
The Issues for 1999 and Paradigms for the Millenium

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Summary

The author's thesis is that today's unsolved, fundamental political and social, as well as fundamental scientific problems are the other side of the coin of the existing paradigms from the point of view of time and place – and the toponymic indications of the new, the missing ones. Based on Commons' observations about the types of socio-scientific paradigms that have been dominant in the last three centuries of modern age, in periods of prosperity and crises, the author concludes that we should not expect the appearance of a new paradigm soon. Today, searching for urgent solutions to social problems that science has not found answers to, we should design a research strategy that will look anew into the transitions among various paradigms that have been replacing each other during these three centuries, and look for the probably lost theoretical elements of the social and the political "form analysis" that will, aided by the contemporary empirical-research rigorousness enable us a better understanding of the transformation of the forms of social and political institutions and processes, and thus establish the new foundations for their more reliable normative, formal, and quantitative analysis, as well as their controlled change via appropriate public policies.

As a rule, the concept of "paradigm" in recent literature is linked with the name of Thomas Khun.¹ On the occasion of his recent death, the obituarist in the London *Economist* cautioned ever so nicely:

Kuhn did not die. He has just once again changed paradigm.

You can never know whether a paradigm is really dead, because they are subject to fashions, so it is always unclear whether they are really alive or are only "trendy". This is so in social sciences, and probably even more so in humanities.

The fabled turtle carrying the world on its back probably is not going to return to the scientific mode. But one never knows. Depends on what you understand by "turtle".

In social sciences, it sometimes really seems that some ruling paradigms were never born. As if they had – in some non-time – become dominant. Like shadows on the walls of your cave. Now you see it, now you don't, and then perhaps you do again. Perhaps

¹ Although he, in fact, primarily dealt with paradigms of natural sciences (physics mostly). But his counterparts in social sciences have gladly used his name when enumerating their own associations regarding that topic.

this is not a scientific paradigm at all but an impressively billowy shadow of a figure. Of God knows what.

You frequently wonder while waiting for the new Bethlehem star: shouldn't a sign of life in the meantime be sought in the former or in the former never-ruling-but-imperfectly-understood paradigms? Move cave? Or fire? Or alter the standpoint?

This will happen especially when it has become clear that the dominant paradigm can no longer resolve the most recent or newly-observed dominant problems. Like the famous scientific-senatorial pair from James Blish's SF tetralogy *Cities in Flight*: when pressed, you are going to look for the anti-gravity principle by sifting through various rejected theories – if you cannot expect to arrive at it from the established ones.

Something similar has been happening in contemporary political science, particularly in the field that focuses on solving practical political and social, particularly developmental problems. Among them, the urgent ones increase almost exponentially. Moreover, quite a few of them affect the very survival of individuals, groups, nations, cultures, civilisations, and even the entire human kind.

These problems are the reverse side of the existing paradigms from the viewpoint of time and place. And the toponymic indications of the new ones.

The Issues for 1999

As of lately – but very unmistakably – we have been aware that all over the world we breathe bad air, we drink bad water, and are increasingly exposed to an environment to which in no time only insects may be able to adapt. We have no intellectual, let alone economic, social, or at least political structure that would know how to lay out at least a probable comprehensive solution to this problem. The best that can be expected practically-politically in this field is that one of the potential future American presidential candidates, Al Gore, has used these issues for a few slogans for his presidential campaign and that the German “green” diplomat Joschka Fischer has designed a provisional agenda for a future coalition; also, an occasional international conference with minor reverberations is possible. Anyway, this is an area still better comprehended by traditional religions/worldviews than contemporary science.² Truth to tell, it has never truly asked itself whether these issues have, besides the sociological and anthropological, any physical sense. It is hardly believable that their, due to many reasons, completely vague and uncertain political-economic status might precede that already broached and thrilling question on the agenda.

Unfortunately, in 1999, for many places on earth the biggest problem is still going to be how to eat anything, and not what to eat and with what consequences. In Croatia

² Cf. The special edition of *Time* 1998 about the planet Earth. See also in: F. Capra (1998, 1991) *Tao fizike*; (1986, 1981) *Vrijeme preokreta. Znanost, društvo i nastupajuća kultura*. R. E. Benedick (1991) *Ozone Diplomacy: New Directions in Safeguarding the Planet*.

as well we may discover the not so new truth that it is difficult to reap more if you sow less.

