Crisis of a liberal democratic regime?

Michal Vašečka
Masaryk University Brno (www.fss.muni.cz)
CVEK Bratislava (www.cvek.sk)
Presentation thesis

- Liberal democratic regime is „muddling through“ a period of crisis due to various reasons;
- Its crisis is a result of our inability to strengthen its core stones, its rivals seem to be more efficient;
- Recent crisis might be understood as a chance to return legitimacy to liberal democratic regime.
Liberal democracy as a regime

- Strong middle class and well-functioning civil society are often seen as pre-conditions for liberal democracy.

- Liberal democracy - political systems that attempts to:
  - Defend civil liberties;
  - Regulate government intervention;
  - Increase the scope for freedom of citizens;
  - Develop a society open to talent;
  - Frame rules that maximize the well-being of all citizens.
Main principles of a liberal democratic regime

- Liberal democracies are based on four main principles:
  - A belief in the individual;
  - A belief in reason and progress;
  - A consensual theory of society;
  - A suspicion of concentrated forms of power.
Liberal democratic regime nowadays

- Liberal society as a cynical society
- Central Europe - liberal democratic regime as a symbol bandit capitalism
- Liberal democratic regime lost its participatory ethos /chair made of three legs is losing its legs…/
Crisis of modernity

Crisis of state
- Theory of elites
- Marxist theory
- State corporativism
- Societal corporativism

Crisis of modernity

Crisis of society
- Ideals of pluralism clashes with reality
- Social stratas fight for their position on the stratification tree, the most endangered – middle class
- Rising discrepancy between material and cultural status of a middle class
- New forms of political control over society
- Post-democracy
Problem is real / Structuralist view/

- Fragmentarization of social cohesion
- Disappearance of social solidarity
- Panic of middle classes
- Rise of anomy
- Ontological insecurity
- Lack of trust
- Alienation from society
„Is there a problem?“ /Constructivist view/

- Social construction of reality and construction of post-modern views
- Consequences of definition of situation
- Obvious world and internal world of people of late modernity
- Abstract systems of modern society and lack of trust as a source of insecurity and lack of trust
- Generation identity
- Conspiratory type of thinking
- Mass society as an incompetent actor
Crisis as a reaction on „post“ situation

- „Post“ society and inability to deal with new situation
  - Post-democratic society
  - Post-civilization society
  - Post-imperialist society
  - Post-optimist society
  - Post-secular society
  - Post-heroic society

- Risk society as a society that lost ability to be reflexive
Liberal democratic regime is recently being reproduced mostly thanks to epidemics of consumption and capitalism is based on its dominant idea - choice;

But - ideology of choice is overwhelming, people feel they have too much choice, result is feeling of anxiety, people are „frozen“ from having so many choices in their life.

Renata Salecl: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1bqMY82xzWo
Demand for a paradigm change?

- Cultural capitalism of 1968 - this time crisis is broader
- Lack of vision...
- Slavoj Žižek:
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hpAMbpQ8J7g
Crisis as a chance?

- Crisis does not lead to an increase of participatory ethos
- Post-modern society as a society with one leg?
- Emancipated civil society as a chance for liberal democracy in 21st century