
Political philosophy and political science: complex relationships

Filosofía política y ciencia política: relaciones complejas

Gianfranco Pasquino

Universidad de Bolonia, Italia

gpasquino@johnshopkins.it

Abstract

The relationships between political philosophy and political science are complex, important, changing. They are also quite unsatisfactory. Following a brief analysis of four types of political philosophy, this article argues that the branch of political philosophy interested in describing and shaping a just society is highly relevant for what several political scientists study and write. When dealing with democracy and the processes of democratization, with the quality and the transformation of democratic political systems, political scientists can and should find a lot of interesting and useful material produced by political philosophers. Liberal democracies have won the Cold War. Now the challenge is represented by, on one side (religious), fundamentalisms (in the plural); on the other side, by the communitarians and the multiculturalists. Both groups of political philosophers declare that political liberalism, especially, the brand espoused and formulated by John Rawls, is inadequate to provide a framework for contemporary democratic regimes. This article claims that political scientists have a lot to learn from the clash of these political theories as well as from republicanism and constitutional patriotism. In this article, some indications are given and few examples are provided. So far the challenge has been eschewed and the task has gone unfulfilled.

Keywords: political science, political philosophy, liberalism, communitarianism, multiculturalism, democratization.

Resumen

Las relaciones entre la filosofía política y la ciencia política son complejas, relevantes y cambiantes. Son también insatisfactorias. Tras un breve análisis de cuatro tipos de Filosofía Política, este artículo sostiene que la rama de la Filosofía Política interesada en describir y moldear una sociedad justa es muy relevante para los estudios politológicos. Cuando abordan la democracia, los procesos de democratización y la calidad y la transformación de los sistemas políticos democráticos, los politólogos pueden y deben encontrar material muy interesante y útil producido por los filósofos políticos. Las democracias liberales fueron las ganadoras de la guerra fría. Ahora el reto está representado, por un lado, por los fundamentalismos (religiosos) en plural; y, por otro lado, por los comunitaristas y multiculturalistas. Ambos grupos de filósofos políticos declaran que el liberalismo político, especialmente, la rama formulada y sostenida por John Rawls,

es inadecuado para proporcionar un marco para los regímenes contemporáneos democráticos. Este artículo mantiene que los politólogos tienen mucho que aprender de la confrontación de estas teorías políticas al igual que del republicanismo y el patriotismo constitucional. En este artículo, se proporcionan algunas indicaciones y ejemplos. Hasta ahora, el reto se ha soslayado y la tarea no se ha llevado a cabo.

Palabras clave: ciencia política, filosofía política, liberalismo, comunitarismo, multiculturalismo, democratización.

ABSTRACT EMPIRICISM AND GRAND THEORIZATIONS

“Research untutored by theory may prove trivial, and theory unsupported by data, futile” (Easton, 1967: 16). When David Easton wrote these phrases, US political scientists had just completed and overcome their behavioral revolution. In fact, already in 1959, Robert Dahl had even written an epitaph to that successful revolution. Some of those political scientists may have also read the scathing criticisms addressed by C. Wright Mills to sociology as a discipline fluctuating between “abstract empiricism” (the great Paul F. Lazarsfeld being the target) and “grand theorizations” (whose most important representative was Talcott Parsons). At the time, according to Gabriel Almond and Bingham Powell most political scientists were not so much abstract empiricists, but parochial, configurative, formal scholars largely unable to analyze, understand, and explain the politics of developing areas and, even, of the developed ones. They were parochial because interested only in studying Western Europe plus the Soviet Union and the USA; configurative because they devoted their analyses to individual political systems; and formal because “their focus tended to be on institutions (primarily governmental ones) and their legal norms, rules, and regulations, or on political ideas and ideologies, rather than on performance, interaction, and behavior” (Almond and Powell, 1966: 2-3). In what quickly became a bestseller in the profession and influenced many colleagues and generations of students, political philosophers did not enjoy a significant position. The authors made one reference to Arendt, one to Aristotle, none to Hobbes, one to Locke, none to Rousseau, none to Machiavelli, three to Marxism, none to Strauss, one to Tocqueville and a whopping fifteen references to Max Weber.

