**Notes for Lecture on Democracy and Capitalism (2020)**

**Introduction**

In this lecture, we will focus on the relationship between democracy and capitalism. We will structure the lecture around two main questions, and in relation to a host of core readings on the topic. The two questions are:

1. How is the relationship between capitalism and democracy evolving? and
2. Can democracy constitute a viable and desirable alternative to capitalism?

The core readings which we will review in order to bring these questions into focus include Wolfgang Streeck’s 2014 essay, “How Will Capitalism End?” and Nancy Fraser’s 2015 article, “Legitimation Crisis? On the Political Contradictions of Financialised Capitalism.” We will supplement these rather Eurocentric analyses with Partha Chatterjee’s perhaps already somewhat dated but still perspicacious overview of how the contradictions between capitalism and democracy have played themselves out and have evolved, in relation to a so-called ‘passive revolution’, in the Indian context, in his 2012 chapter, “Democracy and Capitalism in India. Pursuing Two Tocquevillian Themes.” We will, furthermore, discuss the critique of Eurocentric conceptions of “radical democracy” and the analysis and advocacy of “an alternative radical democratic tradition rooted in the practices of subaltern social movements,” as advanced by Janet Conway and Jakeet Singh in their incisive 2011 article, “Radical Democracy in Global Perspective: Notes from the Pluriverse.” Finally, we will conclude with a treatment of Christine Keating’s feminist exploration of “the ways in which processes of [neoliberal] globalization [have] altered the terms of the contestation between market-centered and more participatory models of democracy,” leading sometimes to the co-optation of the liberationist potential of the latter, in her insightful 2004 article, “Developmental Democracy and its Inclusions: Globalization and the Transformation of Participation.”

**The End of Capitalism?**

Wolfgang Streeck begins his influential 2014 article, “How Will Capitalism End?,” published in the pages of the *New Left Review*, and which he would two years later expand into a book, by remarking on the “widespread sense today that capitalism is in critical condition, more so than at any time since the end of the Second World War” (p.35). Streeck locates the 2008 crash within a broader historical trajectory of continual and cumulative, increasingly severe crises, ever since “the end of post-war prosperity in the mid-1970’s.” Streeck sketches the sequence by which “[g]lobal inflation in the 1970s was followed by rising public debt in the 1980s, and fiscal consolidation in the 1990s was accompanied by a steep increase in private-sector indebtedness.”

Though Streeck speaks of “the increasingly connected global economy,” the focus of his analysis is clearly the core of the capitalist world-system (even if he avoids using such terminology, preferring instead the phrase “rich, highly industrialized—or better, increasingly deindustrialized—capitalist countries”). According to Streeck, the cumulative crisis symptoms are most evident in three long-term trends in the rich countries: first, a persistent decline in the rate of economic growth; second, “an equally persistent rise in overall indebtedness in leading capitalist states, where governments, private households and non-financial as well as financial firms have, over forty years, continued to pile up financial obligations;” and third, rising levels of inequality in terms of both income and wealth (p.35).

Moreover, Streeck emphasises the way in which these three trends seem interconnected, and how, together, they lead to the effect of what he dubs “the Matthew principle,” in reference to chapter 25, verse 29, from the Gospel of Matthew: “‘For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken even that which he hath” (p.37).

This leads him to ask, “Can what appears to be a vicious circle of harmful trends continue forever?” (p.38). What we are witnessing, he claims, are not a series of crises that resolve in new equilibria, but rather a “process of continual decay.” And so he poses the question, are there any signs of an impending reversal to the morbid symptoms of ever lower growth, ever higher inequality, and ever rising debt, or are we headed instead towards what he calls “a crisis that is systemic in nature”?

The signs would seem clear, however, that there is no reversal in sight. To the contrary, Streeck contends, “[g]overnments, first and foremost that of the United States, have remained firmly in the grip of the money-making industries” (p.38). In the meantime, “OECD capitalism has been kept going by liberal injections of fiat money, under a policy of monetary expansion whose architects know better than anyone else that it cannot continue forever” (p.39). But what’s more, he continues, “as things stand, the only alternative to sustaining capitalism by means of an unlimited money supply is trying to revive it through neoliberal economic reform” (p.40). In other words, he adds, sharply, “bitter medicine for the many, combined with higher incentives for the few” (p.40).

Which brings him to the subject of democracy. Streeck reminds his readers that for a long time, “[c]apitalism and democracy had … been considered adversaries, until the postwar settlement seemed to have accomplished their reconciliation.” Indeed, he notes, “[w]ell into the twentieth century, owners of capital had been afraid of democratic majorities abolishing private property, while workers and their organizations expected capitalists to finance a return to authoritarian rule in defence of their privileges.” Streeck goes on to contend that it was “[o]nly in the Cold War world [that] capitalism and democracy seem[ed] to become aligned with one another, as economic progress made it possible for working-class majorities to accept a free-market, private-property regime, in turn making it appear that democratic freedom was inseparable from, and indeed depended on, the freedom of markets and profit-making.”

But the period of reconciliation between capitalism and democracy seems clearly to have come to an end. Streeck writes: “Today … doubts about the compatibility of a capitalist economy with a democratic polity have powerfully returned.” He stresses in particular the claim that “[a]mong ordinary people, there is now a pervasive sense that politics can no longer make a difference in their lives, as reflected in common perceptions of deadlock, incompetence and corruption among what seems an increasingly self-contained and self-serving political class, united in their claim that ‘there is no alternative’ to them and their policies” (p.40).

The result, a serious decline in the legitimation of the political system, as reflected in such interrelated tendencies as “declining electoral turnout, high voter volatility, ever greater electoral fragmentation,” and crucially, “the rise of ‘populist’ protest parties,” as well as “pervasive government instability” (pp.40-41).

“The legitimacy of postwar democracy,” Streeck insists, had been “based on the premise that states had a capacity to intervene in markets and correct their outcomes in the interest of citizens.” The decades-long trend of intensifying inequality has cast doubt on all that, a trend only exacerbated by the aftermath of the 2008 crisis. Streeck describes a transition in the realm of politics proper from “democratic class struggle” to what he calls “post-democratic politainment,” making reference to the work of Walter Korpi and Colin Crouch, respectively, and corresponding to and facilitating the transition in the realm of the political economy from postwar Keyensianism to neoliberal Hayekianism (p.41).

In terms of fiscal matters, “by replacing tax revenue with debt, governments contributed further to inequality, in that they offered secure investment opportunities to those whose money they would or could no longer confiscate and had to borrow instead” (p.43). All the while, over the past several decades, “[i]nstitutional protection of the market economy from democratic interference has advanced greatly,” with the decline of trade unions alongside the growth of involvement of democratically-unaccountable transnational agencies in national wage-setting and budget-making (p.44).

