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CRITICAL ESSAY ON CORRUPTION IN BRAZILIAN SCIENTIFIC PRODUCTION

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Summary

Corruption is a phenomenon of international interest, which has been gaining space in the public agenda and also in academic production. In order to capture how corruption has been debated in Brazilian scientific production, an unsystematic review was carried out, also contemplating how the subject is debated in the field of Health. It was also intended to weave Marxist criticism of the most common conception of corruption. Literature reviews showed that there was an increase in production from the 2010s onwards, with the majority in the field of Law. The studies are mostly public, without specifying power or sphere of government, and have greater use of foreign references.

There is a need for expansion in studies, including critical readings of the dominant discourse, as was the case with the questioning made about the separation between "public" and "private", "political" and "economic" in the definition of corruption. A Marxist view of corruption as an ideology of the Capitalist State was highlighted.

Keywords: Corruption; Revision; Marxist critique.

<p>ENSAIO CRÍTICO SOBRE A CORRUPÇÃO NA PRODUÇÃO CIENTÍFICA BRASILEIRA</p> <p>Resumo: Corrupção é fenômeno de interesse internacional, que vem ganhando espaço na agenda pública e também na produção acadêmica. No intuito de captar como a corrupção vem sendo debatida na produção científica brasileira, foi feita uma revisão assistemática, contemplando também como o assunto é debatido no campo da Saúde. Foi intuito também tecer crítica marxista a concepção mais comum de corrupção. As revisões de literatura demonstraram que houve aumento da produção a partir da década de 2010, sendo maioria no campo do Direito. Os estudos são majoritariamente de âmbito público, sem especificar poder ou esfera de governo e tem maior uso de referências estrangeiras. Há necessidade de ampliação nos estudos, inclusive com leituras críticas ao discurso dominante, como foi o caso do questionamento feito sobre a separação entre “público” e “privado”, “político” e “econômico” da definição de corrupção. Destacou-se uma visão marxista de corrupção enquanto ideologia do Estado Capitalista.</p>	<p>ENSAYO CRITICO SOBRE LA CORRUPCIÓN EN LA PRODUCCIÓN CIENTÍFICA BRASILEÑA</p> <p>Resumen: La corrupción es un fenómeno de interés internacional, que ganó espacio en la agenda pública y en la producción académica. Para captar cómo la corrupción ha sido debatida en la producción científica brasileña, se realizó una revisión asistemática, contemplando también como se debate el tema en el sector de salud. Se pretendía tejer una crítica marxista a la concepción más utilizada de corrupción. La literatura demostró que ha habido un aumento en la producción sobre corrupción desde 2010, con mayoría en el campo del derecho. Los estudios son en su mayoría de ámbito público, sin especificar poder o esfera de gobierno y tienen mayor uso de referencias extranjeras. Es necesario ampliar los estudios, incluyendo lecturas críticas del discurso dominante, como los cuestionamiento sobre la separación entre “público” y “privado”, “político” y “económico” en la definición de corrupción. Se destacó una visión marxista de la corrupción como ideología del Estado capitalista.</p>
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Descritores: Corrupção; Revisão; Crítica marxista.		Descriptores: Corrupción; Revisión; Crítica marxista.
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INTRODUCTION

Corruption is a subject of multidisciplinary interests and contributions, Law, Administration, Sociology, Economics, Political Science¹ among other disciplines use diverse paradigmatic approaches such as: economic, political, cultural, psychological, philosophical, linguistic, among others in the debate on the subject.²

Brazilian scientific production on corruption in the field of political and social sciences has increased in the last two decades. However, until the mid 1990s it appeared scarce, being motivated by the boost provided by international organizations such as the World Bank, the creation of International Transparency, among others, which focused on the importance of fighting corruption, including for the development of nations. After this international induction, together with the corruption scandals in Brazil, very mediatic such as "Mensalão" and "Lava-Jato", there was a significant increase in this production.³

Corruption, in the scientific literature, tends to be a polysemic concept and there is very little consensus on it. There are clearly divergences in the interpretation of the phenomenon, although there is also a majority use of definitions based on international organizations¹ such as International Transparency which interprets corruption as "the abuse of delegated power for private gain".⁴⁽⁷⁷⁾ This definition is linked to a classic idea of corruption that opposes the public and the private.^{1,2}

In order to capture how corruption has been debated in Brazilian scientific production, an unsystematic review was carried out, where the following stood out for use in this essay: three literature reviews,¹⁻³ and two other texts^{5,6} that distinguish the approach to corruption in literature. It was also intended to problematize some concepts rooted in the most classic definition of corruption, from a Marxist point of view. Finally, there is also a review on the theme of corruption in the field of health, using the Virtual Health Library – VHL. This study is justified from the understanding that corruption is a phenomenon of international interest, which has been gaining space in the public agenda

and also in Brazilian academic production and that it can benefit from a critical discussion on the subject.

