

On how the subjectivities of our continent are "predisposed" to fascism

I. I would like to begin by taking up an idea that runs deeply through this meeting: the need to imagine the future and to build it from now on, every day, while we are still alive. There is something deeply political and deeply human there. Because talking about contemporary fascisms does not only imply analyzing governments, parties or public figures; it also implies asking ourselves what kind of subjectivities, sensitivities and ways of life are being produced in our societies.

And perhaps here there is a fundamental question: how have been configured - and continue to be configured - the subjectivities that not only vote for authoritarian proposals, but also accept, normalize or even reproduce fascist practices in everyday life?

We speak of fascisms in the plural because the authoritarian expressions that today cross Latin America and the Caribbean are not identical to each other. Far-right governments, certain traditional rights or even some centrist projects that incorporate discourses of securitization, militarization and social control do not operate in exactly the same way. However, beyond their differences, there is something that worries us deeply: the subjective conditions that make these expressions possible.

This question has a particularly important dimension for us from the place of education. Because education is not limited to transmitting content; it actively participates in the formation of sensibilities, imaginaries, affections, ways of relating to time, to conflict, to fear, to others and to the very idea of the future. Therein lies perhaps one of our greatest responsibilities.

We do not intend to offer definitive answers or close a discussion that is deeply complex. We just want to share some reflections built from regional experiences, from educational work, from territorial voices, youth, journalistic investigations, artistic productions and multiple collective conversations.

And we also want to say something from the beginning: these reflections do not ignore the long historical matrix on which our societies were built. Latin American and Caribbean subjectivities are not born in a vacuum. They are crossed by coloniality still in force, by republics founded on profound exclusions, by social systems that from their origin classified bodies, territories and lives between those that deserved protection and those considered dispensable. Perhaps that historical matrix is precisely one of the conditions that facilitate what we are seeing emerge so strongly today.

II. One of the most visible phenomena of our time **is the acceleration of time**. Immediacy has become a dominant value. Everything must happen now: responses, success, entertainment, information, emotions, political opinions, and even human relationships. Speed appears as efficiency and pause as failure.

But this acceleration is not only technological or economic; it profoundly transforms our ways of feeling and thinking. Democracy takes time. Needs listening, deliberation, disagreement, collective organization, long processes. However, contemporary subjectivities are increasingly shaped by an exactly opposite logic: that of the immediate result.

This logic of immediate result is a construction of the economic model of our time, which demands maximum productivity of everyone who works and who studies. This exhausting and unsustainable model is incompatible with a strong democracy, which demands time dedicated to movements, associations and participatory processes. The fascist discourse takes advantage of the exhaustion and poverty of time to promote a transformation of politics into bureaucracy, so that a few can make decisions without a political system that demands citizen participation.

In this context, any complex political process begins to be perceived as useless, slow or incapable. Discussion is replaced by slogan; reflection by reaction; collective construction by the expectation that someone will quickly solve problems. Little by little, politics ceases to be thought of as a common space and is evaluated with the logic of an application: if it does not produce instant results, it is discarded.

III. At the same time, **space seems to have shrunk**. Digital technologies allow a permanent connection and an immediate circulation of images, news and speeches. However, that hyperconnection does not necessarily produce human closeness. Rather, a paradox occurs: we know more and more images of the world while emotionally and ethically distancing ourselves from the concrete experiences of others.

The pain of others becomes content. Violence circulates as a spectacle. People stop perceiving themselves as complex subjects and appear as profiles, figures, enemies, threats or simple consumable images.

IV. And here appears something central: the crisis of narration.

Societies need long stories to sustain collective projects. They need historical memory, continuity between generations, the ability to connect past, present and future. But today fragments predominate: headlines, short videos, instant indignations, fleeting opinions. Each event immediately displaces the previous one before it can be understood.

Without shared narratives, the possibility of imagining common futures is also weakened. And when collective horizons disappear, the feeling of exhaustion, emptiness and helplessness is strengthened.

The long conversation - where one thinks, listens, contrasts and doubts - is being replaced by the logic of immediate comment. Insult works better than argument because it's fast, emotional, and easily viralized. Democratic debate, on the other hand,

demands something that contemporary dynamics constantly erode: time, attention and recognition of the other as a legitimate interlocutor.

That is why certain public statements that a few years ago would have been intolerable today circulate with relative normality. Not necessarily because societies have rationally elaborated new authoritarian convictions, but because they lowered collective thresholds of sensitivity to violence, exclusion, and dehumanization.

