

Karol Kasprowicz

(Historiographical Society, Branch in Lublin, Poland)
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6328-052X>
 E-mail: kkasprowicz7@gmail.com

Reflections on Historiography and Theory of Revolution



Refleksje nad historiografią i teorią rewolucji

ABSTRACT

The major aim of this article is to analyse the concept of revolution and changes within the theory of revolution. Theorising about radical social changes raised questions which still have not been answered: how is revolution different from other social changes? Does it have the beginning and the end? Is it a result of chance or a necessity? Why does it take place at a particular time, in a given place? How does it evolve? These basic problems are still the subject of study today.

Key words: revolution, social change, theory, history, the past

*'It isn't the events themselves that disturb people,
 but only their judgements about them'.
 Epictetus (Encheiridion, chapter V)*

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THE AUTHOR'S ADDRESS: Karol Kasprowicz, the Institute of History of the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, 4A Maria Curie-Skłodowska Square, Lublin 20-031, Poland			
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1.1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Theory, as most of the terms related to scholarly studies, has its source in the cradle of the modern political thought, i.e. Greece. The word itself comes from the Greek *Θεωρία*. Scientists aim at constructing hypotheses and theoretical systems (mostly on the ground of empirical studies), and then empirically test them with the use of observation and experiments¹. A lot of printing ink has been used to describe what theory is. Generally, a scientific theory is a logical structure, constructed from the formulated laws of nature, facts (results of experiments and observation) and hypotheses. There is no doubt that science views the world through the prism of theory². The research practice of a historian seems to depart from this pattern. Historians' scope of activity is limited since their subjects of study are not to be accessed directly. Historians, before they create their own historical narration, should ponder on Albert Einstein's words: 'Whether you can observe a thing or not depends on the theory which you use. It is the theory which decides what can be observed'³.

Extrapolating these words to the studies of the past, we can see that the matter brought up by one of the greatest minds of the 20th century relies on the importance of the ancient theory in the process of historical understanding. The theory itself sets the limits of this understanding and its subject of study. It is a springboard serving to widen the scope of vision. Have historians forgotten about the importance of theory? Definitely not. It was Herodotus and Thucydides who first paid tribute to theory in the service of Clio. History has gone a long way from the classical history, through history as a social or Marxist science, to the understanding of history as a field which is not scientific⁴. Owing to many various factors, the 1960s and 1970s⁵ witnessed a scientific reflection over history, i.e. the birth of methodology of history and history of historiography. The role of theory and its place in the work

¹ K. Popper, *Logika poznania naukowego*, Warszawa 2002, p. 21.

² M. Heller, *Filozofia nauki*, Kraków 2016, p. 75.

³ 'To czy jesteś w stanie coś zaobserwować czy nie, zależy od teorii, którą się posługujesz. To teoria decyduje, co można obserwować'. After: E. Carr, *Historia. Czym jest*, Poznań 2002, p. 202.

⁴ See: G.G. Iggers, *Historiografia XX wieku. Przegląd kierunków badawczych*, Warszawa 2010; A.F. Grabski, *Kształty historii*, Łódź 1985.

⁵ Poland witnessed a development of the so-called 'Poznań school' in the 1970s. It centered around Jerzy Topolski, Jerzy Kmita, Leszek Nowak, and Andrzej Malewski. They claimed that the role of history is to explain the past. See: *Między historią a teorią. Refleksje nad problematyką dziejów i wiedzy historycznej*, ed. M. Drozdowski, Warszawa-Poznań 1988.

of historians are still *terra incognita* for many⁶. Jerzy Topolski believed that '[...] of primary importance for the world with history is the level of historic science, its ability to show the past reality, despite of a limited access to it, and being on one's own with its sources. A question is raised – Topolski added – how does a historian reconstruct their view of the past?'⁷. Topolski answered the question himself, similarly to philosophers such as Otto Neurath and Willard van Orman Quine, stating: 'The constant writing of history anew can be compared to the act of rebuilding a ship at sea, [which] is sailing [...] with its passengers on the rough waves of events. A historian is not only an observer but also an agent participating in the events. [...] This fact has twofold consequences: it can positively influence the acuity of vision but can also deform the observation'⁸. Topolski's views refer directly to the significance of self-awareness in the field of historical theory. Adopting the suggestion by Marcei Handelsman as of the year 1928, '[...] history – today and in the past – imposing a duty of omniscience on a historian, should in fact be poly-history, in line with its original name'⁹. Initially, the term history 'equaled knowledge in general'¹⁰. A bit later, in 1938, Maurice Mandelbaum delineated the subject of methodology of history, together with its objectives¹¹. The models of historical studies¹², which were established in the 20th century in contrast to the previously accepted historicism, enriched the scientific knowledge

⁶ J. Pomorski, *Historia i metodologia*, Lublin 1991, p. 10.

⁷ '[...] pierwszorzędne znaczenie dla świata z historią ma poziom nauki historycznej, jej zdolność do ukazywania przeszłej rzeczywistości, mimo stracenia z nią kontaktu i pozostania sam na sam ze źródłami. Powstaje pytanie – dedukował Topolski – Jak historyk konstruuje swój obraz przeszłości?'. J. Topolski, *Świat bez historii*, Poznań 1998, pp. 173–175.

⁸ 'Stałe pisanie historii na nowo przyrównujemy do przebudowywania okrętu na pełnym morzu, [który] płynie [...] wraz ze wszystkimi na wzbudzonych falach zdarzeń. Jest nie tylko ich obserwatorem, lecz również współtwórcą nieobojętnym na bieg rzeczy. [...] Fakt, iż historyk jest równocześnie obserwatorem i uczestnikiem życia społecznego, prowadzi do dwojakich skutków: może wpływać pozytywnie na ostrość jego widzenia, może jednak także obserwację tę deformować'. *Ibidem*, pp. 174–175.

⁹ '[...] historia – w zasadzie dziś jak i dawniej – nakładając na historyka obowiązek wszechwiedzy, winna być polihistorją, zgodnie ze swą nazwą pierwotną'. M. Handelsman, *Historia. Zasady metodologii i teorii poznania historycznego. Podręcznik dla szkół wyższych*, Warszawa–Kraków–Lublin–Łódź–Paryż–Poznań–Wilno–Zakopane 1928, p. 34.

¹⁰ 'równało się wiedzy w ogóle'. *Ibidem*, p. 1.

¹¹ See: M. Mandelbaum, *The Problem of Historical Knowledge*, New York 1938.

¹² Models of historical studies, i.e. constructions of the optimal development that was reached at a given moment of time by historiography, are the major subjects of study for methodology of history, together with social awareness and rules guiding the study practice. See: J. Pomorski, *op. cit.*, pp. 27–30; See: M. Handelsman, *op. cit.*, p. 74–76; J. Topolski, *Teoria wiedzy historycznej*, Poznań 1983, pp. 56–57, 130–138, 256.

of the past. The thought, expressed by the theory, should precede a scientific understanding. This pointed Marc Bloch to the observation that '[...] each historical study assumes that, starting with its early stages, the research will have a clearly marked direction. Thought comes first. Sheer observation, if possible at all, has never brought any effects in any science'¹³.

In light of the abovementioned opinions regarding the importance of theory for history, it seems justified to treat a historian as a fisher or a detective, who creates a network of hypotheses or criminal plots¹⁴, which, when falsified, would lead to a gradual discovery (constantly anew) or a construal of the past. This idea was aptly expressed by Novalis, who at the end of the 18th century stated that '[...] hypotheses are nets: only those who throw them can catch something'¹⁵. A collective effort of generations of scientists, a growing awareness of the limitations that come with a particular scientific discipline as well as recognition of the importance of theory, enable a historian to catch grains of truth in the vastness of cognizable reality.

In the 1960s, Robert Merton wrote *On the Shoulders of Giants*¹⁶. The title refers to a metaphor which was used by Isaac Newton and a medieval monk, Bernard of Chartres. Scientists are compared to dwarves on the shoulders of giants, who can see further than the giants themselves from that vantage point¹⁷. The giants are the great minds, wise people who left a heritage of thoughts and ideas. The breadth of the horizon of studies depends on the heritage that blazed the trail for the understanding of the reality.

¹³ '[...] każde badanie historyczne zakłada, że poczynając już od pierwszych kroków, poszukiwania mieć będą wytknięty kierunek. Na początku jest myśl. Nigdy w żadnej nauce bierna obserwacja – nawet gdybyśmy przyjęli, że taka jest możliwa – nie wydała owoców'. M. Bloch, *Pochwała historii*, Warszawa 1964, p. 89.

¹⁴ I refer to the creation of criminal versions in accordance to the principle of multiple versions. A criminal version, according to Tadeusz Hanausek, is the result of cognitive processes in the form of assumptions, serving as hypotheses to explain an event, its causes, circumstances and course. What is highlighted here is the necessity of an alternative character of the version, which assumes that each version assumes one of many possibilities. See: T. Hanausek, *Kryminalistyka. Zarys wykładu*, Kraków 2009, pp. 79–82. Similar concepts of hypothetical thinking were proposed by William of Baskerville in Umberto Eco's novel. William, not having any answer, '[...] relied on many differing possibilities'. He states that those who have ready-made answers to all questions are bound to be mistaken. William accepts the eventual mistakes, because '[...] instead of conceiving only one, I imagine many, so I become the slave of none'. See: U. Eco, *The Name of the Rose*, Warszawa 2013, pp. 432–434.

¹⁵ '[...] hipotezy są sieciami: tylko ten kto je zarzuca coś złowi'. The motto by Karl Popper, adopted from the German poet of 18th century, Novalis. K. Popper, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

¹⁶ See: R. Merton, *On the Shoulders of Giants*, New York 1965.

¹⁷ P. Sztompka, *Teoria przestrzeni międzyludzkiej*, Kraków 2016, pp. 33–34.

The abovementioned scientists, Einstein and Merton, followed different scientific paths and expressed an extremely important thought in a separate way, namely, that it is the development of theoretical concepts that stimulates an understanding of the reality, whether the past, present (or the future one). A good example is Descartes, who developed the concept of the mind, which has shaped the way we understand the mind today. Descartes' vision of the mind consists of three theses: the mind is distinct from the body; the mind is distinct from other minds; the mind, in which perception precedes will (action)¹⁸.

The three dogmas, having been gradually falsified by new theories (today, mostly neurobiological ones) and empirical studies conducted by new generations of scientists led to an almost opposite vision of the mind¹⁹. Today, the mind is conceptualised along three categories: as the embodied mind, the action-oriented mind and the social mind²⁰.

