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## Banal Revolution: The Emptying of a Political Signifier

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*'After all, what is Revolution if it is not a Vodka bar.'*  
(Alexandra B., 16/11/2008 in her review of Revolution Bar<sup>1</sup>)

### Introduction

If you type in the word 'revolution' in the Google search engine the top result that comes up is a chain of bars called Revolution. Other results on the first page of the search engine include a commercial radio station, clothing, a skate park and a software company. A Wikipedia page and the website of the Revolutionary Socialist Youth are the only non-commercial results Google provides us on its first page. This says as much about the business model of Google than it does about the changes at the level of meanings attributed to revolution.

Revolution, it will be argued here, is a political signifier emptied of its radical connotations and currently used graciously as a brand or as a buzzword to mean change in whatever direction. As a result, revolution has been firmly incorporated into the neoliberal discourse and value system. For example, on the website of the U.S. White House we read:

At the end of his two terms in office, Ronald Reagan viewed with satisfaction the achievements of his innovative program known as the **Reagan Revolution**, which aimed to reinvigorate the American people and reduce their reliance upon Government<sup>2</sup>. (emphasis added)

Appropriating leftwing discourse is a crucial aspect of a broader strategy of neoliberal ideology to fill the emptiness of political signifiers associated with its ideological enemies with particular meanings aligned to neo-liberal values. As such, a hegemonic rearticulation takes place involving 'the subversion of oppositional and competing practices which attempt to articulate the social in a different way' (Torfing, 1998, p. 91). A blatant illustration of this is the current use of 'reform' as a euphemism for tearing down the welfare system and reducing the levels of protection for workers. Through such subtle (and less subtle) processes of disarticulation, neoliberal ideology aims to establish itself as a universal essentialist unquestionable hegemony – i.e. Thatcher's famous mantra: 'There is no alternative!'. In doing so, neoliberalism has been highly successful in negating its negation, to paraphrase Hegel and Marx (see Žižek, 2008, p. 189).

In an attempt to map this emptying of the signifier 'revolution' and its appropriation by neoliberal discourse, three distinct types of revolutions are distinguished here. First, the traditional meaning of a revolution is highlighted, an uprising resulting in the sudden overthrow of a social order and the replacement by another, either by violent or non-violent means. Second, the long-term gradual change of a social order as a revolution without a revolution is foregrounded through Gramsci's passive revolution and Inglehart's silent

<sup>1</sup> See: <http://www.yelp.co.uk/biz/revolution-bar-london>

<sup>2</sup> See: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/presidents/ronaldreagan>

revolution. The third type of revolution addressed here represents the further emptying of the signifier and refers to banal revolution, the appropriation of revolution by neo-liberal discourse and capitalist interests in society as a way to denote technological progress or indeed as a funky brand for a hip chain of bars.

### Revolution 1.0

Revolutions are of all ages and are invariably dramatic events. It is thus not entirely surprising that revolutions have been the object of much writing and theorization as to why they occur and how to define and delimit such an incisive event. A revolution was defined by Aristotle as a structural and sudden rupture in a social order provoked by subordinate actors and resulting either in a completely new social order or 'a modification of the existing one'. It occurs, according to Aristotle, as a result of discrepancies in the interpretation of what constitutes justice between different groups in society. He delimits two distinct groups that can provoke a revolution, a suppressed minority or a frustrated majority:

In all revolutions, the conditions which leads up to them is the desire of the many for equality, and the desire of the minority for effective superiority. (Aristotle of Stagira, in *Politics* - 355BC)

Weirdly enough, Aristotle used the word *stasis*, which was subsequently translated as revolution. However, some argue that this is a mistranslation and misunderstanding of the process of stasis, which tends to mean rigidity, entrenchment, something fixed or even the status quo – the exact opposite of what we understand a revolution to be. What Aristotle wanted to express, according to Voegelin (2000, p. 197), is that '[w]hen someone becomes hardened in a position and offers resistance to the smooth interplay of society, then order enters into disorder'. In other words, the rigidification of the position dominant actors take leads to the strengthening of the counter positions occupied by the subordinate, which subsequently results in civic disorder, unrest, and ultimately in the breakdown of the rigidified order. If we consider the French revolution, many Centuries later, the rigidity of the *Ancien Regime* was notorious and arguably led to the forging of class alliances between workers, peasants and bourgeoisie – *un Bloc Historique* referring to the work of Sorel and Gramsci; something the 99% slogan attempts to recreate today.

