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A Reflection on the Challenges of Teaching a Culture of Cooperation in the Age of Ideological Dominance

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The aim of this study is to reflect on the challenges of teaching a culture of cooperation in an era dominated by ideologies.

Methodology: The research method is an analytical-deductive approach, categorized under qualitative research.

Findings: In the era of ideologies (totalitarian), the control and alignment of individuals, from the international level to interpersonal relationships, occur with the aim of self-centered recruitment. This is manifested in the formation of parties, groups, associations, and sometimes in other forms, which may be visible or concealed. It appears that ideologies such as fascism, nationalism, conservatism, liberalism, and even sects derived from religions, each to varying degrees, adhere to and act upon the belief of "us as good and others as bad." In this research, the approach of ideologies towards the culture of cooperation is outlined. Following this, the potential challenges in educational systems, primarily in the conflict between teacher and educational system, are discussed in four scenarios. An attempt is made to demonstrate how having an ideological mindset, and the meaning of "ally" and "alliance" and its examples in ideological thinking, directs the educational process toward "recruitment."

Conclusion: The claim of education based on the foundations of religion, science, and philosophy seems ideal, at least one step ahead of education based on ideology; however, the dominance of ideological thoughts in the reality of societies is a factor in the culture of "recruitment." In this context, teaching and instructional methods feel the shadow of dominant thought. The detailed discussion of this conflict is presented in the text.

Keywords: challenge, education, culture, cooperation, teacher, ideology

1. Introduction

After the Sophists centered their education on rhetoric and winning arguments, Socrates spoke of inquiry, and Plato, inspired by his teacher's ideas, introduced the concept of intersubjective agreement. This agreement, achieved through mutual assistance of minds in the pursuit of truth, leads to a close unity. In this context, "recruitment" is discussed as a less favorable element, often associated with the imposition of power, ideas, and sometimes even the presentation of offerings and prescriptions. In its unfavorable form, recruitment is driven by self-centeredness and group selfishness. Among these, totalitarian ideologies are particularly linked to systems of ideas, especially social, political, or religious ideas shared by a group or social movement. Examples of widespread ideologies include communism and anti-communism, socialism and liberalism, feminism and sexism, racism and anti-racism, pacifism and militarism—each of which can be seen as more or less positive or negative (Casey & MacPhail, 2018; Casey & Quennerstedt, 2020). Members of a group sharing such ideologies defend a set of very general ideas that form the basis of their more specific beliefs about the world, guide their interpretation of events, and regulate their social actions. Overall, ideologies can be said to represent the core beliefs of a group and its members. Although ideologies range from totalitarianism to liberalism, which promotes pluralism, even liberalism, within its various programs, ultimately propagates its own ideas. Moreover, the more power and wider the platform for propagation (such as international institutions), the broader and more extensive their coverage of ideas will be (Carvalho, Rosa, & Amaral, 2022).

2. Ideology and Consciousness

It should be noted that there are numerous definitions and approaches to ideology. From the perspective of Engels and Marx, ideologies were forms of "false consciousness," that is, common beliefs misled by the ruling class to legitimize the status quo and obscure the actual socio-economic conditions of workers (Abu-Shawish et al., 2021). Until recently, this negative concept of ideology—as systems of self-serving ideas of dominant groups—prevailed in social sciences, where it was traditionally contrasted with real and scientific knowledge. This negative concept of "ideology" has also become a key element in the popular and political use of the term, meaning a system of false, misleading, or deceptive beliefs. Generally, this negative use of the concept

presupposes a polarization between us and them: we have real knowledge, they have ideology (Altarawneh et al., 2023). Ideology is explained based on characteristics across three different dimensions. First, ideology is a "worldview." Second, ideologies assume a "blueprint for a desirable future, a good society." In the third dimension, ideologies are comprehensive and holistic approaches that include explanations on how to achieve the ideals in the first and second dimensions (Bada & Jita, 2022).

