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The Great Double Transformation of the 21st century

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Abstract

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The importance of the work of Karl Polanyi lies in the integration of a deep structural analysis of capitalist subsumption of all spheres of social reproduction by transforming the basic goods of life into fictitious commodities with a long-term crisis theory (waves of movements and counter-movements, great crises etc.). The almost neglected horizon of this concept developed over forty years is the search for a (socialist) transformation transcending the whole structure of capitalist market societies.

The paper will concentrate on the last chapter of *The Great Transformation* "Freedom in a Complex Society" and works of the 1940th to 1950th of Karl Polanyi to outline the major paths of a double transformation in and beyond capitalism by radicalizing proposals of a Keynesian type *and* of commons-oriented answers toward the crises of market-dominated civilization. This would mean a twofold transformation. There are two senses in which such a transformation is twofold. Firstly, it has the task of overcoming the exploitative, oppressive, and destructive character of today's capitalist society while simultaneously creating forms that absorb/transcend ("aufheben") the developmental capacity of modern societies in a solidary, democratic, and ecological form. Secondly, the transformation is twofold in that, given the actually existing possibilities, it occurs *within* capitalism, but also points *beyond* it. It is about combining the 'transformation towards a socially and ecologically regulated capitalism with the beginning of a second Great Transformation that takes us beyond capitalism' (Dieter Klein) and aiming at a new civilization.

In *The Great Transformation* and works in the 1940th Karl Polanyi concentrates on three ways of a postcapitalist transformation: (1) decommodification of the basic goods of life (nature, labour, money, culture); (2) deglobalization; and (3) wholesale democratization of democracy. His anthropological research of the late 1940th and 1950th studies precapitalist societies as civilizations keeping the market forces under strict control. This makes clear that for him the path forward to a postcapitalist type of societies is a double negation of capitalism and reaffirmation of some most important features of precapitalist societies and their culture.

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1. Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft – the complexity of society

The last chapter of Karl Polanyi's famous work "The Great Transformation" was titled "Freedom in a Complex Society". This title itself expresses one of the most fundamental contradictions in the heart of the socialist tradition and of Polanyi's thinking itself – the contradiction between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. Socialism in general and Polanyi's understanding of socialism in particular are visions of an "association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all" (Marx and Engels 1848:506). From its early beginnings in the aftermath of the Great French revolution socialism and communism challenged the emerging modern capitalist societies demanding the freedom should not be a privilege but accessible to the last favored classes and groups. In the words of one of the most far sighted critiques of socialism, Lorenz von Stein, communism expresses the scandal that in the freest society humankind as ever seen new forms of unfreedom have emerged and one class is exploiting and suppressing the other (Stein 1959:8) The society is unable to govern its own reproduction as a society of freedom.

The classical communist solution to this scandal is the transformation of complex capitalist societies into a community of communities based on common property of the producers (in the broadest sense) or of a *Gesellschaft* with complex institutions of intermediation to a *Gemeinschaft* or association of individuals bound by common property and direct collective self-government. Everybody should become collective owner and producer in one and the same person. All social relations should become interrelations of persons, directly regulated by rational and purposeful collective action. No hidden hand should steer the development and no private property should withstand solidarity. Money, law and state would vanish after a shorter or longer transitional period. Revolutionary communism in the tradition of François Noël Babeuf tried to implement this type of society by taking over the state apparatus; evolutionary communism in the tradition of Robert Owen proposed and experimented with building- up concrete communities of New Harmony. The result would be the same – rebuilding societies as communities. Karl Marx resumed this position in his main work "The Capital" as follows: "Let us now picture to ourselves ... a community of free individuals, carrying on their work with the means of production in common, in which the labour power of all the different individuals is consciously applied as the combined labour power of the community. [...] The social relations of the individual producers, with regard both to their labour and to its products, are in this case perfectly simple and intelligible, and that with regard not only to production but also to distribution" (Marx 1996:89 f.).

In 1887 Ferdinand Tönnies published his most important work *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* with the not so well known subtitle "An Essay on Communism and Socialism as Empirical Cultural Forms" (in 1912 replaced by "Fundamental Concepts in Pure Sociology"). In this work he introduced the difference between two analytically opposed types of social relations.¹ Beside Henry Maine's works on ancient societies and Otto von Gierke's on cooperatives Tönnies refers in his foreword of 1887 to Karl Marx as "the strangest and deepest social philosopher" (Tönnies 1887:XXVIII). Tönnies defines his dichotomist terms in the following way: "All kinds of social co-existence that are familiar, comfortable and exclusive are to be understood as belonging to *Gemeinschaft*. *Gesellschaft* means life in the public sphere, in the outside world. In *Gemeinschaft* we are united from the moment of our birth with our own folk for better or for worse. We go out into *Gesellschaft* as if into a foreign land." (Tönnies 2001:18) It should be noted that for Tönnies *socialism* is result of a tendency to bring *Vergesellschaftung* under social control which – becoming total and thus transforming

¹ Interestingly enough the English translation of the title of Tönnies' work was changed several times: In 1940 Tönnies' work was translated by Charles P. Loomis and published under the title *Fundamental Concepts of Sociology (Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft)*, in 1955 the same work was published as *Community and Association* and in 1957 as *Community and Society*. The most current translation of the book title by Jose Harris and Margaret Hollis is *Community and Civil Society*. Frequently in the translation *Gesellschaft* is not translated at all.

society into a *Gemeinschaft* again – would be self-defeating.² This position had an impact on Karl Polanyi as we will see (see also Dale 2010:34 ff.).

Karl Polanyi's understanding of socialism seems to be fed and enriched at least by three "sources" which made him doubt this identification of socialism with *Gemeinschaft*. Firstly it was shaped by his permanent and lasting reflection of very different currents of socialism and critiques of socialism and communism (see for an overview Cangiani, Polanyi-Levitt, and Thomasberger 2005). Secondly it was shaped by his work as an outstanding analyst of international political and economical affairs working for the *Österreichischer Volkswirt*. His analysis of the crisis-ridden period after WW I and the late 1920th and 1930th were a rich source of a deep understanding of the relations between economics, politics and the values of complex capitalist societies. More and more he became aware of the problems to combine an orientation toward social justice, individual freedom and economic efficiency faced by committed left governments, labor unions and left parties (Polanyi 2002a, 2003). A third source became is ever increasing interest in precapitalist societies and their relation of market and non-market forms of regulation (see Polanyi 1957, 1966). Based on the insights of these three currents of his work Polanyi started to doubt the orthodox assumption that socialism will be a *Gesellschaft* reduced to *Gemeinschaft*. In *the Great Transformation* this assumption finally did not longer held at all – freedom should be realized in a *complex society* never reducible to *Gemeinschaft* and dealing with very different institutional forms always confronted with the problem of objectivations and relative independence (*Verselbständigung*) und *Entfremdung* but having the horizon a community of free individuals acting together in solidararian forms.

In his debate with Ludwig von Mises Karl Polanyi³ bases his argumentation on socialism as a *Gemeinschaft* of individuals organized in functional differentiated organizations (see Bockman 2013). In his work *Gemeinwirtschaft* Mises argued that a economy based on common property is not feasible (or is at least less efficient than a market economy) due to the fact that it would be impossible to establish prices for the factors of production making an efficient allocation of these factors impossible and neglecting opportunity costs (Mises 1932). In line with concepts developed by G.D.H. Cole (1920) and the Austrian School of Marxism (Bauer 1976) Karl Polanyi tried to prove that even on the basis of common property and united in one *Gemeinschaft* different actors can emerge – the collective producers (*Produktionsverband*), the collective consumers (*Konsumgenossenschaften*), the communities (*Kommune*). In this special "functional socialism" (Polanyi 2005b:72) these associations are "functional representations" of one and the same individuals in different roles (Polanyi 2005b:97). This functional socialism is clearly distinguished from any type of a centralized command economy based on the assumption of a mono-subject.

