
ANDRZEJ KAPISZEWSKI'S QUEST FOR TRUTH

SKETCH FOR A PORTRAIT

Everyone whose path into adult life leads through academic studies faces two difficult choices. The sense of the first of these boils down to the choice of the course of the studies, while that of the other is related to searching for answers to the question "what to do next, after graduation"? While the grounds for making the selection in the first case are rather repeatable, and are primarily manifested by the models and personages provided by the social (family, school, peer) milieu and have no final quality (as the course of the studies can be changed, complemented with another, or an interdisciplinary course can be joined in the first place), and the process of preparation to the graduation follows through successive formalized

stages, the latter case is far more complex. It is so, for it involves the identity of people making choices, including the vision of their own future, paths leading thereto, costs (psychological and social) that they are ready to bear in an intentional manner, and time.

If the choice is the first step to the continuous search for new solutions, when nothing is more precious than the truth being discovered, the time of such quest is counted in the successive decades. Moreover, the final effect of such a choice becomes in most cases not only irreversible but also unpredictable.

In the case of Andrzej Kapiszewski, the first of the two choices, that is the one leading into the adult life through the community of teachers and learners and university lecture halls brought him – under the influence of Zdzisław Opiał (Professor of the Jagiellonian University, working at that time with “the inter-school mathematical learned society”, whose participants included students of King John III Sobieski Secondary School in Kraków, attended and graduated by the future professor Kapiszewski) – to the study of mathematics (“from year three,” as he would put down in 2007 in his diary written for his son, Piotr, “in the elitist but also very difficult, theoretical section”).

The latter decision was far more complex and had far reaching consequences. In 1971, with Master of Arts diploma in his hand, he had to decide what to do next. First, the young graduate decided to try his hand as an intern at Jagiellonian University’s Institute of Economy. A year later, he would already be teaching statistics at the University’s Institute of Sociology. This new experience posed questions that were decisive for everything that was to follow. What were they? First, whether the construction of mathematical models of social reality made sense if one did not know this reality? Secondly, whether the “second-hand” study, by an analysis of the existing descriptions and explanations of the regularities of life of human communities, was indeed sufficient? Thirdly, whether it is enough to be moving solely within the realm of own culture to understand the multitude of paths to reach the fulfilment of human fate? Which solution of this particular equation holding so many unknowns was he to select?

Andrzej Kapiszewski decided to be not only a mathematician but also a sociologist, which he could do thanks to post-graduate studies he held at the Faculty of Sociology of the Columbia University (1974–1975). Armed with this experience, he himself began asking the questions typical for sociology and search for answers to them through empirical studies of the factors co-shaping the lives and futures of social groups. Moreover, he was daring enough to take on challenges posed by the cultures, religions and political systems that had as yet been alien to him: not only ones that were produced under the influence of the transfer of the archetypes from the realm of European culture (e.g. to the United States) but also those that originated entirely beyond this domain, where the Arab world and Islam were and have remained the demiurge.

Kapiszewski considered necessary not only learning them in the categories of notions and the logic of scientific thinking but also through participative observation and own experience of those so very different everyday realities, following the imperatives of the method of the "humanist coefficient" proposed by Florian Znaniecki. For a theoretical mathematician, the passage from the cold order of abstract models to the multi-dimensional world of never fully predictable group actors – a world that was, moreover, recognisable mostly through the "humanist coefficient" must have been no simple design. Nor, obviously, could it have taken place overnight. The most convincing evidence of the process are Kapiszewski's successive books, a short, subjective selection of which follows.

Stereotype, Assimilation, and Conflict

Andrzej Kapiszewski's cognitive adventure – initially with social sciences, sociology and social psychology – originated from his research of stereotypes and self-stereotypes of Americans of Polish origin conducted in 1975 among 456 students from ten American universities. This study resulted in his doctoral thesis in sociology, defended at the Institute of Sociology of the Jagiellonian University in 1976 and was highly recognised by the Minister of Science, Higher Education, and Technology, which found its expression in granting the individual award. After some additional research, the work provided the basis for his first book *Stereotyp Amerykanów polskiego pochodzenia* ([*Stereotype of Americans of Polish Origin*], Wrocław 1978), widely read and quoted to this day not only by students.

