

Part I

Theoretical Backgrounds, Methodological Considerations

Uneven Development, Socio-Spatial Polarization and Political Responses

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1. Introduction

Although the causal mechanisms and processes are specific to different forms of societal organization, uneven development is a characteristic common to more advanced forms of societal development. Uneven development is therefore integral to the crisis-prone development of capitalist economies. From the outset, such economies were and continue to be characterized by socio-spatial uneven development and consequent polarization at various scales. The combined and uneven character of capitalist development results in both the social production of space and growing qualitative as well as quantitative differentiation between places within those socio-spatial structures. Growing economic polarization affects social conditions, while, in turn, the evolution of the economic development process is influenced by these socially produced spatial differences. As a result, national states (and now the EU) see it as necessary to seek to limit socio-spatial polarization and keep inequality within 'acceptable' limits.

There is a considerable body of theory in political economy and economic geography that seeks to explain why capitalist economies are characterized by uneven development and socio-spatial polarization and to consider the implications of this for policy and politics. Maps of uneven development have been sharply redefined over the last three decades because of the tendential move towards neoliberal globalization, the post-1989 political-economic changes in and beyond the EU, and the effects of the financial crisis that erupted in 2008 with globally uneven effects. For example, prior to 1989 the territories of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) were located within the spatial division of labour imposed on the COMECON (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) bloc. Post-1989, these countries and their constituent places were incorporated, at varying speeds, into spatial divisions of labour of capitalism, both the emerging global divisions of labour and those of the EU, as national

states in CEE sought formal trade relations with the EU and/or applied to become members of it. In both cases, spatial divisions of labour were being reshaped under the influence of an increasingly powerful neoliberalization tendency that gave greater influence to global market forces in reshaping geographies of economies.

As a result of these developments, there have been significant changes in the place of the EU in the global economy and in patterns of uneven development within it. While there have been hot-spots of growth, typically linked to financial services and banking, much of the EU has been blighted by deindustrialization and economic decline. This has resulted in the increasing marginalization of both national economies (such as those of Greece and Portugal) and cities and regions within the national territories of the more successful economies (not least Germany). While post-1989 geopolitical changes and the subsequent enlargement of the EU into CEE promised new development and regeneration opportunities for some cities and regions there, these promises have often failed to materialize. However, the global economic recession triggered by the collapse of parts of the finance and banking sectors in 2008 ushered in a new era of austerity that affected much of the EU, including some previously economically successful places, as EU institutions and national states seemed powerless to combat economic decline and burgeoning socio-spatial polarization and inequality. Indeed, political responses often exacerbated these problems. Existing forms of representational democracy appeared powerless in the face of deepening depression. One consequence of this was a resurgence of far-right and neo-Fascist political parties in some EU countries (such as France, Greece and the UK). Another was the re-emergence of new forms of politics and protest on the streets of major cities such as Athens, London and Madrid.

The rest of the chapter is organized as follows. First, I review different approaches to understanding spatially uneven development, and argue that Marxian political economy is the most promising of these. Then I consider recent changes in the EU and new forms of political response to deepening socio-spatial polarization. Finally, I offer a few concluding comments on the likely future.

2. Theorizing capitalist uneven development and socio-spatial polarization

Leaving aside those neoclassical approaches that deny the possibilities of uneven development by assumption, there is a wide range of non-Marxian approaches that, in various ways, seek to account for uneven spatial development and set out the reasons why growth or decline becomes a cumulative and self-reinforcing process (see, for example, Myrdal 1957, Hirschmann 1958, Krugman 1991). Once trajectories of change have been initially established (for reasons that may or may not be explained), these approaches see places becoming locked into their respective trajectories of growth or decline. They share this key feature in common. Once the initial trajectory emerges, then the future of a place as successful or not seems to be already determined. This is essentially – though implicitly – an evolutionary perspective on spatial development, in which the past strongly conditions, or even rigidly determines, the future. There are certainly many places in which the trajectory of change can be described and interpreted in these terms. However, the historical geography of capitalist development is also replete with examples that do not fit into this simple dichotomy and follow much more complicated trajectories of change.

