

José Bové and the globalisation counter-movement in France and beyond: a Polanyian interpretation

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Abstract. This article illustrates the continuing salience of Karl Polanyi's *The Great Transformation* (1944) by employing two of its central concepts, fictitious commodities and the double movement to interpret the globalisation counter-movement and one of its most important figures, José Bové. I explain the transformation of José Bové from rural sheep farmer to French folk hero and global activist and analyse the extent to which his rhetoric and political actions are congruent with Polanyi's key insights. Arguing against the media characterisation of Bové as protectionist, I show that this misrepresentation conceals the larger ideological threat his movement poses to institutionalised politics and neoliberal hegemony. The political vision underlying Bové's symbolic media tactics and articulated in his book, *Le Monde n'est pas une Marchandise*, reveals significant manifestations of Polanyi's chief intellectual legacy – an unparalleled critique of economism and market society. An often neglected question in Polanyian scholarship is whether or not it is possible to have a market economy without becoming a market society. A more careful analysis of Polanyi's thought sheds light on this key issue while the empirical analysis of Bové's movement reveals its implications for French society and the broader globalisation counter-movement.

The congenital weakness of nineteenth century society was not that it was industrial but that it was a market society.¹

Introduction

The myth of the self-regulating market, which Karl Polanyi so powerfully exposed and historically discredited in *The Great Transformation* (1944), is once again in ascendancy. Yet free market ideology and its latest iteration, neoliberalism or what the French call *la pensée unique*, is contested on multiple fronts and in greater numbers than ever witnessed before. From the Seattle protests of 1999 to the annual meetings of the World Social Forum, a groundswell of international opinion and action appears to represent a counter-movement that substantially reaffirms Polanyi's prescient analysis of the societal contradictions and consequences of market utopia as experienced in the nineteenth century. In this article I employ Polanyi's approach to political economy and his theory of society's double movement to interpret one element of anti-globalisation politics that has had tremendous symbolic resonance in France and indeed throughout the world. José Bové first captured the world's attention in August 1999 when he and fellow members of the *Confédération*

¹ Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1944), p. 250.

Paysanne, a small farmers' association, dismantled a McDonald's under construction in rural Southwest France to protest US trade sanctions against French exports and to symbolically reject what Bové calls 'malbouffe' or junk food. Sentenced to three months in prison for criminal vandalism for which he would eventually receive a presidential pardon, and later serving time in jail for separate charges of trespassing and destruction of genetically modified crops, Bové has become something of a poster child for the globalisation countermovement and the struggle against a corporate dominated, profit-driven society.

Anti-globalisation politics are particularly strong in France which should come as no surprise as France has always been sceptical of the virtues of unregulated capitalism,² has a deeply rooted protest culture and a strong tradition of venerating her cultural and culinary heritage which is perceived as being emasculated by increasing globalisation. Given France's central role in the globalisation debates – from official government calls for 'managed globalisation' to mass protests against neoliberal policies emanating from the EU and WTO – a theoretically grounded, empirical analysis of the Bové phenomenon is particularly instructive for understanding the ideological tensions and political challenges underlying globalisation politics. The two motivating questions compelling the present analysis are the following: First, are Polanyi's ideas relevant to the current societal reactions against the processes of globalisation and if so, what do his concepts elucidate about the Bové phenomenon that other theories do not? Second, can an empirical analysis of Bové's politics clarify certain ambiguities in current Polanyian scholarship? My aim is not to provide a mere descriptive analysis of Bové and his relationship to social movement politics, but to use Polanyian concepts to probe its deeper meaning and then to draw theoretical insights from the empirical case to reassess Polanyi's relevance to the globalisation debates and the transformative potential and/or limitations of the contemporary globalisation countermovement.

The article is divided into three parts. The first section offers an analysis of Polanyi's key thesis with a special focus on the linkage between the crucial concepts of 'fictitious commodities' and the 'double movement'. I argue that the real value of re-reading *The Great Transformation* is to historicise the ideology as well as the policy consequences of what Polanyi calls the 'stark utopia' of the self-regulating market. I also emphasise the importance Polanyi attributed to state authority and international institutions and the significance of both to the double movement. Most Polanyi commentators have been remiss in defending Polanyi and his body of thought against those who classify him as a mere protectionist and advocate of welfare capitalism. Engaging with the debates generated recently by Polanyi scholars, I conclude that Polanyi's vision of non-Marxist socialism offers important insights for the ideological coherence and success of the globalisation countermovement.

The second section provides a brief narrative of José Bové and his critique of neoliberal globalisation. Here I show the parallels between Polanyi's insights about the natural reaction against the false commodification of land, labour and money and Bové's rhetoric decrying increasing commodification, GMOs, and his campaign against the WTO and the productivist approach to agricultural production. I also

² For a seminal analysis of the French model of capitalism, see Richard F. Kuisel's *Capitalism and the State in Modern France: Renovation and Economic Management in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). A more current assessment can be found in Vivien Schmidt's *The Futures of European Capitalisms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

highlight the tensions between a strictly protectionist and socially conservative reading of the double movement and the transnationalisation of Bové's cause, especially his critique of EU agricultural subsidies.

The final part of the article reflects upon the relationship between market economy and market society both in Polanyi's thought and Bové's actions, and asserts its theoretical centrality to the globalisation debates and its political relevance for unifying a culturally and politically diverse globalisation countermovement.

Polanyi's intellectual legacy

Writing against the backdrop of two world wars, native Hungarian and political émigré Karl Polanyi³ (1886–1964) set out to understand the historical and cultural roots of the collapse of nineteenth century civilisation. His thesis was that the international system, comprised of the balance of power, the gold standard and the liberal state, ultimately self-destructed because each of these constituent institutions was constructed upon the utopian idea of the self-regulating market system. At the outset Polanyi asserts:

All types of societies are limited by economic factors. Nineteenth century alone was economic in a different and distinctive sense, for it chose to base itself on a motive only rarely acknowledged as valid in the history of human societies, and certainly never before raised to the level of a justification of action and behavior of everyday life, namely gain. The self-regulating market system was uniquely derived from this principle.⁴

Using multiple levels of analysis spanning the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and combining a polemic against economic liberalism and orthodox Marxism⁵ with serious empirical study, Polanyi produced a trenchant explanation of the failures of the system and the fundamental tension between a capitalist world economy and domestic social welfare. Though generally received as a work of economic history and sociological thought, Polanyi's conceptual innovation in *The Great Transformation* has influenced all of the social sciences with a distinctive impact in anthropology and the moral economy traditions in political science and economics. Polanyi's contemporary relevance to the study of international relations can be traced to the seminal article by Ruggie⁶ which drew upon the idea of 'embeddedness' and more recently to the important contributions of the Gill and Mittelman edited volume.⁷ Recognising the revival of interest in Polanyi, but dissatisfied with the cursory application of his concepts in the globalisation debates, a special issue of *Politics and Society* was produced offering a more systematic and

³ No single biography appears to exist, but considerable background information can be obtained from Kari Polanyi-Levitt and Marguerite Mendell, 'Karl Polanyi: His Life and Times', *Studies in Political Economy*, 22 (1987), pp. 7–39. See also Kari Polanyi-Levitt (ed.), *The Life and Work of Karl Polanyi* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1990).

