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The contemporary dynamics of Capitalism and the tensions of the crisis interpreted within a theoretical frame centred on the double movement

Abstract

The paper discusses the dynamics and tensions of capitalism in industrialized countries using a theoretical frame freely inspired by Polanyi's concept of double movement. The commodification process is viewed as a permanent simultaneous double movement. Commodification offers opportunities to work and consume that are freeing the individuals from traditional, often oppressive, institutional conditions (the disembedding part of the movement) but, at the same time, it opens a deficit of protection and obliges the actors to reconstruct social bonds which are compatible with the market and able to support the livelihood of the actors themselves (the re-embedding part of the movement). After a phase when the welfare capitalist institutional assets have obscured the impact of the double movement in industrialized societies the post industrial transformations are again making visible its tensions in social contexts that are more and more individualized, de-standardized and fragmented. Individuals have now great opportunities for self-realization, they are more self-conscious, better able to participate in emancipation movements and to communicate through high-tech devices. However, they are at the same time, increasingly isolated and vulnerable, being under-represented politically, less protected by the welfare state, social bonds and community relations. The current dynamic of the double movement and of emancipation agencies are here explored with particular attention to European countries and to the impact in terms of social inequalities and new forms of discrimination and exclusion.

Draft paper (provisional: do not quote without the author's permission)

1. *The double movement as an interpretation frame for the dynamic of capitalism* . The current financial and economic crisis of the industrialized countries, which started in 2008 and has made the interpretation of our societies more difficult. This is an uncertain and dynamic phase, characterized by high rates of growth in some emerging large countries, high levels of economic interdependence and competition on a global scale, strong de-standardization trends, increasing social heterogeneity and instability and growing inequalities. On the other hand, the crisis has confirmed the failure of market neoliberal strategies and policies but, on the other, it has also revealed the limits of nation state regulations and the perverse effects of an uncontrolled process of bureaucratization. The mainstream paradigms of the social sciences are unable to contribute a reasonable understanding of the contemporary social change conditions mainly for two reasons. They

are all based on different hypothesis of equilibrium and stability while our societies can only be understood in term of dynamism and tensions. They underestimate the importance of interdependence between different phenomena and processes in different parts of the world and, nearly always, end up in ethnocentric explanations and biased methodologies.

In this presentation, in order to take into proper account the dynamism and the complex interdependence of our societies, I shall put the contemporary tensions of social change into an interpretative frame freely inspired by the Polanyian concept of double movement. I shall interpret the double movement as a simultaneous combination of disembeddedness which destroys traditional social bonds and habits in order to accommodate new market opportunities (here the market is intended as a competitive and antisocial force) and of re-embeddedness creating new social bonds and institutional relations. I shall also maintain, again within a broad Polanyian theoretical ground, that the processes of re-embeddedness are activated by variable mixes of the three pure logics of institutional social regulation: reciprocity, redistribution and the market intended as a cooperation logic (Polanyi, 1957). I shall also complement this frame with attention to the role of the organized agencies of social and political emancipating movements that, as I shall explain in a moment, I do not consider as a part of the double movement itself (Fraser, 2011) but as a fundamental element of the comprehensive dynamic of modernity within capitalism. Then I shall locate the interpretative frame in a more precise historical and socio-cultural context where the double movement happens within the present globalized and individualized processes of change in the industrially advanced countries. In particular I will consider the European context, while not ignoring the impact of global interdependence.

Finally, I shall elaborate the analysis in order to take into account the effects of the long lasting economic and financial crisis. I shall focus on the fact that the current tensions between market and society today, particularly in the highly industrialized countries, are producing an increasing level of social and territorial inequalities and eroding the ideal of a standard of social protection – Marshall social rights of citizenship – offered with universalistic features to all citizens and residents. In the conclusions I shall make some brief preliminary considerations on the perspectives regarding the future of our societies, such as the possibility that under current conditions the forces of disembeddedness may destroy societies, as Polanyi (1944) at times feared, or that the double movement shall collapse in another way and capitalism (the historical process of commodification) shall end, as suggested in a recent article by Wolfgang Streeck (2014).

