On Populist Politics and Parliamentary Paralysis

An Interview with Ernesto Laclau

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A spectre is haunting Western Europe, and it no longer bears the name 'communism' but 'populism'. Politicians and political parties such as Wilders in the Netherlands, Le Pen in France, Berlusconi in Italy or the Vlaams Belang in Flanders refer to 'the people' or the demos to legitimize what is usually an extreme right-wing programme that connects 'the danger of Islam' and 'the threat of immigration to identity' with such things as globalisation, security and the future of 'our' social safety net. This rhetoric is embedded in a more general discourse that creates a broader antagonism between 'us' and 'them', 'the people' and their adversaries. 'Us' stands for average hard-working citizens who behave decently and have common sense. 'Them' stands for the political establishment and the 'left-wing church', who squander money at the government's expense and deprive 'us', 'the silent majority', of freedom of speech through the imposed morality of political correctness. In this way, right-wing populism can position itself as an ultra-democratic discourse, adept at aggregating various complaints and fears in the name of 'the people'. Whether it's the European Union, the uncertain future of the pension system, the credit crisis, the rate of taxation, or simply the ever-growing queues on the motorways, it is always connected to the discrepancy between 'us' and 'them'. 'They' do not listen to 'us'; 'they' ignore the will and identity of 'the people'. This discourse not only simplifies the political arena; it also relates 'the people' to a charismatic leader who seems to literally personify its presumed desires. Le Pen, Wilders, De Winter or Berlusconi profess that they give the 'silent majority' a voice, while in fact they actively articulate it by ascribing very different complaints, demands and desires to the discrepancy between 'us' and 'them'. All of this is facilitated by the mediatized audience democracy, in which self-appointed mouthpieces of 'the people' can directly address the individual citizen in prime time with well-chosen one-liners. In the Netherlands, first Pim Fortuyn and then Geert Wilders proved in this way that a populist politician can appeal to a broad spectrum of the population without the support of a consolidated party machine.

Latin America is in the grip of a completely different kind of populism. Of a left-wing persuasion, it is buoyed by a combination of three factors: the mobilization capacity of various grassroots movements, the recruitment power of the mass media, and the rhetorical allure of a charismatic leader, à la Evo Morales, Lula da Silva or Hugo Chávez. Unlike in right-wing Europe, the contradistinction between 'us' and 'them' is not primarily articulated culturally, but economically, which would seem to make Latin American populism a descendent of Marxist thought. Or is this precisely not the case, because the populist antithesis between the people and the establishment differs thoroughly from the antagonism between a dominated or exploited class and a propertied class?

For political theorist Ernesto Laclau (born in 1935 in Buenos Aires), this question sparked a reflection that would bring him 'beyond Marx' and prevailing theories of democracy. The populist appeal of 'Peronism' in Argentina was a reason for Laclau to cast serious doubts on the orthodox Marxist axiom that all politics is essentially an expression of economic

class differences. Instead, populism teaches that class politics is also first and foremost, a question of discourse: the articulation of the social space according to a specific dichotomy, which in populism assumes a more general form than in Marxism. In *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985), written together with Chantal Mouffe and which co-initiated so-called post-Marxism, this idea is further elaborated through an appeal to Gramsci's notion of hegemony. A hegemonic discourse, or a discourse that strives for hegemony, relates various dissatisfactions to each other: it homogenizes them by linking them together as equivalent demands in a chain of equivalence. This simultaneously creates an antagonism between 'the people' and the establishment: on the one hand, the equivalent demands are represented as coming from 'the people', which is thus discursively construed and given a political content, and on the other hand these demands are contrasted to the interests of those in power and the groups connected with them. The distinction between 'us' and 'them' may be defined in class terms, but this is only one possible articulation. Every hegemonic or contra-hegemonic discourse has its characteristic central signifiers that connect or combine divergent demands – one of the meanings of the verb 'to articulate' – and thus give shape to the antagonism between 'us' and 'them'. Precisely because a signifier such as, for example, 'the working class', 'the Dutch people', or, in a liberal context, 'the citizen', combines very different demands, it acquires so many connotations that it ultimately tends towards meaninglessness, it changes into 'an empty signifier'. In short, hegemonic politics comes down to constructing a 'people' by creating an antagonism with the help of versatile symbols.

