

## POLITICAL SCIENCE: THE PROBLEM OF IDENTITY OF THE DISCIPLINE. METATHEORETICAL REFLECTIONS

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**Summary.** Diagnosis of the identity crisis of political science as an academic discipline is the starting point in the article for reflection on the discipline's methodological condition. The paper consists of three parts. Part One discusses the institutional determinants of the science of politics in Poland and in the United States. Part Two presents the arguments ultimately leading to the definition of the science of politics as a *discursive platform*. Part Three explains the mechanisms responsible for the unification – in the form of the platform – of the science of politics. This takes place on two levels (treated as conjunctive or disjunctive in research practice): 1) as part of object methodologies of individual subdisciplines, which reject the positivist doctrine of 'pure facts' as well as the distinction between empirical theory and normative theory; 2) as part of research pragmatics – pragmatism and hermeneutics – which free political theory from metaphysical errors and set the standards of its scientificity.

**Key words:** science of politics, methodology of social sciences, discursive platform, transversal reason, pragmatism, hermeneutics

### INTRODUCTION

The present paper seeks to answer the question: what is the science of politics or political science? This is the question of a metascientific nature. To answer it exhaustively would require a vast study. In an essay, we cannot avoid simplifications. However, I choose to accept them for at least two reasons. Firstly, because in the Polish political science literature there are extremely few metatheoretical studies. Secondly, because I came to the conclusion that this state of research should be compared with its counterpart in the English-language literature. Given the fact that the size of the latter is truly impressive, I found it a mitigating circumstance to the extent that it will absolve me from both the charge of not having studied it exhaustively enough and from the sketchy form of my presentation.

The question posed here concerns applied science or the science whose purpose is to serve man through the methodical interpretation and rational explanation of what he/she experiences in the political reality and to help him/her understand his/her participation in the collective *form of life*, which is politics, and

thereby facilitate opening to the world and communication with others. The problem lies, however, in that politics is a highly complex and pluralistic sphere of human activity. Scientific reflection on it, therefore, must necessarily be also diversified. The more so that science itself is an ambiguous concept, understood and practiced in diverse ways, and governed by various conventions in the form of methodological rules. Specialists in general scientific methodology claim – and they have to be trusted in this – that there are no non-historical or universal criteria of scientificity. Therefore, by definition, there cannot be only one answer to our simple question. Nevertheless, for all these different, currently existing and prospectively possible answers, I can find a certain broad (in terms of description and explanation), collective category in the form of the metaphor of a *discursive platform*, which gives a special unity (synthesis) to the theoretical approaches and research disciplines that meet on it. The latter, which are essentially *subdisciplines* of political science, are sometimes called *science(s) of politics* or *political science*. The concept of *discursive platform* will allow me to give up the plural number to subsume all these subdisciplines under one *science* – a field of scientific writing, united by certain functional, linguistic (especially semantically) and epistemological/general-philosophical elements. While these ties are not too strong, they are effective enough to allow us in practice to justifiably apply the joint name of *science of politics* or *political science*.

The present paper is divided into three parts. Part One shows the institutional determinants of political science, which influence the way of understanding and pursuing it both in Poland and in the United States. Part Two reminds us of the double rationality of this discipline, combining theoretical and practical, descriptive and normative, and social and humanistic studies. Finally, Part Three presents strictly methodological reflections, focused on showing and explaining mechanisms that take part in the unification of political science in the form and on a scale of the *platform*.

#### SCIENCE IN THE FETTERS OF INSTITUTIONS

Political science is an academic discipline in an identity crisis. This is the case both in Poland and in the Western world: Europe and the USA. There are different reasons for this state of affairs at home and abroad: they partly overlap, and partly they have their local specific character both here and there.

One of the leading Polish political scientists, Czesław Mojsiewicz, in his 1996 report *Politologia w Polsce na etapie transformacji* (Political science in Poland at the stage of transformation), says that this discipline is a part of the humanities made up of sixteen ‘specialties’<sup>1</sup>. In the same report, its author, when

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<sup>1</sup> These are: 1) international relations, 2) political theory, 3) history of political thought, 4) political doctrines, 5) contemporary political history, 6) political sociology, 7) social politics, 8) economic

discussing the condition of scholarly studies conducted in this field in Poland, stresses new dangers they are facing today – new ones at the stage of transformation of the political system, and therefore with no ideological and political constraints, which were the determinant of science in Poland in the cold war era. Characteristically enough, Mojsiewicz sees these dangers from the standpoint of the functioning of the state institution that decides who deserves (and who does not) to be awarded the postdoctoral degree (habilitated doctor) or the title of professor in political science. Revealing the criteria used for this purpose by the Central Qualifying Commission for Degrees and Titles<sup>2</sup>, he names as the first of these dangers „the blurring of boundaries between scientific disciplines related to political science, mainly political history, the science of state and law, and sociology versus political science”<sup>3</sup>. This type of ascertainment, understandable from the standpoint of a decision-making institution in the sphere of science, which, by nature, is governed by the need to maximize formalization of knowledge, is surprising from the methodological point of view. How should we understand it then? Are the sciences ‘closely’ related to political science, called ‘specialties’ earlier in the text, each taken separately, something different from political science itself? What would it be without them then? If, however, they are its constituents, how is it possible that they can, let us say this, ‘deconstruct’ it, deprive it of distinctive features. Perhaps the concept itself of ‘science of politics/political science’ was clandestinely treated as hypostasis, i.e. some ideal construction, independent of research practice? There are more and more doubts about it. One thing seems certain, though: the rationality of the decision-making institution concerning political science clashes with the rationality of scientific cognition employed (also) in politics.

In other words, the Central Commission’s criteria are irrational from the methodological point of view, according to which science cannot essentially be controlled because originally it denotes the process of creative cognition<sup>4</sup>. The criteria are (can be) rational from the standpoint of theory or sociology of science, which apply the term science to the whole field of culture consisting of all the *objective results of cognition* in the form of methods, theories, institutions,

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politics, 9) political geography, 10) political philosophy, 11) political psychology, 12) theory of state, 13) theory of communication, 14) political systems, 15) international economy, 16) press systems.

<sup>2</sup> This has been its full name since 2003. Observe, incidentally, that Mojsiewicz himself belongs to the elite circle of its members divided, by the discipline key, into permanent sections elected democratically by all senior (independent) academics, employed at the appropriate faculties of all higher education institutions in Poland. The institutional classification of sciences into fields and disciplines within their scope comes from the Central Commission. Thus, for example, according to the Commission’s classification, humanities is a *field*, while political science is a *discipline*.

<sup>3</sup> Cz. Mojsiewicz, *Politologia w Polsce na etapie transformacji* (Political science in Poland at the stage of transformation) [in:] *idem, Od polityki do politologii* (From politics to political science), Toruń 2004, pp. 230–231, 237.

<sup>4</sup> S. Kamiński, *Pojęcie nauki i klasyfikacja nauk* (The concept of science and classification of sciences), Lublin 1981, p. 18.

etc. This is a perspective on the practice of pursuing science and the social, organizational, or financial (etc.) mechanisms governing it. *In practice*, the 'rationality' of political science as an academic discipline is determined institutionally in Poland. It consists in the conformance with the *interests and views* of a group of people who perform the role of *gatekeepers*, who decide directly or indirectly about filling the professorial posts at the political science faculties at universities and colleges. The *practical* answer to the question 'what is political science' corresponds from their perspective with Paul K. Feyerabend's description: „science is what I do, what my colleagues do, and what the likes of us together with the majority of society regard as 'scientific' ”<sup>5</sup>.

And Czesław Mojsiewicz answers the question: who is a political scientist?, formulating the following three criteria: 1) self-identification with political science, by which he understands a political science teaching-research institution (faculty, institute, department/chair at a university or college), 2) completion of a political science degree program or a related one (law), and a doctoral or post-doctoral degree, 3) scholarly achievements that are the grounds for awarding professorship in „humanities on the basis of achievements in political science”<sup>6</sup>. This is a classic tautological definition in the institutional version: all the three criteria are purely formal in the institutional sense. In short, a political scientist/political science is one who/which has a set of properties that allow him/it to seek this appellation, conferred upon him/it by persons acting in the name of a particular social institution functioning (in a given country, place, and time) with the status and under the aegis of political science.

