

**WHERE'S GOING POLITICAL SCIENCE DISCIPLINE? THE NEXT  
DECADE**

**GODOFREDO VIDAL DE L ROSA<sup>1</sup>**

**Working paper**

**All commentaries and suggestions will be welcomed**

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<sup>1</sup> Doctor Godofredo Vidal de la Rosa is specialist in Democratic theory and in the trajectory of the Political Sciences Discipline. He is Professor Titular and Researcher from the department of Sociology, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana (Plantel Azcapotzalco), México, D.F., and member of the Research Committee on the development of political science , IPSA.. Opinions and comments will be sent to [gvdr@correo.azc.uam.mx](mailto:gvdr@correo.azc.uam.mx). This paper is part of the research project “Teoría política contemporánea” (DCSH 802),

## **Introducción**

There are three common beliefs among the practitioners of political science. The first is that political science is a modern invention; the second is a concomitant version: political science is a product of the post WWII environment (Boncourt, 2009). And the third is that political science flourishes only in democratic environments. The three propositions are not false, but they are not totally true. Political science is the oldest of all the social sciences. Many commentators don't have good memories and they believe that political science is a son or daughter of "modernity" (Keating, 2009. Von Beyme, 1994; Von Beyme, 1998). Others go so far claiming that the state is a modern product (Modern state is a modern product but states are so old, as civilization itself). I want to recall the longevity of our discipline because the long view is the best way to obtain an ample wisdom. Wisdom is often forgotten in our actual debates on the actual state of the discipline and its future. I want to state a couple on things to come. First, political science is not a product of modernity, but only of modern political science. Maquiavelo, when he used a kind of comparative method, was the first, but Hobbes, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Tocqueville, "*Plubius*", and a long list on eminencies were the new founders of the political science in the democratic era. More specifically, the Federalists' papers and Tocqueville asked for a new political science to understand the new times. Their novelty is not political science as an enterprise of detailed observation, comparison and logical reasoning about types of regimes and state power, but the emergence of citizenship. Tocqueville understood this fact plenty as he talked about the emergence of the ideas of universal equality aspirations and the broken of the lines of caste. Class, race, gender and the amorphous conformation of the new *polis*: citizenship, were the new facts, not political science,

Second, political science is not an exclusive product of Western minds. I believe that we can look for and found a lot of thinkers on the art of exercising political power. But it is true that modern political sciences are most aware that its predecessors in the emergence of common people in an active political role. That is the essence of democracy in the way that Tocqueville suggested the need of a new science. Third, modern political science is a product of illustrious dead Western white men. The founders of our discipline are all of us, with the exception of the authors of the *Federalist Papers*, Western Europeans. The *Weberian* lineage, in Germany, and the *Elite* school in Italy were examples of the robust trunks from our actual discipline growth. The roots on our discipline, thus, are older and multi branched. However, recently, there are a lot of people claiming against the hegemony of the American Political science. They are partially right. American political science is hegemonic and probably we need changes. But the critics generally forgot the target. Their accusations are not on the results of research or successfulness of theoretical building or adequacy of methodological debates but on a stereotype, on a “construction” of a myth on the identity of American political science. This image is like the boogiemán. Causes a lot of anguish but only have existence in the wishful thinking of its critics. My essay is an attempt to elude this American political science stereotype and focus in the actual state of the discipline. I will begin with underlying the American political science plurality and dynamism. Secondly, I want to examine the reactions of some Europeans –not all political scientists, but most philosophers and “humanists”— to the real and invented pretension of the American political science. There are two groups. The serious critics and the performance stylised critics. In a third moment I want to explore the actual state of political science in the later periphery regions. Latin Americans, East Asians, Africans, East Europeans, all us, we are doing our own work.

