Bridging theory and practice in political science

Lyubomir Stefanov, PhD
lstefanov@nbu.bg
New Bulgarian University
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Politics:

► the activities associated with the governance of a country or area;
► a particular set of political beliefs or principles;
► the principles relating to or inherent in a sphere or activity, especially when concerned with power and status.


Is there a problem in teaching political science? If yes, than what is it? What and how should we change: the academics, the academia or both? How we should change our teaching methods? How and what should we teach students?

Political science is often perceived more as an academic enterprise rather than as practical knowledge of how societies organize and govern their political matters. Professors of political science tend to pay more attention on research methods and techniques rather than to field work. Analyses are
in most of the cases dealing with official electoral data instead of questioning how these results were actually achieved and what is lying beneath and behind the digits. Comparison became more important than understanding the very matter and nature of an event, phenomenon, case, subject or object because of the new technologies that allow simultaneous massive and varying data sets analyses. Lost in variables, values, regressions and correlations scholars of political science are nowadays less and less tempted to look for explanations beyond the familiar linear and regression research lines. Thus the science initiated by Aristotle to help people understand and improve their societal life missed on its main object – the human being and its actions, ideas, aspirations, demands, fears and hopes when living in large groups and the nature of social power and its constraints.

The problem

Theoretical implications

How all this happened? First of all, the technological boom from the late 70’s started a process of speedy and large amount of data gathering, proceeding and computing. Pol Sci was fascinated by the opportunity to measure and operationalize human actions by harnessing the might of new calculation machines, super computers of no match in the past. The worldwide access to the Internet – a phenomenon per se, made access to national, regional and local data easier and fast like never before. And Pol Sci could not resist the temptation to generalize on the basis of huge data sets without being able to navigate through the various fields, levels and specifics which stood behind them. It was not that Pol Sci was not aware of them, no, it was the desire to test new theories that pushed for smothering the edges of the rough data. Most important, academic researchers could not or did not want to do the field work in person which made them heavily dependent on local sources and resources which in turn raises the question of data reliability and objectivity.

As a consequence, Pol Sci\(^1\) transformed itself into gatherer of data and information, producer of astonishing formulas, tables, figures, summaries, reports and portraitist of political scenery instead of

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\(^1\) Pol Sci stands for Political Science throughout the text as it represents the new approach required in teaching and “doing” it in the beginning of 21\(^{st}\) century and the Internet and apps-era
analyst of processes, guide and interpreter of politics, maker of explanations. Overall, gradually throughout the past five decades convinced itself that digits are important and not the human social interactions behind them. The definitions became heavily dependent on mathematics, substituting the humanitarian nature of pols sci with digits, formulas, algorithms, prescribed relations etc. Therefore it was not men actions anymore in the focus of the research instead its numerical value mattered more. This resulted in turn into complications of the formulas, encapsulation of the discipline and the profession, new academic slang, more and more unpopular books, articles, studies and debates.

**Practical implications**

Subsequent to the sweeping Toffler’s’ “Third wave” political science began to re-focus in order to be in touch with the surrounding world and keep the pace of the progress made by the post-WWII society, especially in the Anglo-Saxon world. However, it was also both collateral victim and tool in the ideological war between the Soviet block and the Free world. Proclaiming democracy as the best political formula and regime ever despite the original warning of Aristotle that it is not, Pol Sci was the herald and investigator of the merits and benefits which democracy could bring, if implemented properly, to human society. For more than three decades it registered, observed, monitored and compared features of various socio-political types around the world through the prism of ideological supremacy, though not explicitly demonstrated. Just at the end of the 70’s, which strangely or not coincided with the beginning of the end of the Soviet empire, political scientist began to doubt the democratic paradigm in politics and turned their search inwards.

However, despite the triumphant march of decolonization and suggested democratization throughout Africa and Latin America, it was not until the end of the Cold war and the collapse of the Soviet type of communism in Central and Eastern Europe that Pol Sci was ready to test and charge its basic principles and postulates. Still, many people believed that democracy will inevitably prevail if installed willingly and applied unanimously in the new free societies. The mistake was that they were seen rather homogenous and flat and were not expected to take any other path significantly divergent than the beaten one. It appeared that each of the new born states had an idea of its own how to democratize its policy and politics. Pol Sci attempted first to generalize, like it did in the past, and then switched to single case issues just
to bounce back to generalizations later. Still the paradigm was that democracy has only one rightful ideological and practical appearance that of the modern Western liberal type. Thus instead of studying carefully and methodologically the newcomers to democracy, Pol Sci, and for the record not only!, jumped on fast conclusions from lesson learned from the past. At least temporally, not mentioning spatially, the situation was not same which proved to be fatal for the upcoming conclusions.

