

Uma leitura marxista da Reforma do Ensino Médio: o desenvolvimento da ideologia burguesa de educação¹

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Resumo

O presente artigo tem por objetivo propor uma leitura marxista a respeito da Lei nº 13.415/2017. Longe de esgotar qualquer discussão versaremos sobre algumas das determinações e relações fundamentais que constituem o fenômeno da Reforma do Ensino Médio, buscando a essência dessa política educacional. Nossa pesquisa foi realizada a partir de uma abordagem qualitativa e se ancora na perspectiva materialista histórica-dialética. Para apoderar-nos de nosso objeto de estudo, utilizamos a pesquisa bibliográfica. O desenvolvimento da pesquisa passa pela justificativa da validade da teoria marxista para estudo desse objeto, pelos conceitos de ideologia e educação e por uma abordagem da lei em três eixos de análise: organizações multilaterais, setor privado e pós-fordismo; a reforma e a dualidade estrutural do Ensino Médio; aspectos ideológicos da Lei nº 13.415/2017: disputas envolvidas. A investigação desvelou uma gama de relações que envolvem a reforma, o que demonstrou que ela não se resume aos eventos mais imediatos e facilmente observáveis. Ela é, em última instância, uma complexa e fundamental etapa no desenvolvimento e consolidação da ideologia burguesa de educação.

Palavras-chave: Educação Básica. Lei nº 13.415/2017. Materialismo histórico-dialético. Ideologia. Reforma do Ensino Médio.

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A marxist reading of high school reformation: The development of the burguese ideology of education

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Abstract

This article aims to propose a Marxist reading of Law 13.415. Far from exhausting any discussion, we will deal with some of the fundamental determinations and relationships that constitute the High School Reformation, seeking the essence of this policy. Our research was realized from a qualitative approach and is anchored in the historical-dialectical materialist perspective. In order to take hold our object of study, we used bibliographic research. The development of the research goes through the justification of the validity of the Marxist theory for the study of this object, the concepts of ideology and education and an approach to the law in three axes of analysis: multilateral organizations, the private sector and post-Fordism; the reform and structural duality of high school; Ideological aspects of Law nº 13.415/2017: disputes involved. The investigation carried out revealed a totality of relationships involving the reformation, which demonstrated that it is not limited to the most immediate observable events. It is, ultimately, a fundamental stage in the development and consolidation of the bourgeois ideology of education.

Keywords: Basic Education. Law 13.415/2017. Historical-dialectical materialista. Ideology. High School Reform.

Una lectura marxista de la Reforma de la Enseñanza Media: el desarrollo de la ideología burguesa de la educación

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Resumen

Este artículo tiene como objetivo proponer una lectura marxista de la Ley 13.415/2017. Abordaremos algunas de las determinaciones y relaciones fundamentales que constituyen el fenómeno de la Reforma de la Enseñanza Media, buscando la esencia de esta política educativa. Nuestra investigación se realizó desde un enfoque cualitativo y está anclada en la perspectiva materialista histórico-dialéctica. Para apoderarse de nuestro objeto, recurrimos a la investigación bibliográfica. El desarrollo de la investigación pasa por la justificación de la validez de la teoría marxista para el estudio, los conceptos de ideología y educación y por un enfoque de la ley en tres ejes de análisis: organismos multilaterales, el sector privado y el posfordismo; la reforma y dualidad estructural de la escuela secundaria; aspectos ideológicos de la Ley nº 13.415/2017: disputas involucradas. La búsqueda realizada reveló una gama de relaciones en torno a la reforma, lo que demostró que ésta no se limita a los hechos más inmediatos y fácilmente observables. Es, en definitiva, una etapa compleja y fundamental en la consolidación de la ideología burguesa de la educación.

Palabras clave: Educación Básica. Ley nº 13.415/2017. Materialista histórico-dialéctica. Ideología. Reforma de la escuela secundaria

1. Introduction

Since the end of 2016, secondary education in Brazil was altered by the enactment of Provisional Measure (MP) No. 746/2016, later sanctioned as Law No. 13.415 on February 16, 2017, which instituted a reform in this stage of Basic Education in our country. Once made public, the Secondary Education Reform quickly became a topic of disputes, struggles, and resistances. In this article, we aim to present a Marxist interpretation of Law No. 13.415/2017. Far from exhausting any discussion, and aware of the limits of this text, we will discuss some of the fundamental determinations and relationships that constitute the phenomenon of the Secondary Education Reform, seeking the essence of this educational policy. Our research was conducted using a qualitative approach and is anchored in the historical-dialectical materialist perspective of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. To delve into our study object, we used bibliographic research.

Our text is developed in three distinct sections. In the first, by discussing some of the central elements of Marxist theory, we support its validity as a lens for understanding our study object. In the second, we focus on the understanding of the concepts of ideology and education, the theoretical foundations on which we build our argument. The third section is dedicated to understanding the phenomenon of the Secondary Education Reform, addressing three axes: the determining factor of multilateral organizations, the private sector, and the post-Fordist era; the reform and the historical duality of Secondary Education; and, finally, its ideological aspects.

2. Marxist Theory as a Lens for Understanding the Reform

One of the most common and widespread criticisms directed at Marx and Engels' theory is that it is supposedly reductionist, characterized by an economic determinism that is unable to comprehend society in its entirety. In the words of Paulo Netto (2011, p. 13): “[...] in the records of textbooks, Marx generally appears as a factorialist theorist - he would have been the one who, in analyzing history and society, positioned the 'economic factor' as determinant in relation to other 'factors' such as social, cultural, etc.” We, like Professor José Paulo Netto, understand that this view, beyond its superficiality, is misguided.

From the outset, it should be emphasized that a careful and attentive reading of Marx and Engels' works does not lead to a univocal conclusion of such reductionism. In fact, we can support this argument based on the authors' own writings. A pertinent summary of the fundamental premise

of historical-dialectical materialism can be found in the preface to "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy," a work from 1859 considered the main precursor to "Capital." In reviewing his studies and writings, Marx tells us:

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The general conclusion I reached, which once obtained served as a guide for my studies, can be summarized as follows: in the social production of their own existence, individuals enter into determined, necessary relations independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to a specific level of development of their material productive forces (MARX, 2008, p. 47).

