

THE HILL AND KNOWLTON AFFAIR AND THE MARKETIZATION OF THE FIRST GULF WAR. A POLANYIAN PERSPECTIVE

Silviu Valentin PETRE

Independent researcher, Romania

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Abstract: *The 1990-1991 First Gulf War became a classic manual of PR or manipulation, depends on the terms one chooses. Within the whole manipulative framework, Hill and Knowlton, one of USA's foremost advertising brands played a pivotal, ripple-making role. With the money provided by Kuwaiti government in exile, H&K faked several testimonies according to which Saddam's soldiers had been responsible of appalling deeds by pillaging Kuwaiti hospitals, where they stole incubators and left newborn babies to die. Thus, President Bush gained legitimacy in front of the US Congress and international fora to assemble a coalition of the willing to deal with Iraqi aggression. This article will not only dwell upon the abovementioned episode, but shall also sketch an explanatory framework using Karl Polanyi's writings.*

Keywords: Gulf War, Saddam Hussein, George Bush, Hill and Knowlton, manipulation, Karl Polanyi

1. INTRODUCTION

From the standpoint of mass communication, modernity has brought state and society in a dialectical entanglement. The ability to possess the upper hand in providing information has bounced between political factors and the plural voices of what we have learned no call civil society. Thus, during the Middle Ages, the Catholic Church amassed the knowledge while Western European dukes and kings struggled to gain the territorial authority over their subjects. With the invention of the printing press and Lutheran/Calvinist fronde against Rome's Papacy, one can witness a shift in the capability of mass communication to the grasp of national sovereigns. Such process would never be complete, smooth or linearly, but it will shape collective identities till today. Established bureaucracies maintained the flow of information with regard to administrative matters back and fro citizens. National primary and compulsory education cemented national identities and taught people not necessarily to think alike, but at least to have a common platform of mutual understanding. However, dialectics has made her appearance again, when public sphere has awakend and learned to criticise power, wrestling the monopoly of truth from kings and governments and pressuring political institutions to become more transparent and accountable towards society. Technology played its part in that dynamic affair with increasing intensity as we approach present day.

In those regimes with pluralist lenience (stemming from concurential hegemonies to polyarchies to use Robert Dahl's terminology), communication technology helped enhance participatory culture, whereas in totalitarian regimes the monopoly of legitimate violence along with total dominance over communication left no viable dissenting voices.

However, the need to assure the support of public opinion in extreme case (such as calamity, economic crisis or military conflict) push even democratic elected governments to indulge in authoritarian practices combining propaganda with hampering the free flow of information.

Given all said above, present article aims to present the Hill and Knowlton affair during First Gulf War and reflect the manner in which social sciences can take advantage of Karl Polanyi's double movement concept in order to come up with a theory of manipulation. A further development of such explanatory model may cut across political science, elite theories and media studies displaying untapped potential.

Several motives met each other to produce present study:

- a certain familiarity of the author with the case of Saddam Hussein and US involvement in the Middle East;

- the ideological belief that objectivity comes about if one learns to balance liberalism with Marxism, the two major secular narratives of modernity. Both on the realm of academic debates as well in crafting public policy;

- a beginner interest for the cinematographic universe.

First part sketches in broad strokes the unfolding of the First Gulf War and presents the role played by Hill and Knowlton. The Second dwells upon Karl Polanyi's work and its legacy cast over the last part of the XX century while the third discusses opportunities to combine Polanyian sistem of thought with other perspectives.

2. THE ROOT CAUSES OF THE FIRST GULF WAR

Although a fine-grained anatomy of the First Persian or First Gulf War (1990-1991) goes much beyond the scope of our study, we shall restrict to a historical sketch in order to lay the events in their context and base our further analysis. Inspired by Kenneth Waltz's three level¹ model deemed necessary to judge a conflict, one can come with three angles:

2.1. The structural level/angle

This level makes justice to structuralism and explain dynamic scenarios following a bird's view. For more than four decades, the post1945 international system has been clustered around Soviet-American rivalry. The only remaining superpowers after the fall of the European balance of power, both Washington and Moscow engaged in an all-out duel carried not only for influence and allies, but mostly to test the primacy of contrasting political philosophies. Although the rest of the planetary map retained some autonomy from the embattled giants, smaller actors were heavily influenced by the consequences of bipolarity.