It is interesting to note that this is an essay of political thought, understanding thought as a "human capacity to unveil appearances [, which is done within a logic. And understanding **politics** as] a symbolic and material element of expression of power, fundamental for construction and social change".⁷⁽¹¹⁶⁻¹¹⁷⁾

DEVELOPMENT

A first characteristic highlighted in relation to Brazilian publications on corruption is the greater production on the subject from the point of view of Law, as shown by a literature review in the field of applied human and social sciences.³ This review, added to another in the field of political science,¹ highlights a significant increase in scientific production between 2014 and 2017 and associates the fact with the corruption scandals in the country, "Mensalão" and/or "Operation Car Wash" and the mediatic way in which these cases are publicized. It is also observed that until 1996 there were no scientific articles on corruption as a central theme, and that by the 2010s there were sixfold the number of publications when compared to 1990.¹

Another historical fact that stands out and that drives the debate on corruption is the creation of organizations such as the International Transparency (1993) and the involvement of multilateral institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in the fight against corruption.^{1,5} From a little-debated topic, corruption is now considered "the greatest inhibitor to equitable economic development"¹⁽¹²⁷⁾ in the words of James Wolfensohn¹, president of the World Bank at the time. The 1996 Annual General Meeting of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund is also a landmark event, when high-ranking figures from the institutions declared a public commitment to fighting corruption.¹ From then on, recommendations and political guidelines were created in this regard, especially for less developed countries, which were linked as conditions for international support and investments, which were consistent with a liberal market ideology, which was obviously intended to expand in these places.⁵

In addition to being the majority in the field of Law, the studies that address corruption are predominantly qualitative (72%); public (87%); the approach being carried out in a general way (69%), that is, not referring to one of the Three Powers (Executive, 22%; Legislative, 5%; and the Judiciary, 4%), not even to one level of government (national, 50%; transnational, 15%; federal, 17%; state, 7%; and municipal, 11%). And these same characteristics are repeated in studies in the specific field of administration.³ Thus, it can be seen that the interest of the research is on the public sphere, although the phenomenon also occurs in the private sphere, which may reinforce a certain common sense that the problem is restricted to the State, parties and the political class.¹ It also does not address the spheres such as the Legislative and Judiciary, and when they address the latter, they do so not as susceptible to corruption, but in their performance in legal proceedings and trial of cases.³

Another characteristic of Brazilian academic production is the greater citation of foreign authors, especially Rose-Ackerman,³ an author who has a thought on the causes and consequences of corruption in the economic field, with a micro-individual explanation, which is consistent with a perspective associated with the logic of the market and the multilateral institutions highlighted above.² The themes discussed in the articles also seem to converge with the international agenda of these organizations, because after corruption, terms such as "combat", "compliance", "effect", are the ones that appear most in titles, and keywords.³

The same data is expressed differently based on the division proposed by Vitullo:¹ which classifies publications with a **conventional approach**, which would be those that do not question the use of the theme of corruption in the political dispute, and a second heterodox group, which has a more critical approach. And most of the studies were based on a conventional approach (84.9%), among them are those that are in accordance with the definitions and perspectives of multilateral organizations, concerned with offering indicators, evaluation methods and combating corruption, without questioning them. Which are often also studies that cannot distance themselves from the way the media approaches the topic.¹

As previously evidenced, corruption is approached through different paradigms and four of them will be commented on: the economic, the cultural, the neo-institutionalist

and finally the **heterodox**, or called here critical. According to Vannucci,⁶ the first three are different though not irreconcilable. In the first, corruption is an individual choice based on the cost-benefit calculation of this act, a behavior called *rent-seeking* or *self-seeking*. Culturalism, on the other hand, understands that corruption is intrinsically linked to moral, ethical, normative issues of the culture of a given society, so corruption would be more or less determined as to culture. Furthermore, the neo-institutionalist focuses on the mechanisms of corrupt relations, as well as the role that institutions have in forging the beliefs of social actors about the viability of corruption. The latter has gained hegemony in Brazilian scientific articles and even in other countries, because, according to Vitullo,¹ it is the reading that has been promoted by international organizations that have guided the fight against corruption since the 1990s.¹