⁴ K. Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, p. 30.

⁵ See especially chs 12 and 13, K. Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*.

⁶ J. G. Ruggie, 'International Regimes, Transactions and Change: Embedded Liberalism in the Postwar Economic Order', *International Organization*, 36 (1982), pp. 379–416.

⁷ Stephen Gill and James H. Mittelman (eds.), *Innovation and Transformation in International Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

critical engagement with Polanyi's theoretical legacy.⁸ While these recent developments in Polanyian scholarship are important, it is noteworthy that in France, Polanyi's *magnum opus* has long been recognised as one of the ten classics of twentieth-century social thought.⁹ Perhaps the best explanation of the staying power of Polanyi's work is the resurgent hegemony of free market liberalism and the recognition by many that *The Great Transformation* and Polanyi's life's work represent its most powerful refutation. This I believe is Polanyi's overarching intellectual legacy and as I wish to show below, it sheds considerable light on the dilemmas facing global society today.

Fictitious commodities and the double movement

In his explanation of the rise and fall of liberal capitalism, which extended through the Second World War, Polanyi shows the ideological delusions and the repercussions of society's attempt to establish a self-regulating market. To fully appreciate his argument, it is essential to understand the two central and interconnected concepts of fictitious commodities and the double movement. Though Polanyi was certainly influenced by thinkers from Marx and Weber to Keynes and Lukács, it is his concrete historical analysis and the linkage of these two concepts that I believe set his thesis apart.

Subtling his book 'The Political and Economic Origins of Our Times', Polanyi hoped to influence postwar international restructuring by tracing the roots of fascism and the ultimate demise of 'civilisation as we have known it' to the Industrial Revolution and the doctrine of economic liberalism that accompanied it. While Polanyi acknowledged that markets had been in existence since at least the sixteenth century, not until the nineteenth century were markets 'disembedded' and human society 'become an accessory of the economic system'.¹⁰ He dismisses the idea that the transition from a mercantilist system to a market society was part of a natural evolutionary process, and argues instead that it was a deliberate, politically planned transformation that required the commodification of land, money and labour. Of course, Marx had written extensively about the 'fetish character of commodities' in both *Capital* and *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, but Polanyi provides a fresh empirical account of how this process of commodification actually transpired.

Preceding his analysis, Polanyi examines the history of markets through the mercantilist period where he shows that they were 'controlled and regulated more than ever by social authority'.¹¹ His point was to underscore the fact that the shift to a self-regulating market was a 'complete reversal of the trend of development'.¹² Such a shift required assumptions of stupendous proportions, the most significant of which were 'fictitious commodities'. In Polanyi's words:

⁸ Fred Block and Sean O'Rian (ed.), 'Special Issue: The Legacy of Karl Polanyi', *Politics and Society*, 31:2 (2003).

⁹ Gregory Baum, *Karl Polanyi on Ethics and Economics* (London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1923).

¹⁰ K. Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, p. 75.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 68.

The crucial point is this: labor, land, and money are essential elements of industry; they also must be organized in markets; in fact, these markets form an absolutely vital part of the economic system. But labor, land, and money are obviously *not* commodities; the postulate that anything that is bought and sold must have been produced for sale is emphatically untrue in regard to them. In other words, according to the empirical definition of a commodity they are not commodities. Labor is only another name for a human activity which goes with life itself, which in its turn is not produced for sale but for entirely different reasons, nor can that activity be detached from the rest of life, be stored or mobilised; land is only another name for nature, which is not produced by man; actual money, finally is merely a token of purchasing power which, as a rule, is not produced at all, but comes into being through the mechanism of banking or state finance. None of them is produced for sale. The commodity description of labor, land, and money is entirely fictitious.¹³

To substantiate his claim, he traced the development of labour markets in England devoting an entire chapter to Speenhamland and its repeal by the Poor Law Reform in 1834. The Speenhamland law enacted in 1795 overturned the Elizabethan poor laws and was designed to curb the increase in pauperism by guaranteeing a subsistence income, a 'right to live' established by the going price of bread. This aid-in-wages, though ostensibly assisting employees and the poor, was actually a subsidy to employers and it effectively precluded the development of a competitive labour market. When the industrial middle class gained political victory in 1832, the Poor Law Reform was enacted abolishing outdoor relief to the unemployed, thereby forcing them into the wage labour – what Polanyi calls, the inaugural moment of industrial capitalism. Two points are essential in grasping the full weight of Polanyi's analysis of Speenhamland and its repeal. First, he shows that there was nothing automatic about the emergence of the labour market, and second, Polanyi underscores the political construction of the supposedly 'free market' through direct state intervention. To reiterate, his hope was to persuade those still influenced by economic liberalism and the idea of the self-regulating market in the 1930s and 1940s that the entire notion was historically fallacious. As Fred Block aptly summarises: 'There was nothing more central for Polanyi than these three points: that the ideology of economic liberalism was pervasive, that it was fundamentally mistaken, and that it had become "one of the main obstacles to the solution of the problems of our civilization."' ¹⁴

What is most distinctive and original in Polanyi's thought, though surprisingly underemphasised in the secondary literature, is the linkage he makes between fictitious commodities and the double movement. More than the exploitation and alienation that Marx had attributed to the process of commodification, Polanyi documented the institutional effects of the contradictions of capitalism and the inevitable reaction of society to protect itself against the very market forces it put into place. The conscious political planning and concrete measures put into place to establish a market society were met with spontaneous, unplanned responses from different sectors of society, not only the poor and working classes. Thus, the countermovement should not be confused with class struggle, but as Polanyi discerned it, a multi-class effort. For example, in the case of money, even capitalists gained protection from the vagaries of the world market through the creation of

¹³ Ibid., p. 72.

