Progressive Lefts versus Far-Rights: Socioeconomic and Political Reflections with Education as a Solution

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ABSTRACT

The clash between progressive lefts and the far right is a global phenomenon that impacts socioeconomic and political spheres. Progressive lefts seek a just and egalitarian society with an active state in wealth redistribution, while the far right defends traditional values, a strong state, and nationalist policies. This ideological conflict manifests in political polarization and the erosion of trust in institutions. Education is presented as a crucial tool to foster critical thinking, tolerance, and citizen participation, contributing to the construction of a more just and equitable future.

Keywords: Progressive left, far right, democracy, education, ideology.

INTRODUCTION

In the melting pot of contemporary society, two polarized ideological currents have emerged with force, shaping the global political and socioeconomic landscape: the progressive left and the far-right. This clash of visions, far from being a mere academic debate, manifests in the tangible reality of millions of people, affecting their lives, their rights, and their opportunities.

In the intricate labyrinth of contemporary politics, the clash between the progressive left and the far-right emerges as a phenomenon of increasing global relevance, shaping public discourse and political agendas with unprecedented intensity. This confrontation, far from being merely an ideological dichotomy, manifests in complex socioeconomic and political dynamics that demand rigorous analysis and deep reflection (Harvey, 2006; Harvey, 2005, 2015; Piketty, 2020; Stiglitz, 2013).

The progressive left, rooted in a tradition of thought that traces back to the Enlightenment and 19th-century socialism, advocates for a societal model based on social justice, equal opportunities, and the protection of human rights. Their vision centers on state intervention to correct market inequalities, ensure access to essential public services, and promote the redistribution of wealth. In a world marked by growing inequality and social exclusion, the progressive left champions public policies that prioritize collective well-being over individual

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interests, solidarity over competition, and inclusion over exclusion.

On the opposite end of the political spectrum, the far-right represents a conservative and nationalist reaction to the challenges of globalization, cultural diversity, and identity crises. Their discourse is characterized by the defense of traditional values, the exaltation of national identity, and hostility towards immigration and minorities. The far-right advocates for a strong, authoritarian state capable of protecting national security and preserving cultural identity, and for economic policies that prioritize national interests over international cooperation. In a world marked by uncertainty and fear, the far-right offers simple and populist answers to complex problems, appealing to emotions and prejudices rather than to reason and evidence.

This ideological confrontation translates into a series of political and social conflicts, manifesting in the polarization of public discourse, the fragmentation of the political system, and the erosion of trust in democratic institutions. In a context of growing economic inequality, environmental crisis, and geopolitical tensions, the struggle between the progressive left and the far-right intensifies, threatening to destabilize the political and social order.
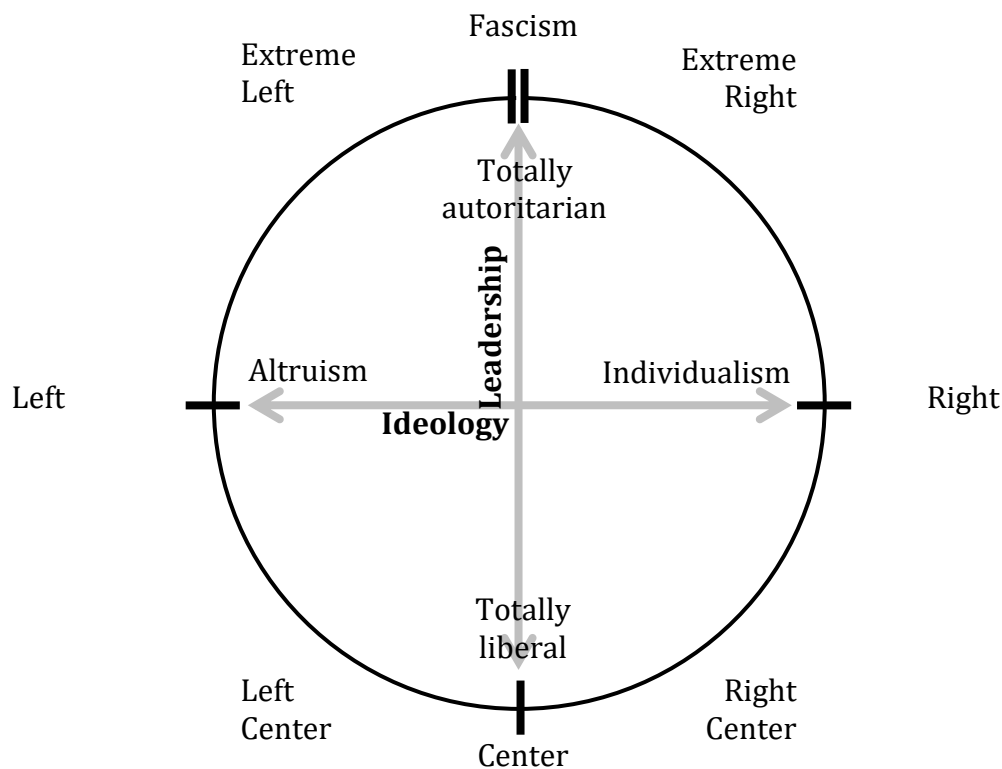