Regarding the economic paradigm, one of the main authors and already mentioned before, because she is often cited in Brazilian studies, is Rose-Ackerman.⁶ In her theory, corruption is a product of an individual rational choice, which has consequences and influences on organizations. For the author⁶, the risks of punishments are evaluated, as well as the severity of these *versus* the rewards due to corrupt acts, which can be financial, but can also be of another nature, such as the conquest of power and others. So, this theory is based on the assumption that the individual's perception is eminently rational and that individuals are always in search of their interests in a world of few resources. Corruption is defined as an infraction of norms/rules, formal or informal, within a relationship between the *principal/truster*^a and the agent in pursuit of the former's interests.⁶

From the culturalist perspective, ethical standards matter when it comes to corruption. In this paradigm there is a look at cultural traditions, norms, values internalized by individuals, which shape them morally and this impacts their decisions as to whether or not to engage in corrupt activities. There is a belief that the difference between levels of corruption in certain countries is due to these cultural issues, and from this point of view it can be problematic, as it creates an implicit hierarchy between societies, usually

^a The *principal/truster* is someone who delegates decision-making power to an agent in order to pursue and carry out the interests of the former.

associating corruption with countries that have not incorporated Western culture, its vision of modernity and development.⁵ It is in this sense that some studies question the individualistic culture that exalts ambition in neoliberalism, arguing that it can favor a tendency to corruption.⁶

In Brazil, studies of this nature sometimes associate Portuguese colonization with clientelist and patrimonialism practices and, finally, corruption.⁵ In the review of Macedo and Valadares,³ only two Brazilian authors appear on the list of the most cited, one of them is José Murilo de Carvalho³, who deals with the relationship of Brazilians with the law and corruption, bringing an understanding of the issue based on Brazilian cultural and political issues throughout history. This demonstrates the use and penetrability that the culturalist approach still has in Brazilian studies.

The neo-institutionalist paradigm, in turn, investigates corrupt relations, their norms and informal sanctions. In this approach, there are some mechanisms that operate within complex organizations and corrupt systems, such as the internalization of informal norms (it is related to what she calls "*first-party control*"), sanctions that one corrupt agent can apply to another, withdrawing benefits, or even violent forms ("*second-party control*").⁶ The first Brazilian author most cited in national studies is Fernando Filgueiras,³ who has approached the theme from this neo-institutionalist perspective, according to Macedo and Valadares.³

On the other hand, the approach called heterodox by Vitullo¹ brought some questions brought by scientific articles regarding the theme of corruption in the political dispute. For example, the use of corruption in the sense of **criminalizing politics and demonizing the State**, as well as **stigmatizing popular parties**. Often, both the media and studies explain corruption only to the public sphere, generally focusing on the political class, especially popular parties, which serves precisely to discredit politics. It is in this way that corruption has become very associated with popular parties, such as, for example, in the case of the Workers' Party (PT) in Brazil. There is also criticism of the assumption of corruption as the main problem of a nation, therefore covering up structural problems of the mode of production, which the author classified as "populist manipulation of corruption seen as the source of all the country's ills"¹⁽¹²²⁾ and "narrowing the public debate and naturalization of the social order".¹⁽¹²⁰⁾

The criticism in the studies points to a "prejudice against the popular classes and exaltation of the supposed virtuosity of the middle classes",¹⁽¹²¹⁾ which would be an idea that because they have fewer financial conditions, the popular classes are more susceptible to accepting corruption, while the middle class sustains a moralistic anti-corruption discourse. There is also a questioning about the role of the Judiciary and the mainstream media, which sometimes pass for suprapolitical instances, although in reality they are involved in a range of political and financial interests.¹

Another very important debate has to do with the use of the fight against corruption as a strategy for implementing a neoliberal, deregulating, and privatizing agenda. Because, according to the criteria of international organizations such as the World Bank, the market, the limitation of State competences with privatization, deregulation are the powerful tools to control corruption. Authors¹ criticize this **"reaffirmation of neoliberalism as dominant common sense and exaltation of the market"**,¹⁽¹²¹⁾ as well as the **"protagonism of international institutions in the propagation of anti-corruption"**.¹⁽¹²¹⁾ The interest of these organizations is economic in that they use the anti-corruption agenda to hide these same cultural criteria within the private company. Under the aegis of capitalist competence, corrupt behaviors in the private sphere such as rapine, influence peddling and private financing of public bodies would be justified.¹ And this is a clear example of how the political is not dissociated from the economic and how the delimited distinction between public and private obscures important analytical elements.