After *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, Laclau published several collections of theoretical essays in which he on the one hand dwells upon specific issues regarding the theory of hegemony he developed with Mouffe and on the other gives attention, among other things, to the dialectics between universality and particularity in light of the identity politics that were strongly taking hold in the 1990s. He thus became an internationally much heard and broadly respected voice on the left, as shown by the debate with the feminist theorist Judith Butler and the Lacanian-inspired political philosopher Slavoj Žižek in *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality* (2000). In 2005, 20 years after the publication of *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, Laclau published *On Populist Reason*. Rather than a faithful synthesis of insights noted earlier, this is a study that stands on its own in which Laclau rearticulates the path his thinking has taken in the meantime. One of the basic propositions of the book is that populism is neither an aberration of a democratic politics nor a danger to it but, on the contrary, an inherent dimension of it. Democratic politics requires the construction of a 'people' on the basis of one or more empty signifiers as well as an antagonism between 'us' and 'them' – which is not to say that every populism is also by definition democratic.

Rudi Laermans: In Western Europe, a resurgence of populism can be observed, particularly of the extreme right-wing type. What is your perspective on this development?

Ernesto Laclau: I think that the prospects in today's Western Europe are rather unpleasant. All the governments in Western Europe are reacting to the crisis with extreme neoliberal formulas of adjustment. Zapatero has just passed a set of draconian measures and you know what is happening in Greece. In Germany the situation is also relatively unsustainable, and in England the relationship between Nick Clegg and David Cameron is quite feeble because there exist strong tendencies within the Liberal Democrats to reject the coalition agreement and the way it is implemented. So the situation is bad, and this all the more because the social democratic parties, which are the only viable alternative at the moment in Eastern as well as Western Europe, do not have any alternative plan. These conditions fuel extreme right-wing populism. If you don't have an alternative to the system, people who feel a need for such an alternative move to extreme ideologies, whether they are right-wing or left-wing. Take the example of France. There existed a classical discourse of opposition, which was that of the Communist Party and the red belts of the

industrial cities. This world has disintegrated as a result of the tertiarization of the labour market. The outcome was a unique system of power in which the social democrats and the more conservative forces did not differ very much from each other. The only political alternatives were to be found on the fringes of the left and the right, yet it is the right fringe that has progressively expanded. Many former voters of the French Communist Party are today voters of Le Pen, a phenomenon that is called *gaucho-lepénisme*. The reason is simple: if you want change in some way, the precise way in which that change is going to happen and its ideological framing become a secondary matter. And that is of course not only the situation in France. The chances for a left populism are today in Western Europe rather minimal. Populism is going to expand, but it will be a populism of the right.

RL: You mean an ethno-populism?

EL: Not necessarily. Ethnic populism is important in Eastern Europe, but I don't think you will have a populism of that kind in Western Europe. Thus Le Pen is not someone who tries to recreate a national identity as the sole basis of inclusion. It's not the ethno-populism that flourished in Bulgaria or Romania during the interwar period. It's a rather complicated matter, and I don't know how it's going to evolve. What is clear is that without a reconstruction of the left along a social democratic line – because communist options are already over – it's difficult to imagine how a more democratic politics can come about.

RL: People like Le Pen in France or Wilders in the Netherlands make an appeal to the identity of the French or the Dutch, which they position as threatened by immigrants as well as the reigning political elites. Yet you wouldn't speak of ethno-populism?

EL: No, because of a terminological question. Le Pen or Wilders are not focusing on race as the central question. Le Pen is not claiming that there exists a superior French race. He is saying something different than ethno-populism: 'We are French people and we reject the immigrants.' The same goes for the Dutch right-wing populism of Wilders: it's not an ethno-populism but an anti-immigrant one. Maybe the situation is a bit different in Flanders because there you have not only the theme of immigration but also the relationship with the Walloons.

RL: Wilders and the Party for Freedom are a complex thing. It's a populism that claims to defend 'our values', such as tolerance toward homosexuals. There is thus a twofold reference, one to the supposed values of the Dutch, so a nationalist reference, and a more general one to the modern-liberal tradition.

EL: What would be the empty signifier?

RL: In the case of Wilders Party for Freedom, 'freedom' itself is a very important signifier. It's made equivalent with being modern, tolerant, secularized… and at the same time with a certain idea of 'We the Dutch'.

