

The Political Trilemma of Social-Ecological  
Transformation – Lessons from Karl Polanyi's  
„The Great Transformation“

Comment by Judith Dellheim

**„sustainable foundational economy that offers access to essential goods and services for all residents combined with planetary coexistence and international cooperation ...” what is “... the only strategy with the potential to concretize the Polanyian vision of equal freedom for all, place-based as well as embedded in a resilient planet.”**

## **1st Recommendation**

To learn from Karl Polanyi that we should maintain and develop our interest for details and, therefore, ask specifically:

- Who does what why, and with which individual, societal and ecological consequences?  
(incl. the development of production and consumption patterns, of actors and societal structures)
- What is related to what and how does this occur – and what does this mean?

## **2nd Recommendation**

To re-read the Brundtland report in its original version, focusing on the interest of global poor, of the socially and globally weakest, and, at the same time, focusing on the issue of specific technologies for resolving or increasing problems.

### **3rd Recommendation**

We also have to look again at history – especially from the perspective of the majority of the global population, the historically colonized.

**“(2) The deglobalization of the 1930s and 1940s was violent, but brought an era of US hegemony as well as lasting social progress in the form of decolonialization and welfare states. The shift from UK to US hegemony was a geopolitical shift within the West – the current crisis of US-hegemony and the rise of China and Asia in general implies more profound changes, leading to acute social and political conflict and struggles for dominance ...”**

## **4th Recommendation**

We shall have to rethink the terms of „globalisation“ and „deglobalisation“.

## **5th Recommendation**

To look for actors, and to consider them more deeply, who already aim at something compatible to the „foundational economy based on planetary coexistence“ in the following directions:

- by working on conceptions like Buen vivir, Mother Earth, Commoning, ecosocialist manifesto;
- by developing common actions and campaigns, like for the UN binding treaty, or for an international Corona tax;
- by working on strategies focusing on peace, health, climate, and biodiversity.