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**New Public Management - Philosophical and anthropological foundations**

Marc Humbert, Emeritus professor, LIRIS, University of Rennes, Vice-chairman Association des convivialistes.

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen! I am really pleased to participate in this event. I am honoured that under the guidance of your governing board Mireille Boucher and Margaret Longuevre, I have been invited to discuss a theme of lecture with Thérèse Ferragut the Head of your programme committee. I have tried to prepare a piece that could fit their expectations and I apologize by advance for my broken, but near British English –The Channel is not so wide- , especially to the people coming from the USA.

To know a little more about you, I browsed your website, and I saw that you are used to work as a community, every other year, in different places. I read that a few years ago you met in **Ankara** where you discussed at length around the concept of **“encounter”**. This is in line with the message of my lecture.

But before I start, I must say hello and a special thanks to Margaret Longuevre, and to Hervé Coulouarn who supported the organisation. I am surely indebted to them for having pointed to to me as a possible speaker. Hervé and Didier Longuevre were my colleagues at the Faculty of Economy in Rennes, and they know a few things about me. For instance, that I co-founded in 2002 a world NGO, called PEKEA. The acronym means

**A Political and Ethical Knowledge in Economic Activities.**

This is an international network mainly composed of academics from Human and Social Sciences – half of them are Heterodox economists, as me- and they are working in around 60 different countries – half of the members are French.

We advocate that **to deal with economic activities – in fact with any human activities- there is a single relevant way. It is to adopt a political and ethical point of view, that is, a human and moral point of view and not a technical perspective which is a machine’s point of view.**

After a dozen of conferences and meeting we were convinced that we should contribute to the building of **a more human world: we named it a “convivial world” a world made of a variety of “convivial societies”.**

Nowadays, in France, everywhere, in every place, in every group, people are organising from time to time for their fellows, I would say their **co-lifers** – either at work, in a district, a housing estate, a sports club- **a convivial moment, an “encounter” or a moment of conviviality**. In fact, a parenthesis in an almost dreadful, no-human life, a niche to live a few minutes happy altogether.

Why to live like that, only a few minutes from time to time? Why not living all our life like that? In a convivial manner? We became convinced that to build such a convivial world was an imperative task.

How to do that? **If you want total liberty for all, you need to adopt liberalism.**

 **If we want conviviality for all, we need to define and to adopt *convivialism*.**

***Convivialism*** is based on 4 basic and **interdependent principles** (interdependence compels self-limitation) to be respected and upon which any small or larger group of people may build **different varieties of convivial societies**. We must

1) respect our **common natural humanity**: no one is superior to another one, and humans are not superior to the other species and to Nature. *Ecological mind and no discrimination*.

2)respect our **common sociality**: our life is a life in society where we were born and educated and our relations between us are our prime value aiming at **solidarity** and cooperation as well

3) respect the dignity of anyone, to help anyone to become autonomous, to blossom. **Freedom** allows any new-born to become an individual different from other ones, this is **individuation**.

4) respect differences in opinion, and welcome competition, conflicts; we may to oppose and to give to one another without sacrificing ourselves to one another. *[[1]](#footnote-1)*. This is **democracy and equality**.

To get more, go to: http://www.lesconvivialistes.org/

To be sure this is the background with which I will now present a few ideas on the theme:

*"New Public Management - Philosophical and anthropological foundations"*

I will present four points: the first will discuss Political Philosophy which is the basis to define the areas for Government concerns and which imposed in the modern 19th century, to limit strictly their scope. This worked so badly that - I will turn to that as my second point- it paved the way to the rise of Bureaucracy, or the Old Public Management. As you know the near collapse of it, led the world to make a headlong rush to the so-called New Public Management. This will be my third point. And with this rush, we have arrived nowhere, and were making for the worst difficulties. I am convinced that it is a kind of nonsense, even it is worse, it is like an anthropological suicide. I will present this way of thinking in my last point.

**1) Philosophical Foundations of something that may be termed “Public”**

Let us have a brief look into the past.

From the beginning mankind has been living within self-organised groups. As the Greek Philosopher **Aristotle** put it, **man is a political animal**. Not from time to time. Human beings are social creatures. **From the beginning, there were what we may call, to-day, small-scale societies**. And relations between people within the society were essential. And these people had something in common “**Res Publica**” a Public Thing.

Aristotle had been the disciple of **Plato** (*Republic*) who launched the quest for an ideal State, the quest for the best political order. Such a question was not asked by **Confucius** in China. To him the sole concern was to help the Emperor to be the best monarch for the country and to teach any willing individual to become a superior man of virtue who respects the natural order. The idea to choose a political regime was out of the picture in China.

After the Roman Empire, during the middle ages, there was almost no discussion in Europe about the ideal State. A host of Monarchs were ruling their subjects with the collaboration of religious authorities, preserving an order clearly indisputable as they had a divine mission from God supported by His invisible powers.

However, during the late 17th and 18th centuries in Europe, started a period termed **Enlightenment**. Thinkers rejected the traditional order, and even religion, to focus on **science and reason as bases to guide any actions.** They tried to find a rationale to everything. Why a few Governors and a mass of governed people? Why a State? This was the emergence of **Modern Political Philosophy**.