Contemporary fascisms advance many times in this way: they do not break out only as a spectacular rupture, but as a gradual process of habituation and erosion of democracy. The intolerable becomes debatable; then acceptable; finally normal and the same fascist options become normal within the formal mechanisms of democracy.

V. Added to this is another deeply disturbing phenomenon: **fear as the political organizer of our societies.**

We are not only talking about a specific fear, but an atmospheric, permanent, diffuse fear. The fear of violence, unemployment, precariousness, the future, fearing the other, the fear of being left out, of not surviving.

And there the advance of organized crime plays a fundamental role.

Organized crime cannot be understood only as a criminal phenomenon. In many territories of Latin America and the Caribbean it operates as a form of government. It regulates behaviors, controls economies, defines who can speak, circulate, or live. It applies punishments, imposes silences, and turns violence into everyday language.

In these contexts, human life loses value and fear completely reorganizes social relationships. People learn to be silent, to distrust, to survive individually. Community ties are fractured and the possibilities for collective action are weakened.

Youth appear to be particularly affected by these dynamics. In societies marked by inequality, precariousness, state violence and the absence of shared horizons, criminal economies offer recognition, belonging, protection and immediate models of success. They don't just dispute territories: they produce subjectivities.

And many times those logics end up finding continuity in increasingly authoritarian state responses. Militarization, mass surveillance, the suspension of rights and the expansion of "heavy-handed" policies are beginning to appear as inevitable.

Here a key aspect arises: the strong hand does not function solely as an ideological position. It also functions as an affective response. When societies live through fear, exhaustion and uncertainty, order begins to be perceived as one of the few imaginable goods. Freedom ceases to be felt as a collective possibility and begins to be experienced as a risk.

In that context, many people no longer want to participate politically; they want someone to control the situation. The demand stops being to democratize life and becomes simply to survive.

This produces a profound transformation of democratic sensitivities. Because democracy is not sustained only by formal institutions. It also depends on certain subjective dispositions: the ability to listen to the other, tolerate disagreement, sustain long processes, defend rights even in moments of fear and recognize the dignity of those who are different.

When those capacities are eroded, democracy can be formally maintained while losing its deep democratic culture.

And perhaps here appears one of the most difficult problems of our time: we live in hyper-connected but politically isolated societies. There is permanent circulation of opinions, but less collective organization. Lots of individual expression, little common construction. A lot of immediate reaction, little shared elaboration.

The citizen is progressively transformed into a user, consumer or spectator.

What we are facing today is profound. It has to do with contemporary ways of experiencing time, fear, the body, the bond with others and the very possibility of imagining the future.

And perhaps **there also appear our most important political and pedagogical challenges.**

How to reconstruct democratic experiences in an organized age against the very conditions of democratic experience?

How can we once again produce spaces for real conversation, listening, care and collective organisation?

How to reconstruct shared narratives capable of disputing fear and fragmentation?

How to politicize life again, not from hatred or simplification, but from the ability to weave community?

Because in the face of the expansion of subjectivities predisposed to fascism, perhaps the most urgent task is precisely the opposite: to rebuild bonds, sustain memories, invent futures and stubbornly defend the possibility of a common life.

Processes and tools for this task are already available in our region. Although today we see a society predisposed to fascism, there are historical constructions based on generating democratic subjectivities. In this sense, it is important to recover Freire, to look for ways to dialogue and jointly build our future in the pedagogy of hope. It is pertinent to return to Fals Borda, to question the ways of doing politics and generate

evidence about policies that do not listen to the affected communities. As a third point, it is relevant to highlight the experiences of civil society in democratizing our countries, which can inspire more democratic lifestyles.

And finally, of course, CLADE knows that the possibilities of education, when it comes to generating critical thinking, spaces for knowledge and recognition of the Other, capacities for non-violent coexistence, opportunities for exchange, dialogue, debate, consensus, decisions and collective actions, are broad possibilities that can touch from childhood to the elderly; from the spaces of public education systems, to the spaces of community and popular education, from academia to communities and vice versa.

Perhaps it is time to take up something seemingly simple, but profoundly radical in these times: to look at each other again, listen to each other again and reimagine together a new world that is already underway, but to which we do not systematically turn our gaze, to strengthen those new constructions that announce the future we want and deserve.

That what Fredric Jameson said is not going to happen to us: *"Someone once said that it is easier to imagine the end of the world than to imagine the end of capitalism"*.