In Capitalism, and especially from the classical economists, there is a conceptual separation between the economic and the political. However, this idea that dissociates the economic from the political is misleading and serves as a mechanism for defending the social order of capital. Marx rightly elucidates the political face of the economy, he thinks of capital as a social relation in which capitalist production exists due to the class struggle and the coercive intervention of the State in the expropriation of the producer. The State was and is essential in this process that is the basis of capitalism, and in this way it is evident that the economic sphere is based on politics.⁸ And, further, that the State's action would not be **suprapolitical** or above class division, but is an instrument of the dominant classes for the perpetuation of the power instituted in this sociability.

Borón⁹ warns about this fragmentation:

Because for Marxism, no aspect or dimension of social reality can be theorized on the margins – or independently – of the totality in which it is constituted. It is impossible to theorize about "politics," as political science and the conventional knowledge of the social sciences do, assuming that it exists in a kind of limbo that is safe from the prosaic realities of economic life. "Society," on the other hand, is a deceptive abstraction without regard to the material foundation on which it rests. "Culture" understood as ideology, discourse, language, traditions and mentalities, values and "common sense" can only be sustained thanks to its complex articulation with society, economics and politics.^{9(196, author highlights)}

The separation will be possible historically because, for the first time, in this system of production where the private owners, owners of production, are not linked to this function, another social and public one. In pre-capitalist systems, those who held economic power also held political, legal and military power, relations were dependent and these groups had an obligation to, for example, collect taxes, provide individual protection, among others. In capitalism, a sphere of power dedicated to private ends (class power) is developed, and the legal and social functions, including the coercive apparatus, are of the state.⁸ In other words, a separation also between the private and the public.

To add to these critical reflections, it is worth quoting the Marxist author Armando Boito Junior,¹⁰ argues precisely that "the distinction between the public and the private is a historical, dated and ideological creation of the capitalist State".¹⁰⁽¹⁰⁾ In his analytical perspective, corruption would be "an ideological creation (an unconscious, deformed and interested representation of reality) of the Capitalist State."¹⁰⁽¹³⁾ It is distorted and self-interested, because it helps to reaffirm this separation, even if only formal, between public and private, and helps to conceal the class character of the capitalist State.¹⁰ The author¹⁰ summarizes his thought:

Therefore, affirming that corruption has social roots and is a constitutive part of the capitalist state may be a good start, but it is far from offering workers scientific knowledge that can guide a socialist critique of corruption. This only begins when it is clear that the very idea of corruption is a bourgeois ideological figure and serves, in the first place, to cover up the fact that the institutions, equipment, goods and human resources of the capitalist state are not "public", but resources at the service of the general interests of the ruling class.^{10(15, author highlights)}

Boito Júnior¹⁰ in his text will also discuss how each social class relates to corruption, he argues that the only univocal class that defends the flag against corruption

is the middle class. Firstly, the bourgeoisie has a so-called ambivalent relationship, because it would like to be able to use corruption in a dispute with fractions of its class, but at the same time it fears that corruption may reveal the true nature of the State. The working class, on the other hand, fights corruption, but as part of the problem of inequality in the distribution of wealth that plagues it. For the working class, the fight against corruption is not at the center of their agendas, issues such as: "the concentration of property, the concentration of wealth, the exploitation of labor and the very privileged condition of bureaucrats and professional bourgeois politicians"¹⁰⁽¹⁶⁾ are perceived as harmful to the class.

However, it is the middle class that most identifies with the anti-corruption agenda. Boito Júnior¹⁰ explains that this is due to his economic condition and meritocratic ideology. In this ideology, social differences are conceived "as a result of individual differences in the gifts and merits of each one"¹⁰⁽¹⁷⁾, it "presents a distorted view of social inequality and deformed in such a way that it justifies wage and social advantages for middle-class workers"¹⁰⁽¹⁷⁾. According to the author, the solution given by them would be legal and moral reform.