¹⁴ Fred Block and Margaret R. Somers, 'Beyond the Economic Fallacy: The Holistic Social Science of Karl Polanyi', in Theda Skocpol (ed.), *Vision and Method in Historical Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

central banking. The commodity fiction with regard to land was dealt with in a chapter entitled 'Market and Nature' where Polanyi shows that the dangers of the market economy to man and nature cannot be neatly separated. Just as social legislation and factory laws had to be put into place to protect the working class, a series of agrarian tariffs and land laws served to protect the peasantry.¹⁵

The following passage is worth quoting at length as it captures the linkage between the two concepts and the cornerstone of Polanyi's argument.

Social history in the nineteenth century was thus the result of a double movement: the extension of the market organisation in respect to genuine commodities was accompanied by its restriction in respect to fictitious ones. While on the one hand markets spread all over the face of the globe and the amount of goods involved grew to unbelievable proportions, on the other hand a network of measures and policies was integrated into powerful institutions designed to check the action of the market relative to labor, land, and money. While the organization of world commodity markets, world capital markets, and world currency markets under the aegis of the gold standard gave an unparalleled momentum to the mechanism of markets, a deep-seated movement sprang into being to resist the pernicious effects of a market-controlled economy. Society protected itself against the perils inherent in a self-regulating market system – this was the one comprehensive feature in the history of the age.¹⁶

Polanyi conceptualises this protective reaction as a 'double movement' the clearest definition of which appears in chapter 11, 'Self-Protection of Society'. He begins the chapter by noting that: 'For a century the dynamics of modern society was governed by a double movement: the market expanded continuously but this movement was met by a countermovement checking the expansion in definite directions'.¹⁷ The significance Polanyi attaches to the role of the state and political authority in forging the first element of the double movement deserves special attention. McMichael's exposition of Polanyi yields a particularly perceptive view on this point as he shows that Polanyi's account of the formation of the modern nation-state is bound up with 'political resistance to the institution of market relations' and that the link to the present form of corporate globalisation is 'that the state itself is transformed as an instrument of privatisation, and its evident complicity in the decomposition of citizenship fuels an alternative politics informing a global counter-movement'.¹⁸

To discern whether the current global social movements agitating around increased jurisdiction of the WTO, debt relief to developing countries, ecological degradation, the expansion of genetically modified organisms, and so on, approximate what Polanyi conceptualises as a double movement, we must ascertain the extent to which reaction is generated by the expansion of the market ethos which is in fact being promulgated by both states and international institutions. Furthermore, what must not be overlooked in Polanyi's analysis is the degree to which he

¹⁵ The important difference, concludes Polanyi, is that on the continent the peasants defended or at least compromised with the market system. This chapter foreshadows the classic works of Alexander Gerschenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective: A Book of Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962) and Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1966). Incidentally, it is interesting to note that the opening quote of Bové's book is that of another leader in the movement who vowed in 1973 that never again would the 'paysans' become the Versailles.

¹⁶ K. Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, p. 76.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

¹⁸ Philip McMichael, 'Globalization', prepared for the *Handbook of Political Sociology*, eds. Thomas Janoski, Robert Alford, Alexander Hicks and Milfred Swartz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming), p. 2.

demonstrated that capitalist production itself had to be insulated from the devastating effects of a self-regulating market. Once again he emphasises the dialectical nature of the double movement:

It can be personified as the action of two organising principles in society, each of them setting itself specific institutional aims, having the support of definite social forces and using its own distinctive methods. The one was the principle of economic liberalism, aiming at the establishment of a self-regulating market, relying on the support of the trading classes, and using largely *laissez-faire* and free trade as its methods; the other was the principle of social protection aiming at the conservation of man and nature as well as productive organisation, relying on the varying support of those most immediately affected by the deleterious action of the market – primarily, but not exclusively, the working and the landed classes – and using protective legislation, restrictive associations, and other instruments of intervention as its methods.¹⁹

Though a fierce critic of capitalism, Polanyi was ultimately a pragmatist who believed socialist ideals could be accommodated once the myth of the free market was finally disposed of and the economy re-submerged in social life rather than its obverse under economic liberalism.²⁰ As such his work has come to serve as a model for scholars advocating the mixed or organised economy, as opposed to the neoclassical model which is still the most influential among mainstream economists, and increasingly, political scientists. Both the welfare state literature and the ‘varieties of capitalism’ school – particularly the collected volumes of Hollingsworth and Boyer²¹ and Hall and Soskice²² – draw inspiration from Polanyi and his critique of economism and market society. Yet, the very fact that we are experiencing a recurring global economic crisis reveals a new legitimacy crisis underpinning the protectionist strategy. Indeed, outside the academy the neoliberal model and the market logic seem to have triumphed once again. In the new edition of *The Great Transformation* (2001) Joseph Stiglitz writes in the Foreword:

Economic science and economic history have come to recognize the validity of Polanyi’s key contentions. But public policy – particularly as reflected in the Washington consensus doctrines concerning how the developing world and the economies in transition should make their great transformations – seems all too often not to have done so.²³

And while there is ample evidence of the resurgence of free market ideology and policy moves at both the national level (such as retrenchment of welfare policies, privatisation of public services) and international levels (such as trade liberalisation of new sectors like services and agriculture, structural adjustment and austerity policies), interventions and protections are rampant. The Enron scandal and the collusion of Arthur Andersen, the Bush administration and state governments is our most recent example of the hypocrisy of market ideology, nicely captured in this title from the *New York Times* business pages: ‘Enron Preaching Deregulation, Worked the Statehouse Circuit’ (2/9/02, p. B1). Another example of the disconnect between rhetoric and reality is revealed by the recent WTO ruling in favour of the EU

¹⁹ K. Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, p. 132.

²⁰ Evidence of this can be found in his discussions of the New Deal sprinkled throughout the book. See for example K. Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, p. 256.

²¹ J. Rogers Hollingsworth and Robert Boyer (eds.), *Contemporary Capitalism: The Embeddedness of Institutions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

²² Peter A. Hall and David Soskice (eds.), *Varieties of Capitalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

²³ K. Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (2001), p. xiii.

complaint against the US Foreign Sales Corporation which shelters US multinational companies from taxes essentially creating a subsidy and unfair export advantage highly resented by European firms. Again, these episodes of state actors on the one hand urging market solutions, advocating free trade and a limited role of the state in the economy, but on the other hand, facilitating the use of the state apparatus and international institutions to achieve corporate capital's interest affirms Polanyi's insight of the state's instrumental role in this phase of the double movement.