After September 11 and the War on terror came the sobering. Democracy appeared not to be the ultimate goal of each and every society around the world, not even of the predominant part of them. Instead, each and every society opted for applying its own political principles and rules which best fit to its self-perception, history, culture, esteem, traditions. Occasionally this process may borrow some of its achievements, lean to democracy in general or even adjust democracy in a local, unique way but only after “internal” processes called for that and not external advisors, factors or forces pushed it.

And there comes the general question: how Pol Sci contributed to this mess? How come that the science for politics lost ground and began to register processes, outcomes and features instead of studying the very nature of the individual and group socio-political actions, motives and rationale? What made Pol Sci blind for the changes, but the real, not “just” technological or economic, or behavioral or psychological or institutional ones around the world? How humans became less important than the records for their actions? How behavioral, rational choice, institutional and psychological approaches and theories deployed by Pol Sci diverted each for its best intentions the focus from the core to the parts that comprise it? A worrying sequel of doubts …

And the answer to these questions is quite simple: professionalization, specialization, diversification and subdivisions switched the primary focus of Pol Sci from the original object-understanding the very nature of politics by research and teaching to the sequences and consequences from its actions. Looking at the three-pillar structure of comparative analyses described by Peter Mair (1998:310) it is hard not to agree with his conclusion that exactly the third step after first, choosing a case and second, drawing a “systematic comparison between countries, with the intention of identifying, and eventually explaining, the differences or similarities between them with respect to the particular phenomenon which is being analyzed”, namely “the method of research, that is concerned with developing rules and standards about how comparative research should be carried out, including the levels of analysis at which the comparative analysis operates, and the limits and possibilities of comparison itself” is the most problematic one.
A possible solution

The natural question flowing is: what to do next? There seem to be at least two possible answers available leading respectively the quest for restoring the credibility of political science into two directions. The first presents the option of repairing the damage done to political science and its analytical reliability caused by aspirations for generalizations which to produce prediction. This task requires enormous efforts dedicated to careful and systematic check on the results obtained from each and every research carried on since 1960’s onwards in order to trace the virus of overgeneralization, meta-classification, ascribed causality, overconfidence in the explanatory power of randomly chosen variables and their wrongful, if not fake operationalization and nomination. The other path, by and large the more perilous and rocky, is epitomized by a new approach to the hole process of understating and subsequently teaching political science. Although requiring a pile of efforts similar to the first above-mentioned option, this is the direction which will link back the science for politics from academic books to the reality of everyday life and its challenges.

Naturally, the second approach implies returning to the grassroots of political science and its re-establishment as trustworthy and potent analytical and descriptive tool, while the first has to focus more on “technical” work aimed at verification and justification of the existing methods and the results they produced. However both must concentrate on much more devoted and sophisticated field work because that is where the science for politics has lost ground. Surprisingly or not political science became since 1960’s a science for the numbers, of the numbers and about the numbers. The norm has been set by colleagues across the Atlantic in their attempts to check on each and every existing theoretical framework through the fast growing options presented by other sciences and their tools, namely sociology, statistics and big numbers mathematics. Last but not least, flash-speed calculations became reality the minute after computers became available to social scientists.

People tend to react genuinely individually until they become members of a given group, thus both subjects and objects to rational and irrational decision making and taking. This opportunity for large group psychology study and seemingly easy to predict behavior based on straightforward research was the temptation political scientists could not resist in the due course epitomized by the positivist approach. The rise of modern political science techniques, approaches and interpretations coincided not surprisingly with the establishment of democracy as preferable political regime on global scale. Naturally, those who govern looked both for advice how to rule more successfully and efficiently and
how to secure themselves with another term in public office. As a result political scientists around the world, but mainly from the democratic West found themselves stimulated and at the same time obliged to produce results of analytical and predictive power, which to establish their reputation and guarantee the funds for their research activities.