Contemporary political science is rooted in American political science for one and devastating reason: the destruction of the European social research during the ascent of fascism and until its destruction. It was after the defeat of these monstrous political phenomena that European and other latitudes that social sciences were rebuilt with the help of UNESCO and the American academes (Almond, 1990; Easton, 1991; 1995; Newton, 1991; McKay, 1991; Morlino, 1991; Beyme, C, Von, 1991; *Participation*, 2009)). Especially Western European social and political sciences were rebuilt on the American format. As time passed by, Europeans are reclaiming their glorious intellectual past and challenging the American hegemonic intellectual ways to do the work. In this process some interesting thing are happening, for example, the emergence of nonsensical rhetoric. One of this nonsense has loyalist that like to accuse the American political science of being positivistic. That kind of criticism becomes especially hard because there are remnants of the “postmodernist” silliness. I want to suggest that postmodernism is only *pre-sokalianism*.<sup>2</sup> Of course, American political science was, and residually is until now, positivistic. But in my opinion, this epistemological dilemma was solved two decades ago.

A second nonsense is the division among the Continental interpretative- and the American tradition (Pettit, 1995; West, 1995). The first is supposedly interpretative and the second empirical; the first is philosophically oriented and the second analytical. The first is most normative and the last is “positivistic”. That is, of course, a simplification that we, political scientists, don’t deserve.

### **The “American” vs. “European” Political science; A cacophonous debate.**

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<sup>2</sup> I call as post *sokalism* posterior to the overwhelming criticism that James Sokal and Jean Bricmont, (1998) make of the charlatany of post-modern French I intellectuals and their many followers.

The initial pseudo dilemma that I want to explore is on some claiming from European researchers to the American political science. As there is not one homogeneous theoretical posture in the United States, and the nexus that maintain the union are on the *problem laden side, not in the epistemological court*, I would not to dismiss as a false statement the accusation to the American hegemony, however I can say that American colleagues are provincials and obsessed with them as a model to the rest of us, etc.(Gunnell, 2006). But many critics of American political science try to sell the idea on that American political science is a) positivistic, b) mechanistic 3) any thing like, but very ugly characteristic. Years ago, I tried to do that, but Americans and Europeans can read only in English and I was condemned to oblivion. *C'est la vie*.

I can understand that not everybody is obliged to know the changes of the internal work of our discipline, but also we have the right to demand more humility when we talk on some things not very familiar to our knowledge. American political science is on flux, as European and Latin American and Chinese or South African political science. But not because they are national political sciences but because science is changing and the communication between different persons –we- is becoming easier. But this communication improvement is not creating a fragmentation but, by contrary, common criteria to discuss and debate on research problems and some common rules –minimal and transitional— on what is *science* and specially political *science*.

There is not one paradigm of American political science. At least we must identify three of them. They are the behaviourist, the “rational choicer” and the “neo institutionalists”. Moreover, inside each one there are many branches. For example, into the class of neoinstitutionalists we can find very different approaches not only in their theoretical, but methodological and ideological traits. The same occurs in the other

approaches. *There is not a one paradigm, but multiple approaches characterized by methods and problems.* There are pretentious authors and sects but I am incapable to find any paradigm. Including rational choice, that is a very changing approach. In fact, in the Western Europe side is typical to identify a “theory” with an author. Cultism is frequent and each decade two or three new *gurus* appear and disappear. The temptation to impute the same behaviour to the American political science is irresistible because offers an easy and comfortable way to criticize the full enterprise, accusing it of being a residual of some philosophy, as pragmatism or neo-conservatism<sup>3</sup>. This is an easy way to fake but is a dishonest way to work. For example, the more extraordinary event in the rational choice approaches is the slow but sustained rejection of the term “rational” as the basis of “decision” or “choice”. Evolutionary biology and neurosciences have arrived to political science and old fences are coming down. The sects and separated tables are not the same when Gabriel Almond mentioned them, and there is a very interesting traffic between different inner traditions of the APC. The gravediggers that believed that they were making the exhumations of the political science discipline carried on an empty coffin.

This reaction against the American political science is weird. Not because American political science is exempted of criticism, but the critics against are bad oriented. Think in the critiques of two exemplar academics on the European tradition. The Italian professor Giovanni Sartori and the professor American Phillip Schmitter, both are working at Siena University and both very angry with the actual ways of American political sciences (Sartori, 2004; Schmitter, 2002). Their criticism is not on the sustainability of methods or irrelevance of problems but only in supposed pretensions of the American political science. Of course, American scholars can be very