After the dwindling of the Cold War- how the struggle came to be known- late 1980s have witnessed the decentering of the international structure and the empowerment of regional security complexes with autonomous agendas.² Nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism re-affirmed their presences once again on the canvas of history and rekindled the never truly asleep powder keg in the Middle East.³

¹ Waltzian analytic framework counsils that we have to understand warfare and international relations on three level: individual level (ex: the psychology of leaders); state (ex: political culture; regime type; the capability to extract resources from society etc) and international level (relations between states; overall distribution of power, number of poles). Kenneth N. Waltz, *Omul, statul și războiul* (Man, state and war), (Iași: Institutul European Publishing House, 2001)

² James N. Rosenau, *The Study of World Politics Volume 2: globalizaton and governance*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 12 and *passim*. Murat Gül, "The concept of change and James N. Rosenau: Still international relations?" *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations* Vol. 3 5 (May 2009): 199-207. Jackie Smith, Dawn Wiest, *Social Movements in the World-System: The Politics of Crisis and Transformation*, (Russell Sage Foundation, 2012). Haluk Özdemir, "An Inter-Subsystemic Approach in International Relations" *All Azimuth* V4, N1, Jan. 2015, 5-26

³ Mark Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993). Samuel Huntington, *Ciocnirea civilizațiilor și refacerea ordinii globale*,

2.2. The Iraqi perspective

After consolidating his authority on the domestic front in late '70, Iraqi strongman, Saddam Hussein embarked on an ambitious and at the same time aggressive policy in the region so as to extend his fiefdom and probably emerge as the preeminent actor of the Gulf area. His aims coincided with those of the West, at least for a while due to the fact that: a) inside he aimed at modernising a desertsides backward Iraq inhabited by herdsmen and farmers with the help of American and European technology⁴; b) outside he indulged the plan to slow down the spread of Iranian Khomeinist revolution, measure sympathised by both Washington and fellow Sunni nearby countries such as Saudi Arabia.

After eight-long year strife with Iran, Iraq emerged a weaker nation.⁵ Its economy was in disarray and the only short-term available way to be reconstructed was through expanding oil exports. Unfortunately for Baghdad's interest, the pint size Emirate of Kuwait was long ahead of Iraqis in terms of petrol exports, thus engaging in fowlplay competition, according to Saddam's reproaches. After a series of diplomatic trials both with Kuwaiti ruling family as well as with the other regional Arab countries to whom he tried to plead his cause and remind that Iraq bore the brunt of the clash with Tehran so as to stop the march of Shiism, Hussein invoked that Kuwait clung to an artificial statehood built by British imperialism after chipping away a portion of Iraq's historical territorial body so he invaded it on August 2, 1990.

A Frank Morrow documentary- "Secrets of the Gulf War" adds some detail to the overall picture and entertains the hypothesis that the feud between Baghdad and Kuwait City was more than meets the eye:

- In 1988 Kuwaiti authorities hired a drilling company from Santa Fe, USA to exploit some oil fields very near to the Iraqi border. The angle of the drill was oblique, consequently it breached Iraq's territory and drew protests from the bigger neighbor.⁶

- professors Harry Cleaver and Douglas Kellner add a more nuanced perspective full of behind the court realpolitik. According to them, US colluded with Saddam to bully Kuwait and other OPEC neighbors so as to generate an overall decrease in oil price, but Saddam went beyond his designated role, dreaming of personal hegemony in the region.⁷

2.3. The American perspective

The demise of the Soviet adversary, forced American policymakers to re-orient their views on many direction and at best write a new archstrategy for a seemingly unipolar international system. The Iraqi aggression in Kuwait offered Washington the possibility to blend ethical demands with material national interests. On the one hand, President George Bush's rhetorical creed in a new world order based on the rule of law and bringing forth UN Chart once again stood against trumping the sovereignty of others by military means.⁸

traducere Radu Carp, (Prahova: Antet, 2004). Viorel Buța, Constantin Moștofleu (ed), *Implicații ale religiilor asupra securității în contextul extinderii UE*, (Bucharest: National University "Carol I" Publishing House, 2006). Ishtiaq Ahmed, *The Politics of Religion in South and Southeast Asia*, (New York/London: Routledge, 2011)

⁴ For a friendly biography see Charles Saint-Prot, *Saddam Hussein: un gaullisme arabe?*, (Paris: Albin Michel, 1987). A more balanced account is given by Efraim Karsh, Inari Rautsi, *Saddam Hussein: A Political Biography*, (London: Grove/Atlantic, 1991). The Economist, "The blundering dictator. The life, death and uncertain legacy of an Arab villain and hero" Jan 4th 2007

⁵ For an analysis on the effects of Iran-Iraq conflict for the Iraqi economy as well as on Baghdad's military weaponry in late 1980s see: Marion Farouk-Sluglett, Peter Sluglett, "Iraq Since 1986: The Strengthening of Saddam", *Middle East Research and Information Project* Volume: 20 (November/December 1990), accessed March 5, 2015, 12:31. Onur Ozlu, Iraqi Economic "Reconstruction and Development, Center for Strategic and International Studies", Washington, (2006): 13-16

⁶ Frank Morrow, "Secrets of the Gulf War, Oil, Saddam Hypocrisy and Unknown History of Kuwait", Alternative Information Network, 1991, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-7eurP-t3Z0>, accessed 27 February, 2016, 21:23, min.15-16:00. There is a certain bias with the opinions expressed by the participants at the documentary, so the author of present article advises a certain skepticism in approaching this bibliographical reference.

⁷ "Secrets of the Gulf War", min.21:50 and min.23:52

⁸ George H. W. Bush, "Address Before a Joint Session of Congress", Miller Center (September 11, 1990), <http://millercenter.org/president/bush/speeches/speech-3425>, accessed march 5, 2016, 12:35.