The fact that the “abstract empiricist” Paul Lazarsfeld, quoted three times, was defeated by the Grand Theorist Talcott Parsons, quoted six times, was, in my opinion, the reflection of Parsons’ academic power. As a matter of fact, at the time, one could not find grand theorizations in political science to the exception, perhaps, of Easton’s *A Systems Analysis of Political Life*, today largely a forgotten book. In a way, Easton (1953) had already broken with all political philosophers who had contributed to the birth and the evolution of political science, to mention just a few, from Aristotle to Machiavelli from Rousseau to Marx (this is not an exhaustive listing). On the one hand, Easton showed no interest for what political philosophers had written; on the

other hand, his conception of theory had very little to do with political philosophy. As to Mills (1959), he had no problem in recognizing the theoretical and substantial contributions made by the founders of sociology, but, though interested in the analysis of how power is acquired, concentrated, and exercised, he never explored in any depth what the political philosophers had written. Still, he had two outstanding intellectual mentors: Max Weber and Karl Marx. Together with Hans Gerth, he translated and edited some of Weber's most important essays (Gerth and Mills, 1946). To the contributions of the Marxists, he devoted a well organized anthology (Mills, 1962).

Even though, the Fifties and the Sixties of the XXth century were good, innovative, and productive decades both for sociology and political science, there was practically no debate on the relationship between political philosophy and political science. At the time, political science seemed to have no interest and to make no use of any kind of political philosophy. On the one hand, several political scientists were far more preoccupied with establishing clear disciplinary boundaries and emphasizing its autonomous status. This was the task the behavioralists had put to themselves. This is what the scholars who adopted "systems analysis" tried to perform. On the other hand, some were interested in reaching out to interdisciplinary research looking for what especially psychology and economics, but also sociology, could offer. The balance sheet remained ambiguous (Lipset, 1969).

The situation has somewhat changed in the past twenty years or so. Of course, the acolytes of the school of rational choice have proceeded along their own narrow path towards what its practitioners define "positive political theory". They attempt to draw a sharp contrast with mainstream political science theories, whose scientific status in any case they question. As to classic political philosophers, their writings and contributions are at best considered to be examples of "normative political theory", hence not belonging at all to the realm of "science", of scientific inquiry and theorizations. Nonetheless, usually under the heading of "Political Theory", most handbooks of political science carry a chapter in which one may find a discussion of the relationship between political science and political philosophy. Too often the discussion is rather abstract, essentially devoted to finding and stressing the many differences between the approaches of political philosophy and political science to the study of politics. Most contemporary political philosophers are not avid readers and frequent users of what political scientists research and write. Only rarely, is political science research, as Easton would put it, "tutored by theory", and, in any case, that "tutoring" theory even more rarely descends either from ancient or from contemporary political philosophy.

There is an insurmountable obstacle for those who desire to analyze the relationships between political philosophy and political science. No single scholar can straddle both fields. No single scholar can acquire a satisfactory knowledge of what has been and is being done by both disciplines and what contemporary philosophers and political scientists do. Needless to add, both statements apply to me, too. Groping in the dark, political scientists oscillate between paying lip service to political philosophy,

especially the classics, and, thereafter, immediately declaring its irrelevance for the analysis of modern issues. Most political philosophers respond by stressing the cultural poverty of political science and the triviality of its findings. In order to escape both depressing and rather unfair evaluations, I will first identify four types of political philosophy. Then, I will search for the possible connections between those political philosophies and political science. Finally, I will explore and evaluate how much contemporary political philosophy has become important and in which area or sector of political science.