The first notion which I would like to analyse in this article are the semantic changes of the term *revolution*²¹. I analyse how the concept of a problem situation (the term used by Karl Popper) evolved throughout the periods of time, starting in the antiquity and ending at the modern times. I reconstruct the process of change based on the semantic evolution of the term and a theoretical reflection. Such a change is epitomised by Charles Tilly, who made an allegorical distinction between a solar eclipse

¹⁸ Descartes, *Listy do Regiusa. Uwagi o pewnym pismku*, Warszawa 1996, p. 29; idem, *Zasady filozofii*, Kęty 2001, pp. 38–43; idem, *Medytacje o pierwszej filozofii*, Kraków 2004, pp. 46, 73, 93.

¹⁹ Theory falsifiability is, according to Popper, in a narrow understanding, a criterion of empirical character determining whether a given theoretical system belongs to empirical sciences. Popper wrote: 'Falsyfikowalność proponuję tutaj jako kryterium demarkacji. [...] Falsyfikowalność przeprowadza podział pomiędzy dwoma rodzajami zdań najzupełniej sensownych: zdaniami falsyfikowanymi i нефalsyfikowanymi. Wyznacza się w ten sposób granicę w obrębie wyrażeń sensownych, a nie granicę języka sensownego' ['I propose falsifiability as the demarcation criterion. [...] Falsifiability makes a distinction between two types of most sensical sentences: falsifiable and non-falsifiable. Hence a border is made in the sensical expressions and not in the sensical language']. See: K. Popper, *op. cit.*, pp. 35, 73, 81.

²⁰ B. Brożek, *Hipoteza umysłu normatywnego*, 'Studia z Kognitywistyki i Filozofii Umysłu' 2013, 7, pp. 37–40; idem, *Myślenie. Podręcznik użytkownika*, Kraków 2016, pp. 9–46; neuroscience and history. See: J. Pomorski, *Polityzacja/Mitologizacja historii, czyli w czym neuronauka (i metodologia) może pomóc badaczowi historii najnowszej*, 'Historia@Teoria' 2017, 4.

²¹ It seems that equally suitable would be the use of the term 'concept migration' by Michał Heller. It denotes absorption of certain concepts by various scientific disciplines. 'Concept migration' is multi-directional, complex and shows that scientific disciplines, despite various objects of study, influence each other in a multidimensional way. Definitions and concepts were originally of a philosophical character, and then, being transferred into natural sciences, left a mark on human knowledge. See: M. Heller, *Granice nauki*, Kraków 2014; idem, *Bóg i geometria. Gdy przestrzeń była Bogiem*, Kraków 2016.

and a traffic jam. The metaphor symbolically shows a transition from an astronomical thinking about revolution to multidimensional theories and models. Initially, revolution was understood as a cyclic event which takes place in certain, clearly defined astronomical conditions, just like a solar eclipse. Today, revolutionary changes in the social sphere resemble traffic jams, with their specific, repeating, causal mechanisms. Traffic jams differ in sizes and causes, it is quite difficult to determine their beginnings and ends since they emerge from various conditions and circumstances. A thesis on the randomness of their origin would be easy to be put forward and defended, however, it is possible to point towards certain conditions that lead to traffic jams. These could be, for example, weather, rush hour, road conditions, black spots on the road. Factors leading to traffic jams may be complex and look as if a given traffic jam was a result of chance. We may be talking about a cluster of factors, or even direct and indirect factors. Similarly, revolutions cannot be grouped under one theory that would specify the necessary and sufficient conditions for a revolution to take place or these determining its course and consequences²².

This article aims to show the concept of revolution in a wider and multi-dimensional context. In the analysis of semantic contexts I referred to the history of concepts, originating in the 1950s²³, developed by Reinhart Koselleck, the author of the Bielefeld school of historiography. According to Koselleck, the history of concepts is 'historical scientific studies, which do not treat language as an epiphenomenon of the so-called reality ('Being determines consciousness' – Karl Marx) but treat it as a methodologically non-reducible last resort, without whom neither experience, nor studies about the world or society are possible'²⁴. This methodology is aimed at showing how, in the context of revolution, changes in the perception of time 'revolutionised' the meaning of the term (semantic evolution), beginning from the ancient cycle and circularity to the linear experiencing of time and the idea of a new beginning. Then particular features of revolution are presented.

²² C. Tilly, *Revolucje europejskie 1492–1992*, Warszawa 1997, pp. 18–19.

²³ Richard Koebner was the first to demonstrate how words and actions interact and influence each other. See: R. Koebner, *Semantics and Historiography*, 'Cambridge Journal' 1953, 7, pp. 131–144.

²⁴ '[...] nazywa się historyczne badania naukowe, które nie traktują języka jako epifenomenu tak zwanej rzeczywistości ('Byt określa świadomość' – Karol Marks), lecz pojmują go jako metodycznie nieredukowalną ostateczną instancję, bez której ani doświadczenie, ani nauka o świecie lub społeczeństwie nie są możliwe'. R. Koselleck, *Dzieje pojęć. Studia z semantyki i pragmatyki języka społeczno-politycznego*, Warszawa 2009, p. 103.

A theoretical reflection over revolution began together with the story²⁵ of the French revolution. I tried to sketch the birth of the theory and present the main paradigms of theorising on the phenomenon predominant from the 19th to the 21st century. There are many typologies of theoretical reflection on revolution. Starting from the 1980s, the most famous attempt at its systematisation was the one by Jack A. Goldstone²⁶, who distinguished between three generations of researchers inquiring into the phenomenon. The first group were authors of the period between 1900 and 1940, such as Gustav Le Bon, Charles Ellwood, Pitrim Sorokin, Lyford Edwards, Crane Brinton and George Petee. They did not lay the theoretical foundations for their studies but rather took a descriptive approach towards revolution. Theoreticians of the second generation put forward their concepts in the time from 1940 to 1970. These were James Davies, Ted Gurr, Chalmers Johnson, Neil Smelser, Samuel Huntington and Charles Tilly. They offered comprehensive analyses of an interdisciplinary character as they relied on theories from the political, psychological, and social sciences, and developed them for the sake of their studies. The group of third-generation scholars is rooted in the second half of the 1970s. Its main representatives were Theda Skocpol, Jeffrey Paige, Ellen Trimberger and Shmuel Eisenstadt. They advanced previous theories by emphasizing the role of the state, international affairs, as well as the significance of army and peasant community in the process of revolution. Goldstone's typology gained recognition in the scientific circles due to its transparent systematisation. It also brought attention to the creation of the fourth generation of theoreticians²⁷ at the end of 20th century. The concepts put forward by John Foran, Eric Selbin, Jack Goldstone, Jeff Goodwin, Timothy Wickham-Crowley, John Walton and Farideh Farhi are characterised by their distinctness from the previous theories. Their thought emphasize the issues of subjectivity, composition of revolution, coalition and political culture²⁸.

²⁵ Storytelling as an effective tool of studying revolution is proposed by Eric Selbin. He describes it '[...] as a new approach which focuses on the thoughts and feelings of people engaged in a revolutionary process'. See: E. Selbin, *Revolution, Rebellion, Resistance: The Power of Story*, Londyn 2010 p. 4.

²⁶ Goldstone presented his typology in two articles published in the 1980s. See: J.A. Goldstone, *Theories of Revolution: The Third Generation*, 'World Politics' 1980, 32, pp. 425–453; idem, *The Comparative and Historical Study of Revolutions*, 'Annual Review of Sociology' 1982, 8, pp. 187–207.

²⁷ J. Foran, *Theories of Revolution Revisited: Toward a Fourth Generation?*, 'Sociological Theory' 1993, 11, 1, pp. 1–20; E. Selbin, *Revolution in the Real World: Bringing Agency Back In*, in: *Theorizing Revolutions*, ed. J. Foran, London–New York 1997, pp. 123–136.

²⁸ It is worth noting that revolution experts who base their studies on the theory of rational choice were completely ignored. The abovementioned system refers to these

Another classification was proposed by Stan Taylor, and was based on a disciplinary criterion²⁹. He made a distinction between sociological (e.g. Barrington Moore, Skocpol), socio-psychological (e.g. Davies, Gurr), economic (e.g. Gordon Tullock, Morris Silver) and political theories (Tilly, Huntington). The distinction lacked in inclusiveness and referred only to the concepts developed in the 1960s and 1970s. Another typology of the theoretical thought on revolution was put forward by Quee-Young Kim³⁰. With the use of the category of paradigm, he made a distinction between two major areas of research: 'society-oriented paradigm' (e.g. Johnson, Gurr) and 'state-oriented paradigm' (e.g. Skocpol)³¹.

In this article I rely on the conceptualisation of revolution similar to Jarosław Chodak's, who made a radical change in the classification in terms of directions and ways of forming the models of revolution. Chodak's typology is hinged '[...] mostly on the concepts representative of particular theoretical orientations'³², therefore it is rooted in '[...] identify[ing] the major research perspectives'³³. Chodak lists the major currents in the theoretical reflection over revolution in a chronological order, spanning the period of 1848–2001, and beginning with classic

works which deal with revolution on a macro scale, while studies inspired by the theory of rational choice aim at understanding revolution on a micro scale. Only recently, this trend, with a focus on agency, has gained popularity. Goldstone discovered this idea only in 2001. See: J.A. Goldstone, *Toward A Fourth Generation of Revolutionary Theory*, 'Annual Review of Political Science' 2001, 4, pp. 163–165.

²⁹ Taylor, in contrast to Goldstone, does not omit theoretical reflections based on the theory of rational choice. See: S. Taylor, *Social Science and Revolutions*, London 1984. Piotr Sztompka refers to it in his work on social changes. See: P. Sztompka, *Socjologia zmian społecznych*, Kraków 2006, pp. 286–294.

³⁰ Q. Kim, *Paradigmas and Revolutions: The Societal and Statist Approach Reconsidered*, 'Journal of Developing Societies' 1990, 6, 1, pp. 1–16.

³¹ The abovementioned classifications do not exhaust the available conceptual divisions. An interesting idea was proposed by Rod Aya. He relied on a distinction of revolution on the basis of the criterion of the causes of a radical change. He distinguished between structural, political, psychological and functional theories. See: R. Aya, *Theorie of Revolutions*, in: *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, eds. N. Smelser, P. Baltes'a, Amsterdam–New York 2001, pp. 13314–13317; A similar typology was offered by Krzysztof Brzechczyn, relying on the most important explanations of a given theory. He mentioned homogenous theories (cultural, political and economic) and mixed theories (economic-cultural, political-economic, political-economic-cultural). See: K. Brzechczyn, *Rozwój teorii rewolucji w socjologii historyczno-porównawczej. Próba analizy metodologicznej*, in: *O rewolucji. Obrazy radykalnej zmiany społecznej*, eds. K. Brzechczyn, M. Nowak, Poznań 2007, pp. 37–64.