In the second half of the 1920th the focus of Polanyi's search for socialist alternatives shifted from the problem of accountancy to the problem of freedom. This was in line with his earlier critique of corporatism and bureaucratization in the works of the first decade of the 20th century (see Cangiani et al. 2005:21 f.). His lecture "On Freedom" in 1927 is centered on the

² In the concluding remarks of his work Ferdinand Tönnies writes: "The whole movement, from its first appearance and through all its subsequent stages, can also be understood as a transition from original, simple, family-based *communism*, and the *small-town individualism* that stems from it – through to an absolutely detached *cosmopolitan and universalist individualism* and to the state-based and international *socialism* generated by it.10 Socialism is already latent in the very concept of *Gesellschaft*, although it begins only in the form of practical links between all the forces of capitalism and the state, which is specifically employed by them to maintain and advance the commercial order. Gradually, however, it turns into attempts to impose centralised control on business and on labour itself through the mechanism of the state – which, if they were to succeed, would put an end to the whole of competitive market society and its civilisation.(Tönnies 2001:260) The East-German philosopher Peter Ruben has developed a deep analysis of state socialism and the failure to impose *Gemeinschaft* as the main principle of *Vergesellschaftung* on complex societies (Ruben 1995, 1998; see also Crome 2006).

³ At this point the author is not able to include Karl Polanyi's intellectual life in Hungary until 1914.

question how individual freedom can be possible in a complex society. In the liberal market societies nobody has the control over the results of his or her actions and the consequences of free personal decisions are left to the "hereafter of the market": "The idea of being responsible for our personal share in the life of 'others', that is, in social realities, and incorporating it into the realm of freedom is not possible in the bourgeois world. But it is just as impossible to abjure and thus to voluntarily limit our responsibility and thus our freedom. The bourgeois world's idea of freedom and responsibility points beyond the boundaries of this world" (Polanyi 2005c:146).

In this lecture on the one hand Polanyi still refer to socialism as a society as an assemble of direct personal relations, as a cooperation of individuals, "when the social relations of people to each other become clear and transparent, as they are in a family or in a communistic community" (Polanyi 2005c:150). On the other hand he reflects the problem that even in the most advanced socialist society forms of "objectifications" will remain. State, markets and law won't vanish but become much less "entfremdet" from the concrete actions of concrete individuals. He resumes his position as follows: "... the idea of functional democracy, of functional representation ... leads to robbing the political objectification *state power* of its reified character to an extent that is up to now unimaginable and approaching the direct expression of the impulses towards *law* of the individual. A complete cancellation of the objectification *law* naturally does not occur here. It is not even thinkable. The congealed will, which we call law, remains forever as a wall between past impulses to law and the fluid impulses to law which are at work today. However, in a functional democracy this wall will be infinitely thin and completely transparent – which is the most that our fantasy with regard to social freedom currently lets us imagine" (Polanyi 2005c:162).

This discussion of the role of "objectifications" continues in Karl Polanyi's works during his stay in Great Britain being involved in discussions in left Christian groups and different forms of workers education. I will restrict myself here to the made distinction of society and community (*Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft*). The late 1930s, in other words the years immediately preceding the writing of *The Great Transformation*, was a time of intensive teaching activity for Polanyi, first in the circle of the Christian Left Group⁴ and then in the Workers Educational Association, whose president was R. H. Tawney.⁵ This framework of teaching and

⁴ In this context he published *Christianity and the Social Revolution* (Lewis, Polanyi, and Kitchin 1935) together with John Macmurray, Joseph Needham, and others. Through this he could have also been influenced by Macmurray's positions, who saw community and society as necessary poles of humansocial existence, neither of which can be dissolved into each other: 'The members of a community are in communion with one another, and their association is a fellowship. And since such an association exhibits the form of the personal in its fully positive personal character, it will necessarily contain within it and be constituted by its own negative, which is society. Every community is a society; but not every society is a community' (Macmurray 1961:146).

⁵ Repeatedly, Polanyi comes back to the motif of the "acquisitive society", the subject of Tawney's first influential book (Tawney 1920). Tawney had criticized an ideology that derived the fulfilling of societal functions purely from 'free', egotistical action, and he contrasted this with the vision of a society that rests on the connection between personal responsibility and social functions: "A society which aimed at making the acquisition of wealth contingent upon the discharge of social obligations, which sought to proportion remuneration to service and denied it to those by whom no service was performed, which inquired first not what men possess but what they can make or create or achieve, might be called a Functional Society, because in such a society the main subject of social emphasis would be the performance of functions. But such a society does not exist, even as a remote ideal, in the modern world, though something like it has hung, an unrealized theory, before men's minds in the past. Modern societies aim at protecting economic rights, while leaving economic functions, except in moments of abnormal emergency, to fulfill themselves" (Tawney 1920:28 f.). Polanyi later called the model of an acquisitive society ignorance of the reality of society: "No society is possible in which power and compulsion are absent, nor a world in which force has no function. It was an illusion to assume a society shaped by man's will and wish alone. Yet this was the result of a market view of society which equated economics with contractual relationships, and contractual relations with freedom. [...] Any decent individual could imagine himself free from all responsibility for acts of compulsion on the part of a state

discussion represented the decisive space for his thinking before he wrote his main work. This is where the narrative of the book arose and took final shape. Here he came into contact with England's socialist thought, above all with that of Robert Owen. Here he formulated his specific view of the distinction between society and community, which also underpins *The Great Transformation*. This is also where he developed his position on the limits of Christian attempts to lead society back to community. From here on 'recognition of the reality of society', of the complexity of society, became for him an indispensable condition of every emancipatory- solidary politics. He said both positively and critically: "The Christian axiom about the essence of society is of the utmost boldness and paradoxy. It can be put in the simple phrase that society is a personal relation of individuals. Now, to regard society thus means to disregard altogether the share of institutional life and of other impersonal forces in social existence. In a sense it is the complete denial of the objective existence of society. [...] Two negative assertions seem to follow from this position. 1. *Society* as such, as an aggregate of functional institutions ... is no concern of Christianity. His concern is with the individual in community, not with society. 2. Neither is *history* as such his concern" (Polanyi n.d. (a):1–3). In view of the big catastrophes, however, this double "indifference" is no longer acceptable. "... if the claims of community press for change in society, the judgement passed upon society is inexorable. And when history points to the next step in the achievement of universal community, its claim to the allegiance of the Christian is unconditional" (Polanyi n.d. (a):3). The aim has to be a 'democracy of freedom' (Polanyi n.d. (a):16), which simultaneously preserves the institutions of a complex society *and* subordinates them to the free life of its citizen.

In the already cited 1937/38 Notes from the Training Weekends of the Christian Left we find some remarkable utterances: "There is no contracting out of society. But where the limits of the socially possible are reached, community unfolds to us its transcending reality. It is to this realm of community beyond society that man yearns to travel" (Polanyi 1937:16). Taking up this approach he then continues in *The Great Transformation*: "If industrialism is not to extinguish the race, it must be subordinated to the requirements of man's nature" (Polanyi 2001a:257). Even in his last letter written, shortly before his death on 23 April 1964, to Rudolf Schlesinger, the editor of *Co-Existence*, the journal he founded, Polanyi stresses again the importance of community and writes: "The essential connotation [to 'nation'] is always about the communion of humans. The heart of the feudal nation was the privilege; the heart of the bourgeois nation was property; the heart of the socialist nation is the people, where collective existence is the enjoyment of a community culture. I myself have never lived in such a society." (quoted in Polanyi-Levitt 1990:263)

The interrelationships between the realm of universal community, the habitation and uniqueness of the individual, and his/her freedom with responsibility, together with the irreducible complexity of society as well as, finally, democracy as a mode of life and way of shaping society are key concepts in Polanyi's work and form the matrix of his understanding of socialism.⁶

which he, personally, rejected; or for economic suffering in society from which he, personally, had not benefited. He was "paying his way," was "in nobody's debt," and was unentangled in the evil of power and economic value. His lack of responsibility for them seemed so evident that he denied their reality in the name of his freedom" (Polanyi 2001a:266). Polanyi exposed this as a convenient illusion.