**Thomas Hobbes (1651, *Leviathan*)**, to a certain extent, established that government is the basis for the political good, for the Public Good. He referred to Aristotle and to his concept of **civil society** (Greek *koinonia politikê* – Latin *societas civilis*) that was equivalent at that time to **political community**. He made the hypothesis that before the birth of this civil society – equipped with a Government- the human condition was that of a “**state of nature**” characterised by a “war of all against all", following Plautus’assertion "Homo homini lupus" (man is a wolf to man) (Plautus 254 – 184 BC, a Roman playwright). To escape this anarchy, people voluntary agreed between them, to accept a full submission, a full obedience to the governors. They accepted to become the governed, within a civil society. Doing so **they lost their freedom, but they gained security**.

**John Locke (1689, *Second Treatise of Government*)** followed partly the narrative brought in by Hobbes. He considered that the delegation to a Government of the monopoly of violence was conditional. First, Government must be impartial in administering and enforcing the law. Second, Government must guarantee natural, inalienable, individual rights: self-defence, self-preservation, **estate (property)** that are the expression of individual liberty. Therefore, any legitimate government must be able to secure these rights based **on liberty of the individuals**. If not, the majority of the people is allowed to change the Government.

A step ahead was made by **Jean-Jacques Rousseau** **(1762, *Du* *Contrat Social ou Principes du Droit Politique*)** who introduced the wording “**The Social Contract** **and added equality to liberty**.

He poses and solves a paradox: (Book 1, 6), “each individual gives himself entirely” [that is he accepts his alienation…but] as it is the same for the others [– they all give themselves entirely-] no-one has any interest in making things tougher for everyone but himself”. This means that “The social pact, far from destroying natural equality, substitutes, on the contrary, a moral and lawful equality for whatever physical inequality that nature may have imposed on mankind; so that however unequal in strength and intelligence, men become equal by covenant and by right”. Therefore, each associate, as a citizen, by his vote within a democracy, will equally contribute to express what is “the “**general will**” or **general interest** that should prevail over their own individual one”.

These Philosophers brought in the basis of a liberal, individualistic, **Political Philosophy**.

Government – or the State- should guarantee to the citizens, liberty and equality for all, and the accomplishment of the general will, of the general interest, that is, in the first place, **stability and security.**

In the meantime, a new world order has emerged. Since the landing of Columbus in America (1492) the competition between States changed its focal point. Until then they competed to extend their colonial empires, their political and military power. After that, they focussed much more than in the past on a race for accumulation and wealth. Capitalism, international trade and manufactures gave a wide field open to private property and to State promotion. In the18th century, the main idea of the time relative to that, was still Mercantilism. The Government searched more wealth in getting more gold and silver, by all means. For example, in boosting exports and resisting to imports. And everything related to that had to be controlled by the Government.

A Moral and Political Philosopher, **Adam Smith (1776, *An inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations)*,** brought a revolution in thinking the role of Government in economic affairs. He pointed out that a free market – a *laisser faire laisser passer* – has far more efficacy to bring **prosperity** to the Nation, to the people, to take care of the Public interest, than the visible intervention of a Government.

“It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages.” Book 1, Chap II p. 17. “every individual […], generally, indeed, neither intends to promote **the public interest**, nor knows how much he is promoting […]he intends only his own gain, and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by **an invisible hand** to promote an end which was no part of his intention. […] By pursuing his own interest, he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it. I have never known much good done by those who affected to trade for **the public good**.”Book IV, Chap II p. 421.

Free individuals acting, competing in self-regulating markets, that is the best recipe for the wealth of Nations, for the public interest, for the public good. This is **the ideology of economic liberalism**. Adam Smith was one of the most important founding fathers of this Philosophy, of **this belief in the market which is at the core of the NPM**. The public interest, the public good is supposed to be reached thanks to the efficacy of the invisible hand of the market.

Nota Bene:

1) Everybody notices that from that time on, **the Public is supposed to expect not only security, but also prosperity, wealth.**

2) Prosperity is still expected from the Government even by Smith, but not from the sole action of the Government. **Smith did not want to suppress the Government, but to limit its scope**. According to him, the **necessary functions to be carried out by the Government** were the following. National defence, administration of justice (law and order), delivery of some public goods like infrastructure and education. They are essential to reap the benefits we can expect from a free market economy. During the 19th century Money and Health were usually included in the list of these basic or sovereign functions of any Government. And to do so, Government had to organise an administration and to levy taxes on economic activities.

By and large, the ideas of these Philosophers were adopted in Europe, with great panache in some places, overthrowing the old traditional order, as in France in the aftermath of the 1789’s revolution. Step by step, Nations organised themselves upon the principles of liberty and equality of individuals, setting up a **political regime termed democracy**. This regime guaranteed civil and political rights, for the civil society and guaranteed too **property rights to allow the smooth running of economic affairs**, or say, the dynamic of capitalism.