EL: At this point we have to distinguish several things, such as ethnicity, nationality, race… These unifying signifiers don't all function in the same way since their modes of inclusion and exclusion are different. All of them are without doubt right-wing, yet the logic behind the creation of these identities differs. Thus in the Nazi discourse the eugenic component was very important, whereas this is not at all the case in today's right-wing movements. And a second thing is that it's also important to distinguish the logic of dichotomizing society in two camps from the ideologies that invoke this logic: in Latin America the opposition to neoliberalism mobilized around populist themes in the wake of the ascension of peasant communities in Bolivia, the dynamic of the new social movements in Argentina, or the grassroots mobilization in Venezuela. The latter would have collapsed without the presence of Hugo Chávez as a unifying signifier. So there are two levels at

which popular mobilization takes place. The same is happening in Ecuador with Rafael Correa, with Evo Morales in Bolivia, with first Nestor and then Christina Kirchner in Argentina, and with Pepe Mujica in Uruguay. To some extent, Lula has managed to create a similar situation in Brazil, clearly a more complicated country than the others just mentioned. So overall the spectrum of politics in Latin America is moving to the left, with populist logics.

RL: Hearing you mentioning all these presidential names reminds me of the fact that in *On Populist Reason*, you stress the importance of the name of the leader as a constitutive performative element in populist discourse. Yet most political theorists of liberal democracy regard populist leadership as quite problematic because it rapidly tends to become authoritarian.

EL: Politics is constructed around two poles. One side is populism, the other is institutionalism. The excess of populism leads to the dissolution of the social community, which is of course a disaster. Yet since an excess of institutionalism results in political paralysis, one always has to construct a balance between these two poles in order to have a viable political system. This balance is created in different societies in different ways. An excess of institutionalism more particularly leads to the parliamentarization of power, which paralyses the executive. A typical example was the Fourth Republic in France. The country became unmanageable and within this context Gaullism emerged, which was probably a moment of populism. Several things that were not manageable by the disintegrating political system became again manageable thanks to the personalization of power. And then came the rebellion of 1968. It threatened to disintegrate society since it proved difficult to transform this broad mobilization and the many accompanying demands into a viable political progressive alternative going beyond Gaullism. Only one man had the sense of what was needed at that point, and that was Pierre Mendès France. When the mobilization started, he was giving a series of talks in Chile. He interrupted his tour, went back to France, and said on the radio that he was prepared to seize power if he was backed by the whole left. He proposed the founding of a Sixth Republic on a left-wing basis but did not succeed. On the one hand the Communist Party had a very cautious corporatist politics of negotiation. The last thing in the world they wanted was the emergence of a left-wing populism in France. On the other hand the *gauchistes* were totally elsewhere with their slogan 'all power to the imagination'. What happened then, we have already been speaking about. People didn't see that the mobilization of 68 could result in a reorganization of French society. During the subsequent election De Gaulle therefore won massively, but not because people were particularly happy with him. For one year later, in the April 1969 referendum on the proposed constitutional amendment, De Gaulle was defeated. In the forced parliamentary election of 1968 people just didn't see how a new politico-hegemonic arrangement could possibly emerge. So confronted with the prospect of a complete disintegration they voted for De Gaulle. Jacques Lacan once said that the two great leaders in French politics of the second half of the twentieth century that he admired were De Gaulle and Pierre Mendès France. Slavoj Žižek has misinterpreted this statement, saying that it showed Lacan was not at all left-wing. I think Lacan was actually trying to say something different, namely that the only genuine hegemonic projects that proposed an image of the state's capacity to unify French society were advanced by the right-winger De Gaulle and the left-winger Mendès France. But to reiterate the more general point: we need a balance between populism and institutionalism. In the Latin-American context this is perfectly clear. In the European context the lack of unifying signifiers, so of slogans or leaders, is going to be felt very much in the next few years. And the risk is that they will be come from the right...

RL: What you say reminds me of the analysis of Max Weber. In his view, the administrative bureaucratic apparatus needs a strong leader on top who receives a plebiscitee via election. Without that kind of leader, the moment of true politics disappears because you

end up with a takeover of bureaucracy or administration. Weber therefore favoured a presidential regime based on the American model. In comparison with a strict parliamentary system, a presidential regime seems indeed to foster populist politics. One could perhaps be in favour of a dual regime with a populist dynamic via the presidential channel that is balanced by procedures and parliamentary control?