In the picturesque Croatian hall of funny mirrors – in front of one, or perhaps none, there is a normal world into which the Croatian Alice does not know how to step from the world behind it – the global crisis is reflected so many times that it seems as if it were springing from a local source. Even the global warning for this, electoral or pre-electoral year (“Beware of politicians”)³ smells stale and musty. A country where all sorts of crises in political evolution appear almost simultaneously instead of sequentially or at least by leaps and bounds,⁴ must find itself in a schizophrenic position in which it compulsively focuses on the existentially least significant, but politically most obvious and perhaps really most urgent matter: the co-habitation of the parliamentary crisis and the crisis of the presidency. Also, it is aware it is in the clutches of a politically induced elemental economic crisis for which it has no time. But it is not aware that it cannot solve any of these predicaments unless it “first” overcomes the Croatian acute as well as chronic (at least a century-long) crisis of fundamental cultural and scientific patterns of the epochal and the mundane activities that almost coincide at the turn of the millenium.

The notorious liberal-degaullist “transitional” problem how to transform a political-economic structure patterned like a “black hole” is still unresolved (M. Friedman). A black hole can be anticipated but not eliminated: it can only be given an increasingly light diet, as was done in the model of restricting despotic rule a lá Magna Cartae. “A black hole” is not only a tardy problem of a “welfare state” or a “Big Government” country with a developed market and democracy. This is a continual matrix of Modernism, complementing Foucault’s hospital or prison, that stubbornly and post-modernly shifts from one perspective to another without getting any newer. The only thing new is its “transitional” transformation into a basic pattern of a planetary crisis which seems to be devouring the others. In this perspective, the perspective of the crisis of all crises, the former proletarian/party/national state of the primitive accumulation of capital,⁵ that seemed so monolithic, today in Croatia turns out to be divided into distinctive corporative concentric layers. And primitive to boot. And very intransigent and resistant to the turbulent global surroundings.

³ Crook, C. (1998) “Nothing to fear but politicians”, in: *The World in 1999*, London, Economist Publ., p. 14.

⁴ Cf. Almond & Powell (1996), Binder et al. (1971), Strpić (1988). According to the theories of the crises of political development by Almond, Powell, Binder, Coleman, LaPalombare, Pye, Verb, and Weiner, the development of newly-created countries include - in that order or in different sequences - the crises of identity, legitimation, participation, penetration, and distribution.

⁵ Cf. D. Strpić 1986.

Political-Economic Cycles and the Research Strategy

In that kind of setting, tomorrow – if not yet today – it will be clear that *the debtor's capitalism* can no longer be the financial framework for the continuation of a productive development of the *capitalism of high technology and global communication networks*. Both these developments have emerged and blossomed in an attempt to make an innovative breakthrough in the great stagnation of the 1970s and 1980s (which has been, by the way, overcome only in America); both were relatively successful. However, since these are structural innovations of completely different political-economic duration, their paired idyll came to an end in the 1990s. Though the shorter life-span of the debtor's capitalism became more obvious by means of a combined effect of the inability of the debtor countries to pay back their – by constant reprogramming – increased debts under the existing conditions, and their inability to implement or stabilise their transitional reforms (which ought to have enabled them to repay their debts). This incapacity is linked not only with the scissors that have been closing down on the throat of undeveloped countries, but also with the transformational difficulties of developed G-7 members. But these two facets of the current crisis have insufficiently been brought into a structural connection.⁶ The framework of the crisis is not exhausted in the practical incompatibility of the goal of the oversimplified creditors' regulation (striving for and consequently achieving increasingly steeper and at the top sharper pyramidal structure of international political economy) and the grounds for the realisation of that goal: the increasingly more porous, even narrower debtors' base of the global developmental pyramid. There is a growing danger that debtors will simply begin to drop out of the system. The critical point of the frameworks is in their pyramidal shape that is described as at least a temporary and individual path towards the recovery from recession.

In the last two centuries, the responses to world crises of this type (accompanied with the political upheavals of 1789, 1848, 1914, 1933-39, 1968, 1989-99⁷) on the economic dimension have always above all meant reflexive contraction of the global core's capital. However, a way out would always be found in the geo-economic and sector-based revolutionary-technological, cultural, and political-economic expansion of a group of metropolises, occasionally even peripheral groups, but never in the contraction. The circumstances in this decade are rather specific, since the US – now more than ever the successor to the British global role of the 18th and 19th century – is the only country that (though rather “locally” or regionally in a very narrow sense) has found a way out of the economic crisis. Which does not in a long term have to lead to the best strategic political-economic outcomes. Not for the US. Even less for the world. The way out can only be found in the recovery of several regional centres of profits and innovation, and the resulting intensification of the world consumption and trade.