**The question of prosperity rapidly collided with the question of equality**. Capitalism brought prosperity to the Nation for the benefit of an elite, letting aside the ordinary people in poverty. To avoid revolts from the masses, the governors were pushed to give them more rights, and to organise **redistribution of wealth to improve the welfare of the governed.** Doing so they acknowledged the **failure of the Market, the incapacity of the invisible hand to deliver prosperity to all.**

[two slides:

**The “historical” political ideology at the core of the NPM**

Free individuals acting, competing in self-regulating markets, this is **the ideology of economic liberalism**

The public interest, the public good is to be reached thanks to the efficacy of the invisible hand of the market.

From that time on, the Public is supposed to expect not only security, but also prosperity, wealth**.**

**Smith did not want to suppress the Government, but to limit its scope** tonational defence, administration of justice (law and order), delivery of some public goods like infrastructure and education (later Money and health).

**The “democratic”19th century : Equality at bay**

Nations organised themselves upon the principles of liberty and equality of individuals, setting up a **political regime termed democracy.**

Civil and political rights, for a civil society of equality and **property rights for all, but monopolised by capitalists**.

Capitalism brought prosperity to the Nation but **prosperity rapidly collided with the question of equality**

Failure of the Market: the invisible hand does not to deliver prosperity to all. ]

**2) Practical Foundations of something that was termed “bureaucracy”, an Old Public Management.**

By and large, at the beginning of the 19th century, the Modern Liberal World, boosted by the industrial revolution and the triumphant capitalism, imposed a minimal Government according to Smith’s vision. However, practical politicians in power, elected or not, for practical reasons more than moral ones, sometimes under the pressure of the masses, have levied taxes on private earnings to spend Moneys for infrastructures and to get people out of harsh poverty.

These facts were first noticed in his country by a German economist **Adolph Wagner (1872 *Lehrbuch der politischen Ökonomie*)**: “as the economy develops over time, the activities and functions of the government increase” and government spends more and more. Among progressive peoples (societies), central and local governments are concerned to an increasing extent by the satisfaction of the economic needs of the people[[2]](#footnote-2). He is said (Jaen Garcia, 2018) to have documented some statistics later in a German Financial economics Review[[3]](#footnote-3) (1890)). As we can observe on the following graph, in Germany, the ratio of Government spending/GDP that has already reached a little more than 10% in 1880, rose to more than 20% in 1900, far ahead from the other industrialised countries. However, all of them will go on the same track along the following decades.

Chart 1: Government spending/ National GDP- 1880-2011- 5 countries.



Total government spending, including interest government expenditures, as share of national GDP

**Source** [**https://ourworldindata.org/government-spending**](https://ourworldindata.org/government-spending)

**Government Spending by Esteban Ortiz-Ospina and Max Roser**

Chart 2: Government spending/National DGP – selected countries recent years



Mauro, P., R. Romeu, A. Binder, and A. Zaman, 2013, “A Modern History of Fiscal Prudence and Profligacy,” IMF Working Paper WP/13/5, (Washington: International Monetary Fund).

Taken from IMF (2014) *Fiscal Monitor, (*chap. 2, p. 21-56), April.

Statistics concerning the last 60 years, with a division between advanced, emerging and low-income economies show the same upward trend in Government spending, but severely slowed since the 1990s as the IMF exemplifies advocating a reduction.

France – and European Nordic Countries- are at the top pf the league and Administration was ironically termed as a Mammoth. **When more than 40% of the wealth of a Nation is filtered by its Government** it is quite amazing to listen to everyone saying; “**this Nation is a market economy”. Such a half-truth is a whole lie, a manipulated assertion.**

Anyway, the growing amount of Government spending at least since the beginning of the 20th century has implied more and more **Administration.** No possible comparison with the past when there were distribution of moneys to reward people for their services to the government or to maintain an army by offerings, tribute or so.

The first to study this expanded activity of the state **was Max Weber (1922, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Grundriß der verstehenden Soziologie*)***,* a posthumously book, where we may read his essay his essay “**bürokratie**”) a German historian, political economist and sociologist. He stated that it was beyond the capacity of the politicians to manage the state structure without bureaucrats. This means that Government comprises two categories of powerful people **Politicians and Bureaucrats**.

To his mind, this was necessary due to the complexification of the economic structure and to the growing amount of Government spending. He described **Bureaucracy** as **the most rational, efficient, powerful and hierarchical apparatus of state admin­istration.** Everyone is treated equal and the division of labour is clearly described with formally written rules and procedures which are neutral and impersonal, and operated by each **employee.** These employees were called “civil servant” or “functionary” (in French: *fonctionnaire*)”.

In France, it was usual in the 1960s in France to have a deep respect for the Administration and for the Civil servants who serve the general interest. A saying expressed with contentment went like tha:; “governments come and go, but administration remain (*les gouvernements passent, l’administration reste*)”. And it was considered as a very good thing for the people and for the Nation. It was far away from the American Spoils System ("to the victor belong the spoils" introduced in 1828 in the USA ; with the civil service reform in 1883, the system was limited to the high positions).

[**Acceleration of the complexification of any activities within the society driven by the motto of progress and efficacy**

For the “Business”? Beyond the Political economy set up by Smith:]

We must say that **Law** was the first academic field concerned with the elaboration of the basic rules to determine the power and the duties of the Government and of the people, first by writing a Constitution, organising a judicial system…

Then **political economy**, initiated by Smith, step by step, has been concerned with the design of economic policies, especially after the Great Crisis in 1929.