Figure 1: Ideology versus leadership schema.

Facing this challenging outlook, education emerges as a fundamental tool for building a more just and equitable future. Education, understood as a comprehensive formation process that promotes critical thinking, tolerance, and civic participation, can play a crucial role in overcoming ideological polarization and fostering constructive dialogue among different worldviews. By encouraging respect for diversity, valuing evidence, and committing to

democratic values, education can contribute to shaping informed and responsible citizens, capable of actively participating in building a better future for all.

Figure 1 presents a diagram that aims to conceptually illustrate different political frameworks, considering two dimensions: ideology and leadership style. Ideology can be either right-wing or left-wing, and leadership style can be either fully liberal (democratic) or fully authoritarian (fascist).

Observe that fascism (typically illustrated by Hitler) would be a right-wing ideological framework, but as its leadership becomes completely authoritarian, it circles around and reaches the top of the Figure 1 diagram, which shows a kind of mirror. Stalin's statism, which was supposedly left-wing, also being completely authoritarian, reaches the other side of the mirror of the fascist schemes at the top of Figure 1. In this way, both Hitler and Stalin are similar representations of ideological frameworks supposedly opposed in ideology, but they are not.

The far-right would be an extreme right-wing framework in Figure 1. The progressive left would be a left-wing framework, which can be located as either a center-left or extreme-left framework, depending on the specific case. We consider the current progressive left in Mexico to be more of a center-left case, as it upholds democratic values.

THE SUBSTITUTION OF IMPORTS MODEL

The Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) model is an economic development strategy that seeks to promote a country's industrialization through the domestic production of previously imported goods (Mercado Contreras, 2025). This model was widely implemented in Latin America and other developing countries during the second half of the 20th century, primarily in the 1960s and 1970s (Vazquez Maggio, 2017).

The main objectives of ISI are industrialization, to boost the development of national industry seeking to reduce import dependence; economic growth, which seeks to promote the expansion of production and employment in the industrial sector; and economic autonomy, with the goal of decreasing the national economy's vulnerability to international market fluctuations.

The key mechanisms of ISI are protectionism, through the implementation of tariffs, quotas, and other trade barriers to make imports more expensive and protect domestic industry from foreign competition; subsidies, by granting financial aid and other incentives to national companies to stimulate production and investment in strategic sectors; state intervention, through the active participation of the government in the planning and financing of industrial development, including the creation of public enterprises; and preferential credit, by providing credit facilities with low interest rates for industries that produce import-substituting goods.