As I said at the beginning, this situation of political science is by no means only a Polish *specificum*. It also looks the same in other countries, including the oldest democracy or the United States, where, naturally, the analogous function of gatekeepers is not exercised by any federal/state commission. This status is held however by the leading organization called the American Political Science Association. It publishes the *American Political Science Review* (number one out of 79 periodicals in this field according to the criterion of being cited as announced by the *Journal Citation Report* for 2004), which, alongside the *American Journal of Political Science* (which in turn advertises as the most widely-

<sup>5</sup> P.K. Feyerabend, *Przeciw metodzie*, transl. by S. Wiertlewski, Wrocław 2001, p. 240. (*Against Method*, London, Verso 1993).

<sup>6</sup> Cz. Mojsiewicz, *Problemy programowe i kadrowe politologii w wyższych szkołach niepublicznych* (Problems with the curricula and teaching staff in non-public higher education institutions) [in:] *idem, Od polityki do politologii* (From politics to political science), p. 260. One more conclusion by this author:

The future of political science in Poland are the academic teachers educated at the faculties (institutes) of political science and bound to their workplace by doctoral and postdoctoral degrees in political science. This is the goal we have to reach in order to build the scientific level of the political science discipline and avoid dispersing political science among other disciplines in social sciences and humanities. We must follow the example of other scientific disciplines on the requirements who can be a lawyer, historian, philosopher, economist, etc. (*ibidem*, pp. 260/261).

read political science journal in the USA) is regarded as the most important periodical in this domain. In *practice* the two periodicals determine the criteria of scientificity of political science studies in the USA and they are believed to have a *de facto* decisive impact on the employment policy at US *political science departments*. They do so in an arbitrary way, promoting first of all positivist methods in research, which are essentially oriented towards generalization and statistics. Figures show for example that in the AJPS 86% of papers in 1975–1979 were written with a behaviorist approach or used the perspective of rational choice theory, in 1997–2001 the respective coefficient being 71%, while in the APSR the percentage of positivist papers during the same periods was 76 and 63%.

The domination and privileged status of positivism, especially behaviorism and the rational choice theory, in American political science (including international relations; the same phenomenon being also observable to a lesser extent in the UK) are criticized by many. Some of them do not so much challenge the importance of positivist studies as they mildly point out the need to accept epistemological pluralism in social sciences. They remind us that not all social relations can be directly observed and presented in figures, that empirical ‘results’ can be interpreted in many ways, depending on the theoretical assumptions adopted by a research scholar<sup>7</sup>. Other critics of this state of affairs point out the paradoxes accompanying it. Ido Oren, when writing a history of American political science in his book *Our Enemies and US: America's Rivalries and Making of Political Science* (2003), exposes its ideological leanings entangled in scientific rhetoric. Now American political science, making the picture of itself, insists that it is an ‘objective science independent of its national origin and historical context’ and at the same time a science committed to ‘freedom and democracy’. This involvement, Oren believes, undermines its objectivity, which he demonstrates especially by the example of modifications, which political science made in the content of the definition of democracy. At each stage of its history since the World War II, it emphasized similarities between the US and its allies, the similarities that are expected to distinguish it from the competitors of America. It turns out, however, that they are employed instrumentally, serving to legitimate US foreign policy, providing it with the key concept of ‘democratic’ peace<sup>8</sup>, which in reality denotes the international order based on the terms imposed by the US. Sometimes it is directly called *pax Americana*. Another paradox in the history of American political science is seen in connection with the thought of Isaiah Berlin, also important for itself. In his main 1962 essay with the characteristic title question *Does Political Theory Still Exist?* Berlin maintains that political theory will never become science because of the nature of

<sup>7</sup> See: D. Marsh and H. Savigny, *Political science as a broad church: the search for a pluralist discipline*, „Politics”, 2004, vol. 24 (3), pp. 155–168.

<sup>8</sup> Shown after: R. Adcock, M. Bevir, *The history of political science*, „Political Studies Review”, 2005, vol. 3, pp. 11–12.

questions it asks. Among others, he meant normative questions, which, he says, remain 'obstinately philosophical' while, he believes, what is „characteristic of specifically philosophical questions is that they do not ... satisfy conditions required by an independent science, the principal among which is that the path to their solution must be implicit in their very formulation". This refers to the conditions set forth in the positivist methodology of studies, satisfied both by formal and empirical sciences but, as Berlin holds, not satisfied by political theories. Forty years later, American scholar Ruth W. Grant finds that in the past period political theory developed much faster in the USA at political science departments, where 81% professional political theorists are employed today, than at departments of philosophy<sup>9</sup>.

Let us return to the situation in Poland. It resembles the American situation in that Polish representatives of social sciences also exhibit positivist preferences. The essential difference appears to be that these preferences in Poland are generally of Marxist provenance. Therefore, this is, as it were, second-hand positivism, inherited from the scientistic Marxist scenery. It still shows its vitality today: from the dissemination of bizarre if methodologically naive maxims, like for example the one about the scholarly text, which must not be written in the first person, to the ultra-optimistic belief that political science is following only one path to scientificity, defined by the dialectical triad: from the stage of *epistemological eclecticism* (the rise of the discipline in the pre-theoretic stage: intuitive association of phenomena) to the stage of *epistemological heterogenism* (integration of individual sciences around one discipline, which is the science of politics) to *epistemological autogenism*: political science becomes a theoretical, autonomous discipline, integrated on the basis of uniform and specific assumptions. When this idea dawned on Polish political scientists in 1982 (historically this was the start of martial law in Poland), they then answered consistently that those assumptions, certainly, could be satisfied by „first of all, the philosophy of historical materialism, which was a general conception of society as a whole”<sup>10</sup>. This pattern of the discipline's development, attractive in its simplicity and based on the conviction that analytical-empirical methods of natural sciences can and should be applied in social sciences, outlived its era. It can be found intact as late as in 1998 in one of the best studies in Polish on the problems of political decision making. Having referred to it, the explanation follows that „as a result of such an evolution, biochemistry arose, for example”<sup>11</sup>, then the reader be-

<sup>9</sup> R.W. Grant, *Political theory, political science, and politics*, „Political Theory”, 2002, vol. 30, no. 4, p. 577.

<sup>10</sup> M.A. Faliński, K. Misiura, *Przełom teoretyczny w badaniu polityki – istota i etapy procesu* (Theoretical breakthrough in research into politics – the essence and stages of the process) [in:] J.P. Georgica (ed.), *Wprowadzenie do teorii polityki* (Introduction to political theory), vol. I, Warsaw 1982, pp. 44–47.

<sup>11</sup> Z. J. Pietraś, *Decydowanie polityczne* (Political decision-making), Warsaw 1998, p. 14.

comes immersed in excellent reading based almost entirely on ... the American (positivist) literature on the subject!

The spirit of Marxism is therefore still taking revenge even, as we see, in this unthinking and apparently innocent (theatrical) way, on Polish humanities tormented by ideology, trying to arouse in us irrational fears of 'metaphysics', dooming to infamy all qualitative studies – studies of the subjective aspect of social reality. All these in order to promote 'dialectics' – only one analytical-empirical model of science, the only one worthy of this name. (Empirical studies were traditionally commissioned and funded in Poland by the institutions of the communist state. The academic circles even today have retained the attitude of submission to the authorities – the successively changing political parties at the helm of the state. This *subjective* remark can be made 'scientific' and treated *favorably* as the effect of the participating observation technique employed by its author). In this way, the aforementioned 'spirit' also slows down the free development of political science, causing it to try to institutionally ensure imaginary epistemological purity for itself, which is also demanded by Czesław Mojsiewicz (referred to above). I am afraid, however, that these are futile efforts, doomed, as we shall see, to face unrelenting resistance both on the part of the character of political science itself and its area of subject matter: extremely complex, requiring different research perspectives and diverse conceptions of science associated with them. Both these elements together make theoretico-scientific reflection on political science a difficult and unrewarding occupation. This is evidenced, for example, by comprehensive, usually joint studies compiled in Poland, under the heading 'Introduction to the science of state and politics' or 'Fundamentals of political science'. They lack any general metatheoretical reflection that would show at least some pretense of integration of political science<sup>12</sup>.