³² '[...] przede wszystkim na koncepcjach najbardziej reprezentatywnych dla poszczególnych orientacji teoretycznych'.

³³ '[...] identyfikacja głównych perspektyw badawczych'. J. Chodak, *Teorie rewolucji w naukach społecznych*, Lublin 2012, pp. 11, 31.

theories of revolution (Karl Marx, Plinio Correa de Oliveira, Alexis de Tocqueville, Gustave le Bon, Pitrim A. Sorokin), through the natural 'school' of history of revolution (Brinton, Edwards, Petee), theories of revolution in the modernist perspective (Smelser, Huntington, Davies, Gurr, James Geschwender), revolution viewed from the point of historical sociology (Skockpol, Tilly, Paige, Wolf, Moore) and viewed from the perspective of theories of rational choice (Gordon Tullock, Samuel Popkin, Jeffrey Berejikian, Micheal Taylor), and finishes with currently developing multidimensional theories of revolution, i.e. the fourth generation of theoreticians (e.g. Goldstone, Farhi, Walton, Jeff Goodwin, Timothy Wickham-Crowley). I adopted a similar systematisation in my work; however, my work is closer to a sketch since I focus on the key representatives of given approaches. What is more, I concentrate on the understanding of revolution in the lusophone culture as a contrast to the American and European stance.

1.2. AT THE DAWN OF 'REVOLUTION'

In 1543, after many years of preparation of the manuscript, *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* was first printed in Nuremberg. The work of Nicolaus Copernicus offered an model of the universe, an alternative to Ptolemy's geocentric system, and became a synonym to the revolution in science³⁴. This is reinforced by the term itself, *revolutionibus*, which denotes 'revolutions', moving around in a cyclic way³⁵. The Latin *Revolutio*³⁶ is

³⁴ For scientific revolutions see: T.S. Kuhn, *Struktura rewolucji naukowych*, Warszawa 2009; idem, *Przewrót kopernikański: astronomia planetarna w dziejach myśli*, Warszawa 1966; J. Życiński, *Struktura rewolucji metanaukowej. Studium rozwoju współczesnej nauki*, Kraków 2013.

³⁵ J. Topolski, *Jak się pisze i rozumie historię? Tajemnice narracji historycznej*, Poznań 2008, p. 181.

³⁶ Previously the term *revolutio* (or *revolutus*) was used by Ovid in the term *revolutaseacula*, which was used as a poetic metaphor, and also by Saint Augustine: 'aut post multasitidem per diverse corpora revolutiones', in a theological context. See: W. Wrzosek, *Historia-Kultura-Metafora. Powstanie nieklasycznej historiografii*, Wrocław 1995, p. 39; In light of cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphor is a way of thinking and entails mapping of elements from one conceptual domain onto another domain. For neuro-cognitive scientists, metaphor is '[...] zdolność pojmowania doświadczeń za pośrednictwem metafory jest kolejnym zmysłem, jak wzrok, dotyk czy słuch, a metafora dostarcza jedyne go sposobu postrzegania i doświadczania znacznej części świata rzeczywistego. Metafora jest takim samym i równie cennym elementem naszego funkcjonowania jak zmysł dotyku' '[...] an ability to understand experience [...], another sense, just like sight, touch or hearing, metaphor provides another way of perceiving and experiencing a substantial part of the real world. Metaphor is the same and equally important element of human functioning, just as the sense of touch']. See:

synonymous to *rotation, reversion, return*. The syllable *re-* entails an act of coming back to the initial stage. The term *revolutio* appears in French at the end of 12th century and up till the 17th century denotes an act of rotating or moving on the circular trajectory. The latter meaning is still to be found in English in the technical and astronomic jargon³⁷. The 17th century witnessed the use of *revolution* in a political sense, which made it a term in the domain of political philosophy. The establishment of *revolution* as a scientific term, referring to the natural movement of celestial bodies, played a great role in further understanding of radical changes and revolution³⁸. When the 17th century thinkers began using the term to describe social phenomena, it gained its physical-political meaning.

Since the advent of the 17th century's meaning of *revolution*, with its political connotations, political systems were thought to change in terms of constant transformation. We can easily find correlations between revolution understood in such a way and the teachings of Plato, Aristotle, or Polybius. In line with the ancient thought, there is a limited number of political systems, which change one after another, only to come back to square one. The first, monarchy, '[...] we usually call kingdom, the rule of the few but more than one we call aristocracy, [...] and when the people rule for the general good, we use the term *politeia*. [...] Degenerations of the abovementioned political systems are: tyranny (in relation to kingdom), oligarchy (in relation to aristocracy), and democracy (in relation to *politeia*)'³⁹. Aristotle's thoughts on political systems were developed by Polybius in the 2nd century B.C.E. By observing the transitions of various forms of government, he adopted a theory of the cyclic development, inspired by Plato. Thus he combined the political thoughts of two great Greek philosophers, the essence of which was a vision of the state as a human organism, going through the stage of growth (proper systems,

G. Lakoff, M. Johnson, *Metafory w naszym życiu*, Warszawa 2010, p. 305; For example, studies on memory are studies on metaphors (similarly to revolution studies) which described it. See: D. Draiaisma, *Machina metafor. Historia pamięci*, Warszawa 2009; Revolution, acquiring its metaphorical meaning, made sense in other areas of human life.

³⁷ P. Sztompka, *Socjologia*, p. 280 (and footnote 1).

³⁸ In the 1970s William Lipsky noted a great number of articles and monographs (about 250–300) connected with the concept of revolution. See: W.E. Lipsky, *Comparative Approaches to the Study of Revolution: A Historiographic Essay*, 'Review of Politics' 1976, 38, pp. 494–495.

³⁹ '[...] zwykliśmy nazywać królestwem, panowanie niewielu, a więcej niż jednego, zwimy arystokracją, [...] kiedy zaś lud rządzi ku ogólnemu pożytkowi, używamy nazwy, którą w szerszym znaczeniu określamy wszystkie ustroje – politeja. [...] Zwyródnieniami wspomnianych ustrojów są: w stosunku do królestwa tyrania, w stosunku do arystokracji oligarchia, a w stosunku do politei demokracja'. Aristotle, *Polityka*, Warszawa 2011, p. 86.

according to Aristotle), through the stage of fall (degenerated systems). These systems followed each other in the following order: tyranny replaces monarchy, then tyranny is overthrown by aristocracy, which is replaced by oligarchy, and oligarchy is replaced by democracy. It is a cyclic process when the individual stands at the lead of people's rule⁴⁰.

The 17th century theoreticians understood revolution as a natural change in political systems. Ancient sciences, derived from the ancient Greece, narrowed down the number of political systems, highlighting their finiteness. They also paid attention to the inevitability of change within the state organism. The aspect of naturalness of revolution was highlighted by Reinhart Koselleck, noting that '[...] any changes, *rerum commutatio*, *rerum conversio*, were not able to introduce anything new to the world of politics. Historical experience lasted, imprinted in the status quo, as if confirmed by nature, similarly to seasons, which despite their changing nature, are constant. By analogy, people as political beings have their hands tied by changes which bring nothing new under the sun'⁴¹. The double sense of revolution, i.e. a combination of an astronomical dimension, understood as a specific natural state, together with the idea of eternal comeback, a cyclic change of the political state, was already known in the 17th century. Koselleck defined the metaphor of identity between nature and revolution, as a historical time, closed and repeated with the same quality. In light of this historical experience all political systems remained under the influence of a trans-historical sense of revolution⁴². At this stage of reflection, we can clearly see a relationship between an understanding of a historical process and an understanding of the term *revolution*. It is possible to analyse the evolution of such a meaning⁴³.

⁴⁰ Andrzej Grabski, quoting A. Momigliano, noted a lack of consequence in Polybios' referring to the 'cyklicznego poglądu na dzieje' ['cyclic view of history']. The Greek historian admitted the possibility of cyclic variability even though without a definite character. See: A. Grabski, *Dzieje historiografii*, Poznań 2003, p. 25.

⁴¹ '[...] wszelka zmiana spraw, *rerum commutatio*, *rerum conversio*, nie była w stanie wprowadzić czegoś zasadniczo nowego do świata polityki. Doświadczenie historyczne trwało, wbudowane w istniejący stan, jakby utwierdzony przez naturę, a podobnie jak pory roku w swej zmienności wciąż są takie same, tak i ludzie jako istoty polityczne mają ręce związane przemianami, które nie zdołają niczego nowego pod słońcem stworzyć'. R. Koselleck, *Historyczne kryteria nowożytnego pojęcia rewolucji*, in: *Semantyka historyczna*, Poznań 2012, p. 109.

⁴² *Ibidem*, pp. 110–111.

⁴³ Another perspective is presented by Wojciech Wrzosek. The main thesis of his work presumes that the foundation of changes that took place in the 20th century historiography lies in a change of historiographic metaphors: from the classical to the non-classical ones. Metaphor is understood as a category of epistemological historiographic analysis. Metaphor '[...] może być rozumiana jako pojęcie retoryczne, literaturoznawcze, kategoria

The early modern political philosophy relied on the term *revolution* in its general sense – *revolutio* appears as a form of restoration or reconstruction of the old order and reflects the image of cyclic time⁴⁴ of a natural and essential character. That is how Tomas Hobbes imagined the English revolution: 'I have seen this revolution a circular motion'⁴⁵. The events of 1640–1660, for an observer of that time, looked parallel to the cycles of change described in antiquity: from absolute monarchy to the Long parliament, through the Rump Parliament, to Cromwell's dictatorship, and then through oligarchy to the restoration of monarchy. It is quite symptomatic that the first use of *revolution* as a political term dates back to 1660, i.e. the restoration of the Stuart monarchy. The same applies to the Glorious Revolution of 1688. It entailed a period of restoration and reconstruction. Hobbes used the term *revolution* purposefully to describe the event, which expressed not only a political change but also the whole process of power usurpation, which, once started, triggers inevitable stages of a model revolt⁴⁶.