For the use of his own research, Andrzej Kapiszewski makes use of a peculiar understanding of stereotype, brought down to its ethnical form. Seen from this perspective, "stereotype is a representation concerning a given ethnic group that exists in the conscience of members of another group in the form of a set of interconnected judgemental opinions" (*ibidem*, p. 27). Such a representation is assumed to be true, because people believe it to be so. Moreover, when it is brought into the process of communication, its constituents seem to take the form of a syndrome. Yet, depending on the features of social space in which this syndrome is brought up (and especially the time, circumstances, and purpose for which the addressor and the addressee use it), some of its subsets may be forgotten, while others are markedly exposed, which makes the valence accompanying these subsets become more important than the impact of the entire stereotype.

Kapiszewski treats the structure, content, and dynamism (existence and disappearance as well as the changing axiology of the individual subsets) of ethnical stereotypes and self-stereotypes in the USA as a function of successive stages in the process of evolution of the American people. This point of view, in turn, fo-

cuses his attention on the problems of relations between US ethnicities. The various source materials that the researcher gathered over the years will merge and evolve into the book published under a telling title: *Asymilacja i konflikt* ([Assimilation and Conflict] Kraków 1984). The study became the grounds for Andrzej Kapiszewski's higher doctorate (*habilitacja*) thesis, which he defended in a *viva voce* examination before the Council of the Faculty of Philosophy and History of the Jagiellonian University (1986) and was successively conferred the higher doctorate in humanities.

In this book, the reader would search in vain for arguments supporting the author's fascination (not unlike that of Paul Felix Lazarsfeld's) in the application of mathematics in social sciences. This time, the author focused not on the quantitative research techniques but on the contrary: on the historical processes leading to the establishment of nation states, for they are "the form that is dominant in the history of the world, while the national bond is among the most powerful and draws the most serious consequences in the types of social ties" (*ibidem*, p. 5). Of the entire spectrum of particular courses that these processes have taken in different historic times and various societies, the hardest to research are the ones that are connected to intercontinental migrations (or, going even further: the ones that are determined by these migrations) that occur in multi-cultural societies. A reason for Kapiszewski to become especially keen on the understanding of these societies.

In his case-study, he returns to the United States. Here, within that context he focuses on the historical relationship between the Polonia and African Americans, and conflicts between two ethnicities: Jews and Poles. Much like Andrew Greely, Andrzej Kapiszewski perceives the phase of "belligerence, when they are especially likely to fall into acute conflict with others" and the phase of mutual acceptance (NB: One, which can be accelerated by such earlier ethnical conflicts; *ibidem*, p. 223) in the processes of assimilation (perceived as a specific synthesis of integration and acculturation) of all American ethnic groups. Why? Because "such conflicts allow a better understanding of the actual situation of the group in the social structure, of the system of values inherent in the society, and of the changes that are required to actualise own interests, redistribution of goods and/or power so that the group could participate more fully in the activity of the entire society, including also, if not primarily, the process of nation shaping [because it is so, as Lewis Coser claims, H.K.]: that conflicts weld the pluralist society into a single unity, playing the fundamental role in the integration of individuals." (*ibidem*, p. 223).

Polish–Jewish Relations

Polish–Jewish Relations, also perceived through the eyes of American diplomats, are another problem in Andrzej Kapiszewski's cognitive research, and at the same time mark a new methodological challenge. There came the time to master heuristic and hermeneutic skills proper for the research apparatus of the historian, and especially the art of discovering or uncovering new source materials and their interpretation.

An opportunity to achieve this came with Kapiszewski's residence at Stanford University (1989–1990), which gave him access to the Hoover Institute on War, Revolution and Peace and other collections. Among the collections stored by the Department of State in the Institute, Kapiszewski found eight highly interesting documents. Their number included letters, reports, fragments of a diary, and the recording of a speech by Hugh Gibson (the first US Ambassador to Poland reborn, nominated by Woodrow Wilson in April 1919).