BOBBIO'S HERITAGE

In a magisterial piece, available also in Spanish and Portuguese, but not in English, Norberto Bobbio (1971), himself more of a political philosopher than a political scientist, identified four different meanings of political philosophy. First, political philosophy attempts to describe, to formulate, to theorize the best Republic, that is, to construct the model of an ideal State. This type of political philosophy deals with utopias. Second, political philosophy aims at discovering the foundations of power and tries to give an answer to the question "why should we obey the power-holders?" Hence, political philosophy attempts to define political obligation and to find the bases of the legitimacy of power. Third, political philosophy is devoted to the definition, analysis, explanation of the concept of politics as distinguished from religion, law, ethics. Fourth and last, political philosophy conducts a critical discourse on political science. It is interested in evaluating the origins, the bases, and the achievements of political science with special reference to its pretense of being value free—contrary to the first meaning of political philosophy that is deliberately value oriented. Bobbio's article, originally published in 1971, then reprinted in 1999, has not been widely quoted and, what counts more, has not made a breakthrough into the scarce literature devoted to the relationships between political philosophy and political science.

Bobbio himself was quite aware that neither the political philosophers nor the political scientists appeared especially willing to reflect on what they were doing, on the status of their respective disciplines, their achievements and their shortcomings, their potentialities. Therefore, he proceeded to infer the consequences of his perspective. The first type of political philosophy had to be located exactly at the opposite pole of political science, more precisely, that type of political science not interested in designing the best republic, but only in describing and analyzing the (really) existing Republics. The second type of political philosophy, that is, the analysis of power, of political obligation, of legitimacy is bound to encounter political science. Whenever the encounter takes place, the questions become: "how has the encounter been accomplished? How many political science studies of political power and legitimacy have really been inspired and enriched by philosophical theories?". Here, I anticipate that

both Hobbes and Weber (whose status is not, however, that of a political philosopher) have, indeed, been taken into serious consideration by contemporary political scientists. The third type of political philosophy, the one dealing with the definition of politics, namely, of the concept and the practice of politics, shows a large measure of overlapping with political science. The contributions of the political philosophers can be neglected only by those political scientists who are not inclined to attempt theory-building. In Wright Mills' words, they are abstract empiricists. Finally, all metadiscourses on politics and political science by political philosophers demonstrate their usefulness for conscious thinkers because they elucidate the meaning of the method and the concepts as well as the validity of the generalizations and the theories. Bobbio synthesizes the four relationships as follows: 1) separation and divergence; 2) separation, but convergence; 3) continuity; 4) reciprocal integration or reciprocal interaction (mutual help).

Perusing, though not in a systematic way, the literature published in the last fifty years or so, it is possible to say that the phase of "separation and divergence", largely the consequence of behavioralism, therefore prominent especially in the US political science, has faded away for some time only to reappear prominently through the ascent of the theory of rational choice. It would be quite difficult to identify cases of "continuity" between political philosophy and political science and of scholars representing that continuity in their writings. There are many cases of "separation and convergence", while it remains rather unlikely to find examples of "reciprocal integration", that is, on the one hand, of political philosophers resorting to political science analytical categories and substantial findings and, on the other hand, of political scientists utilizing the knowledge produced by political philosophers in their approaches, research, theory building. In order to acquire some precision there are at least two major preliminary problems to be solved. First, it is necessary to remark that political philosophy, that is, that branch of philosophy dealing with political objects and issues, has largely been redefined as political theory. Second, a line should be drawn between classical political philosophers and contemporary political theorists. There are good reasons to believe that the watershed in both cases is represented by the publication of John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* (1971).

Having written by far the most influential and most quoted book by a political philosopher in the past forty years, Rawls has also made inroads into political science. Has he been so widely read to the point of almost overshadowing the works of the political philosophers of the past? In order to answer, albeit in a rather crude way, this question, I have compared the name indexes of four important compendia of political analysis published from the mid-Sixties up to now plus Easton's pioneering analysis *The Political System* (1953) whose openly declared goal was to show why and how in the study of politics political scientists had to go well beyond classic political philosophy. Table 1 contains the results of my search in the five books and their index of names.

TABLE 1.
MOST QUOTED POLITICAL PHILOSOPHERS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE HANDBOOKS

	Easton 1953	Charlesworth 1967	Greenstein & Polsby 1975	Goodin & Klingemann 1996	Goodin 2009
Arendt			13	9	5
Aristotle	8	6		16	6
Habermas			5	15	13
Hobbes	5	5	17	16	10
Locke	3	2	23	5	3
Machiavelli	4		19	10	4
Marx	10	2	32	19	10
Rawls			10	29	14*
Rousseau	4	2	15	6	1
Strauss	2	3	2	11	3
Tocqueville		1		7	5
Walzer			1	10	3
Weber	6	2	32	30	19

Source: By author.