So it seems that our most immediate task is to rehearse the arguments against the distortions of market ideology and its consequences for those excluded from the prosperity and opportunities purportedly generated by the globalising political economy. Polanyi articulates this challenge accordingly:

Liberal leaders never weary of repeating that the tragedy of the nineteenth century sprang from the incapacity of man to remain faithful to the inspiration of the early liberals; that the generous initiative of our ancestors was frustrated by the passions of nationalism and class war, vested interests, and monopolists, and above all, by the blindness of the working people to the ultimate beneficence of unrestricted economic freedom to all human interests, including their own. A great intellectual and moral advance was thus, it is claimed, frustrated by the intellectual and moral weaknesses of the mass of the people; what the spirit of Enlightenment had achieved was put to nought by the forces of selfishness. In a nutshell, this is the economic liberal's defense. Unless it is refuted, he will continue to hold the floor in the contest of arguments.²⁴

David Held²⁵ is one who continues this 'contest of arguments' by engaging explicitly with Hayek, arguing that this depiction of the free market (which is in effect the same in neoliberal discourse) disguises its underlying power relations and therefore ignores how economic power can distort political democracy. Held builds a defence of democratic intervention in the economy based largely on the idea of 'reframing' the market.²⁶ Though he never explicitly mentions Polanyi and he may hesitate to embrace the structural solutions required by a more radical reading of Polanyi, I believe his argument reflects a theoretical solution to what Polanyi saw as the fundamental imperative for future generations, the need to reconcile human freedom with the 'reality of society'. The first step in this direction requires that we 'throw off the ideological remnant of the nineteenth century, the market mentality'²⁷ instead of letting it eclipse political thought and action. As we will see, it is this message more than any other that is emerging from the Bové campaign and the growing globalisation counter-movement.

José Bové versus McWorld

My aim in this analysis of a single personality in the broader globalisation counter-movement is to not to place greater significance in the actions of any one individual, but rather to demonstrate the parallel between Bové's campaign and Polanyi's core concepts and to then to show how the Bové phenomenon has come to symbolise the counter-hegemonic move against the power of transnational capital.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 144.

²⁵ David Held, *Democracy and the Global Order* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995).

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 244–66.

²⁷ J. R. Stanfield, *The Economic Thought of Karl Polanyi* (London: Macmillan, 1986) p. 150.

I also briefly assess the relationship between the local and the global by examining Bové's popularity in France, his resonance in the Global South and the distinctiveness of France's official response to neoliberal globalisation. Finally, defending Bové against the portrayal of his campaign as reactionary and protectionist offers insight into the competing strands of Polanyi interpretation, and clarifies the countermovement both in theory and practice as something much more liberating than mere protection.

Since mounting the tractor with fellow farmers on 12 August 1999 and bringing down the golden arches of a McDonald's under construction in a remote town in southern France, José Bové has become a household name in France. Hero to some, villain to others, and largely ignored in North America, Bové's story offers a unique opportunity to examine how the Polanyian concepts are being played out in today's global politics. Before turning to substance, it is important to de-sensationalise the Bové personality²⁸ and mention a few important aspects of his educational and professional background and the organisational dimensions of the movement he has launched. First of all, though 'paysan' translates as peasant or small farmer, Bové did not come by this quite so naturally²⁹ as his parents are both scientific researchers (biochemist Father and natural scientist Mother who do not entirely share their son's views on ecology) and he himself attended university in Bordeaux to study philosophy. Having spent several years of his early childhood in California while his parents did post-doctoral research, he speaks English fluently and refers positively to the experience to attenuate his characterisation as anti-American.

During his university years he was swept up by the spirit of May '68, and especially influenced by the Christian left and liberation theology,³⁰ he became active in the student anti-militarisation movement. Later, when the government rejected his demand for conscientious objector status, he fled Bordeaux and 'discovered the farm' so to speak. From 1979 onward, Bové has resided in southwest France where he raises sheep for Roquefort cheese production. He was immediately active in setting up small agricultural cooperatives that encouraged alternative farming practices to resist industrialisation, and led campaigns against the conversion of farmland for military installations. In opposition to the oldest and largest farming association, FNSEA, Bové helped found the Confédération paysanne (CP hereafter) in 1987 and was voted its first national secretary. In addition to encouraging a 'different conception of agriculture' this organisation's primary objective is to resist agribusiness trends by reorganising production communally, cutting out the intermediary and selling goods directly on the market. As Bove puts it, '[we] prefer creating employment rather than accumulating capital.'³¹

²⁸ Based on extensive reading of the press coverage of Bové since the events of 1999, it would be hard to miss the attention paid to his moustache, for instance! The chain smoking, mustachioed French farmer is a common introduction whether updating his legal battle, reporting on his recent divorce, or less often reporting on the political substance of his mobilisation against corporate capital.

²⁹ This explains why he is typically referred to in the French press as 'neo-rurale'. For example, see the article by Jean-Louis Thabor, 'Le vrai visage de José Bové', *Le Figaro Magazine* (4/7/2001), pp. 42–8.

³⁰ Though beyond the scope of this article, it is interesting to note the common religious or spiritual motivations in both Polanyi and Bové. For more background on Polanyi in this area, see 'The Essence of Fascism', in *Christianity and the Social Revolution* (1935), cited in *The Great Transformation*, p. 237.

³¹ Translation is mine. Gilles Luneau (with José Bové and François Dufour), *Le Monde n'est pas une Marchandise* (Paris: Editions la Découverte, 2000), p. 61.

The organisation has both regional and global dimensions. At the European level, CP is a member of the *Coordination paysanne européenne* and *Via campesina* was created in 1993 after the Earth summit in Rio, and as a direct reaction to the integration of agriculture into the trading regime at the conclusion of the Uruguay round. The global movement claims 50 million adherents representing 69 organisations from 37 countries of four continents. Though some criticise Bové for being a media opportunist, as he seems to carefully stage events like the ransacking of the McDonald's and the destruction of genetically engineered crops, his message obviously goes far beyond symbolic acts. He is now leveraging his celebrity to gain access to the establishment in order to press his agenda. For example, he held a meeting with EU Trade Commissioner, Pascal Lamy,³² in Brussels where he presented his vision for CAP reform, including a reduction of subsidies and a reorientation towards employment, and encouraging trade that is more equitable for developing countries.³³