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<sup>3</sup> On this aspect the classical work is Gunnell, 1988. For an exploration on the influence of *neo-conservatism* in mainstream political science, see the recent essay of Professor Ricci, 2009)

pretentious, as French are, or any others, but throwing the baby with the bath water can be an exaggeration. However, there are certain traits in actual European sociology and political science that make it look as Americans of the sixties. For example, the recurrent reference to social systems” is an legacy from old times when structural functionalism was hegemonic into the USA camp. But functionalism has no their best and more enthusiast defenders in the European camp. I do not have any problem with *isms*, if they do the work well. Theoretical enterprises are not on theory but on social realities and human behaviour. The fights amongst different *isms* (as functionalism against the rational choicerism), reflex only mutual ignorance besides hat are surpassed many years ago (Monroe, 2005). In the first place , because the “scientificism” of the American social and political science is very often a bad representation. In fact, as an example, rational choice is not a unique monolithic theory, but a framework in constant change. Secondly, we do not confuse our fears to methodological rigor, with theoretical stigmatization.

In my opinion what is wrong with American Political Science is the same that is wrong with political science across the world. Specifically, Americas political scientist are very often so “provincials”, in that sense that their images of political configurations in time and space are always compared –in terms vastly disadvantages- with the American dream (Gunnell, 2004). American political scientists are often not very aware of this transfer of his political images to the rest of the world. The same can be said of different practitioners. Then, one important thing is to be always ready to confront our owns prejudices with realities. Especially because political science is yet insufflate with remnants of the Cold War. For example, the limits on democratic theory, which is based in the Schumpeterian revision of the “classical” or vulgar democratic theory, must be confronted. This theoretical dominant conception, the so called

“minimalist” conception of democracy (Przeworski, 1997) must be challenged but not with empty words, but reasons and critical debate. Secondly, magic hand passing don’t work against stupidity. Mostly, criticism comes from the guts and not from the brain. For example many are sustaining a supposedly anti or post positivistic epistemological stance, branded as the post modernist and interpretative methods. But we, political scientist, are not epistemologists neither ethicists or philosophers or linguists, but political scientists. Our identity derives from our object of study. That is, from the problems that we study. These “things” is politics and political power. And this identity comes since Aristotle, at least. As Professor Ian Shapiro convincingly has pointed, political science is a *problem laden science* (2004; 2005). John Gunnell (1988) is quite right when points the fallacious practice to discuss on the legitimacy of our research on metaphysical or philosophical terms. John Gunnell calls this fallacious practice as the myth of the Continental tradition (1996). The narrative of this belief began in Germany where philosophers tried to impose their status to scientists. But two and half centuries are not enough to learn that there are not a trascendental or epistemological substratum to politics. Politics is, probably, a natural, biologically constituted human –or hominid– propensity activity. Is most probable that we harvest into the fossils that into the Heavens.

American political science was built on secular basis. When this was done, the conventional dualism was rejected for a “naturalistic” view of science. Naturalism was nearby of positivism (Bunge). Positivism was, as is well known, a reaction from German *science* to respond to the dualistic pretensions of aprioristic judgements and was a decisive step to the autonomy of natural sciences from the chains of trascendental epistemology. Naturalism however, was bad received for many Europeans, specially the émigrés, during the fascist nightmare (Gunnell, 1993). A kind of battle happened during



the sixties among the secularist American political science and émigré Social theory. That last carried to the USA a lot of metaphysical presuppositions. This attitude was not Emerge intellectuals as different as Herbert Marcuse, Hannah Arendt or Leo Strauss rejected the conventional, naturalistic view of science of the American political science. In that way naturalism was confounded with positivism (Gunnell, 1993; 1998). However, American political science is, by now, anything but positivistic (Goodin & Kliegemann, 1998; Katnelzon and Milner, 2002)).

During the seventies the resurrection of Grand Theories was observed in Western Europe. This new grand edifices supplanted Marxism (Skinner, 1985). The re-emergence of Grand theories was precedent to postmodernism and neo constructivism that were a kind of radical sociology of knowledge. Accordingly with the new fashions, American political sciences were a social invention. Of course that it is so. But the intention was to destroy the pretensions of objectivity and the naturalistic-realist approach of the American political science. Antirealism and the old –religious- dualism returned, especially among French intellectuals (Sokal and Brimont, 1998). In Germany the old *gusto* for enormous books on Social theory resurged with a lot of famous thinkers, including Habermas, Luhman, Beck, Honnet, etc. In the UK, Giddens and its fellow dedicated themselves to build a *Deus ex machina* of social –not human- action. Structuration theory, systems theory, etc. are not social science but transhuman mechanisms so general to understand social phenomena (Van der Berg, 1998). Human actors disappeared, the same that in the most classical American sociological hegemonic tradition: the structural functionalism (Wrong, 1961).

