Completion of a period initiated by social changes which made it possible to reconstitute a whole set of social sciences and return them into the area of free thinking, a period lasting for one generation, presents a unique opportunity to assess all of its features and developments. The story of political science in Central Europe is a case in point as it offers very specific data on development of such a set of social sciences. In Central Europe since the end of the Cold War, political science as a discipline did not follow from the interwar period in which it had been born, but rather from totalitarian period (as Linz says) in which it was either eliminated (Czechoslovakia), or hardly tolerated (Poland, Hungary). Since 1989, however, it has gone through the process of reconstitution and search for its own definition, accompanied by adequate dynamics at the institutional, personal, methodological, topical and economical levels. Consequently, it is appropriate to explore the degree of “maturity” of a particular science – in our case political science. To assess how mature a science is we may need to probe into its ability of self-reflection which is perceived as one of the crucial elements of a mature science. However, by referring to an ability of self-reflection we mean to point out to an elementary competence to such a research act, which is composed of the existence of tools necessary to conduct this research, the interest/willingness to initiate the research and to subsequently discuss its results regardless of their implications, and finally of the existence of competent researchers.

Therefore, an analysis of the process of establishment of political science (in Czech: politická věda, or more often politologie; in Hungarian: politikatudomány; in Polish: politologia, or nauki polityczne; in Slovak: politológia) in four Central European countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia) in 1989-2009 seems to be extraordinarily urgent and also intriguing research task. The decision to focus on these countries primarily stem from a standard application of this comparative framework in transitology, or – to put it differently – from duly justified expectation the project outputs will be easy to compare and interpret. The authors aspire to provide an image of the current status of the political science in Central Europe, and the trends and self-perceptions as they emerge in the field. In terms of time the research focuses on last twenty years, i.e. on the period beginning in 1989. However, we do take into account the impact the previous developments might have on the current realities.
We endorse both the classical approaches to study the state of the discipline, and the most typical reasons to strive for this (self-)reflection. However, we are also aware of the problems that arise from any attempt to think over the political science; problems that are not only theoretical and methodological, but also topical (since the subject matter of the political science is politics). Therefore, we wish to emphasize we do not aim to provide an all-embracing research of a classical nature, such as we can find in standard works since 1960’s analyzing both the national (Somit - Tanenhaus 1964; Finifter 1983; Arculeo 1984; Böhret 1985; Beyme 1986; and others) and international level (e.g. Andrews 1982; Klingemann 1994). Rather, in accord with our research strategy, this is a particular study focused on carefully selected issues.

The authors intend to make use of their experience stemming from previous professional accomplishments. Both authors pay long-term and thorough attention to issues of Central European political science. Their professional careers in principle follow the genesis of contemporary Czech political science since 1989. With the exception of Z. Mansfeldova they are the only Czech political scientists who have published more texts on the issues constituting the subject matter of this project, and who are systematically seeking to outline the genesis of the Czech political science. Their efforts can be documented by their participation in Kaase’s and Sparschuh’s article Three Social Science Disciplines in Central and Eastern Europe. Handarticle on Economics, Political Science and Sociology 1989-2001, Bonn/Berlin - Budapest 2002), respectively in Eisfeld’s and Pal’s volume Political Science in Central-East Europe (Berlin - Montreal 2010).

Our research project was divided into three stages, each of them lasting one year. In stage one, we prepared an initial study describing fundaments of the project and presenting its objectives, scope and methods. This study was consequently consulted with experts from cooperating foreign institutions, thus giving the project direct link to national political science communities under review. Consequently, interviews received their final form guaranteeing validity and reliability of data, and also working towards their comparison.

Stage two was focused on qualitative research, in particular interviews, working with key issues of the project, and on subsequent elaboration of these primary data. Here, the authors addressed the institutions compiled in databases as mentioned above. In this stage, several research studies elaborating partial issues related to the project’s subject matter, and also constituting major elements of the monograph, were published.
Finally, stage three was reserved for final compilation of materials and texts necessary to publish the monograph, and also for presentation of the project’s results in the international political science conferences (Montreal 2008, Santiago de Chile 2009, and Warsaw 2010). As we have already stated we don’t aspire to present a comprehensive (or even all-embracing) research in our subject matter, research that would have complied with all the variables included in classical works that discuss the state of the discipline. Such a research usually follows standard approaches and focus either on a “national” case study (for example Politologia w Polsce /2006/), or on comparison of such case studies complemented by a summary analysis. In such works, the reader can find structured data arranged so as to enable a usual comparison of respective issue fields that include the following elements: historical development, institutions (academic and non-academic), teaching (modes of evaluation, epistemological/theoretical approaches, programs, students, faculty), research (evaluation of quality, funding), national representation and international cooperation, or possibly the relationship of the political science and politics. However, the data corpus employed to define the state of the discipline tends to be even broader (which also means it is more difficult to choose appropriate methods of research); consequently, it can be approached in different ways. Not only can we compare national political science communities within international (or regional) context, but we can also compare them in the context of the social sciences in general, diachronically with respect to various historical epochs, and so on. Even within the political science itself there are numerous topics: we can study its contents and developments as evident in various dimensions in terms of time, locations, people, ideas, methods, relations, institutions etc. We can even focus on a specific subfield. This article, on the contrary, aspires to assume a specific viewpoint: on one hand its perspective is of a particular nature as it addresses only carefully selected topics, one the other hand it closely scrutinizes a specific region. Two major assumptions of our research project thus can be stated as follows: First, the contemporary political science is hugely diversified both in terms of methodological, topical, research and educational preferences, and also given divergent historical developments and even different understandings of what the political science is. Second, the region of Central Europe that constitutes the subject of our research is exceptionally heterogeneous and ambiguous which is caused by various cultural, economic, social, religious, demographic and linguistic elements that are projected onto the complexities of the historical and political developments in this region. Given this diversity we hold it is
meaningful to follow it and explore also with regard to the gradual establishment of the political science as an academic discipline.

To achieve our goals, we opted to conduct an internet questionnaire survey. This survey consisted of 47 standardized questions that were focused on selected aspects of the genesis and functioning of the national political science communities. The questionnaires were distributed among the leading representatives of carefully selected political science institutions (in most cases university departments) in the four Central European countries. However, neither this survey was intended to find “objective” aspects of the development of the Central European political science communities; rather, it was also conceived in a selective way.