The dismantling of the McDonald's in Millau was certainly a media coup and one which transformed Bové into national folk hero almost overnight, but it came at a price, with Bové and others condemned to pay one million francs in damages and serve three months in prison. While the event itself was far less than spontaneous, subsequent outpouring of support was a major surprise. Dufour recounts the bombardment of letters, calls and donations amounting to over 700,000 francs. Worth noting is the fact that 30,000 francs came from American members of the National Family Farm coalition and the movement for sustainable development, who would also later help finance and organise Bové and Dufour's trip to Seattle (see pp. 44–6).³⁴ What is particularly significant about CP's action is the connection between the WTO decision against the EU ban on imports of hormone-treated beef and the targeted action against McDonald's. As explained in their book, the CP meetings in April of 1999 had been devoted to a discussion of the February 1998 WTO ruling (in favour of the US) and how to cope with the imminent trade sanctions. What surprised CP leadership was the severity of American retaliations, particularly the fact that French products would be penalised with 100 per cent tariffs on items such as Roquefort, *foie gras*, and Dijon mustard. When a dialogue with the French agricultural minister produced no compensation, plans were set in motion. The news about a McDonald's under construction in Millau presented the perfect opportunity to link international trade practices (and the complicity of the French state therein) and the expanded power of the WTO with the increasing commercialisation and industrialisation of agriculture, related food safety issues, and what Bové refers to as 'malbouffe' (bad food).³⁵ As it was portrayed to the public, the US was forcing Europeans to ingest hormones while exporting their 'malbouffe' and keeping high quality products 'du terroir' off their market. Revealing the socio-cultural implications of this development, Bové argues: 'For me, malbouffe means both the standardisation of food – the same taste from one end of the world to the other – and the choice of food associated with the use of hormones and GMOs. The food industry regards

³² For more details on this meeting, see 'Pascal Lamy promet a José Bové de plaider pour un meilleur fonctionnement de l'OMC', *Le Monde* (8/15/2001).

³³ See G. Luneau, *Le Monde n'est pas une Marchandise*, pp. 215–17.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 44–6.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 14–15.

the farmer as merely the supplier of raw commodities to meet the need of the manufacturers, rather than those of the consumer.’³⁶

The overwhelming support shown for this attack on McDonald’s is not surprising given the historical tendency of the French to criticise American products and habits, but it also forced an honest debate about the public’s implication in the process by, of course, patronising fast-food chains in the first place. And as Bové explains, the mobilisation of public opinion is due largely to the coincidence of the various food scares, globalisation anxiety in general and the widespread association of McDonald’s with economic imperialism.³⁷ The larger message behind the attack on McDonald’s was one in opposition to the general strategy of the industrial food complex towards product standardisation and homogenisation of tastes.³⁸

There is no mention of Polanyi by the co-authors of the book, yet as the following remarks and passages highlight, there are striking commonalities in the themes and concerns of these thinkers. The bulk of *Le Monde n’est pas une marchandise* is devoted to an exposure of the wastefulness and socio-cultural destruction that accompanies the agribusiness approach to food production, and in substance and tone it is quite reminiscent of Polanyi’s ‘Habitation versus Improvement’. As discussed above, the commodification of labour was in Polanyi’s analysis the lynchpin of the market society and he devoted more effort to exposing its consequences, as opposed to those of land and money. His references to the enclosures and Corn Laws are certainly meaningful, though not quite as fully developed as his discussion of Speenhamland. The following passage however should suffice to illustrate the parallels between Polanyi and many of these arguments put forward by Bové.

Much of the social damage done to England’s countryside sprang at first from the dislocating effects of trade directly upon the countryside itself. The Revolution in Agriculture definitely antedated the Industrial Revolution. Both enclosures of the common and consolidations into compact holdings, which accompanied the new great advance in agricultural methods, had a powerfully unsettling effect. The war on cottages, the absorption of cottage gardens and grounds, the confiscation of rights in the common deprived cottage industry of its two mainstays: family earnings and agricultural background. As long as domestic industry was supplemented by the facilities and amenities of a garden plot, a scrap of land, or grazing rights, the dependence of the labourer on money earnings was not absolute; the potato plot or ‘stubbing geese’, a cow or even an ass in the commons made all the difference; and family earnings acted as a kind of unemployment insurance. The rationalisation of agriculture inevitably uprooted the labourer and undermined his social security.³⁹

An entire chapter of *Le Monde n’est pas une marchandise* is devoted to the effects of rationalisation and what they call ‘Taylorisation’ and over-industrialisation of agriculture in Europe and the States since the 1950s. In addition to a discussion of the disappearance of farming as a vocation,⁴⁰ the authors also cite the environmental degradation and economic irrationality caused by over-production. Most importantly, it is their argument that the lack of food security can be directly linked with this rupture between farmers and consumers brought on by the modernisation

³⁶ Stuart Jeffries, ‘Bové Relishes a Second Bite’, *Observer* (8/12/2001). Retrieved from the World Wide Web 1/23/2002 at (<http://www.commondreams.org/views01/0813-03.htm>)

³⁷ G. Luneau, *Le Monde n’est pas une Marchandise*, pp. 23–4.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

³⁹ K. Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, p. 92.

⁴⁰ G. Luneau, *Le Monde n’est pas une Marchandise*, p. 98.

process and trade liberalisation that has revitalised the CP movement.⁴¹ It is not insignificant to point out that many perceive a fundamental distinction between the French support for protest politics and general sympathies with farmers and the new popularity of CP that primarily derives from its bridging of classes, political parties, and the urban/rural divide.⁴²

Broadening the scope, Bové's words about excessive commodification of all forms of human activity are completely congruent with Polanyi's insights about the effect of making markets alone the key organising principle of society. In the following passage such ideas are expressed quite explicitly.