But, what is wrong with realism? Apparently realism is very frightening to many intellectuals. Their reactions are similar to the sense of loss of God in the reception of Physics or modern evolutionary biology. The reaction is argued on the

basis that the *belief* of the actors is the cement of social world (but not their choices or actions but their identities). It is not bad to observe belief, but beliefs are not always sustained in *real* but post hoc rationale motives or causes. Causes are real; motives are real when they provoke real effects. Nobody is arguing against “subjectivity”. Contrarily, American political science recognized that during the last two decades. The difficulty is in the way to observe. Realists believe in methodological rigor and the rule of proof and refutations. There is anybody that rejects this rule?

Secondly, the criticism against conventional American political science is on meta- theoretical grounds, not on empirical or historical basis. Observation is out of debate. But the problem laden approach is the only way to resolve the disputes on the meaning of reality. I believe that if the critics of American political science should pay their attention to the results and in the problems arisen from the practice of the discipline, without reference to nationality, race, gender or class. Observing and debating on problems can give to us a much better comprehension of the limitations of American political science, but also, the limitations of its supposed alternative.

After behaviourism, it comes a reinvigoration of alternatives, and rational choice won the contests. Three decades ago Rational Choice seemed like a winner, but like its predecessor, Rational Choice must adopt more modest pretensions (Shapiro and Green). By now, Rational Choice is a vigorous force in the American political science but its status must be maintained only by ceding a lot of strong conditions, including the initial pretensions on strong rationality (for example the research programs initiated by Herbert Simon, and the Santa Fe Institute programs). Even now, rationality is considered a non essential requirement of the theory. We don't talk on rational choice but on interdependent choices. In this transition game theory consolidated as a legitimate transdisciplinary scientific language. The fences between social and

biological sciences were trespassed getting us into an exciting and not fully explored territory. I don't believe that there will be an American adventure and I can bet on that from across the world political scientists would engage in an intense and exciting debate. After all, debates are the best of American political science and I believe the first thing that we can emulate (Lindblom, 1997: 242).

The methodological transformation was not well understood. In fact, the original statistical methods are been enriched with causal analysis and game theoretical approaches. The image of a monolithic, positivistic, American political science cannot be more far from reality. **Democratic theory** is the immediate target to be reached. I want to begin with a pillar of American political science. Democratic Theory is founded in a long tradition: in the last century was consolidated around the Schumpeter argument . This new synthesis is called the minimalist theory and supports the Rational Choice –or political economic models- as the behaviourist approach (Barry, 1970). In this paradigm, voting is the only way in which citizenship can be influential. The presumption of the existence of a *Volonté General*, the Common Wellbeing or the elusive social welfare functions were under logical attack. Moreover, notions like representative government have been socked by the Social Choice theory, or representation demolished for a bare bone view of voting methods, and voting was the only mode to participate into a democratic tournament. I believe that political scientists across the world could work on the limits of the *Schumpeterian* cage. American political science has done a lot of work on democratic stability. In fact, most works had been impressed by the fragility of democratic systems and its emphasis has been on stability (Ricci, 1984). Values are one of the favoured answers. Civic culture was an initial answer and, despite the strong criticism to its concepts and presuppositions, culture has been the central category to sustain all the structure of the so called

behaviourist revolution. But “culture” has evolved since 50 years ago, when Almond and Verba introduced in 1959, their model or stereotype of the civic culture. Culture has been a central motif on interest of political philosophers around the world, since thousand years ago. The American innovation was to make culture a functional variable of functional or stable democracy. But as, many thinkers noted, the causal relation between cultural variables and political or institutional variables was not established on solid grounds until now. But the tradition of cultural study of politics continued until now. The social capital approach is an example of this promising new life.