In the social movement literature a revolution is often clearly delimited as an overthrow of a government by an oppressed class, accompanied by the use of force and fed by the deligitimization of those that govern amongst 'the population as a whole or certain key sections of it' (Calvert, 1970, p. 4). Along the same lines, Johnson (1966, p. 1) contends that a revolution is 'a special kind of social change, one that involves the intrusion of violence into civil social relations'. The framing of revolution as unrest, disequilibrium, disorder and especially violence before, but also after revolutionary moments, has instilled a sense of horror amongst elites and resulted in an overall negative connotation being projected onto revolution as a notion and an idea.

This is expressed virulently in English satirical prints published in the period after the French Revolution, which saw the execution of Louis XVI, the abolishment of the church and the reign of terror by Robespierre. For example, the famous caricaturist George Cruikshank (1792-1878) produced many drawings critiquing the radical reforms implemented by the godless and anti-royalist forces in France. The caption in Figure 1 reads: 'Death or Liberty or Britannia and the Virtues of the Constitution in Danger of Violation from the Great Political Libertine Radical Reform'. On a side note, the mask worn by radical freedom is very reminiscent of the V for Vendetta Guy Fawkes mask appropriated by Anonymous and the Occupy movement.

**Figure 1.** 'Death or Liberty!' by George Cruikshank, 1819

Source: Public Domain

The historical contexts of the French, but as much the Soviet revolutions, meant that the influence and behaviour of crowds and masses, especially in relation to what they were capable of legitimizing, became the focus of theorization. The crowd was seen to be uncivic, unruly, violent, destructive and thus dangerous. Is godless mob rule what we really want? Collective behaviour theorists such as Park ([1904] 1982, p. 80) contend that '[w]hen the public ceases to be critical, it dissolves or is transformed into a crowd'. Park was influenced by LeBon's (1895) and especially Tarde's (1898) work on the crowd, focusing on the psychology of crowds and how individuals behave in crowds. Tarde juxtaposed the rational, critically reflexive, heterogeneous public, reading newspapers with the irrational, un-reflexive and homogeneous crowd. Park and Burgess ([1921] 1966, p. 385) warn of the danger of a 'circular reaction' in crowds and in doing so they voice a common fear of the crowd as being irrational, erratic and indiscriminate.

'the crowd does not discuss and hence it does not reflect. It simply "mills." Out of this milling process a collective impulse is formed which dominates all the members of the crowd'.

As such, collective behaviour theorists sought to explain social movements and collective actions as symptoms of a broken society that requires fixing. Once harmony is restored, collective behaviour theory contends, social movements either collapse or become institutionalized by the system. This concurs with structural functionalism and the theory of social equilibrium (Parsons, 1951), seeing social change as a process that re-establishes a stable social order through (minor) concessions. As such, collective behaviour theory is often described as a breakdown theory and accused of 'disregard[ing] the role of conflict within collective action and reduc[ing] it to pathological reaction and marginality' (Hannigan, 1985, p. 437).

This insistence of collective behaviour scholars on approaching social movements and revolutions as pathological was challenged by both the Resource Mobilisation Theory, emphasizing the role of organisation and structural constraints to success and the New

Social Movement Theories, stressing identity, culture and agency (Jenkins, 1981; Touraine, 1981; Melucci, 1996). From the perspective of the critics of collective behaviour theory, social movements and counter-cultures striving for social change are not irrational nor pathological, but rather rational responses to a changing society or the expressions of a vibrant democracy.

The emphasis on collective identities and the complex motivations of people to resist, led to the insight that revolutions need to be 'accompanied by cognitive changes, changes in the very way that individuals perceive and experience reality; in short, a revolution constitutes a fundamental change in world view' (Kramnick, 1972, p. 31) and is therefore often the outcome of many years of frustrations and hunger for change from the part of the population. An interesting phenomenon in this regard is the rise of non-violent revolutions as these examples attest:

- The Carnation Revolution (1974, Portugal)
- The Velvet Revolution (1989, Czechoslovakia)
- The Bulldozer Revolution (2000, Serbia)
- The Rose Revolution (2003, Georgia)
- The Orange Revolution (2004, Ukraine)

In relation to the post-communist states, Beissinger (2007, p. 261) speaks of 'Modular Democratic Revolutions', whereby we can observe 'the borrowing of mobilizational frames, repertoires, or modes of contention across cases', very reminiscent of the concept of 'movement spillover' (Meyer and Whittier, 1994), a phenomenon that could also be observed during the Arab spring, subsequently leading to the Indignados and the Occupy movement. Although the Indignados and Occupy can hardly be seen as revolutionary, but are more reminiscent of the logic of bearing witness to injustice (Cammaerts, 2012).