3. Ideology as a General Concept

While legitimizing thought (domination or claiming liberation) is one of the key functions of many ideologies (Zhu & Chikwa, 2021), a broader concept of ideology can be proposed. This allows for the study of ideologies such as anti-racism ideologies in the same manner—as systems that oppose and resist domination and social inequality and intend to maintain and legitimize their own thinking. Karl Mannheim called such opposing ideologies "utopias"; thus, "counter-ideologies" like anti-racism not only oppose racism and racist ideologies but also have their own specific ideologies (e.g., humanitarianism) (Zeng & Wang, 2016). In other words, a general theory of ideology allows for a broader and more flexible application of this concept.

4. Ideology and Ideological Functions as a Basis for Social Actions

Ideologies make sense not only for understanding the world (from the group's perspective) but also as a basis for the social actions of group members; thus, gender or racist ideologies might be considered based on the existence of discrimination (protesting discrimination), pacifist ideologies might be used to protest nuclear weapons, and environmental ideologies guide actions against pollution (Durán et al., 2017). Hence, often, ideologies arise from group conflict and struggle, which typically positions us against them (e.g., racists). However, although ideologies and the social actions of group members are closely linked, it should be noted that these two concepts are different and that ideologies cannot be simply reduced to "ideological functions" (Carneiro & Roberto Carlos Pacheco dos, 2023).

5. Ideological Knowledge

Similarly, group ideologies may influence knowledge. Indeed, ideologies may appear legitimate and justified under the umbrella of knowledge. This might seem contradictory, as knowledge has traditionally been defined as independent

of ideology. For instance, the Mertonian model views science as an activity independent of other social institutions and considers the normative structure of the scientific institution as a result of the independent actions of scientists (Fahrenwald, 2023); however, ideological knowledge is often seen in the guise of "ideological belief." Thus, if some psychologists believe that Black people are less intelligent than White people, they may see this as knowledge, as it is derived from scientific evidence, while others may view it as a form of racist prejudice based on biased reasoning (Ersin & Atay, 2021). Therefore, more generally, we must acknowledge that knowledge may also be influenced by ideology, as those holding such beliefs think these beliefs are true based on their criteria. Consequently, they consider them knowledge rather than ideological beliefs. Many examples suggest that group knowledge is dependent on group ideology, and such dependence may be evaluated as more or less positive or negative. On the other hand, knowledge may also be governed by more positive ideological principles; thus, much of our knowledge today about pollution is influenced by environmental ideologies (Malan, 2021).

Therefore, deeper insight into domination and inequality will, at least initially, be based on resistance ideologies and only later be accepted by other groups and society at large. Of course, it is not claimed that all knowledge or all our beliefs are ideological. This would render the concept of "ideology" almost useless because it is precisely necessary to distinguish between ideological and other beliefs (Sharma, 2024). Therefore, by definition, the common core beliefs in a given society or culture are non-ideological, precisely because there is no dispute over these beliefs, no opposition, no struggle. However, what we accept as non-ideological common beliefs in our society or culture may become ideological beliefs from the perspective of another culture. This is often observable in the case of a religion like Christianity, which 500 years ago was almost universally accepted as the "true belief" by most members of European societies but is now associated with the ideological beliefs of only a group of people (Heryadi, 2024); conversely, what was once a controversial belief (e.g., regarding the shape and position of the earth) is now generally accepted as common belief.

Famous ideologies will be examined, and the "us" and "them" distinction and the methods of recruitment around "us" and the critique of "them" will be explored and revealed.

