

Policymaking and Learning Actors, or Is A 'Double Movement' In Cognition Possible?

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Abstract

One of the key issues in K. Polanyi's (1944, 1957) work is that capitalist markets may be inconsistent with societal values. This (external) inconsistency eventually leads to a reaction against the rationale of the market, what Polanyi refers to with the notion of the double movement. The double movement, in turn, may disrupt the (internal) consistency of the market, thereby leading to dramatic consequences for society, as was the case with fascism and nazism. A crucial question therefore is how to achieve a protective response without undermining society. The paper contends that the two types of (in)consistency basically depend on the shared knowledge available in a given society. It therefore discusses how that knowledge arises and how actors may favor or prevent change by acting on learning processes. The aim is to stress that a policy for change not only requires a scientific perspective that is not restricted within disciplinary boundaries, it also requires a dialogue between social scientists, policy-makers and all those sections of society who can be affected by a change in the status quo.

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