A variety of phenomena connected with fighting for power were characterised by a variety of names. Political conflicts of the 16th and 17th century in the Netherlands, Germany, France or England were labelled as uprisings, revolts, rebellions, uprisings, putsches, coup d'états or civil wars. Some of them (especially civil wars), with time were renamed as revolutions in order to highlight the importance and momentousness of the events. Vagueness and ambiguity of the term *revolution* makes it possible to be used in reference to a variety of phenomena. Where is the semantic line between a civil war and a revolution? This dilemma can be explained by the specificity of the correlation between the two since the times of the

poetyki, ale może być także postrzegana w kontekście, który czyni z niej kategorię epistemologiczną. [...] Najogólniej biorąc, metafora i jej konteksty interpretacyjne wydają się stosowne zwłaszcza dla takiego myślenia o humanistyce, które sytuuje ją nie tyle i nie przede wszystkim w obrębie nauki, ile w obszarze kultury. Badania nad metaforą stwarzają szansę przewyciężenia rozdarcia historiografii między nauką a literaturą, powstałego w czasach nowożytnych' [...] can be understood as a term related to rhetorics, literature studies, poetics but also in the context of an epistemological category. [...] Generally, metaphor and its contexts, and its interpretation contexts seems to be suitable for the way of thinking about humanities not in the context of science but culture. Studies on metaphor create a chance to overcome the split of historiography between science and literature, created in modern times']. Wrzosek tried to analyse revolution in terms of metaphor. See: W. Wrzosek, *op. cit.*, pp. 26, 38–40, 44–45.

⁴⁴ B. Uspienski, *Historia i semiotyka*, Gdańsk 1998, p. 134.

⁴⁵ After: M. Hartman, *Hobbes's Concept of Political Revolution*, 'Journal of the History of Ideas' (Philadelphia), July–September 1986, 47, 3, p. 487; See: T. Hobbes, *Lewiatan czyli materia, forma i władza państwa kościelnego i świeckiego*, Warszawa 2009, pp. 268–271.

⁴⁶ M. Hartman, *op. cit.*, p. 495.

Enlightenment. A civil war had a character of a state rebellion, grounded in legal titles or religious status. *Revolution* was used as a metaphor of a sudden or long-lasting revolt. In this light, both terms, *civil war* and *revolution*, were not mutually exclusive⁴⁷. Fighting for power came with the terms depending on their users. For those in power, any opposition was a conspiracy, rebellion, riot, coup d'état. For those fighting for their rights, their fight was an uprising, revolt or civil war. The vagueness of these terms and their random usage meant that there was no consolidated term for the phenomenon. A process of revolution, which would exceed the model of various forms of political power, was not known at that time. According to Hannah Arendt, up till the American and French Revolution, '[...] even though in the pre-modern political language offered enough words to describe an uprising of the subordinate against those in power, there was not a single word describing a radical change through which the subordinate become those in power'⁴⁸.

It was only during the Enlightenment when the modern sense of revolution was established. First of all, the trend for using the term *revolution* began with the advent of the age of reason. Each moral, scientific, religious or economic turn was considered from the point of view of change. In 1772 Louis Mercier stated that '[...] all is revolution in this world'⁴⁹. Secondly, *revolution* was contrasted with *civil war*. Progress of civilization was supposed to give a bloodless character to a change of political systems. A civil war became associated with a limited turn, in contrast to new areas opened by revolutions. A revolution ceased to be a term of a physical-political domain. The co-existence of the two meanings of *revolution* lasted till the end of 18th century, till the French Revolution⁵⁰.

In the age of reason, the meaning of *revolution* exceeded the domain of political sciences, embracing other domains of reality. Beginning with the 18th century, the term became vague⁵¹ and it was impossible to determine its limited sense. Its vagueness and connotations with movement resulted

⁴⁷ R. Koselleck, *Semantyka*, pp. 112–113.

⁴⁸ '[...] choć w przednowożytnym języku politycznym dość było słów, aby opisać powstanie poddanych przeciwko władcy, to nie było żadnego, które by opisywało zmianę tak radykalną, że poddani sami stają się władcami'. H. Arendt, *O rewolucji*, Kraków 1991, p. 39.

⁴⁹ '[...] wszystko jest na tym świecie rewolucją'. After: R. Koselleck, *Semantyka*, p. 113.

⁵⁰ Up till 1905 a dualistic sense of the term revolution could be observed. This is evidenced by the 19th century understanding of revolution in Portugal.

⁵¹ In the vague set, its element may belong to the set to a certain degree or with a certain probability. For more on vague logic: E. Januszewski, *Logiczne i filozoficzne problemy z logiką rozmytą*, 'Roczniki Filozoficzne' 2007, 55, 1.

in its ambiguity⁵². The consequences of broadening the scope of revolution can be seen today. Tadeusz Łepkowski, studying the birth of revolution, distinguishes between three categories. The first is a long-lasting technical-economic-civil revolution. It embraces industrial (17th century, 18th century, scientific-technical revolutions), agrarian (biological-chemical-agrarian, to be specific), neolithic and demographic-medical revolutions. The second type covers revolutions at the meeting point of 'social being, technology and biology'⁵³, which referred to '[...] the sphere of the mind, spirit, intellect and moral sensitivity, to internal experience'⁵⁴. What Łepkowski had in mind were mental, cultural, moral and religious revolts. Changes, which took a long time or had long-lasting effects, should belong to the category of radical social changes. This is the aftermath of the semantic changes happening in the 18th century. Changes, previously not located on the time axis and not understood in terms of linear development, were classified as a type of revolution⁵⁵. The moment in which an eternal turn transforms into the idea of a new beginning was a rejection of the past by the French in 1789. The course of the French Revolution, its ideas and aftermath determined contemporary views on revolution. 14th July, 1789 was when the Duke of la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt informed Louis XVI about the fall of the Bastille. The king supposedly shouted: 'It's a revolt!'. The Duke replied: 'No Sir, this is a revolution!'⁵⁶. This dialogue became historic because of the unprecedented meaning of the term *revolution*. It is worth mentioning that the multiple senses of the term and the complexity

⁵² It should be noted that polysemy may be treated as something positive. See: W. Czajkowski, *O pewnych poznawczych pożytkach płynących z wieloznaczności słowa 'rewolucja'*, in: *O rewolucji. Obrazy radykalnej zmiany społecznej*, eds. K. Brzechczyn, M. Nowak, Poznań 2007, pp. 13–36.

⁵³ 'człowieka społecznego, techniki i biologii'.

⁵⁴ '[...] sfery umysłu i ducha, intelektu i wrażliwości moralnej, do przeżyć wewnętrznych'. T. Łepkowski, *Narodziny rewolucji: aspekty społeczno-polityczne*, in: *Przemoc zbiorowa. Ruch masowy. Rewolucja*, eds. E. Kaczyńska, Z.W. Rykowski, Warszawa 1990, pp. 11–12.

⁵⁵ As a result, we deal with a specific inflation of the term revolution. Polysemy of the term entails a transfer of meaning onto new domains of social life: starting with scientific revolutions, through moral revolutions (e.g. sexual revolutions), cultural (the 1960s in China and after 1968 in the Western world), national, industrial, and technological ones. See: L. Russo, *Zapomniana rewolucja: grecka myśl naukowa a nauka nowoczesna*, Warszawa 2005; S. Shapin, *Rewolucja naukowa*, Warszawa 2000; *Kobieta i rewolucja obyczajowa: społeczno-kulturowe aspekty seksualności. Wiek XIX i XX*, eds. A. Szwarc, A. Żarnowska, Warszawa 2006; R. Kimball, *Długi marsz: jak rewolucja kulturalna z lat 60. zmieniła Amerykę*, Elbląg 2008; J. Tomaszewicz, *Rewolucja narodowa: nacjonalistyczne koncepcje rewolucji społecznej w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*, Warszawa 2012; J. Rifkin, *Trzecia rewolucja przemysłowa: jak lateralny model władzy inspiruje całe pokolenie i zmienia oblicze świata*, Katowice 2012; P. Gawrysiak, *Cyfrowa rewolucja: rozwój cywilizacji informacyjnej*, Warszawa 2008.

⁵⁶ 'To jest rewolta!'. 'Nie Panie, to jest rewolucja'. H. Arendt, *O rewolucji*, pp. 46–47.

of the phenomenon bore resemblance to some aspects of other events, especially those, which were characteristic of violence and the mobility of the masses. The dialogue shows how thin the line has been between various events connected with social changes. Mark Hagopian in his book *The Phenomenon of Revolution*, in the chapter titled *What revolution is not* enumerated confused terms: coup d'état (e.g. putsch, palace revolution), revolt (e.g. rebellion, peasants' revolt, municipal revolt), secession (e.g. colonial, religious, regional)⁵⁷. A similar distinction was reached by Samuel Huntington, who made a distinction between a revolution and an insurrection, revolt, coup d'état, rebellion and independence war⁵⁸.

What is more, in order to understand the idea of revolution we should remember that independence is strictly dependent on the experience of time in which the cycle of history begins anew. Count of Mirabeau described revolution as a borderline between despotism and liberty⁵⁹. This issue was also addressed by Condorcet, who claimed that the word *revolutionary* may be only used in reference to those revolutions which aim at liberty⁶⁰. This idea was implemented by Robespierre, who described the order he established as the 'despotism of liberty'. Liberty became an attribute of a radical social change. In this context La Fayette highlighted voluntarism of the masses, claiming that '[...] people become free the moment they want to be free'⁶¹. The link between the concept of revolution (in a socio-political sense) and ideas of the 19th century connected with socialism, nationalism, religion, each glorifying freedom, left a mark on the ideological treatment of the interpretation and understanding of revolution⁶².

Another phenomenon that appeared together with the idea of a new beginning was violence⁶³. The new stage could not begin without getting rid of the weight of the past. The only way to reach another step towards inevitable progress was to be made rapidly. Observing the Great Terror, Joseph de Maistre noted that '[...] there is nothing but violence in the world'⁶⁴. Hanna Arendt pointed towards violence as an immanent part

⁵⁷ M. Hagopian, *The Phenomenon of Revolution*, New York 1974, pp. 1–44.

⁵⁸ S.P. Huntington, *Political*, p. 264.

⁵⁹ J. Baszkiewicz, *Danton*, Warszawa 1990, p. 28.

⁶⁰ Zob. B. Baczek, *Revolucja. Władza, nadzieje, rozterki*, Gdańsk 2010, pp. 30–33.

⁶¹ '[...] lud staje się wolny natychmiast, gdy zechce być wolny'. J. Baszkiewicz, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

⁶² J. Topolski, *Jak się pisze*, p. 182.

⁶³ The relationship between violence and cognition, and the role of symbolic violence in the shaping of cultural games was studied by Andrzej Zybertowicz in *Przemoc i poznanie: studium z nie-klasycznej socjologii wiedzy*, Toruń 1995.