Many places in (and beyond) the EU have followed a different trajectory, switching from growth to decline, while others have been repositioned from stagnation outside the scope of capitalist social relations to become centres of growth. Other places followed a still more complicated path. Once centres of capital accumulation and cumulative economic growth, they then reached a tipping point and became places of decline, characterized by capital flight, devalorization, disinvestment, job loss and rising unemployment. Subsequently, to varying degrees, some of them have experienced a degree of economic renewal, based upon new inflows of capital. Not all places abandoned by capital experience such a revival, however; some remain economically depressed, marginalized and decoupled from the main circuits of capital accumulation. Such dramatic reversals from trajectories of growth to decline to renewed growth of a qualitatively different type and scale, or from growth and prosperity to seemingly permanent marginalization, require a different and more sophisticated sort of conceptual and explanatory approach.

This more powerful explanation is provided by Marxian political economy, emphasizing the inner dynamics of the capitalist mode of production – that is, the particular combination of social relations and technologies (material and immaterial) that define capitalist economies as capitalist – and emphasizing competition among and within the structurally defined classes of capital and labour as the driving force of the economy. The

struggle between capital and labour in the labour market, in the workplace and at the point of production is critical in shaping historical geographies of growth and decline. While not the only arena of social conflict within capitalism – although many of the others, such as ethnicity, race and gender, often relate to the labour market and the workplace – relations between capital and labour are fundamental to trajectories of economic growth and decline. Similarly, competition between individual capitals is critical in shaping the path of accumulation and the fortunes of particular places. Individual companies seek to compete in varied ways – via innovative products and production processes, seeking both to create new markets for new products and increase market share by reducing the costs of production of existing products, for example.

Of particular relevance in the context of spatially uneven development is that companies also compete by seeking out locations that are particularly profitable and thus favourable for capitalist production. These can include locations in which existing products can be produced more profitably with existing production technologies because of lower costs of purchasing labour-power, or because they offer opportunities to increase labour productivity and the rate of exploitation of labour, or because they have less stringent regulatory regimes governing workplaces or the environment. They can also include locations in which new innovative processes can be introduced because they lack any history of industrial production, and so potential workers lack knowledge of productivity and workplace norms and of how to organize collectively. Or they may be locations in which new products can be produced for which strong levels of effective demand can be created. In short, there can be diverse reasons as companies pursue strategies of ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ competition, respectively, and thereby help shape place-specific trajectories of growth and decline (see Hudson 2001).

Expressed slightly differently, as an integral part of their competitive strategies, companies seek both to produce spatial differentiation in conditions of production and to take advantage of existing patterns of differentiation in their search for profits. As a corollary, processes of socio-spatial differentiation give rise to rents for landowners and those who control natural materials needed in economic processes, thereby influencing the sectoral distribution of surplus value. In the past, companies would typically explore such options within the boundaries of ‘their’ national territories, although from the outset capital has had global horizons. More recently, however, especially in recent decades, companies regularly

and routinely scour the globe for new locations that will enable them to produce more profitably and so gain a competitive edge over their rivals.

This has some very important practical consequences. One of these, as Hadjimichalis (1987) emphasized, is that there is a routine transfer of value between places via exchange relations within and among companies. A second is that companies routinely devalorize capital and disinvest from some places while investing in others. These latter could be other successful places, places previously not penetrated by capitalist relations of production, or places that have been abandoned by other companies (or national states) as unprofitable locations. Choice of location will depend upon product and process, seeking to match the characteristics of place with the requirements of particular activities. But processes of both investment and disinvestment and devalorization are unavoidably place specific: these processes must occur in specific places.

As a consequence of this place-specificity, places may sequentially experience successive waves of investment and disinvestment, expressed as sequences of industrialization, deindustrialization and reindustrialization, of economic growth, decline and renewed growth, as part of processes of combined and uneven development that are structurally inscribed within capitalist development. Alternatively, places may be permanently abandoned by capital if it sees no prospect of sufficient profit in them. Again – as also emphasized by Myrdal, Hirschman and Krugman – spatially uneven development is seen not just as a product of the uneven distribution of natural resources and the influences of nature on economic geographies, but as arising out of the constitutive social relations of capital. This point is absolutely crucial, not least as it makes clear that the critical question is the form that uneven development and socio-spatial differentiation take – the question is how, where and when, not whether, this comes about.