The stages of ISI are:
1. Substitution of non-durable consumer goods: This begins with the local production of basic goods such as food, textiles, and footwear.
2. Substitution of durable consumer goods: The process moves towards the production of more complex goods like home appliances and automobiles.
3. Substitution of capital goods: The aim is to develop the capacity to produce industrial machinery and equipment to reduce reliance on foreign technology.

Implementing the Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) model offers several significant benefits for a country. Firstly, it drives the growth of domestic industry, which, in turn, creates new employment opportunities for the local population. Additionally, ISI helps reduce reliance on imports, strengthening the country's economy and making it less vulnerable to international market fluctuations. Finally, this strategy fosters the development of local technological and productive capabilities, allowing the country to produce higher value-added goods and services and compete in the global market.

Despite its potential benefits, ISI also presents significant disadvantages. By protecting domestic industries from external competition, it can lead to inefficiency and a lack of competitiveness in the international market. Furthermore, reliance on subsidies and state protection can distort the market and discourage innovation. ISI can also limit access to cutting-edge goods and technologies, hindering long-term modernization and economic growth. The need to finance industrial development may lead to the accumulation of external debt, posing a risk to economic stability. Finally, limited domestic markets can restrict the consistent growth of industries, preventing them from achieving economies of scale and consolidating their position in the global market.

ISI began to show signs of exhaustion in the 1970s due to the inefficiency of protected industries, growing external debt, and the global economic crisis. Starting in the 1980s, there was a shift towards policies of trade openness and economic liberalization, marking the end of ISI's predominance (García Ramírez & Guevara Barrera, 2018).

THE NEOLIBERALISM MODEL

Neoliberalism is a political and economic philosophy that advocates for reducing state intervention in the economy, promoting free markets, and privatizing public companies and services. It emerged as a response to the welfare state crisis in the 1970s and became the dominant model in the 1980s and 1990s (Mañé-Estrada, 2024).

The fundamental principles of neoliberalism are based on the belief that the free market is the most efficient mechanism for resource allocation and wealth creation. This implies the elimination of trade barriers, the deregulation of markets, and the promotion of competition. Privatization of public companies and services is promoted, under the premise that the private sector is more efficient and productive. Government deregulation seeks to reduce obstacles to economic activity, fostering entrepreneurial initiative and innovation. Reduced public spending, especially on social programs and public services, is advocated with the goal of lessening the tax burden and promoting individual responsibility. Fiscal discipline, which involves maintaining a balanced budget and controlling inflation, is considered crucial for creating an environment favorable to investment and economic growth. The right to private property is protected against state intervention. Finally, individual responsibility and freedom of choice are emphasized over collectivism and state intervention.

Neoliberalism is characterized by a series of measures aimed at liberalizing the economy and reducing the role of the state. Among the most important are trade openness, which involves eliminating tariffs and non-tariff barriers to facilitate international trade. Financial deregulation is also promoted, removing restrictions on capital flows and financial activity. Another key characteristic is labor flexibility, which seeks to reduce labor protections and

promote flexible hiring. Lastly, it advocates for tax reductions, especially for businesses and high-income individuals.

Neoliberalism has had a significant impact on the global economy, generating both benefits and criticisms. Among its attributed benefits are the economic growth experienced in some countries and specific sectors. It has also facilitated greater access to goods and services through international trade. In some privatized sectors, an increase in innovation and efficiency has been observed.

Despite the benefits some attribute to neoliberalism, it has also received numerous criticisms. It is argued that this economic model has contributed to increased economic inequality, job insecurity, and the weakening of labor rights. Furthermore, it is criticized for the deterioration of public services and social protection, as well as for generating recurrent financial and economic crises. Finally, neoliberalism is associated with environmental degradation and the concentration of economic power in large corporations.