Subsequently the efforts laid were of predominant practical nature because they needed to prove the credibility of the newly discovered methods and techniques for mass communication and mobilization by the most active political agents: the parties. It is arguable whether political science allowed to be guided discretely by politicians or it was just a matter of coincidence and mutual interest that fostered the progress of the research methods and tools and enlarged the horizons and perspectives before the scholars of politics. However, following the initial gathering and later exchange of gathered data among scholars allowed for attempts aimed at looking for large-scale explanations and universal patterns. A brief look over the literature from the last three decades of 20th century perfectly demonstrates that tendency of generalization: Sartory (1976, 1984); Almond and Verba (1963), Lijphart (1984, 1999); Linz and Stepan (1996); Blondel (1996) Rokkan and Lipset (1967), Robert A. Dahl (1963, 1971) etc. devoted countless efforts to prove their theories and hypotheses on global scale and build near-universal explanatory power for them.

A notable example, although not from the field of political science is an idea developed by the prominent sci-fi author Isaak Asimov in his famous trilogy-the Foundation. The story there goes around a new science created by a genius in mathematics-psychohistory, which encompasses methods and tools mainly from history, psychology, cryptography, sociology, statistics and large-numbers mathematics. The final product of this mixture was a tool that possesses predictive power for the socio-political and economic behavior not only of large group of humans but of all living individuals, as far as they remain sufficiently enough in numbers. Overall the new science was able to predict the future though in probabilistic terms.

Another weakness that marred contemporary political science credentials was ascribing retroactive or reverse causality to issues, events, cases, variables and conclusions. In turn this can be again best illustrated by sci-fi, although of different, funnier nature. The word is of Douglas Addams’ Complete Hitchhiker’s guide to galaxy, which by leading the reader through many adventures around the Cosmos focuses in one of its chapters on digging for the answer to the ultimate question about the meaning of life, the Universe and everything else. In doing so it gives a story about a super-computer designed and created to answer that question. However, after thousand years of calculations, the super-computer came to the conclusion that it cannot answer the question instead it could develop a computer
of superior quality which to perform the required calculations and produce the required statement. After other tens of thousands of years the new super machine came with an answer and it was 42, but in the meantime it forgot to what that answer was. So, another even mightier computer was constructed which to gather the information obtained by its predecessors and come out with both a question and an answer.

Basically the irony from the abovementioned examples is that if Aristotle, considered as the father of political science, was to present his theories today they would have never be considered as political science ones simply because they are not based on quantitative empirical data rather on observation and deduction. Which leads us one step further in bridging theory and practice and posts the question of methodological nature what next? to what to do? The answer is again manifold in meaning still there are two more prominent explanations. First comes the reason to make political science generally useful to society and not just to scholars while second, but not in importance is to shrink the scope of the science back, despite of the seemingly complicated world that requires complicated approaches. It is exactly this logic that ruined Pol Sci in the past – to be ever encompassing and ready to embark all new and fancy tools available in order to hold dominant position among the other humanities. Well, it did that and the costs are terrible. Returning to simplicity is the key for making it attractive for students and reliable explanatory instrument for scientists.

**How to build a bridge between theory and practice?**

In order to succeed in building the bridge between theory and practice in Pol Sci we need to change the spirit of the place and the methods by we teach it. How should the university be changed in order to meet the challenges of the contemporary world outside the academia walls? What should we, as political scientist, do in order to be able to teach students and learn them to be capable of not just applying formulas and theoretical postulates but in truth understanding the nature of politics?

If we assume our starting point/hypothesis to be that there is a gap between theory and practice than we need to find out the reasons for it. Starting with the usual old-time questions: what, why and how will do for our first step in this research. How it appeared, why it appeared and what cause it will help us find a solution for this problem. Only after having the right diagnoses will be able to amend the gap and bridge theory and practice in Pol Sci.
What is practice, if theory is pretty much defined? Teaching students, doing desk/field research, leading a political campaign, advising politicians/senior government staff or local/state/international institution or NGO?

No matter of the answer to the above formulated options, each time when speaking as political scientist outside university aula each and every one of us has heard a variation of the following request: “please, explain it with plain/non-academic words”. This raises the question for what purpose our theory and scientific jargon/code is built if we need to translate it all the time for the needs and demands of all non-academic users?