But even so, elites, too, seem to be losing their “faith in democratic government and its suitability for reshaping societies in line with market imperatives” (p.44). The worry on this side of the class divide seems to be that “the political institutions inherited from the postwar compromise may at some point be repossessed by popular majorities, in a last-minute effort to block progress toward a neoliberal solution to the crisis” (p.45).

From this point, rather than positing an end to democracy, Streeck turns to pose the question of whether what is on the table is ultimately the end of capitalism itself. He contends: “in the light of decades of declining growth, rising inequality and increasing indebtedness—as well as of the successsive agonies of inflation, public debt and financial implosion since the 1970s—[the time has come] to think again about capitalism as a historical phenomenon, one that has not just a beginning, but also an end” (p.45). He dismisses as but a “modernist prejudice” the idea that predicting the end of capitalism requires being able to foresee what will come after it. He argues, nevertheless, that the death of capitalism can certainly be foreseen, especially given the alleged fact that, like a cancer, it has metastasized to the point that “capitalist progress has by now more or less destroyed any agency that could stabilize it by limiting it” (pp.46-47). Death by overwhelming success, so to speak. “Dying, as it were, from an overdose of itself” (p.55). Paradoxically, “capitalism’s defeat of its opposition may actually have been a Pyrrhic victory, freeing it from countervailing powers which, while sometimes inconvenient, had in fact supported it” (p.49).

Death by success, and death by process. According to Streeck, “what matters is that no force is on hand that could be expected to reverse the three downward trends in economic growth, social equality and financial stability and end their mutual reinforcement.” This is not like the crisis of the 1930s, precisely because “there is today no political-economic formula on the horizon, left or right, that might provide capitalist societies with a coherent new regime of regulation.” Consequently, “[s]ocial integration as well as system integration seem irreversibly damaged and set to deteriorate further.” He goes on to predict: “What is most likely to happen as time passes is a continuous accumulation of small and not-so-small dysfunctions; none necessarily deadly as such, but most beyond repair, all the more so as they become too many for individual address. In the process,” he continues, “the parts of the whole will fit together less and less; frictions of all kinds will multiply; unanticipated consequences will spread, along ever more obscure lines of causation. Uncertainty,” he insists, “will proliferate; crises of every sort—of legitimacy, productivity or both—will follow each other in quick succession while predictability and governability will decline further (as they have for decades now).” He concludes: “Eventually, the myriad provisional fixes devised for short-term crisis management will collapse under the weight of the daily disasters produced by a social order in profound, anomic disarray” (p.47).

Might not such a state of disarray lead to openings for forces of change? Not even on this front does Streeck glimpse even a glimmer of hope. He reasons: “One might think that a long-lasting crisis of this sort would open up more than a few windows of opportunity for reformist or revolutionary agency. It seems, however, that disorganized capitalism is disorganizing not only itself but its opposition as well, depriving it of the capacity either to defeat capitalism or to rescue it” (p.48).

Streeck does make brief mention of the possibility that “most of today’s stagnation theories apply only to the West, or just to the US, not to China, Russia, India or Brazil—countries to which the frontier of economic growth may be about to migrate, with vast virgin lands waiting to be made available for capitalist progress” (p.49). But he just as quickly seems to dismiss the point, adding in a footnote that “recent assessments of their economic performance and prospects are much less enthusiastic than they were two or three years ago” (p.49).

Streeck proceeds to sketch the details of what he diagnoses as five systemic disorders of today’s advanced capitalism. These include: “stagnation, oligarchic redistribution, the plundering of the public domain, corruption and global anarchy” (p.55). In terms of the last of these, “global anarchy,” it is worth noting that Streeck insists that “[g]lobal capitalism needs a centre to secure its periphery and provide it with a credible monetary regime.” In this regard, he provides the historical example that “[u]ntil the 1920s, this role was performed by Britain, and from 1945 until the 1970s by the United States; the years in between, when a centre was missing, and different powers aspired to take on the role, were a time of chaos, economically as well as politically” (p.62). Contemporary capitalism, Streeck contends, “increasingly suffers from global anarchy, as the United States is no longer able to serve in its postwar role, and a multipolar world order is nowhere on the horizon” (p.63).

Streeck ends his article with a summary of his main points – that “capitalism, as a social order held together by a promise of boundless collective progress, is in critical condition.” Three inter-related disturbing trends stand out: “Growth is giving way to secular stagnation; what economic progress remains is less and less shared; and confidence in the capitalist money economy is leveraged on a rising mountain of promises that are ever less likely to be kept.” Moreover, the system has been rocked by successive crises: “Since the 1970s,” he writes, “the capitalist centre has undergone three successive crises, of inflation, public finances and private debt.” As a result, he argues, “[t]oday, in an uneasy phase of transition, its survival depends on central banks providing it with unlimited synthetic liquidity.” All this has led to a steep decline in political legitimation. “Step by step,” Streeck contends, “capitalism’s shotgun marriage with democracy since 1945 is breaking up.” Meanwhile, he diagnoses, “[t]he capitalist system is at present stricken with at least five worsening disorders for which no cure is at hand: declining growth, oligarchy, starvation of the public sphere, corruption and international anarchy.” From this, Streeck draws the rather alarming conclusion that: “What is to be expected, on the basis of capitalism’s recent historical record, is a long and painful period of cumulative decay: of intensifying frictions, of fragility and uncertainty, and of a steady succession of ‘normal accidents’—not necessarily but quite possibly on the scale of the global breakdown of the 1930s” (pp.63-64).

**Legitimation Crisis?**

Nancy Fraser concurs with Streeck that we are witnessing a deep crisis – but whereas Streeck diagnoses the crisis as one of capitalism, Fraser’s focus is centred more on the political realm proper, where she diagnoses a crisis of democracy. Fraser begins her important 2015 article, “Legitimation Crisis? On the Political Contradictions of Financialized Capitalism,” published in *Critical Historical Studies*,with the observation that the suggestion abounds that “democracy’s long-standing ills have passed beyond the point of amelioration to the stage of crisis” (p.157). She goes on to list a series of ills plaguing contemporary democratic rule, with a particular focus on the rich countries at the core of the global capitalist world system, to which she refers as the “Global North.” These ills include “declines in electoral turnout, the proliferation of corruption and big money in politics, increased concentration of media ownership, a rise in right-wing extremism, the virtual collapse of traditional left-wing parties, the sharp narrowing of the spectrum of policy differences as nearly all parties rush to placate the bond markets, widespread disaffection with the European Union, the declining credibility of the United States as a legitimate, rational world hegemon, the proliferation of political violence—at the hands of states and police forces, majority and minority extremists, organized networks, and disaffected individuals” (pp.157-158). Morbid symptoms, no doubt – “unmistakeable signs of a hollowing out of democratic forms” (p.158).