The question about the condition and identity of contemporary political science inspires, however, systematic reflection initiated with an almost regular frequency in the English-speaking countries. The collective self-reflection of political science takes place there more or less every decade under the auspices of the already mentioned American Political Science Association<sup>13</sup>, the organization founded in 1903, currently with over fifteen thousand members from eighty countries. For understandable historical reasons, Poland obviously does not have such traditions<sup>14</sup>.

The Anglo-American example confirms my belief that the aforementioned difficulty and unrewarding nature of meta-political science reflection does not

<sup>12</sup> See for example: B. Szmulik and M. Żmigrodzki (eds), *Wprowadzenie do nauki o państwie i polityce* (Introduction to the science of state and politics), Lublin 2002; K.A. Wojtaszczyk and W. Jakubowski (eds), *Spółeczeństwo i polityka. Podstawy nauk politycznych* (Society and politics. Fundamentals of political sciences), Warsaw 2002.

<sup>13</sup> See: R. Adcock, M. Bevir, *op. cit.*, pp. 1–16.

<sup>14</sup> Although we have the Polish Political Science Society in this country, its stature and scholarly impact are far smaller than that of its American counterpart.

mean that it is impossible. Employing the Anglo-American assistance, therefore, I shall seek to demonstrate this below, in my own way, fully aware of all my limitations, which should probably also include my philosophical education. I hope at this point that the presented theoretico-scientific argumentation will be able to neutralize not only post-Marxist prejudices and misconceptions among political scientists, but also the (far more serious) fear of the loss of identity of their discipline. Ultimately, the point is that they should accept its specificity.

### DOUBLE RATIONALITY

The science of politics is determined on two sides: both by its subject and object. This double determination translates into tension that arises between reason and reality, i.e. between our notions or images of ideal life and social organization, and the realities, the practice of social life with its limitations and constraints. The task of science, traditionally understood as the domain of ideal concepts, is to legitimate practice (some, as we will see, have serious doubts about this), which denotes here concrete political orders. The main problem with the accomplishment of this task in modern times lies, it appears, in keeping a balance between the two sides: between facticity and validity. Overconfidence in empirical studies is harmful to practical science just as is too much trust in intellectual constructs that connote ideal legal and economic communities of free and equal citizens. One must admit that the latter arouse more concerns, also in the context of the problem of identity of political science. Intellectualization/rationalization is usually (ultimately) associated here with the destructive tendency towards metaphysical thinking. When, for example, Ian Shapiro, a Yale University political scientist, asks himself the question today: what's wrong with political science and what to do about it?, he sees the reason for this state of affairs precisely in this tendency – our intellectual inclination to look for the foundations. He describes it as follows:

It seems to be an endemic obsession of political scientists to believe that there must be general explanations of all political phenomena, indeed to subsume them into a single theoretical program. Theory-drivenness kicks in when the pursuit of generality comes at the expense of the pursuit of empirical validity. 'Positive' theorists sometimes assert that it is an appropriate division of labor for them to pursue generality while others worry about validity<sup>15</sup>.

That controlling through theories, i.e. by rationality outside politics, which is harmful to knowledge about it (to understanding politics) has been known for a long time. Michael Oakeshott, reflecting in his 1947 text on the rationality of both politics itself and studies of it, comes to the conclusion that wrong is he who tries to reduce all knowledge of politics to techniques – to knowledge that

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<sup>15</sup> I. Shapiro, *Problems, methods, and theories in the study of politics, or what's wrong with political science and what to do about it*, „Political Theory”, 2002, vol. 30, no. 4, p. 605.



can be formulated „in the form of rules, principles, instructions, or maxims i.e. in most general terms, in the form of propositions”. Politics reduced to engineering is, for the English scholar, „politics of the felt need”. Therefore, for politics, the model situation of political life is a condition of deficiency, or more exactly, a condition of morbidity: a series of crises that need repairing. This is why it creates demand for genuine ‘scholars’: economists, psychologists and other experts in particular selected problems, who, however, use one universal language of quantitative studies. Oakeshott says that this is a vision of politics of excellence and homogeneity, according to which only the best solutions are taken into account – it does not recognize accidental, local determinants, and there is no room for diversity in it. We should add that rationalism, in the sense given to it by Oakeshott, is the source of totalitarianism in politics. The problem is that any practical activity, in this writer’s view, assumes two kinds of knowledge: alongside technical knowledge, it additionally contains practical knowledge. And the latter, as we know from elsewhere, is not reflective, it cannot be constrained within some rules, it is an art acquired in practice, requiring involvement, imagination, and finally, courage. Without it, it is impossible not only to learn any skill but also to pursue „genuine scholarly activities”. Between political science and the other social sciences there is a quantitative rather than qualitative difference: Oakeshott believes that it is precisely political science in which the double character is vested to the extreme degree, associated with the combination of the two kinds of knowledge. We could express it like this: political science is a praxeological knowledge combining two components: scientific, i.e. technical knowledge, rational in the narrow sense, and humanistic, i.e. practical knowledge, adopting the broad sense of reason. The former gives us an illusion of certainty and self-sufficiency. The latter, however, seems imprecise, uncertain, „based only on belief and probability rather than truth”. It is the domain of the power of judgment, or, as Oakeshott says, it can be expressed by means of taste and connoisseurship<sup>16</sup>.

*Taste and connoisseurship* were used by the author to define the form of reason that we use every day. Its (systematic and explanatory) extension is the science of politics – the field of social life, sometimes perceived, as we can see, even as the least suitable to be treated in a rationalist way. To pursue it thus requires not only scientific reason – instrumental, calculative, but also (according to some: essentially, strict proportions between the two types of reason cannot be established) practical reason, traditionally called taste, *fronesis*, prudence or power of judgment. Both these types of reason actually find their place in the etymology itself of the phrase *theory of politics* (or *political theory*), thus making it an oxymoron (and thereby confirming Oakeshott’s observation about the double nature of political science, double to the ‘highest degree’). Now, the Greek *bios*

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<sup>16</sup> M. Oakeshott, *Rationalism in politics* (1947) [in:] *Rationalism in politics and other essays*, Liberty Fund, Indianapolis 1991, pp. 5–42.

*politikos*, like the Latin *vita activa* denote the area of human affairs, changing and accidental by nature. The Greek *theoria* relates, on the other hand, to intellectual cognition, which expresses that which is eternal and unchanging, that which fills in Plato's world of ideas. Theoretical cognition is the result of the mind's 'eye', the contemplative viewing all by oneself of the abstract, universal order of things. One clashes with the other. Theory always aims at elevating that which is here and now to the level of an absolute being, observable only through the mind's eye. Positivism, which disqualifies metaphysics, is, according to its critics, an extension of the ideal of scientific cognition, specified in metaphysical tradition as *theoria*. It is from there, starting with Plato, that traditional political theory (like the theory of each kind of studies) derives its model: *polis* is the reflection of the universe – in either, the issue is harmony and order. The fundamental issue of political theory is therefore the problem of social order. Thus traditionally, as Adriana Cavarero observes, political theory consists in theorizing politics, which essentially denotes 'depoliticizing' of politics, i.e. reduction of politics to the principles of *theoria*. The present-day political practice (the crisis of politics caused mainly by the conceptual crisis associated with the disappearance of the category of national state in the age of globalization) demands that such a theory be revised, that it return to political practice. In other words, as the Italian author suggests, it demands that theory be 'politicized'<sup>17</sup>.

