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Study of the hegemony of the *woke* ideology. Analysis and proposals

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Table of contents

I.	Introduction	7
II.	Approach to the concepts	9
	A. <i>Woke</i> Culture	11
	B. Gender Ideology and Feminism	12
	C. Environmentalism and Sustainability	15
III.	Progressive Government Policies: a snapshot of our present situation	17
	D. 2030 Agenda	17
	E. Universities in the United States	19
	F. Development in Latin America: the São Paulo Forum and the Puebla Group	21
IV.	Conclusions	25
	G. Conservatism as an anti-ideological approach	25

I. Introduction

It's widely acknowledged that human beings, unlike other life forms, necessitate comprehension of both themselves and their circumstances. Human beings who are unaware of the situation in which they find themselves do not know themselves, and are therefore absent, and this absence, caused by a lack of understanding of reality, ends up preventing them from being part of their moment in history, of what corresponds to their own time. However, in order to understand the reality that “we have been forced to live in”, we have the task of understanding what the history of ideas calls postmodernity, and the philosophical legacy that has fashioned the political ideologies that have shaped our Western societies for half a century.

Many intellectuals devote their careers and research to understanding the changes in culture, customs and the understanding of reality that shape their society. Awareness of socio-political phenomena is essential for anyone who wants to be in touch with reality. This takes on particular relevance when the characteristic feature of our societies has begun to be what we might call a crisis of reality, i.e. when legitimate differences of opinion and views of life have become so pronounced that they end up becoming antagonistic and irreconcilable versions of reality, of what is meaningful and what is meaningless. Our ideological differences are much more than mere political differences that pit different parties against each other. They are differences regarding what is real and what the sources of reality are, making the proposals for social organisation offered by the different political stances incompatible with a new radicalism. This is evident in the lack of genuine political debate and discussion. The precision exhibited in the political debates of our leaders is intricately linked to their divergent comprehension of reality, which varies significantly across numerous facets. Engaging in substantive discourse necessitates an initial consensus on a multitude of matters.

This crisis of reality leads to the study of the new ideological trends underlying the *Woke culture*, in whose repertoire we find Gender Ideology, Feminism in its postmodern interpretation, and Environmentalism as a new standard of morality that bases its demands on the scientific nature of its premises. These socio-political phenomena are causing Western societies to structure themselves under a new concept of the nature of man and woman, of morality and of the role of the state, public policies, and social participation and action, and therefore, the main objective of this paper is to offer an analysis of the nature of these ideologies and their expression in the societies where they demonstrate a hegemonic dominance.

II.

Contextualisation and approach to the concepts

These emerging ideologies are largely the outcome of the nihilistic philosophy and postmodernism that emerged in the 19th and 20th centuries respectively. Both advocate for the emancipation of societies from all inherited culture and tradition, rejecting the forms of social organisation and understanding of reality that have been handed down to us. They are the heritage that has allowed us to develop as civilisations. Among these trends, the synthetic formulations of political and psychological theories around the socialisation of the libido as a liberating mechanism of humankind are of particular importance¹.

It is difficult to overstate the importance of Friedrich Nietzsche as one of the crucial figures in the understanding of contemporary ideologies. His greatest legacy was nihilistic thought, which asserts the complete absence of foundations and principles consists in the affirmation of the total absence of foundations and principles². Nihilism means, in the philosopher's own words, "*that highest values themselves are devalued*"³. Nietzsche regards tradition as an accumulation of outdated values that must be overcome, and whose supposed binding nature (especially moral) stems from a forgetfulness of the time in which these values were created. With his statement "God is dead", he reveals a new era in which not even the theological idea of a god could impose objective requirements or demands on human life. This is giving rise to moral relativism leading to a "*liquid modernity*"⁴. This well-known concept of the sociologist and philosopher Zygmunt Bauman serves as a description of the ephemeral and fluid nature of values that characterises contemporary society. This moral and scientific relativism, characteristic of postmodern thought, is so deep-rooted that there are authors who come to view it as a cynical view of all cultural and historical heritage⁵.

However, the annulment of all values accumulated as a legacy of our traditions is not sufficient to understand the origin and development of *Woke* culture and gender ideology and their political justification. As early as

1 Gallego, E. A., & Maíllo, C. S. (2013). *Sexual Revolution and Nihilism*, Madrid, p. 29.

2 Gallego, E. A., & Maíllo, C. S. (2013). *Sexual Revolution and Nihilism*, Madrid, p. 29.

3 Nietzsche, F. (2002), *Nihilism: Posthumous Writings*, Barcelona, Península, p. 64.

4 Rocca, A. V. (2008). Zygmunt Bauman: Liquid modernity and human fragility. *Nomads: Critical Journal of Social and Juridical Sciences*.

5 Casey, G. (2021). Helen Pluckrose and James Lindsay: Cynical Theories: How Universities made everything about race, gender, and Identity - and why this harms everybody. *Society*, 58(3), 224-227.

the 1960s, Herbert Marcuse, German-American philosopher and sociologist and one of the leading scholars of the Frankfurt School⁶, advocated sexual revolution through the socialisation of people's libido and sexual instincts. He believed that the emancipation of sexuality from the realm of the private and intimate would liberate people from the coercive social structures of a patriarchal society. He regarded sexuality as a game of pleasure in the service of men and women. For Marcuse, achieving true freedom meant achieving freedom from reality⁷. Moreover, the party responsible for this to be achieved was precisely the state, as the body in which society, conscious of itself, provides itself with the means for the transformation of reality.

Biology thus began to be perceived as a restriction on the freedom of individuals –a conditioning factor⁸– that had to be eliminated in order to extend freedom beyond determinants that were no longer just political or economic, but also biological. Shortly thereafter, this view took the form of slogans at the head of demonstrations in favour of abortion, homosexual marriage, or in defence of the “rights” of transgender people: “biology is not destiny”. So the biology of human beings imposes a sexual dualisation with organic and functional differences that are not necessarily a prerequisite for freedom. It was established that the corporeality of human beings could not be a repressive element in the search for one's own identity and in the choice of sexual orientation of individuals, as it would be a constraint on freedom.