Fraser proceeds to pose the question: “What exactly is in crisis here, and what are the grounds and locus of the trouble?” (p.158). She contends that “[t]he most insightful observers intuit that democracy’s current crisis is deeply bound up with the advent of neoliberal capitalism” – among whom she includes Streeck, alongside Colin Crouch, Wendy Brown, and Stephen Gill. The work of these theorists, Fraser insists, “take us close to the heart of the matter.” They all converge in “[s]eeking to capture an epochal shift,” and in so doing, “they link democratic crisis to a mutation in the nature of capitalism.” The mutation in question “is the shift from the state-organized capitalism of the postwar era to the globalizing capitalism of the present,” as Fraser characterizes the arguments of these observers, and it has resulted in a “destabiliz[ation] of political orders throughout the world, [a] hollowing out of public powers and [a transformation, a deformation, of] democratic institutions into empty shells, mere shadows of their former selves” (p.159).

Fraser attempts to go beyond these analyses, to develop what she considers an even “deeper” diagnosis – by interpreting the ills plaguing democracy “as more or less acute expressions of the political contradictions of financialized capitalism.” She makes it clear from the outset that she thinks the roots of the problem ultimately lie in capitalism itself, and are not merely a feature of capitalism’s current, financialized form. This because, according to Fraser, “every capitalist social formation harbors a deep-seated political ‘crisis tendency’ or ‘contradiction’” (p.159). The basic, or fundamental, contradiction she identifies is that, “[o]n the one hand, legitimate, efficacious public power is a condition of possibility for sustained capital accumulation; on the other hand, capitalism’s drive to endless accumulation tends to destabilize the very public power on which it relies” (p.159).

Fraser distinguishes between three different historical forms of capitalism – (1) “the liberal competitive capitalism of the nineteenth century;” (2) “the state-managed monopoly capitalism of the postwar era;” and (3) “the financialized neoliberal capitalism of the present time.” She argues that the basic contradiction plays itself out differently – “assumes a different and distinctive guise” – in each historical form.

Fraser proposes a non-economistic conception of capitalist crisis – one that goes beyond standard leftist views which “focus on contradictions internal to the economy,” such as those related to the alleged “inherent tendency of the rate of profit” to fall, which can lead to “crises of overaccumulation, overproduction, and underconsumption.” The basic core of these crisis theories is that they posit that in capitalism there is “a built-in tendency to self-destabilization, which expresses itself periodically.”

Fraser does not take issue with such economistic theories *per se*; but she does insist that this “standard view misses other, noneconomic expressions and bases of crisis” (p.160). Indeed, she contends, “[o]nly an enlarged understanding of capitalism, encompassing both its official economy and the latter’s ‘non-economic’ background conditions, can permit us to conceptualize, and to criticize, its full range of crisis tendencies, including those implicated in present processes of de-democratization” (p.160).

Fraser specifies three essential conditions upon which the capitalist economy depends. The first of these, “social reproduction, concerns the broad range of activities, often unwaged and performed by women, that create and maintain social bonds, while also forming capitalism’s human subjects, who are (among other things) the bearers of labor power.” The second of these, the natural ecology, constitutes “the indispensable material and energy inputs for commodity production, the necessary sink for absorbing the latter’s waste, and the sustaining basis for human and nonhuman life.” The third of these “concerns the political conditions of possibility for a capitalist economy” (p.161).

It is the last of these which is the focus of Fraser’s argument here – the fact that the capitalist economy, for example, “depends crucially on public powers to guarantee property rights, enforce contracts, and adjudicate disputes; to suppress rebellions, maintain order, and manage dissent; and to sustain, in the language of the US Constitution, ‘the full faith and credit’ of the money supply that constitutes capital’s lifeblood” (p.161). Moreover, according to Fraser, political preconditions are operative at both the state-territorial and the geopolitical levels.

In a nutshell, it is Fraser’s contention that, “capitalist economic production is not self-sustaining, but relies on political power.” And yet, “the drive to limitless accumulation threatens to compromise the very public powers, both national and transnational, that capital needs.” There is thus an inherent contradiction or tendency to self-destabilization at work, since “[t]he effect over time … can be to destabilize the necessary political conditions of the capitalist economy” (p.163). A crisis tendency that, Fraser insists, is located at the boundary between the economy and the polity.

Analogous contradictions occur at the boundary between economy and society and at the boundary between economy and nature, corresponding to social-reproductive and ecological crisis tendencies, respectively.

Frases stresses two types of potential ramifications for the political contradiction of capitalism. On the one hand, “[o]ne result can be an **administrative crisis**, in which public powers lack the necessary heft to govern effectively.” In this scenario, “[o]utgunned by private powers, such as large transnational corporations, [public powers] are blocked from making and implementing the policies needed to solve social problems, including problems that, if left unaddressed, would endanger long-term prospects for capital accumulation” (p.165).

On the other hand, [a] second result can be a **legitimation crisis**, in which public opinion turns against a dysfunctional system that fails to deliver. In that case, popular forces mobilize to oppose the capture and hollowing out of public powers” (p.165). In this case, such forces “protest the subordination of polity to economy, along with its deleterious consequences for ecology and social reproduction, [and therefore] aim to reconfigure the relations among those constitutive features of capitalist society.” Fraser refers to these kinds of struggles as “boundary struggles,” because they “seek to resolve the crisis by transforming the institutional topography of the capitalist order.” And she argues that precisely this kind of legitimation crisis “***should be*** brewing today” (p.165).

Fraser takes these categories of administrative crisis and legitimation crisis from the work of the eminent German political philosopher Jürgen Habermas, in particular, from his pathbreaking analysis of the way in which the political contradiction of capitalism developed and played out towards the end of the postwar, state-managed regime of accumulation. She begins the second step of her argument by noting how her expanded view of capitalism as an institutionalised order “foregrounds its historical character” (p.166). The “boundaries between production and reproduction, human society and the natural environment, and economy and polity” can, and do, shift.