A chance of this revision is seen today in practical reason. Just as scientific reason is sometimes criticized and charged with detaching theory from politics, with non-political authorization of theory supporting a fundamentalist political culture, practical reason is treated as a tool for making normative propositions that avoid the fundamentalist separation from politics. It is practical reason that, according to some scholars, is to enable creation of 'applied political theory'<sup>18</sup>. The fundamental difficulty of such a theory lies in that it is expected to be based on the conception of reason, which is the source of such norms of activity of individual and collective (state-social) entities that motivate those entities in the manner free from coercion and from the imposition of content-specified orientations binding on all. It appears that such criteria, under the present socio-cultural conditions, which I am going to discuss in Part Three, are best fulfilled by *transversal reason*<sup>19</sup>: it is responsible for transcending the separatist image of rationalities governing the human world. It is therefore primarily interested not in content, not in *essences* – i.e. concepts, theories, intellectual representations – of politics, economy, morality, or religion but in *coincidences/intersections and transitions*

<sup>17</sup> A. Cavarero, *Politicizing theory*, „Political Theory”, 2002, vol. 30, no. 4, pp. 506–512.

<sup>18</sup> J. Simons, *The exile of political theory: the lost homeland of legitimization*, „Political Studies”, 1995, vol. XLIII, pp. 689–690.

<sup>19</sup> On this form of reason, see: W. Welsch, *Vernunft. Die zeitgenössische Vernunftkritik und das Konzept der transversalen Vernunft*, Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp 1995. See also my remarks on the subject inter alia [in:] J. Hudzik, *Rozum, wolność, odpowiedzialność* (Reason, freedom, responsibility), Lublin 2001, pp. 239–244.

between them. Transversal reason is an instrument functionally strong and efficient enough to help us move every day between politics, economy, morality ... without mixing the orders of things (learnedly called rationalities, discourses or paradigms) on a local (community, group, or national) scale and supralocal: international, transnational, and global. Political science as an extension of *transversal* reason is thus practiced nowadays in an interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary manner, its subdisciplines therefore intersect and overlap, and assume one's ability to move not only from one to another but also at their intersections and between them. For that reason, in research practice, it is impossible to treat in entire isolation from one another for example political theory and political doctrines or history of political thought; international relations and international economy, political sociology and (that which is now called) *cultural studies*; communication theory and cultural semiotics.

I am presenting theoretico-scientific reflection, which thus sustains cooperation in the area of political science. The issue, in most general terms, is cooperation between the aforesaid technical knowledge and practical knowledge or, to put it differently, between social studies, scientistically oriented, and humanistic studies. The common formal object of either are relations – all kinds of relations.

Social studies, namely, discover cause-and-effect relationships formulated as general laws. For example, the political-science model of decision-making analysis looks then as follows: knowing the content of a decision and implementation actions taken on its basis, 'in accordance with the direction of fallible reductive thinking', we seek reasons (causes) for the decision and, on the one hand, laws governing internal political processes, as well as, on the other hand, laws governing international processes<sup>20</sup>. It should also be remembered that because of the ambiguity and conventionality of the terms 'cause' and 'effect', the methodology of social science today employs other categories, such as the concepts of sufficient condition and necessary condition – the view, according to which scientific laws describe the sufficient or necessary conditions for the occurrence of given phenomena, is called conditionalism<sup>21</sup>.

The purpose of humanistic studies is, however, to establish the meaning and significance of phenomena by means of interpretive and historical methods. Meaning also has a relational nature: something it means to somebody. Likewise with significance: the significance of something can be established in relation to what and why this something means to us. The answers to such questions change depending on who, where, and when asks them; they are thus never final and universally significant<sup>22</sup>. Oakeshott drew attention to the special presence (to the 'highest extent') in political science of knowledge acquired in practice, some-

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<sup>20</sup> Z.J. Pietraś, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>21</sup> On causal explanation, see: B. Krauz-Mozer, *Teorie polityki* (Political theories), Warsaw 2005, pp. 121–124.

<sup>22</sup> R.W. Grant, *op. cit.*, p. 581.

times called 'art': as such it eludes general laws. There are serious consequences of this practical character of political science. This can be seen both on its language and explanation levels. The language of political science is close to the language of political action, just as the language of ethics is close to morality. For when we talk about politics we mean the domain of intentional, conscious, reflective human behaviors. Without taking this fact into consideration, i.e. without making an effort to understand the self-understanding of political actors, all scholarly reflection on them would be inadequate. Which is why political scientists of different orientation agree that political theory at bottom 'is an extension of a natural, daily activity'<sup>23</sup>; that it is a „methodological extension and critical clarification of the already reflective and problematized character of historically situated practices of practical reasoning”<sup>24</sup>. Even 'postmetaphysical' discursive theory assumes (entirely metaphysically!) that its fundamental communication rationality is 'set in the linguistic *telos* of agreement', which guides anyone who uses *natural language*<sup>25</sup>.

This relationship between facticity and validity (that which is binding or normative) means that the world of politics is always understandable and predictable *to some extent*; that general concepts used in the field of political science demonstrate in the empirical material – in the investigated decisions, actions, or phenomena, determined by context and circumstances – some regularities and causal mechanisms. For that reason we cannot obviously speak about cause and effect under these conditions in the absolute or ideal sense like in natural history. Social science seeks causal laws, understanding them only as a methodological rule rather than an absolutely binding paradigm. Politicians follow diverse interests and motivations, owing to which, especially in democracy, they take different stances in given cases. Therefore, in order to understand them, to feel their attitudes and motivations, it is not enough to have general knowledge only. To understand the whole of political life, political choices, reasons for making them and probable consequences, requires therefore a synthesis of scientific approaches (once subsumed under nomothetic sciences) and humanistic (idiographic) ones, i.e. a synthesis of both causal and interpretive explanations, connected with reflections on their meaning and significance. The dividing line between the two kinds of investigations is, as Ruth W. Grant says, *permeable*. And the writer goes on to explain:

The significance of something may well include its causal impact. Political theory as an enterprise assumes that interpretations, conceptual regimes, judgments of significance, and ideas of all

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 588.

<sup>24</sup> J. Tully, *Political philosophy as critical activity*, „Political Theory”, 2002, vol. 30, no. 4, p. 544.

<sup>25</sup> J. Habermas, *Faktyczność i obowiązywanie. Teoria dyskursu wobec zagadnień prawa i demokratycznego państwa prawnego*, transl. by A. Romaniuk and R. Marszałek, Warsaw 2005, p. 17. (*Faktizität und Geltung. Beiträge zur diskursiven Theorie des Rechts und des demokratischen Rechtsstaats*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/Main 1992).

kinds are themselves both causes and effects. (...) In other words, the study of politics needs both to seek general laws to explain the causes of political behavior and to develop interpretations of the meaning and significance of political events and conceptual regimes to form evaluative judgments of them. Political studies have both scientific and humanistic aims<sup>26</sup>.

Acceptance of the methodological significance of the aforementioned cooperation in both types of studies in the field of political science allows the political scientist to consciously, competently (and it would be good if without fear of institutional sanctions) utilize various methods and techniques appropriate to the object and goal of investigations. As far as the object is concerned, it is becoming increasingly synergetic today, it requires diverse approaches entering together the area of political science. For example, try to ponder the phenomenon of state and authority under the conditions of so-called information society. To understand it requires studies in sociology, science of public organization, theory of organization and management, and media theory.

#### SCIENCE IDENTICAL ON THE PLATFORM SCALE

I propose here theoretico-scientific reflection, which is intended to serve to strengthen the belief in the need to conduct comprehensive studies as part of political science. I assume at this point that a political scientist can locate his discipline in the system of sciences, which reflects the actual state of the unifying ordering of knowledge. The system of sciences that make up political science is based on comparative methodology providing the grasp of the whole of science and creating a wide *discursive platform*, on which diverse specialists meet and conduct studies both within their (usually/institutionally and/or methodologically) specified disciplines, telling one another about their results, and between these disciplines and at their intersections – so-called inter- and transdisciplinary studies<sup>27</sup>.

In the case of political science we are dealing with a varied discipline, made up of jointly occurring subdisciplines, closely interconnected, mutually complementary in respect of 1) the subject matter, 2) tasks, and 3) fragmentariness of the types of cognition. In the first case there is complementation of objects of scientific cognition having a general (e.g. political theory, political philosophy) and particular (economic politics, social policy) character, and a qualitative (political theory, theory of state) and quantitative (international economy) character. Regarding the tasks: social politics, theory of state, political sociology and others are praxeological sciences aiming at practical application, seeking optimum means to reach specific practical ends, constituting values such as e.g. democracy or welfare state. Besides them, there are also theoretical sciences, in the normative, axiological sense, which seek justification why certain values should

<sup>26</sup> R.W. Grant, *op. cit.*, pp. 589–590.