The neoliberal model has been the subject of intense debates and controversies, and its impact continues to be analyzed and discussed. We did not seriously consider the need to shift towards a progressive left model until after a conversation with a stranger on a vacation flight to the beach. The stranger was pejoratively discussing the excesses and embezzlement of the Peña Nieto government. I did not react seriously to this, as I thought a bit of government corruption wasn't something to be taken so seriously and was to be expected. However, the conversation took a serious turn when the stranger said, "Do you know how all the world's problems would be solved?" This certainly caught my attention, and I said, "No, how?" To which the stranger replied, "By killing all the poor people." For three seconds of absolute terror, contemplating the "beauty" and simplicity of such a solution (in the eyes of a neoliberal), I did not know what to say, as there was no way to object by saying it would not be moral; neoliberalism does not understand morality, only reasons. Finally, I managed to say, "You cannot do that because if you kill all the poor, then more poor people would emerge, and in the end, you'd have to kill everyone." Clearly, a true change in politics and the socioeconomic approach was now needed (Polanyi, 2001; Stiglitz, 2019). With Andrés Manuel López Obrador, such an opportunity arose (Millán-Valenzuela & Rodríguez, 2024), which continues to this day under the leadership of Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo. The answer formulated for that question is not entirely correct. Having a large population presents the evolutionary advantage that better solutions to problems can emerge due to a broad and varied population. This becomes clear in the field of computing when studying "genetic algorithms" and, more specifically, when applying this approach to hard optimization problems such as the "traveling salesman problem." An artificial selection of the fittest patterns is observed (Haupt & Haupt, 2004; Applegate, Bixby, Chvátal, & Cook, 2006; Copertari, 2018, 2024).

THE PROGRESSIVE LEFT AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO NEOLIBERALISM

The progressive left presents itself as a critical alternative to neoliberalism, proposing a socioeconomic model that prioritizes social justice, equality, and sustainability (Klachko, 2024; Arellano, 2022; Casillas Herrera, 2010). To understand this alternative, it is essential to analyze its fundamental pillars and contrast them with neoliberal principles (Ramírez González, 2017; Delgado Wise, 2023).

The progressive left criticizes neoliberalism by arguing that this economic model generates a series of negative consequences for society. Firstly, it points out that the concentration of wealth and precarious employment deepen social divides, leading to greater inequality. Additionally, the privatization of basic services is criticized, as this limits access to health, education, and housing for the most vulnerable sectors of the population, leading to exclusion. Financial deregulation and speculation are identified as causes of recurrent economic crises, which generate instability and negatively affect the economy in general. Another important point of criticism is environmental degradation, as the prioritization of unrestricted economic growth leads to the exploitation of natural resources and climate change, endangering the future of the planet. It is argued that the power of corporations and financial markets undermines the ability of states to regulate the economy and protect citizens' rights, thereby weakening democracy.

As an alternative to neoliberalism, the progressive left proposes a model that strengthens the welfare state. This implies that the state must guarantee universal access to quality public services like healthcare, education, housing, and social security. To finance these services and reduce inequality, they propose progressive fiscal policies, such as taxes on large fortunes and capital gains, to enable wealth redistribution. The need for the state to regulate the financial sector and large corporations is raised, aiming to prevent speculation and protect the rights of workers and consumers. Another central element of this proposal is the transition towards a sustainable economy, through investment in renewable energy, environmental protection, and the creation of green jobs. The goal is to strengthen citizen participation in political and economic decision-making, promoting a participatory democracy, and special importance is given to the protection of labor rights and the creation of decent jobs.

It is important to note that the progressive left is not a homogeneous bloc. There are different currents and approaches, ranging from democratic socialism to political environmentalism. However, they share a common vision of a more just, egalitarian, and sustainable society.

The progressive left faces significant challenges, including resistance from economic and political sectors that benefit from neoliberalism, the fragmentation of social movements, and the need to build broad alliances to drive change. Despite these challenges, the progressive left remains a relevant political force in many countries. Its proposals resonate with the concerns of a growing portion of the population seeking alternatives to the neoliberal model.