From its very beginning the commodification process that is at the core of the development of modern industrialized/ capitalist societies¹ can be viewed as a permanent simultaneous double movement. It offers new opportunities to work and consume that are emancipating/ freeing individuals from traditional often oppressive social conditions (rural communities and villages, clans, tribes, patriarchal families, etc.) but, at the same time, commodification opens a deficit of social protection and obliges individuals to reconstruct social bonds compatible with the current market opportunities and able to support the livelihood of the individuals themselves. The double movement constitutes the permanent dynamic of

¹ Today we can easily argue that the commodification process (and thus the double movement) is affecting nearly all the societies in the world, albeit to a different extent and, particularly, with different re-embeddedness regulating responses. This is possibly the more convincing way of using the fashionable term of globalization.

modern societies as exposed to commodification processes within different historical and socio-cultural conditions.

It is not the place here to discuss in detail this theoretical frame but it is important to raise the question of the processes and movements of emancipation and democratization which are highly interconnected with the double movement and assume a crucial importance in shaping the perspectives of our societies. Nancy Fraser (2011) has strongly asserted the importance of the emancipation movements proposing that the double movement should be revised as a triple movement including the motion of emancipation². I do not agree with this revision for both heuristic and methodological reasons. The double movement in fact makes sense as constituted simultaneously by two parts: the disembedding motion activated by the competitive market and the re-embedding motion activated by the necessity to create new social bonds and social protections in order to keep societies alive. The simultaneous character of the double movement is a key feature of the concept. But it is also important to assume that the commodification process puts in motion the construction of individual identities and agencies that give a completely new life to the emancipation movements opposing traditional and new forms of oppression. The various processes of democratization, liberation and emancipation are connected with the double movement but they are not an instantaneous third part of it. Emancipation movements are various in different times and contexts, and confront both the traditional forms of oppression (for instance patriarchy both in the reciprocity forms of organization – in families and communities - and in market and state organizations) and the new forms of oppression fuelled by capitalist development (like pollution and environmental destruction or increasing bureaucratic and political burdens). Within this interpretative frame the emancipation motion of market opportunities generates both an instantaneous reaction necessary in order to keep society alive and a chain of reactions, variously diluted in time and mediated by diversified and changing organizational forms, that is reflected in the mobilization of social agencies into new movements confronting all forms of oppression. The features and perspectives of our societies exposed to commodification tensions depends both on how the re-embedding agency is shaping new modes of social protection and on how the organized emancipation movements are effectively contrasting social oppression and discrimination within a more individualized society set into motion by ever new market opportunities (Welzel, 2013). Along this line of thinking we can go even further and insist on the fact that the emancipation activated by the disembeddedness part of the double movement is only negative. It eradicates traditional forms of social organization generating the immediate necessity to build new social bonds and protections and only offers a potential for emancipation which becomes real when, at diversified historical and cultural conditions, emancipation movements and organizations are effectively activated. In the cases of underdeveloped and colonial contexts there is commodification/ disembeddedness without emancipation. Here, however, these dependent ways of being exposed to the market are accompanied by new forms of enslavement and oppression.

² Fraser suggests “ ... to broaden Polanyi’s problematic to encompass a third project that crosscuts his central conflict between marketization and social protection. This third project, which I call *emancipation*, aims to overcome forms of domination rooted in both economy and society. ... struggles for emancipation constitute the missing third that mediates every conflict between marketization and social protection. The effect of introducing this missing third will be to transform the double movement into a *triple movement*.” (Fraser, 2011: 140)