While Marx's own work contains suggestive comments and hints about spatially uneven development at various scales and its significance for capitalist development, he did not fully or systematically develop them. Subsequently, others such as Gramsci, Lenin and Luxemburg, working in various strands of the Marxian tradition, further developed Marx's insights and the analysis of uneven development at various spatial scales. It was not, however, until the 1960s and the work of Ernest Mandel that intranational uneven development began to be more systemically integrated into Marxian political economy, further elaborating that approach (Mandel 1968). Mandel, influenced by the historical

geography of Belgium, specifically recognized the centrality of intranational spatially uneven development to the accumulation process. He argued that 'unevenness of development as between different parts of a single country' is an essential precondition for capital accumulation, and that its significance had been greatly underestimated in previous Marxian analyses. Furthermore, other social scientists – including Nicos Poulantzas (1978) – were soon paying increasing attention to issues of spatially uneven development as a part of this reinvigoration of Marxian approaches.

However, the development of Marxian political economy to encompass spatial unevenness as a structurally necessary feature of capitalist development owes most to David Harvey. In his magisterial account of *The Limits to Capital* (1982), Harvey located spatially uneven development within the context of his 'third cut' at crisis theory and the way in which capital both produces and uses spatial differentiation as part of its repertoire of tactics to offset falling profitability.¹ In so doing, Harvey, importantly, locates spatial uneven development as a systemic feature of capitalist economies. Capitalist development was thus explicitly conceptualized as necessarily and unavoidably uneven, simultaneously producing places of growth alongside those of decline as an integral aspect of the crisis-prone process of capital accumulation. Moreover, for Harvey, the significance of spatially uneven development to capitalism did not stop there. He saw urbanization and the development of major urban complexes as a central and necessary feature of capitalist development, as urbanization (with all its manifold effects on consumption and lifestyle) provided an outlet for the realization of surplus value produced within the industrial circuit of capital.

Harvey's thinking on spatial uneven development and the way in which the dynamic of development in places altered over time was further elaborated by Neil Smith. His concept of 'a see-saw theory of uneven development' sought to grasp the dialectical relations between development and underdevelopment in places (Smith 1984). For Smith, as for Harvey, the contradictory character of capitalist development results – inevitably and unavoidably – in capital eroding the place-specific conditions of profitable production that first attracted it to a place. This erosion reaches a tipping point, at which capital decides to shift location. In response to rising diseconomies of place and scale, capital abandons these places in search of more profitable locations, externalizing the social costs, which are left to be borne by the people and places it abandons. The net effect is that, in response to differences in profitability and those things that determine it – such as labour market conditions or pollution regulation –

capital flows into and out of places, in the process generating growth or decline as well as helping (un)make places as socio-material ensembles. Thus, his 'see-saw theory' represents capital's ongoing attempt to secure what Harvey had earlier conceptualized as a 'spatial fix' via systematic mobility and a sort of dynamic equilibrium rather than pursuit of fixity and a static equilibrium in the economic landscape. Via this theorization, Smith helps uncover the rationale for the constant ebb and flow of capital into and out of places that lies at the heart of processes of spatially uneven development. As Smith (1984: 149) put it, ' [T]his ... see-saw movement of capital ... lies behind the larger uneven development process.'

However, Smith's approach tends to assume that every place will experience this sequence of waves of growth and decline, and while it offers powerful insights into the experiences of many places, and throws light on the processes that underlie such shifts, the trajectories of change of many others do not fit this pattern. As noted above, there is no inevitability of capital flowing back into places it previously abandoned, and they can remain marginalized and detached from the accumulation process (except, for example, as sources of migrant labour to provide labour-power in those places that form the centres of accumulation). More generally, and equally problematically, his approach still leaves the question of which places experience which sorts of trajectories of growth and decline, at which points in time, and why this is so, rather open. Progress on this front was primarily a result of Doreen Massey's seminal work, brought together in *Spatial Division of Labour* (Massey 1984). Massey sought to develop a different and more pro-active conception of places. She challenged a view that sees the fate of places as simply the end product of the decisions of capital, as layers of investment and disinvestment are sedimented sequentially into or stripped out of a place at capital's behest, with places as little more than passive objects resulting from the logic of capital. In contrast, Massey emphasized the need to take account of both the natural and socially produced attributes of place in shaping flows of capital. She argued that the agency and activities of people in their place, seeking to make and defend its economic viability, are critical for understanding which places experienced which sorts of growth, decline and revival.