Throughout the 20th century and up to the present day, the history of social movements around abortion rights, the sexual liberation of 1968, egalitarian feminism and finally gender ideology, but also the emerging forms of transhumanism, do nothing but further this view that biological factors are a thing of the past that reduces the possibilities through which freedom grows and progresses. It is therefore understandable that nowadays all structures or ideas under which previous generations lived, such as sexual duality or marital heterosexuality, are suppressed or even criminalised as phobic because they are considered natural and therefore ‘normal’.

These are some of the assumptions required for today's progressive ideologies to have entered politics in the form of legislation in most Western countries and being sought to be implemented in developing countries. It was Herbert Marcuse himself who defended the key role of the state in the protection of these so-called freedoms, stressing the intolerance of anyone who dissented from the politicisation of sexuality. If these freedoms can only be provided by the state, then a paternalistic and irreplaceable state role is created for the organisation and establishment of a new cultural order and, ultimately, a new anthropological consciousness.

6 The Frankfurt School was an influential group of Marxist thinkers and philosophers and social critics that emerged in Germany in the 1920s. Their interdisciplinary approach focused on the analysis of culture, politics and society, and their work influenced contemporary critical theory, philosophy and sociology.

7 Gallego, E. A., & Maillo, C. S. (2013). *Sexual Revolution and Nihilism*, Madrid.

8 As stated by Higinio Marín.

A. Progressivism and *woke* culture

Hence, progressivism could basically be defined as the triumphal rebellion against the past that discontinues any inherited structure of tradition⁹. As a result of these ideas and those that emerged in the postmodern era, progressivism took shape in the variants that we find in our societies today.

The term ‘progress’ denotes the act of moving forward, inherently suggesting the notions of improvement and perfection. For this reason, progress is intimately linked to the future, as the only scenario where it can come to fruition is in the years that lie ahead. This is why progressivism, in order to improve society, necessitates the rejection of the past. But it should also be noted that postmodernism is based on the *nihilising* negation of conditioning precedents (defined as constraints on freedom). But it also implies the annulment of the linearity of time, which implies acknowledging that the future is beyond our reach. Thus the future, as the expectation of improvement, is embedded in a hedonic present. In other words, the progressive view is based on the negation of the past and the construction of the present through the fulfilment of desires¹⁰. In order to exist, the “brave new world” has to be here and now.

In conclusion, individuals who identify as progressive are those who recognize that progress necessitates the transcendence of antiquity in pursuit of novelty. The result is the overcoming of history and the overturning of tradition in order to reach new moral standards. In this way the present that advocates progress is never judged, and it is only that present that can judge the past.

This accounts for the emergence of sensitivity readers in recent years, particularly in the United States, and their spread to other regions. Their purpose is to review previously published works, updating them to represent social minorities and eliminate stereotypes based on sex, race, or sexual orientation. *Sensitivity readers* seek to rewrite history in order to establish a new framework of anthropological and social thought. These practices have led works such as *Ten little niggers* published in 1939 by Agatha Christie to change its name in France to *And then there were none*, so as not to offend the sensitivities of groups that are considered to be subject to discrimination.

Thus, our history and tradition are judged as damning and dismissed as guides, ignoring the fact that, without the authority of both, “the authority of the world is lost”, as Hannah Arendt observed. This progressivism of the last two centuries is the main promoter of *Woke* culture, gender ideology, libertarian feminism and the new environmentalism, which portray themselves as the only option to replace the flawed political and cultural systems of the past. It is therefore no exaggeration to regard *Woke* culture as an attempt to reform the West¹¹ and the values on which our nations and our tradition have been built and developed, particularly with regard to their Judeo-Christian roots.

9 CEFAS - CEU (2022, 14 March). Round table “Progressivism: the ideology of the suicide of the West” Quintana Paz, Marín and Cambroneró [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HKDqpnYKQ0U>

10 CEFAS - CEU (2022, 14 March). Round table “Progressivism: the ideology of the suicide of the West” Quintana Paz, Marín and Cambroneró [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HKDqpnYKQ0U>

11 CEFAS - CEU (2022, 14 March). Round table “Progressivism: the ideology of the suicide of the West” Quintana Paz, Marín and Cambroneró [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HKDqpnYKQ0U>

This new *Woke* culture was also driven by the countercultural movement of the 1960s in the United States, which condemned American society's way of life, accusing it of being unfair in its sharing of social benefits and privileges and hypocritical in its own self-understanding as a meritocratic and free society. This movement culminated in the well-known Summer of Love of 1967. That summer thousands of young people gathered, mainly in San Francisco, California, but also in other parts of the United States and the Western world, to express their rejection of established social norms and to promote values such as peace, love, equality and freedom, in many cases predominantly in the sexual sphere.

This movement reached Europe in the form of one of the greatest symbolic milestones in contemporary European history: May '68. These protests that took place in France ended up being merely incidental from a political perspective, yet they represented a turning point in European lifestyles and gave rise to the Sexual Revolution. Western people established themselves as subjects who sought the free expansion of their vital desires and who demonstrated radical ingratitude towards everything that had made their development and the conditions of their existence possible¹².

The philosopher Miguel Ángel Quintana Paz explains that the *Woke* movement seeks the reform of key Western values through the imposition of a new cultural proposal, but that far from managing to eradicate the former, it brings about the deformation of the values of European Christian civilisation, which were later inherited by Latin American countries and the United States, stripping them of their context. Thus, all the proposals of this new (counter)cultural movement are rooted in profoundly Christian values, but stripping them of their original meaning. Hence, for example, victimisation arises as a claim to moral authority, but also promotes the idea of equality that strips the natural differences between individuals that make up the richness of the social fabric of their relevance. It is, then, as Quintana Paz and Higinio Marín have said, a moralistic variant of religion, but one in which there is no forgiveness for the offence.

B. Feminism and gender ideology

In this context, radical feminism emerged, which, besides considering sexual orientations a matter of choice, denies the existence of sexes and views genders as purely cultural constructs. This is the feminism that legitimises gender ideology and all the variants that subsequently emerged from it.

