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Article

Religion and Neoliberalism from the Periphery: Elements to Understand Conservatism in Brazil from the Large Evangelical Corporations of The State of Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)

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Abstract: This article discusses the relationship between the discourse of evangelical churches and the production of conservative neoliberal political rationalities. We start from the premise that the Large Evangelical Corporations (in Brazil), operate within the neoliberal logic, and offer biographical solutions to social exclusion systems, indicating the individual and spiritual causes for poverty and suffering, while identifying the "deserving" of blessings, suggesting elevation through personal responsibility. In this turn, they merge self-entrepreneur individualism with rhetoric that interweaves elements of conservative communitarianism, such as tradition, naturalizing gender roles, and cultivating traditional family models, seen as key to rehabilitating the wider society. We hypothesize that, in the Brazilian case of the state of Rio de Janeiro, evangelical churches are central parts of this gear, acting as one of the main "resonance machines" (Connolly) of neoliberal policies, providing individualized solutions for structural systems of social exclusion, in a pedagogical, efficient and extensive manner. In this sense, this work benefits from fieldwork and interviews conducted in the state of Rio de Janeiro with its large evangelical churches.

Keywords: large evangelical corporations; neoliberalism; conservatism; peripheries

1. Introduction

In the article, we intend to understand the relationship between the discourse of evangelical churches and the production of conservative political rationalities of neoliberal background from the Large Evangelical Corporations (LEC)¹ of the state of Rio de Janeiro. With it, we start from the premise that evangelical churches, operating within the neoliberal logic, offer biographical solutions

¹ The LEC is the large religious corporation of at least 50 evangelical churches/congregations in their structural networks, which has at least 50 thousand faithful members, with 500 pastors spread across the country according to Quadros and Madeira (2018). They are Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG), World Church of God's Power (WCGP), International Church of God's Grace (ICGG), Evangelical Apostolic Church Renascer em Cristo (EACRC), Brazilian Baptist Convention (BBC), Presbyterian Church of Brazil (PCB), Congregational Evangelical Church (CEC), General Convention of the Assemblies of God in Brazil (GCAGB), Convention of the Assemblies of God (CAG), Assembly of God Victory in Christ (AGVC), Apostolic Church of the Restoration, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Brazil (ELCB), Anglican Church of Brazil - Third of Recife (ACB - New York).

(Author, 2008) to structural systems of social exclusion, indicating the individual and spiritual causes for poverty and suffering, while identifying the "deserving" of blessings, suggesting elevation through personal responsibility. Therefore, they merge self-entrepreneur individualism with rhetoric that interweaves elements of conservative communitarianism, such as tradition, naturalizing gender roles, and cultivating traditional family models, seen as key to rehabilitating the wider society.

We hypothesize that, in the Brazilian case, the evangelical churches, highlighted from the LEC of the state of Rio de Janeiro, have been constituted as central parts of this gear, acting as one of the main "resonance machines" (Connolly 2005) of neoliberal policies, providing individualized solutions for structural systems of social exclusion, in a pedagogical, diverse, efficient and extensive way. We believe that adherence to evangelical churches while forging new subjectivities to peripheral neoliberalism, organizes a social grammar through which its faithful can narrate their demands for security, financial, and affective stability. It is not a question of thinking the evangelical discourse as intrinsically learned from a spark of capitalism, as in some Weberian-inspired theses on Latin America (Martin 1996; 2014; Lehmann 1996) or Africa (Van Dijk 2012; Freeman 2012) but to understand the modalities of publicizing this discourse in its intertwining with the very constitution of Brazilian society, its democracy and, especially, its periphery. As Montero (2016) observes, it is about considering itself the process of publicizing religion, which is built as a public religion, while at the same time constituting the space in which it performs.

The idea of the "resonance machine" by Connolly (2005), seems to us quite appropriate for the analysis we propose, for the author, no political economy or religious practice is self-referent:

On the contrary, in politics several elements infiltrate each other, metabolizing into a mobile complex. Causation is a resonance between elements that have merged to a considerable degree. Here, causality, as dependency relationships between separate factors, turns into energetic complexities of mutual imbrication and inter-involvement, in which, henceforth, unconnected or loosely associated elements bend, lean, blend, emulsify, and dissolve in each other, forging a qualitative formation resistant to classical models of explanation" (Connolly 2005, p.870).

That said, we reverse the tone of Weberian-inspired sociology of religion (Martin 1996; 2014; Lehmann 1996), which starts from the phenomenon seen as a relatively autonomous sphere, to think the production of discourses and subjectivities linked to religion composing processes of subjection that constitute a pragmatic of itself (Foucault 2008). Otherwise, it is not about recovering an ontological hierarchization to the Marxist molds, thinking of the economic as an organizer, ultimately determining the other spheres of life, but leaving aside abstract conceptions of the subject, focusing our attention on the material and spiritual processes of the production of these subjectivities (Gago 2018). As Burity (1994) observes, it is impossible to separate the processes of apprehension from the real signification processes, which imply both argumentative and practical and concrete networks in the institutions in which such representations can become significant, shared, or imposed (Burity 1994, p.149).