Introduction speech of the NWO, George H W Bush from 9 11 90 (speech), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzzVHXSIJ9s>, accesses March 5, 2016, 12:32

In this logic, America had to act and play the role of global policeman with UN approval. On the other hand, Saddam's aggression sent worrisome ripples across the region, many fearing that his quest would not stop with Kuwait and others might follow soon. Since the OPEC crisis in early 1970s, Western powers have been unsettled by what shortage of petrol can do to their industrialized economies. The Carter Doctrine issued by Jimmy Carter stated clear that any deliberate stop of oil towards Western hemisphere by the Gulf countries was to be considered a direct affront to the American national interest and responded in kind. On the same trail, Bush Sr. administration was compelled to stop the Iraqi president, restore status-quo and reassure Israel and the other Arab allied nations of US continuous protection.⁹

2.4. Enters Hill and Knowlton

The brilliant yet controversial brand Hill and Knowlton traces its lineage to the name of John Hill, pioneering figure of American public relations. John Wiley Hill (1890-1977) was a journalist, Midwestern Republican in his sympathies later turned to the world of business. In 1927 he opened a PR firm in Cleveland and started work with heavy industrial companies. His first customers were Cleveland-based Union Trust Company, and the Otis Steel Company. In 1933, after the peak of the Great Depression he brought to Cleveland a former partner, Don Knowlton with whom has established Hill & Knowlton, household name that would evolve to become the 'gray lady of public relations' in late 1980s and early 1990s. Operating two headquarters for many years, at New York and Cleveland/ Ohio, H&K specialized in corporate cases that involved names like Kellogg's, Procter & Gamble, Dupont, Xerox, IBM, American Airlines etc. After 1945 John Hill was approached by the CEOs in tobacco industry who were in need of good publicity as public was becoming more aware about the health problems generated by frequent smoking. In 1953 Hill, a former smoker himself who had quit before, advised the representatives of tobacco industry they should try to convince the American citizens that "public health is paramount to all else." More so, he threw support for the creation of a Tobacco Industry Research Committee (later rebranded Council for Tobacco Research).¹⁰ In 1966 H&K have installed their own scientific research department: Division of Scientific, Technical, and Environmental Affairs¹¹ professing the following creed: " *Our job is not to oppose or fight progressive measures in the public interest [...] but to keep clients informed on the developments affecting them and to keep the records straight regarding their policies.*"¹²

In 1980, three years after the death of the founder, H&K was bought by J.W.T. Group, one of the international giants in public relations. In 1987 a further acquisition followed when J.W.T. was absorbed into W.P.P. Group, an umbrella holding company presided by the British financier Martin S. Sorrell.¹³

With the advent of the First Gulf War, H&K involvement in selling the case against Saddam Hussein to the American nation provides a rich opportunity to study the linkage between elites and institutions converging to shape the public sphere.

Shortly after Iraqi troops stormed the Kuwaiti borders, Citizens for a Free Kuwait, an NGO, hired the services of H&K to rattle a grass-root level case against Baghdad's strongman in order to speed up the decision to intervene already taken at by president

⁹ A multi-layered analysis of American motivation to intervene in 1990 is done in Joseph S. Nye Jr., Why the Gulf War served the national interest, *The Atlantic online*, July 1991

¹⁰ David Michaels, *Doubt is their product: How industry's assault on science threatens your health*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 5

¹¹ Michaels, p.9. Karen S. Miller, *The voice of business: Hill and Knowlton and postwar public relations*, (North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 171

¹² Miller, 171

¹³ Jeffrey Goodell, "What Hill & Knowlton Can Do for You, (And What It Couldn't Do for Itself)", *The New York Times*, September 9, 1990

Bush Sr. H& K were paid around 12 million dollar from the Kuwaiti governments and another few thousand dollar by ordinary donors.

The pivotal moment of the entire public campaign happened on October 10 1990 in front of the bipartisan Congressional Caucus in Human Rights co-chaired by Thomas Lantos (Democrat) and John Porter (Republican) and where a teenage Kuwaiti girl who went under the name of Nahyria spoke about how Iraqi soldiers engaged in appalling acts throwing newborn babies out of hospital incubators.¹⁴ The story had a tremendous success on the emotional level switching many reluctant or pacifists into fastpacing interventionists.¹⁵ Amnesty International came up even with a number : 312 children.¹⁶ President Bush would soon pick the episode and repeat it six times in a single speech.