From this quotation, it is evident that Marx focuses specifically on how humans produce their own existence. He considers the production of material means necessary for survival as a process that has been ongoing for millennia and must be repeated daily (Marx & Engels, 2016). For him, this production forms the base or infrastructure upon which the political and intellectual history of an era is built and explained. This, in turn, constitutes the superstructure, which includes culture, law, ideology, and everything that naturally arises from the satisfaction of basic needs, leading to further needs, and so on (Engels, 2004). If these terms are correct, it is clear that Marx's focus on how humans produce their existence cannot be reduced to or confused with economic reductionism or factorialism; rather, it represents something deeper.

In the *Communist Manifesto*, published in 1848, Marx and Engels mention the formulation of ideas, ideology, consciousness, and intellectual production as components deserving attention in the Communist Party's role in the proletariat's struggle against poverty and exploitation (Marx & Engels, 2004). In *The German Ideology*, the authors attempt to rescue "ideas" from a purely metaphysical and indeterminate existence, connecting them to how humans produce and reproduce their existence. This epistemological shift is illustrated in two expressions. First, they establish their materialism: "totally contrary to German philosophy, which descends from heaven to earth, here it ascends from earth to heaven" (Marx & Engels, 2016, p. 94). Second, they summarize their premise: "it is not consciousness that determines life, but life that determines consciousness" (Marx & Engels, 2016, p. 94).

From this perspective, there is no room for doubts or misinterpretations. Marx and Engels do not relegate ideas or non-economic components of human societies to a secondary role. Instead, they address them in relation to how humans historically produce their material existence, considering the relationship between structure and superstructure. Thus, ideas can be better understood in their dynamics, movements, and relations and must be articulated with the concrete aspects of objective reality. Referring to a passage from a letter written by Friedrich Engels:

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According to the materialist conception of history, the ultimately determining moment in history is the production and reproduction of real life. Neither Marx nor I have ever claimed more than that. If someone now distorts this [asserting] that the economic moment is the only determinant, they turn that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, and absurd statement (ENGELS, 1890).

With the exception of the section on the method of political economy in the introduction to the "Grundrisse: Manuscripts of 1857-1858," a collection of texts written between 1857 and 1858 and edited during the Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe (MEGA), Marx and Engels did not leave any text solely dedicated to the methods of their social theory. In the few pages of the introduction, Marx begins his argument by emphasizing the complexity of the categories that constitute concrete reality:

It seems correct to start with the real and the concrete, with the effective presupposition, and therefore, in the case of economics, for example, to begin with the population, which is the foundation and subject of the entire social act of production. Considered more rigorously, however, this turns out to be false. The population is an abstraction when I leave out, for example, the classes of which it is composed. These classes, in turn, are an empty word if I do not understand the elements on which they are based, e.g., wage labor, capital, etc. (MARX, 2011, p. 76-77).

Here, it is observed that categories cannot be understood in isolation but must be seen as a diversity that, through the synthesis of multiple determinations, forms a unit, the concrete. This concrete is indeed the starting point from which the process of thought begins, but it is not the product of this thought (MARX, 2011). It is up to the researcher to understand these determinations and, from them, reveal the movement of their object of study. In the words of Paulo Netto, it is about going beyond the

The phenomenological, immediate, and empirical appearance—where knowledge necessarily begins represents a level of reality and is therefore important and not to be discarded. The aim of research methods that facilitate theoretical understanding, starting from this appearance, is to reach the essence of the object. In other words, the research method seeks to uncover the structure and dynamics of the object through its superficial manifestations. (PAULO NETTO, 2011, p. 21) (grifos do autor).

Taking the High School Reform as our object of study, it is not limited to simple categories and superficial explanations. On the contrary, it must be understood through specific determinations and within a social, political, and economic context. This is what we aim to explore. If, a priori, Law No. 13.415/2017 presents itself as a phenomenon, we want to understand its dynamics and essence. Given this, we believe that Marxist theory, by its own means, is fully valid as a lens for our investigation.

3. Brief Considerations on Ideology and Education

At this stage of our work, we aim to outline the theoretical foundations for our understanding of concepts that will be crucial in building our argument. These concepts are those that make up the title of this section: ideology and education. Considering the reflections made in the previous section of this article, we begin the discussion on the concept of ideology, referencing Marilena Chauí's definition: "*A corpus* of representations and norms that fix and prescribe in advance what and how one should think, act, and feel" (CHAUÍ, 2016, p. 247). In the context of capitalist society, ideology plays a significant role in the domination of one class over another. It is, ultimately, an illusion of consciousness, a distortion of concrete social relations, resulting from a complex process of division of labor, reaching its peak in bourgeois capitalist society.

How can consciousness be anything other than the consciousness of material reality if it is ultimately determined by that material reality? This apparent contradiction would challenge the concept of ideology (as described above) against the fundamental premise of historical-materialist dialectics, i.e., the relationship between the way humans produce their material existence and consciousness. According to Marx and Engels, all consciousness is always tainted by the material life that precedes it, as long as there are living humans, it is and will remain a social product. First and foremost, consciousness is merely the awareness of the immediate sensible world and the limited connections established between people (MARX; ENGELS, 2016).

Nevertheless, the various stages of development of productive forces have led to an increasing process of division of labor. What was initially the sexual division of labor⁴ in early societies evolved, under the aegis of large industries, machines, and technology, into the division between manual labor and intellectual labor. In other words, it represents a division between those who conceptualize society and those who perform manual work.

Once the division between those who think and those who execute is established, consciousness can become emancipated and can potentially be something other than the consciousness of social practice and the concrete relations of material existence production. It is at this point that ideology is constituted. Detached from concrete reality, ideology is responsible for presenting the ideas and interests of the dominant classes as if they were rational and universally valid, masking inequalities, inducing formatted thinking, and thus ensuring the reproduction of the conditions of production as they stand, or in other words, the reproduction of capitalism itself. In the words of Marx and Engels:

⁴ The sexual division of labor in societies involves assigning distinct tasks to men and women within the dynamics of material existence production. According to Marx and Engels (2016), this is the first form of division of labor.