The feminist movement can be seen in three successive waves, the first in the 19th century, represented by the suffragettes who won women the right to vote. The second wave in the 20th century, particularly between the 1950s and 1980s, questioned the traditional roles of the two sexes and the family, and was characterised by the idea that power structures had developed the concept of gender in order to exert greater oppression on women. Then, the third wave, which began in the 1990s and continues to the present day, defends the

¹² Argumenta. (2022, 6 November). From 68 to the *Woke* culture. Pablo Pérez López [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ny7m-GzbsG-w>

theory of intersectionality, a concept coined by professor and writer Kimberlé Crenshaw, which affirms the existence of intersectionality between different forms of oppression, such as gender, race, social class, sexual orientation, gender identity and physical or mental abilities, among others.

Thus, during the second wave and before the emergence of the concept of intersectionality, we can distinguish three types of feminism¹³: liberal feminism, materialist feminism and radical feminism, which later joined intersectionality feminism. Liberal feminism sought to extend all the freedoms of liberal societies to women and to acknowledge them as having the same rights and duties as men. Materialist feminism marked a pivotal moment in understanding the relationship between men and women, asserting that patriarchy and capitalism collaborated to oppress women both in the workplace and at home. Two key milestones in the history of this movement are the influence of industrialisation and the appearance of the contraceptive pill.

Industrialization led to a division between labor and domestic spheres¹⁴. Until then, the role differences between men and women were viewed as distinct spheres of influence and activity that were complementary and interdependent, as well as conducive to child-rearing and family life, as Mary Harrington observes. In other words, far from this asymmetry of the sexes being a structure of oppression against women, it was a source of synergies between the sexes¹⁵. Thus, industrialisation meant that women's economic agency in the domestic sphere was reduced and narrowed, and they began to develop a role more marked by consumption than by production, while at the same time it meant their total economic dependence on men. This gave rise to a feminist labour movement and liberal feminism, mentioned above, more as a response to the material changes in society than as a reaction to a feeling of male oppression¹⁶.

Conversely, industrialization, the emergence of a new consumer system, and market dynamics reshaped our understanding of care, leading to the emergence of materialist feminist movements that indicted men and the capitalist system as agents of oppression. There was an ambivalent tension between care feminism, a term coined by Mary Harrington, who defines it as feminism that “*fought against the logic of the market, emphasising the interdependence [of the two sexes] and the domestic sphere*”¹⁷, and a feminism of freedom which “*embraced the logic of the individualistic market and sought women's entry into that market on the same terms as men*”¹⁸. The balance finally tipped in favour of the latter with the appearance of the contraceptive pill.

In the context of the Sexual Revolution, the contraceptive pill played a very important role, as it not only transformed sex into leisure and changed personal and social relations, but also exposed women's bodies to biomedical domination. This is how the second wave of feminism ended up with the emergence of *radical*

13 Casey, G. (2021). Helen Pluckrose and James Lindsay: Cynical Theories: How Universities made everything about race, gender, and Identity - and why This harms everybody. p. 137.

14 Harrington, M. (2023). *Feminism Against Progress*.

15 Favale, A. (2023, 28 Junio). A feminism embedded in human nature. Public Discourse. <https://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2023/06/89309/>

16 Harrington, M. (2023). *Feminism Against Progress*.

17 Harrington, M. (2023). *Feminism Against Progress*.

18 Harrington, M. (2023). *Feminism Against Progress*.

feminism, which sought to reorganise society by destroying the concept of gender and made it possible for gender ideology to be seen as the ideology of liberation from the oppressive structures of the past.

It is worth noting that currently the form of feminism that prevails in American universities is intersectionality¹⁹ feminism, which emerged in the third wave under the influence of postmodernist theories and the theory of intersectionality. As Helen Pluckrose and James Lindsay point out in their book *Cynical Theories*, this feminism abandons the idea that capitalism and social classes are the primary cause of women's oppression and inequality, in favour of the theory that the "identities" established by society are the real oppressors of women. This is how a substantial change arises in the Marxist-communist mentality that abandons economic struggles as the transforming element of societies, since the real origin of social injustice and inequality is to be found in other previous oppressive structures. Thus, the culprit changes, but the oppressor-oppressed perspective continues to be the basic structural form of society that was established, mainly, after the publication of the Communist Manifesto of the philosophers Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels where they defend that history is composed by the history of the "class struggle". Thus, "class struggle" no longer rests on economic premises, but on forms of domination based on social stigmas.

Judith Lorber, one of the most prominent American feminist sociologists and theorists of the second half of the 20th century, states in one of her papers that Marxist women view women as a social class²⁰. The major proponents of these social-Marxist ideas believe that the social division between men and women is an invention created solely to subjugate the female gender to the male gender, promoting the capitalist system and the consumer society this entails. Therefore, their most important campaign becomes the deconstruction of the idea of the two sexes. Here, once again, we see how these ideas have an essentially postmodern inspiration, considering that knowledge and the tradition on which it is based are not founded on truth, but are simply social constructs that support structures of power and privilege.

Feminism and gender ideology are aligned with other theories that support the Marxist view of relations in which only two positions are advocated: oppressors and oppressed, victims and victimisers. These include the postcolonial theory, which is an academic and critical approach that examines the effects and implications of colonialism on the culture, politics, economy and identity of the countries and communities that were colonised and that questions the power structures and dominant narratives that emerged during the colonial period and that are considered to persist today, creating the globalisation of power in these countries. We also find issues of race or the 'queer' theory as models in which the concept of the oppressor-oppressed is central. Another example –perhaps the most important today because of its political extension and its unique claim to scientific objectivity– is environmentalist ideology.

19 Intersectionality is a concept that refers to the intersection and interaction between different forms of discrimination, oppression or social disadvantage experienced by an individual or group. It was named by law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in the 1980s, originally to address the experiences of discrimination faced by African-American women, recognizing that their identity is shaped by the intersection of gender and race.

