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The Dream of Abundance Produces Monsters



Sources: The Conversation [Image: Shutterstock / alphaspirt.it]

Emmanuel Macron announced a few weeks ago the end of abundance. Specifically, the President of the French Republic said: "We are living the end of what could seem like a triple abundance: that of liquidity at no cost (...), that of products and technologies (...) and land, raw materials and water."

Video: [Emmanuel Macron speaks at the Council of Ministers on August 25 of the "end of abundance"](#).

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We rule out that Macron has mutated into anti-capitalist, but that does not prevent him from seeing the fissures and drift of the world economic system. And it is that the world suffers because inflation tightens, climate change begins to bother, war announces structural imbalances ...

But the French president has discovered nothing. Since the first industrialization there is literature that warns of how abundance is not a course but a drift. Even before, encrypted in Christian doctrine, scholastic schools charged against luxury. That centuries later and after the fall of the USSR, the historian Francis Fukuyama decreed *the end of history* only served to disavow much better grounded texts to disavow him.

Fukuyama's story was a story of abundance.

What society?

The dream of uninterrupted growth (with fatal shocks that have never finished awakening dreamers) would lead to the deployment of neoliberal policies.

Since the 80s, strategies have emerged that, more or less openly, seek to blur the concept of society. "*There is not such a thing as society,*" said Margaret Thatcher. And, if there is no society, there is no basis for a redistributive structure.

The states that privatized the telecommunications, energy and transport companies (the big businesses of *post-Fordism*) could afford to do without the social. Those businesses were the fuel that fueled the middle-class dream for decades of liquidity, credit and pollution.

But the fuel runs out and that middle class must commit its own life to keep the wheel turning: the exposure of bodies as merchandise and the sale of privacy intensifies, work is encapsulated in increasingly precarious jobs and is quoted to a box that may be empty on retirement day.

The middle class is only sometimes, when it can approach abundance. When you buy a car or when, in moments of easy credit, you access a decent home. But it is a middle class with feet of clay that increasingly nourishes structural poverty.

Business and unequal redistribution

The business strategies of post-Fordism (technology, data, energy...) are not cloistered in time and space. Unlike in Fordism (with its assembly lines and its working masses), long-term employment contracts that formally link the subject who produces with the company are no longer needed. There are no longer companies that produce a single commodity constantly for an indefinite period of time.

The ups and downs of the market resitúan the investment at the click of a button. Money looks, selects, releases ballast and activates and deactivates staff lightly.

However, the distribution of capital in this *liquid society* continues to be sought through jobs, but increasingly precarious. If Fordism invented that workers bought the car they made, post-Fordism has taken a turn of the screw to make people a commodity like any other. People who when consuming produce and who are only rewarded for a minimum part of what they produce. The old concept of surplus value pales in comparison to the reproductive capacity of big capital. And so the ILO warns that access to employment is not a guarantee of poverty avoidance.

Episodic redistributive policies emerge that appeal to the concept of society: the increase in the minimum interprofessional wage, the fixing of vital incomes, the containments of the liberalization of the labor market or social tax initiatives. Policies that, from the neoliberal perspective, are considered obstacles to the attraction of capital, that is, *obstacles* to progress and abundance.

Abundance vs. Progress

A car is merchandise; energy is a commodity; the data is merchandise; an erupting volcano, the planet, the bodies, the work. Wares. You pay to have them, to see them, to rent them... So much moving commodity makes up abundance.

For decades, the liberal world lived in the illusion that abundance, unlimited access to resources, was a symptom of progress. Even today, in the media, it is intended to point out as failed states those that do not guarantee access to any merchandise at any time.

The business strategy of the immediacy of Amazon and Google (that the package *arrives right now*, that the content can be enjoyed *here and now*) has become a standard of well-being that States, as organizers of the public, should not pretend. On the contrary, even. Because the strategy of immediate access to commodities, the strategy of abundance, is what transforms individuals into instruments of that same abundance. In goods. That which in other times was called alienation. And alienation is the antagonistic moment of social progress.

If President Macron warns us of the end of abundance, perhaps he should be questioned with some question: the end of what abundance? Also that of commodified people? Also that of people as subjects of service always at your disposal? Hopefully.

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