⁶⁴ '[...] we wszechświecie nie ma nic prócz przemocy'. After: M. Milewska, *Ocet i łzy. Terror Wielkiej Rewolucji Francuskiej jako doświadczenie traumatyczne*, Gdańsk 2001, p. 17.

of any revolution, stating that '[...] only when change occurs in a sense of a new beginning, where violence is used to constitute an altogether different form of government and where the liberation from oppression aims at least at the constitution of freedom, can we speak of revolution'⁶⁵. Violence was not only the quality of revolutionists, but also of ordinary, random people in the times of crime, aggression and war⁶⁶. Violence, which led to a revolt, was subject to radicalisation in the course of a revolutionary process. Especially intriguing has been the discord between the expectations of the thinkers in the Enlightenment and reality. A model to follow was the Glorious Revolution. The experience of 1688 in England was a conclusive argument for optimism. Paradoxically, most revolutions against violence ended up as mechanisms and spirals of violence (see: France 1789, Mexico 1910, Russia 1917, Spain 1936–1938, Cuba 1959, Cambodia 1975). The course of revolution leading towards increasing repressions was explained as a reaction to the threat of counterrevolution or the fifth column. Francois Furet, investigating the French Revolution, noticed that radicalisation of the attitudes⁶⁷ stemmed from the internal dynamics of the revolutionary process, the final spectrum of which is madness⁶⁸. Apart from violence as an element of revolution, we can generalise that the past was an arena of fighting and violence⁶⁹.

The abovementioned observation demonstrate what significant a semantic shift has been made in relation to the French Revolution. The model of revolution changed significantly. It reevaluated its characteristic features, it shaped the future mythologisation of each significant political, social or economic change. The French Revolution, which had a lot in common with the American Revolution, became the archetype of a big revolt. Each of the following social changes, just like in the case of primitive ontological concepts, became real only when they followed the archetype. Mircea Eliade wrote '[...] thus reality is acquired solely through repetition or participation; everything which lacks an exemplary model is 'meaningless', i.e., it lacks reality'⁷⁰. The archetype of the French

⁶⁵ '[...] tam gdzie pojawia się zmiana w sensie nowego początku, gdzie gwałt zostaje użyty do ustanowienia zupełnie innej formy ustrojowej i gdzie wyzwolenie spod ucisku przynajmniej dąży do zaprowadzenia wolności, tam możemy mówić o rewolucji'. H. Arendt, *O rewolucji*, p. 33.

⁶⁶ See: H. Arendt, *Korzenie totalitaryzmu*, Warszawa 2014, pp. 387–422.

⁶⁷ See: B. Baczkowski, *Jak wyjść z Terroru: Termidor a Rewolucja*, Gdańsk 2005.

⁶⁸ See: F. Furet, *Prawdziwy koniec rewolucji francuskiej*, Warszawa 1994.

⁶⁹ M. Kula, *Przemoc: zmienne zjawisko długiego trwania*, in: *Dramat przemocy w historycznej perspektywie*, eds. J. Chrobaczyński, W. Wrzesiński, Kraków 2004, pp. 39–57.

⁷⁰ '[...] w ten sposób rzeczywistość osiąga się wyłącznie przez powtórzenie lub uczestnictwo; wszystko, co nie ma wzorcowego modelu, jest 'ogolone z sensu', to znaczy

Revolution was realised through violence because the '[...] execution of the king was the founding violence, an act of foundation of the Republic'⁷¹, and the acts of violence which followed were only its repetition⁷². In 1842, Barthélemy Hauréau, from the perspective of an observer and first-hand witness of the aftermath of the French Revolution, concluded that the well-known term *revolution* had lost its original meaning and became fuel for human resources of knowledge⁷³. What features did the concept of the mythical night of 14th July, 1789 gain then? The definition as proposed by Hannah Arendt pointed towards five basic features of revolution: novelty, liberty, new beginning, violence, inevitability. Only the last one, which with time evolved into the idea of historical inevitability, was associated with the primary meaning of the term. It was this distinguishing feature that played a key role in the vision of a radical change. It contributed to the mythologisation of revolution⁷⁴. The immanent naturalness of revolution, its astronomic level, independent of human intervention, resulted in it being regarded as a starting point for the interpretation of human history and experienced reality⁷⁵. As a result of philosophical influences, revolution, separated from the social world, is beyond it, which is particularly visible in objective idealism and the philosophy of history by Hegel.

What is more, in the context of radical social change, we should also mention the ideas proposed by Waldemar Czajkowski and Reinhart Koselleck. The former defined a network of concepts that can be attribute to revolution. His ideas are grounded in 'semantic holism'. The sociological sense ('objective') of this concept is formed by various ideas: depth, completeness, immediacy, collective causation, and intensity. In the phenomenological sense ('subjective') revolution is an extraordinary change.

The analysis by Koselleck pertains mainly to the semantic field, which is gained in 1789⁷⁶. The basis for his ideas is the hypothesis that the experience of modernity is also the experience of new time⁷⁷. In relation to revolution, it was a break-off with the previous structure of time and a change

brak mu rzeczywistości'. M. Eliade, *Mity i historia*, in: *Mit wiecznego powrotu*, Warszawa 1998, p. 46.

⁷¹ '[...] egzekucja króla była w istocie ową przemocą założycielską, aktem fundującym Republikę'. M. Milewska, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

⁷² See: J. Chrobaczyński, *Czy przemoc jest 'motorem' historii?*, in: *Dramat*, pp. 19–26.

⁷³ After: R. Koselleck, *Semantyka*, p. 115.

⁷⁴ See: M. Woźniak, *Doświadczenie historii: kulturowy i społeczny wymiar mitu rewolucji*, Lublin 2003, pp. 65–66.

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 66.

⁷⁶ R. Koselleck, *Semantyka*, pp. 116–129.

⁷⁷ *Idem*, *Dzieje*, p. 78.

in how history changed together with the Great French Revolution. Firstly, revolution is made up of the experience of the way from a political revolution to a social one (the element of reform is included). The social element became the essence of a radical turn as the whole social structure was to change. It was noted that it was in 1794 that the process of making France 'the opposite of the existing countries'⁷⁸ was termed as 'social revolution'. Another feature of revolution was directly connected with the first one, i.e. any step towards emancipation was to be made immediately. This, in turn, was meant to shorten the experienced time of revolution. The movement of the people seemed to shorten or even not to matter. This established revolution as a meta-historical concept in the domain of philosophy of history. The meta-historical aspect is derived from the understanding of revolution as a collective prime number, i.e. from Mercier's statement that everything in the world is revolution. A rhetorical specification will place revolution within various forms of synecdoche: part for whole (*pars pro toto*) and whole for part (*totum pro parte*). In other words, a revolution was made as a certain type of stylistic figure, changing its meaning to achieve a specific effect. Hayden White would describe the term as a trope⁷⁹. What is more, Jerzy Szacki perceives the use of revolution '[...] alongside metaphor: one name is transferred onto another object, creating an illusion of its understanding by attributing features which seem to be valid in the case of the first one'⁸⁰.

Revolution brought about a new dictionary. The verbal noun 'revolutionisation' and the verb 'to revolutionise' led to the derivation of previously unknown 'revolutionist'. The neologism was coined together with the belief that individuals can change the course of history. Its essence was the activist necessity to start a revolution in light of any circumstances making it real. In such a case, revolution is to be carried out by its people⁸¹. 'Revolutionist' as a political actor was born with the fall of the *ancien regime*. It was in a broad sense a supporter of new ideas, engaged in political fighting and relying on agitation of crowds⁸². The adjective

⁷⁸ 'odwrotności dziś istniejących państw'.

⁷⁹ H. White, *Metahistory. The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, Baltimore–London 1973, pp. 31–38.

⁸⁰ '[...] na prawach metafory: nazwę przenosi się z jednego przedmiotu na inny, wywołując złudzenie jego rozumienia przez przypisanie mu cech, które na zasadzie oczywistości zdają się przysługiwać temu pierwszemu'. J. Szacki, *Parę uwag o teorii rewolucji*, in: *Przemoc zbiorowa. Ruch masowy. Rewolucja*, eds. E. Kaczyńska, Z.W. Rykowski, Warszawa 1990, p. 26.

⁸¹ See: A. Zamojski, *Święte Szaleństwo. Romantycy, patrioci, rewolucjoniści 1776–1871*, Kraków 2015.

⁸² B. Baczeko, *Rewolucja*, pp. 37–39.

'revolutionary'⁸³ describes anything related to revolution, but only the one aiming at liberty⁸⁴. The spirit and rules of revolution were derived from such a definition. According to Emmanuel Sieyès, '[...] the spirit of revolution is the spirit capable of starting and leading a revolution for freedom', and the law of revolution is '[...] the law the subject of which is to keep and accelerate revolution'⁸⁵. The law of revolution was helpful in the emergence of another concept relating to revolution, i.e. legal validity to emerge. A term 'absolute revolution' was coined, suggesting that revolutionary movement derives any legal rights from itself.

One of the major paradoxes of radical turns appeared at the turn of the 18th and 19th century, viewed from the perspective of time: one or many revolutions? A revolutionary process and consciousness, revived by an interaction with it, were inextricably linked. Since the French Revolution, it was an immanent part, an internal contradiction inherent in the word. Koselleck noted that the viewpoint derived from the semantic field of the modern revolution (bearing in mind its lack of logic) leads to the perception of movement and change in terms of time and space. A revolution is meant to be permanent, timewise, and its spatial scope should be global.

A juxtaposition of all the above mentioned semantic fields makes Koselleck regard revolution as a meta-historical concept within the scope of philosophy of history, with absolutist ambitions. He wrote that '[...] since the whole world is to be revolutionised, it means that revolution should last as long as the goal is achieved'⁸⁶. Additionally, the criterion of legal validity legitimises revolution, which in the magic charm of historical inevitability obliges revolutionists to use violence in their fight for freedom, in their battle for a New Beginning.

1.3. THE BIRTH OF THEORY

After the French Revolution the issue of the relationship between the past, present and future acquired a political dimension. A belief in a better

⁸³ Attempts to define the word *revolutionary* were made, among others, by Condorcet in his article *On the meaning of the word revolutionary* published 1.06.1793.

⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 29.

⁸⁵ '[...] duch rewolucyjny to duch zdolny wytwarzać rewolucję dokonaną dla wolności i nią kierować'. '[...] prawo, którego przedmiotem jest utrzymanie tej rewolucji lub przyśpieszenie jej biegu'. After: B. Baczeko, *Rewolucja*, p. 7.

⁸⁶ '[...] skoro cała ziemia ma być zrewolucjonizowana, to wynika z tego niewątpliwie, że rewolucja trwać ma tak długo, jak długo ten cel nie zostanie osiągnięty'. R. Koselleck, *Semantyka*, p. 121.

future spread, and on the basis of a scientific understanding of history people would reach the said future thanks to their conscious, collective and orchestrated effort. That was the moment when science-aspiring philosophy of history was born, claiming that it found the direction and the final sense of history⁸⁷.