20 Lorber, J. (2006). *Shifting Paradigms and Challenging Categories. Social Problems*.

C. Environmentalism

It is also crucial to highlight environmentalism as a field of action and development of the *Woke* culture and progressivism in promoting the examination of oppressive social structures. We all understand environmentalism as a social and political trend that focuses on the protection of the environment, the preservation of natural resources and the promotion of sustainable practices to ensure the health of ecosystems, “*meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*”²¹.

This ideology encompasses a broad spectrum of approaches, spanning from environmental activism and awareness campaigns to the promotion of policies and laws aimed at conservation of the natural environment. The environmental movement focuses its goals and political ambitions on taking into account the various environmental urgencies and challenges identified by the scientific community. Climate change, deforestation, air and water pollution, loss of biodiversity and other problems that affect the health of the planet and the species that inhabit it have shifted from being scientific issues to being political and moral questions. Environmentalism is thus not only limited to the protection of nature, but also considers the relationship between humans and their environment, promoting certain lifestyles, the responsible use of resources and the adoption of clean and renewable technologies. In its broadest and most moderate manifestation, environmentalism strives to achieve a balance between human development and environmental preservation, acknowledging the interdependence between natural ecosystems and human society.

However, environmentalism is one of the discourses that progressive activists have appropriated and through which they reinforce their theory of the oppression that the privileged classes exert on nature, on the countries that are the source of natural resources –mostly developing countries– and, ultimately, on the poorest classes who are unable to protect themselves from the resulting ravages of nature. Miguel Ángel Quintana Paz points out that the progressive environmentalism represented by activists such as Greta Thunberg is an environmentalism that is based on the condemnation of previous generations and that promotes a catastrophic narrative in which there are culprits and victims. In this way, a new front is created that is capable of dividing society under the premises of social Marxism²².

Woke culture, *feminism*, *gender ideology*, *race theory*, *post-colonialism* and *environmentalism* are all ideological trends that have emerged under the assumption that societies have developed through mechanisms of domination and subjugation that maintained structures of power and privilege. All activists, theorists and intellectuals who defend this interpretation of history and reality present the state as the key element that is required to dismantle this order and to implement social justice. As pointed out above, Herbert Marcuse

21 “Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the needs of the future”. See United Nations, *Brundtland Commission, Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future*, 1987.

22 Guardian News. (2019, 23 septiembre). *Greta Thunberg to world leaders: «How dare you? you have stolen my dreams and my childhood»* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TMrtLsQbaok>

himself stated that for the liberation of the sexual dimension of society, the totalitarian action of the state was indispensable, followed by the establishment of a new social order, the overthrowing of the former structures, the superseding of tradition as the ultimate goal and duty of a state responsible for achieving the fulfilment of human existence

III.

The triumph of the woke ideology, a snapshot of the present

The assumption that the state is the only entity capable of guaranteeing the achievement of social justice and the elimination of the structures of the past leads today to the belief that it is the state authorities (or supra-state, by assignment of the latter) that are responsible for the fulfilment of the welfare of humankind in history. This requires the state to apply everything in its power: the reform of legislation, social policies, the subsidising of cultural activities that encourage certain reinterpretations of history or intentional modifications of language, or the creation of scientific-technical methods aimed at achieving the hedonic desires of the subject. That is, it is the state that must succeed in eliminating hardship from life and satisfying all desires as demands²³.

Societies are growing under the umbrella of post-modernism, which is the total affirmation of cultural and moral relativism. This reality can be observed in different ways and in different cultural contexts. The creation of global agendas, the domination of academic institutions, and the defence of Marxist political systems in the economic and social spheres are ways in which *Woke* ideology can penetrate all layers of the social fabric.

D. 2030 Agenda

The 2030 Agenda is a global plan of action adopted by the United Nations Member States in September 2015. It establishes a set of goals, known as the *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs), designed to address global challenges and promote sustainable development worldwide with the aim of achieving it by 2030. The Agenda consists of 17 SDGs that include specific targets to eradicate poverty, promote quality education, ensure gender equality, boost climate action, foster peace and justice, among other issues that are identified as crucial for human development and global sustainability. These goals are interconnected and cover social,

²³ In this regard, the speech that the Second Vice-President of the Spanish Government, Yolanda Díaz, gave as a message of greetings for the new year 2024 is by no means trivial: “*I hope that this year will turn all your good wishes into rights. If the years progress, so must our country*”. This message clearly shows the progressive matrix that views the present as the scenario for the fulfilment of all desires in which the ideal of the future is revealed, and the idea that the state (through its juridification as rights) is the agent responsible for the achievement of this future in the present. See: https://twitter.com/Yolanda_Diaz_/status/1741491535118504274

economic and environmental aspects, asserting the need for a holistic approach to address today's global challenges. The goals are broken down into 169 targets, which are structured and developed as the specification of social norms to guide countries towards the achievement of social rights and social welfare. The problem is that the ideological source of the goals is deeply *Woke*. That is why those who reject the Agenda claim that they see it as the intended replacement of Western values and the secularisation of society. Although the 2030 Agenda was drawn up under the parameters of moral neutrality, this objective is not achieved because its fundamental premises are based on the ideas of cultural relativism, the socialisation of the libido, the idea of equity as the supreme value and the responsibility of states to make all rights effective, displacing the intermediate structures between the individual and state power: the family, religion, forms of civil association, etc.

One of the key issues that emerge from the ideas being promoted and is worth looking into is the role of the state. Within the Agenda, and consequently in most countries and organizations endorsing it, the state supplants religion and it is the state that safeguards citizens from the social abuses that may occur in families or in minorities that are recognised to be the object of discrimination. In this way, the state encompasses many aspects of people's lives in society and takes on an irreplaceable role by being recognised as the key agent for achieving social justice. Even for those who find the goals of the agenda commendable, a fundamental problem arises, which is the creation of statist societies which, for the sake of improving the lives of their citizens, assume the power and duty to dictate social norms, producing a clash of interests with those who do not recognise and share their core values. This poses a structural dilemma for citizens within these societies, who are compelled to adhere to values deemed inalienable by states and supra-national organizations subscribing to *Woke* ideology. In this regard, it is worth mentioning that the 2030 Agenda recognizes and defends abortion as a right and gender ideology as an anthropological compression of people, while assuming environmentalism and feminism as a struggle based on the confrontation between oppressors and oppressed.