Within this interpretative frame the necessity of reshaping social relations in order to produce a livelihood compatible with commodification constitutes the core of the processes of change and the main concept necessary in order to understand individual and collective agencies both within the simultaneous forms of re-embedding and the delayed mobilization of emancipation movements. The processes of commodification always set into motion the activation of new social bonds and protective institutions instantaneously and, eventually, promote the creation of emancipation and democratization movements and organizations in the long run. Some important institutions regulating social life in modern societies, like the trade unions, are rooted in both the re-embedding instantaneous necessity to invent new bonds of social protection and in the emancipation trends that fight social oppression. The explanatory power of the double movement paradigm makes sense if we put it in an accurate historical frame that also takes into account the cultural and social diversity of different societies across the world (Arrighi, 1994). Here, in order to concentrate the discussion on the present situation in industrialized countries, I have to completely ignore the first phase of industrialization (that was the core of Polanyi's *The Great Transformation*) and make a jump to the welfare capitalist societies that matured during the thirty "glorious" years after the Second World War (also called "Golden Age")³. Within a Polanyian frame – similar to the one adopted here but oriented to explain diversity (in a relatively stable equilibrium context) rather than the dynamism of capitalism⁴ – Esping-Andersen (1990) explains the variety of the worlds of welfare capitalism using the concept of "decommodification"⁵. According to his analysis, in the welfare capitalist societies decommodification (protection against commodification) occurs through a varied set of institutional combinations of protection derived from three different sources: family/kinship/communities; the market (intended as income or employment that allows for access to private protection resources and services); the welfare state. It is easy to recognize here the "pure forms of social integration" as mentioned by Polanyi (1957): reciprocity, redistribution and the market. The three worlds are different because in each of them an area of protection is more expanded than the others for social, political, economic and historically specific conditions.

The three different institutional mixes of protection and democratization of welfare capitalism have been built through turbulent processes of change, reforms and political confrontation in class, gender and ethnically divided societies. However the tensions of the double movement remained in the shadows with respect to the idea of a common standardized institutional balance/ regime accompanying high growth, unlimited expansion of consumption, monopolistic control of industrial technologies and unequal global

³ As we shall see later, this period may be considered "glorious" or "golden" only for a small portion of the global population while the rest of the world was hit by unequal exchange, underdevelopment, turbulent decolonization struggles, diffused poverty and famine.

⁴ I agree with Streeck (2011 and 2012) that a correct analysis of the dynamism of capitalism is now extremely important in order to understand current societies. "I will begin by arguing for treating capitalism as an *endogenously dynamic* and *dynamically unstable* social system, one driven to expand and dependent on expansion, and on this account more often than not, and in particular today, in critical condition ..." (Streeck, 2012, 4)

⁵ Within an interpretative frame centred on the double movement, it would have been preferable to use the idea of "protection from commodification" rather than "decommodification". Welfare institutions in fact constitute the core of the second part of the double movement and, most of the time, they are forms of protection without altering the marketization process.

exchange. The fact that high growth and commodification have been considered compatible with the expansion of welfare has obscured the idea of the double movement, the importance of understanding the dynamic of capitalism in order to explain the highly unstable and temporary institutional regimes and the influence of the Polanyian vision of the permanent tensions between market and society.

The unequal global exchange and the devastating impact of underdevelopment on the largest part of the population of the world can be considered as the social vulnerability part of the double movement during this period of capitalist modernization. In the cases of underdeveloped societies the dis-embedding part of the movement was creating great tensions and the re-embedding social institutions appeared unable to confront the situation. Rural poverty, famine, tribal conflicts and war, the uncontrolled growth of informal and illegal activities and of shanty towns of urban poor have been the main features of the other part of the story of the double movement at the time of welfare capitalism⁶. This highly interconnected part of the story remained “obviously” forgotten in the mainstream economic and sociological interpretations – strictly founded on ethnocentric methodologies and total ignorance of dynamism and interdependence – of the “balanced” welfare capitalist societies of the Golden Age.

At the same time emancipation movements against imperialism, patriarchy and ecological destruction became very active towards the end of this phase and have been fundamental in accelerating the crisis of the welfare capitalism assets. When globalization, destandardization and individualization processes, and mounting social movements eroded the institutional configurations of social protection in the welfare capitalist countries, the tensions of the double movement as activated by the contemporary trends of commodification became again evident.