This approach resulted in the compilation of a broadly-based corpus of data. However, it is to be noted the very selection of issues to be researched had normative character and, moreover, this should make it possible for the authors to conduct also “normative”, interpretative analysis of the issues under question. Here, we consider it crucial to emphasize this article represents normatively conceived report on the state of the discipline, not an objective picture of the existing conditions of the Central European political science.

Of course, there was a fundamental problem the authors had to tackle: in what way we can define political science, and not only the Central European one, but in general? First, we can take account its subdisciplinary scope; second, we can try to define it in an institutional way. That is, what are the boundaries of the field, or respectively in what way we can understand it? Given the developments of respective sub-disciplines of the political science it is important to ask whether we wish to include within the political science the discipline of International Relations regardless of any possible consequences. Here, it is obvious the International Relations can be seen as a field that was originally constituted as a subfield of the political science, while on the other hand its dynamic evolution resulted in its establishment as an autonomous academic field. Without any doubt the International Relations is now well established and viable science. Its autonomous position can be proved by all fundamental attributes: institutional, organizational, personal, theoretical, terminological and methodological. Of course, we can easily argue there are numerous overlaps and mutual relations in terms of the topics, paradigms and methods that relate International Relations to other (sub)fields of the political science. On the other hand, such an argument can be used (and often is) to describe the position of the political science itself towards other social sciences and humanities, however without denouncing its independent character.
In the end, in resolving this issue the authors assume an attitude that can be understood as conciliatory and pragmatic: some problems and issues that are discussed in our article are related to the political science (or Central European political science) in a strict sense, while others have broader focus that includes also “filial” disciplines of the political science. The reason behind this attitude is the authors don’t think it is possible to define exclusive contents of the political science, thus excommunicating other related disciplines. While it is certainly possible to speak about trends that can be observed and identified within the broad field of the political science, not only can’t we state any final and generally valid conclusions but such an attempt would be meaningless. Still, there are political science institutions whose research focus is very broad and includes also e.g. international relations. On the other hand there are numerous other institutions in which the process of disintegration has proceeded to a serious extent. It is to be noted, by the way, the more prestigious such an academic institution is, the more significant such disintegration can be. And provided these institutions represent the actors that play key roles within the respective political science community, thus setting the stage for the research agenda and methodological discussions, it is only natural to anticipate they are of crucial relevance for the process of internal disintegration and that they herald future developments. In a similar way we can view the relationship of the political science and other related disciplines – European Studies, Strategic and Security Studies, area studies or studies of conflict – as these disciplines are also rooted in the political science, although currently they are generally viewed as separate fields.\textsuperscript{8}

Such elaborate considerations of the subdisciplinary demarcation of what the political science is can ultimately lead to a hypothesis there is something like 	extit{residual political science} – i.e. the political science in the strict sense that lacks any ambition to incorporate all those more or less autonomous (sub)disciplines. Such a residual political science might be comprised of the electoral studies, comparative political science and political philosophy – however, curiously enough, all these fields can be easily envisaged as autonomous fields as well. To sum this up, there is no final solution to this problem – leaving alone the issue whether such a solution is needed at all – which can be interpreted as endorsement of the conciliatory and accommodating approach that we already assumed towards defining the boundaries of political science.

The other demarcation (and the stricter one) is of an institutional character – i.e. which institutions can be characterized as falling within the boundaries of political science. Here, the major issue can be found in the tension between the science and public space, or – to put it differently – between the political science and the politics, and in the delicacy of
differentiating between theoretical political science and the political analysis or commentaries.

The major issue is twenty years after the 1989 changes the Central European political science is institutionally diversified in the same way we can observe in the Western Europe. Given the limited scope of the research (and the article) the authors have decided to focus primarily on the academic (in a strict sense university) institutions, i.e. specifically faculties, schools, institutes and departments. This does not mean the Central European political science should be limited to these actors only: however, the major criterion for an institution to be included in the political science (and consequently in our research) was the comprehensiveness of both the research and educational actions undertaken by the respective institution.

This means various research institutions (including academies of sciences and their branches) and think-tanks have not complied with this criterion and have been consequently excluded from our survey despite the fact the outputs produced by their staff can (and often do) fall within the political science domain and are fully respectable in terms of their quality. However, our study does not see the political science as a research field only, but puts a heavy emphasis on its educational aspects as well.

Taking into account our comments above it is now necessary to explain on what basis we have compiled the survey focused on selected aspects of the evolution and functioning of four Central European political science communities, and in what way we have constituted the sample of respondents.

Let’s begin with the fundamental points: we wish to emphasize the survey was not intended to uncover “objective” aspects of the genesis of the Central European political science since it is conceived in a selective way. Moreover, it represents only one of possible approaches to collect relevant data. The questionnaire was designed and prepared by the authors and was consequently consulted with several specialists in collecting data. In the end, it was conducted in co-operation with the Centre of Empirical Research (Středisko empirických výzkumů, STEM) which is specialized in the applied sociological research. The original questionnaire was in Czech, but was subsequently translated into English, Polish and Hungarian (there was no translation into Slovak as this language is very close to the Czech) so that every respondent could work with the questionnaire in vernacular language and/or lingua franca of social sciences.

The survey was conducted since April 4 till December 10, 2008, i.e. for more than eight months. The invitation to participate was delivered to 41 political scientists. Given low response rate this invitation was repeated several times by various means, e.g. by summary
emails, personal phone calls and a letter. In the end we received feedback from 32 respondents who either filled in an electronic questionnaire posted in a secure webpage, or thru a printed form. All responses were subsequently processed by the STEM specialists. The final response rate was very high, reaching up to 78%, and can thus be considered fully satisfactory (see the attachment). In the procedure as described above there also was – although limited – interaction between the authors and some respondents. However, their communication was not related to respective questions and answers and, consequently, there was no interference whatsoever in the autonomy of the respondents’ feedback. On the other hand, given high response rate the authors were given a chance to attempt at identification of regularities, and even at interpretations and predictions – both with regard to Central European region, and to respective national communities – although our study had not been intended to have any predictive capacity.