## Revolution 2.0

In the Marxist tradition revolutions are approached from a conflictual perspective rather than a harmonious one; revolution is inevitable within a capitalist society. However, the need for a violent overthrow of the dominant capitalist system in order to replace it with a socialist/collective one, has for a long time been the object of vigorous debate within Marxist circles. Gramsci is an interesting author in this regard. He precisely acknowledged that the way the Bolsheviks managed to take hold of the state (i.e. through violent means) was not replicable in Western Europe where he perceived a lack of a bloc historique. Gramsci (1971, p. 235) saw a more intricate and intrusive system of social control breeding false consciousness as the main reason for this lack of a public legitimacy for an aggressive war of manoeuvre or a frontal attack.

In wars among the more industrially and socially advanced states, the war of manoeuvre must be considered as reduced to more of a tactical than a strategic function; [...] The same reduction must take place in the art and science of politics, at least in the case of the most advanced states, where 'civil society' has become a very complex structure [...] The superstructures of civil society are like the trench-systems of modern warfare.

Gramsci (1971, p. 59) called the method through which dominant classes are able to continue exerting their rule over the subordinate even despite catastrophic economic crises and depressions, such as the one after the crash of 1930 (and arguably after the current crisis too), a passive revolution – a revolution without revolution. By this he referred to the

ability of the bourgeoisie and capitalism to mutate and reconfigure itself in the face of contestations so as to reemerge as a legitimate dominant class and societal system. Passive revolutions thus 'produce socio-political transformations, sometimes of significance', but crucially whilst also securing the dominance of the property and capital owning classes in terms of 'power, initiative and hegemony, and leaving the working classes in their condition of subalternity' (Losurdo, 1997, p. 155).

Gramsci (1971) studied in particular post-revolutionary restoration periods, but also Roosevelt's New Deal and the emergence of Taylorism and Fordism as well as corporatist fascism as distinct ways in which the working classes were kept on board when it came to supporting a capitalist bourgeois-led society. Gramsci identified four major components through which a passive revolution takes place: education, discourse, religion and the media. Hence, his insistence on the importance of hegemony, the war of position and the particular role of superstructure institutions such as schools, churches and newspapers.

Gramsci's most important contribution, however, consisted in arguing that the mechanisms through which the passive revolution affects long-term change in the minds of citizens, whilst keeping the privileges of the ruling elites intact, can and should also be used by revolutionary actors aiming for radical change. Social struggles by the subaltern can also use the educational system, religious beliefs and the media to alter discourse and articulate counter-hegemonic strategies. In this regard we could refer to Williams notion of the long revolution, which he contrasts with the short revolution, concurring with Revolution 1.0. The long revolution denotes the importance of culture and the superstructure in revolutionary struggles.

The human energy of the Long Revolution springs from the conviction that men can direct their own lives, by breaking through the pressures and restrictions of older forms of society and discovering new common institutions. (Williams, 1961, p. 347)

Another author of interest here is Inglehart (1977) and his concept of the silent revolution referring to the shift from an emphasis on material to immaterial values within society, which is generally coupled to a shift in the politics of contention as well. The post-war generations in Europe and the U.S. had experienced years of rising prosperity due to the Keynesian policies and above all a more or less stable political context. As Bertolt Brecht (quoted in Brunstein, 1964, p. 234) once proclaimed: 'Erst kommt das Fressen und dann kommt die Moral' [First eating, then morality]. As such, new types of demands relating to personal and sexual freedoms, respect for difference or promoting a healthy and environmentally friendly lifestyle, were increasingly being voiced more forcefully. This is closely connected to the emergence of what came to be known as a cross-generational shift from material pre-occupations to more importance being attributed to post-materialistic values such as self-expression, personal autonomy, identity and self-reflexion – the revolution of the self (Inglehart, 1977; Giddens, 1992).