*Plus an entire chapter devoted to justice after Rawls.

Admittedly, the reverse exercise could be performed, that is, one could legitimately and profitably peruse how many quotations of major political scientists can be found in the works of contemporary political philosophers. However, here I am interested above all in getting to know which political philosophers are quoted by contemporary political scientists. Of course, I have chosen those important political philosophers whose works are likely to offer food for thought to political scientists. I venture to say that Hannah Arendt's writings on violence, on totalitarianism, on revolution are relevant for political scientists dealing with those subjects. Among other reasons, Aristotle deserves to be read and discussed because of his conception of politics and the criteria utilized in his classification of the types of government. Habermas has dealt with many subjects of interest to political scientists: the formation of public opinion, constitutionalism, deliberative democracy. How to tame conflict, to put an end to civil wars and to create political order are topics central to the analysis by Thomas Hobbes. Pluralism, the rights of the individuals, the boundaries between the public and the private constitute some of the subjects illuminated by John Locke. Nobody has done better than Machiavelli in arguing and defining the autonomy of politics and in explaining how to acquire, retain, and exercise political power. The nature of capitalism and the dynamics and confrontation of social classes are the themes of the lasting contributions by Karl Marx as well as by Max Weber.

Rawls' *Theory of justice* remains at the center of a wide ranging debate on constitution-making, the grounds and limits of political duty and obligation, distributive justice. Neither totalitarian nor libertarian, Jean Jacques Rousseau's analysis of the social contract and his reflections on the relationships between society and the State and on the formation of

majorities have influenced many a scholar of democracy. Leo Strauss' emphasis on classical political philosophers and his radical conception of power and politics are at the roots of neo-conservative thought (and practices). The towering figure of Tocqueville is must reading for all those who study pluralism and democracy. Michael Walzer acquired visibility and intellectual influence both for his analysis of the spheres of justice and his criteria for distinguishing just from unjust wars. Finally, though not a political philosopher, but a sociologist proud of his profession, Max Weber has contributed to almost all the fields of scientific inquiry from religion to politics, from the bureaucracy to social classes, and many more. The number of quotations of his works is revealing of his widespread, continuing, endless influence.

It is not easy to properly connect the wide variety of themes analyzed by several of the most important political philosophers of the past and of today with what contemporary political scientists have been dealing with at least in the last three decades. The fall of the Berlin wall does represent a turning point for many political theorists as well as political scientists working on big issues. Though his book *The End of History and the Last Man* (this is the precise full, too often truncated, title) has been much criticized, frequently on the basis of very partial readings, Fukuyama (1991) made a very important theoretical point relying on Hegel's interpretation of history. According to Fukuyama, liberalism as a political theory had won the Cold War. Following the defeat of Marxism and all its variants, there remained no alternative to liberalism. Hence, liberal-democracies were at last free to blossom and to express all its potentialities. Political scientists dealing with the issue of democratization, a path opened by the collapse of the Berlin wall and not only, were quick to realize that two outcomes had become possible: liberal and illiberal democracies. Interestingly, practically all political scientists, starting with Fukuyama himself, neglected the soon to arrive challenge of religious fundamentalism (of all brands). Nor do fundamentalism and religion appear in the name index of *A Theory of Justice*.

The number of times Rawls has been quoted in the three handbooks of political science is, indeed, striking. On the one hand, it suggests that his work has become and is still considered highly relevant by political scientists and, on the other hand, that liberalism as a political theory has acquired and, though challenged, retains the status of the most important contemporary political theory. This does not mean that no competing theory exists. On the contrary, there are several competing theories, but all of them have been or have felt obliged to consider liberalism the political theory to be challenged, to be criticized, to be defeated, and, finally, to be superseded. The task of comparing the competing theories, highlighting their differences, providing an evaluation and assessing their usefulness and influence for contemporary political science (as made explicit by the references of political scientists themselves) is simply Herculean. Hence, I will be obliged to rely on simplifications and syntheses. My starting point is what Bobbio (1996: 5) considered the first school of political philosophy, that is, the one whose aim is, I quote, "to describe, to formulate, to theorize the best Republic, that is, to construct the ideal model of a State".