Qualitative and longitudinal research with young adults "socially excluded" from poor neighborhoods in England, MacDonald, Shildrick, Webster, and Simpson (2005) demonstrates how social networks inserted locally make them part of the process by which poverty and class inequalities are reproduced. Networks of family and friends, rooted in severely deindustrialized places, supported young people as they transitioned into adulthood in adverse circumstances. The authors show how, paradoxically, while local networks have helped young people cope with growth problems in poor neighborhoods and generated a sense of inclusion, the type of social capital embedded in them served simultaneously to close opportunities and limit the possibilities of escaping conditions of social exclusion and precarious labor. Contrary, the LEC of the state of Rio de Janeiro works to break such reproduction, only they do it from a compromised individual and the breaking of draconian social and moral ties (Boechat Dutra Jr & Py 2018).

In this sense, we intend to show how religious agencies act as central parts of the gear for the formation of conservative political rationalities of "neoliberal background" (Dardot & Laval 2016, p.92), acting as one of the main "resonance machines" of neoliberal policies. The religious agencies of the LEC establish a relationship between the gradual prominence that non-state actors have assumed

in the construction of an ideational environment and the more effective development of market rationality. For now, we can say that, in contexts such as those in Brazil, religious agencies, become preferred channels compared to their secular counterparts, for the establishment of a neoliberal governmentality, especially because they maintain closer ties with peripheral communities and are practically the only organized institutions registered in certain territories. In this sense, the LEC consolidates as bridgeheads of ideation, by offering biographical and spiritual solutions to social and structural problems, end up forging entrepreneurial subjects, and being responsible for their social reproduction.

Previous works (Autor, 2023), based on the metropolitan region of Rio de Janeiro, show that such peripheral subjects tend to abandon local solidarity and external neighborhood relations to their religious community, at the same time that they begin to trust in their trajectories, reject state policies of social inclusion, seen both as limiting their possibility of social ascension, and as equating morally deviant people to good and god-fearing citizens. It is interesting to note that there is a line that unites the observance of religious moral dictates, to the "fulfillment of the promises of blessings that you reserved" for each individual.

Thus, we think we can conclude that churches (through the LEC) fulfill the important role not only of moralizing individual conduct but also of shaping the private sphere, establishing the family model, that is, restoring patriarchal references, and reorienting the public role of women. Such a policy took place during the former government, especially in the Ministry of Women, Family, and Human Rights, synthesized in the phrase: "Boys wear blue and girls wear pink" (Author, 2021).

Thus, we intend to understand contrasting attitudes towards public policies, such as low levels of adherence to vaccination programs, and risky behavior during the COVID-19 epidemic, as well as the neighborhood ties, important as survival strategies in the peripheries of large cities. On the other hand, paradoxically, we believe we can demonstrate the churches by promoting the inculcation of economic rationality, allowing these subjects to minimally plan their actions, which gives them a strategic advantage in their ventures. In this same sense, we intend to highlight the logic of the development of neoliberal society from not only governmentality (Agamben 2001; Dardot & Laval 2016) but also the logic of the governed (Chatterjee 2004).

We think power demonstrates in the article that, although churches, as in the case of LEC *Semear Church*, are seen as mechanisms of diffusion of neoliberal rationality in the peripheries, paradoxically, they act as places of construction of discourses and do against hegemonic, a place where ordinary and peripheral people produce discourses and actions that allow them to survive and mean their environments of exclusion (spatial and social) as well as their victories in the struggle for recognition, affection, and survivals.

It is still important to emphasize that this study proposes to address - at the micro level - two of the social processes the most prominent today, that is, the birth and organization of conservative discourses, as well as its linkage to the precariousness of living conditions and neoliberal rationalities. And how these processes lead to the development of community and personal effects, as a policy of resentment, the main catalyst of various right-wing populist political forms (Rosanvallon, 2020; Berman, 2021). As we have said, we are interested here in the interface of these processes to religious movements, especially evangelical ones of the LEC located in the state of Rio de Janeiro, which does not make this study unique, because, as we will argue, a wide range of researchers, some from outside the sociology of religions (Mo Sung 2018), struggled to try to understand the relationship between religion, conservatism, capitalism and especially political behavior.

Thus, this work is part of a long tradition of studies that seek to understand the relationship between religious images of the world (Weber 2004) and the actions of the subjects, as well as a network of recent efforts to understand the various facets of the conservative turn, with different modulations and intensities, in the Brazilian and international sociopolitical scenario and its imbrications with the religious phenomenon.

2. Religion and Public Space in Brazil

The prominence of religious agencies, especially Catholicism, as co-producers of Brazilian civil society (Mainwaring 1985) is highlighted in the national literature however, when we witness clashes between organized civil society movements and religious leaders about the place of religion in the public sphere, may have changed since Catholicism, in its popular, Romanized or liberation aspect occupied the center of these discussions (Mo Sung 2017). But what would have changed with the entry of evangelicals (with the variety of Pentecostal types) and charismatic Catholics in the public scene, what is the scope of this change, which has led researchers to associate this scenario with images such as crisis (Almeida 2019) or authoritarian regimes such as "Cristofascism" (Py, 2021; 2020) and social actors affirming that we are facing a threat to democracy?