Documents written in the hand of the Ambassador in Warsaw were addressed to Frank Polk (Secretary of State in office in 1919), Robert Lansing (Secretary of State in office in 1920), Charles Hughes (holding the office of the Secretary of State in 1922) and William Philips (Assistant Secretary of State in 1919). There was also a letter from Louis Marshall to Abram I. Elkus, dated 19th August 1919.

Kapiszewski believed these documents to be of special importance as they not only allowed a simultaneous insight into a whole range of important questions from three points of view: of Poles, of the Jewish minority, and of American diplomacy, but did so at the time of events that were momentous for that period: the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, the investigation conducted by the Mission of Henry Morgenthau and pertaining to Polish–Jewish relations, and the visits of various delegations representing the Jewish community in the US in Poland. This explains why the first book devoted to these subjects (*Hugh Gibson and Controversy over Polish–Jewish Relations After World War I*, Kraków 1991) is a highly peculiar book, defined by the author in its subtitle as “a documentary history”. Later, in the first years of the new millennium, Andrzej Kapiszewski would return to the subject in the book entitled *Conflicts across the Atlantic: Essays on Polish–Jewish Relation in the United States during World War I and in the Interwar Years* (Kraków 2004).

The Arab World

The duties of Counsellor of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, charge d'affaires ad interim, and the Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to the United Arab Emirates and Qatar (1991–1997) introduced Andrzej Kapiszewski to the Arab world, letting him not only see the sacred and the profane in this realm of dissimilar culture but also understand its specific characteristics through the many years of participative observation. Kapiszewski found valuable assistance in the broadening of the scope of his observation in the experience of his wife, Maria, who lectured at the UAE University in Al Ain (138 kilometres away from Abu Dhabi) as a visiting professor.

The knowledge acquired in public posts, also while developing the contractual foundations to support mutually beneficial economic cooperation, Kapiszewski reinforced later with the research conducted for a year at the Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research. This study let him not only organise the sources documenting the historical processes of Arab States but also learn their behaviour in the international milieu.

New books were published; their number included *Native Arab Population and Foreign Workers in the Gulf States* (Kraków 1999), *Nationals and Foreign Workers and Expatriate. Population and Labor Dilemmas of the GCC States* (London 2001), and *The Changing Middle East. Selected Issues in Politics and Society in the Gulf* (Kraków 2006). The last of these studies contains an interesting synthesis of Andrzej Kapiszewski's earlier research that pertained, among other subjects, to the assumptions contained in George W. Bush's *Promotion of Democracy Agenda* in the Middle East and its implementation, elections in Iraq and their consequences, the expansion of political representation in the monarchies of the Gulf, the attitude of Arabs to migrants from Asia, people and the workforce of Oman, and the directions of political situation development in Saudi Arabia (towards democratisation or authoritarianism?).

Even this highly cursory look proves that besides research of international migrations and interethnic relations in the countries receiving immigrants, there come up the classical questions of the sociology of politics: transformations of political systems and the reasons thereof, forms of civic and political culture, and elections-related behaviours.

In this new cognitive milieu, Andrzej Kapiszewski is primarily intrigued by the social changes, manifested for example in the new attitude of the citizens and authorities of Arab states to human capital. The cultural nature of this process is well illustrated in the ever greater pressure of Arab women on higher education.

His reflection over the social change will come to fruition in the synthetic *Modern Oman: Studies on Politics, Economy, Environment and Cult of the Sultanate* edited together with Abdulrahman Al-Salimi and Andrzej Pikulski (Kraków–Muscat 2006).

The accumulation of multiple types of research procedures, methods and techniques endows his discourse and cognitive statements with a specific character. It bears no classical European sense of superiority or the religious tensions that rise so easily between Christians and Muslims. What is visible is rather the reverse: the readiness to understand the fact – so difficult for many and yet so simple – that the richness of human culture is not composed of a single but of multiple isonomic paths of fulfilling the human fate.

The Chair of the Middle and Far East at the Faculty of International and Political Studies of the Jagiellonian University, which Andrzej Kapiszewski established in 2000 and later chaired, became the organisational expression of his humanist attitude and position.