### **On theoretical and methodological pluralism**

Political science is a science? The question is simple. We are in the verge to be as our cousin discipline sociology, lost in its own doubt about its identity. We must give definitive answers or being fractures into adversary camps. If the separate tables were very uncomfortable, the split into scientific enterprise and humanistic or political storyteller would be tragic to our future as vocation. Political science, as any other scientific activity, has particular ways to work. The process of innovation and the following process of dispersion, assimilation and reconstruction are well studied. The modern political science emerged in Western countries, but with West Europe as the centre. The transformation of Political theory as a speculative enterprise to an analytical and empirical discipline occurred during the transit from the late XIX century into the XX century. In Italy and Germany political analysis acquired the status of a scientific activity. The advent of the II World War broke this experiment and began the Americanization of political science. The assimilation of European traditions into American academy was not an easy enterprise but at last, the result was behaviourism. Behaviourism was the response to the speculative modes of the European traditions.

The counterattack against behaviourism used the accusation of positivism as the bogeyman. But a new phase of political science had arrived. In fact, this new brand of political science establishes the standard of the discipline in Europe. The European academic political science was rebuilt according to the American mood.( ). During three decades or more that standard was only threatened by Marxism, but Marxism was destroyed by Marxists themselves. In the era of the so called globalization, new actors enter to the political science activity. But generally, the newcomers adopted the standards established by American or Europeans. The classical example is modernization theory; it was a kind of official ideology of the American comparative politics, and Professor Huntington proclaimed that as modernization advanced political science could be consolidated. The Huntington thesis was reformulated for political use in the form that as democratization was implanted in the “third wave” countries, political science –as the Americas imagined that— could be consolidated. That is true in one sense. The modernization theory, or the so called Lipset hypothesis was the conventional frame of the expansion on the American view of democratization. Both, the Huntington suggestion and the Lipset Hypothesis are now abandoned. But the limitations of both arguments show the possibility to propose new ideas and new ways to do political science. In the other extreme were the European postmodernist fashion and the return of the Grand Theories. In between, modernization theory and Grand theorization emerged an impasse.. However, it is by now unsustainable if we want to do political science and not merely imitative consumption of ideological arguments and nonsensical chattering. In my opinion, the globalization of political science can only mean the pluralisation of perspectives, interests and problems. But plurality means very often mere cacophony. Political science requires a new forum but new basic rules on what debate can be productive. This means the recognition that the political science is a

scientific enterprise. Minimal standards of scientific review, proofs and refutations can be accepted by all of practitioners. That simple assertion causes a lot of fear amongst many people. As many people rejected the Ptolemaic discovering by fear to be heretics, many people react for fear to change. But political science is not a modernization enterprise but a comprehension program to understand political change. Comparative politics was another terrain of contention. Modernization theory has a long history. In a probably excessive summary, modernization theory is now framed as the Lipset Hypothesis. In this hypothesis, democracy is the coronation of modernization; and corroborates the original insights of Parsons and many other Americans. I am insisting in the need of honour the American political science but with restrictions. The European and the American political science communities can be very provincial and imperialist. Like Englishmen that stole the ruins of Athens to enrich their wonderful museums, American colleges don't show respect for their "subjects" except as convenient or inconvenient to their interests as Grand Power. Let me tell a personal tale. Many American researchers are doing research in the Oaxaca's colonial past, and they have permits to study old documents and observe anything that they want into Oaxaca's communities, but they reject any possibility to publish their results in Mexican journals. A possible alternative could be to pact a reciprocity treatise where foreigners were obliged to share their results with the local academic communities. IPSA could be the institution that implements that ethic code based in scientific reciprocity.

But beyond the permanent state of provisionality on our methods, the fact is that we have a continuous innovation in these. A case example is game theory. Game theory is rejected by many professionals –in and out the USA- and is accused to be an imperialist adventure from Colonialist economics. I don't think that this story is true. That's is true that between practitioners of game theory, specially rational choice and

social choice practitioners, prevalence an arrogant spirit., contrary to the convenient state of doubt and scepticism in the ideal scientific. But no matter that the guys of rational choice are arrogant and deprecate against the more conventional ways to do political and social sciences, game theory arrived to establish itself between us. The social and behavioural sciences in the XXI Century can not ignore the advancement game theory neither formal method. The divide amongst *interpretative* (or critical) and *explanations* (or positivistic) epistemologies, is absolutely obsolete. The new generations of political scientist would be trained in the best of traditions, Political theory and formal methods, and not in their worst impairments. Sciences are in the middle of a renovation of its grammars and methodological lingua. A set of bridges between “natural” and “human” sciences are build. Most political sciences do not are aware of this situation but the revolution is going on. From methodological pluralism to a minimal common grammar has been a long and silent transit. The separate tables are, in the first decade of the XXI century, an artificial and provincial behaviour.