THE PROBLEMATIC FACING THE PROGRESSIVE LEFT

The progressive left, with its emphasis on social justice, equality, and human rights, presents a series of complex issues and challenges in the contemporary political and social landscape (Oliver, 2022). These challenges can be analyzed from various perspectives:

1. Definition and internal diversity:
    - Ambiguity of the term: "Progressive left" is a broad and often ambiguous term. Its definition varies by geographic, historical, and cultural context, making it difficult to identify a coherent set of principles and policies.
    - Diversity of currents: The progressive left encompasses a wide range of ideological currents, from democratic socialism to progressive liberalism, including

environmentalism and feminism. This diversity can create internal tensions and conflicts over priorities and strategies.

2. Political challenges:
   - Political polarization: The progressive left often finds itself at the center of political polarization, which hinders dialogue and consensus-building.
   - Difficulty connecting with certain sectors: Some segments of the population, especially in rural areas or among those with lower educational attainment, may feel alienated by the discourse and proposals of the progressive left.
   - Tensions with globalization: The progressive left often criticizes the negative effects of globalization, such as economic inequality and environmental degradation. However, finding viable alternatives to globalization is a complex challenge.
   - Identity politics: The progressive left tends to focus heavily on identity politics, which can generate rejection in more conservative sectors who feel that issues like the economy are overlooked.

3. Social challenges:
   - Economic inequality: Despite the efforts of the progressive left, economic inequality remains a persistent problem in many countries.
   - Climate change: The fight against climate change is a priority for the progressive left, but it requires deep transformations in the economy and society.
   - Migration: Migration is a complex issue that generates heated debates. The progressive left tends to defend the rights of migrants, but it must also address the concerns of host communities.
   - New technologies: The rapid advancement of new technologies poses complex ethical and social challenges, such as privacy, artificial intelligence, and job automation.

4. Common criticism:
   - Excessive focus on identity: Some critics argue that the progressive left focuses too much on identity politics, to the detriment of broader economic and social issues.
   - Paternalism: Other critics accuse the progressive left of paternalism, arguing that it imposes its values and beliefs on other social groups.
   - Disconnection from reality: Some critics point out that the progressive left is disconnected from the daily realities of many people.
   - High costs: The policies proposed by the progressive left often come at a high cost to taxpayers.

5. Possible solutions and ways forward:
   - Build bridges: The progressive left needs to build bridges with other sectors of society, including those who do not share its views.
   - Focus on concrete solutions: It is important for the progressive left to propose concrete and viable solutions to the problems society faces.
   - Promote dialogue and debate: The progressive left should promote open dialogue and debate on important issues, rather than imposing its viewpoints.
   - Adapt to new challenges: The progressive left must adapt to the new challenges of the 21st century, including climate change, globalization, and new technologies.

The progressive left faces a series of complex challenges, but it also can play an important role in building a more just, egalitarian, and sustainable world.

THE FAR RIGHT AS A FALSE SOLUTION

The far-right, with its ideology based on extreme nationalism, radical conservatism, and authoritarianism, represents a diametrically opposed alternative to the progressive left (Laval & Sorondo, 2023; Alenda & Escoffier, 2024), and is therefore incompatible as a solution to its problems (Orozco, 2023; Equipo de Investigación Política, 2024). Following is a reasoning:

1. Opposing fundamental values:
   - Equality vs. hierarchy: The progressive left champions social equality, justice, and human rights for all. In contrast, the far-right advocates a hierarchical view of society, where certain groups (nation, race, religion) are considered superior to others.
   - Diversity vs. homogeneity: The progressive left celebrates cultural, ethnic, and sexual diversity, and promotes the inclusion of minorities. The far-right, conversely, seeks cultural homogeneity and the exclusion of those considered "different" or "foreign".
   - Human rights vs. national security: The progressive left prioritizes human rights and individual liberties. The far-right, however, prioritizes national security and public order, often at the expense of rights and freedoms.