As we have already stated, the decision to make use of questionnaire survey posed a problem of defining the research field. In the end, we opted to select exclusively political science institutions affiliated to universities (see the list below in the alphabetical order). In our survey, therefore, there are only such units like universities, or – more precisely – their political science institutions represented by their heads. Should we have understood as a sample the political science community itself, our approach would have meant we would have gained only partial and possibly unbalanced collection of data. In terms of representativeness it is obvious our “university” sample does not represent the whole field; this has led us to assume a cautious stance towards generalizing the data. The fact in analyzing Central European political science communities we have preferred universities obviously constitutes an obstacle for any generalization. However, as we have said we have not intended to create a comprehensive “sample”; moreover, the university activities do cover some fields of the political science in a full-range way. And albeit the universities obviously do not represent the political science community as a whole but only its part, this part is relevant and in many respects determining.

At the same time we have to say if our article occasionally relates to the questionnaire questions, then it is necessary to separate opinions of the authors from the data and, within the data themselves, to take into account limited impact of the data as they are derived from the only one “source” (or respectively “universe”) of the political science community – although we hold this source is the most important one.
The decision which university institutions should be included into our sample was based on a major criterion: they were required to have an accredited Master Program in political science, and to implement it in practical terms. Such a criterion neatly combines the necessity to make an educational selection (for example especially in Poland you can find a great number of institutions which offer only bachelor degree in political science) with a research selection: to achieve accreditation for a master program an institution must be able to prove it employs relevant numbers of associate professors and full professors who have a strong publication and research record. We hold this criterion has made it possible to compile the list of the most relevant actors within the respective political science communities, the institutions which have been represented by their leading representatives (see the attachment). Moreover, such an approach can be seen as another reason why non-university institutions were not included into the respondents’ list as in their case this criterion of relevance could not have been applied.

As we have already noted, in this article we primarily wish to deal with the institutional and personnel dimensions of the political science in the Central Europe. More specifically, the authors intend to comment upon the selected interesting or in a way significant features of the institutional and personnel developments, the current state and trends in the Central European political science after 1989. At the first sight such an aspiration appears standard, being a typical element of all texts dealing with this issue. However, we believe we can present some data and observations which can hardly be derived from the standard texts. The reason is the data we present are not easily accessible or obvious even for the Central European political scientists as they have never been collected, or deal with subjective opinions.

Primarily, in the very beginning we have to define, substantiate and at least briefly comment upon the proposition according to which the political science in the Central Europe has developed since 1989 as a university discipline. In other words, we hold in the Central Europe the universities were and still are the vehicle of the development of political science as a comprehensive academic field. Here, it is to be noted such a view does not only follow from our interpretation of a question from our survey “What environment do you consider the most effective for the development of the political science?” albeit the responses given to the question are (with the exception of Hungary) unambiguous and institutions other than universities are hardly mentioned.

The second argument we present is based on historical and ideological experience which the Central European countries that used to be part of the so-called “communist bloc” share as a
consequence of the obligatory (coerced) engagement of the social sciences in the implementation of the interests of those who established them. Politicization and ideologization constitute relevant and dangerous phenomena which especially in the Central European context have exceptional information value. Of course neither the universities are immune against these phenomena; however, due to their tradition of autonomous, even rebellious behavior, and also given their permanent contact with the students who can hardly be manipulated the universities have much better chances to resist. These facts can be evidenced thru the existence of the so-called “Academies of Sciences”.

Although it is not precise to speak about them as institutions of the “Soviet type” there is a historical fact in three out of four countries we explore these Academies were established in early post-WWII years: the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences (1953-1992) was founded after all major (and especially autonomous) scientific non-university institutions and learned societies were abolished, and in the same time the Academies of Sciences were founded also in Slovakia (1953)17 and Poland (1952)18. The only exception is The Hungarian Academy of Sciences which continuous existence dates back to the beginning of the 19th century. However, after WWII this Academy was on the basis of „Act XXVII of 1949, modelled on the Soviet example, integrated the Academy into the newly developing political and institutional system, thus ending its autonomy and placing it under direct Communist Party and state control“ 19.

The criticism against the Academies of Sciences expressed above is based on the fact these institutions were under the complete control of the state and the communist party. Such a predicament was shared by all institutes: in case of natural sciences institutes in terms of their scientific work, topical focus, methodological preferences and of course also the human resources policies. In case of social science institutes we have to add ideological distortions. Having said that we cannot deny these Academies produced a number of striking texts; on the other hand it is obvious the universities (in comparison with the Academies) much more carefully defended the remnants of their freedoms. Consequently, we are skeptical about the renewal or establishment of political science institutes within Academies of Sciences after 198920, or later on (in the late 1990’s) about their ability to make meaningful contribution to the political science – for example in Poland the very sense of such an institute was challenged.21

The fact the comments above are not just theoretical considerations can be evidenced by a simple view in the webpage of the Political Science Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences22, specifically in the list of the projects currently undertaken by the Institute. Under
the heading of “National Projects” we can find five projects: Dr. Ivan Dérer Slovak Social Democratic Politician, Lawyer and Political Journalist; Institutional Framework of Foreign Policy of Slovak Republic; Strategy of the Development of the Slovak Society; Research into Key Issues of Modern Slovak History; Relationship of the Politics and History – Overcoming the Past. With the exception of the second project it is dubious whether these projects deal with political science issues – especially the tendency to confuse contemporary history and political science can be seen as eminent feature of the Slovak political science. Another “malady” can be found in the habit to perceive the Institute as a non-academic service organization of the Slovak political elites. Consequently, a concern emerges to what extent outputs of such institutes can be understood as part of the academic political science.  
On the other hand we have to admit our view is not the only one. The opposite view can be to some extent evidenced by the data we have collected as responses to the question 28: here, a series of institutes of respective Academies of Sciences was named among the most prestigious political science organizations in the Central Europe – for example Institute of Political Studies of Polish Academy of Science Warsaw (IPS PAS, founded 1988), Institute of Political Science of Hungarian Academy of Science (IPS HAS, founded 1990), Institute of Sociology of Czech Academy of Sciences (founded 1990), Prague-based Centre of Global Studies (the common organization of the Institute of Philosophy of Czech Academy of Sciences and the Faculty of Arts of the Charles University), and even the already mentioned Political Science Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (founded 1990 as Political Science Cabinet of the Slovak Academy of Sciences). There are also numerous political scientists who perceive the actions of these institutes as meaningful, promising, even exceptional (for example in terms of research – see the role of IPS HAS /Szabó 2002b: 137/). To put it simply, they see them as fully incorporated into the political science institutional network.  
However, the IPS PAS strategy to operate an educational element (foundation of Collegium Civitas, “non-public college”, in 1997 was initiated and guaranteed by ISP PAS – see Weselowski – Markowski 2002: 218) is still exceptional.
Therefore, let’s conclude this part by a neutral comment: debates on the role of Academies of Sciences in Central Europe last for more than twenty years. Currently, these debated tend to be more and more dramatic due to financial and budgetary crises or to tensions between the demands of the basic and applied research.
Another interesting question having relevant information value in terms of the current state of the Central European political science consists in the position and reputation of the political science institutions in the private universities. Also here our survey produces almost
unanimous opinion their role should only be “complementary to that of political science institutions in the public/state universities”. However, in this case we hold the real condition is somewhat more complex despite the fact the view there should be no substantial difference between the institutions in the public/state and private universities (let alone the possibility the private universities should play a leading role) is obviously marginal among the leading Central European political scientists.