6. Fascism

Historians, political scientists, and other scholars have long debated the exact nature of fascism. Each view of fascism is distinct from the other, and many definitions have been considered either too broad or too narrow (Shoshani & Schreuer, 2019). The main element defining fascism is an organic national society based on the belief that "unity is strength." Fascist ideology, with its totalitarian understanding, entails a political understanding that dictates an individual should dedicate their life to the glory of their nation or race and obey the supreme leader unquestioningly. Historically, fascism has been defined as the most reactionary, totalitarian, and oppressive form of monopoly capitalist political rule (Bønløkke et al., 2015). Fascism is characterized by themes of anti-rationalism, extreme nationalism, a struggle for race, nation, and suppression of opponents. Fascists are anti-democratic and pro-totalitarianism. They tend to defend the idea of corporatism, which is assumed to organically combine labor and capital. They see the nation as an organic unity, often defined by race, a social unity that provides purpose and meaning for individual existence. Generally, fascist movements not only focus on themes of national awakening but also show variations in attitudes toward religion, depending on specific local characteristics. In this ideology, individual freedom has no meaning, and true freedom is defined as obedience to a specific individual, like Hitler, without questioning his will and dissolving the individual in national totality. They believe humanity is based on the concept of a superior race and radical inequality, which holds that some people are fundamentally different from others. Therefore, my race and, in some cases, my belief are good, while the race and belief of others are bad and deviant.

7. Nationalism

The concept of nationalism is derived from the concept of "nation," meaning to be born. In a sense, it means loving the nation to which one belongs and integrating with its ideals. The main themes of nationalism include love of country, nation, organic society, autonomy, and culturalism. Nationalism is a concept that can be seen in various fields within ideologies. On one hand, it fits within the wing that extends to socialists with the self-determination of nations, peoples, and the terms of patriotism. In this context, it is understood within the concept of civic nationalism. On the other hand, it has a broad application that includes the fascist society with the terms of superior race and chauvinism.

Proponents of this ideology are ambivalent about democracy. An anti-democratic attitude may arise if it relies on racial theory. They see the state as a means to hold the nation together. Nationalism appears to be an ideology exposed to pragmatic interventions that became prominent mainly after the Industrial Revolution. This ideology describes the nation as a common ethnic, social, cultural, and emotional unity. Therefore, besides views that consider belief essential for national unity, in this movement, pure racial characteristics are highlighted (Saputra et al., 2023). Overall, in most interpretations of nationalism, the dominant view is that some nations are superior to others.

8. Liberalism

Liberalism is a political and moral philosophy based on individual rights, liberty, the consent of the governed, political equality, private property rights, and equality before the law. Liberals, depending on their interpretation of these principles, support various and often contradictory views, but they generally advocate for private property, free-market economics, individual rights (including civil rights and human rights), secularism, the rule of law, political freedom, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, and freedom of religion (Maguire et al., 2019). Liberalism is often cited as the dominant ideology of modern history.

Throughout its historical development, liberalism has manifested as classical liberalism, economic liberalism, neoliberalism, and modern liberalism. Liberalism can be described as an ideology that has significantly influenced the establishment of the classical capitalist system and democracy in practice. Proponents of this view argue that the state takes on the role of an arbiter among conflicting groups. They strongly support the market and capitalist production relations and claim that the economy is the vital sector of civil society. They conceive and shape the nation on the basis of civil and cultural unity. They regard religion as a "private" matter related to individual preferences and personal growth. They see liberty as the highest and most dominant value of the individual and argue that people are born with equal moral values. However, they understand equality in the legal sense (Paulsrud & Nilholm, 2020).

9. Conservatism

Conservatism is often associated with movements that argue for the preservation of the status quo and the continuity of religious, ideological, and conscientious requirements.

The prominent principles and themes include tradition, human imperfection, organic society, hierarchy, authority, and property, which are colloquially aligned with afterlife values, adherence to values, and religious and spiritual beliefs. However, in political science, adherence to traditions, pragmatism in daily life, acceptance of human values, solidarity, and the practices of the "nanny state" can be observed. It can be argued that neoliberal policies and neoconservatism united and shaped the postmodern debate and even dominance after 1980. They portray the state as strong, with the mission and role of providing authority and discipline, protecting society from chaos. Although they support the free market economy, they also support practical interventions against potential adversities. The nation is defined as an organic entity linked by common ethnic identity and shared history. They see religion as a necessary source of stability and social cohesion and unity. Their main concern is that negative liberties might negatively affect the structure of society and pose a threat. Society is naturally hierarchical, and they consider equality to be an abstract and unattainable utopia (Moradi et al., 2013).