Le grand bouleversement que nous subissons aujourd'hui vise à transformer toutes les activités qui ont lieu à la surface du globe en marchés et en marchandises. La résistance à cette tendance fonde notre combat. Si toute activité humaine devient un enjeu mercantile, la bagarre se fait entre deux conceptions de la société. L'une, qui laisse le marché, avec ses propres règles, organiser la société, intégrer toutes les activités humaines, santé, culture, éducation, etc., à la loi de l'argent, avec comme stade ultime – proposé aux négociations internationales de l'OMC – la marchandisation du vivant. L'autre, où ce sont les citoyens, les institutions politiques, l'espace de vie et les autres enjeux comme l'environnement et la culture qui ont le pouvoir d'organiser la société.⁴³

I would argue that in both theory and practice the Bové phenomenon (and its resonance beyond France) embodies the core ideas and values of Polanyi's *magnum opus*. The language and values engendered by economism and market society are simply incompatible with the diversity and complexity of human and societal interests. The theology of markets is tenacious, however, and in a recent interview Bové pointed out that the proponents of neoliberal order used the occasion of WTO meetings in Qatar to associate all those opposed to free trade with Bin Laden and terrorism.⁴⁴ In this same interview Bové professes to be willing to work within the boundaries of legitimate governance, using the power of states to reshape and democratise the WTO and to put the 'economy in the service of men and not men in the service of the economy'.⁴⁵ What needs to be reinforced in the globalisation debates and our assessment of the countermovement may in fact be the very continuity of this ideological struggle, but also the primary difference between Polanyi's era and ours. Without making a post-industrial argument, it is significant that the new terrain is in the service sector and it flows from this that the countermove will have a slightly different cast of characters joining more traditional interests. Gill has articulated this in the following way: 'A new "postmodern Prince" may prove to be the most effective political form for giving coherence to an open-ended, plural, inclusive, and flexible form of politics and thus create alternatives to neoliberal globalisation'.⁴⁶ The movement embodied by the CP and its regional and global alliances might represent such a political form, but this is only one potential characterisation and one that is not entirely unproblematic in that there is acknowledged conflict between traditional labour's interest (that is, industrial farmers) and those CP members working for more sustainable production.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 80–4.

⁴² Jean Viard, 'José Bové, pont entre le rural et l'urbain', *Libération* (6/30/2000).

⁴³ G. Luneau, *Le Monde n'est pas une Marchandise*, p. 194.

⁴⁴ As cited in 'Entretien avec José Bové' (Paris: Jonas, March 2002), pp. 25–31.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁴⁶ Stephen Gill, 'Toward a Postmodern Prince? The Battle in Seattle as a Moment in the New Politics of Globalisation', *Millennium*, 29 (2000), pp. 131–40.

Another divergence is simply that global capitalism has evolved and borders are shrinking in many ways. Technology does matter and communications capacity has dramatically increased the ability of capital to be more mobile, but it has also helped facilitate a countervailing power of which the Bové phenomenon is emblematic. In its alliance with Via Campesina, it is obvious that the movement reflects what Mark Rupert considers as the cosmopolitan democratic response linking workers, feminists, consumer groups, environmentalists and communities within and across national boundaries.⁴⁷ As he points out, though, this response is not the only alternative world view contesting the hegemony of transnational capital; the far-right, religious fundamentalists and nationalists also pose a challenge. Rupert urges that the progressive movement define itself against not only the agenda of transnational corporate capital, but also this anti-democratic, nationalist and often racist form of anti-globalisation populism. Bové clearly is in no way legitimately linked to nationalism, not only in his support for landless peasants in the developing world and his support for the Palestinian cause, but most significantly in his opposition to export subsidies to French farmers which disadvantage farmers in the developing world.

These general remarks about the form of the wider countermovement raise the issue of analytical clarity. What are we talking about when we invoke Polanyi's concept of the double movement? As one scholar has written about the burgeoning literature on global civil society and those working on transnational politics: 'They fail to adequately distinguish social movements, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), and transnational networks and do not adequately specify their relations with each other or with states and international institutions'.⁴⁸ I would argue that the extent to which the fight against the market mentality unifies these otherwise disparate groups, lobbying specifically against unfair trade and increasing commodification, is more significant than the need for clearer typologies. With regard to the need to assess their relationship to the state and international institutions, what has changed from Polanyi's world to ours is that both have to be transformed if the societal perspective is to prevail. State power and market expansion is reaching its territorial limits and only new forms of commodification can give rise to new markets. The contemporary double movement in this loose alliance of small farmers, consumers, environmentalists, and development NGOs is far less socially conservative and protectionist than a too narrow reading of Polanyi might predict. Transcending national and sectarian interests, they refuse to let the quest for markets pit them against one another and instead in the case of CP/Via Campesina are pursuing a strategy of food sovereignty, where there is mutual respect for the traditions and practices of each locale.⁴⁹ Explaining the shift from food security to food sovereignty, Bové claims: 'Ce n'était pas simplement l'agriculture qui était prise en otage mais l'alimentation.'⁵⁰ (Referring to the WTO, he says essentially that it is not simply agriculture that has been taken hostage but also culinary sovereignty or

⁴⁷ Mark Rupert, *Ideologies of Globalization: Contending Visions of a New World Order* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

⁴⁸ Sidney Tarrow, 'Transnational Politics: Contention and Institutions in International Politics', in *Annual Review of Political Science*, 4 (2001), p. 2.

⁴⁹ See G. Luneau, *Le Monde n'est pas une Marchandise*, pp. 207–8.

⁵⁰ Nadia Teskrat, 'José Bové: Du Combat Contre la 'Malbouffe' à l'anti-mondialisation', *Agence France Presse* (7/16/2001). Retrieved from the World Wide Web 1/25/2002 at (<http://www.web.lexis-nexis.com>)

local food and ways of eating.). There is also a push to end export subsidies that are seen as detrimental to developing countries and a concerted effort to harmonise the interests among farmers in the North and South. Finally, it is a misconception to view the countermove as antiglobalisation or anti-WTO. Again, CP calls for limiting public aid to farmers and reducing exports for developing countries so they attain self-sufficiency.⁵¹ It is the undemocratic nature of the institution that is rejected and what is demanded is a separation of the administrative and judiciary functions. For instance, some have proposed the creation of a separate institution such as an independent international tribunal to replace the current politicised dispute settlement mechanism.⁵²

Thus, in the words of Peter Evans: 'Transnational activists aren't just beating their heads against some inexorable logic of structural change. They may well be an integral part of the only political project that can provide the institutional underpinnings that the current global political economy needs to survive.'⁵³ While recognising that the trade negotiations in Seattle had innumerable problems prior to convening and that the talks were doomed to fail regardless of the battle from outside, John Odell nonetheless concludes that 'The Battle of Seattle must rank with the most spectacular failures in the history of trade diplomacy'.⁵⁴ Even if one concedes that the stalled talks may be attributed to flawed preparatory negotiations, the consciousness-raising element alone achieved an unprecedented scale that I would argue ranks with one of the most spectacular successes in the history of counter-hegemonic politics.