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In each era, the ideas of the ruling class are the dominant ideas, that is, the class that is the material force dominating society is also the spiritual force dominating it. The class that controls the means of material production also controls the means of spiritual production, so that the thoughts of those lacking spiritual production means are also subordinated to it. The dominant ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relations [...] (MARX; ENGELS, 2016, p. 47, Aurhors'emphasis).

In the *Manifesto*, without directly referring to the term ideology, the authors' reflections appear under other terms but with the same meaning:

But do not discuss with us, applying to the abolition of bourgeois property the standard of your bourgeois conceptions of freedom, culture, law, etc. Your own ideas are a product of the bourgeois relations of production and property, just as your law is merely the will of your class raised to the level of law, a will whose content is determined by the material conditions of existence of your class (MARX; ENGELS, 2004, p. 62-63).

As a fundamental element of class domination, ideology needs to ensure that individuals, under its scope, can identify with it and, involuntarily, legitimize it. The internalization of symbols, norms, and signs ensures its effectiveness, as it constructs an imaginary that serves the interests of the ruling class. In fact, this is a key point of interpretation: ideology operates in a way that presents the interests of the ruling class as if they were, in reality, the interests of everyone (CHAUÍ, 2016).

Obviously, the discussion carried out up to this point does not aim to cover the entire debate on ideology, nor to delve into Marxist theory and how it can serve the study of other aspects of the superstructure, with one exception: education. Indeed, for our purposes, examining education through the lens of Marx and Engels' theory should be our next step. With these considerations made, we proceed with the question: what is the historical-materialist perspective on education and how is it related to what we have presented so far about ideology?

We must clarify two aspects of our argument. First, we understand that answering these questions does not represent a wholly original effort, as Brazilian and foreign researchers have already written extensive theoretical treatises on this subject. Nevertheless, providing a brief synthesis of some of this discussion will help us understand the contradictions and grasp the real movement of our central object of analysis, as these are basic premises without which we cannot proceed. Secondly, we acknowledge that we do not exhaust the debate in these few pages, nor do we intend to. Our goal is merely to explore key elements for our examination of Law No. 13,415/2017

That said, our starting point is the realization that neither Marx nor Engels left any treatises or essays that deal exclusively with education. According to José Claudinei Lombardi:

His references to these issues appear separately throughout his work, both in his early writings and in his mature works, including in the Manuscripts and in Capital. From his production, it is not possible to 'construct' a complete and elaborate pedagogical or educational system. However, this does not mean that the references are merely situational opinions and, as such, are entirely dismissible from a theoretical standpoint (LOMBARDI, 2011, p. 6 Authors' emphasis).

The very nature of Marxist theory makes it suitable for studying the educational phenomenon, since education, a component of the superstructure, is ultimately an economic determination, a form related to the mode of production of material existence. It should be noted, however, that for Marx and Engels, education is not a process limited to educational institutions, but permeates all of society. In the Manifesto, we see mentions of domestic education and social education, indicating that the authors conceived of the family as an agent of education (MARX; ENGELS, 2004). Nonetheless, the idea of school, and therefore of institutionalized and formal education, appears shortly after in the following passage: 'And your education, is it not also determined by society? Is it not determined by the social relations in which you educate your children, by the more or less direct and indirect interference of society through schools, etc.?' (MARX; ENGELS, 2004, p.63). For our purposes in this text, we will focus on formal/school education, approaching the more contemporary sense attributed to the concept. For didactic purposes, and supported by the aforementioned citation, we can summarize the historical materialist dialectical premise with the following observation: on the structure of the capitalist mode of production is built a bourgeois-capitalist education and school system.

Under this analytical framework, education as we know it today is a human activity that gained strength with the advent of liberalism, the Enlightenment movement, and the French Revolution of 1789. John Locke's empiricist conception, which views humans as *tabula rasa*, points to the need for instruction in two aspects: 1) education for those who own property; 2) as a plan of support for the poor, teaching them a trade and preparing them for discipline in work (FARIAS, 1990). Adam Smith defended state-provided popular education as a way to prevent 'the complete degeneration of the people resulting from the division of labor' (MARX; ENGELS, 2011, p.36).

In this context, it is the role of the bourgeois state to take responsibility for the education and instruction of the people, a movement observed, for example, in the post-revolutionary years in France, through efforts to organize a public, free, and universal system. By the mid-19th century, formal school education was a reality in the major industrial economies of Europe and was highly instrumentalized as part of maintaining bourgeois hegemony (FARIAS, 1990). This is the logic of formal education during the time of Marx and Engels and serves as the starting point for the authors

A marxist reading of high school reformation: The development of the burguese ideology of education to develop their reflections and critiques. The division of labor is the predominant axis from which the founders of historical materialism develop their reflections on education.

The division of labor is, historically, required by the process of manufacturing or industrial work. The development of the machine incorporates into it the skills and knowledge that previously resided in, and were possessed by, the worker. Thus, science and knowledge become the property of capital, and the worker finds themselves confronting it. As Engels indicates, 'monitoring the machines, replacing broken threads, are not activities that require any effort of thought from the worker, although, on the other hand, they prevent them from engaging their mind in anything else' (LOMBARDI, 2011, p. 9)

Thus, what Marx and Engels advocate is a form of instruction that can unite manual and intellectual (spiritual) labor, envisioning an education for the proletariat. This justifies their criticism of the education provided by the state, as since liberal theory made the bourgeois state apparatus an educational agent, educational institutions have been ideologically configured for the alienation of the working class (LOMBARDI, 2011).

Perhaps one of Marx's most important explanations about education is found in the '*Instructions to the Delegates of the Provisional Central Council*,' written in 1868, four years after the foundation of the First International (1864-1876). There we find:

By education, we understand three things:

- 1) Intellectual education.
- 2) Physical education such as that obtained through gymnastics and military exercises.
- 3) Technological education, which encompasses the general and scientific principles of the entire production process and, at the same time, introduces children and adolescents to the handling of basic tools in various industrial fields. The division of children and adolescents into three categories, from nine to eighteen years old, should correspond to a graduated and progressive course for their intellectual, physical, and polytechnic education (MARX; ENGELS, 2011, p. 85).