<sup>27</sup> S. Kamiński, *op. cit.*, p. 257.

be implemented, why one should act one way rather than another in politics. This is especially political philosophy (which, obviously, understands the notion of justification itself in different ways: metaphysical, pragmatic, linguistic). Finally, political sciences complement one another in respect of the fragmentariness of utilized types of cognition, different in the case of quantitative and qualitative studies, historical and systematic studies (political history and theory of international relations), descriptive and explanatory studies (political geography and political sociology), or with analytical and synthesis studies.

It follows therefrom that there are no formal, procedural foundations of unity for political science. Such (informal) factors as the object, tasks, and fragmentariness of cognition do not and consequently cannot (despite the expectations of the Central Qualifying Commission members and editors of the aforementioned American periodicals) bind political science strictly enough to avoid blurring the boundaries between its subdisciplines. To confirm my suppositions I will refer to the remarks of the methodologist Barbara Krauz-Mozer:

Political science is a synthesis of many disciplines, often with different, diversified object methodologies, and it deals with everything that is of political significance. This goal is too broad and ambitious for political science to be treated as a single separate discipline with its own methodology, hence this name is used with some exaggeration. But it is owing to this that in political science, like in no other discipline, there is revealed the fundamental unity regarding the object of study in social sciences, followed by common research problems – these two are analyzed and possibly solved by methodology *sensu largo*. Thus, whatever important is established by general methodology of sciences pertaining to the conditions of cognition in one of the social disciplines is also significant for all the others<sup>28</sup>.

What is so important that general methodology of sciences finds concerning political science? That it is above all a discipline of multi-faceted studies, today referred to as inter- and transdisciplinary or network studies, conducted with various methods. That in most cases these studies are in a functional interrelationship, or one that consists in that pursuing one discipline facilitates practicing another, that one creates the conceptual apparatus utilized in another, that it draws heuristic or illustrative models from it. Which is why, in my view, the following general methodological reflection can apply to political science, to the whole discipline and its particular subdisciplines:

What seems paradoxical is that the diversity itself of an individual discipline is an element that binds it stronger with the whole knowledge. The variety of problems in some science or methods used in solving it causes this science to be closer to other sciences according to the affinity of individual problems and methods. Which is why so-called transitional, intermediate, intersected, or borderline etc. disciplines not only do away with clear-cut borderlines and isolation but they also help find the 'common interdisciplinary language'<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> B. Krauz-Mozer, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

<sup>29</sup> S. Kamiński, *op. cit.*, p. 255; also on the aspects and forms of unification, see: *ibidem* pp. 254–255.

This is the case with political science: it is methodologically indeterminate and open-ended in the sense that the number of its subdisciplines is not limited – new ones keep arising and will do so (e.g. biopolitics or European studies) in response to the currently changing cultural-social-political reality: to its non-transparency, complexity, plurality, and homogeneity. That is why political science so understood is described with the category of identity defined by means of the term ‘insert’ in social studies. Insert identity is one that is always open to new proposals of self-definition, always calculating what is the determinant of its ‘being itself’.

In order to scientifically describe the reality in question and explain it in a *practical way, i.e. one that allows us to prognosticate about its future, supervise and control its processes*, it is necessary not only to redefine traditional political categories but also (humbly) accept the fact that the degree of accuracy of our cognition of them depends – and nothing has changed about this indeed since Aristotle and Oakeshott – on the *nature of the object of cognition*, while today we also know that it depends on the instrument, or the language, that we use to cognize it.

And there are now languages (of political science) aplenty because the object itself is extremely (increasingly – this is a process) complex, dynamic, variable, synergistic, thereby allowing us even more so to show „the truth, only roughly and in general outline”<sup>30</sup>. Almost twenty-five centuries after its emergence, this ancient maxim means the same to us today as it did at its beginning: that social science is a special – methodological, explanatory – extension of reason, used in everyday life. This reflection still holds true for political science.

Since the expectations that political science will reach the stage of *epistemological autogenism* are, as we have established, an ideological illusion only (let us repeat – speaking of its own ‘methodology’ in political science is somewhat exaggerated), we have to accept that we are dealing with a synthesis of its kind of many disciplines. Its specificity is a derivative of this insert identity: for that reason it is a rather loose whole because, as has been said, it is linked by (mostly) functional connections. There are no hierarchical, structural interrelations among them. Their suggestive image can therefore be the *platform*, upon which different *discourses* meet, or (in a spirit of Michel Foucault) the ways of producing knowledge through language, or, to put it differently: the ways of giving a meaning to political phenomena and practices. This is how a number of political science subdisciplines behave, which themselves are essentially *transitional, intersected, borderline disciplines without clear-cut boundaries between one another*, using *interdisciplinary language*, always shared only partially.

It is as a discursive platform that political science is naturally exposed to the incessant concern about its unsinkability – the concern manifested in continuously

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<sup>30</sup> Aristotle, *Etyka nikomachejska* (Nicomachean ethics), transl. by D. Gromska, Warsaw 1982, pp. 5–6 (1094 b, 11–25).

repeated questions addressed to it about its own integrity and stability. In other words, the concern about the bond – the community of language, approaches and research objectives that bind into one the material, on which floats the ‘wreckage’ coming from other objects floating in the ocean of humanities and social sciences. The standpoint according to which one can unequivocally determine the criteria, necessary and sufficient conditions, for a given type of cognition to be political science cognition, is sometimes termed *naturalizing*: it assumes that politics is a defined object discipline, established regardless of our experience (in this sense – natural), which can be intellectually grasped/discovered (with the mind’s eye like in Plato). The intellectual categories thus arisen allow us only then to make political reality the object of empirical studies. This view has its sources in the prejudice of hypostasis: politics becomes ontologized, all phenomena associated with it becoming seemingly natural. Then, for example, the object of political science decision analysis will be *political reality as such* rather than views, interests, conditions, or the vision of reality of decision-makers<sup>31</sup>.

We deal with the problem of identity of political science when doubts arise about the possibility of abstracting the bond that holds it together, extracting it in its pure state. Then one calls into question the existence both of some separate object discipline and an intellectual program that would comprehend it. Under such circumstances there emerges the vision of a *discursive platform* – a labile object, difficult to identify because it has the *insert* identity. Certainly, one can live on it permanently but also reside temporarily: enter it legally and just as legally leave it. No wonder such an image frightens ‘natural dwellers’ – the permanent residents of the platform, who, deep-rooted aboard it, are hardly inclined either to perceive or call their abode in this way. And they accuse of betrayal (of the discipline) those who leave the platform, and of sabotage – all newcomers.

I assume that the acceptance of the platform-like shape of political science stems from methodological maturity, from understanding that such a form of unification of sciences is characteristic of applied/praxeological knowledge, with ambitions not only to describe and explain but also to supervise and control that which occurs as a result of purposeful political actions, and to forecast their effects. Which is why all these properties at once justify (to use a somewhat different language of description) the treatment of political science as a discipline with a nature of an ‘unstable compound’, which is in fact „a complex set of practices, whose unity, such as it is, is given as much by historical accident and institutional convenience as by a coherent intellectual rationale” (Stefan Collini)<sup>32</sup>. Therefore, to show the methodological identity/distinction of such a discipline is, by

<sup>31</sup> Such a perspective that naturalizes political science as a scholarly discipline is believed to prevail for example in the monograph devoted to the British studies of 20th-century politics [in:] (eds) J. Harward, B. Barry, A. Brown, *The British Study of Politics in the Twentieth Century*, Oxford University Press, 1999. See also: R. Adcock, M. Bevir, *op. cit.*, pp. 3–4. On political decision-making in this respect see: Z. J. Pietraś, *op. cit.*, pp. 39–40.