When Laclau and Mouffe (1985) published *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* they provided the theoretical grounds for the expansion of the political and of radical political struggles. Lifestyle struggles became legitimised as part of a radical left-wing agenda for progressive social change. In many ways, NSM theories along with political theorists such as Laclau and Mouffe facilitated the politization of the cultural, the non-material and the emancipation of the super-structure from the economic base and the class struggle, providing a space for identity and passions in politics. Laclau and Mouffe (1985, p. 115) also presented a way to conceptually connect individual/personal identities with collective ones by articulating political identity as the positioning of subjects within a discursive field that is context dependent.

Besides the prominence of Gramsci in the work of Laclau and Mouffe, the silent revolution could also be linked to Gramsci's passive revolution through the many struggles focusing on

a politics of recognition rather than a politics of redistribution (Fraser, 1996). Many of these struggles have precisely adopted Gramsci's tactics of the passive revolution focusing on positive representation, changing minds, values and behaviour, waging a war of position and aiming for change in the long run rather than in the short term.

**Figure 2.** Gay Parade New York City, 17 January 2009



**Source:** Nathaniel Paluga - [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gay\\_parade.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gay_parade.jpg)

The highly successful, but protracted struggle of gay, lesbian and bi-sexual communities for equal rights and against discrimination on the basis of sexual preferences is a good example of this. In recent years, many countries have adopted legislation allowing same-sex couples to marry and/or adopt children; as well as to prevent discrimination on the basis of sexual preference. This does not mean that all is fine for gays and lesbians, just as gender inequalities are not something of the past, but we certainly have come a very long way in a few decades time.

At the same time, it has to be acknowledged that these struggles for recognition focusing on non-materialistic values are not uncontested and led to new social, cultural and political faultlines in many societies and a polarisation between what could be called new right and new left ideological positions<sup>3</sup>.

### Revolution 3.0

As mentioned in the introduction, at present 'revolution' is in many ways one of the quintessential examples of an empty signifier; bereft of meaning and consequently inducing a discursive struggle to fill the void. In relation to empty signifiers Torfing (2004, p. 11) argues that '[t]he inside is marked by a constitutive lack that the outside helps to fill'. A signifier becomes empty when it is disarticulated from the signified and unable to point unequivocally to a totalized meaning. The filling of the emptied signifier then precisely represents the attempts to hegemonise a particular meaning over and above others. In this struggle to achieve closure, Laclau (1996, p. 44) contends, '[v]arious forces can compete in their efforts to present their particular objectives as those which carry out the filling of that lack'.

<sup>3</sup> Typical new left values are solidarity, openness, cosmopolitanism, secularism, respect for difference leading to positions such as pro-abortion, pro-euthanasia, being in favour of the legalisation of drugs, advocating rights for asylum seekers and emphasizing the benefits of migration or arguing for environmental policies. Common new right values include fundamentalist religious beliefs, closure, nationalism or regionalism, leading to a negative dispositions in relation to the issues identified above.

The emergence in the 1980s-1990s of optimistic discourses speaking of a technological, digital or virtual revolution in many ways signaled the successful disarticulation of revolution from its radical or at least subversive nodes. Despite early efforts by Marxist scholars such as Freeman (1974) to position technological revolutions in relation to the Schumpeterian concept of creative destruction and the inevitability of crisis in capitalism, pretty quickly the notion of a technological revolution was appropriated by neoliberal ideology and came to mean technological advancement coupled with friction-free perpetual economic growth and the belief in the ability of man [sic] and machine to conquer and even virtually recreate nature. Henceforth, revolution was unrooted and positioned in a discursive field far removed from its original meaning and nodal links to resistance. The time conjunction in which this new revolutionary discourse became prominent is of relevance as well. Calabrese and Burgelman (1999, p. 5) attribute the emergence of the technological revolution discourse to the end of the cold war and the urgent need for a new meta-narrative – ‘a new mythology [...] to mobilize society around the aims of capitalism’, which was found in the information society. Technology became sacralised; the machine as god, capable of anything, even inducing a revolution. The technological revolution became what Kubicek, et al. (1997, pp. 11-12) called a *Leitbild* – THE model of development outside which nothing else exists anymore and serving as a guide for action<sup>4</sup>.