These were the French and the American revolution in which Hannah Arendt saw significant moments which influenced the sense of theories on radical social change⁸⁸. In terms of theoretical reflection, the biggest consequence of the Great French Revolution was the birth of a new understanding of history. The revolutionary concept, which stemmed from the French Revolution, was Hegel's philosophy of history. According to Hegel⁸⁹, reality (logical, necessary and reasonable) is a dialectical whole, which aims to understand itself. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831) rationalised history by means of evolutionary idealism (in line with the rules of reason), evolving into higher and higher form of self-analysis by overcoming previous ideas (pattern: thesis – anti-thesis – synthesis). In this understanding, historical progress is dialectical and despite its idealistic character, it introduced philosophical absolute into the domain of human relationships. Paradoxically, a consequence of the turn of philosophy into philosophy of history was the placement of inevitability instead of liberty as the major category behind the revolutionary idea. Arendt saw the cause of such a change in the observers, not actors or participants, describing and interpreting revolutions. 'A perspective of the audience watching a performance'⁹⁰ left a mark on all the future revolutionary changes, just as it did on Hegel's philosophy of history.

Hegel's philosophical reflection shaped two major discourses regarding radical social change. The first is based on a mythologised, appraising and non-scientific understanding of revolution. Within this discourse revolution becomes a basic mechanism of change to reality. Fascination and terror, the two approaches which were typical of the French Revolution facilitated the perception of revolution from the perspective of collective imagination. The myth⁹¹ of revolution, as one of the fundamental myths,

⁸⁷ I use the term 'philosophy of history' after Krzysztof Pomian. He makes a clear distinction between 'ideology' from 'philosophy of history'. See: K. Pomian, *Porządek czasu*, Gdańsk 2014, pp. 287–288.

⁸⁸ H. Arendt, *O rewolucji*, p. 50.

⁸⁹ Hegel's understanding of the mind as a basic force in history was developed by Herbert Marcuse who believed liberty should be the basic category of the mind. See: H. Marcuse, *Rozum i rewolucja: Hegel a powstanie teorii społecznej*, Warszawa 1966; Z.J. Czarniecki, *Przyszłość i historia*, Lublin 1981.

⁹⁰ 'Perspektywa widza oglądającego przedstawienie'. H. Arendt, *O rewolucji*, p. 51.

⁹¹ I agree with the definition of a myth by Bronisław Malinowski, who wrote that a myth '[...] nie jest wyjaśnieniem zaspokajającym potrzebę zainteresowań naukowych,

is rife with the idea of the past existence of events, processes, which have '[...] the power of dividing the historical process into smaller parts, which clearly point towards differences between the state before and after revolution. In light of these differences a narration is organised not only in a chronological order but also in terms of selection and hierarchy of the material, hence in terms of the content and persuasion techniques (concerning authenticity and ideology)'⁹². Topolski searched for the causes of ideology of revolution in linking the thoughts of radical change with the major ideas of the 19th century, i.e. socialism, nationalism, and religion⁹³. Another concept was proposed by Wojciech Wrzosek, who suggested using metaphor in relation to revolution. Revolution understood as a metaphor would stand '[...] in opposition to the metaphors of growth and genesis, fundamental to the Western culture, and to a certain degree (???) would be their completion'⁹⁴.

The abovementioned understanding of revolution from the perspective of a myth or a metaphor, i.e. the tools bringing order to the experience of history (the so-called structuring of experience), are exceptionally effective in the process of becoming historical knowledge⁹⁵. A feature of such an

ale narracją, w której zmartwychwstaje pradawna rzeczywistość, narracją opowiadaną dla zaspokojenia głębokich potrzeb religijnych, uzasadnienia dążeń moralnych, [...] wyjaśnienia twierdzeń czy nawet wymogów praktycznych. W kulturze pierwotnej mit jest nieodzowny: wyraża, wzbogaca i kodyfikuje wierzenia; chroni i wzmacnia moralność; [...] zawiera reguły, którymi człowiek powinien się kierować. Mit jest żywotnym składnikiem cywilizacji ludzkiej; nie jest czymś opowiadaniem, ale aktywną, stale działającą siłą' '[...] is not an explanation fulfilling scientific needs but a narration which resurrects primeval reality, narration told to fulfill deep religious needs, to justify moral desires, [...] to explain statements and practical demands. In the primitive cultures a myth is a necessity: it is a form of expression; it enriches and codifies beliefs; it protects and intensifies morality; [...] it offers rules that people should follow. It is a living part of the human civilisation; it is not an empty story but rather an active, working force'. See: B. Malinowski, *Mit, magia, religia*, in: *Dzieła*, vol. 7, Warszawa 1990, p. 303; The issue of a myth has been studied in an trans-disciplinary way. The available literature is extremely rich, some of the major works include: R. Barthes, *Mitologie*, Warszawa 2008; M. Eliade, *Aspekty mitu*, Warszawa 1998; L. Kołakowski, *Obecność mitu*, Warszawa 2005.

⁹² '[...] moc dzielenia procesu historycznego na odcinki, w których wyraźnie wskazuje się na różnice między stanem przed (rewolucją) i po (rewolucji), i w świetle tych różnic organizuje się narrację nie tylko pod względem chronologicznym, lecz także pod względem selekcji i hierarchizacji materiału, a więc i pod względem treści i sposobu perswazji (prawdziwościowej i ideologicznej)'. J. Topolski, *Jak się pisze*, p. 180.

⁹³ *Ibidem*, p. 182.

⁹⁴ '[...] w opozycji do fundamentalnych dla kultury zachodniej metafor rozwoju i genezy, a w pewnym stopniu (???) stanowi ich uzupełnienie'. W. Wrzosek, *op. cit.*, p. 38; Also Koselleck analyses revolution from the perspective of metaphor. See: R. Koselleck, *Dzieje*, pp. 265–271.

⁹⁵ On the role of revolution in understanding the past: M. Woźniak, *op. cit.*, pp. 18–64;

understanding of revolution is its evaluation, either positive or negative, hyperbole or deprecation, and creation of illusions. I understand illusions similarly to Furet as a specific system of ideas regarding the past, present or future reality, which justifies and evaluates it and facilitates action based on the objectives of the system⁹⁶. The major foundation of illusion is the past, which is subject to reinterpretation, reconstruction or falsification according to the binding vision of the world. Czesław Miłosz defined the way of thinking designed for the mythical captivation of the mind as an intense vulgarity of knowledge⁹⁷.

The dialectical method in the Marxist perspective (but also in other perspectives) resembles a system of bridges cast over precipices⁹⁸. Bridges create an illusion that there is no precipice, and one can walk forward. Such an illusion is one of the elements constituting a myth. Mythical thinking has a great power – it has roots in the past and provides density and contiguity to the society.

Hegelianism rationalised history, and myth seems to be an ideal tool for a reasonable ordering of events and of a historical understanding. Revolution fitted the dialectical evolution of reality, which became the foundation of the Marxist philosophy. Lenin's interpretation of Karl Marx's thoughts became the most famous extension of the German thinker's ideas. However, the basis for Marxist claims were Hegel's and his disciples' philosophy. The primary Marxism understood revolution as a beginning of a new era in the development of societies. It was a social revolution connected with a change in economic formations. The Marxist model of social change was based on a deterministic character of social life, which depends on an economic structure, which is influenced by means of production. A major problem with the Marxist ideas was the reversed dependence between the surrounding world and an individual. He claimed that '[...] it is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence but their social existence that determines their consciousness'⁹⁹. This thought was verified and falsified, yet, the influence of Marxist philosophy on the 19th and 20th century world was enormous. Marxism aspired to be a philosophy, economy, sociology, but also a political religion. Revolution appeared within the theoretical constructs by Marx and Engels as '[...] a leap of humanity from the kingdom of inevitability onto the kingdom

J. Topolski, *Jak się pisze*, pp. 180–189.

⁹⁶ F. Furet, *Przeszłość pewnego złudzenia*, Warszawa 1996, p. 11

⁹⁷ Cz. Miłosz, *Zniewolony umysł*, Paryż 1953, p. 154

⁹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 155.

⁹⁹ '[...] nie świadomość ludzi określa ich byt, lecz przeciwnie, ich społeczny byt określa ich świadomość'. K. Marks, *Przyczynek do krytyki ekonomii politycznej*, Warszawa 1953, p. 5.

of freedom'¹⁰⁰. The idea of revolution was immanently written in the process of evolution of socio-economic formations, it was supposed to be an emanation of the ever-growing class struggle. The ruling class exploits the inferior class, the oppression grows, and the alienation of the exploited ends together with their class consciousness, which pushes them towards revolution. In other words, revolutionary explosion takes place as a result of an extreme oppression. According to this idea, revolution ends with a change in output methods, which affects the whole society. A change in the base leads to a big change in the superstructure¹⁰¹. The Marxist theory of revolution found its reflection in Marx's comments on philosophy: 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways. The point, however, is to change it'¹⁰². Universal aspirations behind Marxism resulted in Marx's ideas becoming an inspiration for left-wing social movements across the world, which in the second half of the 20th century turned his thoughts into a secular theology, and his doctrine was treated as a set of dogmas¹⁰³.

In opposition to the Marxist interpretation of history, other interpretations of revolution emerged, full of mythical thinking. The lusophone culture developed a vision of radical social change, in opposition to Marxism but also to the whole legacy of the Great French Revolution. Its author was the Brazilian thinker, Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, who placed revolution within the frame of a world-shaking civilisation crisis, whose scope of activity is humanity¹⁰⁴. The book titled *Revolution and counterrevolution* was published in 1959 and had 26 editions, being translated into 10 languages. It offers a concept of the crisis of the Western civilisation, which is: common – 'There is not a single nation, which has not experienced to a greater or lesser extent'¹⁰⁵; unified – 'It is not a number of crises developing independently from one another, in each country, mutually linked through more or less important analogies'¹⁰⁶; total – '[...] the crisis develops on such a deep level of problems

¹⁰⁰ '[...] skok ludzkości z królestwa konieczności w królestwo wolności'. F. Engels, *Przewrót w nauce dokonany przez pana Eugeniusza Dühringa*, in: K. Marks, F. Engels, *Dzieła*, vol. 20, Warszawa 1972, p. 316.

¹⁰¹ L. Kołakowski, *Główne nurty marksizmu*, vol. 1, Warszawa 2009, p. 337.

¹⁰² 'Filozofowie rozmaicie tylko interpretowali świat; idzie jednak o to, aby go zmienić'. K. Marks, *Tezy o Feuerbachu*, in: K. Marks, F. Engels, *Dzieła*, vol. 3, Warszawa 1982, p. 8.

¹⁰³ Por. E. Hobsbawm, *Jak zmienić świat. Marks i marksizm 1840–2011*, Warszawa 2013, pp. 375–430.

¹⁰⁴ P.C. de Oliviera, *Rewolucja i kontrrewolucja*, Kraków 2006, p. 25.