THE VEIL OF IGNORANCE AND DEMOCRATIZATION

The different “schools” of political theorists I will briefly analyze devote their attention especially to the values they consider uppermost in organizing social life. Representative and governing institutions occupy a second place. Though no political theorist of the different schools would deny the role of the institutions, none of them is interested in the “new institutionalism”. However, all of them attempt to formulate the rules for the creation of a good society. Then, it will be up to Constitution-makers to build those institutions capable of embodying, protecting, and promoting those rules. Rawls’ liberal theory of justice has many merits, not the least being its parsimony and elegance. He tries to combine the two classic values of all Western political philosophy: liberty and equality. His fundamental premise/assumption is that the principles of justice must be chosen behind a “veil of ignorance”: “no one knows his place in society, his class position or social status, nor does anyone know his fortune in the distribution of natural assets and abilities, his intelligence, strength, and the like. I shall even assume that the parties do not know their conceptions of the good or their special psychological propensities. The principles of justice are chosen behind a veil of ignorance” (p. 137).

Operating behind the “veil of ignorance”, all would agree on two principles of justice. The *principle of equal liberty* states that “each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others” (p. 60). The basic liberties of citizens are the classic liberal-democratic liberties: the political liberty to vote and run for office, freedom of speech and assembly, liberty of conscience, freedom of personal property and freedom from arbitrary arrest and seizure as defined by the concept of rule of law (p. 61). The second principle (*the difference principle*) states that “social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both a) to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged and b) attached to office and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity” (p. 83). It is immediately evident that Rawls is highly relevant not only for those political scientists who deal with really existing democracy and their quality, but also for the many who have studied the processes of democratization. Again, few references may be sufficient to prove my points. In his classic study *The Theory of Democracy Revisited* (1987), Giovanni Sartori quotes Rawls ten times. Though their quotation of Rawls is very appropriately located, that is, when discussing pacts, agreements, negotiations, Linz and Stepan (1996: 266) represent an exception to the vast literature that preceded and followed them. Apparently, few political scientist have resorted to the “veil of ignorance” approach when analyzing how reactionaries, moderates, reformists and radicals were bargaining during the transition from authoritarian regimes and the inauguration of a new, usually democratic, regime. This is the approach by Adam Przeworski (1991) in an otherwise excellent study, totally oblivious of Rawls. Another instance of lack of any reference to Rawls can be found in one of the best studies of democratization written by his Harvard colleague, Samuel P. Huntington (1991). On the whole, it is fair to conclude that the theoretical

significance and impact of the wealth of studies on democratization, several of them not especially original and quite limited in scope and breadth, has been sharply limited by the lack of attention to Rawls' writings.

Not surprisingly Rawls' political liberalism has been "attacked" by some competing political theories. A brief look at them will also serve the purpose of finding whether they have fared better in the eyes and in the research of political scientists. I will start with the political theory of republicanism (Pettit, 1997) though, technically, republicanism is not a competitor of Rawls' liberalism. It runs in the same line being both a variant and a supplement of liberalism. The "republicans" agree with the two principles formulated by Rawls because they are decisive components of their theory as well. However, they believe that the citizens not only have the right to "vote and run for office", they also have the "duty to participate". Good citizens are those who participate constantly and intensely to the life of their political system. Republicans believe that high degrees of political participation are indispensable for the least advantaged in society in order to reach a fair equality of opportunity. The republican belief in political participation as a critical value for all political systems has to be translated in adequate institutional arrangements making participation easy and influential. In all likelihood, so far the best kit of participatory tools can be found in the many various forms and experiments of deliberative democracy. However, it would be an exaggeration to say that: 1) deliberative democracy is a new type of democracy; 2) deliberative democracy can flourish even if and when Rawls' principles do not come into the picture. On the contrary, the tools of deliberative democracy can be utilized also by both communitarians and multiculturalists (see below).