In reality, nevertheless, it is the political science that is an academic discipline in which the private sector including all its elements (in the first plays the fees) established itself very effectively (in fact in the best way of all social sciences) and still, even after twenty years, proves to be very viable. Especially in Poland, but also in the Czech Republic and Slovakia we could witness fast development of political science institutions in the private universities since the mid-1990’s (Olszewski 2006: 296-297). Provided we would wish to have a typical example, the “story” of the Department of Political Science in the Aleksander Gieysztor’s Academy of Humanities in Pultusk can be of interest. The department was founded in 1995 when it received the state accreditation to teach an undergraduate political science program. In 1997 it received accreditation for graduate program, and in 2002 for the postgraduate one. This is a usual process of bottom-up development unrelated to any accreditations based on previous institutional continuity (for more details see Weselowski - Markowski 2002: 217). The success of the political science institutions in the private universities was derived from several factors. First, in the beginning the state bodies assumed very liberal approach towards new accreditations which did not prevent specialists affiliated to the public universities from harmonizing their duties in their maternal institutions with the engagement in the newly emerging private institutions. Later on this trend developed in relevant academic phenomenon that was of interest for example for the sociologists – the institution of the so-called “flying professors” had several features: academic, economic, personal, local etc.. It was gradually subject to growing criticism and also joking, thus obviously affecting to the reputation of the political science as a respectable academic field. Currently, given the changes in the accreditation processes, this phenomenon belongs to the past but despite this it significantly contributed to the establishment of some standards within political science communities.

The second aspect that assisted to the expansion of political science in the private institutions can be seen in certain petrification of traditional universities in terms of their personnel, economic, academic or organizational strategies. For (increasingly) numerous graduates the private universities were becoming the only professional option to continue in their career as their career prospects in the traditional universities seemed to be unlikely, even impossible.
Consequently, the private universities were perceived as a platform that is able to grow and undergo various reforms (not only professional ones). Some private universities did produce flexible internal organizational systems that are fully competitive to the western academic environment. On the other hand there were some private universities (quite understandably) whose representatives lacked both interest and abilities, and which retained the character of local institutions that are closer to the high schools.

The third – and certainly not irrelevant – aspect of the rise of the private political science institutions can be seen in the fashionable status of the political science. Actually, early in 1990’s the political science acquired the reputation of the discipline that can allegedly offer fresh graduates an interesting chance of social advancement, and is after all intellectually easier to grasp (since it is a “narrative” science) than natural or technical sciences. Such an infamous reputation the political science did not acquire only due to the expansion of the political science in the private universities, but it did play some role especially given its extent.

To sum this issue up we can say the private universities do constitute a significant element within the Central European political science universe. Institutions like the Aleksander Gieysztor’s Academy of Humanities in Pultusk (which we already mentioned) and the Higher Business School – National Louis University Nowy Sacz (both in Poland) and the Prague-based Metropolitan University (which currently expands beyond Prague anyway) are relevant actors in the political science academic environment. However, the financial and economic crisis that forces the state institutions to reconsider the models of funding in the public education, presents a crucial challenge also for the private universities.

Another conspicuous criterion to assess the institutional environment of the Central European political science reflects the cleavage centre versus periphery. With the exception of Poland the other Central European countries, represented in our research, have their obvious geographical and administrative hubs: Prague, Budapest and Bratislava. These hubs naturally play dominant roles also as academic centers – here we can find the oldest and most famous universities: Charles University (founded in 1348), Loránd Eötvös University (founded in 1777), and Comenius University (founded in 1919). However, the assumption the good universities are all (and only) located in the capital, and the provinces represent a kind of intellectual periphery, is outdated. If Prague, Bratislava or Budapest do boast of a high concentration of researchers, it would be a mistake to forget that several (in fact majority?) eminent Central European political scientists work in this so-called “periphery”. Or, to put
this more precisely, political science ranks among the disciplines in Central Europe in relation to which we can challenge the idea of the centre’s qualitative prevalence over periphery. This condition is most obvious in Poland. Despite the strong position of Warsaw as a natural academic centre there are numerous other centers of intellectual life that can hardly be disputed: Cracow, Lublin, Poznan, Torun, Wroclaw (in the alphabetical order). Their reputation and excellence follow from both the historical predicaments, and the current abilities/decisions of the local authorities to build and develop respectable university institutions.

Similarly, in the Czech Republic it is Prague that possesses the most extensive academic (including political science) background: most importantly the Charles University (Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Social Sciences), the Economic University, but political science can be studies in the private institutions as well (for example Metropolitan University). However, within the Czech political science there are also peripheral institutions whose performance is fully competitive. In the first place we have to mention the network of political science institutions in the Faculty of Social Studies in Masaryk University in Brno, but also departments of political science affiliated to the Faculty of Arts of the West Bohemian University in Pilsen, and to the Faculty of Arts of the Palacky University in Olomouc respectively.