2. The contemporary dynamic of the double movement: globalization, fragmentation and destandardization.

The post industrial social transformations since the oil crisis of the mid-Seventies are again making visible the tensions of the double movement in advanced industrial societies that are more and more individualized, destandardized and fragmented. Individuals now have great opportunities for self-realization, they are more self-conscious, more able to participate in emancipation movements and to communicate through high-tech devices but, at the same time, they are increasingly isolated and vulnerable, less protected by the welfare state, political representation, social bonds and community relations.

The global economic assets are changing. Competition with emerging countries is eroding the surplus of resources deriving from unequal exchange and monopolistic control over productive technologies and knowledge that was used to balance high growth with

⁶ It is interesting to note that the only ways of escaping the devastating effects of being exposed to commodification for the less developed countries in this phase have either been “revolutionary” modes of limiting exposure, like in the cases of China, Cuba, Vietnam, or, in few cases, being allowed to remain economically isolated and untouched by commodification processes because of remoteness or lack of resources of interest for world trade.

expanding social protection in the previous phase. Consequently the rate of the economic growth of industrialized countries has started to fall and, what is more important, the new economic dynamism shows a limited capacity to compensate for the impact of commodification with investments in welfare support. The difficulties of implementing economic support for social protection have been largely increased by the process of financialization which has constantly subtracted resources from social policies and redistributed them to the very rich and to the most powerful members of state bureaucracy and political elites. Within all the industrialized countries this process is favouring a new dramatic wave of increasing social inequalities and of concentration of power (Picketty, 2013).

Industrial restructuring and the expansion of service jobs have made careers more heterogeneous and unstable. Workers in non-standard careers are on the increase, and, at the same time, they are under-represented by unions, political parties and professional associations. Even when they are not precarious and/ or poorly paid they suffer from a dangerous deficit of social rights that protect them from old and new risks.

The nuclear family, that is still the main social institution regulating private life, has a decreasing capacity to offer protection to its members, due to the lengthening of life expectancy, the drop in marriages and births and due to the spread of divorce, reconstituted families and people living alone. Moreover, the massive entry of women into the labour market has generated tensions in relation to family responsibilities and care work, implying a need to develop ways of reconciling paid employment and family-oriented activities.

In these same societies a new massive wave of migration is taking place. The migration flows now are characterised by a heightened potential for mobility (due to the growth of low-cost flights, for example) and communication (the Internet, mobile phones), on the one hand, but also by employment instability and heterogeneity, on the other. The diffusion of low-paid unstable jobs in the service sector for migrants has given rise to a range of difficulties in relation to their occupational, social and residential inclusion. These mobile migrants with complex transnational identities are now facing political and cultural contexts in which welfare and social rights are weakened and discriminatory and xenophobic practices are widespread.

When seeking to tackle the demand for social protection generated by these new risks, the national welfare states can only draw on limited resources, due to globalisation processes, heightened international economic competition and the growing costs of the political and bureaucratic apparatus. The expansion of social protection programmes now appears incompatible with the need to maintain high levels of economic efficiency. Public welfare, as well as being economically problematic, has also been delegitimized in political terms, at least in some countries more oriented to neo liberal policies, being perceived as a costly intervention to support a restricted number of individuals, against the interests of the majority of the population. Moreover everywhere in the industrialized countries efficient public intervention has been increasingly hindered by the distortions produced by bureaucratization and the influence of powerful political and economic lobbies. As Weber (1922/ 2008) noticed nearly a hundred years ago, the growth of the bureaucratic and

political machines fuelled by economic development and the necessity to expand social control and public policies increases the independent powers and interests of the machines themselves in contrast to the goals of producing social protection and social inclusion for citizens. The abundant flow of resources during the Golden Age and the impact of financialization more recently have made this process of accumulation of autonomous power of political and bureaucratic elites increasingly oppressive. As a consequence of these processes of change, the tensions within the double movement have again become virulent and unpredictable, and the emancipation movements are playing an increasingly important role.