Lately we are forced to do same for our students as well, following the rapid technological change that made the Internet really global, mobile phones and laptops cheap, and transformed individual as well as group communications, affecting the very core of our culture, traditions, habits and life in general. Than what kind of future political scientist universities produce – more skilled in data-browsing and Internet research or professionals, familiar with the code of conduct and honor of Pol Sci? Thus is Pol Sci still vocation or profession?

Last, but not least: how we address our students from the Generation M2 (second millennium AD) and to what we teach them? How they understand, interpret and think of the knowledge we pass on to them? Which subsequently raises the question what does political science actually mean to these students?

So naturally comes the question how a professor in Pol Sci should organize a course and his/her teaching in order to make the lectures/discussions more attractive but overall beneficial for the attending students? How should the theories be explained in order to overcome the gap in generational, background, historical and technological terms? Simply put: how should we make Pol Sci easily comprehended and understood? There is my straightforward answer: by making less scientific and more practical, i.e. interesting and of daily use looking like an operational tool and not a cabinet method.

There is, surprisingly or not still no consensus among political scientists “how best to study politics”. However this fact is hardly surprising and probably unavoidable given the large spectrum of human activities which Pol Sci considers interesting. That is why handbooks were invented – to address the myriad arrays of given science and to help bringing order into the chaos of theories. That is why and we shall look upon a prominent example of recent.

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2 Magstadt, Thomas M. (2013:11)
In the first chapter of the New Handbook in Political Science (1998) Goodin and Klingeman did quite a review of what Pol Sci is and how it evolved during the 20th century, with focus on the last three decades. They sound very proud of how professional Pol Sci has become since the beginning of 20th century and how prolific it was at the end of that century. Despite pointing out that Pol Sci literature flourished due to Anglo-Saxon, especially American scholars and admitting that this could be a problem, they do not see it as an obstacle that hinders the triumphant march of how specialized, operational, differential and subdivisional Pol Sci has become (pp. 3-4). Their review of the achievements of Pol Sci correctly include how it overcome the crusades of behaviorism, rational choice and institutionalism just to raise anew its anthem for the “powerhouses” of Pol Sci – authors of heaviest influence and their works most often quoted. “A good composite view of the shape of the discipline emerges from combining all these criteria: who are the "integrators" of the profession, who are "most frequently referenced in the discipline as a whole," and who are "most frequently referenced within their own subdisciplines."” (p. 26)

The list of those must read books is limited to some nine authors mainly from the English-speaking world and the USA (p.18): “Almond and Verba's Civic Culture (1963), Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes' American Voter (1960), Dahl's Who Governs? (1961b), Dahrendorf's Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society (1959), Deutsch's Nerves of Government (1963), Downs's Economic Theory of Democracy (1957), Easton's Systems Analysis of Political Life (1965), Huntington's Political Order in Changing Societies (1968), Key's Responsible Electorate (1966), Lane's Political Ideology (1962), Lindblom's Intelligence of Democracy (1965), Lipset's Political Man (1960), Moore's Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy (1966), Neustadt's Presidential Power (1960), Olson's Logic of Collective Action (1965): all these are the common currency of the profession, the lingua franca of our shared discipline and the touchstones for further contributions to it” (p. 15).

Although those books were being referred to as “instant classics” of the last two decades of 20th century, still there is a doubt that the real classic authors3 are considered relevant and not just a part from pols sci’s history as Gabriel Almond reflects in the following chapter (2) of A New Handbook of Pol Sci.

Surprisingly, the whole enterprise of advertising political science and its current developments, achievements and maturity ends up with another sequel of comparisons about influence, sublevel

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orientation, integration power and overall positioning in Pol Sci of selected authors. Leaning to benchmarking it missed on answering the original question why Pol Sci is important. Thus the Handbook, despite being rich with titles, examples, methodological insights, theoretical solutions and proposals even answers to some complicated matters and issues misses one very important chapter—of how to teach Pol Sci. And that is where it fails to become complete and thorough – a true Handbook that not only dwells into the debris of Pol Sci of recent but proposes how to offer the identified novelties to the students and the general public. Instead it opted to remain under the warming safety of the good old club of professionals and not to bother with the real practice – that of teaching.

In the lines and paragraphs that follow, I will make some proposals which are of general nature. They are aimed at transforming our approach to the profession we chose, the place we chose to carry it out and the methods we use to carry it out. Some of them are quite speculative but it is my deep belief that only after removing the shackles of our self-imposed limitations and boundaries of recent we will be able to match the first our own high standards and second, the expectations of the society and the students in particular. Challenging some of the sacred Pol Sci rules, prescriptions, and methods as a science I would propose if not a tool for a change than a picture of how it should look like.