¹⁰⁵ 'Nie ma dziś narodu, na który nie oddziaływał w większym lub mniejszym stopniu'. *Ibidem*, p. 27.

¹⁰⁶ 'Nie jest to szereg kryzysów rozwijających się obok siebie niezależnie, w każdym kraju, wzajemnie powiązanych ze sobą przez mniej lub bardziej istotne analogie'. *Ibidem*.

that naturally it spreads into all levels of the soul, all cultural areas and finally all the spheres of human activity'¹⁰⁷; dominant – '[...] the crisis resembles a ruler, who is served by all the powers of chaos as useful and obedient tools'¹⁰⁸; a process – '[...] the crisis is not a spectacular, isolated episode. On the contrary, it becomes a critical process lasting over five centuries now. It is a long chain of causes and effects, which emerged at certain point with great force, in the deepest corners of the soul and culture of the Western civilisation and has been bringing convulsions since the 15th century'¹⁰⁹. A critical process described and analysed by de Oliveira is revolution *par excellence*. The word 'revolution' entails a movement leading towards the destruction of the legal authorities and legal order and towards replacing them with illegal authorities and illegal order¹¹⁰. Revolution consists of three layers: disorderly tendencies¹¹¹, crisis of ideas (e.g. in creation of new doctrines) and the existence of sphere of facts (transformation of institutions, law and tradition). The driving force behind revolution is the first layer. What is more, the destructive character of the crisis is present in its genesis. De Oliveira wrote that: '[...] since the very first explosions, the force is present with its full fierceness, which will be revealed in its worst excesses. For instance, the first contestations of Protestantism included implicitly anachronistic objectives of communism. Luther was nothing more, to put it bluntly, than Luther, however, all the tendencies, states of the soul, imponderables of the Reformation, were marked in an authentic way, even though implicitly, the spirit of Voltaire, Robespierre, Marx and Lenin'¹¹². This revolution, crawling since 15th/16th century expressed itself in disorderly tendencies, which, like

¹⁰⁷ '[...] kryzys ten rozwija się na tak głębokim poziomie problemów, że z samej natury rzeczy rozciąga się lub rozpościera na wszystkie władze duszy, wszystkie dziedziny kultury i w końcu wszystkie sfery ludzkiego działania'. *Ibidem*, p. 28.

¹⁰⁸ '[...] kryzys ten przypomina władcę, któremu służą wszystkie siły chaosu jako pożyteczne i posłuszne narzędzia'. *Ibidem*, pp. 28–29.

¹⁰⁹ '[...] kryzys ten nie jest jakimś spektakularny, odizolowanym epizodem. Przeciwnie, stanowi on krytyczny proces trwający już pięć wieków. Jest to długi łańcuch przyczyn i skutków, który wyłoniwszy się w pewnym momencie z wielką siłą, w najgłębszych zakątkach duszy i kultury człowieka Zachodu, wywołuje konwulsje począwszy od XV wieku'. *Ibidem*, pp. 29–40.

¹¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 57.

¹¹¹ The word 'tendency' is understood in a psychological and spiritual sense, not in a sociological or political sense.

¹¹² '[...] od pierwszej chwili swoich wielkich eksplozji siła ta posiada już potencjalnie całą zaciekłość, którą ujawni później w swoich najgorszych ekscesach. Na przykład w pierwszych kontestacjach protestantyzmu były już zawarte implicite anarchiczne pragnienia komunizmu. Luter nie był, mówiąc wprost, nikim więcej jak tylko Lutrem, lecz wszystkie tendencje, stany duszy i imponderabilia luterskiego wybuchu nosiły już w sobie autentycznie i w pełni, choć tylko implicite, ducha Woltera i Robespiera oraz Marksa i Lenina'. *Ibidem*, p. 47.

habits, develop proportionately to their satisfaction. Such an understanding of revolution is seen as a permanent crisis, specific *perpetuum mobile*, which since the reformation has been changing the world, leading towards its fall. For revolution, *par excellence* the only natural opposition would be counter-revolution, understood as a reaction, i.e. action directed against another action. If revolution is a disorder, a systematic chaos, counter-revolution brings the order back. Just as there is a revolutionary process, overturning order, counter-revolution works analogically but in the opposite direction. It is seen by de Oliveira as '[...] progressive [...] march towards order'¹¹³, which '[...] stems from the fact that dynamism of good is radically different from dynamism of evil'¹¹⁴. De Oliveira's vision resembles and borrows from the legacy of Joseph de Maistre, for whom the revolutionary process also started in the time of the Reformation (labelled by de Oliveira 'pseudo-reformation').

If Marx saw the plane for revolution in the material foundations of social reality, then de Oliveira laid emphasis on the spiritual aspects of human life because all the crises have their roots in the deepest problems of the soul, '[...] from where they spread to the individual's whole personality and all their actions'¹¹⁵. Viewed from this perspective, these are two mythical, totally different visions of revolution understood as a mechanism to change the world.

Another discourse is related to the scientific reflection over revolution. A major difficulty for researchers is the poly-semantic nature of the subject of study in the historical perspective. The colloquial understanding of the term and the contradictory definitions of revolution result in a conceptual chaos. Plurality of the research strategies points to constant searching for effective tools of conceptualisation. For the sake of this article presenting an overview of revolution theories, the most effective definition seems to be the one proposed by Anthony Giddens, who describes it as '[...] a process of political change thanks to massive social movement through violent overthrowing of the existing regime and formation of a new government'¹¹⁶. Generally, the major research areas over revolutionary changes can be divided into two: idiographic and nomothetic, in line with

¹¹³ '[...] postępujący [...] marsz ku porządkowi'.

¹¹⁴ '[...] wynika z faktu, że dynamizm dobra jest radykalnie odmienny od dynamizmu zła'. *Ibidem*, p. 117.

¹¹⁵ '[...] skąd rozciągają się na całą osobowość człowieka i wszystkie jego działania'. *Ibidem*, p. 25.

¹¹⁶ '[...] proces zmiany politycznej dzięki masowemu ruchowi społecznemu przez obalenie przemocą istniejącego reżimu i utworzenie nowego rządu'. A. Giddens, *Socjologia*, Warszawa 2005, p. 732.

the classic taxonomy proposed by Wilhelm Windelband and Henry Rickert. Idiographic analyses, i.e. descriptive ones, dealing with the establishment of individual, specific facts and the ordering of specific events, are typical of first reflections over a given phenomenon, especially in historical works. The nomothetic approach is characteristic of analyses dealing with regularities and general laws of science. By observing the development of science, we notice a constant evolution towards formulation of common laws of the surrounding reality.

A classic work in the field of revolution studies, with the ambition to discover general laws and still valid today is the work *The Old Regime and the Revolution* by Alexis de Tocqueville. The French thinker studies the 'genealogy' of the French Revolution. He tried to find the roots of the radical change in France in the medieval social system. A historical-comparative study shows regularity of events taking place in a specific place at a specific time and shows some general laws behind them. The ambition of Tocqueville was to explain the nature of revolution rather than its content¹¹⁷. For him, just like his great predecessor, Edmund Burke, with whom he often disagreed in his work, the French Revolution concealed its true essence. What is more, he was the first to notice the paradoxes lying at the foundation of the radical social change and to ask for functions of particular social classes, society as a whole and political systems. It is worth noting that a conflict between social classes is not a cause of a revolution but its consequence. Another major difference from Marx's ideology was the statement that a prerequisite of revolution is not the growing oppression of the exploited class. The French example demonstrates that the revolution took place after a period of successful economic growth. It is quite unusual that intensification of discontent happened at that time. Tocqueville noticed that '[...] just as prosperity grows in France, minds are full of uncertainty and anxiety, general discontent intensifies; hatred towards the old institutions starts to grow. The nation heads towards revolution'¹¹⁸. He then concluded 'Revolution does not start only when those who are in a bad spot feel even worse. Most commonly the nation, which withstands the burdensome law without complaint, as if indifferently, suddenly rejects it when they ease a bit. The system, which is overthrown by revolution, is almost always better than the previous one, and the most dangerous moment for bad government

¹¹⁷ F. Furet, *Wstęp*, in: A. de Tocqueville, *Dawny ustój i rewolucja*, Warszawa 2005, p. 8.

¹¹⁸ '[...] w miarę tego, jak wzrasta we Francji ów dobrobyt, o którym mówiłem, w umysłach wzmagają się niepewność i niepokój, pogłębia powszechne niezadowolenie; wzbiera nienawiść do wszystkich starych instytucji. Naród jawnie zmierza do rewolucji'. A. de Tocqueville, *Dawny ustój i rewolucja*, Warszawa 2005, p. 216.

is the moment when it starts implementing new reforms [...]. The evil that people had to endure patiently as something inevitable seems to be unbearable the moment when the mind discovers a way out of it. As if each abuse which has been overcome allowed to see another one, intensifying the effect of abuse. The evil lessens, it is true, however the sensitivity of evil intensifies'¹¹⁹. The idea of the author of *Democracy in America* is a far cry from the Marxist vision of revolution, where the economic determinism ('existence determines consciousness') is the basis for revolutionary ideology. For him the Great French Revolution constituted only a sudden culmination of a long historical process, because '[...] even though it surprised the world, it was just the complementation of a long process, a sudden and violent end of the work of tens of generations. If it did not happen, the old social order would fall into pieces without it, here a little bit earlier, there a little bit later, but would fall slowly, piece by piece, rather than abruptly. With convulsive, painful efforts, with no gradation, with no precautions and with no mercy, the Revolution ended abruptly what could die away on its own with time'¹²⁰. He also added a series of important questions: What was the real sense of the French Revolution? What are its lasting consequences? What was destroyed and what was created by the Revolution?¹²¹.

Another major contribution of de Tocqueville for the theory of revolution was the expansion of the area, named by Robert Merton (as well as by Piotr Sztompka) 'a defined area of ignorance'¹²². He identified the paradox of revolution, i.e. the continuity of certain processes, which, contrary to

¹¹⁹ 'Rewolucja nie zawsze wybucha wtedy, kiedy tym, którym było źle, zaczyna być jeszcze gorzej. Najczęściej dzieje się tak, że lud, który bez skargi, jakby obojętnie, znosił najcięższe prawa, odrzuca je gwałtownie, kiedy ciężar ich nieco zelżeje. Ustrój, który rewolucja obala, bywa niemal zawsze lepszy od tego, który go bezpośrednio poprzedzał, i doświadczenie uczy, że najniebezpieczniejszą chwilą dla złego rządu bywa zwykle ta, w której zaczyna on wprowadzać reformy [...]. Zło, które ludzie znosili cierpliwie jako nieuniknione, wydaje się nieznośne z chwilą, gdy w umysłach zaświta myśl, że można się spod niego wyłamać. Jakby każde usunięte wówczas nadużycie tym wyraźniej pozwalało dojrzeć pozostałe, potęgując jeszcze wrażenie ich dokuczliwości. Zło stało się mniejsze, to prawda, ale pogłębiła się wrażliwość na zło'. *Ibidem*, pp. 217–218.