It is very important to examine the salvationist idealism with which the United Nations deals with global problems. These aspirations are the "salvationist" response to the problems that post-modern and social-Marxist theorists diagnose: an oppressed society under different structures of power and privilege that result in discriminated collectives that only find protection and shelter in the state. This creates the hegemony of a progressive ideology that perceives itself as indispensable and irreplaceable. It is possible to consider that the creation of this programme represents the third phase of current postmodernism, known by American academics as "*reified postmodernism*"²⁴, which consists of asserting the main postmodernist postulates as irrefutable truth, thus creating a totalitarian ideology with the aim of eliminating and freeing societies from the lies of the past and annulling opposing views.

24 Casey, G. (2021). Helen Pluckrose and James Lindsay: Cynical Theories: How Universities made everything about race, gender, and Identity - and why This harms everybody. *Society*, 58(3), 224-227.

The risk of the 2030 Agenda is the creation or promotion of a single, unquestionable school of thought that morally suppresses those who do not share its postulates or its understanding of the nature of man and woman. The current social annulment jeopardises people who want to speak out against it, depriving them of the freedom of choice beyond the impositions of the state. The acceptance of this Agenda by the 193 member states of the UN reveals the strength and expansion of postmodernist postulates and the *Woke* ideology.

E. Universities in the United States

The United States is a country widely recognised for the deep immersion of society in progressive ideology, as evidenced by the numerous legal reforms that have been made over the last two decades for the benefit of transgender and LGBTQ+ groups. It is worth noting that the *Woke* ideology in the United States is particularly strong (which does not exclude the fact that in the rest of the West “Wokism” is widely present and recognized) and that the influence of “discriminated minorities” is stronger than in other Western countries. It is therefore worthwhile to dedicate a few lines to understanding the tension that American universities are going through which bears similarities to the unrest experienced in the 1960s.

The intellectual origins of cultural relativism emerged in Europe, but its development and expansion was a product of American society, catalysed through American universities when the Frankfurt School, originally based in Germany, emigrated to the United States to escape the rise of Nazism in the 1930s and continued its work there. This school was an influential group of social thinkers and theorists whose work was centred on an interdisciplinary approach combining philosophy, sociology, psychology and critical theory. They focused primarily on Marxist theory and social criticism, but eventually developed their own critical approach, influenced by various intellectual trends. Thus, it was in the context of the theoretical proposals of the thinkers of this school that the cultural relativism of the late 20th century took shape. Its development and acceptance in universities was a key factor in its dissemination, since universities are precisely the institutions designed to foster critical thinking and freedom of expression, and where new ideas are born and transferred to society. Paradoxically, however, the spread of postmodernism led to the emergence of an increasingly controversial university climate in the United States. As explained in the introduction to the paper, society began to be characterised by such divergent views of reality and human nature that they became irreconcilable.

For this reason, and as evidence of the ideological and cultural struggle, over the last ten years there have been numerous examples of protest and unrest, often violent, in defence of minorities and the ideal of social justice, which are the expression of the profound tension that American society is experiencing on issues such as racial, gender and sexual orientation discrimination. Significantly, many Frankfurt School theorists claimed that the only way to overthrow powerful elites and patriarchal structures was through intolerance in the defence and implementation of their ideas. They defend this inflexibility as the only possible means for the liberation of society. That is why the “salvationist” pretensions of models such as the 2030 Agenda are so

strongly imposed in Western countries, and opposition to it or the mere expression of reservations of any kind are interpreted as hate discourse, in a growing process of elimination of dissent.

One example of this is the case of Evergreen State College, one of the most progressive universities located near Seattle in the state of Washington, which experienced several days of campus unrest in 2017. It all began with the “Day of Absence”, an annual tradition where members of the African-American community voluntarily absented themselves from campus to highlight the importance of their presence and contributions. That year, a committee of university students called for a reversal of the tradition, demanding that *whites* should be mandatory absentees in order to raise awareness of the lack of diversity and inclusion on campus. A lecturer of evolutionary biology, Bret Weinstein, criticised the proposal in an email, arguing that the committee just wanted to make “*a show of force*” and that the measure was coercive and limited free speech.

Following the lecturer’s statement, for several days students organised and staged riots and clashes. They hounded lecturers they considered to be “racial traitors”, focusing on Weinstein in particular, searching cars and seeking him out with baseball bats around the campus. Paradoxically, the students accused one of the most liberal universities of being racist and xenophobic, leading to violent clashes with the police, who were ordered by the Chancellor not to intervene in the students’ riots. As a result of student pressure and the passivity of the academic authorities, Weinstein, and also his wife (whose relationship to the riots was limited to being the-wife-of), had to resign. Media such as *The New York Times* covered the story, hinting at how the American left was turning against itself²⁵.

Another notable example is the riots at Yale University in 2015. Days before the celebration of the Halloween festivities on campus, the university administration sent out a letter stating that the costumes should be chosen in such a way as not to offend the sensibilities of any minority. In response, one lecturer, Erika Christakis, decided to write a letter to the university expressing her dissatisfaction that the university bureaucracy saw fit to interfere in the way students dressed and warning about the problems that such decisions had on freedom. This email sparked a revolt among the African-American students, who confronted and fiercely argued against Nicholas Christakis, Erika’s husband, and reproached him for not being able to understand them because he was white.

These are by no means isolated examples of uprisings by students who, driven by a feeling of oppression, decide to rebel against the academic authorities. The contradiction is that these situations have occurred simultaneously with progressive decisions and measures taken by various universities, which endanger lecturers’ academic freedom or the possibility of dialogue in the very social institution designed for this purpose. Universities such as Berkeley have been at the centre of heated debates over the offer of academic positions in which, in addition to the usual and generally acceptable information in the context of faculty selection

25 *New York Times*, “When the left turns on its own”.

processes, they ask for a statement about the applicant's perception of diversity and how their research has promoted social diversity.