<sup>32</sup> Quoted after, R. Adcock, M. Bevir, *op. cit.*, p. 5.



definition, extremely difficult. The *platform* seems an accurate metaphor to determine the methodological status and *modus vivendi* of political science, not only from a historical perspective (historicism). Both historians and systematians who try to show the thus understood unity of political science use therefore such collective categories for the purpose as 'tradition', 'language', 'discourse'<sup>33</sup>, or most often in Poland – 'thought'. By means of these special tow-ropes they pull representatives of various academic disciplines aboard the platform. The most accurate definition possible of political science is thus as follows: *political science is a discursive platform, or a set of traditions, languages, ideas, and practices, which provide the ways of speaking about political objects – concrete problems and themes, and about the forms of knowledge and conduct associated with them.*

Owing to these ways of speaking, objects are included in the political scientist's field of vision and thereby recognized as politically significant (valent) on the basis of similarities obtaining between them (after Ludwig Wittgenstein) with a structure of *family resemblance*. This means that the compound whole in the case of such an intellectual construction as political science does not require that its individual constituents have some common (crucial) element. In order to identify all of them jointly as *political science* it is enough to recognize their partial resemblances only, which in this case denote functional affinity, which obtains between these *ways of speaking, or ultimately the forms of rationality*. And the functionally most efficient tool serving to penetrate into the diversity and complexity of multiple rationalities is, as has been said above, *transversal reason* – because it does not apply directly to objects but to their representations, i.e. intellectual images, whereby it can successfully resist this metaphysical tendency to seek the essence – the unambiguous distinctive feature of things. In other words, the notion of resemblance does not apply here to the relation that obtains between a model and its copy, as is the case with the assumption of a relationship between science and reality based on Plato's ontology (metaphysics). This means that it does not apply to simple, ideal qualities, fictional beings that would unequivocally define both politics and the science of it once and for all. In that case, empirical reality, as the object of political scientist's studies, can only imitate these beings better or worse – it will never reach the ideal (in his eyes) anyway. A different thing is political science, which we understand as a *platform, an unstable compound* – it is based already on *different ontologies* pertaining to man, society and the historical process<sup>34</sup>.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 5–6.

<sup>34</sup> One of them is proposed by e.g. Adriana Cavarero. Her reasoning is as follows: if the new ontology is to be the explanation of and justification for political institutions and activities in their present-day plurality and diversity, it must perceive them as collective uncovering of the individual and the unique. That is why the Italian writer speaks of 'ontology of plural uniqueness' (in reference to Hannah Arendt's idea of the political). It pertains to entities – individual and collective – whose participation in politics is not determined by having any identity: sexual, ethnic, religious, class etc. It is assumed here that what is the issue in politics is that entities communicate

What they potentially have in common is a formal conviction that politics is a contextual relation, that it denotes the pluralist sphere of human activity, where it is impossible to separate facts from their meanings (values). At the level of scholarly reflection, this means that it is possible to distinguish between, but it is impossible to separate description from explanation, i.e. from theoretical knowledge. This means that science does not know pure or not interpreted facts; that its propositions make sense only within a given theoretical system, in which world-structuring categories are established.

Unification (making a synthesis) of political science on a platform basis takes place on two levels, which need not be separated in practice but can overlap<sup>35</sup>. One of them is research practice in individual subdisciplines which, within their own object methodologies, have overcome the losses they suffered as a result of having applied the doctrine of 'pure facts' in their field and the accompanying distinction between empirical theory and normative theory. Now it is important for them to make boundaries between these theories 'permeable' so that they have something to tell one another and can meet on the same *platform*. The other level covers political science studies based directly on specified philosophical assumptions/pragmatics, which free political theories from metaphysical errors and thereby establish sufficiently broad-ranging models of scientificity in political science, which allow treating it precisely as a platform. I include here pragmatism and hermeneutics.

#### THEORY ABOVE THE DIVISION INTO 'THE EMPIRICAL – THE NORMATIVE'

To illustrate the process of unification of political science subdisciplines (in the sense given to it by the platform metaphor) I will use the example of the bifurcation of political theory and international relations theory. When the two

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to one another above all their uniqueness, which is the absolute, unclassifiable and unstructurable difference. The value of uniqueness is the original principle of the political scene, says Cavalero. The crisis of the State model in the age of globalization makes it easier, she believes, to see the local and accidental nature of action, in which plurality is the disclosure of uniqueness. See: A. Cavarero, *op. cit.*, pp. 520, 528–529.

<sup>35</sup> A unification perspective, of interest to us, which combines the two levels in question is offered by e.g. J. Habermas. His research project reads:

Theory of politics and law, torn between facticity and validity, breaks up into factions, which have hardly anything to tell one another. Tension between the normativist approach, which is still exposed to the danger of losing contact with social reality, and the objectivist approach, which eradicates all normative aspects, can be understood as an admonishment not to hold too tightly onto the perspective determined by one discipline, but to be open to different standpoints with regard to method (participant vs. observer), to different theoretical objectives (the understanding/explication of the sense and conceptual analysis vs. description and empirical explanation), to perspectives determined by different roles (those of judge, politician, legislator, client, and citizen), and to different attitudes in research pragmatics (hermeneuticist, critic, analyst etc.). J. Habermas, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

disciplines came to be treated as separate areas of studies, political theory was assigned to deal with normative issues such as the nature of justice, freedom, equality, or right life. Theories of international relations, however, are usually regarded as being free from normative problems and subjects. The metatheoretical argumentation for the separation of 'should' and 'is' was broadened with historical reasons. From the World War II on and after the rise of the realistic school, international relations theory focused on what 'is', freed itself from the vocabulary and concerns of political theory, took up the issue of the survival of state in the existing international realities. In this way it rid itself of the burden of normative involvement in strengthening *everlasting peace*, characteristic of the 'idealist' attitude of first-generation scholars dealing with international politics as a reaction to the disaster of the World War I.

The observation of research procedures in political science dealing with various types of interrelations between facts in the global age and establishing their significance shows the blurring of boundaries between the two disciplines in question. This happens in response to the actual blurring of borders between internal politics and foreign politics, between that which is intra-state (domestic) and international. Previously, these boundaries were clear-cut, based on the assumption of stability of the Westphalian model of state, which the realists adopted. Today, bifurcations of political theory and international relations theory are beginning to be criticized for that reason, it is believed (David Held) that it is impossible to explain the modern democratic state without studying the global system and conversely; that „the creation of a general explanatory theory on the borderline between political theory and international relations theory is not only necessary but also possible”. „Such a theory”, Ziemowit Jacek Pietraś goes on, „should at the same time cover two fundamental areas of the state's activity, both activities undertaken in the centralized sphere of internal relations and in the decentralized sphere of international relations”<sup>36</sup>.

I assume we are talking about the theory that satisfies the *platform* requirements articulated above: 1) it is a methodological extension of transversal reason; 2) it sets itself both causal and interpretive explanations as its objective; 3) it is a *politicized theory*, in the sense of being applied, close to practice, one that, in its pursuit of generality, does not lose sight of empirical significance. This type of theory does not therefore disregard changes in the sphere of internal relations – it witnesses the gradual devaluation of fundamental democratic principles: the majority rule, agreement, self-determination, which are taking place today by the impact of external forces operating under, above, and through the sovereign state. The fate of a sovereign community depends today more and more on decisions made by actors acting on a macropolitical scale, by non-state participants in international relations, which are transnational institutions such as party internationals, corporations, non-governmental organizations, churches, suprana-

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<sup>36</sup> Z.J. Pietraś, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

tional organizations, e.g. NATO, WTO, the European Union<sup>37</sup>. This new situation compels redefinition of the classic categories of political science, such as state or power, as a result of which a number of new concepts emerge, and the associated ways of analyzing political reality. Owing to these, the political platform today is constantly under self-reconstruction, and probably this why it does not lose its appeal and attraction, nor is it going to sink. These new categories, or tow-ropes in our metaphor, are for example 'cosmopolitan democracy', 'cosmopolitan sovereignty', 'cosmopolitan reason', 'cosmopolitan state and civil rights', 'political penetration', 'transnational space', or 'network state'<sup>38</sup>. All these concepts refer to new orders of rationality – relations of power under the conditions of the globalized world. They all describe the (dynamic, vague, difficult-to-perceive) process of building up and self-transforming of politics and state in order to extend its possibilities of action in transnational institutions and in the global society, which they serve.

