

# **Sortition, Oligarchy and personality disorder**

*Presentation by Mathew Little, Leigh-on-Sea*

Abstract:

I want to examine horizontality, and in particular sortition, as potential solutions to a pervasive lack of trust in institutions. This lack of trust is apparent in theories like the psychopath theory of the financial crisis. It's easy to retort that institutional, not personal, issues lie at the roots of social problems, but there is a pervasive belief that all institutions are tainted and doomed to fail.

I want to relate this to the concept of a 'market society', the notion that capitalist values have borrowed deep into society itself, and are not just present in the economic 'superstructure'. This is connected to the fact that personality disorders such as narcissism, seem to be getting worse in western societies. The problems are not limited to profit-maximising corporations. The solution may be therefore to turn to ideas of sortition. With responsibility and power periodically switched between people, status and niches of power, do not become a way for individuals to dominate institutions. Sortition may be a way of forming institutions which take account of our flaws as people and seek to circumvent them.

I want to give historical and contemporary examples of sortition and how it is an alternative to well-enshrined notions of democracy through elections, which reinforce status seeking and the 'rule of the best'. Finally, I want to examine whether political organisations, founded on sortition, that aim to take and wield power, can undergo this process without giving in to internal rule by more 'capable' or charismatic leaders.

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