To illustrate this point, Fraser sketches the polity-economy boundary differences among three historical regimes of capitalist accumulation: (1) “a nineteenth-century regime of liberal or competitive capitalism in which the public powers of territorial states were used to constitute the capitalist economy;” (2) “a twentieth-century regime of state-managed monopoly capitalism in which state-level public power was additionally deployed in efforts to forestall or mitigate economic crisis by disciplining capital for its own good;” and (3) “the current regime of globalizing financialized capitalism in which state power is increasingly used to construct transnational governance structures that empower capital” (p.167).

Fraser provides a highly schematic summary account of the trajectory of the first two regimes of accumulation, before turning to engage at some length with Habermas’s 1973 book on *Legitimation Crisis?*, which she characterizes as an extremely important but flawed effort to grapple with the political crisis of the postwar, state-managed regime of accumulation, in some ways analogous to Karl Polanyi’s and Hannah Arendt’s monumental efforts to illuminate different dimensions of the crisis of nineteenth century liberal or competitive capitalism. The principal thesis of Habermas’s book was that “even when—or even if—the regime circumvented capitalism’s inherent tendency to economic crisis, it did not resolve capitalism’s contradictions altogether. What it did, instead, was displace them, shifting the locus of crisis from the economy to the state, from the economic to the political field” (p.170).

Fraser draws on “Habermas’s distinction between administrative and legitimation crisis” in her overview of the systemic challenge that took place in the New Left moment of the late sixties. Habermas’s distinction, Fraser contends, is useful for understanding such moments of systemic crisis because, “[b]y introducing some space between system dysfunctions and the responses of social actors, his approach invites us to consider whether, under a given set of conditions, administrative failures are likely to lead to quiescence or transformative activism. Nevertheless,” she adds, “a full understanding of the relation between administrative and legitimation crisis requires a specifically political mediation. To supply [such a] link,” Fraser “draw[s] on Gramsci’s conception of hegemony as political commonsense. Comprising historically specific suppositions about agency, public power, society, justice, and history, this concept,” Fraser contends, “supplies the missing political mediation between the system and lifeworld dimensions of crisis” (p.175).

Having thus laid considerable theoretical and historical groundwork, Fraser is ready to elaborate her historically-specific interpretation of the current crisis conjuncture – in which the sway of capital is being extended “over its background conditions of possibility—over social reproduction, the natural environment, and [crucially] … over the public powers that have always been indispensable to a capitalist economy” (p.176). In fact, she insists, “financialized capitalism has sharply altered the previous relation of economy to polity. Whereas the prior regime empowered states to subordinate the short-term interests of private firms to the long-term objective of sustained accumulation,” she maintains, “this one authorizes finance capital to discipline states and publics in the immediate interests of private investors.” As a result, she contends, along lines very similar to Streeck, we are witnessing “a growing incapacity of public powers to rein in private powers” (p.176).

Financialized capitalism, Fraser argues, has thus ushered in an “era of ‘governance without government’— which is to say, of domination without the fig leaf of consent. In this regime,” she continues, “it is not states but transnational governance structures, such as the World Trade Organization, which make a growing share of the coercively enforceable rules that now govern vast swaths of social interaction throughout the world” (p.179). In a word, as Stephen Gill has argued, “[a]s neoliberal norms are [effectively] ‘constitutionalized [through transnational agreements], the political agenda is narrowed, preempted in advance.” Indeed, as Colin Crouch has also documented, “political agendas are everywhere narrowed, [not only] by external fiat (the demands of ‘the markets’, ‘the new constitutionalism’) [but also] by internal cooptation (corporate capture, subcontracting, the spread of neoliberal political rationality)” (p.180).

This state of affairs, Fraser insists, is a self-destabilizing one. In her words: “At the very least, such arrangements are primed to produce an administrative crisis, as public powers become increasingly unable to deliver the results that capital—and the rest of us— need. And that in turn,” she continues, “could spark a legitimation crisis, in which public opinion turns against a dysfunctional system and clamors for social transformation” (p.181).

There is certainly abundant evidence for the existence of an acute administrative crisis in the contemporary period. But what are the prospects for this transforming into a full-fledged legitimation crisis? Here Fraser strikes an – albeit cautiously – more optimistic note than Streeck. She provides an overview of the widespread and insidious ways in which neoliberal ideology has seeped in to constrict and confine the contours of common sense – including, among two versions of successor movements of the New Left, which she identifies, respectively, as, on the one hand, “***identitarian strands*** that abandon the terrain of distributive (in)justice to focus one-sidedly on that of (mis)recognition;” and, on the other, “unabashedly ***liberal strands*** that identify emancipation with corporate advancement—as do liberal feminisms focused on ‘leaning in’ and ‘cracking the glass ceiling’” (p.183)

Even so, Fraser contends, “neoliberal commonsense is not all of a piece;” to the contrary, she maintains, it “harbors latent and subordinate elements that could, in principle, be activated in a bid for counter-hegemony” (p.184). It is worth noting, however, that Fraser pins her hopes on the by-now discredited parliamentary political party options of Greece’s *Syriza* and Spain’s *Podemos*, and makes brief mention of the by-now mostly defunct Latin American pink tide. By contrast, she remains dismissive of more movement-based, direct democratic aspirations such as those embodied in the Occupy movement, which she characterizes as “dissipating as quickly as it erupted and leaving behind little in the way of programmatic thinking or organizational structure;” likewise, she rather disparagingly depicts the World Social Forum rather disparagingly, as being “hobbled by anarchisant suspicions of organization, public power, and large-scale programmatic thinking” (pp.185-186).

Fraser concludes her article with a comparison between the crisis of the postwar state-managed regime of accumulation and the contemporary crisis of financialized neoliberal capitalism. She emphasises three main differences. First, she stresses, whereas the crisis of the 1970s was largely political in nature, “[t]oday, in contrast, political crisis goes hand in hand with an overt economic crisis, whose severity is apparent to all—as well as with evident crises of ecology and social reproduction” (p.187). Rather than “displacement,” she argues, it makes more sense to speak today of the “metastasization” of crisis.

Second, she adds, in contrast to the New Left moment, today’s opposition remains “[d]ispersed and nonprogrammatic,” and therefore allegedly largely “fails to rise to the level of a comprehensive challenge to the basic structure of financialized capitalism as an institutionalized social order.” As a result, “to date, at least, no passage from administrative crisis to legitimation crisis has occurred” (p.187).

Third, also in contrast to the 1970s, by now under decades of financialized neoliberal capitalism a “sustained ideological campaign has largely succeeded in delegitimating public power in the public imagination, even as a coordinated institutional assault is in the process of hollowing it out as a practical force” (p.188). And here she again attacks the more movement-oriented, direct-democratic forces of opposition – claiming that “[i]nsofar as [they] remain antiprogrammatic, anti-institutional, and antipolitical, they symptomatize, but do not confront head-on, the political contradictions of financialized capitalism” (p.188).