**Frederik Winslow Taylor (1909, The Principles of Scientific Management)** had introduced analysis of how to perform productive tasks, differentiating operators and executives. In his line, practical people who were in charge of factories or corporations, as Fayol or Sloan, contributed to analyses that created a new field of science “**business**” or “**management**”, as exemplifies the creation of the Harvard Business Review in 1922. **Peter Drucker** **(1946, Concept of the Corporation)** was one of the first management specialists to achieve guru status, trying to explain how to manage a far-flung, complex organization.

Public Administration implement Government policies which are partly the fulfilment of the promises to the voter made by the elected politicians. In the line of Weber’s work, academics set up a kind of discipline to study the Public Administration in operation and to train future civil servants to work in various departments of the Public Administration. Thus, Administration which was a practice or an “Art” became a “Science”. The Administrative Science, according to **Herbert Simon[[4]](#footnote-4) (1946, The Proverbs of Administration)** a professor of political science who introduced this wording.



Source: Brillantes, Jr and Fernandez, Is there Philippine Public Administration or Better Still, for whom is Public Administration, (Donald Kettl is among those who view public administration "as a subfield within political science").

The chart above gives the appearance of competing fields “political science”, “business management”, “economics”, “law” to “help” (?) administrative science to say how transforming public spending in more welfare for the Nation.

However, **Lionel Robbins (1932, Essays in the Nature and Significance of Economic Science)** made clear that the running of any organisation, small or large, private or not, a family, an enterprise, an administration or a Nation, whatever it is, fall in the field of economic science. His definition of economic science was the following:

*“the science which studies human behaviour as a relationship between ends and scarce means which have alternative uses”.*

With such a definition, every human action, either individual or collective, fall within the scope of economic science.

Scarce means are things, how to use things in the best way, efficiently, to get the better outcome, the better efficacy is just a technical question, a question of management.

 This is the only academic discipline among the humanities that really claimed and still claims to be scientific and only economics could get (a kind) of Nobel Prize (from the Bank of Stockholm in memory of Alfred Nobel). Thus, to improve the efficiency and the efficacy of any human action it would be better to ask an economic consultant to help. This paved the way to **technocracy** or **ecocracy. And to be sure to the New Public Management.**

**3) Practical Foundations for a New Public Management.**

But the “old public management” was still in operation. Why this universal shift towards a New Public Management?

As a matter of fact “since the 1980s a global reform movement in public management has been vigorously under way […] with six characteristics: [better] productivity […] marketization […] […customer’s] service orientation […] decentralization […mission or] policy [orientation…] accountability for results[…] these reforms sought to replace traditional rule-based, authority-driven processes with market-based, competition-driven tactics” (Kettl[[5]](#footnote-5), 2000, p. 2-3).

Why have all Governments turned to it, throughout the world, in a relatively close timing? The main reason is, according to Kettl (2000), that they were all trapped in a same kind of turmoil with four components. 1) **A political crisis** in the relation between governments and the citizens, the crisis of democracy. 2) **A social crisis** with some varieties: the necessary reconstruction in Eastern Europe, the stagnation of living standards for the middle classes instead of the past continuous rise in advanced countries and the no decreasing inequalities in not yet industrialised countries. 3) **A Government budget crisis** induced by the slowing growth and the negative impact of taxes, and the dream that deregulation and privatization could save the budget. 4) **An Institutional crisis** faced by National Governments in front of international organizations willing to shape the world, the EU in Europe, IMF and the World Bank for emerging countries, in front too of Nongovernmental Organisations willing to serve the public and in some places, the same claim from local governments.

Anyway, whatever their national specificities, more or less all the countries have been caught into the movement. New Zealand has been considered as a leader whereas France is supposed to have lagged behind.

It is interesting to notice a paradoxical proximity. The stronger movement to go backward to less State in a Smithian sense, started to be universally visible with the policies of deregulation and privitazation implemented by Prime Minister Margaret **Thatcher (1979), a conservative** in the UK. (However, here too, as almost everywhere, the idea to boost market in administration had already been advocated for example by Keeling[[6]](#footnote-6) (1972)). And then, the global shift towards the marketization of government action has reached its turning point, with the *de facto* alliance between Thatcher and President Bill **Clinton (1992), a democrat** in the USA. He committed his administration to “**reinventing government**”. Doing so he signed the victory of free market, symbolised by the Fall of the Berlin Wall (1989) which signalled the end of history according to the wording by Francis Fukuyama[[7]](#footnote-7) (1989). Vice-President Al Gore was in charge of the job and launched the famous motto “**creating a government that works better and costs less**”.

**Christopher Hood[[8]](#footnote-8) (1991, *A New Public Management for all seasons*)** had just coined the term NPM with which he retrospectively characterized the “quite similar administrative” evolving practices in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States. According to his analysis NPM referred to a simulacrum of the allocation of resources by competitive markets that suited neoconservative times

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NPM did not appear brutally during the 1980s in New Zealand, as sometimes it is written. To be sure as Kettl put it[[9]](#footnote-9) “The New Zeland economy could no longer support the nation’s ambitious programs” at that time. No growth, soaring inflation, economy was almost in chaos. It took 20 years of reforms to achieve the so-called NPM. As a matter of fact, France, which is said to be lagging far behind New Zeland, has continuously tried to “reform” its administration, for more efficiency and efficacy. A sort of French variety of NPM.