As anticipated the historical transition has been characterized also by an important wave of mobilization of various emancipation movements that are now spreading everywhere in the world (Della Porta and Tarrow, 2005; Tilly and Wood, 2009; Welzel, 2013). In the welfare capitalist cases, the increasing oppression of the growing bureaucratic and political machines has also favoured the mobilization of movements outside the traditional political and union organizations. Furthermore, individualization and the massive resistance to change of the established political and bureaucratic lobbies are making the scenario of the contemporary tensions produced by the double movement extremely complicated. On the other hand, in general, new communication technologies have become powerful instruments of mobilization and participation⁷ but they have also shown clear limits when it comes to establishing permanent and solid forms of social solidarity bonds.

The traditional institutional assets of the worlds of welfare capitalism are less and less able to deal with the impact of the global trends of commodification. Therefore it becomes crucial to take into consideration responses, most times from below, which are more local, more focused on the active participation and obligations of those in need of support, characterized often by the involvement of voluntary and non-profit agencies. As we shall see in the conclusions the interpretation of this transition in term of a double movement is challenging. An important part of the re-embedding motion is now based, in the industrially advanced countries, on true forms of decommodification (solidarity and cooperation organizations, direct contact between consumers and producers, innovative community and social economies, and so on). The dynamic of the double movement seems to be changing considerably. The double movement is again operating differently in the emerging economies of the global south where the classic tension between commodification and social protection is visible and strong but it is becoming ambiguous in the industrialized countries where the commodification and individualization processes seem to have reached their limits. On the side of the disembeddedness part of the movement, commodification is invading care and personal services and it is supported mainly by the growth rate of emerging countries that is based on resources deriving from exports and high tech specialization⁸. The limits are amplified by what happens on the re-embedding side where the challenge to protect an increasingly diversified, heterogeneous and unstable

⁷ The Arab Spring movements or the experience of Occupy Wall Street or of the Spanish Indignados are good examples of the importance and of the limits of communication technologies.

⁸ The levels of growth based on knowledge, high tech and luxury exports are rather limited and open up a fierce internal competition among industrialized countries. A different story may concern the resources gained in the global financial markets but, as we have seen, these tend to increase inequalities and certainly cannot support systematically social support and inclusion.

populations with decreasing resources is producing uncontrolled growth of inequalities, poverty and discontent but also the expansion of solutions based on forms of decommodification.

3. *The double movement today: the limits of commodification and individualization.*

In the industrialized countries the double movement is now creating tensions that are aggravated by the economic crisis that has continued since 2008. There are great difficulties in finding the means and the resources to face the disembedding impact of global commodification and financialization in societies characterized by high levels of destandardized, individualized, unstable and fragmented social conditions. It may not be the end of society that Polanyi feared in *The Great Transformation* but it does deserve a discussion on the double movement as greatly altered by the present transformations. I shall conclude here by raising some lines of inquiry which are only preliminary proposals for discussion and future research. I shall start from the difficulties faced by the advanced welfare systems in preserving universalistic levels of protection and in enforcing the Marshallian social rights. As we shall see the transformation of welfare capitalism constitutes a good example of the alteration of the double movement on various grounds. New tensions towards decommodification are particularly visible in the expansion of various forms of social support and solidarity. There is an evident contrast between the double movement which is less and less emancipatory, and the emancipation movements in defence of direct participation, empowerment and democracy.

