Why is there a global wave of populism and nationalism at this specific conjuncture? And why is this taking a largely negative form, and could that be changed? Populism gives voice to ‘the people’ as basic source of value and legitimacy—crucial to democracy though easily manipulated by demagogues and distorted by racism or other biased representations of the people. Populist movements that ‘short-circuit’ normal democratic procedures are responses to failures of large scale systems of societal integration, and failures of elites to lead with full consideration of implications for all citizens. Action needs to address these issues, not attempt a return to the status quo ante. Building more effective and fairer globalization may depend on working through nation-states and literally international structures rather than attempting to minimize their role.

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