The International Community

Following the tradition reinforced in Poland by Ludwik Ehrlich and others, Andrzej Kapiszewski perceives the international community as the body of sovereign states, furnished with the capacity to act on the international plane and maintain mutual contacts in accordance with the international code of law.

Already in his first year of diplomatic service, Kapiszewski discovered that the ability to think in abstract terms appropriate for a theoretical mathematician, and that the sociologist methodology he had developed would not be sufficient to conduct activities resulting from his new role. What he needed in this capacity was international and especially public law. Kapiszewski wanted to apply its norms, paradigms, and procedures not only for pragmatic reasons – as these predominantly treat the international law instrumentally – but also for cognitive ones. With the passage of years, he began to treat the implications resulting from the modern perception of international law as a value *per se*.

On the cognitive plain, he successively began to be interested in the paths to democracy and fully-fledged membership in the international community of states that have (for various reasons) practically remained outside it even in the recent past, as e.g. the Republic of South Africa, and bilateral (e.g. Polish–American) and multi-lateral (e.g. within the European Union and other international organisations and institutions) relations. Under the influence of these analyses and questions related to them structurally – and often also functionally – Kapiszewski comes to the conclusion that to understand the essence of power in international relations, it

is not enough to refer solely to the play of national interests that are partially fashioned by the geopolitical situation (as e.g. Hans Morgenthau did) but it becomes necessary to be able to conduct the greater-than-zero-sum games in the name of the common good of the entire international community.

Seeing that, the Professor began to organise international conferences devoted to these questions and edited books containing papers presented in them (*South Africa – Poland: Commemorating 10th Freedom Anniversary of South Africa. Papers Presented at the Conference Commemorating 10th Freedom Anniversary of the Republic of South Africa, Jagiellonian University May 20, 2004*. Kraków 2004, with the Polish edition of the book published later the same year) as well as other works including *Ronald Reagan a wyzwania epoki [Ronald Reagan and the Challenges of his Time]* (Kraków 2005) edited together with Andrzej Bryk.

Kapiszewski assumed a clear position towards European integration and the role of Poland in the process, and presented it in university lectures and publications (*In Europe, with America. Poland 2003*. Kraków 2003, and *Poland in Europe, with America*. Kraków 2004). Even before Poland joined the European Union, Andrzej Kapiszewski – much like Konrad Adenauer half a century earlier – found united Europe a necessity for everyone rather than the “dream of the few and the hope of the many”. His claim that “in international relations, Poles are realists” finds its reflection in the particularly Polish combination of pro-European and pro-American attitudes (*Poland in Europe, with America*, p. 22-23).

The manner of thinking and values professed and followed by Andrzej Kapiszewski are fully reflected by the two Kraków-based magazines he created and edited: “*Krakowskie Studia Międzynarodowe*” [literally: Kraków International Studies] and “*Państwo i Społeczeństwo*” [literally: State and Society].

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Writing about so many problems and skilfully using research methodologies that belong to numerous disciplines of contemporary social and legal disciplines, Andrzej Kapiszewski does not fail to remember the warning that „sociology has most methods and fewest results” formulated at the turn of the 19th century by Henri Poincare, a French mathematician, physicist, astronomer, and philosopher. This is the reason why Kapiszewski did not make the methods the main subject of his interest, nor does he become locked high up in the proverbial “tower of ivory”.

For him, even the most sophisticated method made sense only as much as it allowed reaching the truth about the essence and directions of changes in contemporary societies. He searched for new methods, because he decided to face ever more complex and complicated ties which he tried to unravel.

In the last months of his life, he became fascinated by the Chinese way to modernity. One of the methods to become familiar with it, was through the Centre of Chinese Language and Culture, known to the broader public under the name of Instytut Konfucjusza (Confucius Institute), which Kapiszewski co-founded.

The scientific works of Andrzej Kapiszewski in all the four subject scopes described above provided the grounds for the President of the Republic of Poland to confer on him the title of Professor of Humanities on 28th April 2000.

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