10. Social Democracy

Social democracy, also known as democratic socialism or left-wing democracy, is a political approach that eliminates the negatives of socialism and capitalism and adopts a social market economy. Social democracy is a socio-economic approach that is based on supporting and developing the individual and social needs of citizens but anticipates this to be realized within a socialized market. The prominent themes of this ideology include peace, freedom, coexistence, modernity, the social market, equitable sharing, the rule of law, and democracy. Social democracy is said to be a hybrid approach that smooths out some of the critical aspects of capitalism on the one hand and real socialism on the other. Supporters of social democracy advocate for participatory democracy with all its institutions, organizations, and principles. They view the state as the common umbrella for all identities and beliefs. Economically, they support the socialization of the market through certain interventions and the welfare state. This ideology defends all freedoms within the framework of thought, belief, organization, and secularism as the cornerstone of social development and change. It has an interventionist approach to empowering lower social classes. Social democracy argues that equality should be propagated through positive discrimination and common legal egalitarianism (Taft & Gordon, 2013).

11. Socialism

Finally, socialism is recognized as the ideology of the working class, opposing the market economy and capitalism, and advocating for the sharing of property. The main prominent themes include the working class, the proletarian state, peace and brotherhood, equality, and class politics. Based on dialectical materialist philosophy, socialism shows that societies have traversed different paths (Burbach, 2009).

The roots of socialism can be traced to various historical points, from Plato and Christianity to the radicals of England's 16th-century Civil War, but socialism in its contemporary sense took shape in Europe in the early 19th century. Scholars generally agree that the rapid economic and social changes following urbanization, industrialization, and the swift and widespread departure from rural areas were instrumental in this formation. The liberals of that era welcomed this change, which was embodied in individualism and the capitalist economy, but the socialists found it problematic because they emphasized society, cooperation, and unions, and they also focused on the other side of the capitalist economy, namely the severe class

inequality it had caused. In this context, the terms "communist" and "socialist" first appeared in the Cooperative Magazine of London in 1827, in an article on capital ownership: "Is it better for capital to be owned by an individual or by the community?" Those who chose the latter were called "socialists" (Burbach, 2009). Based on the above foundations, implicit and explicit messages for the field of education, in terms of cooperation and recruitment, will be discussed.

12. Implications and Findings: Ideologies and the Meaning of Social Concepts

Given that the issue under discussion is the concept of "cooperation," to understand its position in ideological beliefs, it is necessary to extract the narratives and understandings of these ideologies regarding fundamental social concepts. Ultimately, by referencing these concepts, their stance on "cooperation" can be articulated. The social concepts under discussion in the context of societies are mainly terms such as equality, democracy, law, judgment, society, and civility.

Table 1

Narratives, Understandings, and Interpretations of Ideologies Regarding Social Concepts

Ideology	Equality	Democracy	Law	Judgment	Society and Civility
Fascism	Radical inequality	Anti-democracy	Opposition to the rule of law	Under party and ideology	Comparison with corporatism and other impositions
Nationalism	Relative equality (intra-racial)	General democracy	Ethnic superiority	Based on ethnic superiority	Relative comparison and contrast
Conservatism	Hierarchical society, utopian equality	Conservative democracy	Opposition via traditional approaches	Moral value - defensive mechanism	Religion-centered civil society
Liberalism	People are born equal but equality is not always freedom	Liberal democracy	Defense of rights, law, and justice	Achieved with a state equal for all	Source of freedoms
Social Democracy	Equality is a core value	Participatory democracy	Defense of rights, law, and justice	A necessity for the social state	Essential for democracy
Anarchism	They do not believe in inherent equality	Radical direct decentralization	State force - irrational	Sovereignty and state hinder justice	Part of itself
Socialism	The core value is absolute and social equality	Radical democracy - socialist democracy	Class perspective	Determined by class struggle	Instrument of class struggle