EL: Postcolonial theorists such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak or Leela Ghandi, the great-granddaughter of Mahatma Ghandi who is professor at the University of Chicago, have produced an interesting analysis of – if I translate it in my language – the ways in which the signifiers of democracy create different institutional preconditions within different societies. What could democracy mean in an Islamic society? What could democracy be in the Latin American case, which I am trying to analyse? They are dealing with the kind of topic that you mention. I think we have to arrive at a more universal theory of democracy in which democratic demands are dealt with in all of their diversity, considering both their dangers and possibilities. With our Eurocentric view we tend to think that democratic demands can be handled in only one way. Yet at the beginning of the nineteenth century liberalism was a very respected form of political organization, whereas democracy was a pejorative term, like populism today, because the notion was identified with the 'government of the mob' or Jacobinism and related things. It took many revolutions and reactions to reach the kind of relatively stable balance between liberalism and democracy we still know today in the West. I think that this kind of integration of democracy and liberalism was never reached in Latin America. After they became independent, Latin American states were organized as liberal parliamentary regimes, yet they were not the least democratic because the democratic demands of the masses were ignored. The mass movements that emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century therefore expressed themselves predominantly not via liberal channels but mainly through a form of nationalistic military dictatorship. There existed a bifurcation in the democratic experience of the masses: there was liberalism and there was democracy expressed through these non-orthodox channels. Only after the experience of the horrible dictatorships of the1970s arose the possibility of coupling the liberal-democratic and the national-populist tradition. This construction is an uneasy thing but I think no one in Latin America, neither Chávez or Morales nor Kirchner or Correa, is advocating the dismantlement of the liberal foundations of the state. In Latin America, we have, or are going to have, democratic governments with a strong presidentialism. This is not the case in Western Europe. Nevertheless, Western Europe needs some kind of populist reconfiguration of the social space in a democratic direction since otherwise that space is going to be occupied by the horrible movements we were speaking about previously – by Le Pen, Wilders and his Party for Freedom, and the like.

RL: Let's go the philosophical basis of your work. In your view, politics is not just a separate societal sphere but a necessary dimension of instituting the social. Could you elaborate this idea a little bit?

EL: In my work I have tried to clarify the distinction between the social and the political according to the Husserlian distinction between sedimentation and reactivation. Whereas the social consists of sedimented practices, the dimension of reactivation comes to the fore in the instituting moment – and that is the political. Obviously, Husserl would not have bought this argument. He would have conceived the instituting moment as being that of the transcendental subject, which has in his view an absolute constitutive priority. I consider the moment of reactivation as a moment of radical contingency. You have social institutions or sedimented practices, but their institution or reinstitution does not have a ground beyond itself. Suppose that you use a mathematical operation. You don't remember the moment in which this mathematical operation was mathematically grounded. So in the moment of sedimentation you use practices that are simply established, whereas in the moment of reactivation you go back to the original moment of

institution. For Husserl, this moment of institution would imply an absolutely grounding, transcendental subject, whereas for me it points to a radical contingency that defines the moment of the political.

RL: And that moment appears in various kinds of struggle?

EL: Yes, I think that the instituting moment is continually reproduced. The social is never completely ordered but society is also not something that starts from zero. The two dimensions are constantly overdetermining each other.

RL: Yet why call the instituting moment political? Because it involves struggle?

EL: Yes, and that brings us to another aspect of my thinking. You have read my joint work with Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, and subsequent writings. One of the defining ideas is that antagonism is of central importance to the institution of the social. You have overall two ideas on the social. Either it is a ground preceding everything else that is happening, which implies that the social has a definite meaning. Or it is an *Abgrund*, in the sense of Heidegger, which is to say that the social lacks any foundation and that the moment of totalization is not a ground but a horizon. Once you have this idea of a horizon, the moment of the political comes to the fore.

RL: And for you this necessarily implies an antagonism?