⁶ We can only go briefly into his specific view of 1920s and 30s Soviet socialism. Like many of his leftwing contemporaries he blinded himself to the extent of Stalinism's destruction of civilisation. He also refused to acknowledge the gap between his understanding of socialism and Soviet-type socialism, which along with democratic space had also destroyed the bases of individual freedom (in this connection see Arendt 1993:39 f.; for my own position Brie 2014a; for remarkable perspicacity at a very early date see Luxemburg 2004). His relationship to socialism was mainly shaped by the non-communist left and by Central and Western European experiences. For him, 'Bolshevism' was a subform of socialism alongside others. In this way he missed what was specific to the Soviet system of rule. In the 1930s he wrote that 'Russian socialism is still in the dictatorial phase, although a development in the direction of democracy has already become clearly visible' (Polanyi 1979:124). In 1939 he said '*The working class must stand by Russia for the sake of socialism*. Both parts of the sentence are

2. Three ways to deal with the contradiction between the complexity of society and human freedom

In 1831 the late Goethe created during his final efforts to finish his famous *Faust* after almost 60 years from beginning a tragic metaphor for modernity. Impressed by the new wave of European revolutions starting in 1830 and reading the works of the French socialist Saint-Simonists (see Jaeger 2014:421 ff.) he wrote the concluding parts of his work. Faust – a murderer again, blinded by the ghost of anxiousness, commanding a large-scale project of land reclamation in the new industrial age, unaware of the proletarians as the diggers of his grave under the supervision of the devil – exclaims in this last moments of his life: "A swamp lies there below the hill,/ Infecting everything I've done:/ My last and greatest act of will/ Succeeds when that foul pool is gone./ Let me make room for many a million,/ Not wholly secure, but free to work on./ Green fertile fields, where men and herds/ May gain swift comfort from the new-made earth./ Quickly settled in those hills' embrace,/ Piled high by a brave, industrious race./ And in the centre here, a Paradise.../ I wish to gaze again on such a land,/ Free earth: where a free race, in freedom, stand./ Then, to the Moment I'd dare say:/ 'Stay a while! You are so lovely!'" (Goethe 1832) The greatest vision ever in the midst of destruction and death!

Modernity has many faces and its extremes are the radicalized market-society, the totalitarian rule under the auspices of ideologies, the rational bureaucratic command or the state-less war of militarized clans in anomic societies. Simple solutions to the complex problems of complex modern societies proved to be traps and nightmares, literally creating not paradise but hell on earth, destroying the freedom it promises to secure. This was true for Bolshevik communism as it was and is true for market liberalism.

Nancy Fraser rightly points out that it is completely wrong to hope for a pendulum swing of the so-called double movement away from market radicalism and towards social protection and to work for it. For this protection can take on authoritarian, repressive, and even barbaric forms under the domination of capital oligarchies or with their active participation. Elements of various sorts of neofascism have been emerging for a long time now. The global surveillance of the communication of citizens is only one such element. The new border regime, drone-based warfare, the massive erosion of social civil rights, and above all the emptying out of democratic institutions are threatening. This kind of 'protection' is the flipside of precisely those tendencies of an unleashed market radicalism against which Polanyi is arguing. The continuation of a double movement is the attempt to stabilize capitalism on its own basis.

The decisive strategic task of a transformatively oriented left would be to challenge the foundation of the so-called double movement – the capitalist market society. This in turn overlaps with the goal of 'non-reformist reform policies' of the kind that Nancy Fraser asks for: 'These would be policies with a double face: on the one hand, they engage people's identities and satisfy some of their needs as interpreted within existing frameworks of recognition and distribution; on the other hand, they set in motion a trajectory of change in which more radical reforms become practicable over time. When successful, nonreformist reforms change more than the specific institutional features they explicitly target. In addition, they alter the terrain upon which later struggles will be waged. By changing incentive structures and political op-

of equal importance. To stand for socialism and not for Russia is the betrayal of socialism in its sole existing embodiment. To stand for Russia without mentioning socialism would also be the betrayal of socialism, which alone makes Russia worth fighting for' (quoted from Karl Polanyi's 1939 manuscript "Russia and the Crisis" by Nagy 1994:99). In 1943 he cited 'the French Revolution, the American Revolution, the Russian Revolution, and socialist Britain' within a list of Rousseau's legacy (Polanyi 2005a:310); and after 1944 he saw the problems of Soviet socialism in the fact that on the one hand the Russian Revolution 'centers rather on the practice of co-operation and the ideal of human fraternity than on liberty and equality' and, on the other hand, that 'the Russians are moreover in a different phase of their revolution', 'far from having reached final fruition' (Polanyi 1944:6–7).

portunity structures, they expand the set of feasible options for future reform. Over time their cumulative effect could be to transform the underlying structures that generate injustice' (Fraser 2003:79 f.). Socially and ecologically oriented entry projects towards a Green New Deal would meld together with entry projects into a solidary economy in the broadest sense (Dellheim 2008), into a reproduction economy, based on solidarior commoning.⁷

In Polanyi's 1943 'Common Man's Masterplan' a series of 'entry projects' are cited, which are also invoked at the end of *The Great Transformation*:

'Regulated market means markets with no supplementary markets for labor, land and money. The security is possible in as society wealthy enough to banish want without even raising the question of the motive to work. The freedom of arbitrary rejection of job to be limited. The freedom of arbitrary dismissal limited. The freedom of unlimited profits limited. The unlimited rights of private ownership limited. The public spirited forms of enterprise fostered. The plastic society achieved. The helpless society transcended. The concept of freedom reformed. Christianity transcended. The philosophy of the common man established' (Polanyi 1943:2).

Karl Polanyi develops three directions to ensure freedom in a complex society: (1) to take the fictitious commodities out of the markets; (2) deglobalization; and (3) democratization.

(1) Taking-out the fictitious commodities of the markets

The best known proposal of Karl Polanyi for a radical reform to overcome the market society is the removal of the fictitious commodities (labour, nature, money – and one may add: knowledge and culture) from the subordination to the markets. His empirical observations and theoretical considerations of the 1920th and 1930th have proved that the subsumption of the basic goods of a free life to the markets are self-destructive to the economy, the society, the political democratic system and the whole civilization. Already in his preparation for a lecture on the *Übersichtsproblem* (the problem of a transparent society) in the late 1920th he wrote:

"For the socialists it is evident: the labour force isn't a commodity... Humans aren't a final product but are standing at the beginning of the ... production process as its creator. They are situated outside of the economy. Likewise this is true for some raw materials..." (Polanyi n.d. (b):18)