After extracting and explaining the positions and understandings of the aforementioned ideologies regarding social issues, their positions and interpretations of recruitment/cooperation can be inferred and validated. The

meaning of "cooperation" and the positions on cooperation within the context of these ideologies are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Ideologies and the Meaning of Cooperation: Narratives and Objectives

Ideology	Position on Cooperation	Objectives	Educational Approach
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Fascism	Recruiter	Gaining power and preserving the "good us"	Educational system serves to inculcate and promote the "good us" (Griffin, 2020)
Nationalism	Recruiter	Empowering and establishing the belief in "our superiority"	Educational system creates beliefs and the illusion of racial superiority (Bodak et al., 2023)
Conservatism	Pragmatic	Preserving the status quo	Educational system based on normalizing and idealizing the current state (Bošnjak et al., 2022)
Liberalism	Claims to foundational cooperation	Freedom, as long as freedom itself is not criticized	Educational system based on acceptable slogans and respect for others (García-Martínez et al., 2021)
Social Democracy	Cooperative (supportive intervention in some cases)	Survival within this slogan	Educational system based on freedom with supportive interventions in some areas (Bønløkke, Kobow, & Kristensen, 2015)
Anarchism	Recruiter	Preserving self and the self-group with power leverage	Educational system based on indirect threats (Paulsrud & Nilholm, 2020)
Socialism	Recruiter	Preserving classes in favor of one's own class	Normalizing classes within the system and indirectly emphasizing competition (Fiore, Sansone, & Paolucci, 2019)

13. Conflicts in the Educational Context

The teacher, as an important element in the educational process, transmits the content and objectives of the educational system to the learners. Therefore, students must accept that there is a legitimate reason to learn what the teacher teaches. Teaching requires the power that the teacher needs (Lawrence, 2024). In the era of ideologies, the main form of power in education is ideological power, which can make learning seem reasonable to students. Although the primary sources of power in the educational system are political and economic, political and economic powers in education ultimately depend on ideological power: thus, ideological power can compel students to learn. As Anthony

Giddens has stated, power in education depends on compliance with those who are its "subjects" (Giddens, 1984). Therefore, the teacher, whether aligned or not with the system, produces different outcomes. While this is a general overview of the issue, more complex equations can be imagined. It is not always the case that if the ideology is cooperative, the outcome and practice of the educational system will lead to cooperation. Thus, the question must be asked, are the practical actions of educational administrators and teachers always aligned with the policy and manifesto of the system? In reality, this is not always the case. This issue is open to investigation and analysis. In fact, whether the educator (teacher) aligns with the official state system or not, various scenarios of this conflict can be inferred and examined.

Table 3

Conflict Between Dominant Ideology and Educational Executives in the Context of Cooperation

Scenario	If Educational Executives (Teacher)	And Dominant Ideology	Result	Appropriate and Likely Action
Scenario 1	Cooperative	Recruiter	Conflict	The teacher is considered misaligned, even if they behave reasonably. Their cooperative action is subject to interpretation and criticism by superiors.
Scenario 2	Recruiter	Recruiter	Alignment/Similarity	"Good us, bad others" and continuation until interference by external elements (e.g., experts outside the structure)
Scenario 3	Cooperative	Cooperative	Alignment/Similarity	Continuation until interference by external elements (e.g., self-centered ideologues and external profiteers)
Scenario 4	Recruiter	Cooperative	Conflict	The teacher is seen as misaligned, acting against the structure within the school and classroom with the intention of recruiting. In this scenario, the system is considered reasonable if it has an ideologue mindset

According to Table 3, in scenarios 1 and 4, conflicts in the educational process can be observed. A teacher with a different mindset teaches within the system. The teacher is a misaligned element. Their actions may be covert and based on hidden curricula, or their actions may be met with warnings and threats from the structure.