EL: I have a twofold position on antagonism. When we wrote *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, we conceived antagonism as pointing to the impossibility of the social order to constitute itself as a sedimented order. Later on I had second thoughts. Antagonism already goes hand in hand with a first discursive inscription of somebody as an enemy that is already a form of sedimentation. There is thus something deeper involved, a moment of dislocation that prevents the existing structure from overcoming this unstructured moment in one way or another. Let's take as an example of a dislocating experience the crisis of the Weimar Republic in which the middle classes lost their savings. You can say: 'It's forces of evil doing this', or 'It's a punishment sent by God because of my sins'. Whatever form of inscription you choose is a second moment with regard to the experience of dislocation, which does not necessarily lead to any form of discursive articulation.

RL: The moment of dislocation can also just elicit particular claims that are dealt with in an administrative way, so without the moment of politics.

EL: There is no radical dislocation if the claims can be handled in that mode. A radical dislocation happens in the moment in which you cannot follow administrative ways.

RL: How would you then delineate administration from politics?

EL: Let me start with an example and then move on to the theoretical approach of this question. Suppose you have a group of neighbours asking the municipality to create a bus line that connects the place where they live to the place where most of them work. If the municipality accepts this claim, this is the end of the matter. The claim is discursively inscribed and administered. But let's suppose the municipality does not accept the claim. There is then the frustration of a demand, and an inability of the institutional system to channel the demand. Now let's further suppose that among or connected to these people whose demand has been frustrated, there exist other demands that are also being frustrated, for instance regarding housing, health, security, schooling, and so on. People start to have the idea that they have something in common, in the sense that their demands are being opposed by a system that has power but does not recognize them. That is a pre-political and pre-populist situation. Instead of the demands being administratively solved, there is the emergence of a chain of equivalent demands not

recognized by the system. In this situation people will start feeling that there exists a division of society between those at the top and those at the bottom. At some point somebody starts interpellating people at the bottom against the whole system. That is the moment in which the populist identity arises. So you have all these demands floating there and some sense of equivalence, or what I call an equivalential chain. And then there is the crystallizing of the plurality of demands around one symbol that unifies the chain. In most of the cases – in fact I have not found a single example in which this is not the case – that symbol is the name of a leader. When all this happens, the social space is divided into two camps. It can happen with an ideology of the right, like you may observe in Flanders or in Holland, or it can happen with an ideology of the left, like in Latin America. The crucial point is that populism is not an ideology itself. It is a form of constructing the political through the division of society in two camps.

RL: And with an explicit reference to 'the people'?

EL: Well, the people are precisely constructed through this chain of equivalences.

RL: I had the impression that your early work on populism suggested that it was necessary to refer to 'the people' as a basic signifier that keeps the whole chain of equivalences together, whereas in more recent writings the empty signifier that installs a hegemonic discourse can for instance also be 'the market', witness neoliberalism.

EL: After 1989 the reference to the market definitely played that role in Eastern Europe of the signifier unifying all demands. The market is actually a way of organizing the economy but in Eastern Europe the market meant at that time many other things, such as catching up with the West, the end of bureaucratic inefficiency, freedom and the right to be different, and so on. Everything crystallized around the signifier 'market' but that did not last long. People started realizing that the market was not an all-in solution to all their difficulties. This led to a disintegration of the anticommunist imaginary and the emergence of some kind of more pragmatic arrangement in most Eastern European countries.

RL: So even if 'the market' is the central signifier, you would still speak of a populist discourse?

EL: It was a genuine populist discourse.

RL: Because it still contained an implicit reference to the people and their claims?

EL: Yes! Don't forget that the people can be constructed in various ways. Thus the Long March of Mao constructed the people as something that exceeded class. There was at that moment no possibility to say that they all belonged to the working class or something of the kind. You had predominantly people who were marginal, with destroyed daily lives – people who were dislocated, as we said before, because of the Japanese invasion. All their demands that could not be met were reabsorbed around the Red Army and communism. In that period, communism started to signify in China something that had very little to do with what it meant in the experience of nineteenth-century Europe, where it was associated with justice and related things. The same can happen in discourses with a completely different ideological orientation. Take the case of Mussolini and Italy in 1923-1924. When people observed that the state that had emerged from the *Risorgimento* was disintegrating, they were looking for some sort of radical re-foundation. The fascists have been able to carry out that revolution whereas the communists failed. One could say this is nonsense, since a true revolution would have been something very different. Yet at some point, 'revolution' became the central signifier pointing to a radical reorganization of society, be it a fascist one. When people realize that society is threatened with radical disintegration, whatever kind of reorganization of society weighs more than the actual

ideological content framing it. The truth is that there were many people moving from communism to fascism and vice versa during this period. In 1944-1945 the opposite process took place: the communist signifier started to articulate a much wider series of equivalences than the fascist one within the context of the German army occupying Northern Italy.