A set of mobilizing myths about the revolutionary potentials of digital technologies subsequently served to propagate a neoliberal capitalist revolution that would ultimately seriously undermine the precarious post World War II compromise in the perpetual conflict between labour and capital, between the state and the ‘free’ market, between the individual and the collective. Step by step the social contract between the state and its citizens has been drastically rewritten and weakened (Torring, 1998; Pierson, 2007). Whereas the promotion of equal chances for all through free education, policies to assure full employment, the war against poverty, and the principle of solidarity between classes used to be self-evident, this is by no means the case anymore. Instead we increasingly find ourselves living back into the future of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when education was for those who could afford it, welfare a matter for enlightened philanthropists, workers’ exploitation rife, disparities in wages extreme and wild unbridled capitalism the order of the day.

While we should not fall into the trap of technological determinism, it is quite obvious that the discourse of the technological revolution is closely related to these radical shifts in the relationships between state, market and citizens/workers described above. It suffices to refer to the introduction of devices facilitating the individualized consumption of culture, the liberalization and privatization of respectively the telecommunications and broadcasting sectors, the internet evolving into a global shopping mall and the ubiquity of advertising in the street, on public transport, on television and on the internet. All this exposes the remaining importance of material values, needs and wants, despite the silent revolution referred to by Inglehart. In the BBC sitcom *Absolutely Fabulous* (5/01/2012), actress Joanna Lumley recently described the UK uprisings in the summer of 2011 as a form of ‘extreme shopping’.

However, the banalisation of revolution goes much further than this. As shown in the introduction to this article, ‘revolution’ has been turned into a brand, which in a sense represents the filling of the void by its complete antithesis. Clothing brands, funky cocktail bars, cycle shops, software companies carry the brand Revolution© with pride. From 2000 to 2012 about 400 trademarks containing the word ‘revolution’ were submitted to the UK Intellectual Property Office<sup>5</sup>. The ultimate culmination of the advertising business’ dislocation of revolution must undoubtedly be the Revolution Awards, issued every year by

<sup>4</sup> The concept of *Leitbild* originated amongst urban planners in post-war Germany and referred to an abstract overall model without much detail and enough flexibility so as to be more easily accepted in a variety of contexts.

<sup>5</sup> See: <http://www.ipo.gov.uk/>



the UK magazine *Revolution* to celebrate ‘those who consistently challenge tried and tested marketing conventions, providing a benchmark of excellence from which the rest of the world can learn’<sup>6</sup>.

Revolutionary imagery, language and iconography are also the frequent target of corporate subversions. The 25<sup>th</sup> International Marketing Conference held in 2006 in Ghent (Belgium) had as main theme ‘Leadership: Old Leaders, New Leaders’ and used the iconic image of Che Guevara wearing iPod headphones. In France, the supermarket chain E.Leclerc ran an advertising campaign appropriating the agitprop imagery produced by the *Ateliers Populaire* during the student uprisings of May 1968. The slogan of one of the posters read: ‘The rise of prices oppresses your purchasing power’ (cf. Figure 3). The designers of the ad-agency Australia must have been in a cynical mood as they replaced the SS sign on the shield of the police in the original with a barcode.

**Figure 3.** Appropriation of revolutionary iconography by supermarket chain E.Leclerc in France



Poster made by Jacques Carelman at the Atelier Populaire de l'École des Beaux Arts de Paris, 18 May 1968



Supermarket chain E.Leclerc advert in France, February 2005

Elsewhere, I called this phenomenon the unjamming of the culture jam (Cammaerts, 2007), or to put it in Situationist terms *le détournement du détournement*. And in this particular case it goes even further as the supposedly ‘anonymous’ creators of the original pictures were remunerated by the advertisement agency for their permission to use the picture. CEO Michel-Édouard Leclerc pokes fun of this on his blog when he responds to critics of the campaign and to apologetic remarks from Jacques Carelman, who designed the anti-police poster:

Let us remind this truth to those who question us: even Picasso painted *Guernica* on order. D’Aragon to Cohn-Bendit, passing by André Breton, Jean-Paul Sartre, Michel Foucault or Pierre Bourdieu [...] Even Trotsky..., even the authors who most contested private property (Marx, Prudhon, Vallès) lived (badly, I agree) from their pen. So, why this shame? (Leclerc, 2005: np – my translation)

## Conclusions

Given the inability to completely totalize meaning – hegemony is ‘a mode of control that has to be fought for constantly in order to maintain it’ (Giroux, 1981: 17) and cannot be seen as ultimately fixed or permanently self-evident (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985, p. 111), there will always be competing meanings that struggle for dominance and the same goes for revolution, which is always preceded and thereby also qualified by an adjective. However,

<sup>6</sup> See: <http://www.revolutionawards.com/>

following Lacan there is usually one Master Signifier 'which functions as the signifier of the very lack [...] the 'empty' signifier which totalizes ('quilts') the dispersed field' (Žižek, 1992, pp. 102-3).