In short, in her view, the economic success or failure of places was a result of socio-spatial processes, the interplay between spatially specific attributes and processes and wider systemic forces shaping flows of capital. In stressing that people can and do help shape the places in which they live and work, she was making both an acute theoretical observation and

also an important political point. In the context of the decline of many centres of industrial production in the 1980s and campaigns to defend places within (and beyond) the EU in the face of a neoliberal onslaught (see, for example, Hudson and Sadler 1983, Beynon 1985, as well as the next section), this was an important intervention – one that retains its salience in the context of post-2008 depression in many parts of the world, including the EU.

Subsequently Massey was to develop more sophisticated conceptions of ‘places’ and of the way in which they became intertwined via processes of combined and uneven development (Allen et al. 1998) but these essentially elaborated upon her earlier theoretical insights. As a result of this elaboration, however, there are potential points of convergence between the sort of explanatory political-economy approach that Massey developed and more recent cultural and institutional perspectives as to why some places ‘succeed’ while others ‘fail’, provided – and this is a crucial caveat – that these can be connected with more systemic explanations of uneven development (Hudson 2001).

3. The role of the state in managing spatially uneven development within national territories: Managing tensions and avoiding crises?

There is a considerable body of theory acknowledging that the conditions necessary for capitalist economies to exist must be socially and politically constructed, and that national states continue to have a key role in this process. This includes addressing the potential problems that arise as a result of spatially uneven development, both at national state level and within the boundaries of their national territories – and it is the latter that is the focus of attention here. Certainly, there is evidence of considerable variation in the ways that states seek to achieve this, for example as registered in the literatures on regulation and varieties of capitalism. While there are those who argue that national states no longer have the significance that they once had, David Harvey (2013: 153) is surely correct when he argues that

[T]he question of the state, and in particular what kind of state (or non-capitalist equivalent), cannot be avoided even in the midst of immense contemporary scepticism [...] of the viability or desirability of such a form of institutionalization.

Furthermore, this form of institutionalization and its involvement in responding to problems of socio-spatial inequality and polarization within national territories has a clear history.

Beginning in the UK in the late 1920s, spatially uneven development, initially in the form of 'the regional problem', emerged onto the political agenda. Around the same time, it emerged onto the political agenda in the US – for example with the creation of the Tennessee Valley Authority. In these ways and countries, spatially uneven development came to be seen as a potential political problem to which, for a variety of reasons, the capitalist state 'had' to respond.² From Marx onwards, however, critical theorists have emphasized that capitalist development is inherently crisis prone and that uneven development is integral to it. As such, it cannot be abolished within capitalist economies. The best that capitalist states can therefore hope to do is keep crisis and its expression in socio-spatial inequality within economically manageable limits and socio-spatial polarization within politically and socially acceptable limits (Habermas 1976).

Given that uneven development is integral to capitalism, it is no surprise that uneven development and socio-spatial polarization have begun to be seen as posing persistent problems for national states: for example in relation to economic performance, social cohesion and the political integrity of the national state territory. Certainly, different national states have tackled this agenda in differing ways, and with variable success. The failures of national states to deal successfully with problems of intranational uneven economic development led some to argue that this would more or less automatically lead to regionalist and nationalist movements seeking greater autonomy from national states, or even secession to a new national state (see, for example, Carney 1980). While there is evidence that documents the emergence of regionalist and nationalist movements, it is, as noted below, also clear that the circumstances in which uneven development becomes the basis for such movements is contingent upon cultural and political factors rather than a simple mechanistic response to uneven economic development (see, for example, Nairn 1977, Kofman 1985). Nevertheless, although they chronically fail to meet their stated objectives of narrowing socio-spatial inequalities, the activities of national states and the social forces that shape them can still play a key role in shaping the developmental trajectory of places, and so of the accumulation process overall.