The truth has been found out only after the end of the military operations when different investigations reached a different snapshot of the dramatic events. Consequently it was discovered that the teary teenager girl was in fact Nahyria (Al Sabah) the daughter of Kuwaiti ambassador to United States and she was trained to behave in front of the camera by H& K people. Further investigation showed how congressmen Lantos and Porter were running the Congressional Foundation for Human Rights which operated in the same building as Hill and Knowlton. Further dubious links came about a year later, when Frank Mankiewicz, vice president of the PR company joined the abovementioned Caucus committee.¹⁷

Another go-between politics and lobby environment character was Craig L. Fuller who served for many years under President Reagan as Assistant to the President for Cabinet Affairs then as Chief of Staff for President George H. Bush before joining the Wexler Group which was later to be acquired by H&K.¹⁸

On April 18, 1991 Amnesty backed down from previous statement about incubators, while in May, the same year investigation show the links between members of Kuwaiti elites and Hill and Knowlton.¹⁹

Bellow one can picture the graphic synthesis of the main characters and organisations involved in the affairs:

¹⁴ Martyn Gregory (director), Neil Doherty (producer), To sell a war- Gulf war propaganda (1992), CBC Programme Documentary, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yaR1YBR5g6U>, accessed 28 Feb 2016, 09:13, min 2-3; min 5-6; min.15

¹⁵ Tom Regan, "When contemplating war, beware of babies in incubators", *Christian Science Monitor*, September 6, 2002

¹⁶ To sell a war- Gulf war propaganda (1992), min 6:46

¹⁷ To sell a war- Gulf war propaganda (1992), min 23:47-24:00

¹⁸ Louis Day, *Ethics Media Communications: Cases and Controversies*, (Thomson Wadsworth, 2006), 183

¹⁹ Steven Mufson, "The privatisation of Craig Fuller", *The Washington Post*, August 2, 1992. Douglas Walton, "Appeal to pity: A case study of the argumentum ad misericordiam" *Argumentation* 9, 1995, 769-784, esp 774

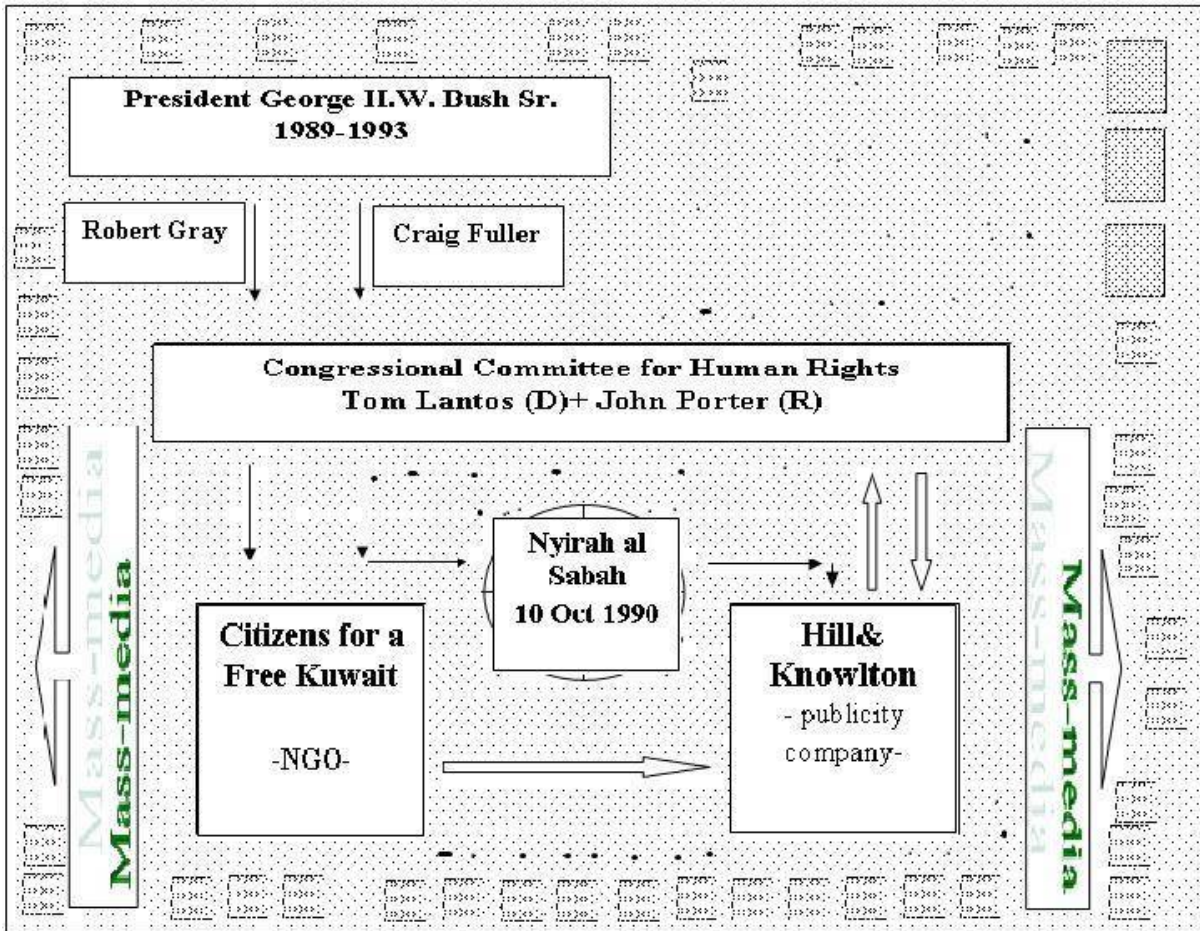


FIG. 1.