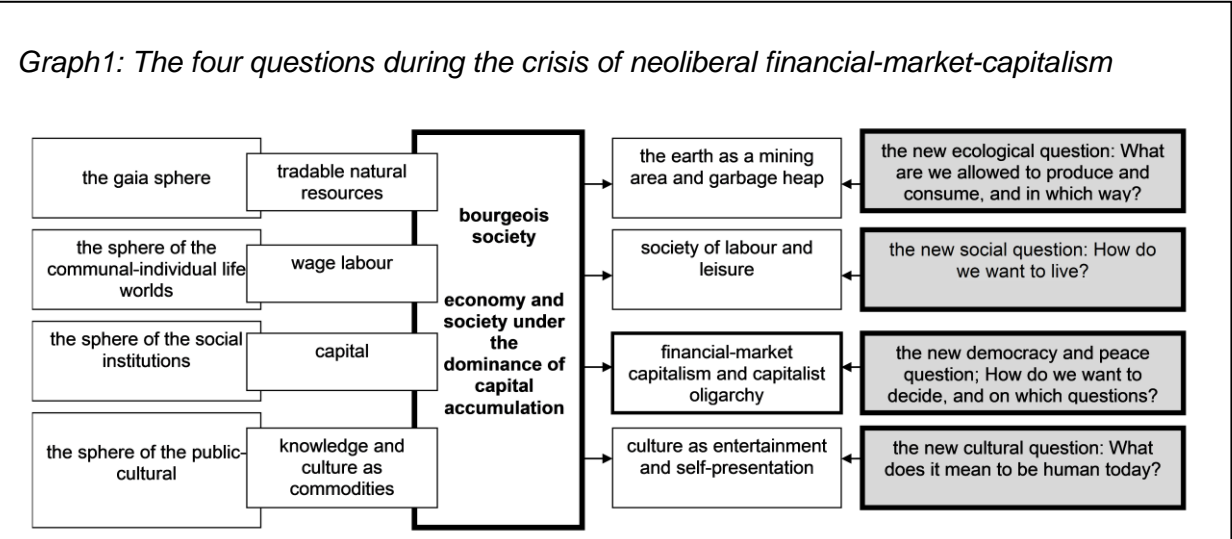
Polanyi studied the different attempts to decommodify labour, nature and money starting from the early 19th century and the proposals of Robert Owen to regulate the labour day. In the mentioned lecture script he adds anticipating ideas of *The Great Transformation*: "If the capitalist utopia ever had been true world had to be at a standstill in the moment it was forbidden to exploit the labour force longer than a fixed number of hours per day" (Polanyi n.d. (b):16). Polanyi demands that the basic conditions of human security and for development should be secured by regulation: "Not only conditions in the factory, hours of work, and modalities of contract, but the basic wage itself, are determined outside the market..." (Polanyi 2001a:259) One should be aware that this would include a deep and profound transformation overcoming the concentration of our societies on wage labour. It is a *care revolution* (Chorus

⁷ On the concept of entry projects see Klein and Brangsch (Brangsch 2009; Brie 2014b; Klein 2004). In this context the Institute for Critical Social Analysis has studied, among other phenomena, participatory budgets (Brangsch and Brangsch 2008), energy-democracy initiatives (Müller 2012), as well as free public transport (Dellheim 2011; Brie and Candeias 2012). Erik Olin Wright's real utopias project has tracked these kinds of projects within a comprehensive concept of socialist transformation (Wright 2010, 2013).

2013; Madörin 2006; Winker 2012, 2015). The spheres of life beyond wage labour should dominate the cycles of life. Frigga Haug is speaking about a four-in-one-approach combining wage labour, care, social and political engagement, and *Muße* (otium) (see Haug 2014).

The ecological question and the deep rooted globalization of investment and commodity chains are radicalizing Polanyi's ideas concerning land and money even more than before. Not only must the economy re-embedded into the society and society into a strong civilization but the human civilization itself must be re-embedded into sustainable cycles of life on earth. Polanyi is aware: "The nature of property, of course, undergoes a deep change in consequence of such measures since there is no longer any need to allow incomes from the title of property to grow without bounds, merely in order to ensure employment, production, and the use of resources in society" (Polanyi 2001:260). This implies to think about the end of the pressure for growth (Daly 1991; Ax and Hinterberger 2013; Klingholz 2014; Mahnkopf 2013; Paech 2011). Polanyi sees the "removal of the control of money from the market" (Polanyi 2001:260) nearly completed at the time he is writing *The Great Transformation*: "Since the introduction of 'functional finance' in all-important states, the directing of investments and the regulation of the rate of saving have become government tasks" (ibid.). Neoliberal financial-market capitalism has reversed this tendency (Streeck 2013). The current multidimensional crisis of the capitalist civilization would demand the socialization of a larger part of investment, the euthanasia of the rentier (Keynes 2003) and deep transformation in all parts of the financial- and tax spheres (Flassbeck et al. 2013; vgl. u.a. Krugman 2008; Polanyi- Levitt 2013; Troost 2010). Nothing less than a transformation of capitalism going beyond it is on the agenda (Klein 2013).

The expression "to take the fictitious commodities out of the markets" could be misunderstood, because markets will need the input of labour, nature, capital and knowledge anyway. It may be better to speak about the removal of the reproduction of these "commodities" from the *dominance* of the markets. Their development should be steered by their own logic, the logic of their own spheres – the life-worlds with regard to "labour", the gaia-sphere with regard to nature, the sphere of stable and democratic institutions (the sphere of the social) with regard to money and the sphere of the cultural with regard to knowledge. Without this the deep civilizational crisis will deepen and the new questions of our time won't be answered (see graph 1) (see Brie 2014c).



For Polanyi to take the fictitious commodities out of the markets does not mean to abolish the markets but change the whole institutional and social framing of the markets. This faces us with a contradiction which is not elaborated in *The Great Transformation*: The regulation of labor, nature, money and knowledge must be done in a way to secure the stability and safe reproduction of the most important goods of freedom in a socially just way *and* in a way that these fictitious commodities can be use for economic and non-economic purposes without destroying them making constant innovation by the permanent re-combination of these "factors" of production possible (Schumpeter 1964). The discussions with Mises have shown for

Polanyi that markets are necessary "to ensure the freedom of the consumer, to indicate the shifting of demand, to influence producers' income, and to serve as an instrument of accountability, while ceasing altogether to be an organ of economic self-regulation" (Polanyi 2001:260). The chances to control the dynamics of the markets are bound to the problem of the spatial dimension of the markets. This leads us to the second direction of transformation – to deglobalization.

(2) *Deglobalization and the cooperation of large politico-economic and civilizational spaces*

In contrast to the broad reception of Polanyi's position on the fictitious commodities and his proposals to remove them from the dominance of the markets his ideas concerning the pluralization of politico-economic and civilizational spaces are merely taken into account. But they are at least as important. His close observations of the central European and southeast European development after the disintegration of the Prussian, Habsburg, Ottoman and Czarist empires led him to work on concrete proposals for a deeper regionalization in Central Europe (see for an example Polanyi 2002b). In his sketch for a book to be written immediately after *The Great Transformation* – the *Common Man's Masterplan* – he concentrates on this task. The post-war order should be an order of peaceful empires cooperating on a global scale. In the ten theses summarizing his proposals in the draft for the *Masterplan* the problem of taking-out the fictitious commodities of the markets is just the last (but not the least). Without the international conditions created this step seems impossible as he has seen in the 1920th and 1930th:

'The story of the unresolved problems should drive home the following recognitions:

- 1. That post war reconstruction is not about "What to do with Germany" but what to do with the unsolved problems of the world. No conceivable treatment of Germany will resolve them.*
- 2. That these unsolved problems led to World War I and were only partly resolved by the destruction of the feudal empires of the Hohenzollern, the Habsburg, the Romanov and the Sultan-Khalifs; that the between-wars period was entirely dominated by them, including the rise of Hitlerism, British appeasement, the Russian bogey, the collapse of France, the gay twenties, and the wasted thirties in America.*
- 3. That these unsolved problems centered around the antiquated international system of absolute sovereignties and an automatic gold-standard on the one hand, of a national life based on unregulated economies on the other. Between them they corroded the civilization with unemployment and unrest, deflations and super-wars.*
- 4. That the Hitlerism crime wave could be successful only because it benefited from these unsolved problems which were bursting the world wide open; in the Hitlerian venture some of the most obstructive features of the old world perished including nuisance sovereignties, the gold standard fetish as well as chaotic markets. But if Hitlerian barbarism was thus "hitch-hiking on the great transformation", it was only because it could pretend to offer an ultimate solution even though it was that of slavery for all under the heel of the Nordics of the Munich beer garden.*
- 5. That the survival of democratic methods depends upon the measure of their success in tackling the global tasks of the time. If freedom fails (a) to restrict the scope of wars, (b) to secure a medium of exchange between increasingly large areas of the planet, then the war-waging slave empire will triumph and ensure peace and division of labour within its confines of death.*