Fraser’s barely-concealed contempt for direct-democratic aspirations as embodied in movements such as Occupy and the World Social Forum reveals a distinctly nation-statist orientation and set of presuppositions about the political, indicative of her stubborningly Gramscian framework for conceptualising a dialectical struggle between hegemonic and counterhegemonic blocs. This is a point to which we shall return, in relation to Janet Conway and Jakeet Singh’s exploration of alternative models of democracy. But before we do that, let us first attempt to decentre the unabashedly Eurocentric focus of Streeck’s and Fraser’s crisis narratives about capitalism and democracy, by focusing on the eminent postcolonial theorist Partha Chatterjee’s account of the way in which the contradiction between these has played itself out in successive historical conjunctures in the context of the world’s largest so-called democratic nation-state, India.

**The Passive Revolution in India**

In a chapter published in 2012, two years before the Hindu-nationalist, right-wing populist Narendra Modi was elected Prime Minister, titled “Democracy and Capitalism in India: Pursuing Two Tocquevillian Themes,” Chatterjee sketches the dynamics of class power and democracy in two successive periods in postcolonial India: first, the period from the 1950s through the 1980s; and then, the period since. What emerges from this periodization is an account in some ways very different from the narrative of democracy and capitalism as told when the experience of the rich countries at the core of the capitalist world-system is centred, as it is in the work of Streeck and Fraser. Chatterjee draws on the work of Sudipta Kaviraj, who used Antonio Gramsci’s idea of the “passive revolution,” corresponding to a “blocked dialectic,” to describe the dynamics of class domination in the first decades of postcolonial India, a framework according to which “power had to be shared between the dominant classes because no one class had the ability to exercise hegemony on its own” (p.4).

According to Chatterjee, “[t]he characteristic features of the passive revolution in India were the relative autonomy of the state as a whole from the bourgeoisie and the landed elites; the supervision of the state by an elected political leadership, a permanent bureaucracy, and an independent judiciary; the negotiation of class interests through a multi-party electoral system; a protectionist regime discouraging the entry of foreign capital and promoting import substitution; the leading role of the state sector in heavy industry, infrastructure, transport, telecommunications, mining, banking, and insurance; state control over the private manufacturing sector through a regime of licensing; and the relatively greater influence of industrial capitalists over the Central government and that of the landed elites on the state governments” (p.4).

Chatterjee continues by pointing out that “[p]assive revolution was a form that was marked by its difference from classical bourgeois democracy. But to the extent that capitalist democracy as established in Western Europe or North America served as the normative standard of bourgeois revolution, discussions of passive revolution in India carried with them the sense of a transitional system—from pre-colonial and colonial regimes to some yet-to-be-defined authentic modernity” (p.4).

Alongside the Gramscian idea of passive revolution, Chatterjee employs the Marxist category of primitive accumulation to help think through the terms of the alleged transition from “traditional agrarian” to “modern industrial” society. Chatterjee reminds us that against the rosy accounts of classical political economists, “Marx [had] stressed that the key feature of the so-called primitive accumulation was the dissociation of the labourer from the means of labour.” In the Indian context, Chatterjee contends, “instead of the leading role of a dynamic capitalist class, it was the **state** of the passive revolution that undertook the task of political management of primitive accumulation” (p.5). Even so, Chatterjee maintains, “the sharing of power with other dominant classes placed definite constraints on the process of capitalist development. The modern sectors did expand, but traditional sectors, characterized by the persistence of institutions such as caste, and religious loyalties and patron–client relations, often adapted to the requirements of modern electoral mobilization, were remarkably resistant” (p.5).

This “dual system” basically remained in place up through the 1980s. However, a series of cumulative changes gradually created the precondition for the emergence of a new political framework. These changes included, first, “the spread of governmental technologies as a result of the deepening reach of the developmental state under conditions of electoral democracy,” which “meant that the state was now no longer an external entity to the peasant community.” Second, “reforms since the 1950s in the structure of agrarian property, even though gradual and piecemeal, meant that except in isolated areas, for the first time in centuries, small peasants possessing land no longer directly confronted an exploiting class within the village, as under feudal or semi-feudal conditions.” Third, “since the tax on land or agricultural produce was no longer a significant source of revenue for the government, as in colonial or pre-colonial times, the relation of the state to the peasantry was no longer directly extractive, as it often was in the past.” Fourth, “with the rapid growth of cities and industrial regions, the possibility of peasants making a shift to urban and non-agricultural occupations was no longer a function of their pauperization and forcible separation from the land, but was often a voluntary choice, shaped by the perception of new opportunities and new desires.” And fifth, “with the spread of school education and widespread exposure to modern communications media such as the cinema, television, and advertising, there was a strong and widespread desire among younger members, both male and female, of peasant families not to live the life of a peasant in the village and instead to move to the town or the city, with all its hardships and uncertainties, because of its lure of anonymity and upward mobility” (p.6).

Alongside these changes in the countryside, Chatterjee contends, there were changes in transnational norms of governance. Specifically, there had emerged by the 1990s “a growing sense that certain basic conditions of life must be provided to people everywhere and that if the national or local governments could not provide them, someone else must, whether it was other states or international agencies or non-governmental organizations (NGOs).” This meant, in a nutshell, that the ongoing and even accelerating process of “primitive accumulation” came to accompanied by “a parallel process of the reversal of the effects of primitive accumulation” (p.7).

Chatterjee stresses in particular the development of “[s]everal governmental technologies [which] became widespread in the second half of the twentieth century” and had the effect of “soften[ing] the blows dealt by primitive accumulation.” Among these, for example, “there are many examples … of government and non-government agencies offering easy loans to enable those without the means of sustenance to find some gainful employment. Such loans are often advanced without serious concern for profitability or the prospect of the loan being repaid, since the money advanced here is not driven by the motive of further accumulation of capital but rather by that of providing the livelihood needs of the debtors—that is to say, by the motive of reversal of the effects of primitive accumulation” (p.9). Likewise, “government agencies provide some direct benefits to people who, because of poverty or other reasons, are unable to meet their basic consumption needs” (p.9). Even so, crucially, “[e]xcept in certain marginal pockets, peasant and craft production in India today is fully integrated into a market economy” (p.9).