Table 1: Successive reforms in French Administration

1917 Léon Blum (socialist) wrote letters about his concern for a reform of the government

1959 “SCOM” Methods and Organisation Central Service (suppressed in 1985)

1968 RCB” “Rationalization of Budget Choices” (suppressed 1984)- it was an adaptation of the US “PPBS” Planning Programming Budgeting System

1989 “Renewal of the Public Service” under Prime Minister Michel Rocard (Mitterrand as President) – Socialist

2001, LOLF (loi organique relative aux lois de finances = basic law to rule a more flexible the use of budget in public administrations) in operation in 2006, a complete reform of the previous basic law (1959)\*-(Jospin Prime minister – Socialist, to deflate the mammoth)

2003 First programmes to reduce the number of people working in the public services (Chirac as President)

2007 ”RGPP” “General Review of Public Policies" President Sarkozy (Right) 2012 “MAP” Modernisation of the Public Action - President Hollande – Socialist

2017 “Public Action 2022” President Macron (neither Right nor Left).

\* LOLF identifies 34 large missions for the State which are divided into 133 programmes. There are about 80 programmes managers, 630 objectives and 1 300 measurable indicators in order to assess the outcomes.

The sheer reality is that the Old Public Management, the Old type of organisation of actions by the State for the welfare of the society was, and still is, in crisis. In most advanced industrialised countries, the Old Public Management was unable to deliver welfare to the people but the States felt they could not spend more money according to the existing capacity to generate more wealth in the country. Among less advanced countries, the old system spent relatively less but they felt they could not spent more; moreover the international organisations pointed out that the existing administrative system in many countries lacked of neutrality and was corrupt.

Thus, the New Public Management came as a saviour for the elites in power. The rationalisation of its operative principles by **Osborne and Gaebler[[10]](#footnote-10) (1992, *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit Is Transforming the Public Sector. From Schoolhouse to Statehouse*)** made them the new gurus of Public Management.

Table 2: The ten principles of the NPM by Osborne and Gaebler

1. Government must "steer" the delivery of public services, and must avoid to go beyond.

2. Government ought to be "community-owned", empowering citizens and communities so that they decide the services they want, and they exercise self-governance.

3. Competition into service delivery is crucial for the better service.

4. Government must be mission-driven instead of being a rule-driven organization.

5.  Public agencies judged and funded on results not on inputs.

6. Citizens and consumers are customers of public goods, agencies must meet their needs and not those of the bureaucracy.

7. Public agencies as enterprises, allocate resources to deliver a public value and are not spending centres.

8. Public agencies must prevent rather than cure public problems

9. Decentralization to move from hierarchy to participation and teamwork

10. Market based strategies to deliver public goods through a variety of mechanisms

Public Administration had been built to compensate the failure of Market, and NPM is strictly the opposite, it claims to cure the failures of bureaucracy by the technocracy of the market. But according to Hood (1991, p.9) New Public Management “has damaged the public services while being ineffective in its ability to deliver on its central claim to lower costs per (constant) unit of service”. Thus, instead of giving a solution to the crises faced, NPM has delivered more problems.

**Christopher Pollitt and Sorin Dan (2011, *The impacts of the New Public Management in Europe: a meta-analysis)***

This has been confirmed by a comprehensive report[[11]](#footnote-11) prepared for the EU commission under the seventh framework programm and published in 2011.

The research work has been done by a team of European public administration scholars from 11universities in 10 countries. They have scanned more than 500 relevant studies in Europe dealing with NPM cases.

And finally, the last sentence of the conclusion of their report reads:

“why such a huge amount of reform -organizational change and upheaval in almost every European state – has taken place *if* the evidence for its positive effects on citizens is so slender?”

***qed quid erat demonstrandum***

**4) The crucial Anthropological Challenge in a market-driven society.**

Finally, the NPM was one of the last blows to transform our societies into economies. And to confirm the blunt assertion by Mrs Thatcher: “there is no such thing as Society”. There are Only individuals, competing in markets, to make money. Should we reject markets to restore societies?

To find a right answer let’s read **Karl Polanyi[[12]](#footnote-12) (1944, *The Great Transformation- The Political and Economic Origins of our Time*)**.

“Though the institution of the market was fairly common since the later Stone Age, its role was no more than incidental to economic life (2001, p. 45). But a Great Transformation occurred in the 19th century and from that time on: “Instead of economy being embedded in social relations, social relations are embedded in the economic system (2001, p.60).

This is a big issue. Because such a transformation cannot be achieved totally and because the consequences would be dramatic.

Let’s read again Polanyi (2001 (p.3) “a self-adjusting market implied a stark Utopia. Such an institution could not exist for any length of time without annihilating the human and natural substance of society; it would have physically destroyed man and transformed his surroundings into a wilderness.”

That looks like an anthropological suicide. That is to abandon what a man was, and replace it by a new concept of man. Probably a “transhuman” or a “cyborg” could fit the move?