Rawls' liberalism is also an organizing principle around which to construct cohesive political communities, capable of facing and solving problems. In the search for a widely shared and largely acceptable organizing principle, Jürgen Habermas (2001a and 2001b) has formulated the concept of *constitutional patriotism*. Being a set of norms, rules, and procedures, a constitution contains the criteria necessary to encourage and accommodate consensus and to accept and moderate conflicts, allowing their free expression within the limits designed by the Constitution itself. Through communicative behavior, that can also take place in the experiments of deliberative democracy, Constitutions adjust and change over time. Constitutional patriotism expresses itself in the positive evaluation of the Constitution as the central element that, also from an affective/expressive point of view, keeps together individuals coming from different cultures and endowed with unequal resources. Through deliberative democracy, the space for the discussion of equality of opportunities and access will be wide and remain open. Communicative behavior in the context of constitutional patriotism will lead to the acceptance and persistence only of justifiable inequalities of resources. In more than one way, constitutional patriotism can be easily accommodated within Rawls' theory of justice. Also, it contains many a lesson on how to build up, maintain, renew the consensus for old and new political systems and face and solve the inevitable conflicts. Habermas' political theory has enjoyed enormous influence on the scholars working in the field of (political) communication as well as among sociologists.

As to political scientists, one could explain away his limited impact by pointing at the complex and often convolute style that characterizes Habermas' theorizing and writing. Nevertheless, it is unfortunate that political scientists, interested in the working of old and new political systems in which conflicts concerning the Constitution are quite frequent, have so far been unwilling or unable to make more use of Habermas' constitutional patriotism (for instance, there is not even one mention in Elster, Offe and Preuss, 1998; and only one quotation in Sunstein, 2001).

Since its original publication in 1971, Rawls' *Theory of Justice* has been sharply criticized and opposed by two competing political theories: communitarianism and multiculturalism. The crux of the criticism is common to both theories. Rawls deals with the liberty and the equality of each and every individual, no matter who they are. He is interested in providing all individuals with the best opportunities to pursue their personal preferences. As we have seen, Rawls' fundamental theoretical assumption is that the rules of the game must be shaped behind a veil of ignorance without taking into account the context, any context.

The political theory of liberalism is, first of all, concerned with the limits to be put to political power and to the spheres of action enjoyed respectively by governmental, representative, judicial institutions. Second, it deals with the way consensus is acquired, expressed, and channeled and with how dissent can be formulated, protected, and promoted. In a globalized world, liberal citizens enjoy universal rights that know of no boundaries. Both communitarianism (see especially Etzioni, 1998) and multiculturalism take exception to the existence of universal rights to be given to all and to protected for all and everywhere. According to both theories, rights and duties are not and cannot be universal. They are historical phenomena. They are defined and achieved through traditions within existing communities. There are specific rights, special duties, exceptional customs embedded in history and traditions. Communitarians and multiculturalists strongly believe that they all must be recognized as such and protected. On the contrary, liberalism believes that behind the recognition of traditions and of their more or less authorized interpreters always lies the likelihood of privileges, of oppression and repression. Cultural "islands" are never heavens for all. Often they are prisons for many. Only the open and free clash of values guarantees that all individuals will have fair access to universal rights, to their protection and promotion. The rules and the procedures for any and all clashes can be provided by the liberal theory shaped by time and experience, by discussion and successive agreements. I strongly agree that "liberalism has demonstrated an almost unprecedented capacity for absorbing its competitors, aided by the collapse of its rival, Marxism, but also by its own virtuosity in reinventing itself and incorporating key elements from opposing traditions" (Dryzek, Honig, Phillips, 2009: 77). Therefore, contrary to what the same authors write, I find it not especially "difficult to sustain a belief in liberalism as the only [though I would write 'as the most important'] tradition, or in secularism as the norm, when the majority of the world's population is patently unconvinced by either" (Dryzek, Honig, Phillips, 2009: 78). Those in opposition to their authoritarian regimes from Zimba-

bwe to Myanmar from Hong Kong to Russia (“traveling” through Turkey and the Ukraine) fight and risk their lives, if not explicitly and adamantly in the name of liberal values, most certainly in the search for them.