Since the 1990s, as Chatterjee goes on to sketch, there has been a transformation in the passive revolution state. According to Chatterjee, “[t]he crucial difference consists in the dismantling of the licence regime, greater entry of foreign capital and foreign consumer goods, and the opening up of sectors such as telecommunications, transport, infrastructure, mining, banking, insurance, among others to private capital (p.10). Corresponding with this, and with the rise of the information technology industry, alongside consistent growth in manufacturing, there has come “a distinct ascendancy in the relative power of the corporate capitalist class as compared to the landed elites.” At the same time, “the dismantling of the licence regime has opened up a new field of competition between state governments to woo capitalist investment, both domestic and foreign.” Moreover, “although the state continues to be the most important mediating apparatus in negotiating between conflicting class interests, the autonomy of the state in relation to the dominant classes appears to have been redefined,” significantly weakened (p.10).

Nevertheless, Chatterjee insists, “[i]t would be a mistake to think that the result is a convergence of the Indian political system with the classical models of capitalist democracy. The critical difference,” he maintains, “has been produced by a split in the field of the political between a domain of properly constituted civil society and a more ill-defined and contingently activated domain of political society.” Indeed, according to Chatterjee, “[c]ivil society in India today, peopled largely by the urban middle classes, is the sphere that seeks to be congruent with the normative models of bourgeois civil society and represents the domain of capitalist hegemony. If this were the only relevant political domain, then India today would probably be indistinguishable from other Western capitalist democracies.” However, he continues, “there is the other domain of” what he calls “political society that includes large sections of the rural population and the urban poor. These people do, of course, have the formal status of citizens and can exercise their franchise as an instrument of political bargaining. But”, he contends, “they do not relate to the organs of the state in the same way that the middle classes do, nor do governmental agencies treat them as proper citizens belonging to civil society” (p.11).

In a nutshell, for Chatterjee, “the framework of passive revolution is still valid for India. But its structure and dynamic have undergone a change. The capitalist class,” he insists, “has come to acquire a position of moral–political hegemony over civil society, consisting principally of the urban middle classes.” Moreover, and this point is crucial, “[i]t exercises its considerable influence over both the Central and the state governments not through electoral mobilization of political parties and movements but largely through the bureaucratic–managerial class, the increasingly influential print and visual media, and the judiciary and other independent regulatory bodies” (p.11).

Meanwhile, Chatterjee continues, “the integration with the market has meant that large sections of what used to be called the subsistence economy, which was once the classic description of small peasant agriculture, have now come fully under the sway of capital” (p.12).

At the same time, population groups ranging from “street vendors, illegal squatters, and others, whose habitation or livelihood verge on the margins of legality,” stand outside of civil society, constituting “political society.” These “people are not regarded by the state as proper citizens possessing rights;” to the contrary, “they are seen to belong to particular population groups, with specific empirically established and statistically described characteristics, which are targets of particular governmental policies” (p.14). Interestingly, Chatterjee suggests, “even though the claims made by different groups in political society are for governmental benefits, these cannot often be met by the standard application of rules and frequently require the declaration of an exception” (p.19). Chattterjee explicitly contrasts “this political method in Indian democracy of making allowance for special cases, mostly involving groups with only a local presence and little influence in the central corridors of power, with the legislative interventions by special interests in the United States, characterized by professional lobbying and the introduction of a myriad of minor clauses in small print into the body of the law” (p.19).

Meanwhile, Chatterjee adds, “[m]obilizations in political society are often premised on the strategic manipulation of relative electoral strengths rather than on the expectation of commanding a majority. Indeed, the frequently spectacular quality of actions in political society, including the resort to violence,” he claims, “is a sign of the ability of relatively small groups of people to make their voices heard and to register their claims with governmental agencies” (p.20). Moreover, he concludes, “the activities of political society represent a continuing critique of the paradoxical reality in all capitalist democracies of equal citizenship and majority rule, on the one hand, and the dominance of property and privilege, on the other” (p.20). However, those subaltern groups incapable of exercising strategic leverage of electoral mobilization find themselves “utterly marginalized,” representing “an outside beyond the boundaries of political society.”

Finally, Chatterjee emphasizes that an “important difference represented by activities in political society, when compared to the movements of democratic mobilization familiar to us from twentieth-century Indian history, is its lack of a perspective of transition” (p.20).

Chatterjee concludes by providing a summary diagnosis. He argues that “[w]ith the continuing rapid growth of the Indian economy, the hegemonic hold of corporate capital over the domain of civil society is likely to continue. This,” he insists, “will inevitably mean continued primitive accumulation. That is to say, there will be more and more primary producers—peasants, artisans, and petty manufacturers—who will lose their means of production.” Nevertheless, he continues, “most of these victims of primitive accumulation are unlikely to be absorbed in the new growth sectors of the economy. They will be marginalized and rendered useless as far as the sectors dominated by corporate capital are concerned.” Even so, he contends, “the passive revolution under conditions of electoral democracy makes it unacceptable and illegitimate for the government to leave these marginalized populations without the means of labour to simply fend for themselves. That carries the risk of turning them into the ‘dangerous classes’. Hence,” he surmises, “a whole series of governmental policies are being, and will be, devised to reverse the effects of primitive accumulation” (p.21).

Chatterjee’s diagnosis does much to decentre the Eurocentric analysis of the evolving relationship between capitalism and democracy in crisis accounts such as those of Streeck and Fraser. Unfortunately, Chatterjee’s analysis was published two years before the election of the Hindu-nationalist, right-wing populist Narendra Modi to the office of Prime Minister. It would be of course interesting to explore how these most disturbing more recent developments fit into Chatterjee’s framework of the evolving passive revolution state. In this regard, his most recent intervention, his 2019 book, *I Am the People: Reflections on Popular Sovereignty Today*, which provides a non-Eurocentric genealogy of the populist state, in which the Gramscian concept of the passive revolution plays a prominent role yet again, would seem well worth checking out.

**Alternative Models of Democracy**

If Chatterjee’s account provides an important corrective and decentring of the Eurocentric framing of the debate about the evolving relationship between capitalism and democracy, it nevertheless converges with the crisis narratives of Streeck and Fraser in the way in which it defines democracy, more specifically, by equating, or conflating, the concept with hierarchically-structured regimes featuring competitive elections and representative, parliamentary rule. In their incisive 2011 article, “Radical Democracy in Global Perspective: Notes from the Pluriverse,” Janet Conway and Jakeet Singh articulate and defend “an alternative tradition of radical democracy rooted in the practices of subaltern social movements” (p.689).