_The University – a topos of different meaning and purposes_

The university is a place for communication, growth and enrichment - private and group. It is a place to build and develop a community - diverse, multicultural, dynamic, provocative, innovative, demanding and most of all questioning. On the territory of this new location identities are approved, values and principles enrich, the sense of self-perception and worldview develop - the universe is constructed through connections from different levels and order between disciplines, not between sciences. The university is becoming a place where the processes of action and making occur parallel to those of reconstructing and remodeling the surrounding world by selecting relevant explanatory techniques and messages; creating conditions for self-development and addressing new challenges of communication and media. This environment stimulates and builds leadership skills among students and makes them the natural leaders of the communities, groups, organizations.
About the teaching and the teachers

Disenchantment of the personalities of the university professors and uplifting of the spell surrounding their cast as guardians of the knowledge and the holly truth, ergo, empowered to share and distribute information at their discretion and will. Who is the author, however, of these treasures so jealous and stingy guarded? Is the preservation of knowledge in a narrow range and its piling in dusty bookshelves the meaning of education? Is not it the opportunity for touching to the knowledge of previous greatness and civilizations and having an advice for its practical implementation in reality the ultimate goal of the University? Namely the descent from the pedestal of the medieval lecturer and entering bravely into intense dialogue with students is key to the transformation of the university, because the learning process is a two-fold because no one owns the patent on knowledge and students also have much to teach their teachers.

Approached from this perspective, are professors researchers or are they communicators of knowledge, transferring high knowledge in understandable and yet academic language? In Bulgaria predominantly dominated the first image and role of the character. No wonder that students stop attending lectures, do not monitor the material and most importantly stop to ask. Creating an environment in which the pulse of the lecture is subject to the bilateral flow of information is our goal. A dialogue in which the roles are determined by the skill of the teacher to navigate and to moderate the debate, provoking interest and curiosity, leading to a conversation focused around several key, supporting concepts. Pathetic, one-way monologues existing at present should be replaced with an environment dominated by the principle that there are no stupid questions.

These changes in behavior and psychology of teaching processes are epitomized by the fact that the nature of knowledge itself has changed; respectively the approach to its collection, analysis, systematization and teaching should reflect this new post-Google Britannica reality.

Teaching and learning should be thought of as a journey - connecting fragments of a changed and changing world through the possible explanations in a universal, connected and semantically structured picture. Teaching becomes a process of arranging the chaos of facts and information on the Internet. Professors build shelves upon which fragments and molecules of knowledge take their proper place and help the puzzle of the cloud of terms, formulas, axioms and tracts transform and shape a crystal lattice of sustainable knowledge. Knowledge in this new environment is polyvalent and diverse and, like the Internet, draws connections between seemingly irrelevant bits of information from vast
information cloud and stream explanatory images, pictures, stories, reality.

Learning and curriculum

Learning should be seen as a process of speciation - the students know and can do, but other than "us, at their age" items, i.e. they do not need the authority of the Patriarch and the shaman, but that of the pathfinder and the guide of knowledge who organizes reality and provides guidance for seeking further information if necessary and/or interest. Learning is not the same as that of the Renaissance. The Enlightenment enhanced the quest for knowledge based on the rediscovered knowledge by the Renaissance giants born in the ancient world. In the early 21st century it is a process of building upon the Inglehartian post-modern world, transforming it into a lifelong journey that creates chances for value-adding experience, expansion and specialization. Thus, the internal organization of each academic program should encourage critical reading and thinking with thematic discussions which to dominate the later stages of education and academic semesters.

There are no age restrictions before the contemporary student due to the nature of the environment that evolved after the collapse of the great ideologies of the economy and politics in 20th century. The citizens of the new millennium not only study between 18 and 35 years. First, because they need different types of skills that may arise at different stages of their life: a fact that the university cannot and should not neglect. Then follow the new relationships between individuals themselves formed at the crest of the third wave predicted by Toffler. Not knowledge but fast flowing information is the currency of the 21st century. The ups and downs on the stairs of the society become exponentially depending on the access and ability to handle and manage information. And it is no longer residing university audiences and campuses only instead the pulsating dynamics of the Internet and the new social networks.