The evangelicals, who remained away from politics until the elections to the Constituent Assembly of 1988 (Pierucci 1989), quickly mobilized their most hegemonic sectors in the change of path of the "place of evangelical is not in politics" by the slogan "brother votes brother". As we have already said (authors, 2021), evangelicals increased their presence in politics as democracy is consolidated and civil society is pluralized. In this sense, they mobilized for a place in the public space, from the same point as other minorities, such as black movements, feminists, and the LGBTQIAP+ movement.

However, unlike these, evangelicals organized themselves into political parties such as the PL and later the PR, PRB, and the Republicans, constituting themselves as a more effective political pressure group. Since the 1986 election, the majority evangelical sectors began to launch confessional candidacies, strategically placed according to the number of faithful in each region (model adopted with praise by the UCKG, but adapted by other denominations such as the Assembly of God) which enabled an exponential increase in the number of evangelical parliamentarians (33 parliamentarians in 1986) and the organization in the Evangelical Bench (Freston 1993).

With the accumulation of federal legislatures, evangelical deputies were gaining dexterity in the intricacies of parliamentary politics and commissions, until they stood as decisive forces of the political game, presenting themselves as faithful to the balance, thanks to the self-styled ability to transfer votes from their faithful to the candidate supported by the church. It is interesting to remember that a survey conducted by ISER (Institute of Religious Studies of Rio de Janeiro), still in the 1990s (Fernandes 1998), shows that this transfer is variable, higher in the UCKG and lower in other evangelical religious structures. From this political capital, the candidates linked to certain LECs become not only important electoral cables, but also disputed allies, allying with all the elected presidents from the 2000s until they appeared as central pieces of the political board, especially after the crisis of the Dilma Government, its removal, and subsequent victory of Bolsonaro in the 2018 elections (Prandi Santos & Bonato 2019).

In a Datafolha survey released on 10/25/2018, so three days before the elections, Bolsonaro surpassed Haddad among evangelicals by more than 30 percentage points, being 69 against 31% of the valid votes. Projecting this difference to the result of the polls, according to Alves (2018), the difference between the two candidates was 11.6 million votes between the evangelicals, thus greater than the total difference in votes (10.7 million) recorded between the two candidates in the final result. This finding led to a series of statements and analyses that gave account of the weight of evangelicals in the election, many affirmed that they acted as faithful balance (Alves, 2018), which jeweled the evangelical leadership that watched their political capital value dizzyingly with the election of Bolsonaro.

On the other hand, some researchers drew attention to the complexity of the context and the nuanced character of the weight that religious confession would have had in the 2018 election. Fonseca (2018), for example, relativizes the thesis of the evangelical weight in the election of Bolsonaro, pointing to his expressive victory in Santa Catarina, a state in which the candidate had his second largest proportional vote (75.92%) being, however, the evangelical population of the state of 20%, even lower than the Brazilian average.

Although one can debate the real weight of evangelicals (and their LCE) for the election of Bolsonaro, there is no denying the centrality of conservative evangelical grammar for Bolsonaro's

political discourse (Autor, 2021) as well as the prominence of this segment in the first echelon of government, in which it has already occupied five ministries. This is not to punctuate the appointment of former minister of Justice André Mendonça (Presbyterian Pastor) for a vacancy in the Supreme Court, as well as the performance of Pastor Silas Malafaia (Assembly of God Victory in Christ), as brown imminence of the government, a kind of Cardinal de Richelieu of Bolsonaro.

Faced with this scenario has emerged a series of studies that take the intersection between conservatism and religion, especially evangelicals, as central objects (Luna 2017). Thus, in the state of Rio de Janeiro the Second Baptist Church of Campos dos Goytacazes, and its pastor Éber Silva, besides being a candidate, had a consistent turn to the right, even declaring his vote and support for Bolsonaro. In addition to allocating part of its space the circulation of conservative politicians in the North Fluminense. In an interview, he states that the alignment of the sector to Bolsonaro occurred in the "manifestation of the Church was due to the absolute wear and tear of politics in Brazil in such relevant demands as public administration, financial management (...). no longer allowed" (Silva 2019). Already, the Apostle Luciano Vicente, within the pulpit of the Pentecostal Church Semear signals that "our families stayed 12 years under political attack. The PT does not that the conversion of anything only changes lives. Therefore, the church must manifest itself for the continuation of life. It is saying yes!" (Vicente 2022).

3. Conservative Populism: The New Face of the Religious?

As we can see, this scenario is not restricted to Brazil or Latin America, nor is it peculiar to the publicization of evangelical religions with their large corporations. Just as Brazilian researchers have drawn attention to the alliance between Catholics and evangelicals in reaction to the conquest of rights by minorities, notably, the LGBTQIAP+ population (Machado 2012; Vaggione & Machado 2020) in other countries of the world has been growing the volume of works that associate religious movements with conservatism and neoliberalism.

Zeynep Atalay (2017), for example, shows how Islamic religious organizations became active vehicles of neoliberal governmentality in Turkey, especially during the Erdogan government. The author demonstrates the association between the Turkish State and the faith-based Organization (Faith-based Organization), which takes on increasing responsibilities in the provision of services and goods while cultivating an ideal environment conducive to the effective functioning of market rationality. Atalay (2017) demonstrates how there is an association between religion, conservatism, and neoliberal thinking, in which a transformation in the family model is advocated, in a project that the author judges as regressive and that eroded the achievements of feminist movements for equality.