#### THE MAKING OF PLATFORM BY FREEING POLITICAL THEORY FROM METAPHYSICAL ASSUMPTIONS

##### **Pragmatism**

The fundamental challenge and task of political science today is to retain the plurality of the modern world of politics and provide knowledge of it, to be appropriate to practice or to practical (applied) political theory. Separation between theory and practice is usually blamed – as has been said before – on ontology, which characterizes the correlates of evaluative statements as fictional (ideal) beings, which are the rational, non-political justification for political reality. The political culture based on them exhibits fundamentalist claims. Philosophical political theories were understood in that way from the emergence of politics to the attempts to undermine metaphysics in the twentieth century, which arose as part of critical philosophy, pragmatism, and philosophy of language. Here, 'theory' in reference to politics is almost synonymous with metaphysical philosophy; science based on it is ultimately normative: it treats of how things should be, for example what democratic institution should be like of the necessity that follows from the adopted theory of human nature.

Following the principles of *theoria* meant seeking legitimacy, foundations of political theory and practice – consequently, this resulted in political theories

<sup>37</sup> See e.g.: B.C. Schmidt, *Together again: reuniting political theory and international relations theory*, „British Journal of Politics and International Relations”, 2002, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 121–122, 127.

<sup>38</sup> See e.g. U. Beck, *Władza i przeciwwładza w epoce globalnej. Nowa ekonomia polityki światowej*, transl. by J. Łoziński, Warsaw 2005, pp. 270–298 (*Macht und Gegenmacht im Globalen Zeitalter. Neue Weltpolitische Ökonomie*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/Main 2002); J. Staniszkis, *Władza globalizacji* (Power of globalization), Warsaw 2003, p. 17; Z.J. Pietraś, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

going too deep into the problems of epistemology, methodology, and philosophy of science or – generally – metascience, which ultimately caused the separation of political theory from politics. There are different ideas about how to bring closer the two sides of this relation. One of them is offered by pragmatism. This is a standpoint according to which political theory does not need to fulfill any legitimating function, either in relation to political practice or to empirical studies. Only by giving up this founding ambitions can it come closer to the current practice and improve that which is defective in it. Otherwise, this threatens with various pathologies, the basic one consisting in tendentiously describing phenomena only to prove the correctness of an *a priori* theoretical standpoint. This is a reductionist error: theory-driven studies burden their object only with one type of description-explanation. They are, therefore, one-sided and inadequate, they disregard other approaches, and do not wish to get to know the achievements of a diversified group of scholars who deal with them.

Ian Shapiro distinguishes between investigations that are *theory laden* and those that are *theory driven*. The former refer to the well-known methodological principle, according to which there is no neutral, theory-free and pure description of ‘facts’ and ‘figures’. Each description of a given political activity or phenomenon is theory laden, which can be observed especially when we ask it the question ‘why?’. It then makes possible different types of explanations. A political scientist has thus to decide which one is the most accurate. In the latter case, with *theory-driven* investigations, the choice of this explanation, let us repeat, is determined in advance by the adopted ‘favorite approach’. What should the task of a pragmatist-political scientist then consist in? How can he make theory return to public affairs, or, in other words, make academic political theorists leave their ivory tower and become involved in current political disputes? This is what Shapiro answers: for this purpose they have to undertake the task of carefully showing, exposing concealed preferences in political science studies for one ‘favorite’ theory or one model of explanation, especially if it is hegemonic, normative, already inherent in the formulation of the problem itself. Political theorists have to speak on behalf of the wider democratic public, in which they succeed when they test and expose theory-driven approaches and offer alternative solutions in place of them. The most important challenge that political theorists face today consists, as Shapiro puts it, in „serving as roving ombudsman for the truth and right by stepping back from political science as practiced to see what is wrong with what is currently being done and say something about how it might be improved”<sup>39</sup>.

This distance from a science based on the wrong conviction that it seeks general explanations for the phenomena investigated has its justification in Shapiro’s view, apart from concerns for the ontological correlates of explanatory propositions, also in the characteristics of the political scientist’s profession.

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<sup>39</sup> I. Shapiro, *op. cit.*, p. 597.

A pragmatist observes that it often happens that political scientists produce their theories, esoteric discourses, only to prevent journalists who specialize in politics from having their say. They want to show in this way that they are better than the latter. Shapiro condemns such motivations, posing the following task to political theorists: „When tackling a problem, we should come to grips with the previous attempts to study it, by journalists as well as scholars in all disciplines who have studied it, and then try to come up with an account that explains what was known before – and then some”<sup>40</sup>.

Theory should thus return to practice at the expense of giving up not only the ambitions to legitimate it philosophically but also social and professional ambitions of political scientists themselves.

Deconstruction of traditional political theory, carried out from the pragmatist standpoint, ultimately leads to a new theory of politics that does not have philosophical foundations. Pragmatism in its theoretico-scientific reflection takes the stance that all scientific search for the objective truth (i.e. the truth about some independently existing metaphysical and/or religious order) is unnecessary and politically suspicious: for it always reflects the political interests of those who do not discover the truth but shape it. This anti-essentialist and anti-fundamentalist attitude (e.g. in the version of Richard Rorty's or Stanley Fish's contextualism<sup>41</sup>) means, when applied to political science, that it is no longer concerned with explaining/presenting the world of politics as it *objectively is*. In order to be objective, one has to view it from outside, which is impossible to do. A purely mental experiment and nothing more. As has been said, political space, especially that of today, is the area of activity with extremely blurred contours. In developed countries and societies, termed late modern or postmodern, the situation of political science is also becoming additionally complicated because theoretical political cognition is losing its legitimacy. The advanced orders of capitalist policy no longer (or, to put it more carefully; less and less) need their legitimacy for two essential reasons.

First, the state as the institution responsible for social integrity, using coercion in order to avoid a crisis of legitimacy, as has been said, gradually ceases to be a privileged political entity. Alongside 'territorial democracy', the global age is witnessing the realization of 'non-territorial, transnational democracy'. Today, also other mechanisms of social regulation begin to function, often more effective than state coercion. We are now governed not only by formal 'practices of governance' of the representative national state, but also in some other ways, for example as employees, suppliers and consumers of transnational corporations – the ways combined with new forms of electronic communication and the associated

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 605/606.

<sup>41</sup> See e.g.: R. Rorty, *Objectivity, Relativism and Truth. Philosophical Papers*, vol. I, Cambridge University Press 1991; S. Fish, *Interpretacja, retoryka, polityka (Interpretation, Rhetoric, Politics)*, transl. by K. Abriszewski *et al.*, Kraków 2002.

patterns of behavior within education, politics, art and, *gender* (culturally defined sex), etc.<sup>42</sup>

Second, in the so-called late modernity, which Anthony Giddens defines by means of the category of radical reflection, one more level of (political science) reflection is no longer able to justify or put anything in order, creating rather even greater uncertainty. Political scientists thus lose their social *raison d'être*, becoming expendable. Their uncomfortable situation is additionally aggravated by the growing process of absorption of science (more broadly – the intellectual domain or culture) by the market. The end of the age of ideology, of legitimization of the political order through ideas and through demonstration and argumentation techniques, is connected with the advent of the age of *imagology* (many authors have grown fond of this concept of Milan Kundera's): prevalence of persuasive images and communication techniques of seduction. Some theorists, therefore, take a stance that if the contemporary political order is going through a legitimacy crisis, then political theory cannot really help because it is in a crisis itself<sup>43</sup>.

Both these circumstances, inconvenient for political science understood in a *naturalist* sense (the sense I gave this term above), are conducive to pragmatism. According to this view, politics, just like the whole human world around it, does not have its inner nature. Owing to this, it can be ascribed to norms and standards, both trans- and international, and local, communal, and institutional. As a result, political science is here a form of rhetoric adopted by given interpretive communities rather than an autonomous science equipped with methods of disclosing hidden universal laws/meanings governing both language and political practices. These communities use variable paradigms and vocabularies, by means of which they continually create and process their objects. Political scientists, as these *itinerant advocates of truth and right*, meet on the common discursive platform when they behave professionally, i.e. when in their work they observe the principle of respect for diversity and plurality, exposing seeming truths and platitudes, hidden in scientific (and political) languages, which claim to be universally valid. They show the possibilities of improving the life of particular communities, where, according to accepted ways of thinking and/or recognized laws of development (in economy, society.), there are none. They form the platform-domain of discourses in the public sphere, on which there is a climate conducive to attitudes that express intellectual and emotional distance to the time-honored orders of things: institutions, practices, values, etc.