Conway and Singh begin their article with positive references to the Zapatistas and to the World Social Forum, for offering “visions and struggles posed against the authoritarian imposition of neoliberal globalisation on every society in the world and against the new relations of imperialism it enacts” (p.689). Among these authoritarian impositions of what Arturo Escobar has called a “new US-based form of Imperial globality,” they contend, “is the US-led drive to export Western-style liberal democracy as the only legitimate mode of governance globally and a precondition for recognition, aid and trade with the West” (p.689). Indeed, they quote the Canadian political philosopher James Tully in this regard, who has argued that “the dominant forms of representative democracy, self-determination and democratisation promoted through international law are not alternatives to imperialism, but, rather, the means through which informal imperialism operates against the wishes of the majority of the population of the post-colonial world” (p.690).

And yet, at the same time, Conway and Singh insist, “[c]ritical, diverse and radical discourses of democracy abound on the ground in oppositional movements around the world” (p.690).

They proceed to “problematise one articulation of ‘radical democracy’ from within Western political theory,” that of Chantal Mouffe, “and look towards alternative approaches to theorising democracy and difference in global perspective, grounded in an appreciation of the struggle of subaltern peoples’ movements to defend their life spaces, their local economies and their ways of life” (p.690).

Conway and Singh locate their argument as being “theoretically informed by the Latin American ‘modernity/coloniality’ perspective, which holds that coloniality has been constitutive of the modern world system from its inception in 16th century European conquest of the Americas into the present” (p.690). Accordingly, they seek to champion “alternative knowledges and practices that carry some possibility of redressing conditions of coloniality are those which have been suppressed by modernity and which expose Western cosmologies and rationalities as limited, particular and geographically and historically specific” (p.690).

Along these lines, they subject Chantal Mouffe’s influential version of radical democracy to a perceptive and strident decolonial critique, before turning to contrast Mouffe’s Eurocentric, liberal, and nation-statist framework with “alternative articulation[s] of radical democracy offered by Gustavo Esteva, Madhu Suri Prakash, and other authors closely engaged with spaces of colonial difference in the Third and Fourth Worlds, including the World Social Forum. The work of these authors,” Conway and Singh contend, “is part of a broad and highly diverse literature that: 1) problematises capitalist modernity and, with it, the modern state and modern forms of subjectivity, and critically locates discourses of global democracy on this terrain; and 2) looks explicitly to the practices of grassroots, place-based movements on the exteriority of modernity as sources for re-imagining and re-theorising democracy” (p.691).

Among the more interesting arguments advanced by Conway and Singh against Mouffe is that her conception of “the political can be characterised by what Richard Day calls ‘the hegemony of hegemony’—that is, the assumption that ‘effective social change can only be achieved simultaneously and *en masse*, across an entire national or supranational space’” (p.693). Such “hegemony of hegemony” is indeed widespread amongst the statist left, as we have seen quite explicitly in Fraser’s critique of the Occupy movement and the World Social Forum for their anarchist, non-programmatic, even allegedly anti-political tendencies.

In contrast to Mouffe’s decidedly statist conceptualization of radical democracy, which largely ignores questions of coloniality, Conway and Singh seek to centre instead the work of so-called “Third World scholar-activists,” who since the 1980s “have been advancing notions of radical democracy grounded in the practices of grassroots movements” (p.695). They add as well that “[m]ore recently there has also emerged a body of indigenous anti-colonial social and political thought in white settler-colonial societies which, although rarely using the language of democracy, nevertheless makes some convergent claims about the alternative political imaginaries available in their land-based traditions of governance” (p.695).

Conway and Singh seek to ground their argument through the concrete example of Gustavo Esteva’s articulation of radical democracy as exemplified in recent struggles in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico. They then turn to a broader discussion of the thought of Esteva, Madhu Suri Prakash, and a diverse array of other writers, drawing an explicit contrast between these and Mouffe’s conceptualization of radical democracy, along three main dimensions: “first, on the hegemony of hegemony as the privileged basis by which to understand the political articulation of difference; second, on the modern state as the de facto terrain and scale of democratic struggle and as the foundation and container of legitimacy; and third, on inter-cultural relations in” what they refer to as “the pluriverse from the perspective of place-based politics” (p.695).

As Conway and Singh explain: “In his article ‘Oaxaca: the path of radical democracy’, Esteva traces and contextualises the rise of the Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca (APPO) in the Mexican state of Oaxaca in 2006 as a key nodal point of a popular insurrection. Arising in the wake of mobilisations by a local teachers union and their harsh repression by Governor Ulises Ruiz, the APPO expressed a convergence among many organisations and movements in a common ‘No!’ to Ruiz’s rule and to the wider regime of which it was a part. The APPO essentially displaced the government for almost five months until the insurrection was brutally repressed in November 2006. Despite this, Esteva testifies, the changes wrought by the uprising and the capacities unleashed through the APPO live on in a continuing struggle for radical democracy that expresses the plurality and the many ‘Yeses’ of the peoples, movements and organisations of Oaxaca” (pp.695-696).

According to Conway and Singh, “Esteva describes the APPO as ‘a movement of movements’, comprised of a diverse array of labour, indigenous, peasant, feminist, environmentalist, cultural, human rights, urban and regional groups.” He, moreover, draws a contrast between the conception of “a movement of movements” and that of a political organisation (p.696). As Conway and Singh describe the contrast, “[p]olitical organisations mirror the statist apparatus which they aspire to control. Movements, on the other hand, are oriented towards experiences in the past or present, and ideals arising from those experiences; have only informal and voluntary participation; operate largely without structures or only with horizontal and flexible structures; and are characterised by an open form of participation in which leaders are neither able to control nor represent participants, but only help to convene, coordinate and stimulate the movement” (p.696).

This contrast is reflected in internally-democratic structures of the APPO. According to Conway and Singh, “the co-ordinating bodies of the APPO do not control the autonomous actions or initiatives of the participants, but rather ‘lead by obeying’ in simply helping the various participant groups to discuss common concerns, share information, and co-ordinate specific actions. Any decisions that are taken by the co-ordinating bodies must be made by consensus” (p.696).

Conway and Singh further contend that there was “a high degree of convergence” among the APPO in favour of a complex agenda of democracy and democratization. First, “they advocated the need to improve formal democratic processes by cleaning up, for example, rampant electoral fraud and corruption.” But second, they also sought “to introduce greater levels of participatory democracy or citizen involvement into government, through a variety of mechanisms such as popular initiative, referenda and plebiscites, re-call, participatory budgeting, transparency and societal oversight of administrative processes.” And crucially, third, they aimed “to place the processes and institutions of formal and participatory democracy at the service of ‘radical democracy’—a deeply local or community-based, grassroots and bottom-up form of democracy derived from the longstanding traditions of indigenous communities (especially within the *municipios* of Oaxaca)” (p.697).