Even in central countries from the point of view of capitalist development, we see an association between religious institutions and the state, as in the cases of the USA (Hennigan & Purser, 2018) and England (Williams & Jayne, 2020). In both cases, the researchers focus on the study of the treatment of alcohol dependence based on religious discourses. In the interesting study by Hennigan and Purser (2018), they analyze the programs of reintegration into the labor market from religious institutions that trigger neoliberal discourses, which the authors classified as "evangelization of employability" demonstrating that, although the marriage between religious discourse and neoliberalism is not perfect, the project of evangelization of employability reveals the extraordinary utility of religion for the promulgation of neoliberal priorities and precarious labor imposition policies. In the same turn, the work of Chacko (2019) shows the imbrications of neoliberal discourse and the Indian nationalist project of Narendra Modi, which has a strong foundation in Hinduism, while the studies of Comaroff (2012) for South Africa and DeJesus (2019) for Angola, they also approach Pentecostal, neoliberalism and conservatism.

Thus, while this work is linked to a network of efforts to understand the rise of national populism in several countries, innovates by advocating a target from below, as we said, shifting the analysis of models that take religious agencies as ideological devices, or as doctors of messages purely in front of which the rational subjects act, on the contrary, we seek to observe the interaction between message and its receivers, as well as its diffusion, assimilation, and uses.

By anchoring our main hypothesis to the idea that the affinity that attracts evangelicals and conservatism is much more linked to the discursive conditions that engender the subjects and their subjectivities than to characteristics intrinsic to their theological work (Autor, 2021) - which does not mean that specific theological conformations did not lead to regressive religious discourses, which would be classified as conservative. We shift the focus of analysis to the relational, positional character of evangelical modulations, which foster conservative discourse, as for the material basis of this discourse, linking, therefore, subjects and forms of submission and subjectivation. Being interested in the political antagonisms caused in the national scene from a conservative religious grammar in its relation to the displacement in the material base of these subjects, subjectivities atomized and refractory to exogenous solidarities to their community. In arguing that, although the evangelicals, from the symptom of LEC, have gained public prominence by reactive guidelines, based on draconian interpretations of the bible, its protagonism is more linked to the way they position themselves in a political game that values the hypertrophy of moral discourse and by offering survival strategies in the face of violence and scarcity experienced in big cities.

Thus, the case of the Pentecostal Church Semear (PCS), the further LEC from the capital (Rio de Janeiro), with his Apostle Luciano Vicente, who practices a modulation of the theology of prosperity in which "develops on the Cellular Vision, which stresses the importance of buying and selling among the members themselves, given that the Church is frequented by numerous owners of small businesses in the region (...) mainly by the owners of beauty establishments" (Boechat Dutra Jr & Py 2018). The PCS searches survival paths in the peripheral region with high rates of robberies, stealing, and murders in the municipal city. Addressing the connection of conservatism, biblical hermeneutics, and strategies his Apostles indicated in the message "who does not live for his family, cannot have the provision of God. Who lives God, lives the family. The church is part of it, so we collaborate, buy, and sell to the brothers who are by his side. (...) This is the vision of God. We, too, by Paul's text, must follow our authorities. For this, we pray for Bolsonaro" (Vicente 2022).

In another turn, the LEC, Central Assembly of God (CAG), led by pastor Elias Moreira developed meetings since 2011 "on Thursdays with entrepreneurs and business members of the church" which is called the "Cult of Solomon". This is because "we Christians know Solomon was an admirable administrator (...) chosen by God to command the nation after David conquered the kingdoms and nations" (Moreira 2019). According to Moreira, before the church "was poorer" meetings began "to help the businessmen and small entrepreneurs who came". However, he saw the need to "make a specific service, with a name of the heart of God, so the Cult of Solomon is a distinct meeting, which aims to influence merchants attending church. Understand what is the will of God and serve as holy people". He also points out that for the most part, "the trades in the Central region of the city will pass by us. I can say the moral uprightness of the entrepreneurs who attend here and how they are mobilized for their families, society, God and in helping the president in the development of the country" (Moreira 2019). According to Moreira "this controversial issue of abortion, other sexes are not created here" (Moreira 2019), making a moralizing reference to the issue of families and the exercise of various sexualities. Thus, we believe it is of paramount importance to understand how such conservative ideas emerge and are assimilated to assess their impact both for local sociability, adherence to public policies and access to reproductive rights, and for the functioning of democracy.

4. Resentfulness as a Primordial Affection

In PT governments, although progress has been made in social inclusion and citizenship policies (2003-2016), recognizing the demands of minority groups, "we saw the inclusion of vast sectors of society in the violent process of capital appreciation, implying an integration that, in contrast, did not necessarily mean citizenship" (Singer & Loreiro 2016, p.13). Faced with this scenario, we see a "political culture" (Rosanvallon 2020) which is awarded on the one hand by the private interests associated with the State - imposing a kind of "ceiling" to access to citizenship - and worn out, which, as mentioned in the previous section, explains in part the frustrations of voters' expectations of deeper transformations in the country's economic and social structure.