According to liberalism, “politics is largely about how to reconcile and aggregate individual interests, and takes place under a supposedly neutral set of constitutional rules”(Dryzek, Honig, Phillips, 2009: 70). However, all individuals come from different experiences and live in specific communities. For better or worse, liberalism glosses over those experiences, that for all human beings are “constitutive”, and considers them irrelevant. Also, liberalism aims at superseding all previous habits and traditions that are embedded in community life. Any way, they should not interfere with the equal treatment of all citizens. Equality before the law, *isonomia*, is an insurmountable liberal principle. No exception allowed. Most communitarians, for instance, Sandel (1982), come close to denouncing that, by so doing, liberalism is bound to destroy the very bases of organized social life, the principles around which communities are formed and function. “For communitarians, individuals are always embedded in a network of social relationships, never the social isolates that liberalism assumes, and they have obligations to the community, not just to the political arrangements that facilitate their own interests” (Sandel, 1982: 71). In a way, multiculturalism followed through (Kymlicka, 1995). In the name of community traditions and life, briefly, “cultures”, it makes a strong case for multiple exceptions to “liberal” norms and rules. Those exceptions are arguably justified by the existence in a political system of collectivities characterized by specificities profoundly affecting their life: religious creeds, relationships between men and women, education, behavior in public. According to both, the communitarians and the multiculturalists, they have to be fully taken into account when legislating on a variety of issues.

THE TASK OF POLITICAL SCIENTISTS

I am painfully aware that my capsule syntheses do not do full justice to the critics of Rawls’ liberalism. By now, it may also be quite clear that I side with Rawls and his political theory. All this said, those who want to identify and discuss the relationships between political philosophy and political science will find abundant and fecund material in all the theories I have mentioned. Here I will briefly revisit some topics that political theorists may illuminate for political scientists, first and foremost, in the wide fields of democratization, democracy-building and the quality of democracy. In a way, most processes of democratization have started under a veil of ignorance. Political scientists may pursue this line of thinking, some have indeed done so, in order to perform two tasks. First, they may want to analyze and compare those cases in which the veils of ignorance have prevented some of the protagonists from choosing their favorite, but risky, paths and which were the consequences. Second, in a more policy-making vein, political scientists may explore which areas of democratization should be more significantly affected by the

veil of ignorance: the drafting of the constitution, the boundaries between the State and the market, the choice of the electoral system. The questions are many. For instance, which is the best procedure of constitution-making that can offer the opportunity of nurturing the highest level of constitutional patriotism? Second, should the emphasis be put from the very beginning on participation as stressed by republicanism and on competition? Or both should be allowed to increase through time? Should all pacts and all power-sharing arrangements and devices be rejected, accepted, considered temporary and transient? Third, in building a democratic framework should the power-holders work along “liberal” lines and put the emphasis on the classic liberal-democratic liberties and duties for all, no exception allowed? Or should the Constitution contain “multicultural” clauses and ad hoc devices for ethnic, linguistic, regional, religious, gender representativeness? Under which conditions (and for how long) are the liberals willing to accept segmented and/or arithmetic representation?

Of course, the burden of dealing with rights and duties and with appropriate public policies should not be put exclusively on the liberals. At least two questions must be asked to the political theorists of multiculturalism. First, have multicultural societies been more capable of protecting and promoting the rights of the citizens and of obtaining their compliance with reference to the performance of duties? Second, how and where is it possible to draw the line between the private sphere and the public sphere in multicultural societies and which multicultural legislation should one aim for? The paramount claim of communitarians and multiculturalists is that the kind of democratic political system built around the principles they advocate will have a superior quality to that of all liberal democracies.