In Hungary and Slovakia, however, the conditions are somewhat different and the political science institutions outside Budapest and Bratislava do not enjoy such a high reputation. Still, the deliberation on the issue of center/periphery in the Central European political science does not have to necessarily be just a subjective commentary. First, it is important to take into account the plurality of approaches and conceptions within the field which is theoretically guaranteed – among other things – by the geographical divisions and the abilities of the local universities to compete with the major universities in the centers. Second, it is within the political science and related sciences where you can state a proposition on possible advantages of the political science institutions being located outside major administrative centers: for example, such advantages could be primarily seen in a detachment from everyday political actions and lures (including career prospects for the researchers/lecturers and also the most gifted students), and thus in a chance/necessity to produce political science without a touch with practical politics and, therefore, as an un politicized, really academic science.

An important factor that can help to identify relevant features of the contemporary Central European political science can be found in the dynamics of the discipline’s internal divisions into various sub-fields. The political science – in the same way as times ago when it seceded
itself from other social sciences as an autonomous discipline – in the course of time has experienced elements of internal fragmentation. The same process can also be identified within the Central European political science communities: after the initial period, typical for its curricular cohesiveness, there has been a gradual development towards multifaceted structure of sub-fields. A classical and also most frequent case can be seen in the secession of International Relations which in the majority of Central European universities currently constitutes fully autonomous field. However, this is just a beginning – we should also ask whether the process of internal fragmentation in Central European countries is the same, or at least similar, or whether there are significant differences.  

Here, we can define a number of fields which, according to the leading Central European political scientists, have acquired the fully autonomous status. These are, as we have already mentioned, International Relations and also European Studies and Security and Strategic Studies. In the past, these fields did not constitute typical political science subdisciplines; rather, they were either related to the political science, or they existed as a field close to it, but having interdisciplinary nature (International Relations), or have been established in the recent decades following the emergence of a specific subject matter to be studied. Currently, they obviously constitute – together with the fields within the “residual” political science – subdisciplinary basis of the broadly perceived political science.

A significant, while less notorious is the story of the rise of the Security and Strategic Studies. As there have been ever stronger feeling the division between domestic and international security is blurred, there have been simultaneous attempts to emphasize this change also in the academic discourse through the shift of these studies (accompanied by the transformation of methods used to study this shift) from the arena of International Relations to the standard political science (Collins 2007: 1-9 etc.). This development can be illustrated by the well-known pyramidal model (political science /fundament/- international relations – security studies – strategic studies /the smallest subset/) of J. Baylis and J. Wirtz (Baylis - Wirtz - Gray - Cohen 2002: 13). Consequently, it comes as no surprise there is continuous tension between the IR and political science communities. However, we cannot exclude further divisions and increasing autonomy of this field, for example its topical, methodological and also paradigmatical shifts beyond the sphere of social sciences towards the hard science.

The second set of political science subfields which are already well established but are not taught and practiced in all universities consists mainly of Comparative Political Science and Political Philosophy (known also as Political Doctrines, Political Thought etc.). The status of these subfields is different than those in the first set – these are typical political science
subfields which in the past constituted the standard segment of the political science curricula. Once they are perceived as established fields, as documented in our survey, this can result in a shift towards their institutional autonomy. What is more likely, however, is such a development stems from the local preferences and from the interests of the particular institutions and researchers: regarding Political Philosophy we can present as an example institutions affiliated to Jagellonian University in Cracow and to the Faculty of Arts of Charles University in Prague. However, given the frequency of the responses in our survey the first interpretation cannot be excluded. Then, nonetheless, we could ask what could remain of “political science” …

The third set of the political science subfields also demonstrates the tendency towards fragmentation within the field as mentioned by the respondents. Especially in Poland, the current subfields like Political Communication and Political Marketing (often combined with Electoral Theory and Electoral Studies) present obviously well established areas. Taking into account the competition within the national area we can state such a fragmentation can be understood as strategic necessity allowing for the self-assertion within the academy. In fact, the Polish view on possible fragmentations within the political science is emphatically broad: Geopolitics, Political Sociology, Political Theory, Political Systems, Party Systems, Economic Policy, Public Administration … - here we can see a mixture of interdisciplinary and subdisciplinary elements of the political science curriculum. Moreover, many Central European universities offer various area studies (British and American Studies, Central- and East European Studies etc.) that can be also perceived as political science fields. The same can be said about the issues of democratization and human rights. In all these cases we can present arguments to the contrary, e.g. interdisciplinary elements, methodological and conceptual ambiguities and so on. At any rate, the political sciences prove an obvious ability to undergo a dynamic transformation – in fact, besides the trend towards residuality (the political science is what is left) we can also observe a tendency towards comprehensiveness (political science as expanding field).

These observations result in an interesting point: in the course of the second decade of the transformation in some Central European countries we could witness (and sometimes we still can) a debate on the modifications of the current models of accreditation, i.e. ways to authorize implementation of particular study programs. This debate has directly impacted upon the process of internal fragmentation of various disciplines including political science; however, we do not intend to pay detailed attention to this issue. Suffice it to say after 1989, when the state authorities began to respect the autonomy of the academy once again, the
accreditation policy – besides the models to distribute funds – has become the most important tool to assert tertiary education policy. Understandably enough, in different countries there are different models. The accreditation award has always been conditioned by the applicant’s (as a rule the institution willing to run the program) ability to submit some evidence of its quantitative (technical, organizational, logistical) and qualitative (primarily the human resources and publication records) background – specifically we can mention the requirement the institution must employ a number of associate and full professors participating in the teaching. In practice, however, instead of focusing on the quality there was growing demand for a quick expansion of the tertiary education, supported by the society, state, and the universities as well. Consequently, there was a number of professors who were willing to guarantee the program quality in several universities simultaneously (so-called “flying professors”). The most permissive practice within Central Europe was established in Poland (Olszewski 2006: 300-301). Nevertheless, also the Czech system of accreditations, supervised by the Accreditation Committee of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, gradually acquired permissive character. For instance, as evidenced by publicly available data, in the period of 2000-2006 the overall number of applications for accreditation in the Czech Republic increased from 250 up to 1635. Moreover, in 2000 the Committee accepted 160 applications, i.e. 64 %, while in 2006 it was 1550 – incredible 94.8 %. The first decade of new millennium has gradually produced an interesting shift in the opinions of parties to these debates. Provided we continue to stick to the Czech and Polish environment (although similar arguments can be found also in Slovakia), we can say the academy has found out the current system of accreditations (in general, not only in the social sciences; however, we cannot deny especially political science used to be presented as a deterrent example) was much too open, tolerant, and permissive – i.e. inappropriate. These debates did not emerge out of blue but as a consequence of the environment conspicuous by the swift transformation of the universities that were turned from the elitist institutions into the mass ones; this transformation had a series of unintended consequences and within some segments of intelligentsia generated passionate defiance.