3. THE WORK OF KARL POLANYI. REDISCOVERING A CLASSIC

Karl Polanyi (1886-1964) was a Hungarian born sociologist and leftwing activist whose writings spell to trace the development of economy from prehistoric times till the Industrial Revolution. Contra the Viennese economic school created by Carl Menger and continued by Ludwig von Mises and Friedrich Hayek that held markets to be something universal, dating back from the days of yore, Polanyi argues that markets are a much later phenomena and they are not indispensable to human endeavors. Although trade practices are almost as old as human experience, one should be very careful not to equate tradesmanship with market itself.

Apart from trade, the other three resource-allocating types are: x) reciprocity; y) redistribution, and z) household.²⁰ One can truly speak of a market-based economy only with the large scale development of capitalism in the XIX century, when three conditions are met at once: 1) money become an all purpose means of exchange; 2) work and 3) property are commodified.²¹ This is the essence of Polanyi's 1944 magnum opus *The Great Transformation*. Moreover, a market based economy goes beyond that and reshapes all collective principles according to its needs, thus giving birth to market

²⁰ Reciprocity goes back to barter interactions, give-and-take economics. „Redistribution is another form of reciprocity and happens in a group to the extent that in the allocation of goods [...] they are collected in one hand and distributed by way of custom, law, or ad hoc central decision.” Household means production for one's needs and was labeled by ancient Greeks *oikonomia*. Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation. The Political and Economic Origins of our Time*, foreword by Joseph Stiglitz, Introduction, by Fred Block, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1944/1957/2002), 51-55. Karl Polanyi, *The livelihood of man*. Text edited by Harry Pearson, (London/San Francisco: Academic Press 1977), 39-43

²¹ Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*. 46-47 and *passim*

society based on the search for profit. Only then Austrian economists should speak of economic rationality and homo oeconomicus, contends the Polanyian logic. Against the Austrians, the Hungarian thinker believes Man (generic term) „does not act so as to safeguard

in the possession of material goods; he acts so as to safeguard his social standing, his social claims, his social assets. He values material goods only in so far as they serve this end.”²² Supplementary ”*The physical existence of a group, its safety life and limb, the totality of its way of life transcend anything that can be reasonably presented as an economic interest.*”²³ Pivotal to understanding the modern economic history of mankind is the <double movement>- a dialectical process that brings civilization back and from market practices: after the market annexes society and molds it according to the tenets of commodification, society, on the brink of destruction, resists and puts up different regulatory measures which limit market expansionism.²⁴ Loyal to his left lineage, Karl Polanyi hoped that industrial XXth century should find a more planned type of economics able to reinstall order into chaos and generate more equitable outcomes.

3.1 Different missions to rescue Polanyi’s legacy

Karl Polanyi’s grim prophecy that capitalism should falter has been contradicted by the turn of events. Western governments adopted the Keynesian consensus and maintained the pro-market approach but with different control checkpoints and extensive social protection programs that would offset Communist allurements within the ranks of the postwar working class. Published in the same year with Hayek’s *Road to Serfdom*, *The Great Transformation* did not gather the same success, eventually being sidelined by the neoclassical mainstream philosophy. In an essay written in early 1960s, Murray Rothbard trashes the later book and dismissed it as a ”farrago of mistakes”.²⁵ His recuperation came quite later, from the 1980s onward. The failure of the Soviet command economy as well as the stagflation encountered in Western liberal-capitalist economies pushed policymakers to take into consideration what has come to be known as the neoliberal package: state retreat from economic micromanagement; rollback of many welfare programs; strong deregularisation etc.²⁶ While some gained others lost, so the win-loose outcome of neoliberal turn which gained full throttle after the demise of Communist dirigisme brought back into attention critical thinkers such Antonio Gramsci and Karl Polanyi able to offer solutions or at least discard the optimism of market fundamentalism.

One of the first contemporary authors who redeemed Polanyi was his protégé, Immanuel Wallerstein.²⁷ Afterwards, in the 1980s John Gerard Ruggie recaptured the term <embeddedness> and spoke of embedded liberalism when describing the above mentioned consensus of the Thirty Glorious Years(1945-1975). Later on, Bjorn Hettne, writing about regionalism, sees the European Union as the embodiment of Polanyan countermovement. In similar vaneer for James Caporaso and Sydney Tarrow, the

²² *The Great Transformation*, 48

²³ *The livelihood of man*, xlvii

²⁴ *The Great Transformation*, 136-151

²⁵ Murray N. Rothbard, ”Down With Primitivism: A Thorough Critique of Polanyi”, Mises Institute, (June 1961) September 17, 2004. For a more recent libertarian answer to Polanyi see Alex Nowrastch, ”Karl Polanyi’s Great Error”, *Libertarianism.org/ Cato Institute*, September 23, 2013, accessed 22 Feb, 2016, 14:34