2. Incompatible policies:
   - Social justice vs. neoliberalism: The progressive left advocates policies of wealth redistribution, social protection, and strengthening the welfare state. The far-right, conversely, promotes neoliberal policies of free markets, privatization, and reduced public spending, which exacerbates inequality.
   - Environmentalism vs. climate denial: The progressive left fights against climate change and promotes environmental sustainability. The far-right, in contrast, tends to deny climate change or minimize its importance, and advocates policies that favor the exploitation of natural resources.
   - Feminism vs. patriarchy: The progressive left champions gender equality and women's rights. The far-right, in contrast, upholds patriarchal values and traditional gender roles, and opposes women's reproductive rights.
   - Migration and immigration: The progressive left tends to defend the rights of migrants, while the far-right promotes anti-immigration and xenophobic policies.

3. Risks to democracy:
   - Authoritarianism: The far-right tends to advocate for strong, authoritarian leaders and to disdain democratic institutions and the rule of law.
   - Political violence: The far-right often resorts to political violence and hate speech to intimidate opponents and advance its agenda.
   - Disinformation: The far-right uses disinformation and fake news to manipulate public opinion and undermine trust in democratic institutions.

Thus, the far-right represents a threat to the fundamental values and principles of the progressive left, as well as to democracy and human rights. Its policies and proposals are incompatible with the pursuit of a more just, egalitarian, and sustainable society. Therefore, the far-right cannot be considered a viable solution or alternative for the progressive left.

It is fundamental that the progressive left strengthens its own political and social project, based on social justice, equality, and human rights, and builds alliances with other progressive sectors of society to confront the threat of the far-right.

EDUCATION AS A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE OF SOLUTION

Education, as a process of comprehensive individual development, offers tools to address the problems faced by the progressive left and the far-right (Díez Gutiérrez & Jarquín Ramírez, 2024), fostering critical thinking, empathy, and the construction of a more just and tolerant society (Betancur, 2022; Aguirre, 2019).

Education plays a crucial role in combating polarization and extremism, both on the left and the right, by promoting critical thinking. By developing the capacity for analysis, reflection, and questioning, it allows individuals to form their own opinions based on reason and evidence, rather than dogma or prejudice. This helps combat misinformation, manipulation, and extremist ideas. Furthermore, education, especially in the humanities, fosters empathy and understanding by promoting knowledge of different cultures, histories, and perspectives. This enables people to develop empathy and comprehend the realities of others, even those with different ideas or values. Empathy is fundamental for building a more tolerant and inclusive society where everyone's rights are respected. Education also develops skills for peaceful conflict resolution by transmitting values like cooperation, respect, and tolerance. This provides tools to resolve conflicts constructively, preventing polarization and violence.

Additionally, civic education promotes responsible citizen participation by forming citizens who are aware of their rights and duties, capable of actively participating in democratic life, and contributing to the common good. This strengthens democratic institutions and prevents authoritarianism.

Education is also a powerful tool for promoting values of equality, social justice, and human rights. It allows individuals to understand the causes of inequality and discrimination, and to commit to building a more just and inclusive society. Finally, education fosters sustainable economic and social development by providing the skills and knowledge necessary to participate in the knowledge economy and contribute to sustainable development. This helps reduce inequality, generate opportunities, and improve the quality of life for everyone.

Consequently, education is a viable solution to the problems posed by both the progressive left and the far-right, as it promotes critical thinking, empathy, peaceful conflict resolution, responsible civic participation, values of equality and social justice, and sustainable economic and social development.

To illustrate why education offers a solution of a different nature than traditional approaches, consider this: when money or food is shared, half of the money or food remains, but when knowledge is shared, it doubles.

Thus, the education of the population is a task that, in principle, allows nations to overcome their problems, especially if done creatively. This is even more true given that we are living in the era of the knowledge society, where the creation of new ideas, knowledge, and technology offers advantages to nations that embrace them, provided they can incorporate them productively and positively into their daily endeavors.