At the same time, the *Harvard Law Review* sparked controversy in 2020 when a group of Harvard Law School students and graduates published an open letter criticising the journal's policy regarding required diversity statements for its prospective members. The controversy arose because of a new policy that required students who wanted to become members of the journal's scientific committee to complete a diversity statement in the application process. This statement focused on racial, gender, sexual and socio-economic diversity, as well as personal experience related to diversity and its promotion. Critics argued that this policy had the potential to create tensions, that diversity should not be a requirement for the selection process and that it could affect freedom of speech by prioritising certain views over others. The open letter, signed by students and graduates of Harvard Law School, raised questions about the suitability of the policy and voiced concerns regarding its potential impact on the admissions process and academic environment of the institution.

These are several examples of the tensions that characterise university social life in the United States today, as well as ways in which the domination of one ideology and political stance can lead to the suppression of lecturers' freedom of speech and academic freedom. Although these situations transcend academic institutions to include large film corporations or large private companies, it is very important to stress that universities are not created to be the driving force behind specific ideologies or to override discourse, but rather to encourage dialogue and the discussion of ideas based on arguments and not on the interpretation of reality by "minorities"²⁶.

F. Development in Latin America: São Paulo Forum and Puebla Group

On the other hand, we can refer to the situation in Latin America. As is well known, Antonio Gramsci was one of the Marxist ideologists who most clearly understood that the university was the place where true social transformation was generated through education. For Gramsci the university is the only leverage point sufficiently capable of changing a society's culture and way of life. Heavily influenced by the ideas of the Italian thinker, Fidel Castro, together with Luiz Inazio Lula Da Silva (then just a social activist), set up the São Paulo Forum. This was an organisation founded in 1990 by left-wing parties, movements and organisations in Latin America and the Caribbean to form an international coalition of the left to strengthen the parties advocating socialism and communism.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall and the breakup of the Soviet Union, Fidel Castro realised that the social-communism he had managed to install in Cuba through the (violent) revolution and its development into a dictatorial system was entering into crisis. He saw the need to enter governments through the democratic system

²⁶ Casey, G. (2021). Helen Pluckrose and James Lindsay: Cynical Theories: How Universities made everything about race, gender, and Identity - and why This harms everybody. *Society*, 58(3), 224-227.

that was gradually spreading, in order to be able to establish executives who would defend socialist ideas in Latin America and confront the neo-liberal hegemony for which he professed a deep aversion. Thus the São Paulo Forum was founded with 48 parties and movements. Today the Forum comprises 123 political parties from 27 different states. It holds annual meetings at which it discusses the political situation in its own territories, sets out its objectives and principles for action, and defines a common strategy in which it establishes measures to be implemented by all members. This demonstrates the Forum's enormous influence on the political situation of the entire Latin American continent. Here, the great transformative relevance of socialist ideas in terms of their intended practical applicability once again makes itself visible, for it is Gramsci's ideas that shape and underlie the principles of the Forum.

Gramsci developed a Marxist intellectualism that reassessed the theories of Hegel and Marx. He realised that the communist revolution that these two thinkers advocated did not happen because they relied on the proletariat as the revolutionary agent. However, because of the immense cultural burden on the proletariat regarding the interpretation of the family (as the natural social structure), religion (as the revelation of man's true supra-terrestrial destiny) or the fatherland (as the ideal of bourgeois society), it was impossible for them to become the agent of change that the revolution demanded. To come into being, communism had to be the ultimate goal. And for that purpose, it was essential to change the culture and the conceptual framework that still prevailed in social institutions and habits. Culture was the form of power; that is, the true seat and object of politics.

In this schema, it is easy to understand the key importance that Gramsci gives to universities in the accomplishment of the revolution. This may seem obvious today, but it was not at all so in a context where communist ideology condemned student life as one of the forms of a bourgeois lifestyle, implying the enjoyment of an idle existence at the expense of production and workers' labour²⁷. Therefore, it became imperative for the advocates of Marxist ideas to be present in academic institutions. In this way, students would become "*agents for the transformation of society*", bringing Marxist-Leninist ideas into their trades and lives. As the Venezuelan political consultant Alejandro Peña Esclusa points out, Marxism is not only a political structure, but also a "religion", a worldview that shapes the lives of the people who believe in it. And this was understood and advocated by Fidel Castro, who openly declared that "*above all, we are Marxist-Leninists*".

At its 23rd annual meeting in Managua in July 2017, the Forum presented a document, "*Consensus of Our America*", in which its values and principles were set out. These include: a profound sense of statehood in which the key role of states is recognised. The different parties that make up the Forum unanimously agree that "*the state must play a key role as regulator of the economy, ensuring the redistribution of wealth*"²⁸. Thus, the distribution of wealth is advocated as the mechanism of social justice that allows societies to prosper as

²⁷ Indeed, many of the communist revolutions in Asian countries such as Cambodia or China were characterised by suspicion, even criminalisation and persecution of university life.

²⁸ Consensus of Our America 2017.

opposed to the bourgeois elites of liberalism that impoverish and cripple countries: “[t]he equitable distribution of wealth is one of the main projects of the left. Fiscal policies must consider that there is no real development without adequate social inclusion. [...] eradication of neoliberal scourges, such as poverty and destitution, drug addiction, social alienation”²⁹. Some of its other key principles include the protection of the environment, the generation of decolonising content, and the persecution of all forms of homophobia, racism, xenophobia, etc. Thus, the ideological agenda of the Forum is perfectly aligned with Marxism –not only economic, but also cultural– which has developed over recent decades under the dialectical structure of oppressed versus oppressors, as mentioned above.

