



# The use of eugenic and hygienist discourses with the purpose of social segregation of peripheral populations

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## ABSTRACT

Globalization and the advance of capitalism have generated great advances in terms of historical evolution and development of societies, however, both have not only promoted benefits, they have also promoted social concerns, among them the emergence of social standards in which those who did not fit into them were segregated, excluded, in this context we can note the genesis of segregationist and eugenicist discourses. Thus, the objective of this article is to discuss the concepts of social hygiene, eugenic and hygienist discourses and how they cause urban and social segregation. To carry out this task, research and bibliographic review on the subject in question were used to ascertain what had already been produced of scientific material on the subject and was used by the deductive research method, starting from major premises to minor ones, until a conclusion.

**Keywords:** Globalization, Capitalism, Discourses, Segregationists, Eugenicists.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Segregation is a gender term, synonymous with the recurrent social disorder in the most diverse fields of society, largely resulting from a chain systematic, resulting from sociological issues that are much more rooted, passed on and improved by generations. The importance of discussions is therefore urgent, even given the complex nature of this important issue.

Thus, the primary proposal of this article is the rise of the theme now proposed, as the main means, the understanding of the culture of social hygiene, and eugenics, and its use as a means and result of urban and social segregation, thus having as its main objective to debate the concepts about social hygiene, eugenic and hygienist discourses and how these cause urban and social segregation.

Initially, we will make brief considerations about the origin and definition of what would be eugenic and hygienist discourses, such as globalization and capitalism that promoted integration and social advances also caused the emergence of patterns that were precursors of segregationist discourses.

Later, we will talk about the eugenic and hygienist discourses and their use by elitist social strata to justify the segregation of less favored and peripheral people who did not fit the standards of the elites.

Finally, we will bring the considerations of the present research trying to answer the guiding question of the same, which is: how the eugenic and hygienist discourses promote urban and social segregation of peripheral populations?



## 2 ORIGIN AND DEFINITION OF EUGENIC AND HYGIENIST DISCOURSES

Globalization and the industrial revolution are great precursors of cultural and social development, capitalism in its great totality has shaped the society in which we know it, the values and means of consumption are brutally based on a systemic chain of actions based on the movement of capital and profit, resignifying every concept of consumption, heritage and even the city.

According to Henry Lefebvre, an important French philosopher and sociologist, in his work *Le droit à la ville*, he discussed the right to the city, in Lefebvre's view, the industrialization of sectors, expressly affected the role of the individual in urban spaces, and the role of protagonism of the individual became subjective, making the city a means and end of capital and obtaining profits.

Globalization and its entire context was of great value in the process of historical evolution, however, as a result of this, it did not only generate the bonus, the inequities that arose over the years had in their importance coming from capitalism and all its structuring.

The economic and social aspects have leveraged inequities in a significant way over the generations, the construction of the social models in which we know it, was based on an unequal pyramid, under the sieve of segregationist and eugenicist discourses.

Regarding the conceptualization, the term eugenics was born in the light of the Darwinian ideology, the anthropologist Francis Galton, who first discussed the theme in his works, believed that social improvement did not occur through education or any other cultural or social value, but through genetics, conjecturing that the individual's capacity was given by heredity and biological lineage. Eugenics can be defined as the science that deals with those social agencies that influence, mentally or physically, the racial qualities of future generations (GALTON, 1906, p. 3, note).

Eugenicist thought, despite having no scientific basis, was ideological for a long time in several cultures, the most impious example being Nazi Germany, eugenics previously described by anthropologist Francis Galton was a primordial pillar for the belief in Aryan superiority, and a foundation for the genocide and decimation of the entire population that did not fit into this biological lineage.

Despite having been totally discredited after the Second World War, eugenics, albeit in a subjective way, was introduced in a non-innocent way in segregationist discourses, the presence of eugenic ideas in Brazil was present in the hygienist era, as an example of the physician and politician Afrânio Peixoto, who believed that practices of alcoholism, and mental illnesses genetically influenced the offspring, He also argued that such circumstances directly influenced the nation and its progress.

In the same intellectual vein, the introduction of eugenic thought hitched a subt ride on the sanitarian movements, often confused with each other, the intellect of eugenicist thought, however, was adopted beyond the medical community and research.



The ideas of the sanitarian movements that at this point reproduced eugenic thought were already glimpsed by the Brazilian elite, in addition to medical and sanitary practices, the civilizing ideal was born, from the perspective of a new social order, which would be reestablished in consensus through eugenics, in the light mainly of the racial issues present in the country, since miscegenation is present in almost every part of the population in Brazil, according to historian Nancy Stepan, the emergence of Brazilian eugenics was also conditioned by the racial situation of the country, a racially hybrid nation, the result of miscegenation between Africans, indigenous peoples and Europeans (STEPAN, 2004: 338).