Some light may be found from a French anthropologist, **Louis Dumont[[13]](#footnote-13) (1977, *From Mandeville to Marx-The Genesis and Triumph of Economic Ideology***)

1) Dumont underlines the move pushed by Locke: “we preferred to be individuals, owners of a property and we turned our back on the social totality with the subordination that it implied, and on our neighbour, at least to the extent that he should be superior or inferior to us[[14]](#footnote-14)”.

No more subordination, as in the traditional framework, between the superior and the inferior, between the governors and the governed: property makes free. No dependence. Free competition in free markets between free individuals.

2) He emphasizes that there was a package deal: packed with civil rights and free property, there were free competition in markets and dis-embbeded economy.

“As a matter of fact, the birth of economics implies a shift in primacy […] from relations between men to relations between men and nature or rather between *Man* (singular) *and things[[15]](#footnote-15)*

The Market is the tool to achieve that.

“The market is a moment of this process of dissolution of the ancient categories of subordination and dependence that Tocqueville revealed, ending up in ’the independent, autonomous, and thus (essentially) non social moral being ... found primarily in our modern ideology of man and society” (Dumont, 1977 p. 8[[16]](#footnote-16)).

Usually named *Homo Economicus*, the economic Man.

**Louis Dumont[[17]](#footnote-17) (1986, *Essays on Individualism: Modern Ideology in Anthropological Perspective***) explains: “men do not exchange things as we would think but, inextricably and fluctuatingly mixed up with those “things” something of themselves” (p. 257).

3) Louis Dumont tries to bring some light on the new kind of relationships between individuals: what is the nature of these relations of exchanges ?

In general, in markets commodities, “things” are exchanged against money. As Polanyi pointed that for the sake of economy ““human labor had to be made a commodity” in order to be tradeable in a market as any object against its price in money.

But, referring to Mauss’s Essay on Gift, Louis Dumont thinks that in any market “men do not exchange things as we would think but, inextricably and fluctuatingly mixed up with those “things” something of themselves”

As Polanyi put it (p. 107), Economic science claimed to have “discovered the laws governing man’s world”. This science imposed “to renounce human solidarity” and stated that “human labor had to be made a commodity.”

4) Louis Dumont illuminates what have become relations between people in markets especially in services

“economists speak of “goods and services” as an overarching category comprising, on the one hand commodities, and, on the other, something quite different from commodities but assembled to them, namely services. This is incidentally an example of relations between men (services) being subordinated to relations to things (goods)”

Thus, to him, the surge of the market is a general

“devaluation of relation between men, relations which generally commanded the relation to things “ […] thus from this “emphasis on relations to men and things as against relation between men” […] leads to a “world without man, a world from which man has deliberately removed himself”.

**Louis Dumont[[18]](#footnote-18) (1986, *Essays on Individualism: Modern Ideology in Anthropological Perspective***) explains: “men do not exchange things as we would think but, inextricably and fluctuatingly mixed up with those “things” something of themselves” (p. 257).

4) Dumont shows that non anonymous exchanges imply relations between people. Especially when the object of the exchange is named “services”.

“economists speak of “goods and services” as an overarching category comprising, on the one hand commodities, and, on the other, something quite different from commodities but assembled to them, namely services. This is incidentally an example of relations between men (services) being subordinated to relations to things (goods)” (*Ibid.*, p.252).

 Thus, Dumont can state clearly that the surge of the market is a general

“devaluation of relation between men, relations which generally commanded the relation to things “(*Ibid*., p.262) thus from this “emphasis on relations to men and things as against relation between men” (*Ibid*., p.260) leads to a “world without man, a world from which man has deliberately removed himself” *Ibid*., p.262).

**Nevertheless, I do think that there are some Grains of hope.**

1) Millions, perhaps billion of people do resist to Ecocracy, to the dictatorship of the market, dictatorship of the economy, individually, in their family, in associations, at work, here and there….

2) Unless the forces of evil replace human beings by machines that would be moved through networks of Artificial Intelligence, we will have to keep to our anthropologic nature, that is we are political, social animals. Our life is to relate to one another.

 Let’s take a Japanese confirmation thanks to **Watsuji Tetsurô**[[19]](#footnote-19) (**1935 *Fudô. Ningengakuteki kôsatsu* 風土人間学的考察**). His philosophy[[20]](#footnote-20) is based on a problematic that starts with the way Japanese are saying and writing human. It goes like that. In Japanese we say “human being” *ningen* and it is written with Chinese characters 人間　these characters, separately, are red *hito* “man” 人　and *aida* “between”　間

To Watsuji, this is the demonstration that we, as human being, we are not only an individual “*hito*” but we are essentially related to the others : “*aida*” is the relational part of any human being.

3) To be sure we do have a problem: “Why is “having more and moving faster” attractive for most modern subjects?[[21]](#footnote-21)”

To want always more. This is pleonexia “a mad desire to get” (Aristotle) leading to hubris and outrageousness.

Is there any answer, any remedies to that?