The principle of polytechnic education in Marxist theory refers to the comprehensive education of the individual, aimed at overcoming the division of labor and providing working-class children with a well-rounded education for the development of the well-rounded man.

From the foundations laid by Marx and Engels, it can be considered that the debate on education in historical-materialist dialectics gained significant momentum with the work of Antonio Gramsci in *Prison Notebooks*⁵.

⁵ Gramsci's work covers various reflections, from analyses of the political situation in newspapers, through philology, to the definition of the role of intellectuals in society (traditional vs. organic). It is not our task here to dissect these concepts, and therefore we remain focused on highlighting some of this thinker's contributions to the debate on education and schooling

Gramsci writes about education from his reflections on the struggles for hegemony between classes. In the context of capitalist society, grounded in bourgeois hegemony, education becomes a political activity, a form of direction, and thus, part of the hegemony itself (NOSELLA, 2013). Similarly, all forms of domination and political relations necessarily entail pedagogical relations: "every relationship of 'hegemony' is necessarily a pedagogical relationship" (GRAMSCI, 1975, p.1330 *apud* NOSELLA, 2013, p. 51). It is worth noting that the concepts of education and pedagogical relationship mentioned by Gramsci involve a broader notion than formal school education, in a sense similar to, though more nuanced than, what we observe in the cited works of Marx and Engels (mentioned above). According to the entry on education in the Gramscian Dictionary (1926-1937), "all education is from one generation to the younger generation, which it shapes: and education is the struggle against instincts linked to basic biological functions, a struggle against nature, and the creation of the current man according to his time" (FROSINI, 2017, p. 457-462). In these terms, education is not limited to school but exists in all aspects of society, as individuals do not develop in isolation. Formal, institutionalized school education does not encompass education in the broader sense of Gramsci's theory but is a part of it.

To remain true to the objectives of our reflection, we focus on Gramsci's reflections on formal education and the school. According to the Dictionary, there are mentions of the school in Notebooks 4, 5, and 6, although it is in Notebook 12 that we find the most comprehensive explanations (FROSINI, 2017). The philosopher views the school as a field for constructing hegemony (NOSELLA, 2013), and as an institution embedded in his conception of the Extended State, where the superstructure consists not only of political society and the State but also of civil society, where the dominant class can exercise its domination through coercion (GRAMSCI, 2010).

Just like in Marx and Engels, the division of labor is a fundamental category for Gramsci in understanding the school within the capitalist system. The author notes that while the bourgeoisie has access to a broader educational foundation (secondary school), workers are relegated to inadequate education in elementary schools, which only allows them to secure employment (GRAMSCI, 2010a). This inequality hinders the ability of working-class intellectuals⁶ to develop, through their own aspirations, a worldview that would allow them to break away from the prevailing capitalist order (GALASTRI, 2013).

⁶ Gramsci understands that all human beings are intellectuals, as there is no practical human activity detached from intellectual activity. However, not everyone acts as intellectuals (in technical and political directions) in society, as most people engage in intellectual activities limited to spontaneous philosophy, which is sustained by: language, popular religion, and common sense (GRAMSCI, 2010b).

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From the understanding that a new society requires the forging of a new educational institution, Gramsci develops his conception of the unitary school, which could signify the beginning of new relationships between intellectual and manual labor (NOSELLA, 2013). The integral education he envisions combines humanistic elements but also considers the practical and organizational demands of a proletarian culture, focusing on the complete development of mental capacities (FROSINI, 2017). In this process, students transition from an anomic state to a stance of autonomy. According to Dermeval Saviani, the two central categories of Gramsci's theory regarding the school are discipline and catharsis. According to the author:

Through discipline, the habit of systematic study is acquired, overcoming the drawbacks of autodidacticism and combating the “magical conception of the world and nature that the child absorbs from the environment” [...] Through catharsis, the educational process reaches its peak, allowing students [...] the superior development of the structure into superstructure in the consciousness of people, that is, the subjective assimilation of objective conditions [...] (SAVIANI, 2013, p. 73-74).

Gramsci's thought has been of great importance to education studies in Brazil. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, with the country's process of redemocratization and the emergence and strengthening of graduate programs in education, the author's writings became a reference in various works. It was also during this time that one of the most significant Marxist perspectives on understanding the educational phenomenon emerged, defined by Saviani (2013a) as the critical-reproductionist view, based on the theory of the school as an Ideological State Apparatus (ISA), developed by Louis Althusser.

In his work, Althusser starts from the premise of Marx and Engels (2016) that the capitalist system, as a whole, must, while producing, also ensure the reproduction of existing conditions of production, “it must therefore reproduce: 1) the productive forces, 2) the existing relations of production” (ALTHUSSER, 1974, p. 11).

Seeking to complement Marxist theory on the superstructure, Althusser understands that the State has two sets of apparatuses: The Repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs), which act through physical or symbolic violence (such as the military), and the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs), which appear, at first glance, as specialized institutions (ALTHUSSER, 1974). The ISAs aim to spread and inculcate the dominant ideology, the bourgeois ideology, in order to create a blend capable of keeping society cohesive. From this, the capitalist system can ensure the continuity of production and the reproduction of production conditions. According to the French philosopher, the School is one of the most important ISAs (ALTHUSSER, 1974, p. 44).

Based on the premise of the ISAs, Cunha (1980) focuses on understanding the school in capitalist society. According to him,

[...] The educational apparatus occupies a privileged place, as it is the only one that instills the dominant ideology based on the formation of the labor force [...] The contribution of the educational apparatus [...] occurs through the material division of individuals into two unequal masses, according to the social division of labor (manual labor vs. intellectual labor); through the inculcation of bourgeois ideology to these two masses, in different ways for each; and through the (technical) formation of the labor force according to the needs of capital (CUNHA, 1980, p. 24).

In view of these reflections, we observe the strength and recurrence with which the division between manual labor and intellectual labor appears as a fundamental category for understanding the school under capitalism. The capitalist process of schooling, ultimately, separates competencies and qualifications according to the division of individuals into classes, between the exploited and the exploiters, the dominant and the dominated, the proletarians and the bourgeoisie (CUNHA, 1980).