Scenario 2 is somewhat more complex and important. In fact, when both minds (the system and the educator) are recruiters, and both define and agree on the same "ally," the continuity and preservation of the desired ism and its education will occur. However, if both minds are recruiters but have different definitions and representations of the ally, we witness two conflicting recruiting ideologies, which can

lead to significant challenges. Imagine a liberal system with a Marxist teacher. Both are recruiters, but while they are similar in their recruiting mindset, they differ in their definition of an ally.

In Scenario 3, the same situation prevails; both are cooperative, but not everyone is worthy of cooperation. That is, their intended audience and support differ. It can be observed that in any conceivable scenario, the challenge of "you are either like us and supported or you become like us to be supported" persists.

14. Discussion and Conclusion

In a world based on interaction and free from self-centered profiteering and the equitable distribution of needs, ranging from material needs to emotions and feelings, many obstacles exist, one of which is the issue of totalitarian ideologies. Although not all ideologies equally propagate or promote the spirit of "good us and bad others," analytical scrutiny reveals that their differences mainly lie in how overt or covert this spirit is. Regardless of which ideology exists in which country, this study assumes that if a particular ideology dominates, what can be perceived regarding the issue of "seeing others"? This study focuses on the concepts of recruitment and cooperation. The researcher believes that recruitment is a significant challenge in an era where the slogan of cooperation exists, but the practice of recruitment is tangible. This research does not aim to conduct fieldwork; its criterion is theoretical, analytical, and inferential foundations. After examining and analyzing these theoretical foundations and reviewing ideologies, their narratives about some important social concepts were presented. By expressing their approach to these concepts, their stance on the issue of cooperation was articulated; finally, the conflicts and challenges within the educational system were explained.

In general, all ideologies have a spirit of self-serving recruitment to some extent; however, some are visible, while others are covert, often hidden behind the veneer of noble concepts. Regardless of the degree and extent of recruiting thinking or the spirit of cooperation, cooperation can be more evident in the actions of individuals than in ideologies because ideologies are primarily formed in the guise of a group. Therefore, individuals and teachers are more independent than the ideology and its members. Accepting an ideology requires individuals to conform and accept the general principles of its manifesto. Thus, the challenge exists among individuals outside the guiding group's framework or

members of another ideology that currently has no place in the structure. Another scenario is also conceivable: they adhere to religion, philosophy, and science and have not reduced it to a specific ideology. It is essential to note that those who are not thinkers (and concerned) are not within the scope of this research, whether they are nonconformist teachers or members of an ideologically-driven system.

Given this, conflicts can be observed in two scenarios that occur in the educational process. If an element like a teacher with a different mindset teaches within the system, the teacher is considered misaligned. In this scenario, the teacher's actions are carried out through hidden curricula, and their actions are likely to be met with warnings and threats from the structure.

The second scenario is somewhat complex and important. In fact, when both ideologies (the system and the teacher) have a recruiting mindset, if both share the same interpretation of the concept of cooperation, the continuity and preservation of the current state through education will occur. However, if both ideologies have a recruiting mindset but have different definitions and representations of "cooperation," we observe two conflicting recruiting ideologies, which can lead to significant challenges. Imagine a liberal educational system with a Marxist teacher. Both are recruiters, but they are similar only in their recruiting mindset, not in their definition of cooperation and assistance.

In Scenario 3, the same situation prevails; both are cooperative, but not everyone is worthy of cooperation. Their intended audience and support differ. It can be observed that in any conceivable scenario, the challenge of "you are either like us and supported or you become like us to be supported" persists.

What is the way out of this challenge? Gerald Gutek (2013) stated that since the 20th century, life has been driven by ideologies, but the ideal situation for societies is education based on science, religion, and philosophy—not ideological science, not sects, and philosophical schools reduced to specific isms based on selective and self-centered profiteering. In principle-based education, especially Islamic education, human agency is a central element, and humans are fundamentally structured around the concept of agency. Therefore, while education based on principles (science and religious philosophy) is idealistic, the theoretical formulation of principle-based education is a step ahead of education that is ideologically driven from the outset (Kusio et al., 2022).

Authors' Contributions

Authors equally contributed to this article.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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