²⁶ Gavin Kendall, ”From Liberalism to Neoliberalism,” Paper presented to the Social Change in the 21st Century Conference Centre for Social Change Research Queensland University of Technology 21 November 2003

²⁷ Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Development of an Intellectual Position*, 2000?, <http://iwallerstein.com/intellectual-itinerary/>, accessed March 6, 2016, 17:39

European Court of Justice "re-embeds social regulation at the supranational level".²⁸ Hannes Lacher claims Polanyi for socialism whereas Naeem Inayatullah and David Blaney gaze at the Hungarian born thinker as a critic of free market but at the same time a sociologist with an interesting methodology.²⁹

Gareth Dale, one of his most astute biographers traces the writings of the late master and concludes that one cannot easily fit him in a certain school of thought or other. Thus, Polanyi has reflexes of liberalism combined with elements of Marxism without fully being a disciple of the XIX century revolutionary philosopher; showed enthusiasm for the League of Nation and later on he was seemingly influenced by E.C.Carr.³⁰

Other perspectives have come to be indirectly associated with Polanyi. Such is Mark Granovetter's research in social networks. His 1985 article about embeddedness explored the ways one can understand the relationship between economic dynamics and the social cultural fingerprint that enmeshes each profit-seeking pursuit.³¹ Frequently quoted since then, Granovetter's 1980s articles have been linked with the late Polanyi and hailed amidst the general return of critical theories. However, Granovetter later dismissed any direct affiliation between his understanding of embeddedness and the one employed by the mid XX century Hungarian writer.³²

The advent of the 2008 global financial crisis, has rekindled the interest towards embeddedness for militant-prescriptive needs, and not only for academic purpose.³³ Fred Block, sociologist of postindustrialism argues that global civil society is in dire need to re-embed markets and forge solidarity networks across borders to resist what he perceives to be the anvil of neoliberalism.³⁴

4. AN INTERDISCIPLINARY EXPLANATORY MODEL FOR PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

After all the above mentioned, for the scope of our study, we shall return and pinpoint the merits for which Polanyi is most acclaimed: the emergence of sociological-economics. In order to craft an explanatory model that could cut-across political science and media studies, we have to address an ideal-type called : homo socio-oeconomicus. First, there is some bad blood that has to be drained from the public debate → for certain years, great names in economics advice that homo oeconomicus does not truly exist in reality and should be looked as a necessary evil useful to make sense of various phenomena. Most recently, with the continuing financial crisis and street protests all over

²⁸ As a response to Caporaso and Tarrow, Martin Höpner and Armin Schäfer take up the similar endeavor to understand the working of the European Union and bracket in dialogue Polanyi and Hayek. Martin Höpner and Armin Schäfer, Embeddedness and Regional Integration: Waiting for Polanyi in a Hayekian Setting, *International Organization* 66, (Summer 2012): 429–55

²⁹ Kate Crehan, *Gramsci, Culture and Anthropology*, (London/Virginia: Pluto Press, London, 2002), vii and 1. David Forgacs, *Gramsci and Marxism in Britain* in James Martin, *Antonio Gramsci: Contemporary applications*, Volume 4, (New York: Routledge, 2002), 73. Sallie A. Marston & Geraldine Pratt, Coming of Age: Urban Geography in the 1980s, *Urban Geography* 24:4 (2003): 340-35. Neil A. Burron, "Counter-hegemony in Latin America? Understanding emerging multipolarity through a Gramscian lens" *Revue québécoise de droit international*, Hors-série (Septembre 2014): 33-68

³⁰ Gareth Dale, "In search of Karl Polanyi's international relations theory", *Review of International Studies*, (September 2015): 1-24, esp. 1-3. Gareth Dale, "Karl Polanyi: Diagnosing Liberal Extremism", *E-International Relations*, 7 December 2015, <http://www.e-ir.info/2015/12/07/karl-polanyi-diagnosing-liberal-extremism/>, accessed March 6, 2016, 17:52

³¹ Mark Granovetter, "Economic Action and Social Structure", *American Journal of Sociology*, Volume 91, Issue 3, (Nov.1985): 481-510

³² Nuno Miguel Cardoso Machado, Karl Polanyi and the New Economic Sociology: Notes on the Concept of (Dis)embeddedness, Translated by João Paulo Moreira, *CCSS Annual Review*, Issue No.3, 2011, <https://ccsar.revues.org/309>, accessed March 1, 2016, 22:36

³³ Kari Polanyi Levitt, Opening Address at the 13th International Karl Polanyi Conference, Concordia University, November 6-8, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TK0rIsWEMA0>, accessed March 1, 2016, 18:12

³⁴ Fred Block, Polanyi's Double Movement and the Reconstruction of Critical Theory, *Interventions Economiques*, 38 | 2008, <https://interventionseconomiques.revues.org/274>.