The transformation of advanced welfare systems towards more localised, active, mixed and diversified social support is everywhere reflecting and sometimes magnifying the growth of social and geographic inequalities and eroding the system of divided but standardised social rights of citizenship. Within this historical transition, there are conditions that may contain the spread of social inequalities and keep discrimination under control. 1) It is important to preserve a strong institutional regulatory frame oriented to ensure acceptable and socially compatible levels of livelihood for the population. 2) An effective and balanced system for the redistribution of resources and responsibilities from central authorities towards local bodies and organizations is key in order to grant support to disadvantaged groups. 3) The political determination to combat discrimination against minorities and other vulnerable groups should be mobilized at all levels⁹. 4) In order to promote conditions for the diffusion of non discriminatory social change the diffusion of knowledge, professional capacities, solidarity, cooperation and intermediation cultures must be favoured. These conditions are based on the capacity to raise a sufficient amount of economic resources to be redistributed in favour of protection as a public good. The double movement opposes the capacity to protect common and public goods on two main grounds: the neo-liberal imperative of competition, on the side of disembeddedness, and the increasing particularistic distortions activated by the political and bureaucratic elites, on the side of re-embeddedness. The mobilisation and participation of diverse agencies (local and national, public and private), associations and social movements is crucial in order to contrast, at least partially, the

⁹ This condition is politically difficult to achieve as often the most vulnerable groups are also stigmatized and politically underrepresented which means that their defence may have serious electoral costs: For example, this has always been the case of inclusive policies in favour of the Roma populations.

vicious circuit of decreasing protection and increasing discrimination. It is precisely through the empowerment of different actors that one can seek to develop effective and long lasting forms of solidarity, inclusion and social support and, at the same time, avoid the increase of social and spatial inequalities. It is on this ground that the movements of emancipation play a crucial role. The public responsibility to oppose discrimination and defend public goods is the indispensable ingredient in order to keep the transformation of fragmented and individualized societies under control and only the mobilization of emancipation movements can produce it.

The crisis is heightening the tensions produced by the double movement because it makes it more difficult to preserve conditions favourable to contrast discrimination and social exclusion¹⁰ due to cuts in the social and regulation resources of the nation states but also to the increasing competition and conflict among different social groups for the redistribution of limited resources. Even in areas which have been considered more “virtuous” in terms of universalistic public regulation – such as the Scandinavian countries – the combination of welfare reforms and difficulties imposed by the crisis are opening up problematic tensions and conflicts, as demonstrated by the violent clashes that took place between immigrants and police in the Spring of 2013 in some large cities in Sweden.

Standardised welfare capitalist assets are systems of social protection which are increasingly less effective in heterogeneous, unstable and individualised social contexts. But the forms of transition towards the “new welfare” and, in particular, local welfare systems (Andreotti and Mingione, forthcoming), tend to accentuate inequalities and discriminations against vulnerable groups which are under-represented in political terms. The ways in which the crisis has been managed in Europe, through austerity and cuts in public spending have amplified the “short circuit”. Given these conditions some solidarity and protection initiatives may become the last resort to defend particular groups of citizens in competition with other groups from acute poverty. Or, in a more subtle way, some social solidarity practices may become the alibi for dismantling public social institutions because it is argued that citizens are perfectly able to “do it themselves”. In any case the transformation of welfare in industrialized countries is increasingly a mix of trends towards commodification (privatization of services) necessarily opposed by countertendencies leading to various forms of decommodification (re-familiarization, direct exchanges, barter, community solidarity and various innovative forms of social and cooperative economies).

There are no blueprints for mobilisation of the social economy and voluntary bodies, and “activation” of service users, all of which may be effective enough to satisfy the growing demands for protection, with sharply decreasing resources. At the present conditions of persistent austerity and cuts in public expenditure, it does not seem that the current recession is likely to have the regenerative impact on welfare that the great crisis of 1929 and the Second World War had, leading ultimately to the New Deal and the European social model¹¹.

¹⁰ Saskia Sassen (2014) uses the term “expulsions” in order to emphasize the violent exclusionary character that current processes of transformation have on the victims of globalization.