6. *That the greatest single step towards division of labour and the enlargement of the peace area is represented by essentially autarch and essentially peaceful empires the co-operation of which is institutionally safeguarded, empires such as the U.S.A., Latin America, Great Britain, the U.S.S.R. and a similarly peaceful federation of a German Central Europe, China, India, and some other regions.*
7. *That the will to cooperation between the empires must be positive and institutionalized. It is the new form of the peace interest which the 19th century produced, and which we should retain and develop. All but the predatory empires are eligible under the new dispensation. The tame empire is no more a utopia.*
8. *That the 19th century was peacefully imperialistic since under the gold standard the leading powers insisted on spreading their business pattern to all countries and forced them to accept their institutions, without which trade was then not possible. We should model ourselves on China which is and was based on the tolerance of other people's ways of life.*
9. *That self-sufficient empires can regulate their economic life in the way that they please and live at peace with others. The helpless method of free trade must be superseded by direct responsibility of the governments for economic and financial relations with other governments.*
10. *That internally we must have regulated markets which remove labour land and money from the scope of anarchy. The inevitable increase in centralization that is involved must be met by the positive will to freedom for all minorities – racial, religious, regional or otherwise – made effective with a singlemindedness modelled on England's achievement.' (Polanyi 1943)*

After WW II Polanyi observed two different tendencies: On the one hand the (in the end more or less successful) attempt of the U.S. to create a new system of a unified global system as it has existed until 1914 with modified rules and the dollar as the new standard. The dollar itself was linked to Gold at the rate of \$35 per ounce of gold until 1971. The Bretton Wood agreement again established a rigid system with one dominant power. On the other hand there were proposals like those of John Maynard Keynes much more in favor of a regulation binding all sides to avoid strong inequalities of international trade and strengthening the ability for a more autonomous development. Based on Keynes' ideas Britain proposed a "use-it-or-lose-it" mechanism. This would have forced creditor nations to import goods from the debtors, build factories in these states or donate part of the surplus to them (Cesarano 2006:160 ff.). In this context Polanyi wrote his profound and important article "Universal capitalism or regional planning?" of 1945 and stressed: "The alternative to reactionary Utopia of Wall Street is the deliberate development of the new instruments and organs of foreign trading and paying, which constitutes the essence of regional planning" (Polanyi 1945:89). He hoped that the "new permanent pattern of world affairs" would be "one of regional systems co-existing side by side" (Polanyi 1945:87). Such large regional systems could make the global market society history with its destructive tendencies and contribute to overcome the side-products of universal capitalism – "intolerant nationalism, petty sovereignties and economic non-cooperation" (Polanyi 1945:88) which he had studied in detail with regard to the Balkan states in the 1920th.

Polanyi was convinced that the catastrophe of his time originated in the institutional rigidity ("Gleichschaltung") of the utopia of a global market society (linked to free trade and the gold standard). As far as only a few states or only one of them (the global imperial power) are really sovereign and the many are just quasi-sovereigns this leads to right-wing nationalism and fascism and experience we are making again in our time. The abolition of the global unified capitalist market order is for Polanyi the precondition for true federations of nation-states: "While under market economy and gold standard the idea of federation was justly deemed a nightmare of centralization and uniformity, the end of market economy may well mean effec-

tive cooperation with domestic freedom" (Polanyi 2001:262) – a lesson just recently learned with regard to Greece! Deglobalization and the development of new forms of solidaristic cooperation are two sides of the same coin (Bello 2005). Only under these conditions individual freedom can be secured and democratic planning and control realized.

(3) *Protection of individual freedom by democratic planning and control of the economy – democratizing democracy*

Polanyi's intentions can be summarized in the idea to make the economy and the society "compatible" with freedom and democracy. His fundamental lesson of the 1930th is: "The stubbornness with which economic liberals, for a critical decade, had, in the service of deflationary policies, supported authoritarian interventionism, merely resulted in a decisive weakening of the democratic forces which might otherwise have averted the fascist catastrophe" (Polanyi 2001:242). According to his paradigm in a market society the economic and the social interests, entrepreneurship and labour, international cooperation and national sovereignty are in an antagonistic conflict (see Polanyi 1979, 2001, 245 ff., 2005a). Authoritarian attempts to defend the globalized market economy and capitalism on the one side and the democratic defense of the interests of the population on the other side (often without taking into account economic stability and competitiveness) had led to a structural confrontation of economy and democracy against which the political system could not hold for long. Fascism emerged as a result of the crisis of the market society. The reluctance to intervene by planning, regulation and control into the economy made fascism possible. Liberalism committed suicide: "Freedom's utter frustration in fascism is, indeed, the inevitable result of the liberal philosophy, which claims that power and compulsion are evil, that freedom demands their absence from a human community. No such thing is possible; in a complex society this becomes apparent" (Polanyi 2001:265 f.).

Karl Polanyi combined his commitment to freedom with the demand to use organized state power in a democratic way to regain control over the economy and to regulate it with the purpose to decrease unfreedom and injustice. From his point of view liberalism represents freedom as the freedom of the few: "The institutional separation of politics and economics, which proved a deadly danger to the substance of society, almost automatically produced freedom at the cost of justice and security" (Polanyi 2001:263). But it has to be stressed that he is totally aware of those liberal achievements which have to be secured at any price and made a common good for all. He proposes to create strong institutional guarantees to secure the "right to nonconformity" (Polanyi 2001:263). It would be of utter importance he wrote to "create spheres of arbitrary freedom protected by unbreakable rules" (Polanyi 2001:264). This includes the imperative: Personal Freedom "should be upheld at all cost – even that of efficiency in production, economy in consumption or rationality in administration. An industrial society can afford to be free" (Polanyi 2001:264). He demanded the extension of civil and political right to the sphere of the social: "The list should be headed by the right of the individual to a job under approved conditions" (Polanyi 2001:264). Under these conditions "regulation and control can achieve freedom not only for the few, but for all" (Polanyi 2001:265).

These positions were in accordance with the famous four rights stressed by president Roosevelt in his 1941 State of the Union Address (freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want and freedom from fear). In 1944 Roosevelt extend this position in a further address to the people of the U.S. with the demand to pass a second "bill of rights" (Roosevelt 1944; Sunstein 2004). His widow, Eleanor Roosevelt, lead the committee of the U.N. to present a draft of a U.N. human rights declaration after WW II. The final declaration included social and cultural rights as liberal and political rights (Glendon 2001). In the 1960th and 1970th new human right declaration were passed (see for a broader documentation and Marxist analysis Klenner 1982). All these declarations have created a normative framework in deep contradiction to the global economic, political, and social order (Klein 1997). An "utopian slope" (Habermas 2010) emerged. The more recent discussion is concentrating on the assumption, that the effective defense of human rights demands a protection of common goods as well, namely the "common goods of humanity" (Boff 2010; Houtart 2012; see also

Brie 2012). All this proves that it is still a long way to go to ensure freedom in a complex society faced by most urgent global problems and to realize the vision of Polanyi's *Great Transformation*.

Polanyi's late works further developed approaches to a plurality of exchange principles already adumbrated in *The Great Transformation*. The traditional societies, which he investigated, are characterized by reciprocity, redistribution, and a subsistence economy. At the same time, as Polanyi noted, they developed extensive markets, which were subjected to strict control. Despite this, the 'safeguards of the rule of law and of the traders' liberty' were impressive. He added: "Similarly, ways were found to reconcile economic planning with the requirements of markets in communities as different as democratic Attica of the fifth century B.C. and the preliterate Negro Kingdom of Dahomey in West Africa, more than 2000 years later" (Polanyi 1977:XII). He rejected the alternative "market society or oppression". For him, planning and regulation could be the condition for freedom. His vision was that of a society with a plurality of property and socialization forms, in which a plurality of protagonists shape their own lives in a self-conscious way and on the basis of a free agreement on their goals and means. Today's initiatives, either in the form of a socio-ecologically radicalized neo-Keynesianism and, on the other side, of a libertarian commonism, are preconditions for it. But he stressed on most important condition: democracy!