On the other hand, this same "political culture" seems to impute to the occupier of the State, in this case, the PT, the role of sole artificer and responsible for the contradictions and limits of the market-citizenship arrangement, potentiating and even precipitating the complete exhaustion of democratic instances, making room for extremist speeches of authoritarian and anti-systematic hue (Demier & Melo 2018). In the meantime, we see, therefore, the emergence of various discourses of moral basis, until then peripheral to the political debate since the collapse of Udenism at the beginning of the Military Dictatorship of 1964 (Benevides, 1981; Cêpeda, 2018).

Therefore, even if in a nuanced way, it seems to us that it is about the same gear that Jair Bolsonaro is elected president and we witness this new breath of religious conservatism, now in evangelical prominence (and with some catholic varnish) from the LEC, discursively organizing part of the public agendas in the country - we remember that the conservative Catholic discourse was an important force in the organization of right-wing thought in Brazil, as well as one of the power lines of the Military Coup of 1964 (Codato & Oliveira 2004), the Dictatorship and part of the re-democratization (Dreher 1999).

In this tinted path until the break, several evangelical leaders of the LEC, which today vocalize the conservative speech, supported the Lula and Dilma government at some point, among these we highlight Pastor Silas Malafaia (AGVC), Bishop Robson Rodovalho (*Sara Nossa Terra* Community) - that in 2002 launched a pro-Lula manifesto and supported Dilma Rousseff in 2010 -, not to mention Bishop Macedo who, in 2010, released a letter of support for Dilma, after attacks suffered by the candidate on the internet. We also recall that the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG), of which Macedo is part, had cadres integrating some ministries of the PT governments until the eve of the opening of the Impeachment against Rousseff process on April 11, 2016, an occasion when former Sports Minister and Deputy Pastor George Hilton voted against the admissibility of the case. We also remember the pastor Éber Silva of the Second Baptist Church (SBC) in Campos dos Goytacazes, has a trajectory as a politician, in the state of Rio de Janeiro, being Federal Deputy between 1999 and 2003, together with the Brazilian Laborism of the PDT (a political party of regional impact by the figure of Leonel Brizola).

Éber Silva at this first moment connects the guidelines of Laborism with the regulation of the tourist profession, with the creation of the Federal Council of Tourism in PL 2296/2000 and the regulation of the profession of psychoanalyst in PL 3549/2000 (Chamber of Deputies 2023). In this context, Pastor Silva made signs in 2001 for PT as "the PT brings in itself the best for the country that is to kill the hunger of the population that needs so much" (Silva 2019). Subsequently, it assumes the rupture turning to the right spectrum with parties as in 2014 to 2017 by the PR (Republican Party), 2018a 2021 in the DEM, and 2022 with the PSD. What caused its composition along with conservative Brazilian discourses for the "Brazilian Christian family"? Returning to the national tone, even taking into account that the PT raised to power in 2003 was a party quite different from the forged in the 1970s and 1980s, as well pointed out (Miguel & Biroli, 2017), his government brought access to the state, social base since its foundation. This expansion of the democratic consensus included, even if in a peripheral way, movements that claimed land rights, trade unionists, members of black movements, feminists, gays, and evangelicals (Demier & Melo 2018).

It seems redundant to stress, the difficulty of the government in accommodating the various groups and private interests within the same coalition (Demier & Melo 2018) that, besides being dishes for the hands of the equilibrist, promoted the public participation of sectors of society hitherto removed from the democratic game, disorganizing the pieces of the board. In turn, the incorporation of social demands into the agenda of governments does not mean the automatic dilution of these demands, on the contrary, what we see is the increase or displacement of these. For example, the "Maria da Penha" Law, affirmative policies regarding racial quotas, or the recognition of the social name for LGBTQIAP+ people, did not exhaust their demands for rights but engendered new demands that challenged social hierarchies, threatening not only the privilege of the elites, but especially the distinctions that underpin social relations such as patriarchalism and racism (Mouffe 2001).

Before continuing, it is worth an addendum, about the famous phrase of the then pre-candidate Jair Bolsonaro during the Roda Viva program of TV Cultura, which asked about the quota policy and the historical debt with the afro-descendant population, answers: "What debt? I have never enslaved anyone in my life". This phrase aligns with the narrative of part of the population, who does not want to renounce their privileges - seen as rights - for the sake of an unjust social order, whose historical roots were not planted by them. Here the narrative of Bolsonaro operates a dual function, at the same time it relieves the individual of the commitment to collectivity, seen as a burden, and points the way to restore a whole social hierarchy, in which blacks, women, and the LGBTQIAP+ population had their place and were not seen as a threat. Finally, the resentful decadent classes "who feel humiliated by the loss of their position resent, above all, those who, situated in a place inferior to them in the social hierarchy, do not allow themselves to be humiliated" (Kehl 2011, p.27).

Within this operation of the "policy of resentment" Apostle Luciano, CPS, suggests concerning PT policies "You do not need the bags checks, bags corruptions, bags against the Brazilian family. It does not need the dirty government of the lefts that take the best of our people" (Vicente 2022). His resentment is activated against corruption linked to the state policies that favored the region of the Turf Club itself, in Campos dos Goytacazes. Likewise, pastor Moreira of the Central Assembly of God (CAG) at the meetings of the Cult of Solomon indicates in tone against corruption and divisions: "Our example is Christ, not a thief who will be arrested. That corrupt politician with four fingers (...) of that party that increased the state's public debt and we are here unjustly paying what they made us force" (Moreira 2019). For Moreira "our people have no example only has sex ceremonies. That party left no legacy, just went against our work. Our jobs have broken, our lives, our traditional families" (Moreira 2019). It is interesting the resentment of Pastor Moreira caused by the "cracks" in traditional families that bind the regional aristocracies of Rio de Janeiro.