State actions and policies are only one source of influence on the character and developmental trajectories of places, however. There are other processes at work, endogenous

to these places and the people who live in them. Places may develop what Harvey, influenced by the work of Raymond Williams (1989), refers to as a 'structured coherence', generating a sense of place-specific identity and interest shared by diverse social groups and forces, expressed via a particular 'structure of feeling'. Such a structure of feeling and attachment to a place can, when linked to spatially uneven economic development, become the trigger for a variety of place-specific campaigns, as different alliances of social groups – what Gramsci might have referred to as hegemonic blocs – come together to defend or promote a shared territorial interest (for example as Basques, Catalans or Corsicans). Thus, class and territory can become conjuncturally conjoined in political campaigns and movements (as Mandel (1963) had recognized in the 1960s through his seminal analyses of capitalist development of Belgium).

These campaigns can take various forms. Their precise expression is always a contingent issue, depending on the specifics of time, place and politics. They might involve action to protect existing economic activities or to attract new ones to marginalized places. They might involve pressures to reduce income transfers from economically successful to less successful places, or, conversely, pressures to increase central state resource allocations to economically less successful places. They could involve campaigns that directly challenge the authority of the national state, seeking to establish more devolved forms of territorial governance giving more powers and resources to places at sub-national scale – or, more precisely, to those empowered to speak and act on behalf of these places. More radically, demands may extend beyond greater devolution of powers to autonomy and independence, challenging the territorial coherence of a national state (as in Corsica or the Basque country of Spain). In summary, then, places, as Alain Lipietz (1993) put it, can become active subjects that act 'for themselves' and exert influence over their economic well-being, although such moves may be contested within the place itself as other dimensions of social differentiation and division override a shared territorial interest (as in north-east England in the early 2000s, for example Hudson 2006).

In one form or another, then, the political effects of intranational spatially uneven development may be to generate place-specific pressures to alter patterns of resource allocation via the state and keep aggregate state expenditures within acceptable limits. This may involve seeking to restructure the state itself in an attempt to smooth the path of economic growth at sub-national scales, and thereby to secure the legitimacy of state action.

Or it may involve seeking to secure the territorial integrity of the national state and avoid potential forms of crisis contingent upon secessionist pressures. This is, to say the least, a tricky balancing act – one made more difficult for national states within the EU by the emergence of EU institutions as political actors, pursuing their own agendas – as state policies must seek to defuse the unavoidable tensions and latent conflicts that arise as a result of a place being simultaneously socially produced, with multiple dimensional meanings and attachments for a variety of people, and one in which capitals seek to make profits. For much of the time, this conflict remains latent, as the tensions remain within tolerable limits. But the tendency for erupting into place-specific crisis never disappears; it is always immanent in the social relations of capital. This has an important consequence: that for places in a capitalist economy their relationship to the ebb and flow of the accumulation of capital is critical to their (re)production *as* places. Just as capital needs people as labour-power, so, too, in a capitalist economy do people need capital as a source of wage income. This raises some important questions as to how places might develop on a resilient and sustainable non-capitalist basis (though consideration of them is beyond the scope of this chapter; see Hudson 2009, Hudson 2010, Hadjimichalis and Hudson 2013).

4. Socio-spatial polarization, the expansion of the EU and political responses to it, before and after the current crisis

As argued above, the character of capitalist development as one of combined and uneven development results in the ongoing production and transformation of socio-spatial polarization. With successive enlargements of the EU, as well as deepening of the internal market, the contours of intra-EU polarization have altered. This was particularly so in the wake of the economic and financial crisis that erupted from 2008. This sharply revealed the extent to which earlier hopes of EU expansion serving as a means to reduce socio-spatial polarization, both within the EU overall and within individual member states, were ill-founded.

Initially, entry to the EU had seemingly offered developmental opportunities – of a sort – to successive waves of applicant countries, initially the southern European applicants in the 1980s and increasingly those from CEE in the 1990s and 2000s. In brief, these opportunities were seen to arise from three directions: first, access to the affluent markets of

the 'North' of the EU, although pre-accession trade arrangements had already, to a considerable degree, opened such markets; second, new sources of EU grants and loans (through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF), Cohesion Funds and so on); and third, through new flows of inward investment from the more advanced 'Northern' parts of the EU and from the USA, Japan and other non-EU countries attracted by the magnitude of the EU market.