Knowledge that is taught therefore more fit to be in the format and organization of the encyclopedia "Britannica" - the quintessence looming sense, but not limited to the scope, range and content. Asked potencies and valences, we build relationships, not vectors and parallel realities, laden with science-look-alike pseudo-loyalty to the academic guild and medieval dogma. Academic courses should be thinking more like a subject index of the discipline - a reference to the row shelf and shelf
section of knowledge and its importance for the universal human knowledge and the formation of the society. Building upon a minimal definition of Science perceived as a “systematic enquiry, building toward an ever more highly differentiated set of ordered propositions about the empirical world” (Goodin and Klingeman, 1998:9). Thinking instead of one and only true science of many sub-sciences and disciplines within the general science which will free space for further specialization but without the fear of “sacilege” on the field of political science.

The disciplines at the university thought and seen as directories - separate file structures with a common semantic code and complementary explanatory models rather than competitive sciences, arguing about the absolute truth and the only possible and right interpretation of the reality of the surrounding world. The files of each discipline are directions divided and sorted by their relative weight, role and determinative knowledge for human development. For example, knowledge of political rhetoric was a sign and an attribute of high political and social culture in the ancient societies of Rome, Hellas and Persia, however since Napoleonic times it is largely considered as a prerequisite and a must competence for every individual who aspires for a successful public career.

Modernity’s leitmotif is freedom of thought juxtaposed to the Enlightenment’s one, which was devoted to gaining a freedom of speech from the censure of the Church and the monarchy. Knowledge is possible and achievable, but is no longer associated or direct product of many readings instead creative and innovative, free thinking becomes dominant for removing and upgrading the limitations and paradigms of the past centuries. The slogan of the generation M2 would possibly look like: you can do anything, as long as you believe you can and have the courage to bear the responsibility for the choices you make!

The showcase

Judging from my own experience from the last five years as assistant professor in NBU’s Political science in English program, Pol Sci is often perceived by my students as an act of fortunetelling after looking into a well-polished crystal ball. To them it looks like Pol Scientists are more political managers, gurus and campaigners rather than academics, who teach. It is very much consequence of the attitude which members of our profession demonstrate publicly as guests at TV
shows and/or early/late commentary studios, giving/writing magazine/newspaper articles or Facebook/blog post.

Until recently, there was hardly a clue or trace that Pol Science is something much more than everyday publicity and public advising, especially before/after general elections of whatever nature. There was no obvious sense in the academic community, nor in the general public that Pol Sci is a discipline “of a useful self-binding mechanism” (Goodin and Klingemann, 1998:6) which wrap up and shape the attitude of the professional guild. No clear-cut rules, principles or code of honor limitations appeared to hold for those calling themselves political scientist. Moreover, in the decades after the downfall of communism in Bulgaria many wannabes pretended to be qualified political scientist but often it proved over time that they not just lack academic training and specialized education but do not have anything in common with the profession at all. This non-surprisingly caused chaos in the perception of the profession – its standards and vocation.

Thus for students in Pol Sci is the notion of profession and not that of a vocation became predominant, but in somewhat completely remote meaning – when graduate you become talking head, a consultant to political party or party secretary, analyst to company or NGO and last, if classified at all-involved in the further development of the profession as a science or discipline.

Naturally, combined with the challenges raised by the Internet era the students attending courses did not know what exactly to expect apart the predominant anxiety for something important. The feeling is that they are not curious about what you are going to say rather how you will “serve” the main course. I am not claiming that first-year students who enter University are familiar with Pol Sci or any other discipline but that they have certain information and knowledge surpassing that of the students some two or three decades ago. The difference is not epitomized just by the unlimited and non-stopping access to various information sources the very moment you share it with them via all kind of smart gadgets. May be the stunning difference is their attention and ability to focus.

M2 students jump in fast but the real problem is that they jump out even faster in the course of the lecture/discussion/group seminars, etc. And it has nothing to do with their ability to understand, comprehend, write, speak or research fluently and in depth. The more likely reason is the enormous amount of information that they have to cope on daily basis in order just to stay tuned. If they do not keep up the pace they are instantly falling out of the competition for limited resource: work, further education, scholarships, and exchange and internship programs. This inevitably leads to different forms and types of socialization and stratification.
M2 students know for sure only one thing and that is that they want to be entertained parallel to receiving first-class education and tutoring. Although attempts were made by colleagues of mine to keep it the old way meaning old-fashioned pedagogic and medieval Sorbonne-style didactics the students clearly demonstrated that this is not theirs way.