Also, one cannot forget the indication Pastor Silva, that for the "Church", there is an "absolute wear of politics in Brazil in such relevant demands as public administration, financial management", Silva details his resentment by stating "They went too far. Silence was no longer allowed". Thus, returning to the discourse in the Lula period (2003-2016), although it has fostered a chain of equivalences (Laclau & Mouffe 1985) that allowed the articulation of demands from various marginalized sectors of society, eventually precipitating a new positioning of classes within the system, similar to what Adam Przeworski (1989) points to the European social democracy.

Thus, in seeking to expand its electoral base, PT hegemony diluted the specific interests of workers as a class, while expanding - including in the circuits of credit and consumption - and transforming its electoral base, both from the objective point of view, material, as from the point of view subjective in the sense of Dardot and Laval (2016). In this sense, André Singer's work "The Senses of Lulism" (2012) leads us to the conclusion that the great achievement of Lulism was to restructure a game of win-win, - a thesis with which Singer would not agree, preferring the idea of weak reformism (Singer 2012) -, that is, fighting poverty without, however, overcoming inequality.

Singer's book (2012) draws attention to an important aspect of our argument, that is, the displacement of the support base of the PT that, from 2006, migrated from the urban middle-schooled classes, to what Paul Singer (1981) classified as "*sub proletariate*". For Paul Singer, the *sub proletariate* is composed of "those who offer their workforce in the market without finding who is willing to purchase it for a price that ensures its reproduction under normal conditions" (Singer 1981, p.22) composed of "domestic servants, employees of small direct producers and workers deprived of the minimum conditions of participation in the class struggle" (1981, p.83). From the political point of view, the sub-proletariat has conservative features and wants a state active in reducing poverty, but without questioning the social order (Miguel 2013).

At this very point, we begin to connect the two ends of our argument: sub-proletariat and evangelicals. As is known, although they have changed significantly in recent decades from the socioeconomic point of view, the evangelical group, even the LEC, is still composed mostly of people with lower education; who declare themselves as black and brown, residents in the outskirts of large cities and occupying the service sector (Bohn 2004) and that traditionally composed the electoral base of the right (Pierucci 1989; Mariano & Pierucci 1992). These segments, however, gradually migrated

to the Lulist base, first by having their leaders admitted to the PT government, then by seeing themselves incorporated in what we call "citizenship for consumption" (Author 2019).

In this sense, it is interesting to resume two moments. The first occurred in October 2002 when, after the first round of elections that year, a group of pastors met in a steakhouse in the North Zone of Rio de Janeiro, captained by pastors Everaldo and Silas Malafaia, to declare support for the then-candidate Lula. The second occurred in 2013, when Marcelo Crivella, then Minister of Fisheries of the Dilma government, spoke during the Convention of Assemblies of God. Observing the focus of the two discourses, separated by more than a decade, we identified the displacement of demands and the anchoring of expectations.

In the first case, Lula says he wants to rely on evangelical churches to attack the country's social problems: "Never in the history of the evangelical church, were called to responsibility and to participate in the construction of this country as I will call". It then highlights how churches and NGOs have been more efficient than the state itself in combating inequalities. In the same event, Pastor Everaldo points out that the "evangelicals want the commitment of the Lula government with falling interest rates, income policies, employment and education and with the freedom to act of the various evangelical churches", in addition to the appreciation of the minimum wage. It is important to stress that such demands are opposed to the guidelines that the pastor himself defended in 2014, when he was a candidate for the Presidency, presenting a more liberal agenda.

Already at the 2013 event, Crivella says that one should applaud Dilma and Lula because of their public policies aimed at the poor population. In his words:

Our president and President Lula made us grow because they supported the poor. And what sustains us are tithes and offers of simple and humble people (...). With President Dilma, interest rates have fallen. Those who pay interest are poor. With less interest, more tithing. (...) When money is left, the evangelical people do not go to the boutique to buy clothes. Do you know what people do? He goes more to church, gives more offers, more tithing, and does more charity. So, we have to applaud President Dilma.

The examples above, rather than evidencing two distinct moments of articulation between evangelicals and politics in Brazil, point to the displacement of the demands emanating from the group identity and its aspirations in early 2002 (Py 2018). How it will be seen then, a decade later, has changed both the aspirations of the Pentecostal base and those of its leaders. Although the speech was delivered by Marcelo Crivella, a licensed bishop of the UCKG, a fundamental LEC, the address was held at a national convention of the Assembly of God and addressed to its pastors, which at that time were not attached to the emphasis speeches of prosperity theology. On the other hand, those pastors were "managers" of their churches and knew the difficulties of maintaining a "religious enterprise" amid the voracious competition of an increasingly competitive market.

In this sense, the LEC was gaining autonomy including its doctrinal aspects, being a good example of the quarrel established with the interdiction of face-to-face services due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in which religious leaders triggered justice to keep churches open. At this point, even though the threat of COVID-19 has often been translated into religious metaphors, such as "satan's tactic" according to Macedo, most pastors do not hide that the main concern with the closing of churches was the fall in the collection of tithes - after all he owns 256 companies.