### **3 EUGENIC AND HYGIENIST DISCOURSES AND THE SOCIAL SEGREGATION OF PERIPHERAL POPULATIONS**

The counterpoints between eugenics and racial issues were intrinsically related, since, for the elite, social problems, diseases, and criminality were necessarily linked to people who did not fit the social pattern, eugenics became a reference for great sanitarian names of the time and a great means and end for the belief in social order. so idealized by the Brazilian elite.

Urban spaces have been manipulated according to the molds of capitalism, precarious sanitary conditions are not only intrinsically related to the precariousness of urban spaces, such social inequities linked to various factors have interconnected eugenics with hygienism as correlated practices.

Moreover, in the current current, hygienist practices are less correlated to sanitary issues, and more linked to aesthetic and social issues, the well-known social hygienism in urban spaces, founded on visual aesthetics of cities have the influence of the eugenicist intellect.

The new social inequities are singular phenomena, the marginalization of bodies, although not an unprecedented practice, has been subtly perfected, being even more and more normalized, from the inaccessibility of spaces that, although public, are associated with a certain group of people, to the rejection of black people in spaces considered noble or *gourmetized*. Social sanitarianism saw, above all, the visual cleanliness and whitening of cohabited areas by people of high economic standard.

The construction of the social order defended by sanitarians and the elite aims at the resignification of the city, establishing aesthetic standards from the perspective of cleanliness, which is the characterization of the discourse of social hygienism, and also eugenicist, from the perspective of racial issues and social class, establishing vestments of color, and wealth to access certain urban spaces, be it private or public.

The diffusion of hygienist discourses in simplistic terms aims at the reconstruction of utopian cities, where the disease is poverty, racial and gender issues, social hygiene, where the aim is not to solve the ills caused by inequities, but rather to distance them from visual and, above all, spatial conviviality, where there is an abyss between inhabited spaces.



In this way, the construction of this ideology spread segregation, the belief in social cleanliness, now idealized under the sieve of the hygienist vision, abruptly was one of the causes of the emergence of communities, the exclusion and distancing of the lower social classes and workers, with a rupture in access to all urban spaces.

The unfeasibility of access to public spaces as an effective member within a given space occurs in a way that makes the segregated member invisible and not subject to decisions within society, in this sense Zigma Bauman"[...] we remove waste in a more radical and effective way: making it invisible, by not looking at it, and unimaginable, by not thinking about it.

Social cleansing, now disguised as sanitarian ideas, has taken shameless directions over the years, the sanitarian fallacy of a medical and scientific nature has given way to direct and uncoated segregation, what we see today are cities that give consent to the distancing of classes in public spaces, as one of the many examples, it is important to mention the attempt at social hygienism, Idealized in the administration of the then mayor João Doria, in 2017, where in an unbridled attempt to end cracolândia, it used water jets as a means on all the people who were in the place, from homeless people to drug users, the act led people to leave with only clothes on their backs.

The diffusion of the hygienist discourse in Brazil reveals aspects interconnected with eugenics, now disseminated with the birth of the idea, with regard to the city, the segregation of people in public spaces transcends purely economic issues, the mere visual existence of people with purchasing power different from what is established as a standard, or even beyond, people of different race and color for the whitened standard is a reason for repulsion, and, even more seriously, the association of criminality with this group.

#### **4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Thus, for all that has been said in this article, the emergence and advance of globalization, as well as that of capitalism that developed with the Industrial Revolution, played an important role in providing interaction and advances in society, however, both did not only provide benefits, they caused the genesis of standardizations in societies, leading to the segregation of individuals who did not follow and/or fit these standards. provoking the diffusion of eugenicist and hygienist discourses.

The term eugenics comes from Darwinian theory and was initially discussed by the anthropologist Francis Galton, who presented in his studies that the improvement of societies and the individuals who were part of them did not occur through education, by any other cultural or social value, but by genetics, that is, the capacity of the individual was given by his heredity and his biological lineage.

Although axiologically not morally acceptable, in practice it is seen as the new forms of iniquities, with epistemological bases already known and now mentioned in this text, eugenics, despite being discussed and studied in scientific ways, was moved and stimulated by political, social and elitist issues.



And, although there is social revulsion linked to Nazi practices based on eugenics, there is a dubiousness between the belief and the practice of anti-eugenicist acts, this is mainly due to the disassociation of the term from the act.

The source of segregationist thinking drinks from the source of social insecurities, and from this it is constantly fed, segregation exists so that inequities exist, and although there are many issues of historical and social order to be listed and discussed, the negotiations for this are mainly related to social insecurity.

Thus, answering the question at the beginning of this article, which is: how do eugenic and hygienist discourses promote urban and social segregation of peripheral populations? Such discourses promote segregation due to the fact that peripheral populations do not fit into a pre-existing pattern to that of the so-called elites who hold a thought that social problems, diseases, and criminalities are necessarily linked to people who did not fit their social standard and therefore peripheral populations become segregated and marginalized, especially in large urban centers.



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