In light of these points, we understand that education is, in the final analysis, determined by the capitalist mode of production, playing an important role in struggles for hegemony, serving as an instrument of class domination, and being a central piece in the diffusion of the dominant ideology. Regarding this discussion, István Mészáros states:

Institutionalized education, especially over the last 150 years, has served overall not only to provide the knowledge and personnel necessary for the expanding productive machinery of the capitalist system, but also to generate and transmit a framework of values that legitimizes the dominant interests, as if no alternative to the management of society could exist [...] (MÉSZÁROS, 2008, p. 35, author's emphasis).

Complementarily, we cannot overlook the category of the division of labor (manual vs. intellectual/spiritual), which is fundamental in the determinations that constitute education as an objective reality within the capitalist system. Lastly, although the connection between the fundamental concepts of this section has already been established through the discussion of the educational AIE, we must highlight another relevant relationship for our investigation, namely, the discussion raised by Chauí (2016) regarding the silencing of discourse about education. According to the philosopher,

[...] in our society, there is a tacitly obeyed rule that I will designate as the rule of competence, which can be summarized as follows: not everyone can say anything to anyone, anywhere, and at any time. In other words, the sender, the receiver, and the content of the message, as well as the form, location, and timing of its transmission, depend on prior norms that determine who can speak and listen, what can be said and heard, and where and when this can be done (CHAUÍ, 2016, p. 249, author's emphasis).

Based on the rule of competence, the state's bureaucracy through the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches, as well as ministries and education departments—regulates and controls the

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4. Law No. 13,415/2017 in 3 Axes

Brazil, like other dependent capitalist countries in Latin America, has a history of economic instability, coups, and a class society marked by extreme inequality. Since the end of the Civil-Military Dictatorship in 1985, the country had experienced the longest period of democracy in its republican history, governed by the Federal Constitution of 1988, which established the principles of full citizenship, with guarantees of all kinds of social rights, such as health and education. However, a legal, parliamentary, and media coup (SAVIANI, 2018) interrupted the second term of the elected president Dilma Rousseff in 2016. Consequently, the coup that prevented Dilma's government was compounded by a severe economic crisis, in a scenario that, according to Alysson Mascaro (2018), can be summarized as a massive catastrophe affecting not only the economy but also institutions, social arrangements, and the Brazilian people. It is, above all,

a coup that brought to power a government of wealthy white men, with no representation of women, Black people, or minorities, which immediately adopted a neoliberal shock agenda, with frontal attacks on workers' rights, social security, unions, education, and health, undertaking privatizations and austerity measures, leading to recession and unemployment (MASCARO, 2018, p. 9).

In the thirteen years prior to the coup, Brazil was governed by Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003-2010) and by Dilma Rousseff herself (2011-2016), both affiliated with the Workers' Party (PT). Although it originated as a purist leftist party, the PT succeeded in elections through the formation of broad alliances, adopting a moderate leftist policy, conciliatory, with low to medium levels of contestation, and which never abandoned capitalism (MASCARO, 2018). Within the constraints of the bourgeois state, inherently capitalist by its material determination, the PT (Workers' Party) represented a relative divergence by promoting public policies with a strong social focus. In this

context, we can cite the expansion of credit to stimulate consumption among the working class, real increases in the minimum wage, and the creation of the *Bolsa Família*, a cash transfer program that became an international reference for income redistribution.

Mascaro (2018) proposes analyzing the Brazilian crisis, in which the coup occurred, from two aspects. According to his argument, it is economically determined and juridically overdetermined, meaning it is explained by the crisis of the capitalist mode of production and realized through the laws of bourgeois society. At the core of the coup is the maintenance of accumulation and exploitation, in short, the social reproduction of capital, represented in the coup action and its agents and class fractions. These agents and class fractions, tracing back to the protests of July 2013, reflected “a diffuse dissatisfaction among youth, sectors of the middle classes, and the rise of right-wing opinion in the country” (SÁ MOTTA, 2016, p. 90). These protests gained momentum in the following two years, culminating in large demonstrations characterized by the massive presence of members of the middle and upper classes, conservative figures from the political scene, and institutions directly linked to the elites, such as the Federation of Industries of the State of São Paulo (FIESP). Additionally, the association of the sentiment of rejection towards the PT with anti-communism endorsed an ultra-conservative discourse, as if the PT governments were gradually establishing a communist dictatorship in Brazil, a process that needed to be immediately halted for the sake of the nation.

On the other side, the struggle in defense of democracy and against the actions of the coup agents gathered social movements, union centers, and sectors of Brazilian intellectuals, gaining significant momentum in April 2016, when the Chamber of Deputies voted on the admissibility of the impeachment process. In July, historians held a pro-democracy event at the University of Brasília. On August 31, 2016, the Federal Senate approved the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff, and Vice-President Michel Temer (PMDB), who had abandoned the government base and led the coup process in the Legislature, officially assumed the presidency, a position he would hold from 2016 to 2018.

As previously mentioned, although the PT never abandoned capitalism, it was through the 2016 coup that we observed a radicalization of neoliberal policies in Brazil. In an article, Márcio Pochmann (2017) argues that Temer’s rise represented a new perspective on state action through the implementation of institutional reforms. According to the author, the unconditional submission and realignment with the United States and the formation of a multicolored congressional coalition were the hallmarks of a “conservative, classist, and authoritarian government” (POCHMANN, 2017, p. 325). In this context, three public policies stood out: Constitutional Amendment (EC) No. 95, which

A marxist reading of high school reformation: The development of the burguese ideology of education froze federal primary spending for 20 years; Law No. 13,467/2017, known as the Labor Reform, responding to demands from capital and productive sectors for the flexibilization of labor rights and guarantees through the “deregulation of the world of work to increase worker exploitation” (LOMBARDI; LIMA, 2018, p. 48); and Law No. 13,415/2017, the High School Reform.

The latter was publicized through Provisional Measure (MP) No. 746/2016, “without even informing the State Secretariats of Education and State Education Councils in advance” (SAVIANI, 2018, p. 39), which immediately drew attention. Provisional measures have legal status equivalent to Decree-Laws, instruments typically used by dictatorial and authoritarian governments. Generally, MPs are used in situations requiring urgent and emergency measures, and after their issuance, the proposal follows a “regime of up to 120 days of processing [...] Therefore [...] it is considered an authoritarian measure that prevents debates that could include a larger part of the population and a more consistent reflection” (QUADROS; KRAWCZYK, 2021, p. 5). In the case of MP No. 746, the approval occurred in the Chamber of Deputies on December 14, 2016, in the Federal Senate on February 13, 2017, and was sanctioned on February 16, 2017, as Law No. 13,415/2017⁷.