It is worth noting, however, that the intra-EU flows had ambivalent effects in relation to socio-spatial inequality and polarization. While providing an answer to problems in some places, they were often the proximate cause of deepening political-economic problems elsewhere as major corporations disinvested from other areas in the EU. These typically were areas that had previously suffered the effects of severe deindustrialization and economic collapse and had seen inward investment in branch plants as (at least part of) the means of creating new economic bases there. In part, however, the changing map of uneven development and inequality was also linked to the 'hollowing out' of formerly successful industrial districts in southern Europe as companies there switched routine production to cheaper labour areas in CEE (Hudson 2003). Thus, seeking to address problems in some parts of the EU became the proximate cause of amplifying or creating such problems elsewhere, transforming rather than ameliorating socio-spatial polarization within it. Post-2008, however, many of these new factories in CEE – and, indeed, many other places in the EU – either shed labour, cut working hours and wages, or closed completely, not least because major corporations relocated production to China and parts of South-east Asia where production costs were lower still.

The common thread linking these successive waves of capitalist investment and disinvestment was (and is) capital's relentless pursuit of profit, relocating to areas with lower production costs (of labour-power, land and so on) and/or less restrictive and more permissive regulatory regimes. Increasingly, problems of intra-EU uneven spatial economic development were shaped by the EU's changing position in global divisions of labour, with increasing socio-spatial polarization between those places that could attract or retain high-level banking, finance and other professional service functions and those increasingly unable to compete in a global marketplace for more routine production and service functions. The changing map of socio-spatial polarization was a complex one, however, as those places that succeeded in attracting high-level service functions (Frankfurt, London, Paris and so on) were

typically characterized by sharp intra-urban socio-spatial polarization, polarized labour markets and bi-polar income distributions. As a result, there was an increasing juxtaposition of wealth and poverty, at varying spatial scales (between and within places), with large swathes of the EU blighted by mass unemployment (with the unemployment rate for young people reaching 50–60 per cent in Greece and Spain, for example) and the poverty that brought with it in an era of shrinking welfare budgets.

As the EU has expanded and uneven development within it deepened, spatially uneven development has increasingly become a political issue for it. The same problems of trying to manage uneven economic development that national states in the EU have grappled with for several decades have increasingly been faced by the EU as an embryonic supranational state and by the political institutions of the Union. As the EU has increasingly become a new space of accumulation because of political decisions to deepen and widen the Union, especially for those states that entered the Eurozone, so pressures have grown for it to be seen to be able to manage the challenges to socio-spatial cohesion that these processes of change set in motion. The raft of EU policies (ERDF, ESF, Cohesion Fund and so on) has had, at best, partial and temporary success, and sat uneasily with the growing trend towards neoliberalization in economic policies more generally. The pressures resulting from deepening polarization were further intensified as a result of macroeconomic and fiscal policies shaped by the priorities of neoliberalization at both national state and EU levels. They reached new heights as the financial crisis that erupted in 2008 spread both spatially and sectorally, with the effects felt especially severely in southern Europe, as some national states were forced to respond to the crisis by the troika of the EU, European Central Bank (ECB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) with deep austerity policies while some states, notably Germany, supported the imposition of austerity policies on others (Hadjimichalis and Hudson 2013).

In this depressed economic environment, the response of the troika and those national states that shared its neoliberal agenda was to prioritize the interests of capital in general and specific fractions of capital in particular. This class-specific response took a number of forms. Perhaps the most revealing of these was the de facto nationalization of banks and major insurance companies in the UK and US, the core states of neoliberal orthodoxy. Little more than a decade after jettisoning Clause 4 of its constitution (which committed it to public ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange), the 'New Labour'