### **The state of the discipline**

A lot of thing can be said in this small industry. The principal diagnosis are on its dispersion, baroquesness and ugly obsession with self gratification. Underlining some question on the unity of sciences –and political sciences self gratification with methodological vanities, lack of relevance, etc. It is possible that all this accusations have sustain. However, Political sciences flourishes in their pluralism and lack of a unique centre. An American professor calls this situation *provisionallism* (Ellis, 2004) as the key motor of progress. The actual disputes will be welcomed and propitiated, beyond stereotypes. One of my favourites examples are on rational choice. “Assumptions of rationality, or indeed irrationality, are often extreme over-

simplifications ... Incorporating rational choice theory into a broader framework allows political psychology to see the self as complex, socially constructed, motivated by loyalties to groups as well as self-interest, characterized by cognitive and affective influences that interact, and composed of multiple identities – both public and private – which shape political behaviour and political process” (Shepherd: 131, Monroe 2002 quoted by Trent). This portrait is good for the 90’ but I think that is old fashioned by the first decade of our Century. First, “rational” choice is not (fortunately) a static theory, but evolve. This evolution has produced a myriad of new synapses between disciplines traditionally adverse. Hybridization can advance at the price of specialization and trespassing. That is, we need both kind of researchers, the conservative that polished a theory and a collections of methods and the dragon slayer that broke the crystal glasses in the room to suggest another way to focus a problem. Charles Linblom mentioned this dialectic pretty well in his review of American political science in the 40’ and 50’. The only good result was the discordance. But in the 600’ this disaccord produce and irrepetible flux of insights in the American Political science and the rebirth of European political science.

The actual plurality of political science discipline is a cause of discomfort not only beyond the American borders, but inside. Professor Laitin recently calls to a crusade to discipline the discipline. His discomfort was with the lack of a centre of confluence on the discipline identity. Neither on theoretical basis neither in the actual so called methodological pluralism political science can grow. In fact, methodological pluralism was a very good transitional idea (Little, Rule, Abbot) but by now is a pretext to cacophony and charlatanry. The scientific nature of our enterprise must be depurated from the baroque verbiage and the only way that I know to do this is to look for the resource of Methodism. A political science focused in problems need common



evaluation standards. These standards are the minimum standards of proof and refutations. A second mechanism is to work on programs but continually monitoring them. The actual cacophony claims for anarchism and I don't have any argument with anarchism, except if it works against scientific enterprises. But there are many social scientists that are claiming for disciplining the disciplines (Laitin) and more, unifying their core foundations (Gintis). The first claim is justifiable because there are a kind of chaotic normality into some disciplines like sociology, and political science is in some ways very divided in methods, theoretical pretences and problems. The second claim is more hard to swallow, not because it is out of reasonability but because it is premature. But the message is there. Game theory is the bridge between biology and behavioural sciences; political science adopted game theory since five decades ago. But the "unification" program is so aggressive to be well accepted in some traditionalist communities and their predictable reaction will be defensive against the initiative. Maybe the near future will give us a more promissory court.

### **The future of our formative years**

The institutional basis for the building of a scientific discipline is receiving new attention. The common reference is the oldest institutions for the organization of the modern social science. I think in the American big association. These associations have been studied a lot. They have many complexities to be explored. Nevertheless, they have been capable to sustain a common ground to the progress of the disciplines. This progress was not, as many think, a linear or easy or simply accumulative process, but a continue debate on the foundations of the discipline. Debates are the best fruit that we can use to have strong and autonomous scientific associations. The new former Third World countries lack of these associations –like Mexico— or they are still in the