At this point, one may ask why bothering so much about the students and not about the quality of the education? Is not it all about education, knowledge, methods of science and academia and not about how students react to their professors teaching methods and approaches? Well I say it is all about to keep students minds not just occupied with the information shared but to engage them throughout the whole process of their education in the University. This means to offer them choice, the best choices, and not ready to be applied solutions or answers because the Life is full with surprises and there are no methodology for predicting them. Therefore, the approach offered focuses on building shelves for knowledge, arranged alphabetically and not on piling tones of information. Despite the subjectivity of this approach it is a risk that is worth taking for the sake of “our” discipline or science at all.

But “human beings, while they are undeniably subject to certain causal forces as well, are also in part intentional actors, capable of cognition and of acting on the basis of it. “Belief,” “purpose,” “intention,” “meaning” are all potentially crucial elements in explaining the actions of humans” (Goodin and Klingeman, 1998:10-11). Or as Aristotle put it “as in other sciences, so in politics, it is impossible that all things should be precisely set down in writing; for enactments must be universal, but actions are concerned with particulars” (Politics, 1999:39-40). Apparently there is and what is more important could not be a universal approach or interpretation of human actions. It is a chimera that a living man could be able to encompass all variable imaginable in order to produce such explanatory model that will be 100 % working, free of any stochastic or normal deviations or mistakes.

So what is actually the goal of teaching political science? I believe that is to translate political process – both usage and exercise of social power, to our students be them attending university aula or practicing politics, i.e. participating in the actual governance of the society. From this viewpoint we may properly approach the whole quest for bridging the gap between theory and practice because it demonstrates that Pol Sci is not just for internal academic usage and debate rather its metaphysical, societal goal is to produce understanding for the processes that occur within human communities of different scale and numbers and through the knowledge in research and studying the specifics of these objects to “guide” politicians in developing and upgrading better modes and rules of governance. Although quite controversial this statement is perfectly in line with Aristotle’s initial understanding of
politics as, “the end [or goal] of politics is the best of ends; and the main concern of politics is to engender a certain character in the citizens and to make them good and disposed to perform noble actions” (Nicomachean Ethics (1099b30)\textsuperscript{4}.

**Conclusion**

It is really hard to sum and wrap the matter on this vast and incredibly dubious matter. Apparently, each and every professor in political science will stand by his/her chosen method of teaching and will defend that choice by whatever means whether for the sake of protecting personal authority, self-esteem or academic prestige. The same applies for scholars of political science. The differentiation introduced is quite deliberate as despite being obvious fact professor and researcher are not necessarily the two sides of a same coin.

It is exactly this small but crucial difference that epitomizes the difficulties and the problems before Pol Sci. It is a non-spoken of academic consensus what the definition of scholar is: one that carries out a constant research in the field of skill of his/her own. No word or notion of teaching others how to do that. It requires a different kind of knowledge and a whole bunch of skills how to educate students. Doing field work, analyses, mathematical or logical model of comparison is completely different from being able to transfer those skills to other in most of the cases, non-qualified persons.

Of course, it is a matter of personal charisma, charm, natural gifts and skill, vocabulary and even reservoir of jokes which stirred produce a good lecturer. Still, there are many other aspects and features of the teaching-type which are even not a precondition for a prolific and distinguished scholar. So the question is must a god professor be a good researcher? Do theory and practice really go hand in hand or not quite? Is it a possible cocktail at all-blending many, often incompatible features which to produce an excellent and popular professor who grabs instantly students’ minds and a brilliant theoretically prepared researcher in one living man? Well, as we know from history there are no living perfect creatures but through constant labor and self-improvement one could come close to perfection in both improving pols sci’s methodological apparatus, enriching its findings, bringing higher its scientific standards and teaching its achievements, history, ideas and techniques to potential students.

\textsuperscript{4} Aristotle's word for ‘politics’ is politikê, which is short for politikê epistêmê or ‘political science’. Politics according to him scores as a practical science, since it is concerned with the noble action or happiness of the citizens. However, it resembles a science from the so called “productive” category as it also seeks to create, preserve, and reform political
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