Conway and Singh go on to extrapolate lessons not only from Oaxaca, but also from the Zapatistas and “many examples in the World Social Forum.” They contend, for example, that “the articulation of difference … is often oriented towards defending localised ‘life projects and life spaces, not towards gaining hegemony over the whole of society, certainly not at the pre-given scale of the nation-state and even less so at the scale of the global” (p.698). This scepticism towards the ideal of democracy implemented at the global level puts them at odds with thinkers such as Françoise Vergès, for whom “world citizenship … must be brought in as a decolonizing alternative.” Whether the critique of the hegemony of hegemony and the espousal of the “pluriverse” or “diversality” requires an exclusive commitment to localism and a renunciation of transnational aspirations for world citizenship is a subject worthy of further consideration.

By all means, Conway and Singh are careful to stress that “[p]lace-based identities and a commitment to local communities as the privileged site and scale of political life do not presuppose isolation, chauvinism or parochialism. Indeed,” they contend, “allies are needed and actively sought, and campaigns and coalitions are being built by many of these movements. Many of these struggles are ‘place-based, yet transnationalised’,” they insist, pointing to the Zapatistas’ “international of hope” as a primary example (p.703).

Conway and Singh conclude by emphasising that “[t]he concept of ‘democracy’ is deeply hegemonic today, such that it is mobilised and struggled over by many different actors, often for opposing purposes.” They cite the influential decolonial thinker Walter Mignolo, who “argues that democracy serves as a kind of ‘connector’ concept that is needed for ‘border thinking’, or the practice of confronting, provincializing and displacing hegemonically imposed meanings with alternative meanings rooted in subaltern practices and traditions” (p.703). This is precisely what they attempt in their centring of “subaltern traditions of radical democracy [which] rely on alternative conceptions of difference and political articulation across difference; [which] emphasise the possibility and desirability of disarticulating the modern state; and [which] offer a distinct vision of the pluriverse from subaltern worlds. If possibilities do remain for rehabilitating the radical potential of democracy, they maintain, “perhaps they will be found by looking to subaltern spaces of colonial difference” (p.704).

**Globalization and the Transformation of Participation**

One of the more interesting details of the story about the experience of the Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca was the convergence of its constitutive movements in favour of a democratization agenda, in which Conway and Singh are careful to distinguish among three levels or types of democracy – formal democracy, participatory democracy, and radical democracy. Quite frequently the latter two are equated, as if they are the same thing; however, Conway and Singh are careful to highlight that the APPO’s vision of radical democracy is of a “localised, constructive, practice-based, horizontalist, non-statist and bottom-up form of co-operation, action-co-ordination and decision making, to which formal and participatory forms of democracy should always remain rooted, responsible, obedient and accountable” (p.697).

In her incisive 2004 article titled “Developmental Democracy and Its Inclusions: Globalization and the Transformation of Participation,” Christine Keating “explore the ways in which processes of globalization [have] alter[ed] the terms of the contestation between market-centered and more participatory models of democracy.” She does so “through an analysis of the ‘New Partnership Initiative’(NPI) core report of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID),” compared with “the platform of the India-based National Alliance of People’s Movements (NAPM)” (p.417). She comes to the conclusion that “given the fact that both models propose expanded active involvement by the populace, participation may no longer be the measure by which capitalist and liberatory models of democracy can be distinguished.” Tellingly, furthermore, “the paradigmatic democratic citizen in both of these models is a woman,” a fact which Keating maintains “indicates that a realignment of democracy’s … sexual contract is at stake as well” (p.418).

With the co-optation of participation by the market-oriented globalization agenda, the distinction between capitalist and liberatory models of democracy comes to be based instead on “contrasting visions of the culture underpinning democratic citizenship” - in the case at hand, whereas USAID promotes a vision of an “‘entrepreneurial’ culture that can support a market-centered developmental democracy,” the NAPM promotes a vision of a “culture of ‘responsibility’ that can sustain a people-centered developmental democracy” (pp.417-418).

Keating begins with an analysis of USAID’s New Partnership Initiative. She argues that “[b]y mobilizing women and other marginalized groups as entrepreneurial citizens in processes of globalization and by including them rather than excluding them from processes of governance, approaches such as NPI work to ensure their compliance with, and thus the sustainability of, the democratic capitalist order. In doing so,” she maintains, “NPI authors hope to build a capitalist democratic order that eventually can be maintained without direct U.S. intervention. The long-range goal of NPI is to ‘accelerate graduation from U.S. assistance’. A successful ‘graduation’, in the framework of NPI, is one in which ‘global partnerships are in place and working effectively ... and where there appears to be sustainable progress toward democracy and free-enterprise’. ‘Graduation’ in this sense envisions a world of ‘mature’ market-oriented democratic societies” (p.426).

Keating goes on to sketch the contrasting principles by which the NAPM operates. According to her, “[t]he basic principle of NAPM’s people-centered developmental democracy is ‘that the first claim on the use of resources will be with regard to the satisfaction of basic needs and the protection of livelihood’. With this principle,” she explains, “the activists are grounding their model of democracy in an understanding of development that is centered not on economic growth per se but on ‘people’s right to life with dignity’.” Similar to the subaltern alternative models mentioned by Conway and Singh, “[t]he institutional structure of such a democracy would be ‘built up from the local community through the intermediate to the national level, with democratic modes of planning and decision-making used to make those decisions’.” Moreover, “[a]t its base, the central institution of NAPM’s model of democracy is ‘a revised ***panchayat***’, the traditional form of participatory local self-government in India,” about which Conway and Singh also spoke.

Over the course of the article, Keating emphasises the importance of unpacking the term participation. She insists that “the kind of participation that can contest globalization’s injustices needs to be further specified. It is modes of participation envisioned in models of democracy such as [those practiced by the Indian National Alliance of peoples’ Movements], those that disrupt the connection between democracy and capitalism in ways that do not depend on an inequitable distribution of global power or wealth, that can generate deepening resistance to hierarchies reinforced by globalization” (p.435).

**Conclusion**

Let us, therefore, conclude. In this lecture, we have focused on the developing relationship between capitalism and democracy. We began with overviews of two crisis narratives, by Wolfgang Streeck and Nancy Fraser. We then turned to attempt to decentre the Eurocentric nature of these accounts, first by a treatment of Partha Chatterjee’s account of the evolution of the passive revolution state in India. We then turned to consider alternative models of radical democracy as practiced by subaltern social movements, as described and advocated by Janet Conway and Jakeet Singh. Finally, we concluded with a brief discussion of how the ideal of democratic participation can and has been partially co-opted by agents of neoliberal globalization