Before concluding, a few comments about the relationship between Bové and the globalisation countermovement in France are in order. First of all, it is not an exaggeration to say that Bové gave the anti-globalisation forces in France a certain coherence that before the events of Millau and Seattle were indistinguishable from other long-standing perceptions of growing Americanisation, increasing EU technocracy and disgruntlement with a sluggish economy and high unemployment. In general the survey data show that 33 per cent of the French population consider globalisation as a 'bad thing', 24 per cent think France has 'more to lose' from globalisation than it has to gain, and 51 per cent say they agree with José Bové's views on economic and financial globalisation.⁵⁵ That half of the population relates to the message and campaign being waged by Bové is remarkable given the fact that he was relatively unknown before the mid-1990s. There are of course, criticisms – most of which come from the conservative press and rival farm organisation FNSEA⁵⁶ – but also from those who consider him as nothing more than a professional subversive. One such critic went so far as to equate his actions with the excessiveness, vandalism and anti-science dogma of the French Revolution.⁵⁷ However the suggestion that his

⁵¹ Philip H. Gordon and Sophie Meunier, *The French Challenge: Adapting to Globalization* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press), p. 84.

⁵² G. Luneau, *Le Monde n'est pas une Marchandise*, pp. 217–18.

⁵³ Peter Evans, 'Fighting Marginalization with Transnational Networks: Counter-Hegemonic Globalization', in *Contemporary Sociology*, 29 (2001), pp. 230–41.

⁵⁴ John S. Odell, 'The Seattle Impasse and its Implications for the World Trade Organization', paper presented to the International Studies Association annual meeting in Chicago, 2001.

⁵⁵ Gordon and Meunier, *The French Challenge*, p. 83.

⁵⁶ Marie-Christine Tabet, 'Acculé par la Justice, Laché par le Gouvernement, Boudé par les Paysans; Le Déclin d'un Phénomène Médiatique', *Le Figaro* (12/21/2001). Retrieved from the World Wide Web 1/25/2002 at <http://www.web.lexis-nexis.com>.

⁵⁷ Francois Ewald and Dominique Lecourt, 'Les OGM et les Nouveaux Vandales', *Le Monde* (9/4/2001). Retrieved from the World Wide Web 1/25/2002 at <http://www.web.lexis-nexis.com>.

popularity is waning may just be wishful thinking on the part of his opponents. Two years after Bové's famous 'dismantling' of a McDonald's restaurant, 50,000 people gathered to commemorate the event and support Bové and his cause, and his presence at the World Social Forum in Brazil received more coverage than the French officials who attended.

The ability to transcend narrow interests and make connections between economics, health, the environment, work and culture, while targeting the WTO and the global economy and decisively not the French state, may be the most significant achievement of the Bové phenomenon. In concrete terms, this has had a powerful impact in terms of moving beyond staid anti-Americanisation dogma and traditional protectionism. The best example of this is the evolution of French and EU policy from the 'cultural exception' approach to that of cultural diversity. In a chapter in their book, Bové and Dufour take great pains to dismiss charges of anti-Americanism by underscoring the unison between their movement and the small farmers in the US and elsewhere. They also talk extensively about their early determination to avoid the trap that the culture industries fell into after the Uruguay Round. The event which crystallised the interconnections between agriculture, culture and society was the CP demonstration at the American film festival in Deauville in September 1999, one month after the Millau episode. Dufour insists that his intention was to convince American film makers and other festival organisers and the public at large that they were not interested in an 'agricultural exception' and they were not opposed to American culture, but rather the fact that economic liberalism and the tyranny of the 'market' was actually restricting consumer choice and putting cultural identity at risk.⁵⁸ This I would argue was a powerful turning point in the French globalisation countermovement and one which has come to symbolise and clarify the most critical challenge of the globalising political economy: how to maintain a market economy without the totalising effects of a market society. I will return to this question in the concluding pages, but first I would simply sum up this discussion of Bové and the countermovement in France by pointing out that this is precisely the message that France is sending as she proposes a '*mondialisation maîtrisée*' (managed or civilised globalisation).⁵⁹ There is more to this than rhetoric as the example of French mobilisation against and prevention of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment attests.⁶⁰ Other examples of effective counter-hegemonic influence include the insistence on a social agenda in the context of EU reform, criticism of American unilateralism and the call for implementation of the Tobin tax. For all the paradoxes of French politics and society – not the least of which is the fact that the former socialist government privatised more state enterprises than the past six governments combined, and France is the fourth largest economy in the world – France is nonetheless one of the strongest voices against the present form of globalisation. As former Prime Minister Lionel Jospin said in the context of the *Francophonie* campaign: 'French is no longer the language of power, but it could be the language of counterpower'.⁶¹ This may in fact be the essence of the French stance on

⁵⁸ G. Luneau, *Le Monde n'est pas une Marchandise*, pp. 31–3.

⁵⁹ Hubert Védrine, *Les Cartes de la France à l'heure de la Mondialisation* (France: Fayard, 2000).

⁶⁰ See discussions of this in P. Gordon and S. Meunier, *The French Challenge*, p. 75. For the influence of ATTAC and other groups such as film-makers and CP, see Susan George and Martin Wolf, *Pour et Contre: La Mondialisation Liberale* (France: Grasset, 2002).

⁶¹ Cited in P. Gordon and S. Meunier, *The French Challenge*, p. 58.

globalisation and as such she will be vilified by free market advocates. In Thomas Frank's work on the pathology of market ideology, he points out how France is often the target of free marketer ideologues and gives an example of this from an article appearing in *Forbes* magazine:

Throwing together the perfidy of critics, the glory of the Internet, and the horror of France into a gigantic preemptive *j'accuse*, the essay suggested that those who badmouthed the market were sending the world straight into depression and – yes – war!⁶²

The backlash against Jean Marie Messier's (Vivendi CEO) comments about the death of '*l'exception culturelle*' and the public debate that ensued, leading to a mild public apology and affirmation of his support for cultural diversity, is a reflection of the seriousness with which the French are shifting the terms and the tone of the globalisation and trade liberalisation debates. The diversity argument represents a more progressive approach and may just signal an important perceptual transformation that, of course, must precede structural change. New forms of coordination at the European level, whether in economic or cultural policy, may indicate one potential strategy that Polanyi invoked yet many of his commentators have ignored. Hettne's appropriation of Polanyi in this light and his notion of the 'new regionalism' is useful here in making the linkage between the state and political authority and the more spontaneous, societal movements. Hettne sees regionalism as a means 'to bring the globalization processes and the transnational transactions under some political-territorial control' and he argues that it is a more varied phenomenon than globalisation in that it implies a return of the political.⁶³ Bové's efforts in confronting the European Commission and calling for agricultural reform at the regional and not just the national level reinforces Hettne's insights and suggest a pragmatism in Bové's political strategies that have been largely dismissed by both protectionists and neoliberals.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude with a reflection on the intellectual dilemma arising from the tensions between the market economy and the 'reality of society' as I believe the globalisation countermovement in all its heterodoxy is mobilising precisely around (and because of) this tension. And as the historical trajectory of global capitalism shows, there are remarkable parallels between the century Polanyi examined and the critical juncture of the global political economy today. As articulated by Herman Schwartz:

As in the nineteenth century, the (re-)emergence of markets was planned by market actors and states that stood to benefit from the destruction or reconfiguration of the various forms of social protection created in the 'golden era' of the keynesian welfare state. This pervasive expansion of the market, and the subjugation of life chances to market logics, is what constitutes 'globalization'.⁶⁴

⁶² Thomas Frank, *One Market Under God: Extreme Capitalism, Market Populism, and the End of Economic Democracy* (New York: Doubleday, 2000) p. 21.