Democracy is in Polanyi's understanding the only form in which free communality can still exist within a complex society with 'aggregates of functional institutions'. He thought that democratization would give rise to socialism as an attempt – however incompletely – to 'make society a distinctively human relationship of persons' (Polanyi 2001:242). He was aware that the complexity of society always produces unintended consequences, which can never be fully controlled. Full oversight and transparency is impossible. However, a much higher degree of freedom and responsibility for the consequences of one's own actions can be achieved. It is true that new relations of domination and new exclusions constantly emerge: "No society is possible in which power and compulsion are absent, nor a world in which force has no function" (Polanyi 2001:266). But, according to the last paragraph of *The Great Transformation*: "Uncomplaining acceptance of the reality of society gives man indomitable courage and strength to remove all removable injustice and unfreedom. As long as he is true to his task of creating more abundant freedom for all, he need not fear that either power or planning will turn against him and destroy the freedom he is building by their instrumentality. This is the meaning of freedom in a complex society; it gives us all the certainty that we need" (Polanyi 2001:268). Here, as already before in Rosa Luxemburg's thinking, freedom is understood as the merging of socialism and democracy, a goal that is at the same time the way.⁸

3. The Great Double Transformation ahead

Polanyi's approach may help to better understand the plurality of societal conflicts and struggles. It stresses that the access to, and control of, the four forms of wealth are causes of inequality, poverty, and existential endangerment and have essential commonalities. The awareness of these commonalities found expression in the global justice and democracy movements, the World Social Forum, the Occupy struggles with their identitarian slogan 'we are the 99 per cent' and other forms of rebellion against the crisis policies of recent decades. These have been struggles against a growing inequality, authoritarian rule, repressive manipulation, and war and violence. They involve a confrontation with neoliberal financial-

⁸ Taking issue with Lenin and Trotsky, Rosa Luxemburg wrote in the summer of 1918 '...socialist democracy is not something which begins only in the promised land after the foundations of socialist economy are created; it does not come as some sort of Christmas present for the worthy people who, in the interim, have loyally supported a handful of socialist dictators' (Luxemburg 2004:208). She wanted transformation in the sense of 'resolute attacks upon the well-entrenched rights and economic relationships of bourgeois society', but 'in the manner of applying democracy', 'out of the active participation of the masses', 'subjected to the control of complete public activity' (Luxemburg 2004:308).

market capitalism, which shapes access to these spheres of wealth. In the process there has been growing recognition that we are dealing spatially as well as temporally, economically, socially, politically, and culturally with areas of uneven development (in other words, exploitation) (see Harvey 2007). Protests have arisen against a destructive capital oligarchy (Dellheim et al. 2012). Although the conflicts and struggles are in part very diverse, they express a certain commonality: They all oppose the answers neoliberal financial-market capitalism gives to the ecological, social, democratic and cultural questions, answers which undermine the bases of civilisation, answers for which the lower and middle groups of society have to pay the price, and which make impossible a worthy life for future generations. In the sense used here, the *Four-In-One* perspective means a process of searching that analyses the four conflicts around societal wealth in their interconnection, from the point of view of solidary emancipation through a lower-middle alliance (Brie 2007) and the overcoming of financial-market capitalism. This kind of *Four-In-One* perspective is an attempt to link together in a new way – in solidarity – the kinds of discontent we are familiar with.

Once again: Today's bourgeois-capitalist societies distribute this fourfold wealth in a highly inequitable way: North and South, labour and capital, men and women, city and country, the better educated and those excluded from education, citizens and the 'sans papiers' (for example, asylum seekers and those made illegal), and 'white' and 'coloured' are only some of the intersectional dimensions of this inequality. The fundamental conflicts are conflicts around the production and distribution of the four forms of societal wealth, around the control of its availability and use, and around its transformation into a means of emancipation and/or a means of domination. Since different groups are differently affected by this inequality, the struggles are fragmented. A Four-In-One perspective could help make this unity within diversity palpable and aid in the search for solidary ways to recreate this unity.

Bourgeois-capitalist civilisation is constantly undermining the four forms of wealth –nature, liveable communities, stable social institutions and meaningful cultural interpretations and identities. Either it can effectively deal with these tendencies, which endanger these forms of wealth existentially, or it will become a *transitional formation* in human history. In this case it would be drifting towards its final crisis in the 21st century. Either this can bring forth, albeit accompanied by severe birth pangs, a civilisation that is better able to preserve the four foundations of human wealth, or one in which ruling groups and specific regions try, by deploying openly authoritarian rule, extensive repression, massive exclusion, and with the abrogation of fundamental human rights to defeat each other or protect themselves from each other (Rosen et al. 2010). We do not yet have the practical answer to possible scenarios of 'more of the same', or a transformation, or even civilisational regression (see Candeias 2012; Institut für Gesellschaftsanalyse 2009). We are dealing with an open-ended centennial crisis (Bischoff/Lieber 2013a).

If we look ahead 40 years into the future, as Jørgen Randers did, and concentrate on the environmental question, then there are good reasons to agree with his description of the world in the year 2052: '[...] I found a future world that will be much more diverse: some regions doing quite well and others having failed miserably and fallen into anarchy; and all of them toiling in increasingly erratic weather, and looking forward with alarm to an increasingly violent climate in the second half of the twenty-first century. I also found a future dominated by urbanization: people seeking opportunity, safety, and strength by gathering in huge cities, I found a world that that will be poorer on a per capita basis than I had expected, and with a culture that I do not particularly like – but that I believe many others will like. That culture will be marked by artificial urban Irving, well insulated from the vagaries of a disappearing natural world, and well equipped with virtual edutainment. I did not find large-scale resource shortage, because the future world will be materially smaller and poorer than I originally expected. Finally I concluded that although things will go relatively well until 2052, the world of 2052 will be well established on a path that I really fear –the path toward self-reinforcing climate change and climate disaster in the second part of the Century. I certainly did not find a world on a well-planned path toward sustainability' (Randers 2012, 160). The real ecological crisis on a global scale may occur just a bit later – in the second half of the 21st century.

Transformation has to be multidimensional – not just in terms of its paths but also its points of departure as well as its protagonists and goals. It cannot be conceived only from the ecological point of view, and it loses its persuasiveness if it is legitimised only by the prognosis of a possible climate catastrophe, the exhaustion of fossil fuel ('peak oil') or the depletion of the planet's biodiversity. In this case the discussion of transformation will quickly become elite management and an authoritarian expertocratic overpowering of democratic politics, from whose vantage point the 'minor' issues of jobs, income, or democratic participation seem irrelevant.

What happens if we look at it from the opposite angle, that is, if we ask whether people living now could get access to the four spheres of wealth of their existence more equitably and sustainably, rather than accepting 'more of the same'? In this case, each question, each engagement, would begin not with sacrifice but with opportunity, not with danger but possibility, not with an abstractly declared interest of humanity but with one's own wishes and hopes. This does not make it irrelevant to keep to the goals of CO₂ reduction and to keep an eye on the planetary limits and 'crash barriers'. But we could think of this task as a very concrete path to living more wealthily, solidaristically, and securely now and in the future. And it would come down to looking at all four spheres of wealth production in their organic interdependency and in their common conflict with neoliberal financial-market capitalism, viewing them thus from a *Four-In-One* perspective. It may even be that from movements for alternative communal-individual life worlds, of democracy, or also movements concerned with the public-cultural there will arise precisely the impulses, energy, and 'events' that lend the ecological question a completely new dynamic. And inversely: Only if the projects for processing the ecological crisis can be simultaneously developed as a contribution to richer life worlds, a democratisation of democracy, the securing of peace, and a new culture can they, it seems to me, escape being absorbed into a project of 'green capitalism'.