government de facto nationalized two major banks based in the UK: RBS and Lloyds. More generally, national governments more or less everywhere cut public sector borrowing and public expenditure, especially welfare budgets, and many bailed out banks and financial institutions. This turn to austerity politics further deepened inequality and socio-spatial divides, with large areas blighted by mass unemployment and poverty (see, for example, Jones 2012). In these circumstances, in which it was clear which interests were prioritized by conventional representational politics, there was increasing evidence of mass protests on the streets of Europe in cities such as Athens, London and Madrid (Hadjimichalis 2013, Harvey 2013). These were met by the full force of state repression, leading to injuries and deaths among those protesting, but leaving questions unanswered as to how to resolve the crisis, restore equitable and sustainable growth, and bring the burgeoning maps of socio-spatial polarization back into more acceptable bounds. Those questions remain unanswered. Whether new forms of politics that can address them can emerge and become dominant likewise remains unanswered, but the prognoses are not good.

5. Through a glass darkly: A glimpse of the future?

As in the 1980s, when there were strikes and protests on the streets of many places in the EU against the destruction of place-based communities as a result of capital flight and national state policies, so once again the recent past has seen the reappearance of protest on the streets of major cities in the EU as the costs of austerity and tackling the economic crisis have been imposed on those least able to cope with them. While there have been numerous place-based protests and campaigns, these have not coalesced into more broadly based political movements that systemically challenge socio-spatial polarization per se and the dominant social relationships and politics that give rise to it. As Williams (1989) emphasized, there are genuine difficulties in translating ‘militant particularisms’ and protests that oppose the manifestations of uneven development in particular places into more broadly based political movements that would contest uneven development and socio-spatial polarization as a systemic feature of social structure. Indeed, as exemplified by the rise of the neo-Fascist Golden Dawn party in Greece, the political response has often been a regressive right-wing xenophobic nationalism rather than any sort of progressive political movement.

It may be even more difficult to build such progressive campaigns now and in years to come. The campaigns that Williams referred to, and those that I have mentioned in the 1970s

and 1980s, can be thought of as having occurred within the parameters of a struggle defined by the two poles of 's (1944) 'double movement', a struggle between marketization and social protection in shaping developmental trajectories. The current context is a more complicated one, however, further heightening the difficulties of building systemic political alternatives to combat inequality and polarization. Building on Polyani's analysis of the 'double movement', Nancy Fraser (2013a, 2013b) suggests that the emergence of a wide range of social movements and struggles that do not fit easily into the twin axes of the double movement necessitates a reconceptualization of the terrain of struggle in terms of a 'triple movement'. As well as the Polanyian conception of marketization versus social protection, we need to recognize a third focal point of social struggle around emancipation. Rather than oscillating along a line between marketization and social protection, political struggle now must be seen in terms of contingent movements within a triangle which has marketization, social protection and emancipation at its corners. This opens up possibilities of a range of connections between these different forces for change which is indeterminate in its outcomes. As she puts it (Fraser 2013a: 129), '[s]een this way, each term has both a *telos* of its own and a potential for ambivalence which unfolds through its interaction with the other two terms. *Contra* Polyani, therefore, the conflict between marketisation and social protection cannot be understood in isolation from emancipation.' In like fashion, the resolution of tensions between emancipation and social protection, and between emancipation and marketization, cannot be understood without the influence of the respective third term. When we recognize that these conflicts will always be specific in time and place, and recalling Williams' (1989) point about the difficulties of generalizing place-specific militant particularisms, the difficulties of building a political alternative that would challenge the systemic processes that generate socio-spatial polarization and inequality within the EU look severe in the extreme, and the prognosis for a progressive politics to tackle them appears gloomy.

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<en-group type="endnotes">

<en><label>1</label>

The ‘first cut’ theory of crisis deals with the underlying source of capitalism’s internal contradictions. The ‘second cut’ theory examines temporal dynamics as they are shaped and mediated through financial and monetary arrangements. The ‘third cut’ theory seeks to integrate spatially uneven development into the theory of crisis. As Harvey (1982: 425) notes, ‘[t]he task is not easy’.

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<en><label>2</label>

Although, as Costis Hadjimichalis reminded me, around the same time in the USSR, state planning, with the creation of successive Five Year Plans, was emerging as a central and defining element in the political-economic alternative of Soviet-style communism, which had some influence on planning thought and practice in the advanced capitalist world.

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