In this sense, both the work of Cibebe Rizek (2016), and Gago (2018), are prodigal in pointing out the nuanced character of this penetration of capitalism in the peripheries of large cities, such as São Paulo and Buenos Aires, transforming its forms of subjectivization and the pragmatics of itself, in the intricate mix with what Gago calls "bottom-up neoliberalism", that is, "a set of conditions that materialize beyond the will of a government (...) but that is transformed under the conditions under which a network of practices and knowledge operates that assumes the calculation as the primary subjective matrix" (Gago 2018, p.19). This amalgam, therefore, would end up functioning as an engine of the popular economy, "a know-how in the crisis", which leads to self-employment, as the author observes.

For Gago the meeting between neoliberal stimuli and popular economy generates what the author calls vitalist pragmatics, establishing the calculation as a vital condition for obtaining survival

in territories where the government does not guarantee the neoliberal conditions of competition (Gago 2018, p.20). In our understanding, it is here that the evangelical churches (with their LEC), many of them work, as we said above, as master springs, both in the production of learned subjectivities of this pragmatic rationality, cooperative dynamics that resist these logics of exploitation or build new arrangements that justify their new accommodation.

The growth of different forms of Pentecostalism and the replication of numerous churches in the neighborhoods and peripheries of the country end up functioning as faith enterprises that compete with each other for the attention and adherence of the faithful. This scenario led the pastors to take contact with techniques and administrative discourses (Campos 1997; Souza & Pinto 2013), beyond the theology of prosperity preached by the UKGC, which, in turn, were translated into theological language, and spread, assimilated, re-maintained and set in motion by the faithful members (Author, 2008), or even directly adapting new forms of national and regional prosperity theology such as PCS (Boechat Dutra Jr & Py 2018).

In this sense, churches become great bridgeheads of this process, as they gain a body, a competitive view of the social world, or in the words of Dardot and Laval (2016), are manufactured neoliberal subjects, derived from a "normative system that extended its influence to the whole world, extending the logic of capital to all social relations and all spheres of life" (Dardot & Laval 2016, p.7). At the same time, they offer a discursive map that engenders the new flexible subjectivities, intertwining practical local knowledge (vitalist pragmatics) and current management processes, offering refuge and strategy of resistance against processes of individualization. Propose to restore parental authority in the face of threats of family disintegration, and create a network of trust - a clientele - in an increasingly anonymous market.

In this sense, we return to Gago (2016) and the concept of the policy of the governed borrowed from Chatterjee (2004), who, according to the author, stresses the Foucault category of governmentality by putting it in contact with the idea of popular policy. In this perspective, the governed are not seen as people, subjects of state sovereignty, but as those who know how to negotiate, and reject the mechanisms of governmentality of which they are object. Thus, democracy depends on the political agency of those who are the target of government knowledge and techniques.

It is interesting to note that the literature on the Pentecostals of the 1980s and 1990s (Mariz 1994a; Mariz 1994b) – is in dissonance with previous period studies that saw adherence to Pentecostalism as the "refuge of the masses" (D'Epinay 1970) - already highlighted adherence to Pentecostalism as strategies for coping with poverty, alcoholism, and domestic violence. Finally, for all these researchers, Pentecostalism offered more than answers to afflictions (Fry & Howe 1975), imposed by the precariousness of life in the peripheries of large cities. More than that, they provided narratives that turned into learning, discursive resources to deal with suffering, exclusion, and misery. They assisted in the easing of aggressive affections for men, or in psychological strategies with which women could deal with domestic violence, moving to material support and the introduction of a new financial logic and family planning.

Similarly, even through other processes, adherence to the LEC, in addition to forging new subjectivities related to peripheral neoliberalism, organizes a social grammar through which its faithful can narrate their demands for security, financial, and affective stability. It is not without reason that the LEC, besides being constituted as financial enterprises and possibility of successful careers for some, shifts their speech to passages of the Old Testament, mainly from the great male figures of the faith (like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joshua, Moses, David, Saul, Solomon, Ezekiel, and Josiah), exalting the logic of the battle and the chosen people, especially in the urban and violent peripheries of the great cities.

The PCS makes direct use of this type of approach when facing the theme of the sermon "The power of revelation", read the biblical text of Ezekiel, which says "Dear ones each walks at a level of revelation that each has". According to the apostle in his hermeneutics of Ezekiel:

This is not only on the personal level but in every way. It is difficult, but it is common to make comparisons (...) In every church, every person lives at the level of revelation that he

has. Each exalts develops this revelation with what he has (...) The angel takes care of it. If with revelation life prospers. Without revelation life. People of prosperity at the family and business level went on a bankruptcy route. I would never imagine that! That's because he abandoned the revelation. Again: just as a revelation prospers, the lack of it breaks. It can cause bankruptcy. It can cause bankruptcy in a family, especially in companies, at work. At the deepest level, it must cause divisions, cause war, in strong spiritual warfare (...) It is only with a strong covenant with God that the revelation is established. There is only one way to win our struggle, to assume that we are proof of God's provision, elected since creation" (Vincent 2019).