The Forum was a great success in its first few decades. At the first meeting, Fidel Castro was the only left-wing leader in Latin America, but as time went by, the other parties that made up the Forum managed to take power in their countries’ executives. Some examples of the socialist and communist governments that emerged are: Hugo Chávez in Venezuela (1999), Tabaré Vázquez in Uruguay (2005), Evo Morales in Bolivia (2006), Rafael Correa in Ecuador (2007), Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua (2007-present), Cristina Fernández Kirchner in Argentina (2007), Fernando Lugo in Paraguay (2008), Mauricio Funes in El Salvador (2009) and Luiz Inazio Lula da Silva in Brazil (2003 and 2023), among others. They managed to achieve up to 14 simultaneous heads of government in the Caribbean and South America in 2009. However, from 2009 to 2019 this number dropped to just 4 in the South American countries³⁰, and for this reason, they founded what is known as the *Puebla Group*, with the aim of achieving a “new progressive momentum”. The Puebla Group arose after the Forum’s loss of strength and reputation in the various Latin American countries where the presence of left-wing governments has had devastating effects on the economic and social situation of their citizens. Puebla is made up not of political parties, but of politicians and parliamentarians who support the same ideas as the Forum. Its founders include the former Prime Minister of Spain, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, and the former Minister of Equality of the Spanish Government and co-founder of Podemos, Irene Montero.

According to Peña Esclusa, two moves that the social-communist parties of the Forum are making to extend their legislatures and introduce a new cultural framework can be highlighted: changing the constitution, controlling or changing the electoral system and, one could add, controlling the media. In this respect, some left-wing political parties can be singled out, which, once they have reached the executive, call democratic principles into question.

The government of Rafael Correa in Ecuador from 2007 to 2017 is a case in point. Correa was noted for his statements on the control that the executive should have over the state, in which he openly denied the principles of the separation of powers: “[t]he president of the republic is not only the head of the executive, he is the head of the entire Ecuadorian state, and the Ecuadorian state is: the executive, the legislature, the judiciary,

29 Consensus of Our America 2017.

30 Razón de Estado TV. (2021, 9 December). Unmasking the São Paulo Forum (produced by Fundación Disenso) Razón de Estado [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yg43s6KpQJI>

*the electorate, transparency and social control, superintendencies, the Attorney General's Office, and the Comptroller General's Office. All of these are the Ecuadorian state*³¹. The division of powers, which ensures the fair development of a democracy, was seriously undermined. This was coupled with his attempt to carry out an electoral reform that would allow indefinite re-election in Ecuadorian territory. However, this measure was rejected in a referendum with 64% of votes against it. It is also worth mentioning the attempt (not without episodes of violence in the streets) to reform the Chilean Constitution in 2022. This reform was rejected in the elections. However, what is relevant for the purposes of this paper is that the proposed reform sought to make it compulsory for civil service posts to be held by women and men on a 50/50 basis, thus putting an end to meritocracy. Furthermore, abortion was introduced as a basic right, annulling the right to life recognised in the 1980 Constitution or the possibility of conscientious objection on the basis of religious and/or moral beliefs; mothers were defined as “women or persons with the capacity to gestate”, disassociating biological sex and gender. Also, in this proposed Constitution, the Senate was eliminated and legislative power was vested solely in the *Congreso de Diputados* (House of Commons), preventing *Cámara Alta* (House of Lords) from exercising a democratic and legal regulatory role³². All these measures, in view of the preceding discussion, are sufficient evidence to state that the Chilean text represents the elevation of the *Woke* ideology to the level of a proposed Constitution.

However, the government in which the Forum and its members' lack of commitment to democracy and respect for human rights is most clearly revealed is the left-wing dictatorship of Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua, which has been in power by force since 2007, persecuting and criminalising all forms of political opposition. The so-called “Mother's Day massacre” on 30 May 2018 was particularly brutal. On that day, the largest Nicaraguan people's uprising so far against the Ortega government took place in Managua. These protests were curtailed by military action by the government, in which fire was opened on the demonstrators, resulting in the death of an unknown number of civilians³³.

Although for the analytical purposes of this paper we must limit ourselves to the most significant examples that help clarify the theoretical understanding of the development and success of progressive ideologies, Nicaragua is not the only country whose FSLN party, as a member of the Forum, has become a de facto dictatorship. Venezuela and Cuba also embody left-wing authoritarian regimes where trends of impoverishment and loss of citizens' rights are discernible. Venezuela has experienced the largest exodus in its history with more than 7.7 million citizens fleeing the government of Nicolas Maduro³⁴, a fact that is not at all consistent with those analyses that point to the social-political success of the Venezuelan communist government.

31 No original source found, there are two secondary sources: Jijón, C., & Jijón, C. (2 November 2011). *So that they know who “the boss” is*: La República EC. La RepúblicaEC: <https://www.larepublica.ec/blog/2011/11/02/para-que-sepan-quien-es-%E2%80%99Cel-jefe%E2%80%99D/>

32 Ayala, Y. (2023). “The deterioration of democracy in Latin America. Analysis and proposal”.

33 The most reliable sources estimate the number of lives lost to be around 300, although official figures state the number of civilian casualties to be 18.

34 *Refugiados y migrantes de Venezuela | R4V*. (s. f.). <https://www.r4v.info/es/refugiadosymigrantes>

IV. Conclusions

G. Conservatism as an anti-ideological approach

Thus, after the presentation of different situations that are unfolding in the USA and Latin America and the study of the different trends that embody the cultural progressivism of the present day, which have the intention of establishing a new social order, it is possible to take a stance that is opposed to the fundamental reason that motivates them, which is the rejection of the past and of tradition.

Recognising in the past a source of truth or true social structures is not an ideological choice, but the way in which societies acknowledge themselves to be linked to their beginnings. There has never been a society that believes itself to be the origin³⁵. Positive consideration of the past also makes it possible not to focus on the futuristic constructivism that characterises postmodern ideologies and their revolutionary nature. A critical but appreciative stance regarding the past and its legacy should be taken. This makes conservatism a vision of politics and reality itself that does not amount to an ideology and is configured as a *meta-ideological* point of view, but one that is capable of coming up with particular solutions and policies. In other words, the nature of conservatism means that it is not a revolutionary ideology, but quite the opposite, a political standpoint capable of conserving what is good and reforming what is necessary.

Thus, conservatism as a political force does not reject the past as a source of lies, but at the same time it does not assume that everything from earlier times is better. A conservative, according to the professor of Political Philosophy, Elio Gallego, is someone who, through gratitude, is capable of discriminating between the enduringly significant and the ways of life that can be improved because they are outdated; while recognising that “it is an exercise in vanity to consider that all generations have been blind until the present one, which has seen the light”³⁶. Indeed, this appreciative view of the past must be complemented by an honest critical analysis of those things that do merit reform or discontinuance.