Resistance against the High School Reform was added to the opposition movements against the 2016 coup. In the political sphere, opposition from leftist parties can be observed both in Opinion No. 95 (BRASIL, 2016), which denounces flaws and ambiguous definitions in the text, and in Direct Action of Unconstitutionality (ADI) No. 5599, filed by the Socialism and Liberty Party (PSOL). In the first report of the ADI, Supreme Federal Court Minister Edson Fachin deemed the Provisional Measure unconstitutional for promoting an educational policy of the nature of the High School Reform. Still in 2016, the National Confederation of Education Workers (CNTE) filed ADI No. 5604 with the same content. However, in 2020, the STF deemed the ADIs unfounded. In civil society, a broad movement of high school students marked the opposition to MP No. 746/2016. “At the height of the movement, approximately 1,400 educational institutions were under student management⁸ (FERREIRA; SILVA, 2017, p. 288).

In light of this information and considering the context of its formulation and the broader neoliberal policies it is part of, we can infer that Law No. 13,415/2017 was an authoritarian expression of the 2016 coup for secondary education in Brazil. Determined economically, developed top-down without the effective participation of educational actors, approved despite opposition movements and

⁷ Available at <https://www.congressonacional.leg.br/materias/medidas-provisorias/-/mpv/126992>. Accessed on January 14, 2021.

⁸ For further reading, see the dossier “(Des)Ocupar é Resistir?” in the journal “Educação Temática Digital,” Campinas, SP, vol. 19, no. 1, pp. 73-98, Jan./Mar. 2017.

civil society protests, and with the juridical superdetermination, it became an objective reality for Brazilian education.

In view of the above, let us now move towards a more in-depth understanding of this research object from three axes: multilateral organizations, the private sector, and post-Fordism; the reform and the structural duality of secondary education; ideological aspects of Law No. 13,415/2017: the disputes involved..

4.1 Multilateral Organizations, the Private Sector, and the Post-Fordist Era

According to Florestan Fernandes, in the current stage of monopoly capitalism, Brazil is under the domination of the United States “- through financial mechanisms, through association with local partners, through corruption, pressure, or other means [...]” (FERNANDES, 1975, p. 18). Indeed, since the MEC-USAID agreements in the late 1960s, the educational scene in Brazil has been influenced by the intervention of multilateral organizations representing capitalist interests. This practice became prominent in the formulation of educational policies in the 1980s and 1990s, through the involvement of institutions such as the World Bank (WB), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and others. These entities, by their nature, illustrate that the capitalist mode of production determines the form of education, as discussed in the previous section.

Multilateral organizations, alongside national ruling classes, were responsible for implementing structural adjustment, where, through documents, reports, and contractual clauses associated with loans, Latin American countries adopted the neoliberal agenda based on the resolutions of the Washington Consensus held in 1989. As João Márcio Mendes Pereira states:

[...] The adjustment prescribed as its goal the reduction of the public deficit through cutting expenses on personnel and administrative costs, drastically reducing subsidies for popular consumption, lowering the per capita cost of programs, reorienting social policy towards primary health care and basic education as social minimums, and focusing spending on groups in extreme poverty (PEREIRA, 2018, p. 2191).

The increasing volume of loans made to Brazil during the 1990s ensured the presence of multilateral organizations' dictates in the formulation of educational policies, with their actions becoming increasingly central in this field after 1994 (SOARES, 2007).

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Simultaneously, as the adjustment measures led to a constant reduction in the state's role in education, the private sector gained prominence through privatizations and the involvement of various institutes linked to industrial and financial capital. This is one of the findings of Valdirene de Oliveira (2017), who notes that the private sector emerged as the major victor in the power struggles related to the formulation of high school policies between 2003 and 2014. Regarding Law No. 13,415/2017, this assertion holds true. According to Quadros and Krawczyk (2021), this educational policy introduces capital into secondary education by adopting liberalizing measures, seeking increased productivity through education, and encouraging the involvement of companies in markets for textbooks, teacher professional development, and parts of the curriculum.

Regarding the conception of student training, Law No. 13,415/2017 "responds to the alignment of education with the flexible accumulation regime" (KUENZER, 2017, p. 331) characteristic of post-Fordism, continuing the hegemonic trend of the last three decades that has flexibility as one of its guiding principles. Productive sectors began demanding new skills from workers, in contrast to the rigid discipline of the assembly line model of Taylorism-Fordism, which dominated industrial production until the 1970s. At the same time,

"In the market, various strategies of exclusion from the formal market are identified, where workers had guaranteed rights and better working conditions, accompanied by strategies of inclusion in the labor world through precarious forms." (KUENZER, 2002, p. 14).

Thus, we observe the concept of "inclusive exclusion," where the worker becomes unemployed and is reinserted through precarious work, occurring alongside "exclusive inclusion," a process involving mass inclusion strategies in formal education, often aiming for universal access to places that do not meet the quality required for "developing intellectually and ethically autonomous identities capable of responding to and overcoming the demands of capitalism" (KUENZER, 2002, p. 15).

In light of these reflections, we see that Law No. 13.415/2017: a) adhered to recommendations from multilateral organizations that have been involved in education policy in Brazil for decades; b) has significant support from private sectors and increases direct capital influence in secondary education; c) aligns with the changes required in education by the new regime of flexible production and accumulation and the processes of inclusive exclusion and exclusive inclusion. Regarding the first two points, the brief considerations made do not exhaust the subject but explain some recent elements of the reform, such as the financing policy for Law No. 13.415/2017 by the World Bank, which includes a loan of \$40 million, received from November 2020 upon meeting the institution's

established goals. Concerning the third assertion, it is necessary to expand the discussion by incorporating a new category, structural duality, a task we will address in the following subsection.