⁶³ Bjorn Hettne, András Inotai, and Osvaldo Sunkel, (eds.), *Globalism and the New Regionalism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), pp. 6–7.

⁶⁴ Herman Schwartz, *States versus Markets: The Emergence of a Global Economy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), p. 318.

Will the current double movement succeed in producing a structural transformation or will cycles of protection and crisis ensue? Is it possible to have a market economy without becoming a market society? This fundamental question and the policy challenges arising from it inextricably link the local, the regional and the global, and as the Bové phenomenon illustrates, this may mark a substantial difference from the past. As two Polanyi scholars articulate it:

The current celebration of the 'global village' glosses over the very serious limitations the globalization of the economy once again places on the independence of national governments to shape domestic policy. Again, the delicate international stability is contingent on the subordination of national social and economic objectives. What is different today, of course, is the heightened interdependence among nations in the production of goods and services and the hyper-mobility of capital. The renewed interest in regionalism which has emerged out of this free market environment is not paradoxical. It is the predictable response – the double movement – to the anarchy of the market.⁶⁵

While material differences obviously exist, the ideological situation seems strikingly similar. Two passages from *The Great Transformation* treat the nature of the relationship between market economy and market society. Describing the nineteenth century experiment with the self-regulating market, Polanyi writes:

Such an institutional pattern could not function unless society was somehow subordinated to its requirements. *A market economy can exist only in a market society* (emphasis added). We reached this conclusion on general grounds in our analysis of the market pattern. We can now specify the reasons for this assertion. A market economy must comprise all elements of industry, including labor, land, and money. (In a market economy the last also is an essential element of industrial life and its inclusion in the market mechanism has, as we will see, far-reaching institutional consequences.) But labor and land are no other than the human beings themselves of which every society consists and the natural surroundings in which it exists. To include them in the market mechanism means to subordinate the substance of society itself to the laws of the market.⁶⁶

We see here again his emphasis on commodification which of course was the key attribute of the market economy which he also defined as an economy directed by prices alone.⁶⁷ Yet ambiguity arises when we juxtapose the above passage with his recognition that markets and prices have a valuable function in society as long as not assumed to be self-regulating.

From the viewpoint of human reality that which is restored by the disestablishment of the commodity fiction lies in all directions of the social compass. In effect, the disintegration of a uniform market economy is already giving rise to a variety of new societies. Also, the end of market society means in no way the absence of markets. These continue, in various fashions, to ensure the freedom of the consumer, to indicate the shifting of demand, to influence producers' income, and to serve as an instrument of accountancy, while ceasing altogether to be an organ of economic self-regulation.⁶⁸

Taking the broader view of Polanyi's deeper socialist commitments into consideration helps clarify the tensions in these two passages. The more radical interpretation of Polanyi's work sees his vision of socialism as one in which markets are certainly present in society, but values and moral systems are in no way subordinate to the

⁶⁵ Marguerite Mendell and Daniel Salée (eds.), *The Legacy of Karl Polanyi* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), p. xv.

⁶⁶ K. Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, p. 71.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 252.

market. Markets are embedded in society rather than society being submerged into markets. Such an interpretation elucidates the problems in some Polanyian scholarship that produces a protectionist reading of the double movement (and which the empirical case of Bové refutes). Two recent articles by Hannes Lacher clearly affirm that the protectionist response is part of the problem, not the solution, to Polanyi's account of capitalist society as economically determined. Lacher argues: 'Necessary from the point of view of society as it is, protectionism is not simply the solution to the ravages of capitalism, but an actualisation of the contradictory relationship between market economy and market society'.⁶⁹ In a separate article Lacher insists that 'Protectionism, then, did not historically point the way out of the destructiveness of capitalism's grip over humanity and society, but, according to Polanyi, formed an integral part of the pathogenesis of the great crisis of market society'.⁷⁰

But has society not become increasingly commodified in the past quarter century as market logic shapes our lives more than community values or authentic individualism? Do the resilience of the welfare state, the defence of a 'social Europe' and international dialogue over environmental and labour standards signal the potential of decommodification and the possibility of market economics without market societies?

State and market actors are confronted with mobilisation and pressure both at home and in the global spaces where they meet (Seattle, Washington DC, Geneva, Davos, Quebec, Qatar, Cancun, and so on) to work out this tension through new practices and regulations that value humanity over profits. In the words of Polanyi:

The true criticism of market society is not that it was based on economics – in a sense, every and any society must be based on it – but that its economy was based on self-interest.⁷¹ . . . At the same time it will become possible to tolerate willingly that other nations shape their domestic institutions according to their inclinations, thus transcending the pernicious nineteenth century dogma of the necessary uniformity of domestic regimes within the orbit of world economy.⁷²

Ultimately, the challenge is to move beyond mere critiques of capitalism by instead valorising the different forms it may take in which politics and social values predominate and by imagining concrete methods by which democratic practices shape economic actions. As Pascal Bruckner has put it: *Ce n'est pas du capitalisme qu'il faut sortir, mais de l'économisme*.⁷³ Both the legacy of Karl Polanyi and the contemporary countermovement and one of its strongest protagonists, José Bové, are valuable guides in this struggle.

⁶⁹ Hannes Lacher, 'The Politics of the Market: Re-reading Karl Polanyi', *Global Society*, 13:3 (1999), p. 320.

⁷⁰ Hannes Lacher, 'Embedded Liberalism, Disembedded Markets: Reconceptualising the Pax Americana', *New Political Economy*, 4:3 (1999), pp. 343–60.

⁷¹ K. Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, p. 249.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 253.

⁷³ Pascal Bruckner, *Misère de la prospérité* (Paris: Grasset, 2002).