⁶ G. Becker makes an interesting point in relation to this thesis (1998, *Business Week*, Oct 19). The existing pyramid and the underlying theory that serves as an ideology, have lulled investors into the false security of high-flying investments into peripheral markets. He even blames the banking/credit crisis in Russia on the illusory confidence in the routines of the American Long Term Capital Management!

⁷ Cf. Schumpeter 1939, Mandel 1972.

The extrapolation of the ongoing processes would suggest that the mid-term highway of expansion may be built on the combination of the boom in telecommunications, the media, information and biotechnological industries and, somewhat on a more long-term basis, in certain sectors of education. But this expansion will not be able to gain momentum without the creation of a more extended poliocentric network of both global production and consumption in those and other regions. At present, the American consumption and the world trade are slowing down in general,⁸ what is perhaps good for this year's American recuperation, but not so for the necessary more permanent American and global upsurge.

This is not good either for the theory that should find new ways to prosperity in this atypical big crisis. J. R. Commons, an American institutionalist of the first half of the century, passionately engaged in the strategy of the Rooseveltian triumph over the 1930s' Depression, noticed a very interesting regularity in the inauguration of the paradigms of modern social theory. His insights may be interpreted as implying that the periods of the emergence of long-term prosperity favour the epochally novel scientific paradigms. The periods of prolonged depression favour modifications and reconstructions of the already existing paradigms.⁹

Indeed, already in the 1970s, at the beginning of the incumbent global crisis, certain "regressive" changes began in social sciences, that in various ways reintroduced the need for a sort of a "*gestalt*" theory, more or less a *normative theory of forms in a historical perspective* – within which it is possible with a greater certainty to perform a formalised and empirical quantitative analysis of the sudden multiplication of new and unforeseen problems.

Since in all political sciences such forms have traditionally been their standard medium, and since the historical, normative, formal, and quantitative analyses have for a long time been regularly connected with them – this step might be in principle somewhat easier for political scientists than for other social scientists. It would have to be easier in political science itself and its vital organic ties with other sciences. Although it is nowhere easy to perform such changes of paradigms.

However, the problem here is that political science during the postwar western market and democratic prosperity tried to disentangle itself from such a tradition,¹⁰ in the naive belief that it would be able to create a more emancipated profile if in that respect it would – paradoxically – imitate younger social sciences like economy and sociology.

⁸ Cf. M. J. Mandel (1999) "Industry outlook: Strong productivity, willing consumers, and low inflation may again confound the doomsayers", *Business Week*, Jan 11.

⁹ Cf. J. R. Commons (1959, 1934) *Institutional Economics: Its Place in Political Economy*, pp. 122-4.

¹⁰ Cf. E. g. G. Almond & J. Coleman (1960) *The Politics of Developing Areas*, pp. 5, 7, 9, 10, 17. D. Strpić (1998) *Promjena*, pp. 44-5, 48, and others.

A special caricature of the belated - and displaced - echo of this trend, the Croatian political "black hole" acted out in the shaping of its policy of development. The Croatian strategy of development is ultimately shaped solely by sociologists and technicians! Without lawyers, economists, political scientists (whose profession this is), culturologists, historians (sic!), natural scientists and philosophers. As if all of them had been devoured by the black hole and stored in some parallel, politically and attitudinally anomalous universe.

The import of that step was boosted by the fact that all modern social sciences at the time of their formation as modern sciences had to free themselves from “serving” first theology and later philosophy; this liberation was modelled after natural and technical sciences. By the emancipation from traditional theologian and philosophical moulds, these models *implied and believed* that they were free from all forms of this mould, particularly the normative ones, but also from others that were in a way imposed from the outside on the always open-ended formation of analytical “models” (“short” and “medium-term”). It is also implied and believed that this sort of emancipation has proved their scientific character, although it seems that it is the natural sciences that have in this century been going through a period of turbulent paradigm change of more than post-modern character.¹¹

So, in the late sixties and the early seventies, it turned out that economic, sociological, legal, and political-scientific analyses – that were at that time relatively arbitrarily applied and combined various basically co-classical,¹² neo-classical and system-based analytical models – resulted in come research findings and political recommendations with, to a vexing degree, incongruous or counterproductive consequences. In the absence of new paradigms, people began to reach for – in the post-modern way – different combinations of old paradigms, particularly for the neglected theoretical models developed in the pertinent scientific disciplines and other social sciences.