The reform that was implemented in Poland in 2006 aimed at strengthening the supervisory elements and making the accreditation requirements stricter: for example, there has been an obligation to submit an annual report on the state of the institution which is compared by the Ministry with the accreditation application; every teacher must be employed by the institution for at least one-year’s period; there has been an aspiration to express the standards of
respective disciplines; and in comparison with the public universities the private ones have to fulfill more extensive range of duties.

On the other hand, the debate in the Czech Republic did not result in specific outputs. Still, there is a very interesting difference in terms of the idea which entity should receive the accreditation – i.e. they should not be granted to the particular programs, but to those universities that would be able to guarantee the internal system of accreditation allowing for the appropriate quality control. Here, we can see broader range of possible supervisors of the university teaching – be it the state, institution, university, or a community within a discipline. The further developments of the disciplinary fragmentation are dependent on a variety of actors that follow their own specific interests.

The previous information on the institutional and subdisciplinary features of the Central European political science was intended to give the reader an idea of some elements of its current institutional development. However, what is the self-perception of the members of Central European political science communities? In what way the question “Who is political scientist?” is addressed? Or, respectively, who is reputed political scientist and how can we recognize a reputed/prestigious political science institution? Are there some features of the Central European political science communities which are perceived as specific by the local political scientists? What the external and internal influences of the national political science communities? And, finally, is it possible to speak about the national political science communities, or about the Central European community?

The question “Who is political scientist?” poses an issue that is often discussed and commented upon in the texts dealing with the state of political science in the Central Europe\textsuperscript{35}, however without reaching any satisfactory response. For example, when commenting upon the differences between the political science before 1989 and after, Tadeusz Klementewicz identifies three cleavages: political-ideological (winners and losers), moral (the good and bad ones), and epistemic (professionals and amateurs; see Klementewicz 1997: 59). Nevertheless, even now, after twenty years of development, this question does have much more aspects.

When debating this question, Czeslaw Mojsiewicz presents four possible answers (in the Polish environment):

1) the one who practices research and has a publication record in the political science
2) the one who works in a political science institution and teaches courses in the field
3) the one who perceives himself as political scientist
4) the one who graduated from a political science program, was awarded PhD in the field, or received a professorship (Mojsiewicz 2006: 14).

However, such an inclusive and tolerant position is not generally accepted. Many an academic in the Central Europe prefers more strict approach and defines a political scientist as a person that “specializes in the field” (Ponczek 2006: 41). Understandably enough, this strict approach can be seen as a kind of defense against the frequently expressed public perception of the political science as unscientific and ideological field – an area which outputs are close either to quackery, or to lobbying, or in the best case to journalism. This is the reason why some specialists who in fact deal with issues and problems that obviously fall within the political science prefer not to be perceived as political scientists, and opt for the participation in the sociological or juristic communities. In this context, E. Ponczek speaks about the “identity crisis” of the political scientists (Ponczek 2006: 48).

These considerations, of course, cannot be in the Central European context resolved by reference to some objective ratings – those that do exist are produced especially by the media and their value (beginning with the selection of the institutions and ending with the variables used for their assessment) wildly oscillates. Still, on the other hand, this information has (or should have) its natural audience – primarily those who wish to study political science, i.e. the “clients” of the political science departments. Although the students’ mobility within the Central European region is low in general, the political science institutions in the region do compete, at least in part. Primarily for the Slovak universities their Czech and Hungarian counterparts do constitute a real and significant competition as there is no language barrier for the Slovak students (in Hungarian case for the Slovak Hungarians and to some extent for some Slovaks) and the Czech and Hungarian universities are seen as a chance to get a more prestigious degree.

Consequently, although the attempts to perceive the Central European universities and political scientists as having competitive relations are rather rare, this does not mean such an issue is irrelevant and without any sense – the reputation of persons/institutions is implicitly related to the quality after all. Sure, the reputation does not equal to quality regardless of whether this is defined as *excellence, audit, outcomes, mission* or *culture* (Mertova - Webster - Nair 2010: 8-9). We can admit, however, the assessment of the quality, although perceived and presented subjectively, is somehow projected onto the reputation itself.

This is also the reason why the spectrum of responses related to the range of criteria that are relevant to identify the most esteemed political scientists is so interesting for our research. There is no wonder the majority of respondents focus on publication records (while
emphasizing repeatedly the most important element is not the quantity, but quality) and general reputation both abroad, and in the maternal country; the same can be said about the rejection of the “career” conception of the reputation based on the achievement of the academic or public/political positions (although the Polish condition is somewhat different). Another way to identify the relevant persons and political science centers can be found in the existence of the political science “schools” and their representatives. In this article, we define the “school” as a group of researchers regardless of whether they are affiliated to a single institution or not who represent a specific way of political science thinking and a methodological option, and also display certain degree of common focus or even organization, or at least a perception of belonging together. The influence of such a group does not have to be limited to the political science as such, but can have an outreach into other disciplines as well.

Regardless of what kind of definition we can make up, the majority of the Central European most important political scientists assume rather skeptical approach to the existence of political science within the region. Infrequent positive views (“yes, there are some schools in the Central Europe”) tend to combine two approaches: either the notion of school is related to a particular institution, or it reflects the activities of a research leader who is able to address broad scientific audience by his/her writings. To our opinion, the first approach tends to emphasize organizational capacities of some institutions (Brno, Prešov), or their traditions (Toruń). Another possible interpretation could be related to the preference of a specific conception of the political science (empirical versus interpretative, historical versus postmodern etc.) as expressed by the majority of members in an institution.