### **Hermeneutic drifting on the platform**

Categories like 'discourse', 'language', 'vocabulary', 'thought', 'interpretive community', which unite political science in the platform paradigm, are used for

<sup>42</sup> See e.g.: J. Tully, *op. cit.*, pp. 538–539.

<sup>43</sup> See: J. Simons, *op. cit.*, pp. 694–697.

this purpose both by systematicians and by historians. They enable both kinds of scholars to draw attention to different orders/forms of rationality, within (in the presence of, versus, at the intersections of) which politics is realized and which influence both politics itself and understanding of it. They are established by religious, literary, legal, or philosophical texts, which originally control our everyday acts of speaking and activity, including those that have a political meaning. These texts are constantly explained, commented on, and interpreted anew, and in this sense they are constantly under transformations, constantly articulated and realized, still remaining to be articulated and realized.<sup>44</sup>

This interpretive effort is also made by political scientists, who understand truth in a broader way than positivists consequently they adopt a different model of science than the latter. In accordance with the hermeneutic model of scientificity, the objective and task of political science is not to explain political phenomena but to describe and interpret in order to understand them. It is the representatives of this orientation in political science that appear to be most comfortable as far as the problem of identity of their discipline is concerned. Strictly speaking, they do not see this problem at all. They believe that the distance between political theory and practice stems from the wrong recognition of the relation itself.

They maintain that first of all it is a wrong belief that the task of theory consists in controlling investigations and thereby imposing alien, distorting categories upon reality. Theory, on the other hand, as Michael Walzer explains, is more concerned with interpreting political principles given in life forms than with discovering or looking for politics as a set of rational, universal principles. Owing to this, theory is closer to social criticism understood as the domain of ethical imperatives belonging to the 'level of activity', as a product of local values, practices, and moral and political customs rather than philosophical speculation. Political theory, understood as social criticism, resembles discussion inside society, and distances itself from relations of power and domination within a given group rather than from practices and customs<sup>45</sup>. From this standpoint, there is no political theory without social practice. Both theorists and practitioners, they all operate in the same universe of norms and principles. Each political action has thus an axiological dimension: it is morally motivated and has a moral meaning<sup>46</sup>.

<sup>44</sup> See: M. Foucault, *L'ordre du discours*, Paris, Gallimard 1971.

<sup>45</sup> See: M. Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, Cambridge, Mass. 1993.

<sup>46</sup> This argumentation is believed to be developed most consistently by Charles Taylor. For him, political theory consists in articulating selfinterpretations, which motivate political life in a group and are its basis. These selfinterpretations are norms and descriptions, whose value lies in that practice becomes more predictable owing to them. „In other words – Jon Simons explains – given that humans are selfinterpreting beings, the task of theory is to match interpretation as closely as possible to action” (J. Simons, *op. cit.*, p. 691). Out of the studies of interest authored by Ch. Taylor see e.g. *Social Theory as Practice* [in:] Ch. Taylor, *Philosophy and the Human Science, Philosophical Papers 2*, Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp. 91–115.



Interpretive political theory, when articulating self-definitions formed in a given culture (or, to put it differently: hermeneutic self-reflections, which contain the concepts of power, justice, equality etc.), itself changes, i.e. co-constitutes its object of study. It corrects political activities at the level of self-understanding of a political community so they would correspond with moral motivations contained in them. Jon Simons observes that this is why it is not accidental that many scholars of this orientation are also communitarians. They are all united by the common will to find norms and values in the existing socio-political practice rather than by a fundamentalist need to regulate politics according to non-political, rationally set standards. Let us repeat that theory is inseparably linked here with practice – both are legitimated only by values contained in the ways of life of given political communities. If, as interpretive theory would have it, „fact and value do not differ by anything from each other, if studying politics is interpretive and constitutive at the same time because of its object, then empirical and normative theory already constitute one whole”<sup>47</sup>. Under such conditions, political science is floating on the surface of political life, trying to take a critical stance on it from inside. Instead of being controlled, it chooses prudent drifting.

Hermeneutic/communitarian theorists do not therefore have grounds to feel isolated from the surrounding world of politics. They speak out in the debates going on in their political communities. They show among others that the positivist model of political science is a Western product, a recurring illusion determined by the Western languages of political and social self-understanding. As such, this model cannot be therefore universal. A manifestation of ethnocentrism is the imposition of the model in question upon science and societies, not only non-European but also (from the Polish standpoint) upon Central European. We could point at many examples of the impact exerted upon Polish post-cold war political science by American behaviorism with its followance of the model of natural sciences, confining itself to observable phenomena, to applied studies, whose goal is to solve particular political problems, etc. The vision of an atomistic-instrumentalist political system, assumed in this type of studies, has hardly anything in common with the conceptions held by the people in Poland, involved in political practices over the last fifteen years, including the prior experiences of the democratic opposition in the days of the communist regime. Political science devoid of such local connotations does not notice collisions/asymmetry that take place between the realities (rationalities) of the postcommunist state, economy and market, and the logic of the neoliberal discourse. Nor can it, as a result, cope with the problems prevailing in the public and scientific discourse in Poland over the last fifteen years. These occur according to dichotomic categories of ‘national – European’, ‘the individual – community’, ‘fundamentalism – liberalism’, ‘truth – freedom’.

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<sup>47</sup> J. Simons, *op. cit.*, p. 692.

There are very few examples of original political thought that takes up these problems drawing from native self-definitions. Such studies assume that to understand political life is not possible without referring to its various local and supralocal factors, without examining the subjective aspect of social reality, the interests, motivations, needs and intentions of those governing and the governed. For both sides, these are the starting grounds for political decisions (taken not randomly) about to what extent and how their tradition and national identity are to change, and about the type of community they are to aim for. Political science hermeneutically oriented, or, more generally speaking: one that assumes the existence of a *permeable* border between positivist and humanistic studies, tries to articulate and reconstruct such decisions as well as indicate the lack of them. Consequently, it tries to describe and explain the phenomena that indicate the deformation of public and scientific discourses and the accompanying manifestations of power crisis, political capitalism, destruction of the state, ritualization of democracy, weakening of social bonds, the policy of imitation of Western models, the imitative policy, externally controlled modernization, etc. But this is the stuff for quite another story.

#### POLITOLOGIA: PROBLEM TOŻSAMOŚCI DYSCYPLINY. ROZWAŻANIA METATEORETYCZNE

**Streszczenie.** Diagnoza kryzysu tożsamości politologii jako dyscypliny akademickiej stanowi w artykule punkt wyjścia do namysłu nad jej kondycją metodologiczną. Artykuł składa się z trzech części. Pierwsza zawiera rozważania na temat uwarunkowań instytucjonalnych nauki o polityce w Polsce i w Stanach Zjednoczonych. Część drugą wypełnia argumentacja prowadząca ostatecznie do określenia nauki o polityce jako *platformy dyskursywnej*. W części trzeciej wyjaśniane są mechanizmy odpowiedzialne za unifikację – w formie platformy – nauki o polityce. Dokonuje się ona na dwóch płaszczyznach (w praktyce badawczej traktowanych łącznie lub rozłącznie): 1) w ramach metodologii przedmiotowych poszczególnych subdyscyplin, które odrzucają pozytywistyczną doktrynę „czystych faktów”, a wraz z nią rozróżnienie między teorią empiryczną a teorią normatywną; 2) w ramach pragmatyk badawczych – pragmatyzmu i hermeneutyki – które uwalniają teorię polityki od błędów metafizycznych i ustalają wzorce jej naukowości.

**Słowa kluczowe:** nauka o polityce, metodologia nauk społecznych, platforma dyskursywna, rozum transwersalny, pragmatyzm, hermeneutyka