Economics, especially as a theory of economic policy, has once again used political economy, this time explicitly political economy as a political science discipline.¹³ But such political economy has a special problem, since the methodology of “rational expectations” – which, naturally, it took over from economics – is not entirely rational in its analyses, e. g. of the Japanese and other Pacific Rim industries, that achieved prominence due to the increasing awareness that a new historical turbulence was at hand – the shift of the global development highway from the Atlantic to the Pacific West).¹⁴ Today the same applies not only to east-European, South American and African economies in transition, but also the most developed countries that are, faced with the challenge of recession and the impending developmental leap, undergoing a process of rapid transformation themselves.

Parallely, the sociological and political science research of the “fourth face of power” pointed to the difficulties created by the co-classical Weberian and late-

¹¹ Cf. F. Capra 1998, 1991, 1975.

¹² Under the “co-classical” theory I imply that modern theory that did not undergo the modern schism in relation to the Antiquity and the Middle Ages but has only just parted its way with theology and philosophy. For more details see in my book *Politologija i politička ekonomija: Problemi i paradigme* that will, hopefully, come out in 1999 as one in the book series *Politička misao* of the Faculty of Political Science in Zagreb.

¹³ Cf. D. Rodrik (1996) “Understanding Economic Policy Reform”, *Journal of Economic Literature*.

¹⁴ Cf. C. Johnson & E. B. Keehn (1994) “A Disaster in the Making: Rational Choice and Asian Studies”, *The National Interest*. A. Sen (1977) “Rational Fools: A Critique of the Behavioral Foundations of Economic Theory”, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*. Y. Murakami (1987) “The Japanese Model of Political Economy”, in: *The Political Economy of Japan*, vol. 1, *The Domestic Transformation*, ed. By K. Yamamura & Y. Yasuba.

Parsonsian lack of understanding of power as a typically modern western category.¹⁵

Obviously, it is no longer enough to analytically divulge institutions, institutional arrangements and highly structured processes, and then to quantitatively measure their aspects – provided that the forms are already there and that understanding them is somebody else's business, or that understanding them is an accomplished job. It is also necessary to grasp how processes and institutions get "confined" into historical forms and transformed from one form into another. Only in this way is it possible to understand not only the statics but also the dynamics of the developments and the radical changes that are occurring in front of our very eyes, the changes that have for the zillionth time made "growth" and "progress" not only theoretically dubious, but practically uncertain, if not de facto impossible without this awareness.

There are three feasible and two practical research strategies at the disposal of today's analysts and designers of the projections of development as well as of those who have projected the Croatian strategy of development.

One strategy (completely hypothetical) is to create analytical instruments that would in a congenial and systematic manner include the totality of social sciences and humanities.

Another strategy, practically not much less hypothetical, would call for a methodological fashioning of the "interface" among the societal sectors whose development is analysed and projected – including the cultural matrices of all sectors – as well as the interface among those scientific disciplines that should be applied.

And finally, there is the still most practical orientation to the independent disciplinary monographic studies, the convergence of whose findings is to a large extent achieved by free estimates. The application is conducted via short- and long-term models, based on the principle "hypothesis-attempt at verification-error-hypothesis".

However, repeated errors will again and again lead back to the formation of whatever interfaces among the areas of analysis of a community's sectors. Besides the method of trial and error, however (which cannot be given too much chances, even mathematically) these interfaces can solely be formed by a deeper and more accurate theoretical understanding of the foundations of individual sectors and the community on the whole. This understanding will have to verify whether the modern community has common foundations and whether the understanding of individual sectors can be adduced from that uniformity or not. Do they have identical foundations (or at least are they organically developed despite their sectors' autonomy), or are they simply a contraption put together after their foundations had been "chanced upon" (A. Ferguson, Hayek) and are held together by inertia and are rife with hopeless "frictions" (Luhman).

If such identical foundations or at least identically based development can be proved, then it is possible to talk about the totality of social sciences – if not immediately from it. Social, humanistic, and spiritual sciences can gain from each other, as

¹⁵ Cf. P. Diger (1992) "The Fourth Face of Power", *The Journal of Politics*. D. Held & D. Kreiger (1984) "Theories of the state", in: S. Bornstein & co. (eds.) *The State in Capitalist Europe*. Cf. Also R. King (1986) *The State in Modern Society: New Directions in Political Sociology*.

well as from some arts, something more than the lucky or unlucky, repeatedly attempted / blundered / successful post-modern mutual appropriations of short- and medium-term procedures and ideas, or even exchanges or accumulation of the areas of pertinence.