Fred Block: The Tenacity of the Free Market Ideology, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qw4M8t1cuJo>, accessed March 1, 2016, 19:24

the world, the notion of homo oeconomicus became a favorite target practice for all sorts of pundits, some from the Right³⁵, but mostly from the Left.³⁶

Far from rejecting any of the points of view laid down here, our socio-economic agent is nearer to the economic than to the social part of the equation and acts as maximiser of gain who always searches for the right social context necessary for that optimum outcome so much desired. Transported into the realm of media studies, homo socio-economicus (HES) values most information- the indispensable currency here- and bestows the best means available to achieve it. (Homo socio-economicus in the universe of mass-media covers both ordinary spectators in front of their radios TV-sets or tablets and also media practitioners, individual or collective: journalists, papers, television companies). We further present two scenarios that operationalize the behavior of HES:

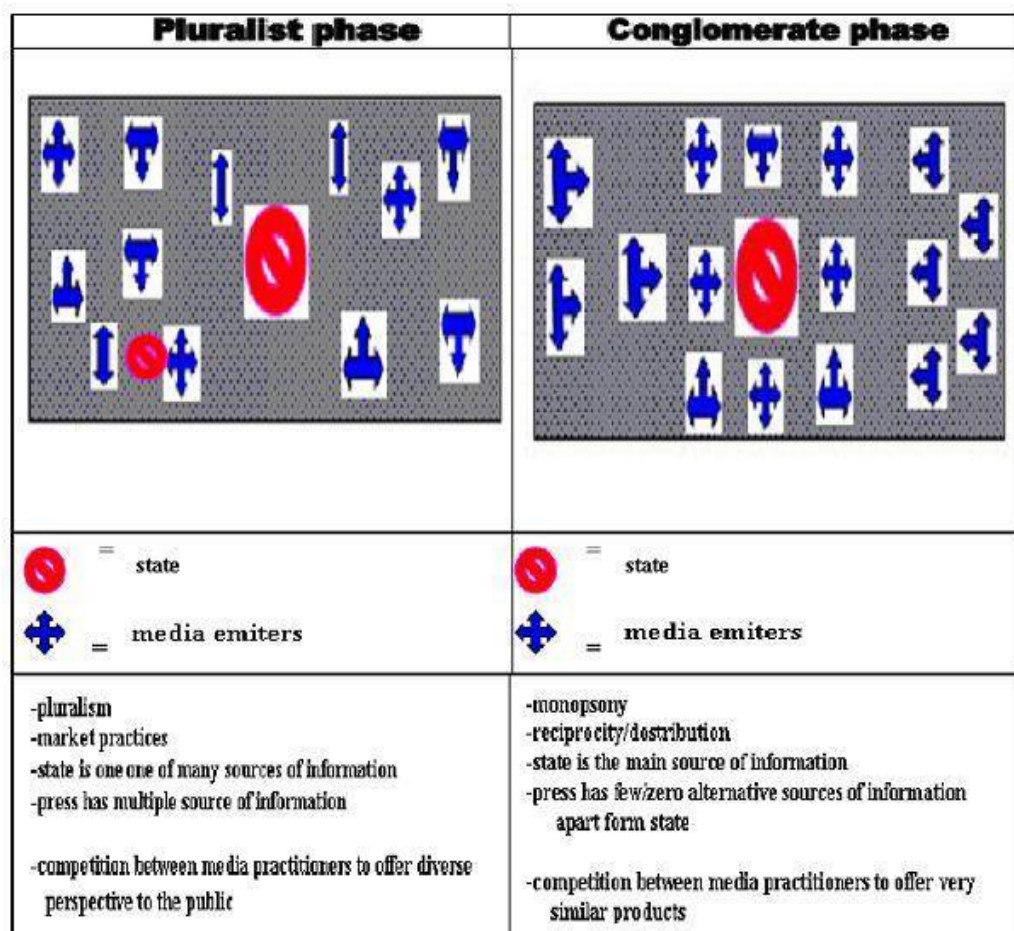


FIG. 2

According to the first scenario (that is the world of a perfect market) information seekers, be day individual citizens, journalists or media companies, have plenty of

³⁵ Francis Woehrling, "Christian Economics" *Journal of Markets & Morality* 4, no. 2 (Fall 2001), 199-216. Kathryn D. Blanchard, *The Protestant Ethic or the Spirit of Capitalism: Christians, Freedom, and Free Markets*, (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2010). Justin Emanuel Alexandru, Petru Ciprian Bradu, Alexandru Taşnadi, "The Great Transformation. The Formulation of New Models" *Theoretical and Applied Economics*, Volume XXII, No. 4 605 (Winter 2015): 321-327. Dr. Sigmund Wagner-Tsukamoto, "Ethical Principles of Old Testament Economics: Implications for the Teaching of Business Ethics", Working Paper, ULSM Leicester, University of Leicester, 2015

³⁶ Martha Fineman, Terence Dougherty (ed), *Feminism Confronts Homo Economicus: Gender, Law, and Society*, (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2005). Dennis J. Snower, "End of Homo economicus loom's", *The Japan Times*, Sept 23, 2014. See also in this regard the interview given by Sam Bowles. The Death of 'Homo Oeconomicus', Institute for New Economic Thinking, 19 June 2015, <http://ineteconomics.org/ideas-papers/interviews-talks/the-death-of-homo-oeconomicus>, accessed March 2, 2016, 10:13

information sources. Media broadcaster compete with one another for breaking news and ratings.