To paraphrase the reviewer of the Revolution Bar at the outset of this article: after all, what else is the use of revolution as a brand or the use of revolutionary language as a marketing technique if it is not precisely the signifier of the very lack inherent to banal revolution as an empty signifier. The banality and thus also the everyday nature of the neoliberal revolution has all the hallmarks of Gramsci's passive revolution. From this perspective, banal revolution obscures the original meaning and connotation of revolution not merely to preserve the status quo but rather to turn the clock back on several progressive struggles, mostly those relating to the old faultlines between labour and capital rather than the identity politics of recognition. As Žižek (24/11/2011) recently declared in a speech to Occupy Wall Street in Zuccotti Park, New York:

What do we perceive today as possible? Just follow the media. On the one hand, in technology and sexuality, everything seems to be possible. [...] but look at the field of society and economy. There, almost everything is considered impossible. You want to raise taxes by a little bit for the rich. They tell you it is impossible: "We lose competitiveness". You want more money for health care, they tell you: "Impossible, this means totalitarian state."

However, neo-Gramscian reinterpretations, such as those by Laclau and especially Mouffe, make clear that the emptied signifier can always be reclaimed; full closure is an ontological impossibility, meaning is always merely partially fixed and totalizing efforts can and will always be resisted in some form or another. As the protester in Figure 4 illustrates the war of position is of a permanent nature.

**Figure 4.** 'This revolution will not be privatized' - Occupy Oakland, 2 November 2011



**Source:** astro twilight - <http://www.marxist.com/united-states-oakland-30000-strong-march.htm>

The question then becomes to which extent or how can revolution be reconnected to its original nodes and be a meaningful signifier for radical change to the benefit of the many rather than the few. In Western democracies, Gramsci's assessment that a revolution is not achievable through a violent war of manoeuvre still stands strong today. Hence, the only available route is that of the passive counter-revolution. In this regard, Bouchier's (1978, p. 37) work is particularly useful. He argues that radical revolutionary political forces have three main tasks if they want to be successful. First, they must de-legitimize the

mechanisms that stabilize hegemonic meanings. Second, they have to dis-alienate the citizen/worker by presenting an alternative cognitive universe and making the means to achieve this alter-reality explicit. Finally, they must achieve the commutation of that alter-reality through communication to fit various groups, interests and a variety of different circumstances.

The redefinition of what is possible in such a way that it generates support in favour of that alter-reality is a crucial part of social and political struggles in our complex, multi-layered and fragmented societies, but symbolic struggles on their own are arguably not enough to fundamentally unsettle the neoliberal paradigm and/or recapture the void of the empty signifier revolution. Even the near-systemic collapse of capitalism in 2008, only avoided thanks to massive state interventions underwritten by taxpayers across the world did not derail the neoliberal revolution, on the contrary. After having saved 'the market', 'the market' turned its back on states and citizens by condemning them for their high debt rates as a result of saving financial capitalism. This pressure from the financial markets and rating agencies is subsequently used in many countries to strip the welfare state and to further privatize public services, which is precisely the essence of the neoliberal agenda – the invisible hand is showing us the finger

At Occupy Wall Street, Žižek proclaimed that the marriage between democracy and free capitalism is over. This necessarily implies that the passive counter-revolution and the realization of the alter-reality has to take place by challenging neoliberalism from within the liberal democratic system and its structures of power, but also by pressuring representative democracies through participation in 'immediate on-the-spot struggle[s]' (Kluge, 1982: 212), as well as sustained campaigns. In this regard, it seems ever more urgent to restore the importance of a politics of redistribution (or should it be retribution?) in present-day political struggles for social change, as Fraser (1996, p. 67) has argued for many years:

Only by looking to integrative approaches that unite redistribution and recognition in the service of participatory parity can we meet the requirements of justice for all.

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