## Contribution for the SSFS7 Climate Change, Global Crises, and Community Regeneration Congress

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I want to talk about three topics or/and interpretation proposals: The historical limits of capitalism; the territoriality of power and the systemic bifurcations.

1. **The historical limits of capitalism**

All life systems have historic boundaries.

The historic coherence of this system, which acted as a center of gravity, takes shape and dissipates as the system reaches its conditions and limits of possibility. This process occurs, as unfolding events support, either its viability or its unsustainability.

Capitalism, with its tendency to objectify and pursue technological improvement as a goal, has long passed the point of its maximum possible development, and has started walking in the opposite direction, eroding its own structural bases, and showing no signs of deceleration. The over achieving technology development has generated an overshoot phenomenon in all fields. It was in the 1970’s when the system reached a state of *Ecological Overshoot*, which means the tipping point where humans consume resources and impact nature at a faster rate than nature can regenerate itself.

Ever since, the ecological balance was broken, the more technology intervenes to control nature, the more it destroys it. This stage of over consumption has been growing, and nowadays it represents slightly more than the 150 % of the biosphere’s regenerative capacity. The rate of extinction grows exponentially, as the forestal cover shrinks by the day. Also, the virgin and agricultural lands are being occupied by genetically modified organisms, under the protocol of monoculture, that cancels the biodiversity, and represses the creativity and ability of nature to recreate and reinvent itself.

From my perspective, the Ecological overshoot, as dramatic as it is, does not summarize the complexity of the problem. There is also a parallel overshoot in social terms, on which we have to focus.

The relative and absolute abundance of available working force, has promoted the depreciation and disposability of human life. Life expectancy is decreasing, and people die of curable diseases, as life quality increasingly degrades. Is this the extinction process of etnocultural alternatives or specific social brackets? In any case, and in both of them, it’s a catastrophe.

Capitalism has entered what I call its “Apocalyptic Phase”

**2. The territoriality of power**

Capitalism´s power is organized in two main ways:

The first one is around Nation States, which provides it with a territorial figure. Often this figure is mistaken by the country itself, ignoring the social complexity, that signifies States, as spaces for confrontation. This confusion provides capitalistic corporations with a buffer, that alleviates their responsibilities. At the same time, it provides it with a protective shell that includes national Armed and Diplomatic Forces, as much as an institutionality that blurs the boundaries between capitalist and nation interests.

In capitalism´s Apocalyptic Phase, where all hell has broken loose, the States seem to recoil, as a defense or survival strategy (a process called “deglobalization” by some scholars), yet increasingly becoming Permanent Exception States (non commonwealth).

The predominance of Nation States, as modes of organization, remains true. At the same time however, the system attempts to shatter weak States, for example in the Balkans, Irak, Siria, Palestine and Venezuela. Then, not all the states are closing over themselves.

Power, on the other hand, is also organized in a corporate manner, trespassing the limits of the institutionality established by International Order, which promote corporate endeavors at the same time as impose certain restrictions on them. The foundation of global corporations gave the kickstart to the globalization process, but moreover, to a transformation of (international) institutionality and territoriality.

The corporations, still protected by the institutional umbrella, have developed a particular kind of territoriality that I call Archipelago Territory. It refers to the articulation of a myriad of physically discontinuous spaces where a corporation has settled. Some in land, some in the ocean and some in space, the whole of them are, in fact, the corporation´s territory.

These territories are shaped as webs with non-adjacent geographical nodes, regulated by the corporations as they have absolute agency to control the behavior within the space. They also have agency to generate a kind of stability that is not that of liberal democracies, and therefore, seems much more appropriate, for the contemporary dynamics of the world. Showing no interest in democracy, and feeling no need for consensus, this kind of territorial organization is setting the paradigms for a direct way of organizing the power structure.

The difference between Nation and Archipelago territoriality is that the former attempts to be an organization structured around the commonwealth, therefore including some form of democracy and consensual mediation. The latter however gives zero importance to what happens in the rest of the world, except when it finds potential or actual competitors. Its society are the owners, the stockholders, the private army, the employees and factory workers. Everything and everybody else is considered the **leftovers of the planet** doomed to roam among countries like immigrant zombies, with no-origin and no-destiny (as there are so many nowadays). This process deepens as the land belongs to increasingly fewer hands, including those of crime organizations.

Due to the difference in their corporation system timelines, as much as their different styles and visions, China can be considered closer to the former kind of territoriality while the United States closer to the latter.

Despite the fact that Capitalism’s dimension remains global (because currently, productive activities and company management are global) it is experiencing a shrinking trajectory.

Societies are increasingly left outside, viewed from the system’s perspective as useless or dysfunctional. The current system, that pretends to be global, is not capable of integrating the world's population as a whole.

1. **The systemic bifurcations**

To be left outside does not mean to be left alone, in freedom. It means to remain under a regime that is strongly disciplinarian and that does not contemplate or value the consensus. Nevertheless, it is also the environment where reproduction has to be reinvented.

In the Immanuel Wallerstein research team, we understand Capitalism as a complex organizational system, surrounding a nucleus of coherence that has lost meaning over time. Moreover, it is because of this loss of meaning, that the system is currently dissipating (therefore, needing more disciplinary control). In parallel, other nuclei of coherence and other world visions gain gravity, pointing towards the formation of a system, that moves away from the predominant one, as an offshoot of it.

This is what we call a bifurcation, and they become certainly visible, as Capitalism moves forward in this process of systemic incoherence. Some of the paths these bifurcations open, lead to somber possibilities, which have a highly destructive centripetal force: systems that are based in discipline and an overreaching control of life. Other paths are promising, offering open horizons that privilege the development of life in freedom. In any case, this is a historical process that occurs simultaneously in many corners of the planet and calls for epistemic diversity.

Authoritarian systems, that create their own materiality, territoriality and institutionality (the drug lord’s territories for example) represent an alternative for many who have been evicted or discarded by the capitalistic society.

The reconstruction of the social tissue in a communitarian manner is a learning exercise that involves long term knowledge, revalues the experience of millenia at the same time that it creates new identities, new ways of solving and promoting life and communal organization. Moreover, it is the process of constitution of new subjects. This reconstruction comes from a critique of modern capitalism and colonialism, and has been strongly stimulated by the coronavirus pandemic, as it revealed the unsustainability of Capitalism right before our eyes.

Capitalism, the way of life as we know it, is certainly leading us to a collective suicide. Will we follow it untill the end, or we will dare to jump into the promisory unknown?