The second approach is conspicuous by its reference to the Polish realities and to the emergence of a numerous group of eminent Polish political scientists. With regard to the most important scholars (Artur Bodnar - Warsaw, Erhard Cziomer - Krakow, Józef Kuukula - Warsaw, Franciszek Ryszka - Warsaw) it is especially noteworthy to highlight Ziemowit Jacek Pietras (Univerzita Marii-Curie Sklodowskiej /UMCS/ in Lublin), one of the leading figures of post-behavioralism and one of the few researchers whose credentials obviously exceed boundaries of the Central European region.

Finally, let’s make an attempt to interpret the survey responses related to the questions dealing with the interconnectedness and the degree of dependence especifics of the Central European political science with the other communities. First, there is a conspicuous (and self-conscious?) feeling and at the same time determined view of the Czech and Slovak political science leaders that in comparison with other European states their national political science
does not display any specific features. However, the general degree of interconnection with the political science communities in the Western Europe and Northern America is assessed in the same way in all Central European countries – as “partial”.

Hungarian and Polish responses reflect the potential specific features in much more substantial way. However, in the Hungarian case these responses are difficult to interpret – see for example the contradictory statements regarding the degree of Americanization. Consequently, it is the Polish case that offers the most balanced (the equilibrium of positive and negative responses in terms of possible specifics), most interesting and probably also most easily generalized reflection. Here, our attention is turned to the long-term focus of the Polish political science on the studies of “national” realities including the evolution of the “national” political science thinking (see also the strong connection with the historiography regardless of whether the Polish political scientists assess this connection in positive or negative terms), on the efforts to capture the logics of the processes of transformation, and – last but not least – on the influence of persons related to the previous regime. Obviously, however, these data cannot be limited to Poland only.

In what way, nevertheless, we can prove the existence of national political science communities, and what arguments can be used? The existence of national political science associations can be seen as one of the few institutional signs of these communities. The opinion whether the associations make any contribution to the national communities or not is basically in parallel (being slightly more positive) with the views on the existence of these communities. Actually, it is necessary to say if there are any political science communities in the respective countries they are completely devoid of any corporate or status features. Actions of the national associations tend to be rather limited; moreover, the associations usually do not dispose of sufficient funds which could enable implementation of more extensive projects. As a rule – see the Czech case – the associations’ actions are limited to the organization of national congresses and to the editorial activities. Naturally, the membership is not compulsory; consequently, many a renowned political scientist is not a member of such an association. So, as we have already stated, the performance of the political science community is dependent on the university institutions.

What conclusion can we make? Or, does it make sense in terms of political science to perceive the Central European countries that are subject to our research as a common area? Such an area could be symbolized and represented by Central European Political Science Association (CEPSA), i.e. the institution overarching the Central European area. However, the skepticism expressed in the responses (with partial exception of Poland) is obvious – and
we hold it is also justified. Without aspiring to present an extensive commentary we can say neither past (founded in 2000 as the branch of IPSA; for details see e.g. Szabó 2002b: 147), nor presence of CEPSA (unclear institutional and financial background, territorial shifts of the editor of the Central European Political Science Review, CEPSA’s journal) pose any convincing argument the Central European political science communities in any way prefer this network to its all-European (European Confederation of Political Science Associations - ECPSA, European Consortium for Political Research - ECPR, European Political Science Network - EPSNet; see Berg-Schlosser 2007a, Topf 2007a), or global counterparts (International Political Science Association - IPSA).

Data and commentaries presented in this article have no ambition to offer a comprehensive testimony on the institutional and human resources conditions of the Central European political science. Numerous relevant aspects were not mentioned in detail, or were even ignored at all – for example we have avoided any discussion about the students’ community. As a rule, we have done so since there are other sources where the readers can find necessary information and data. At any rate, we consider obvious many problems the Central European political science communities deal with are very much the same as standard tensions and issues that are well known in (and reflected by) the Western Europe – to mention some typical cases, we can refer to subdisciplinary fragmentation, the issue of the political science residuality and so on. On the other hand, some problems we have discussed have their obvious roots in the recent transformation processes and, in this sense, are still specific for the Central European area: for example the issue of human resources and guarantees for the accreditations as well as their models, etc.. In fact, here we can witness the same mixture that is known from the reflection of general socio-political trends in the Central Europe.

1 The wording „Central European“ is used as a synonym to the words „Czech, Hungarian, Polish and Slovak“. If necessary, these nations are listed in the alphabetical order.

2 Here, it is important to say this article only presents limited outputs of our research – the comprehensive treatment of the subject and the research itself is to be published as a book by Barbara Budrich Publishers later this year. Consequently, this article must be understood as an attempt to highlight some specific points only: mainly those that refer to the delineation of the Central European political science as a specific research field, and to its institutional background.
3 See the commentary by L. Morlino, President of IPSA, to the article edited by R. Eisfeld and L. A. Pal (2010, cover back): „I am delighted to single out this article as a model for similar studies.“

4 See most recent volume in Czech that deals with this issue (Trávníček 2009).

5 Although some questions posed in the questionnaire deal with the relation of the political science to other social sciences (especially with respect to the evolution of the political science right after 1989), we are convinced – despite some debates initiated for example by feminism (Stoker – Marsh 2006: 119) – in the Central Europe the issue of interdisciplinary identity of the political science did not constitute a relevant point.

6 For a classification of the political science in terms of topics and/or subfields, which according to the authors can be useful also in the Central European environment, see International Political Science Abstracts. For more details see IPSA webpage: http://online.sagepub.com/cgi/topics? category=3174956&journal=sagepub.

7 However, the discipline of International Relations itself is very broad and diversified – see e.g. the list of sections operating under International Studies Association (ISA), although these sections are conceived in a particularistic way (see http://www.isanet.org/sections/). At any rate, a “classificatory typology” (Lehnert 2007: 64) that makes it possible to achieve perfect discrimination is only an ideal type which can be approximated but is not attainable.

8 It is to be noted in the Central European context these disciplines have grown to assume the political science’s initial reputation as a fashionable field (see e.g. the changes in the numbers of applicants who have wished to study the respective disciplines). Such a criticism has often emanated from other social sciences and also from the non-academic environment.