The concept of social class is very dear to Marxism, so it is interesting to highlight it briefly. Galvão,¹¹ highlights two conceptions, by Poulantzas and Bensaïd, the first of which understands class as mainly related to the place that the set of social agents occupies in the production process, without, however, discarding the importance of political and ideological aspects, in addition to the economic ones, in his conception. The second, on the other hand, conceives it as a relationship, sometimes conflictual, with other classes. The author¹¹ recalls the division of the class into itself, which would be its insertion in productive relations and class for itself, which is subjective and speaks of the recognition of the class itself, of its insertion in production. Specifically with regard to the middle class, which stood out above as a defender of the fight against corruption, Galvão¹¹ will explain that his definition is more linked to ideology than to the material base, and meritocratic ideology is precisely its definition.¹¹

Thinking critically, politics and economics are not dissociated, as well as the separation between what is public and private is only formal/artificial, as it occurs only in legal terms. Thus, it is not appropriate from this perspective to define corruption from a

confrontation between public and private interests, a definition commonly used, refuted here.

Finally, the three literature reviews used¹⁻³ point to gaps and the need for further studies on the theme of corruption in political science, social sciences and the field of administration. They point out the need to expand the theme to research in the private sphere; with specific spheres and powers, with quantitative methodology,³ approaches that go beyond the classical idea that corruption is a phenomenon of clash between public and private;² critical readings of the dominant discourse, which question the use of corruption or anti-corruption in the political dispute.¹

CORRUPTION IN HEALTH STUDIES

The issue of corruption still needs more studies, as previously stated. When it comes to corruption in healthcare, the field of study is even scarcer. In 2021, a book entitled "Corruption and health" was published in Brazil,⁴ organized by the initiative of International Transparency in Brazil and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, in order to produce reflections that lasted longer than the pandemic period, in which corruption scandals in the sector came to light. Ligia Bahia⁴ in a chapter of this book agrees that the theme is little debated and explains that internationally studies tend to attribute corruption: "to bad governments, to the weakness of public institutions, and to governance problems",⁴⁽⁷³⁻⁷⁴⁾ often in less developed countries, consistent with the perspective defended by international organizations and with the findings of literature reviews.¹⁻³

This corroborates the few results obtained in a first approximation with the literature in the second half of 2021, in which the descriptors "corruption" and "public health" were used with the connector "and" in the VHL database. Only 22 results were found and 3 of them were read due to the relevance of the subject. All took corruption as the use of public power for private interests, a commonly used perspective and close to the definition given by unilateral institutions.

A second way of approaching corruption that has been repeated in the literature is related to attempts to classify and demarcate typologies. Mujica, Zevallos and Prado¹² highlighted some typologies (according to the criminal nature) and modalities (according

to the cases surveyed in research) of corruption that are distributed differently depending on the levels of the bureaucratic apparatus of the health system. For these authors, bribery and collusion are the types of corrupt practices that are most repeated at different levels of health systems. Braga, in the book "Health and Corruption" (2021)¹³, also mentions that documents from international institutions on the subject, such as the *European Commission* and the United Nations Development Program – UNDP, have very similar typologies and exposes those of the UNDP:

- i) bribery for the provision of medical services;
- ii) corruption in purchases;
- iii) conflict of interest;
- iv) misuse of high-level positions;
- v) undue claims for reimbursement;
- vi) fraud and misappropriation of medicines and medical devices.¹³⁽¹⁰⁵⁾

Still with regard to the theme, Suarez-Rozo *et al.*¹⁴ and Mujica, Zevallos and Prado¹² showed a concern with the theme in the field of health. The first study addresses corruption as one of the causes of the crisis for the Colombian health system and the second study was the basis for the elaboration of a plan to fight corruption in the Ministry of Health in Peru. Bahia points out that in Brazil there is no legislation aimed at combating corruption in health.⁴

But, although there is no specific legislation, there are several mechanisms within the Brazilian health system (Unified Health System – SUS) that serve to control it. One of them is the social control provided for in laws 8.080¹⁵ and 8.142¹⁶ that regulate the SUS, organizing it through health councils: National Council, State, Municipal and Local Councils, which has as one of its purposes the supervision of the movement of resources, in addition to the Health Conferences (National, State and Municipal), Bipartite and Tripartite Commission. In addition, there is the performance of the Federal Audit Courts (TCU) and the States (TCE) which, in the health sector, carry out audits, surveys on expenses, among others. Therefore, in the framework of the system there are structures that independently control a guideline specifically aimed at combating corruption.