35 Gallego, E. (2023, 18 November). Conservatism II: What should be conserved? *The Debate*. https://www.eldebate.com/cultura/20231118/conservatismo-ii-hay-conservar_154416.html

36 Gallego, E. (2023, 18 November). Conservatism II: What should be conserved? *The Debate*. https://www.eldebate.com/cultura/20231118/conservatismo-ii-hay-conservar_154416.html

This point is essential for any conservative who wants to intervene in public life, because on many occasions, progressive thinking has considered conservatism to be averse to change because it is detrimental to its benefits. The rationale is quite the contrary, it is not simply a matter of making specific structures endure, but a question of considering that the desired future cannot be based on the negation of the past, not even in the realm of political, institutional and moral traditions. So if conservatism is the best position in the context of contemporary ideologies, it is precisely because it is not an ideology, but a sense of reality whose sources are broader and more plural than states and their ideological trends. In other words, it is the best political position because it does not conceive of politics as the whole of reality or the source of reality itself. Conservatism assumes the task of taking care of what is given to it, without claiming to be the creator of a new order.

Thus, the point of origin of the thinking of a conservative and a progressive are radically different. This means that the idea of the “common good” held by both sides is very difficult to reconcile. This results in a crisis of reality because there is no broad shared ground from which to discuss. This lack of understanding makes it essential to stop attributing the protection of the “common good” to the state and to establish limits within which coexistence is possible, without neglecting the defence of the truth, but without the subjugation of either side.

Defending what one considers to be the truth is essential, especially when what is at stake is the understanding of the very nature of human beings that governs life in society. However, this should not lead to the annulment of the opponent just because he or she is an opponent. A fair critical spirit requires that no idea or proposal should be dismissed and rejected for the sole reason that it is different or contrary. To act in this way would be to fail in terms of truth and justice, and to assume that one is the possessor of the whole truth and that the opponent embodies absolute wrongness. Just as considering that the past has nothing to teach us is an exercise in vanity, believing that there is nothing we can learn from our opponents is also an exercise in vanity that makes dialogue and coexistence impossible.

From the political perspective of conservatism, various ideas emerge which allow the development of measures that help to regulate “state absolutism”, such as fiscal democracy, subsidiarity of the state and the consequent strengthening of intermediate forms of society. For example, the application of a selective tax system makes it possible to avoid the imposition of a moral stance through state policies, thus strengthening the idea of fiscal democracy. Given the non-confessional nature of the State, but also the history of the Church in Spain, it was agreed that those Spaniards who so wished could contribute to the Church through the payment of their taxes, allowing them to choose when paying their taxes whether or not they wanted a percentage to go to the Catholic Church. In this way, the state provided an option for those who saw good in the work of the Church in society, without prejudice to those who did not wish to participate in its financing. Here the state acts as an enabling system. A similar mechanism could be applied to those measures that imply the assumption of a specific moral ideology, as in the case of abortion or euthanasia. This fiscal democracy, far from seeking to create discord between different social groups, would be a measure that would recognise

and respect the disparity of opinions on such delicate and important matters as the defence of the life of the foetus during pregnancy. In this way, the state becomes a system that does not produce a hegemony of the *Woke* ideology and does not override the opposing position. However, it should be stressed that this possibility has to be restricted to those issues where two characteristics converge: the ascertainment of the existence of a deep social controversy and its non-interference in the coverage and assurance of basic services already defined beforehand.

Another mechanism for regulating the functions of the state is to recognise it as subsidiary. The state's role should be limited to those activities that cannot be undertaken by any other entity. In this way, the state's economic and social interventionism will not be liable to encroach on people's freedom. The more the state is involved, the less it enables the liberty and free initiative of the citizens. However, if the state acts only in matters in which its intervention is essential, such essential matters referring to the basic needs that cannot be covered or secured by any other means, then it represents a system that secures the freedom of its citizens, while at the same time strengthening the intermediate structures that make up civil society. At the same time, these intermediate entities serve as regulators of the role of the state, limiting the intrusion of state powers (with the possibility of their consequent abuses) into the private lives of individuals. In the same vein, considering that politics does not cover all aspects of life, people must be able to interact through intermediate social structures such as the family, social movements, cultural associations, etc., which make up and create the fabric of people's lives beyond the state and political structure.

As a recapitulation of the key ideas that emerge from this paper, we can highlight the importance of acknowledging that the state has a strong tendency to dominate the different spheres of life. It carries out this domination by seeing itself as a structure that is not subject to the law, but rather the creator of people's rights³⁷. Moreover, this domination is directly linked to the *Woke* Ideology. The hegemony of "*Wokism*" is observable in the intolerance of its presuppositions; for progressive measures to be recognised and implemented, it is essential that all theoretical and political opposition be denied and rejected. Thus, the rejection of opposing positions goes beyond mere opposition, but takes the form of criminalisation and condemnation through legislative mechanisms. This criminalisation has the direct consequence of victimising different groups, creating a society divided into "good and bad", "oppressors and oppressed", which only leads to conflict. Rather than recognising the disparity of opinions and strengthening common ideas, Western societies become immersed in dialectical games and power struggles. This progressive stance is based on the denial that history has anything to teach us and on the veto of the social structures of the past. This denial of history and past societies as a source of knowledge means that all reality can be reassessed and that there is no basis or point of reference on which to build it. It produces a cultural relativism where the norm does not exist, which means that legislation by the state becomes the only defensible truth.

37 CEFAS - CEU (2023, 8 March). Elio A. Gallego | The problem of sovereignty [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YoM85k1TGJg>

Therefore, it is understandable that the state needs to restore people's freedoms through their participation and by increasing the influence of intermediate social institutions, encouraging civil society, as well as private initiative, which, far from expecting the state to provide for them, possess a construction mechanism in which people freely decide how to shape society. It is also essential that the modern state, as a non-confessional structure that does not adhere to any specific religion, should not adhere in the same way to any specific moralising ideology, because otherwise it embodies that which it was originally intended to eliminate, absolutism.

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