9 For details see the STEM webpage http://www.stem.cz.

10 The response rate of the internet questionnaire surveys usually oscillates around 30-40%.

11 The only exception being the Institute of Political Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Here, it could be possible to relate to an interesting issue of the presence (or absence) of the political science institutes affiliated to the academy of sciences in the Central European countries, and to the (dis)advantages that stem from such a condition for respective political science communities.

12 We have borrowed this concept from Ulf Sandström (2007). While he employs the term to denote various categories of publications (articles/studies, monographs, collected volumes and reports), thus dealing with obviously different subject matter, it still appropriately and effectively indicates what a diverse field the political science is.

13 On the other hand we have to admit the application of this criterion was criticized by some of our consultants (especially the Polish political scientists W. Paruch and A. Wolek) who considered irrelevant the implicit assumption the selected political science institutions must be necessarily headed by highly esteemed scholars who are by definition the appropriate respondents in our survey. However, we did not search for the best respondents; rather, we aspired to constitute such a group of respondents who would be representative of their institutions. Should we apply any other criterion (the most obvious one being the academic rank of full professor) such a solution would substantially challenge our selection with regard to the number of respondents – in Poland we can identify disproportionately high numbers of professors while, moreover, in some cases it is impossible to learn which institutions awarded them their professorships. Other criteria would be even more subjective, thus being more easily disputed and criticized.
Substantial part of the respondents (see the question no. 28), however, highlighted the Central European University in Budapest as the most prestigious political science institution in the four countries. Nevertheless, we have not included this institution in our survey due to the absence of a comprehensive study model Bachelor-Master-PhD, and its focus on higher levels of education only.

See the question no. 34. In fact, our respondents were the representatives of the universities.

Within the perverse communist dual model that insisted on the existence of various “national” Slovak institutions which however had no Czech counterparts (in some cases only until 1968 when Czechoslovakia turned into would-be federation; in the others until the very end of the communist regime). See http://www.sav.sk/?lang=sk&charset=&doc=info-history.

The Czech Republic is an exception. After 1992 there have been no autonomous political science institute affiliated to the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic (AS CR). Some issues falling within the borders of political science were researched into by the Institute of Sociology.

See Mojsiewicz (2005: 73 and following).

This note should not be understood as an expression of disrespect towards the analytic centers like for example the Osrodek studiow wschodnich in Warsaw. The point is we would only like to make it clear what these conditions are like.

Understandably enough, the institutional networks as described by the relevant actors consist of various think-tanks and research centers. With reference to the responses related to the question no. 28 we can say the most prestigious ones typically are the Institute of International Relations (IIR; UMV) in Prague, Instytut Spraw Publicznych (ISP) in Warsaw, or Institute for Public Affairs (IPA; IVO) in Bratislava.

In the Hungarian academy the private institution do not play substantial role. CEU does constitute a conspicuous exception; however, its “Hungarian” identity is dubious at the best. See Szabó (2002b: 136 a 138).

In the historical context it is necessary to remind fundamental significance of the cities of Lvov and Vilnius which, although not being Polish in substance, decisively influenced the development of the Polish social sciences.

And should such a specific subject matter perish, as it can happen in the case of European Union, the field that focuses on this subject, i.e. European Studies, would cease to exist as well.

For details on the condition of this subdiscipline in Poland, the country in which it enjoys the most substantial attention, see e.g. Paruch (2006: 207-220).

It is also appropriate to mention a specific Polish (and in part Slovak) feature which is absent in the other countries in our research: a frequent interconnection between the political science and journalism – see e.g. the notice issued by the Polish Ministry of Education in March 2002 which defines three study programs under the rubric of political science as journalism and social communication, international relations and political science (Mojsiewicz 2006: 15). On one hand such a conception that implicitly acknowledges “political science”
character of journalism naturally devalues the scientific rigor of the political science; consequently, for this very reason it is criticized or even rejected by many respected political scientists in Poland itself. On the other hand it cannot be excluded such a tolerant approach to the links between political science and journalism can have a positive impact on the quality of performance of the Polish journalistic community. While the Polish colleagues may disagree, good qualities of the Polish journalistic community are generally acknowledged especially in comparison with other Central European countries.

33 Alternatively, we can mention E. Ponczek’s notion of “pure political science” (Ponczek 2006: 43).
34 See the PowerPoint presentation by the secretary of the Accreditation Commission of the Czech Ministry of Education presented in October 9, 2008, in Mikulov.
35 In Poland see e.g. Mojsiewicz (1997: 31) who represents allegedly widespread opinion: „someone should do something about it“ meaning that „everybody is the political scientist now“. Moreover, Mojsiewicz also mediates an interesting debate conducted between J. Wiatr and E. Wnuk-Lipinski in early 1990’s that focused on the chances and limits of the transformation of political scientists working in the academy before 1989 and their transition into the new era – see Mojsiewicz 2005: 60-71.
36 In terms of academic efforts see e.g. an attempt by A. Wolek who classified three variables: the process of education, research activities, and „development“ (Wolek 2003: 26-30).
37 See e.g. CHE Excellence Ranking presented by Die Zeit that compares a selected group of European universities for each subject including political science. Of Central European universities only CEU Budapest, Jagellonian University in Cracow, University of Economics in Prague and the Charles University were included in this list. The criteria are as follows: Overall study situation, International doctorates, International master's students; International staff, Most cited articles, Erasmus Mundus Master's, Teaching staff mobility, Student mobility, Citations, and Publications.
38 See question no. 33.
39 See question no. 24.
40 A. Bodnar’s reputation and his influence upon his students are clearly evidenced by the term „Bodnar’s team“. See Janowski (2006: 57).
41 The author of the first Polish article focused on methodological and theoretical issues of political science (Ryszka 1984).
42 Moreover, we should also mention J. Wiatr. However, in Poland Wiatr is considered more of a sociologist, respectively sociologist of politics. At any rate, the role he played in the establishment of the political science is not disputed. See e.g. Janowski (2006: 57-58).
44 See questions nos. 8, 15.
46 For the supranational dimension of the political science networks see e.g. Coakley (2004: 171-184).
47 See questions nos. 35 and 37.