To show that true happiness is elsewhere? “If [accumulation or outrageousness and ] acceleration is the problem, then **perhaps resonance is the solution**. This, […]is the central thesis of Hartmut Rosa in his latest book, which can be seen as the founding document of a sociology of the good life[[22]](#footnote-22)”

[Harmut Rosa, a German Anthropologist and Sociologist proposes an answer to this crucial issue in order to found a kind of sociology of the good life, with **the concept of “resonance”.**]

A young German Philosopher and Sociologist Hartmut Rosa[[23]](#footnote-23) (2016, ***Resonanz , Eine Soziologie der Weltbezeihung***). In a paper published in 2017 he sum up his idea: “Thus, to sum up my argument so far, we have good reasons to assume that the good life in its essence is not a matter of scope (in money, wealth, options or capabilities), but a particular way of relating to the world – to places and people, to ideas and bodies, to time and to nature, to self and others. Increasing the scope is only a means and a strategy to enable or facilitate the latter – it becomes detrimental if it is structurally turned into an end in itself and thus culturally leads to alienation from the world (and to the destruction of nature on top of it). (p.448).

A subject will have a good life, I claim, if he or she finds and preserves social, material and existential axes of resonance which allow for iterative and periodic reassurance of “existential resonance”, i.e. of a resonant mode of being.453 […]Therefore, the conditions of resonance are such that they require contexts of mutual trust and fearlessness; and these contexts in turn require time and stability as background conditions. p. 454

The pervasive logic of competition in particular undermines the possibility to get into a mode of resonance: if we have to outpace someone, we cannot resonate with him or her at the same time. We cannot compete and resonate simultaneously ( p.454). Finally, the pervasive bureaucratic [MH:I would say technocratic] attempts to completely control processes and outcomes in order to ensure their efficiency and transparency, which define late-modernworkplace conditions, are equally problematic for elationships of resonance, because they are incompatible with the latters’elusiveness and transformative potential (p.454)

**4) Conclusions for the macro-level**

The NPM is a kind of blind tool that relies on the Hypothesis that our “crisis” in any of its dimensions, e.g. the Public Administration would be solved by technocratic ways to cost less – a better efficiency and technocratic ways to evaluate by numbers, by indicators a better efficacy. Without any consideration about the well-being of people and any consideration about the ends that are motivating Public action. There at least two re-orientations to take to redesign Public Management

(i) Stop deregulation and restart regulation. Society – a democratic Government- must control the working and the extent of the market. As **James Galbraith[[24]](#footnote-24) (2018, The need for a new public administration)** put it “*all* biological, mechanical and social systems must regulate their use of resources” self-regulating markets is no-sense when sensitive ends are at stake as it is in the case of Public Administration’s matters.

(ii) I listened to a French Political Philosopher Marcel Gauchet giving an interview a few years ago (2014) on the radio about the NPM. He made the following points. A) There is a definitive impossibility to insert Public Administration in a Framework of Private organisation aimed at making profit B) Public Administration is Politically driven, it implies that it is citizen-oriented and efficacy must be related to that: what is Public efficacy?.

This interview asks the basic question : What is the role of Politics to-day? Is this world a techno-eco-cratic world?

***That is not to focus on tools, on blind tools, but on ends, and to agree on these ends, in a democratic manner.***

**A perspective ?**

I browsed the wide literature about “Public Management” and I found a very stimulating attempt by **Janine O’ Flynn[[25]](#footnote-25)** (***2007, From New Public Management to Public Value: Paradigmatic Change and Managerial Implications***). Up to a certain point she makes a tentative answer to Gauchet, in the line with the resonance of Rosa, but it needs to be completed by regulation. As we can see in the first line of a table she presents in his paper.



I would say that it is up to you to go further…



Source : O’Flynn, Janine (2007) “From New Public Management to Public Value: Paradigmatic Change and Managerial Implications” *The Australian Journal of Public Administration*, vol. 66, no. 3, pp. 353–366

1. Mauss Marcel (2002 English edition) *The Gift- The form and reason of exchange in archaic societies,* London, Routledge) “peoples have learnt how to oppose and to give to one another without sacrificing themselves to one another. This is what tomorrow, in our so-called civilized world, classes and nations and individuals also, must learn. This is one of the enduring secrets of their wisdom and solidarity”. (p. 106). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Quoted from JAÉN-GARCÍA Manuel, (2018) “Wagner’s Law: A Revision and a New Empirical Estimation” *Hacienda Pública Española / Review of Public Economics,*n°224 (1), p. 13-35. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Finanzwissenchaft*, Winter 1890, C. F., Leipzig. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Herbert Simon (1946), “The Proverbs of Administration”, *Public Administration Review* , no. 1, p. 53–67. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. [Kettl](https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/18748.Donald_F_Kettl), Donald F, (2000) *The Global Public Management Revolution: A Report on the Transformation of Governance,* Washington,The Brookings Institution Press [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Keeling, Desmond (1972) *Management in Government*, London, Allen & Unwin. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Fukuyama, Francis (1989). "The End of History?". *The National Interest* (16): p.3–18. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Hood, Christopher (1991) “A Public Management for All Seasons.” *Public Administration* n°69, p. 3–19. His critics were previously presented without the NPM label in Hood, Christopher (1989) “Public Administration and Public Policy: Intellectual Challenges for the 1990s.” *Australian Journal of Public Administration* n°48, p.346–58. A complete state of the art at that time is presented in the following book: Lynn, Laurence E., (2006) *Public management: old and new*, New York, Routledge. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Taken form Donald Kettl, (2000) p. 10. But Kettl did not wait for Clinton reform to discuss the public administration in the USA see for example: Kettl, Donald F. 1988. Government by Proxy: (Mis?) Managing Federal Programs.

Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Osborne, David, and Ted Gaebler (1992), *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit Is Transforming the Public Sector. From Schoolhouse to Statehouse, City Hall to the Pentagon*, Reading, MA, Addison-Wesley. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Pollitt, Christopher and Sorin Dan (2011) *The impacts of the New Public Management in Europe: a meta-analysis,* Bruxelles, European Commission. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Karl Polanyi (1944) *The Great Transformation- The Political and Economic Origins of our Time*, Boston, Beacon Press. (French translation, 1983, with a foreword by Louis Domont, Paris Gallimard, La Grande Transformation- aux origins politiques et économiques de notre temps - 2001 English edition, with a foreword by Joseph E. Stiglitz and an introduction by Fred Block, Boston, Beacon Press). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. The book was published both in English and French,Louis Dumont (1977) *From Mandeville to Marx-The Genesis and Triumph of Economic Ideology*, Chicago, Chicago University Press; the French Title red Dumont Louis (1977), *Homo aequalis, I Genèse et développement de l’idéologie économique*, Paris, Gallimard, I quote from the 1985 edition. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. « Dans la pratique nous sommes ceux qui avons, avec Locke, intronisé la propriété privée à la place de la subordination, qui avons choisi d’être des individus possédant et produisant, et tourné le dos à la totalité sociale avec la subordination qu’elle impliquait, et à notre voisin au moins dans la mesure où il nous serait supérieur ou inférieur. » (Dumont, 1985, p.131 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. « La naissance de l’économique implique en fait un glissement de primauté, […] des relations entre hommes aux relations entre les hommes et la nature ou plutôt entre l’*homme* (au singulier) *et les choses.* » (Dumont, 1985, p 130). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Cité d’après Bouchet, Dominique, (2007) “The ambiguity of the modern conception of autonomy and the paradox of culture “*Revue du Mauss permanente,* 20 December. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Louis Dumont (1986) Essays on Individualism: Modern Ideology in Anthropological Perspective, Chicago, Chicago University Press). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Louis Dumont (1986) Essays on Individualism: Modern Ideology in Anthropological Perspective, Chicago, Chicago University Press). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Watsuji Tetsurô (1935) *Fudô. Ningengakuteki kôsatsu* 風土人間学的考察　Milieux. Etude humanologique, Tokyo, Iwanami Shoten. Translation and introduction in French by Augustin Berque (2011) Fûdo – le milieu humain, Paris, CNRS. According to Augustin Berque past translation in English and in Spanish did not grasp the thinking of Watsuji. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Some Japanese intellectuals and some Scholars from different countries mistakenly believe that the point made by Watsuji is a cultural specificity of Japanese (the j*apaneseness*).

To my mind : this is linked to the fact of the strong resistance organised by the “rulers of Japan” during all the Meiji era, they avoided to give civil rights and autonomy to ordinary people, to the mass of the Japanese. They were kept subordinate. Therefore, despite Japan caught up in technology and in capitalism, they maintained the old type of relationship between people. To be sure, 70 years after the democratic shock imposed on them, the landscape would have changed; but the old rulers came back rapidly in 1950-60 and with the business elite went on, along ancient customs. So that to-day, a high proportion of workers are not able to stop to sacrifice their life to their employer and stop too long overwork time. Anyway this is the point made by Hamaguchi Eshun (1985),  *A contextual model of the Japanese* and some other thinkers. To my knowledge he started with this idea in 1977 and he went on after working at the newly created nichibunken (Kyoto) and published in 1982; *Kanjin shugi sno shakai nihon,* 1997 The rediscovery of Japaneseness Nihonrahisa no saihakken) See Margaret Sleeboom (2004) *Academic Nations in China and Japan: Framed in concepts of Nature, culture and the universel***,** London, Routledge. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Harmut Rosa, 2017, « Dynamic Stabilization, the Triple A. Approach to the Good Life, and the Resonance Conception » *Humanités numériques, corpus et sens*, September, p. 437-456. Available on line : http://questionsdecommunication.revues.org/11228 [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. From suhrkamp : https://www.suhrkamp.de/inquire-rights.html/58626 [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Hartmut Rosa (2016, Resonanz , Eine Soziologie der Weltbezeihung, Berlin, Suhrkamp.translated into English as (2019) *Resonance - A Sociology of our Relationship to the World*, Cambridge, Polity Press and in French (2018) *Résonance – une sociologie de la relation au monde,* Parsi, La découverte. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Galbraith, James K. (2018) “The need for a new public administration” *Real-world economics review,* issue n°84, p. 170-177. See also : Galbraith, James K (2008) *The Predator State,* New York, Free Press. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. O’Flynn, Janine (2007) “From New Public Management to Public Value: Paradigmatic Change and Managerial Implications” *The Australian Journal of Public Administration*, vol. 66, no. 3, pp. 353–366 [↑](#footnote-ref-25)