beginning of their construction. Professionalization goes on fast track, and the growing demand of masters and doctoral grades from European and American academic institutions is the manifest example of the recently growing demand of political “experts” in the “third wave” countries. But professionalization is not the same that *discipline ethos*. This must be built parsimoniously and above all, with autonomy from “the powers that be”. Autonomy is a hard to define but essential condition to the social and political science disciplinary practice, but it basically implies the prominence to scientific vocation over political career climbing. In fact, science, including the political science is not a prolongation of politicians policy advisers, but a particular disposition to be objective, and when it is necessary, strongly critic to the “power that be” practices. In the process the discipline has not acquired a well grounded identity on what is on its central theoretical and factual problems. It is common for political science to be considered as an annexe of sociology or philosophy. But sociologists and philosophers often ignore all on scientific enquire and they believe that political science is only on opinion and informed talk. This is much the case of Latin American condition, especially in Mexico. It will be convenient to have an external help from institutions like the IPSA or/and the American Political Science Association or the ECPR to contribute to the maturation of the disciplinary associations, as was the case after the II World War in Western Europe. This time the assertion of the late Samuel Huntington is true: when democracy is strong political science is strong, when democracy is weak, political science is weak (Huntington, 1987: 7).

### **On debates and forums**

One of the most enduring obstacles to the maturation of political science in the south countries is the low educational standards. Youngsters do not only have a bad or

less than medium class education, but in many regions logic and mathematics are often relegated and feared by them. Without this background it would be more than impossible to participate in the fast changes of the disciplinary universe. The actual trend is to trespass disciplinary boundaries. That is, brake with the arbitrary separation between natural and social sciences. The case of political science is typical. In our discipline, the interaction between social scientists (political scientists, sociologists, anthropologists, physiologists, etc.) is very common since many decades ago. But by now, the links between biology, social science and philosophy is common and obliged. Even if we reject the more radical appeals to unification, as Herbert Gintis or James Wilson proclaim, it would be difficult reject the biology revolution into the social sciences, especially into the game theory, and their impact on human nature, human conscience and human “reasonability” and at the same time pretend to be rational or scientific. The more promising research trespass the disciplinary fences and it is familiar with common methods in sciences, as is the case of the general admission of game theory. That is the reason why it will be unavoidable to change some habits and customs, specially the bad habits in education in the Third World countries. IPSA and the other transnational organizations have an important role in promoting this change.

One of the criticism most frequent to the American political science is that it ignores morals and values. This critique comes from the European émigré camp. For example, the neo-conservatists’ godfather Leo Strauss (1962) critiqued American political science on this grounds, but his target was Max Weber. During decades American political science was criticized for this sin (Gunnell). Naturalistic, realistic social science was confounded with indifference to values. However, the fact is that in recent times, moral, values and culture are coming into the centre of the interest of researchers as facts of social and human life. For example, the research on cooperation

is flourishing not only into the political sciences communities, especially game theory addicts, but between biologists, anthropologists, etc. Only sociologists are off side in this trend –with notable exemptions, as Raymond Boudon or Jon Elster, both Europeans with strong influence from the American way.

The resistance to many aspects of the predominant way to do social and political science is understandable. The American and the Western European professors have an enormous advantage in resources and continuity of their activities over the rest of the practitioners of the social sciences. In the so called, until recently, Third World, social sciences are often a new experience. The most similar was Marxism. But Marxism is if not dead; it is in coma. It is that what American Political Science and European Social Theory have been lodging into the peripheral academies. Most of the work that is made there is an imitation of the original models. It is especially the case of the cult to the Grand theory saints from French, German and English heritage. In the case of the American social sciences, the revival of Parsons has a piece of irony because it occurs when structural functionalism had been declared death since three decades ago into the USA. The reception of American political science was motivated for the Third Wave movement. Many old schools were revived, as the civic culture school, the modernization theory, etc. I do know a real important contribution to these approaches from the south, but I know southerners working in the USA academy making important contributions. Think on Elster, Przewoski, Acemoglu, Sen, Tsebelis, etc. They are first rank researchers, because they have the privileges to be part of the American –or European- epistemic communities. The lack of these communities in the former *third world* countries is a major problem and many people are working in to build national associations to sustain disciplinary institutions. These institutions are important because they cement the double process of professionalization and generation of the debate

tradition. Latin America political science is a good example of these efforts (Nohlen, ).<sup>4</sup> However, the intellectual interchange is until now, unilateral. Americans and Europeans are ignorant and indifferent to the research made in the South. This is in some ways a retrocess respect to the sixties, when *dependentismo* acquired certain reputation as contender of modernization theory. But there is a real intellectual dependency that is in transit to be more independent and reciprocal relationship between the political science in the advanced countries, and the political science in many countries in the South. Transnational organizations as UNESCO, IPSA, ECPR, LASA, ISA, can be bridges to facilitate the common growing, but it would be necessary to create more international journals (printed or electronic).