RL: Let's return to more recent times. You spoke of the populist character of the market discourse in Eastern Europe just after the fall of communism. At that time, neoliberalism was already becoming a hegemonic discourse in the West. During the 1990s neoliberalism spread out in different ideological directions, including the left – I'm thinking for instance of Tony Blair's so-called third-way politics. Was this kind of neoliberalism also a populist discourse?

EL: No. I don't think Blairism was at any moment genuinely populist, except perhaps in its very beginnings. The conservative regime was disintegrating in the 1990s, so there was some kind of populist appeal to Blairism. Yet what Blairism was providing later on was a continuation of Thatcherism by other means. Eric Hobsbawm has written that Blairism was Thatcherism with trousers. It was exactly that. Very quickly the mystic of Blairism was reduced to nothing and, with the Iraq war, it simply disappeared.

RL: How should we then conceive neoliberalism as a hegemonic discourse?

EL: The interesting phenomenon is that neoliberalism in its most crude forms requires authoritarian methods. The restructuring of the Chilean economy in a neoliberal direction by the Chicago boys required the dictatorship of Pinochet. In Argentina, the economic plan of Martínez de Hoz would not have been able to implant itself without the dictatorship of Videla. But there exists another, more pervasive form of neoliberalism that emerges when the parties that should have opposed these regimes are permeated by their ideas. It happens all the time. The Blairism just mentioned is a clear example. And today, the politics of readjustment according to the most traditional norms of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are advocated by the socialist Dominique Strauss-Kahn. The neoliberal disease ultimately goes beyond the authoritarian form, by way of negotiations. Argentina offers an example to the contrary. After the crisis of 2001 and the arrival to power of Nestor Kirchner, the country completely broke with the formulas of the IMF and started up a more pragmatic politics. The result is that Argentina is passing through the actual crisis in a rather mild way, without having to appeal to any forms of adjustment. Most Latin American economies are actually moving in this direction.

RL: Is neoliberalism then predominantly hegemonic with regard to active government and administration?

EL: Neoliberalism was only hegemonic among economic and political elites. It never obtained hegemony over society as a whole.

RL: Some people would question this diagnosis on the basis of phenomena such as contemporary consumerism, which can be linked to the marketization of nearly everything, including politics. One may consider neoliberalism not only as a method of politico-economic government but as a broader ideological formation that re-articulates nearly all social relations in terms of provider-customer positions.

EL: I don't think that there is such a continuity between neoliberalism and consumerism. Consumerism is perfectly compatible with many forms of the welfare state that neoliberalism opposes. It is true that in its most hegemonic moment, neoliberalism rearticulated consumerism according to its own logic. That is exactly what I think is collapsing. Not that I want to be too optimistic because we may have consumerism as an ideology and a social practice for a long time after the neoliberal formula has stopped

being effective. So overall consumerism and neoliberalism are not necessarily linked. Before the crisis of the 1970s, there existed a consumerist attitude that was definitely not a neoliberal one. Thatcherism and Reaganism attempted to link these, and stated that consumerism, which had already become a mass ideology, was compatible with self-regulated markets without state regulations. That was the dominant ideology in the1980s and the 1990s. Things are different today. Consumerism as an ideology is not exactly withering away but what is definitely in decline is the faith that neoliberalism is the best way to achieve consumerism. So my point is that the logic of consumerism and the logic of neoliberalism don't tend to coalesce in a coherent or necessary way. Let's suppose that they don't, and also that neoliberalism does not deliver the goods and that even the consumerist logic is put to the test. Many things may happen then, for instance that people start realizing that they have to become subjects of their own lives at different stages of organization. When this occurs, consumerism is also put into question. I think that all these recent crises not only reveal that neoliberalism is bankrupt but that the confidence on which consumerism was based is also threatened. In such a situation people can think of becoming a different kind of subject, and some hope for another form of societal organization may emerge...

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Tags

Capitalism, Communism, Democracy