Younger social sciences, such as sociology, psychology, economics, contemporary science of management, and partly political science (as promoted in the 1950s) in their contemporary form were established in the relation to the dissension from the tradition, the schism which happened at the turn of the 19th century. They were shaped through the rifts *within* Modernism, and not through the cut that Modernism made in relation to the Middle Ages and the Antiquity. That is why these are, in general, sciences without modern historical forms in their foundations, or sciences whose contemporary form is this very modern formlessness, unlike those sciences which are based on Modernism as a paradigmatic cut and which consequently have a modern form, either directly or through their organic connection with political philosophy and philosophy of law.

That is why economy and sociology, together with the theory of organisation, go together so well with all schools of *co-classical* tradition, that obtained a similar form by circumventing the paradigmatic cut of the modern classic, the cut which is uniquely manifested in political philosophy and political economy.

Thus, economic science (or “economic sciences” as is wont to be grandly said in Croatia) in its present-day form left behind an array of paradigmatic cuts. The neo-liberal socialness and politicalness, and the neo-Keynesian microfoundation of economy were preceded by the monetarist counterrevolution and the Keynesian revolution. The neo-classical revolution, whose deep-rootedness Keynes eradicated, had given economic science its present-day contours.

But this science, as its formative heritage, carries the mark of co-classical, post-classical, and classical traditions of political economy. With this legacy, it has also taken up the burden of analytical dualism and political-economic links between political philosophy and “economic commentaries” plus, at least implicitly, the problems of the interfaces of the state and the cameral sciences, which also means a sort of a great-grandchildren-like relation to the then still indistinct line of the origins of today’s sociology. Similar thing could be said for its modern origins, along the Condorcet-Ferguson-Maine-Tönnies-Weber-Pareto-Schumpeter line.

Based on this legacy, economic science, sociology and, akin to sociology, political science and the science of governing, formatively are connected with the remarkably classical modern breach with political theology¹⁶ and theology in general, and with the opposition towards the Middle Ages and the Antiquity, although there is a sort of a continuity with the latter in a co-classical, formless, singularly deconstructivist way (truth to tell, it is also a form of its kind, but not identified in a modern way).

¹⁶ Cf. D. Lalović (1996) “Volonté générale u Rousseuovoj političkoj teoriji”, doctoral thesis, FPZ, Zagreb 1996. Cf. Especially the first chapter “Teologijsko podrijetlo volonté générale”, and the brilliantly elaborated problem of universalism in political theory in the contentious relationship between the “general will” and “the will of all” in Rousseau.

When contemporary science – particularly economic, but social in general – finds itself against the wall of their own shortcomings in understanding and guiding public policies and the desperately attempted but failed solutions of humankind's existentialist problems that must be resolved immediately or very soon, then – paradoxically – such fundamentally theoretical dive into the Mann-like well of one's history and prehistory may prove to be the only truly pragmatic approach to the creation of the conditions for their solution that we have at our disposal. Independent of the ambition and the need to create an entirely new scientific paradigm, even grudgingly mending the old one to make it “work” and provide any practical solutions to practical problems, becomes a theoretical task of extremely fundamental nature.

Such an inescapable historical-methodological plunge shows that the mentioned cuts in the history of today's social-scientific paradigm have frequently and radically changed the scope of individual social sciences, that they have often and completely about-faced not only the structure but also the direction of their own analytical procedures, and from the scratch replaced the basic type of scientific inquiry they had been based on. In the course of this substitution of paradigms, many premises for the development of the analytic instruments which might resolve today's or tomorrow's problems have been lost or almost lost. Nevertheless, they might perhaps be reconstructed by research and, though relatively temporarily, used as bricks in building scientific devices which are today considered well-established but invalid.

The contingent new paradigm that might be born out of such research or concomitant to it, will probably (at the end of Modernity) have to be able to answer to all modern – albeit today forgotten questions – contemporary, but also classical, post-classical, co-classical, and neo-classical – and perhaps go even beyond that. Probably it is not possible to enter the emerging or emergent new world without fully understanding and rectifying a sort of the Original Sin of contemporary science which, for the love of ever paradigmatically new but increasingly Hume-like restricted exactness, has (repeatedly) renounced its spiritual integrity and its universal queries, only to eventually get stranded in the quagmire of inability of providing even partial but basic practical answers.

If in the end it would turn out that the prevalent type of problem-setting ought to be determined by means of a scientific revolution in, say, theology – that would perhaps not be so bad for today's social sciences. In this Anno Domini, it would certainly be very propitious merely to think about that, at least for theology as a spiritual science.

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