#### **And the rest of us?**

But political science is going to be globalized enterprise and with that, create a double helix of rejection of some of the sacred truths of western political science, and for other side, assimilate it in a critical way (or some like that). This enterprise has three stages at least. The foundation of a discipline ethos, where professionalization goes into the soull of the political science; the search of truth; the second stage is the building of associations –nationals or regional, with the panopies or review, forums and interactive webs; the third is to engage with the mainstream discipline. As I can give a glaze, this process will take a three or four decades.. In the middle, the impact of the conventional tradition must be revised careful by both, the Western dominating tradition practitioners and the rest of “Us”. Political Science in the second half of the XX century was dominated by the American way and its variants, with some presence of the Grand Theories from West Europe. But in the XXI century this situation is changing quickly.

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<sup>4</sup> México is a notable exception of this trend. I have written a little paper trying to give an explanation to this anomalous situation.

The magic word is globalization. As many former Third World countries emerge as great powers, political science will be injected with newcomers and new problems. The old central problems, as the study of State power, Democracy, citizenship, bureaucracy must continue. But the concepts must be contested in new ways. My favourite target is the modernization model. From transition to modernity is the scheme that has dominated the comparative politics until now and it is the backbone of *transitology* (Vidal, 2006). But modernization is by now a very questioned concept. The apparent linearity of the process is now questioned and contingency is reevaluated not only in the short time but in the long history. *Contingency* represents an analytical problem hard to chew; it implies the return to *voluntaristic* process of social and political change. It doesn't imply the abandonment of political science but only of its deterministic aspects. That could mean that political and social sciences could be most similar in its epistemological and methodological foundations to biology that mechanical physics. But science is science and prediction is not the only one requirement to qualification as scientists.

The second challenge will be the rebuilding of democratic theory. Democratic theory was born in the early XIX century. In the XX century American political scientists made of democratic studies the centre of its attention. But, paradoxically, at the end of the XX century Democratic theory is not satisfactory enough. As professor Shapiro (Shapiro, 2003) said, we have many democracies but a merely satisfactory democratic theory. From the Grand Consensus on Democracy, we are entering to the turbulent waters of *concept contesting*. And this can be a good news, exceptuattng all

these that have lived surfing and nourishing in the vacuos repetition of democratization mantras.<sup>5</sup>

For many, multiculturalism is the major obstacle to the real globalization of the political sciences. I do not want to argue against multiculturalists philosophers but I am confident in the universality of science. It is true that social sciences are often impaired by ideological –political- and religious fervours. Fundamentalisms of all brands have been embarked against science around the world. But my bet is that political science would transcend these non-secular aspects of life. It is possible make secular political science in and fundamentalist environment? I don't believe, but I believe that fundamentalism must recede. A frequent case quoted as the case of non modern mind is the Muslim world. But to my knowledge, social sciences are making improvements in Muslim societies. The explanation of this aspect of our “modern” world is hard to explain, but one simple reason that we can propose is on the universality of basic social and political rules of scientific methods. That means two thing. We need an consensus on what's are the rules of scientific methods. This is the only way to build bridges to contras, critiquing e and replicate research results. An consensus on that social and political sciences works with the same basic rules across the world. If we want to understand the complexities of the world we need to be realists, and to be real *realists* means to approached to the reality with scientific methods and ethos. If social and political scientific research is compatible with faith, Western or Easter ways, is not my purpose to discuss here, but I believe that the answer deserve a cautious tolerance.

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<sup>5</sup> There are a particular phenomena that is decisive in the future of social and political sciences among us. The lacks of disciplinary ethos and the proliferating “*charlatanism*” and careerism of professional *spin doctors*. But I wrote some this issue in other essay (Vidal, 2009)

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