¹¹ Evers and Guillemard (2013) provide the following summary: “Despite the gloomy future of the European social model, since the current recession might do away with social rights and citizenship enshrined in law, a more optimistic scenario might be played out whereby our current tribulations would revive a sense of

The double movement in the industrialized countries is less and less an emancipation force and, at the same time, its “natural” impact in terms of commodification is becoming controversial. Commodification/ monetary growth is fundamentally sustained by the dynamism of emerging economies of the Third World. The historical dualism is reversed: now it is in the old industrialized former colonial and imperialistic countries that limited commodification with little or no emancipation is taking place. But is this reversal of the structure of the double movement effectively viable? The opposite situation has been made possible by an enormous degree of violence and oppression in both colonial and imperialistic commercial contexts. The possibility that the double movement in its new forms is not viable means the end of the double movement and of the historical dominance of the process of commodification¹². Within our approach the diffusion of markets habits (disembedding process) is never immediately a process of sustainable development but, at least, under some conditions, it is supported by emancipation opportunities¹³ and it is made sustainable by re-embedding institutions. Decommodification trends and tendencies towards de-growth (Latouche, 2009) may begin a completely different historical process of change which has to be explained by different tools with respect to the double movement. In a recent article Wolfgang Streeck (2014) goes in the direction of a negative answer to the previous question arguing in favour of the end of capitalism, a long, conflict ridden and controversial end. “The demise of capitalism ... is unlikely to follow anyone’s blueprint. As the decay progresses, it is bound to provoke political protests and manifold attempts at collective intervention. But for a long time, these are likely to remain of the Luddite sort: local, dispersed, uncoordinated, ‘primitive’—adding to the disorder while unable to create a new order, at best unintentionally helping it to come about.” (Streeck, 2014: 48). I would add that the features of this long and controversial transition of the end of capitalism (and the double movement) will have to be studied on a global scale. Particular attention should be paid to commodification trends in the emerging economies that generate re-embedding processes (through various forms of reaction), in order to create social protection for millions of new workers involved in expanding markets; and also to the rising of social movements of democratization and emancipation, many times in opposition to western style commodification and modernization. The social movements and agencies of the industrial countries will also play an important role. It is possible, as argued by Streeck, that within this chaotic process of demise even the opposition movements will become disorganized and weak¹⁴. However it is also possible to argue that the process of demise of the double movement will break the historical link between commodification and emancipation – and this has been evident also in the western industrialized countries in the last few decades. It is probably optimistic to maintain that emancipation and

responsibility both in national political cultures and in terms of transnational solidarity within the EU ... Active citizenship and a more civic culture might then help to find new ways for combining social cohesion and economic growth and the respective kind of social investment strategy” (p. 384).

¹² Michael Piore (2008) in a discussion of the social theories of capitalism and the double movement signals how Polanyi’s interpretation is open ended and less teleological with respect to other visions of modernity. However as the idea of the double movement begins at a precise historical moment when the diffusion of market occasions and the process of industrialization started to subvert the traditional ways of life of the peasant societies we can also assume that the process shall arrive at an end when the commodification subversion can no longer take place.

¹³ This is what Max Weber meant when he mentioned that “the air of cities makes you free”.

¹⁴ “It seems, however, that disorganized capitalism is disorganizing not only itself but its opposition as well, depriving it of the capacity either to defeat capitalism or to rescue it.” (Streeck, 2014: 48).

democratization is an historical process that cannot be stopped (Welzel, 2013)¹⁵ and we continue to have historical evidence to the contrary. But we also have evidence that on various grounds and on a global scale contemporary societies are, at least in some areas, maturing levels of openness and tolerance that could not have been imagined in the past. It is on these grounds that the possible long period of demise of the double movement will lead to varying degrees of conflict ridden, unequal and exclusionary societies.

¹⁵ “As emancipative values grow, they motivate a multitude of equal opportunity movements, and they make antidiscrimination norms the prime evaluation standard of the critical media and a thriving industry of “watchdog” organizations (Keane 2009). Constant public pressures from social movements and critical media confine executive power over people.” (Wenzel, 2013: 5)

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