The second scenario describes a monopsonic world where there are plenty media emitters but only a few reliable sources, perhaps even one alone. Such things happen during great crisis or warfare situation. Market dynamic are replaced by distributive and reciprocity between the donor of information and the seeker, to use Polanyi's terminology. Pressed to outcompete their peers and rivals, media companies and journalists try to forge special relationship with the donors providing them with positive coverage.

The advent of air and ground operations in the Arabian Peninsula, placed military forces in a privileged position granting them an almost unrivaled monopoly over the terrain knowledge. Pentagon experts have learned the lesson of Vietnam and curbed the liberty of the press through several methods:

- special permits for journalists;
- pools created to cluster journalists and restrict them from roaming around³⁷;
- preference given to certain media broadcaster such as CNN;
- seducing the public with satellite images, beyond the capability reach of ordinary televisions, which showed a clean motion of the operation, free of casualties or other emotional issues not to chip away the enthusiasm of the audience.³⁸

The model proposed can also be construed in dialogue with different other schools of thought such as:

* John Zaller's views on public opinion. According to Zaller citizens tend to believe elites as long as the later agree to a unified message: "*Individuals will use positions of prominent elites as reference point, providing structure and guidance to opinions concerning war.*"³⁹

* Matthew Baum's structure of public opinion according to which a message has more chances to be believed when there a common ground between the emitter and audience. Such is a war situation when national interest is at stake and both elites and public share a strong common denominator.⁴⁰

* the communication theory of Douglas Kellner who underpins that media production reproduces class structure because the holders of telecommunication companies collude with political elites so as to manufacture consent.⁴¹

* the classic polyarchy introduced by Robert Dahl. More sophisticate than Kellner's, polyarchy does not locate power in a single center, but holds it to be scattered and shared by different actors.⁴²

Where does double movement fit here?

Base on everything sketched up until now, a future research agenda might explore if double movement takes public sphere between pluralist/polyarchic phase and

³⁷ The pool method has been instated after the intervention in Granada, 1983. For more on the same topic as well as on the history of military-media relations in the US see: Robert Davis II, *The US Army and the media in the 20th century*, (Kansas: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2011), 64-65

³⁸ Documentary: 20th Battlefields-Gulf War (1991), BBC/ Military Channel Production, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HMY_0iTk1qs, accessed March 2, 2016, 12:24, min.35:01

³⁹ Adam J.Berinsky, "Assuming the costs of war: events, elites, and American public support for military conflict", *The Journal of Politics*, Vol.69 (Nov.2007), 975-997, esp. 977

⁴⁰ Matthew Baum and Tim Groeling, What gets covered? How Media coverage of elite debate drives the really round- The flag phenomenon: 1979-1998 in Lori Cox Han, Diane J.Heith, *In the public domain. Presidents and the challenge of public leadership*, (New York: State University of New York Press, 2005), 49-75, esp. 54. Matthew A Baum, Philip B.Porter, *War and democratic constraint. How the public influence foreign policy*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 6, 10 and *passim*

⁴¹ Douglas Kellner, *The Persian Gulf TV War*, (Westview Press, 1992). The same idea was expressed through email correspondence to the author on January 23, 2016.

⁴² Robert A.Dahl, *Poliarhiile. Participare și opoziție*, traducere de Mihaela Sadovschi, prefață de Lucian-Dumitru Dîrdală, (Iași: Institutul European, 2000). For an obituary of Dahl's also relevant for future interdisciplinary endeavor see also: Mihai Zodian, "Poliarhia, reformismul și securitatea internațională", *Colocviu Strategic*, National Defence University "Carol I", No.3, March 2014

conglomerate phase, and if so, in what condition. At the same communication theories which already benefit from neoclassical modelation may take into consideration reciprocity and redistribution as forms of negotiations between emitters- journalists- media stakeholders- politics- audience etc.

Ex: one could explore if the cyclicity encountered in historical processes over long time (like Kondratieff waves) do also exist in the market media with regard :

→to property : periods of merger and acquisition when big companies rule followed by fragmentation periods dominated by small companies;

→ relation to political authority: periods when media is critical to political leaders swung by periods when overall media tends to back the agenda set by elites etc.

CONCLUSIONS

The present article hoped to be an exercise in method and strove to explore means to bring closer media studies and power diffusion within a given society. We have chosen the First Gulf War as case study and advanced the possibility of employing the sociology of Karl Polanyi to achieve that.

The writings of Polanyi has been sidelined for several decades. When rediscovered in the last quarter of the XXth century they has been strongly associated to leftleaning militantism. Perhaps would not be a bad idea to see them as the kernel for an interdisciplinary effort beset to bridge gaps and not only in ideological terms.

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