Another article found in the VHL was that of Lopes and Toyoshima,¹⁷ a quantitative study in which they demonstrated in two ways that corruption has an impact on the efficiency of public education and health policies. They observed that the 10% increase in the *corruption proxy* leads to a decrease of approximately 0.3% in the state's efficiency

score of these policies.¹⁷ While not denying the negative impact of corruption, however, it should be noted that the theme is also used in the field of health in the political-economic dispute, often being used to justify the lack of resources in the SUS. While what is proven is that there is an underfunding of the system, among other reasons due to the Deregulation of Union Revenues – DRU withdrawing resources from Social Security, the tax waiver of health activities which generates loss of revenue for the SUS, just to name a few of them. And from Constitutional Amendment 95, which limits public spending for 20 years (2017 to 2036), the SUS is now defunded.¹⁸

Thus, it is inferred that corruption in public health, contradictorily, is a subject that is still little explored in academia, although there is real concern around the theme and impact on public health policies along with the political-economic use of the issue.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Reviews of the Brazilian scientific literature on corruption showed that there was an increase in production from the 2010s onwards, that most studies on corruption are in the field of Law, even though this is a multidisciplinary theme, receiving contributions from Economics, Administration, Political Science, Sociology, among others. The studies are mostly public, with a general approach, without specifying power or sphere of government, and have greater use of foreign references.¹⁻³

Four approaches to corruption were highlighted: economic, culturalist, neo-institutionalist, and heterodox, with the neo-institutionalist being hegemonic in the studies. According to the economic approach, of a neoclassical nature, corruption is an individual choice based on the cost-benefit calculation of this act, a behavior called *rent-seeking*^b or *self-seeking*. In the culturalist approach, corruption is intrinsically linked to moral, ethical, normative issues of the culture of a given society, in this sense the idea of a "must be", that is, a way of moralizing individual behavior would be the way out to combat the culture of corruption. The neo-institutionalist approach, on the other hand, focuses on

^b An example of *rent-seeking* is when a company *lobbies* the government for donations, subsidies, or tariff protection. The pursuit of *rent-seeking* comes in many forms, from *lobbying* or donating funds. For example, if you donate money but don't make it explicit on your taxes, this can be considered a form of *rent-seeking*.

mechanisms of corrupt relations, as well as the role that institutions have in the beliefs of social actors about the viability or otherwise of corrupt practices and their legal sanction.⁵ Finally, what was called a heterodox approach, or even as a critical perspective on corruption, were studies that questioned the use of corruption in political disputes. These, not by chance, are a minority.¹

Some of the topics highlighted by Vitullo¹ as a source of criticism in these heterodox articles were: **criminalization of politics and demonization of the State, stigmatization of popular parties** linked to corruption, **populist manipulation of corruption considered the source of all the country's ills, "reaffirmation of neoliberalism as dominant common sense and exaltation of the market",¹⁽¹²¹⁾** as well as the **"leading role of international institutions in the propagation of anti-corruption".¹⁽¹²¹⁾**

In this essay, the criticism was mainly given to the most commonly used definition of corruption, which confronts a notion of "the public" and "the private" that is based on assumptions, at the very least, questionable, such as: "the abuse of delegated power for private gain".⁵⁽⁷⁷⁾ From a critical Marxist perspective, this definition no longer seems to satisfy, since the well-demarcated boundaries between public and private, political and economic are questioned in this approach. In addition to this questioning, a Marxist author – Armando Boito Junior¹⁰ who thinks of corruption as an ideology of the Capitalist State and perceives the middle class as the greatest defender of the anti-corruption discourse, stood out. For this understanding, the understanding of class in Marxism and more specifically of the middle class was made explicit, through the author Andreia Galvão¹¹.

The approach to the topic of corruption in health is consistent with the majority conceptions and perspectives promoted by international funding agencies. Although there is concern about the topic, it is relatively modest studied in health. Finally, all the literature reviews compiled pointed to the need to expand studies on corruption in Brazilian academia, favoring studies, for example, in the private sphere; with specific spheres and powers, with quantitative methodology;³ and with critical readings of the dominant discourse, which question the use of corruption or anti-corruption in the political dispute,¹ which justifies this essay.

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