However, it is a numbers game. Mexico's population largely consists of young people and adults, and it is difficult to educate everyone successfully and satisfactorily, considering the limited

number of higher education institutions and their student capacity. Even so, it is possible to envision novel educational schemes. For instance, given the increasing access to connectivity and computing technologies, it would be possible, in principle, to create a complete AI-based educational system. In such a system, professors would design recorded classes, but the AI would determine which sessions are broadcasted first and which come later, based on the students' performance.

However, educating the population is not necessarily the final solution to all problems. The neoliberal regime created globally integrated production schemes and destroyed the structure of domestic companies within countries. As a result, businesses offer very few jobs, and when they do, these jobs often do not require a high degree of specialization or cognitive skills. Therefore, it is necessary to start, right away, a public policy for the regeneration of domestic companies with the aim of employing more and more young people and orienting their production towards an internal market with increasing purchasing power.

Another alternative educational model is also proposed. This model consists of a scheme of exponential evolution in its development. Each teacher would instruct a total of 10 young people (or adults) in basic subjects so they become competent in the life and labor markets of the country in the early and mid-21st century. These young people (and adults) must rigorously learn these teachings, which would be accredited by the public education system. They would also need to learn how to teach what they learned to another ten young people or adults, and so on. After seven or eight generations, the entire population would be covered (10^8 = 100,000,000; almost the entire population of Mexico). But what is the average educational level in Mexico compared to other countries? According to Eustat – Basque Institute of Statistics (2024), Mexico's population has an average schooling of 9.2 years. This is not as low as India (6.6 years), but certainly not as high as Germany (14.3 years). Please refer to Table 1 for more information.

Table 1: Average scholarly level of eleven countries including México.

Country	Average scholarly level (data from 2022)
Germany	14.3
Canada	13.9
United States	13.6
United Kingdom	13.4
Japan	12.7
Russian Federation	12.4
France	11.7
Spain	10.6
Mexico	9.2
China	8.1
India	6.6

An average schooling of 9.2 years means that the average Mexican completes primary school (6 years) and junior high school (another 3 years), but barely starts (and then drops out of) high school. Consequently, the average Mexican does not reach upper secondary education, much less higher (university) education. Here we have a huge opportunity for development as a nation.

PENDING PROBLEMATICS FOR A SOLUTION

Educating the population and offering them employment and purchasing power in the economy is a solution to the country's problems, but it also presents a resulting challenge (Quintero Legizamón & Barbosa Domínguez, 2023). This population would then demand resources from the country: housing, communications and telecommunications, road connectivity, water and drainage, and all types of services. These services typically generate an additional environmental burden on the planet's resources. Thus, we need to transition towards greater socioeconomic and political development while simultaneously improving our environmental impact on the planet. This can be achieved using renewable energies (especially harnessing solar energy and efficient distribution of that energy through the CFE's electrical grid), reusing plastics (León Cárdenas & Casas Vela, 2024), aluminum, metals, and organic waste, as well as shifting the water burden from industries with high water requirements to areas that can naturally offer such resources (the coast and southeastern Mexico, for example).

The fundamental problems that must be resolved while advancing socioeconomically and politically include climate change (Tejada Salinas & Panduro Meléndez, 2024; Minchala Hidalgo, Mendoza Hidalgo, & Hidalgo López, 2025), over-exploitation of water, pollution and contamination of soil, water, and air (Palacios Anzules & Moreno Castro, 2022), the energy efficiency of the technology we use, and the energy crisis (Malinovsky & Hurtado, 2024) that will result if we don't transition to utilizing the energy capacity offered by the sun (even natural gas isn't ecologically good enough), among others.