But how realistic is it to really begin a transformation in the current crisis situation, which is adequate to the problem? How profound must the changes of the basic institutions of our society (Zapf 1969) be to stand up to these challenges? Or do they have to be replaced by completely new institutions? What then would these look like? Where are the concrete starting points (Klein 2013; Thie 2013)? How comprehensive would the necessary ruptures in the modes of production and life be? Above all, would this not entail the loss of all the advantages of bourgeois-capitalist societies – beginning with the still historically unequalled capacity for continual innovation and renewal, whose praises Marx and Engels sung in the *Manifesto*, a new level of wellbeing and quality of life for a third of humanity today, the doubling of average life expectancy in the last 150 years from under 40 to, soon, 80 years? Never before have so many people had as much individual freedom and access to knowledge, health services, education, culture, and mobility as they do today.

It is precisely in the countries of Asia and Latin America that the young middle strata are so convinced of the capitalist market's superiority. It was state-regulated reforms oriented to the market economy in the People's Republic of China through which, in three and a half decades, more people than ever before in world history have freed themselves from absolute poverty. Left governments, not least in Latin America, have mostly taken the road of linking market and state and strengthening their raw material export sectors. They are banking on the extension of their countries' position in the world markets in order to partly redistribute the profits earned (On this controversy see Rosa Luxemburg Foundation and Rosa Luxemburg Foundation/Transnational Institute 2013). In Bolivia and Venezuela inequality, measured by Gini coefficients, was reduced. At the same time, there is increasing consciousness that these reforms cannot be continued indefinitely – either in China or elsewhere. The costs of such success are constantly rising. Sustainable development is coming up against its limits; in part, it cements inequality and creates new dependencies. And the reality of many people's lives is marked by insecurity, self-marketing, time stress, and also by poverty. Democracy is constricting, and there is a new flowering of consumerism. In Europe, too, the finance-driven accumulation regime is coming up against its own limits (Demirović/Sablowski 2012) and taking on imperial characteristics (Crome 2012; Heine/Sablowski 2013).

The barbarism that a billion people are denied access to the most elementary basic goods of life, such as nutrition, fresh water, or the simplest medicine, that the number of people who live in slums could double by the end of the decade, reaching two billion, that hundreds of millions of people are exposed to war – all this is in glaring contrast to the social elevation of a part of the world's population. The question is only whether this barbarism can be removed – through the generalisation of bourgeois-capitalist societies or through a rupture that fundamentally breaks with the dominance of capital accumulation and 'free markets'. Is this barbarism only a transitional stage of contemporary civilisation, or is it its other unavoidable side? Is it impossible to have one without the other? What would happen if this civilisation turns out to be truly self-destructive, destroying its own foundations more quickly than it can create new ones, so that barbarism becomes prominent? But even if this is true, a new perspective should prove practically that a transformation is possible that would not end in authoritarian and stagnant societal forms that bury freedom – in the name of whatever idol.

According to my thesis, it is a matter of taking the multidimensionality of the crisis seriously, preserving and extending the potential for freedom, establishing equality of participation for citizens locally and globally, and bequeathing to the next generations the conditions of this freedom and equality in a solidary way. Transformational realpolitik could try to open up the synergetic potential of the ecological, social, democratic, and cultural problems. Historically, ruptures have taken place especially when various movements, conflicts, and initiatives have grown stronger and molecular changes mutually reinforced each other (Candeias 2014), resulting in the development of a power that none of these alone could have brought to bear. These are moments in which 'innovations of worldwide impact' gathered force and 'some processes taking place independently of one another' converge (Osterhammel 2011, 17). This reinforcement and convergence can *also* (though of course not only) be the result of conscious (transformational) politics. In any case, such reinforcement is aided when single projects are carried forward in knowledge of the accompanying synergies and coalitions of appropriate protagonists are being built both locally and globally.

No transformational realpolitik can be sustainably effective unless a new societal productivity or reproductivity arises from it,, which at the same time contains new possibilities of a freer development and extends these to new groups. Productivity here does not mean the mass of consumed energy and exploited resources, not the quantity of goods or services, not the gross social product, but the possibilities for existence and development contained in these, and how they condense in the four spheres of wealth. One of many attempts to measure these is the Genuine Progress Indicator (Wikipedia 2013). A politics oriented to fundamental social change must not neglect the question of the resource base of its own policy and the constant regeneration and qualitative renewal of these resources. If one understands the capital-dominated reproduction of today's societies as the reproduction of the relations of wealth in a very broad sense, then one can really decipher the basic conflicts as conflicts 'involving the control of how productivity is developed and societal wealth used' (Bischoff/Lieber 2013b, 169).

However, the conditions of the production and reproduction of natural-societal wealth have fundamentally changed. In the highly industrialised countries, the degree of use of material-energy wealth no longer has any positive connection to the quality of life. In the majority of other countries this level can be reached in the next 30 to 70 years, if conditions are favourable. Quantitative consumption can and even must drop. The reckless gutting of all extant social and human relations and their subordination to market constraints have long since ceased to be a condition of innovation. For this reason the focuses can be shifted, without this becoming a loss of wealth in the above sense. On the contrary, it could prove to be the case, according to Birgit Mahnkopf, that the capitalist 'continual transgression of, and contempt for, all social and bio-physical limits' has now become an almost insuperable 'impediment to a new phase of accumulation' (Mahnkopf 2013, 222). But this requires practically convincing alternatives. As Elmar Altvater put it optimistically: 'With their creative intelligence, modern societies can accommodate the challenges of societal transformation' (Altvater 2013, 229).

This kind of politics cannot be convincingly created until it is manifested in concrete starting projects, which 'synchronise' the ecological, social, democratic, and cultural aspects. Examples are the movements for the across-the-board adoption of systems of free public local transportation (Dellheim 2011; Brie/Candeias 2012) or the tying of local low CO₂ energy production to democratically controlled public nets and subsidised or free basic electricity provision. These initiatives have a strong global solidary component. North-South partnerships can be built. If it is possible to tie the question of a significant shortening of weekly work hours, while raising the lower wages and securing the middle wage level, to the construction of a public employment sector and a similarly social, ecological, and cultural urban restructuring as well as participatory budgeting, then this kind of project could become very attractive.

Second: The crisis of financial-market capitalism has led to the delegitimation of a *corporate constitution* oriented exclusively to shareholder value. This is an opportunity. In view of the centrality of corporations in their private, public, or cooperative forms, there is the question of how they can become protagonists of a transformational turn. Only if they reproduce natural resources, labour power, credit and financial investments in such a way that the *gaiasphere*, the communal-individual life worlds, the democratic and libertarian institutions, as well as the world of culture, are no longer subsumed under profit and capital accumulation, but are reinforced in their autonomy, can a convincing alternatives pointing beyond capitalism emerge.

From the most diverse corners new demands are continually being presented to corporations: for good work, training, sustainable economy, consumer protection, tying plants to the local level, transparency, internal democratisation, the participation of external stakeholders, and upholding fair trade. There are two paths being pursued here: One path is the direct participation of the relevant interest groups in corporation decisions. This can include the obligatory consideration of demands, but it can also result in the blocking of internal decision-making processes due to mere number of those who have veto power. The other path is the external and internal regulation of entrepreneurial activity, tying the pursuit of management goals to social and ecological aims. Both paths should be tried on a practical basis. We can assume that depending on context they will have diverse results.⁹ Their focus is the democratisation of control over the structures of the economy and its enterprises (Wright 2010, 191–267).

Without transformation of corporations into solidary associations with an economic mission no comprehensive societal transformation can succeed (Bontrup et al. 2006; Demirović 2014; Weipert 2014; Krätke 2014). It is evident that there has to be a broad area of experiments in order to introduce processes that transform the profit-oriented corporations into associations that pursue their goals not through increasing productivity but through increasing societal *reproductivity*, not at the expense of nature, work and life worlds, democratic institutions, or culture, but through new forms of their symbiotic co-development.