4.2 The Reform and the Structural Duality of Secondary Education

Structural duality is a fundamental category of secondary education in Brazil and is defined by Professor Acácia Zeneida Kuenzer as follows:

[...] the formation of workers and citizens in Brazil has been historically shaped by the concept of structural duality, as there has been a clear demarcation in the educational trajectory between those who would perform intellectual or instrumental functions [...]. These two functions of the productive system correspond to differentiated educational paths and schools. For the former, the education is academic, intellectualized, and detached from instrumental actions; for workers, it is vocational training in specialized institutions or on-the-job, with a focus on learning almost exclusively practical skills alongside the development of psychophysical abilities (KUENZER, 2009, p. 27).

In light of this quote, we see that the structural duality characterizing Brazilian Secondary Education is determined by the division between manual and intellectual work. Considering the history of educational policies for this stage of education, within a context where Brazil had already undergone significant industrialization and capitalist development after the 1930s, we can list three policies that contributed to this scenario.

- a) Francisco Campos Reform. Formulated at the beginning of Getúlio Vargas' government (1930-1945), between 1931 and 1932, this reform was part of a broader context of bourgeois modernization, which in turn led to new demands for education, including a growing need for expanding the provision of education (ROMANELLI, 2014). It is considered a landmark as it was the first reform to deeply impact the structure of education and was implemented nationwide for the first time (ROMANELLI, 2014, p. 133). Its measures resulted in a secondary education system that was elitist and encyclopedic, where completing the seven-year trajectory was accessible only to a few privileged individuals.
- b) Organic Laws of Education, a set of Decree-Laws issued during the Estado Novo dictatorship (1937-1945), in 1942, under the management of then Minister Gustavo Capanema. The reform addressed the demands of increasing industrialization and the interests of the industrial bourgeoisie, which was sympathetic to the regime and increasingly engaged in the formation of technical cadres. In this context, professional

A marxist reading of high school reformation: The development of the burguese ideology of education education was regulated on extremely rigid bases that limited access to higher education (ROMANELLI, 2014). While the duality of secondary education was not created by this reform, it was officially established by it.

- c) Reform of Primary and Secondary Education. Proposed through Law No. 5.692/1971, it is known as the major educational reform of the Civil-Military Dictatorship (1964-1985). Its main determination was the compulsory professionalization of Secondary Education, seen as a solution to structural duality. According to Ramos (2012), the manifest goal of this policy was to train the technical staff necessary for the context of the Economic Miracle, characterized by high GDP growth rates. However, the latent objectives included, on one hand, attempting to contain the growing demand for access to higher education and, on the other hand, adjusting the school system "to the new stage of development, marked by the intensification of the internationalization of capital and the transition from import substitution to the hegemony of financial capital. (KUENZER, 2009, p. 29).

These reforms do not exhaust the historical discussion of Secondary Education but provide the foundations for understanding its objective reality. Indeed, structural duality marks educational pathways according to the division of labor, preparing, on one hand, workers and, on the other, leaders.

Various other policies over the subsequent decades have led to advancements and setbacks in the category of structural duality. One of the most emblematic cases was the issuance of Decree No. 2,208, on April 17, 1997, developed during Fernando Henrique Cardoso's government in the context of neoliberal adjustment, and revoked by Decree No. 5,154, issued on July 23, 2004, during Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's government. While the first reintroduced the dual education proposal, the latter pointed towards a slight move towards unitariness, exemplified by Integrated Secondary Education courses. However, even considering the concrete advances in Decree No. 5,154/2004, it can be inferred with certainty that: a) it did not alter the structural reality of Brazilian Secondary Education, as Integrated Education schools continue to account for a low percentage of enrollments, with just over 700,000 compared to more than seven million in the traditional academic modality (BRASIL, 2021); b) neither this reform nor any other policies aiming to address the historical duality of Secondary Education considered the determining aspect of the problem, which, in fact, lies beyond the school walls.

The place of dependency occupied by Brazil in the capitalist order determines class division and the division of labor. These, in turn, are the true determinants of the educational inequality seen in schools. Thus, structural duality cannot be resolved within schools, as its determination is external to the schools themselves, making it, as Kuenzer (2009) states, either naïve or disingenuous to seek to solve it solely through educational policies.

In light of the above, the place of Law No. 13.415/2017 in the context of structural duality is, simultaneously, one of reinforcement and adaptation of this category to the demands of flexible learning and the logic of inclusive exclusion. This situation is primarily configured by one of the central propositions of the reform, contained in Article 4, which divides the Secondary Education curriculum into two parts: the first is composed of the contents in the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC), a nationwide normative document, amounting to 60% of the total workload; the second, corresponding to the remaining 40% of the workload, consists of five formative itineraries in the areas of languages, mathematics, natural sciences, human sciences, and technical-professional training, which will be freely chosen by students (BRASIL, 2017). However, the legal text does not establish rules or conditions for offering these itineraries, conditioning them only "according to their relevance to the local context and the capacity of the education systems" (BRASIL, 2017, s.p.).

In the terms presented above, we can understand that the Secondary Education Reform flagrantly fragments education, disguised under the discourse of flexible education and the possibility of choice by students. However, this determination, when considering the socioeconomic inequalities between regions of the country and the disparity of resources and infrastructure between and within education systems, points to an aggravation of structural duality. In this realm, students will have to choose from itineraries pre-defined by education systems, leading to the conclusion that those with access to the best institutions in major urban centers will have some possibility of choice, while the vast majority of students, from public schools and peripheral regions, will have their real opportunities undermined. Additionally, the historical weight of technical-professional education, always intended for working-class children as a means of containing access to higher education and leadership positions in society, remains subordinate to the division of labor. In this scenario, talking about relevance to the local context is akin to authorizing the creation of purely technical itineraries in Brazil's poorer regions, as the academic preparation continues to be, in the dominant class's view, for a select few. Similarly, the provision for offering itineraries according to the capacity of education systems allows different administrative levels of government to avoid offering more than one itinerary, citing a lack of resources. This is how Law No. 13.415/2017 reinforces duality.