In all likelihood, almost all those interested in the quality of democracy know that the political theory necessary to proceed to defining, to measuring, and to evaluating it has to be, at the same time, descriptive and empirical as well as prescriptive and normative. No matter how good, learned, imaginative, capable of devising convincing indicators, political scientists are, their descriptions will always spill over into prescriptions. The quality of democracy is inevitably a topic that straddles between political theory and political science. Indeed, this explains why it is always an intellectual (and political) pleasure to read Locke, Mill, Tocqueville, just to mention some of the most important political theorists of democracy, true precursors of some, unfortunately, few, contemporary political scientists. In different ways and with different emphases, the authors I have quoted as well as Rawls would agree that the most important and decisive components of the quality of any real and ideal democracy are two: the rule of law and accountability. Where these two components exist it becomes highly likely that there will be liberty, equality of opportunity (not equality of income and wealth), political participation. The communitarians might add recognition of and respect for traditions and the multiculturalists would emphasize cultural specificities and peculiarities. At this point, it will become possible and advisable to proceed to empirical analyses of the realities in different political systems, to measurements, to overall evaluations.

Overall, most political scientists have become, on the one hand, too shy in advocating the reform of democratic institutions to enhance liberal and democratic values; on the other hand, they seem not enough convinced that they do have at least the basic tools to pursue clearly specified goals. Good political science produces knowledge that can be applied. It remains to be seen whether there can be good political science without resorting to the many contributions of good political theory. If I am right in stating that liberalism, republicanism, communitarianism and multiculturalist theories identify important political problems and suggest diversified solutions, then political scientists ought to pay attention to all those solutions, their grounds, motivations, consequences. More precisely, political scientists should assess how those solutions can be implemented, what kind of impact they have on the political system in terms of tensions, conflicts, consensus and which consequences they produce for society and for the individuals in terms of rights and duties and of the quality of life.

ALMOST A CONCLUSION

In this exploratory article I have attempted to identify whether political scientists are interested in what political philosophers do and write and whether they are willing and capable of utilizing some of the knowledge produced especially by contemporary political philosophers. My exploration suggests that even in those fields where political philosophers have a lot to offer, namely, democracy and its quality, democratization, constitution-building, rights and duties, State and market, there has been little or no interaction or reciprocal influence. This is not simply an instance of “separate tables” co-existing in the same club. It is an unfortunate indication that political philosophers and political scientists belong to two different clubs located far away from each other. If one believes that “[political] science without philosophy has no compass” and “philosophy without [political] science has no map” (Regalia and Valbruzzi, 2013: 29), then the conclusion is depressing for both disciplines. While I am not in the position to judge the state of contemporary political philosophy, I can feel the dissatisfaction of many political scientists concerning their discipline. There is much to do to improve theory and research in contemporary political science, not just their relevance, but, above all, their meaning. Much can be done studying and confronting some recent political theories.

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GIANFRANCO PASQUINO

gpasquino@johnshopkins.it

Gianfranco Pasquino is Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the University of Bologna where he has taught from November 1, 1969 to October 31, 2012. He is Senior Adjunct Professor of European Studies at the Bologna Center of the Johns Hopkins University where he teaches "European Political Systems" and "Introduction to Development". Among the founders of the *Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica* (1971), he was its Managing Editor for seven years and Co-Editor for three years. Visiting scholar at the Instituto Juan March, Madrid (Fall 1999), he has been Fellow of ChristChurch, Oxford (2001), Clare Hall, Cambridge (2003), St Antony's, Oxford (2007), The Italian Academy for Advanced Studies, Columbia University (Spring 2010) and of the Transatlantic Academy, Washington, D.C. (Fall 2012). Former Director of the Master in International Relations of the University of Bologna, he teaches regularly every year a course in Buenos Aires. President of the Società Italiana di Scienza Politica (2010-2013), since 2005 he is Fellow of the Accademia dei Lincei. Author of several volumes, the most recent ones being *La rivoluzione promessa. Lettura della Costituzione italiana* (Pearson 2011); *Finale di partita. Tramonto di una Repubblica* (Egea 2013); *Partiti, istituzioni, democrazie* (Il Mulino 2014) and *Cittadini senza scettro. Le riforme sbagliate* (Egea 2015), he is very proud of having co-edited with Norberto Bobbio and Nicola Matteucci the *Dizionario di Politica* (UTET, 2004 3a ed), translated into Spanish and Portuguese.