Third: An important step on the path of transforming profit-oriented corporations into protagonists of a transformational turn could be forms of the *socialisation of investment function*. Access to capital would be tied to the observation of basic standards. Scarcity of capital would be reduced to the level compatible with a comprehensive socio-ecological reconstruction and 'the [more or less peaceful, M.B.] euthanasia of the cumulative oppressive power of the capitalist to exploit the scarcity-value of capital' (Keynes 2003, 230) that this entails. Together with capital controls and public condemnation of enterprises that violate these standards this could lead to a reinforcement of counterpower. Furthermore, in connection with the ecological reconstruction of society the question of 'energy democracy' would be on the agenda (Müller 2012). Direct public investments or the participation of the public sector in corporations, which would be relieved from hardship, could be part of this. The public sector would then at least have veto power against decisions that have negative impact on the public interest. Societal planning would gain new importance in questions of the basic structures of the economy, infrastructure, and consumption (Candeias 2014). The most important step

⁹ On approaches to economic democracy that emerged from the reform strategies of the 1960s and 1970s see Šik 1979.

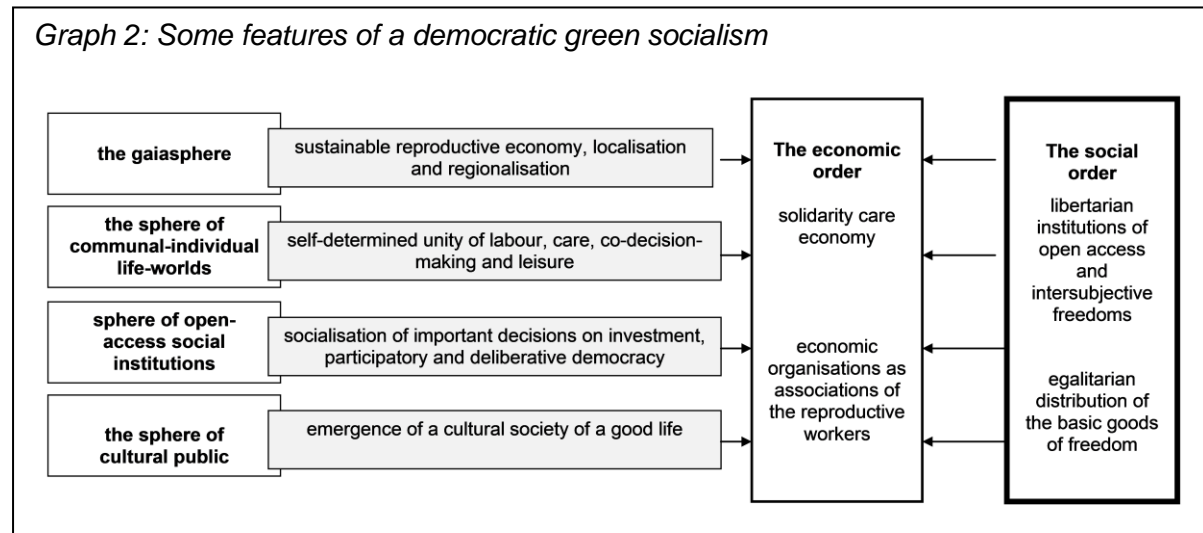
would be the transformation of the financial sector into a service sector for the solidary management of the economy and its solid sustainable financing (Felber 2012). The very first precondition, however, is the massive and thorough devaluation of over-accumulated private capital and the reconversion of private systems of basic public services into public solidary social systems.

A fourth condition would be the creation of transformational coalitions, going far beyond project-based cooperation, on the model of a 'mosaic' (Urban 2009). A part of the resources of the protagonists would be consciously invested in the development of their cooperative capacity. This, however, is difficult. For wage dependents and the socially weaker groups the only thing that seems achievable is the mere defence of interest within capitalism's given parameters and the trade unions' participation in 'crisis corporatism'. This means a struggle according to the rules of the ruling bloc. However, the espousal of democratisation or an ecological reconstruction that ignores the interests of the great majority of the population in social security or good work is divisive. Counter-hegemony is only achievable if people work cooperatively on transformative nexuses, which link redistribution to reconstruction as well as everyday tasks to longer-term perspectives.

A fifth and now increasingly important condition would be the common initiation of constitutional processes, for which models exist in some Latin American countries (Ecuador, Bolivia, and also Venezuela). These models do not involve the top-down decree of projects of domination; rather they involve the constituting of societal protagonists in public spaces. The binding rules of societal cooperation must be changed. This is a meta-level of cooperation, which requires special attention (Ostrom 2005, 58 ff.). Historically, too, major upheavals have always been ruptures in the constitution of societies – at the very latest since the Declaration of Rights in 1776 in the rebellious British colony of Virginia. It begins, first of all, when protagonists of such a process declare the present society to be the ancient régime, an outmoded society (Hardt/Negri 2013, 57 ff.). This denies legitimacy to the given constitutional order (not just the reality of its implementation). Second, when a revolutionary state of exception is declared at the constitutional level; and the fundamental rules of society are nonviolently called into question. Third, when an across-the-board societal discussion is introduced, which can lead to Estates General (Bourdieu 2004), in which a broad societal process related to new standards of a legitimate order is set into motion in a discursive and consensus-oriented way. In this process a completely new relation between individual human rights and the securing of the common goods – the four spheres of societal wealth we have continually referred to (Daiber/Houtart 2012) – could emerge. *Commoning* and *caring* would be very important practices put under constitutional protection (see, inter alia, Helfrich et al. 2010). The constitutional process could also be an important project that promotes the construction of a transformational coalition.

The civilisational dimension of Polanyi's vision appears when he writes: "After a century of blind 'improvement' man is restoring his 'habitation'" (Polanyi 2001:257). The horizons this opens up could be denoted by the concepts of landscape, urban community ('polis'), the squares and loci of public communality (the 'agora'), and the home. Far too many people remain unaware of the radicality of this task. It is a great, enormously attractive vision, which deserves to live. A great deal of this tomorrow has for a long time danced today, as Dieter Klein has vividly shown (Klein 2013:169–202). The philosopher Lothar Kühne formulated this context thus: "In the landscape the individual is not only incorporated into a specific community through the house that is crowned by the landscape; in the landscape he/she also has the incipient spatial form of his/her incorporation into humanity, because the landscape indeed exists because of the house although it is essentially nature and earth. The finiteness of individual life has become negated by/absorbed, in creative everyday life, by the species. [...] Thus the house takes back the values that have been separated out and seigneurially inverted in the church. The house is not seigneurial but is homey and wonderful" (Kühne 1985:39). To this end, however, the earth must become a paradise, which we take care of and cautiously preserve – the old Persian word for garden is *pāiri-daēza* (Turner 2005:121).⁹ The walls must crumble so that everyone can come and go freely in our cities and communities, no one as an outsider but always as a guest or at home, no one humiliated and no one

exalted. Responsibility then can really be taken for freedom; solidary communality of provision and care would be a daily matter; citizens would put much time and effort into subjecting social institutions to democratic control (for an emancipatory perspective on time see Haug 2009). In the place of a society whose rhythms and spaces are determined by capital accumulation (Harvey 2006) the reproduction of solidary life would be shaped in all its diversity. Traditions of pre-capitalist and modern societies could be combined on a new basis in a 'city of being'.¹⁰ A sustainable solidary society or a green socialism of good life would arise (Reißig 2009:141 ff.) (Graph 2).



Karl Polanyi's contemporary Ernst Bloch captured this hope for a new post-capitalist civilization in these words: '*True genesis is not at the beginning but at the end, and it starts to begin only when society and existence become radical, i.e., grasp their roots. But the root of history is the working, creating [and, we should add, caring – M.B.] human being who reshapes and overhauls the given facts. Once he has grasped himself and re-established what is his, without expropriation and alienation, in real democracy, there arises in the world something which shines into the childhood of all and in which no one has yet been: a homeland*' (Bloch 1995:1375 f.).

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