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The adaptation to the new context of flexible learning and the logic of inclusive exclusion occurs due to the necessary updates required by post-Fordist demands. To support this assertion, Oliveira (2017a) compares perspectives on technical-professional education when considering Law No. 5.692/71 and Law No. 13.415/2017. While the former aimed at technical training for the Taylorist-Fordist assembly line production model, the latter seeks a new standard for labor force training. In a convergent sense, Cunha (2017) argues that Law No. 13.415/2017 is a shortcut to the past towards the Civil-Military Dictatorship's school reform, camouflaging the historical duality in formative itineraries under the guise of flexibility, but essentially returning "to the old conception of Secondary Education as preparation for higher education for some, and work training for others (CUNHA, 2017, p. 379).

4.3 Ideological Aspects of Law No. 13,415/2017: Involved Disputes

In this final subsection, we consider the theoretical foundations of ideology and the Ideological State Apparatuses discussed in the previous section. Based on these premises, we can scrutinize the ideological aspects of Law No. 13,415/2017. The first highlight in this discussion pertains to the policy formulation. As previously mentioned, the High School Reform was enacted hastily, through a legal device that, considering the dialogue and reflection required for formulating public policies in such a sensitive area as education in Brazil, can be characterized as authoritarian the Provisional Measure and approved under emergency conditions. This process resulted in all provisions of the legal text, as well as the discourses and arguments in favor of the law, being produced by the state's bureaucracy supported by the rule of competence, as defined by Chauí (2016). Thus, the ideological nature of the discourse on Law No. 13,415/2017 is established, excluding from the discussion and debate the actors directly involved in education, those who could speak about High School.

Another aspect of ideological construction is the way the Temer government, through the Ministry of Education (MEC), promoted the reform and sought to streamline its implementation, notably through an extensive marketing campaign that dominated major media outlets between 2016 and 2017. It is important to highlight that the MEC's advertisements about the educational policy in progress were a clear response to the protests against the law, to which we previously dedicated some lines.

Regarding this debate, Ortega and Hollerbach (2020; 2022), examining the content of a sample of advertising pieces, identified two main axes. The first is the creation of the slogan "New High School," claiming that the reform brings renewal and modernization to High School education. The second is the assertion that Law No. 13,415/2017 will provide greater freedom for students to decide about their educational trajectory based on the choice of itineraries described in Article 4 (ORTEGA; HOLLERBACH, 2022). However, both statements have significant fallacious content.

Firstly, it should be noted, based on the reflections established so far, that the High School Reform does not represent, in essence, a novelty; rather, it is a return to old policies that reinforced the category of structural duality under a guise suited to the new context of post-Fordism. Furthermore, considering the history of High School and the inequalities in Brazil, we can also assert that the freedom of choice promoted by the advertisements is restricted to those with access to the best schools in major urban centers. Once this set of factors is understood, it is plausible to sustain the ideological aspect of how the MEC sought to promote the High School Reform—by creating a false consciousness about the objective reality of Brazilian education, using slogans and symbols that appear valid for all individuals, inducing a formatted thinking about the policy and the involuntary legitimization of its propositions, when, in fact, it encompasses a blend of the interests of the dominant classes.

These two ideological aspects help us understand the relevance of Law No. 13,415/2017 for maintaining education as an instrument of class domination in a context of crisis, coup, and authoritarianism. This sets up a scenario of hegemonic disputes, resulting from the tensions between the state and civil society, as evidenced by reactions to the policy. Such a scenario was more thoroughly analyzed by Ferreti and Silva (2017), who, through the study of arguments for and against Provisional Measure No. 746/2016 and the proposals of the BNCC, found that the dominant classes emerged victorious in the debates surrounding the High School Reform⁹. We understand that these results indicate a hardening of the role of formal school education in disseminating the dominant ideology. High school, as the final stage of compulsory basic education, plays a crucial role in the formative process of those who will carry out intellectual or instrumental functions in society. In these terms, keeping it under as much control as possible and maintaining it within the mechanisms of large capital is fundamental for the reproduction of capitalist social relations of production.

⁹ The authors note that the dominance of the ruling class in shaping educational policy guidelines is not a new phenomenon, as this historical reality dates back to previous governments (FERRETI; SILVA, 2017). We corroborate this statement and endorse the thesis based on the arguments presented in Section 3.1 regarding the influence of the private sector in the formulation of Law No. 13.415/2017.

5. By way of conclusion

In this article, we aimed to present a Marxist reading of Law No. 13.415/2017. Aware of the limits of this text, we addressed some of the fundamental determinations and relationships that constitute the phenomenon of the High School Reform, seeking to grasp the essence of this educational policy.

In our first section, we demonstrated that the historical-dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels is a valid lens for understanding the reform. The second section laid out the theoretical foundations of the concepts of ideology and education, central to our investigation of the subject. The third and final section contextualized Law No. 13.415/2017 and analyzed it along three axes.

The High School Reform is, in effect, an expression of the 2016 coup in the education sector. Authoritatively, this educational policy followed the recommendations of multilateral organizations and received substantial support from private sectors, thus expanding capital's influence in High School education. Simultaneously, Law No. 13.415/2017 represents the changes required by the new regime of flexible production and accumulation while maintaining the historical structural duality of Brazilian High School education. The ideological aspects of the reform are particularly notable, highlighting the struggles for hegemony and the perpetuation of the school as an institution responsible for disseminating the dominant ideology to ensure the reproduction of capitalist social relations of production.

From this comprehensive analysis, we conclude that Law No. 13.415/2017 cannot be fully understood through immediate and observable events alone. It is, ultimately, a complex and critical stage in the development and consolidation of bourgeois educational ideology.

The future of High School education in Brazil remains challenging to map out. The successor government to Temer, led by Jair Messias Bolsonaro from 2019, marked a further turn towards conservatism, authoritarianism, and neoliberalism. With policies focused on privatization and reducing the role of the state in the economy and social policies, Bolsonaro also faced the COVID-19 pandemic, which, by April 2022, had claimed 6.15 million lives worldwide and 660,000 in Brazil. In this context, after a period of indecision due to controversies involving education ministers (5 appointments and 4 ministers in 3 years), the Ministry of Education proceeded with the reform, manifesting through the initial measures of implementation across all state networks in Brazil. Therefore, we point to the need for a detailed study of the implementation of Law No. 13.415/2017

in educational systems, focusing on state public schools, where students will be most affected by the impacts of this policy.

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