In the case of the North American coalition, which includes Mexico, the United States, and Canada, we must seek an alliance where our differences complement each other, rather than competing over our similarities. Mexico faces the challenge of reconstructing its domestic business infrastructure and production chains to meet internal demand. Meanwhile, the United States and Canada must find ways to maintain and increase their technological leadership to offer technological, knowledge-based, and even socioeconomic and political solutions to the key problems identified for the 21st century.

DISCUSSION

Education emerges as a crucial ground for encounter and debate in the face of ideological polarizations between the progressive left and the far-right. Below, a detailed analysis is presented on how education can offer alternative solutions to the challenges posed by these two currents.

The challenges posed by the progressive left are that they focus their criticisms on socioeconomic inequalities, discrimination, and the need for inclusive and equitable education. They also promote education as a tool for social transformation, emphasizing the importance of critical awareness and social justice.

The challenges posed by the far-right are that they typically advocate for an education focused on traditional values, patriotism, and the preservation of national identity. They criticize what they consider "ideological indoctrination" in schools, champion an education that prioritizes discipline and individual merit, and in some cases, promote the separation of social groups within educational institutions.

In this context, education emerges as a key alternative solution to address polarization and extremism. To achieve this, it is fundamental to promote critical thinking in students, providing them with the tools to analyze and question different ideological perspectives, thus avoiding polarization and dogmatism. By developing analytical and argumentative skills, students can objectively evaluate the arguments of both currents, identifying their strengths and weaknesses.

Also crucial is education in democratic values, such as tolerance, respect for diversity, and constructive dialogue. These values are fundamental for building a cohesive and pluralistic society where understanding and respect for different opinions are promoted, reducing polarization and fostering peaceful coexistence.

Another important aspect is ensuring inclusive and equitable education, which provides access to quality education for everyone, regardless of their socioeconomic or cultural background. This is essential for reducing inequalities and promoting social justice. Inclusive education that values diversity and promotes equal opportunities contributes to building a more just and cohesive society.

In an increasingly interconnected world, global citizenship education becomes fundamental. It is necessary to educate students to understand global challenges and the importance of international cooperation. Global citizenship education fosters respect for cultural diversity and promotes the building of a more just and sustainable world.

Finally, in the age of misinformation and fake news, media literacy education is crucial. Students must develop skills to critically evaluate the information they receive, distinguishing between truthful information and propaganda. This allows them to avoid manipulation and indoctrination.

It is important that education be a space for open dialogue and debate, where different ideological perspectives can be discussed respectfully and constructively. Educators must play a fundamental role in promoting critical thinking and education in democratic values. Collaboration among the school, family, and community is essential to ensure a comprehensive education that prepares students to face the challenges of the 21st century.

Consequently, education can play a crucial role in overcoming the ideological polarization between the progressive left and the far-right by promoting critical thinking, democratic values, and social justice.

CONCLUSIONS

Regarding the challenges posed by the progressive left and the far-right, there is a clear divergence in their educational priorities and approaches. While the progressive left emphasizes inclusion, social justice, and social transformation through education, the far-right focuses on tradition, patriotism, and individual merit. Furthermore, both currents criticize the current educational system, albeit from different perspectives. The progressive left highlights inequalities and a lack of equity, while the far-right decries alleged "ideological indoctrination" and a lack of discipline.

Regarding the role of education as an alternative solution, education can be a key tool to overcome ideological polarization, if it fosters critical thinking, education in democratic values, and respect for diversity. Inclusive and equitable education that guarantees access to quality education for all, regardless of their social or cultural background, is fundamental for building a more just and cohesive society. Education for global citizenship and media literacy education are essential to prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century, such as globalization, misinformation, and fake news.

Consequently, education has the potential to bridge the gap between the progressive left and the far-right by promoting dialogue, critical thinking, and mutual understanding. To achieve this, it is fundamental for education to be a space for open and pluralistic debate, where different ideological perspectives can be addressed respectfully and constructively. Forming critical, responsible citizens committed to democratic values is the best alternative for overcoming polarization and building a more just and cohesive society.

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