Thus, the Apollos activates the elements as the "victory of the house entrepreneur of the faith" with his enterprises and his career, by the figure of the biblical prophet Ezekiel to encourage the members to continue "fighting in the day-to-day in god" because they are "people of god's provision, elected since creation" (Vincent 2019). Pastor Moreira, of the ADC, indicates that "in the face of the family problem, crises of his parents, who came his birth", for this, he continues stating:

I'm like Jeremiah so, I think my calling is from my mother's womb. I have shared here that my mother was converted and my family. I was baptized, that is, I was baptized with my mother at her baptism. So, I believe that my call is a God thing (...) The call develops from the moment you get involved in the work of God (...) Speaking of the ministerial career, it is a trajectory, right? It is a career proposed by Paul, which you will go through, it is not a short-distance race (...) I was a broadcaster, I was the director of a program called Pentecostal Power. Amazingly, it was an AM radio, with greater reach (...) that we managed to maintain with the help of brothers and entrepreneurs in the region (Moreira 2021)

On the issue of business demand, in the ADC, for the leadership of Moreira was built the "Cult of Solomon (...) because as we Christians know Solomon was an admirable administrator (...) chosen by God to command the nation after David conquered the kingdoms and nations" (Moreira, Brazil, 2018). Moreira (2018) highlights at this meeting in the presence of entrepreneurs from the state of Rio de Janeiro, that they can "tell a story testimony of how your business is going, in addition to receiving a direct message from God for the week of work, which aims primarily, your prosperity in business" (Moreira, 2018). In this case, the perspective is to relate "a celebration for God" that makes possible "in the Christian emphasis that connects the work and development of the region to encourage local merchants who are winners in Jesus, who has kept them since the beginning of time" (Moreira 2018).

Now, in the same turn, the theological discourse that emphasizes the traditional family, patriarchalism, as well as a strategy of anguished search for authority, facing the autonomy of children, seen as a threat in the violent peripheries of large cities, reflect the cleavage in the traditional family, imposed by the new arrangements and empowerment of feminist groups and LGBTQIAP+ (Pinheiro-Machado & Scalco 2018; Py & Reis 2015). Thus, the contestation of family models, although they focus on masculinity, has in its main antagonists women who are, most of the time, responsible for the reproduction of the traditional and idealized family model (Machado 2016).

This time, when dissatisfaction with the PT government began to pronounce itself in the clear skies of politics in June 2013, on the eve of major events (Dilma Rousseff's popularity was 65% in March 2013), leaders like Pastor Silas Malafaia, already brought as central figures of the March for Jesus, the then federal deputy Jair Bolsonaro. From this point on, the LEC start to act actively in the warp of an anti-political discourse field, with the increasingly strong support of media groups and part of the judiciary and Federal Policy, through Operation Car Wash (*Operação Lava-Jato*). As pastor Éber Silva narrates in the video:

We are 12,000 Baptist pastors; we have to be attentive. The issues of life, of families are great. We are aware of the word of God and we know how a nation becomes blessed, being a nation, whose god is the lord (...) we are in a struggle against the world, the different forms of attacks including a party in favor of impunity and the robbery of the "mensalão" (Silva 2016).

Silva traces his direct criticism of what he calls the "party of impunity and the robbery of the mensalão", as it makes direct reference to the PT and its social policies implemented in the PT management. All these LECs of the state made use of specific adaptations in the theological plot of

ecclesiastical structuring in the face of fidelity and the needs of work life in the context of forging new subjectivities to neoliberalism peripherals in Rio de Janeiro. This alternative of evangelical lexicography has become hegemonic and potentiates with the flow of hatred to the plots of democratic plurality in the experiences of faith, the heterodoxies of family experience distinct from patriarchal modulations, and the series of experiences in dialogue with Amerindian and Afrodiasporic cultures.

Conclusions

In the article, we highlight the relationship between the discourse of evangelical churches and the production of conservative political rationalities of neoliberal background from the Large Evangelical Corporations (LEC) of the State of Rio de Janeiro. In its course we point out that evangelical churches have been operating lines circumscribed by the neoliberal logic, tracing reasons that reinforce the deepening of individualism in the face of social exclusion systems, ratifying customized solutions to poverty, and suffering, as well as in their identification self-employment in the management of spiritualities of success for the market. Thus, they practice a fusion between self-entrepreneur individualism and active rhetoric that interweaves elements of conservative communitarianism significant in the production of silence before the different gender roles and the formulations of "types" promotional path of the so-called "Brazilian Christian family".

We highlight that the LEC of the state of Rio de Janeiro, became a central part of this gear of the "resonance machines" of neoliberal policies in the country, promoting exponential formal promotion of social exclusion. Through the article, we believe that the adhesion of these evangelical churches, while feeding subjectivities to peripheral neoliberalism, organizes a lexicon by which the faithful narrate demands for security, professional success, and financial stability through biblical exegesis, mainly of Old Testament texts - which has ambience in authoritarian regimes.

Thus, the implications in the contemporary of religion and neoliberalism from the periphery were traced, in which the systemic production of spaces personified which, at times, relates to individualism and at other times takes authoritarian positions in the electoral pathways. With the material, it was aimed to point out that the LEC has become an important space for the agenda of Brazilian conservatism, since it has been the stage even of the constant visits of parliamentarians, providing symbolic capital to boost election campaigns.

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