¹²⁰ '[...] choć zaskoczyła świat, była jedynie dopełnieniem długiej pracy, nagłym i gwałtownym zakończeniem dzieła, przy którym truduło się dziesięć ludzkich pokoleń. Gdyby się nie była dokonała, stary gmach społeczny rozleciałby się wszędzie i bez niej, tutaj wcześniej, tam później, tyle tylko, że dalej rozpadałby się po kawałku zamiast runąć nagle. Konwulsyjnymi bolesnym wysiłkiem bez stopniowania, bez przedsięwzięcia środków ostrożności i bezwzględnie Rewolucja skończyła nagle to, co z biegiem czasu wygasłoby samo przez się'. *Ibidem*, p. 56.

¹²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 38.

¹²² 'zdefiniowanym polem ignorancji'. R. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure*, New York 1968, p. 363.

intuition, are not broken, and often even become more intense. He points towards centralisation of the power, having its roots in the previous system. Paradoxically, despite the image of chaos and anarchy, revolution does not destroy the state but, as was expected by Marx, leads towards its further centralisation¹²³.

The beginnings of the scientific discourse on revolution are tightly linked with Tocqueville, but another name, Gustave Le Bon, should be mentioned here. The author of the seminal work, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*¹²⁴, analysed revolution from the perspective of crowd behaviour. Le Bon treats the crowd as a collective soul. He wrote: 'In the crowd one loses self-awareness of one's separateness, feelings and thoughts of all individuals have only one direction'¹²⁵. Once one joins the crowd, they lose their individual self-awareness and blends in the personality of the crowd. Revolution as a phenomenon dependent on the support of the masses has a great impact on human thoughts, emotions and behaviour. The features of the crowd understood as a basic form of revolutionary organisation are irrationality¹²⁶, violence and destructiveness. The crowds adopt various forms of the mind such as: revolutionary Jacobin, crime or mystic. They can co-exist during revolution, even though Le Bon focuses on the last one. He claims that the mystical nature is the foundation of all the religious and political beliefs. That is why revolution inspires mystical enthusiasm, which resembles religious faith¹²⁷. Revolutionary ideas, according to Le Bon, spread just like religious beliefs. When mystical elements and passion become the components of the revolutionary mind, almost always they lead to some sort of extremism (e.g. Jacobin). Importantly, '[...] the crowd does not possess a capacity for reasoning, however, it possesses a great capacity for acting'¹²⁸. Each type of the crowd is not incapable of acting and consolidating until a leader appears. The leader's suggestions influence the actions of the crowd's mind. Basic methods of leading the crowd are statements, repetition and an infectious

¹²³ J. Chodak, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

¹²⁴ Zob. G. Le Bon, *Psychologia tłumu*, Kęty 2013.

¹²⁵ 'W tłumie zanika świadomość własnej odrębności, uczucia i myśli wszystkich jednostek mają jeden tylko kierunek'. *Ibidem*, p. 15.

¹²⁶ Irrationality is an important element of Le Bon's ideology. His theory was based on the assumption of crowd activity breaking with rational forms. The revolutionary crowd seemed to be 'blind' and subject to all the suggestions. Such a perspective was similar to the one proposed by Vilfred Pareto, who highlighted the lack of awareness in crowd functioning.

¹²⁷ G. Le Bon, *The Psychology of Revolution*, London 1913, pp. 87–90.

¹²⁸ '[...] tłum nie posiada wielkiej zdolności rozumowania; posiada w zamian wielką zdolność do działania'. G. Le Bon, *Psychologia*, p. 12.

character. The crowd's spirit is shaped by the manipulating leader. They make use of simple images, words, slogans, all of which create illusions. Then '[...] individuals constituting the crowd lose a sense of their own will and succumb to those who impose their will'¹²⁹.

Pitirim Sorokin's theory is regarded as the first full-fledged modern theory of revolution. He proposed it in 1925 in his work *The Sociology of Revolution*. Sorokin's reflections were based on his direct experience of the Russian Revolution of 1917. His ideas focused on the pathological behaviour of individuals during revolution. It is an example of a behavioural approach. He wrote: 'the conventional clothes of civilised behaviour are soon to be taken off and instead of *socius* we face an unleashed beast'¹³⁰. Regarding these changes Sorokin made a distinction between six areas of repression (however, he planned to extend the list): 1) repression of food intake, 2) repression of basics of human existence, 3) repression of self-preservation activity, 4) repression of possession instinct, 5) sexual repression, 6) repression of self-expression and individuality¹³¹. All the above mentioned distortions '[...] break with conditioned responses, disrupt obedience, discipline, order and civilised forms of behaviour, change human beings into wild hordes of lunatics'¹³². Revolution can be triggered by repression or suppression of instincts. Importantly, most often revolution is preceded by war, which leads towards intensification of oppression of instincts and towards disorganisation of the state organism. These are indirect factors of radical change. Direct causes of revolution are threefold. Firstly, an increase in 'repression' of basic instincts of the social majority and inability to fulfil their needs¹³³. Secondly, a lack of reaction from the authorities. The ruling class cannot stop attempts to change the system. Thirdly, these factors should be of a general character. These are the necessary conditions for revolution to take place – a grassroots pressure combined with the weakness of the authorities. Sorokin noticed that revolution does not improve the situation of the oppressed groups yet

¹²⁹ '[...] jednostki tworzące tłum tracą poczucie własnej woli i bezwiednie ulegają temu, kto potrafi narzucać ją innym'. *Ibidem*, p. 58.

¹³⁰ 'Konwencjonalny strój cywilizowanego zachowania zostaje szybko zrzucony i zamiast *socius* stajemy twarzą w twarz ze spuszczoną z łańcucha bestią'. After: P. Sztompka, *Socjologia*, p. 286 (Sorokin's translations after P. Sztompka); Conf.: P. Sorokin, *The Sociology of Revolution*, New York 1967, p. 372; J. Chodak, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

¹³¹ According to Jarosław Chodak, Sorokin borrowed the ideas on the role of instincts and human nature from Ivan Pavlov and Vilfred Pareto. See: *ibidem*, p. 51 (footnote 5).

¹³² '[...] przelamują odruchy warunkowe, burzą posłuszeństwo, dyscyplinę, porządek i cywilizowane formy zachowania i zamieniają istoty ludzkie w dzikie hordy szaleńców'. P. Sorokin, *op. cit.*, p. 376.

¹³³ *Ibidem*, p. 367.

after some time it leads to further repression of their instincts. Therefore, a second phase of the revolutionary process, i.e. counter-revolution, becomes inevitable. Its causes are identical with the factors which led to revolution, i.e. the repression of instincts. The society, after a series of loses, slowly comes back to normality. The most effective patterns of human interaction are restored thanks to the reconstruction of the old institutions, political system and state apparatus.

Each of the abovementioned perspectives played an important role in the shaping of contemporary theory of revolutions. They were an inspiration, a reference point, and often a foundation for further reflection. For the theory of revolution they became cognitive patterns just like the ideas of Plato or Aristotle for philosophy. Some would even say that everything that was written after them can be only treated as a comment on their ideas. Obviously, these are not all classical theories but those most significant for our further thoughts. What should also be mentioned are the thoughts of the representatives of social and humanistic sciences such as: Max Weber, who focused on the revolutionary and post-revolutionary process; Vilfred Pareto – he incorporated a revolutionary turn into his theory of the circulation of elite;

Edward Tiryakian – interpreted revolution as a religious revival; Emil Durkheimi – revolution, just like suicide, is a manifestation of social disorganisation.

The echo of the classical ideas, often criticised or defended, resonates in most of the further concepts and ideas. There is no doubt that theoretical thoughts of Marx, de Oliveira, Tocqueville, Le Bon or Sorokin would lay the foundation for further research areas.

1.4. RESEARCH AREAS

If the 19th century is called the century of revolutionists, then the 20th century is the century of revolutions. Together with an increasing size of the empirical material, based on the classics of the theory of revolution, certain research areas appeared. Let us follow briefly the evolution of the major ideas.

The first important research area was the school of natural history of revolution. It developed in the 1920s in the United States of America among historians, political scientists and sociologists inspired by the vision of the past as a natural development of life. It analysed revolution in terms of phases of its development, its determinants and conditions. The new approach was initiated by Lyford P. Edwards in 1927 by publishing a seminal book, *Natural*

History of Revolution. Soon afterwards it was followed by Crane Brinton¹³⁴ and George Pettee¹³⁵. A characteristic of the natural school is the so-called etiological approach and understanding of revolution as a pathology or illness which infects a healthy organism. What is more, a revolutionary process is not treated by these researchers as an unexpected and violent phenomenon but rather as a slow, sequential social movement. Edwards wrote that '[...] revolution is similar to the elephant. The elephant breeds in the slowest way out of animals and revolution is the social movement that forms slowest'¹³⁶. The idea was simple, clear and it established some general rules. Revolution was viewed as a positive phenomenon, necessary to return to normality, to heal the ailing country. Owing to the selective choice of evidence for the sake of theory, the 'natural school' was criticised by historians. Still, it was the dominating perspective of revolution research (especially among American sociologists) till the 1960s.

The 1960s abounded in various ideas and theories. Generally, the ideas emerging at that time were viewed as a modernising perspective. It was at that time that many research areas emerged, such as historical sociology, psychological theories, structuralism, most of them of a temporary character. The sources of the revival of the theoretical reflection should be sought in the pressure of new events of a revolutionary character (e.g. China of 1949, Cuba of 1959, Bolivia of 1962). The empirical material prompted the academic circles to act, who previously were at an impasse for years. Scholars started to look for the causes and nature of violence. Various theories were used to explain the phenomenon of revolution, from the area of psychology, political sciences, or sociology. The basis for all the concepts and ideas was the modernising paradigm as revolution was seen as a side effect of various phenomena, which led to social tensions. The dominating functional-structural theory, as proposed by Talcott Parsons, was the starting point for most of the sociological ideas, which were considered as a side effect of modernisation resulting in imbalance and social tension. Psychological theories focused on the cognitive processes, turning of frustration into aggression¹³⁷ and on cognitive dissonance.

¹³⁴ C. Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolution*, New York 1938.

¹³⁵ G. Pettee, *The Process of Revolution*, New York 1938.

¹³⁶ '[...] rewolucja pod pewnym względem jest podobna do słońca. Słoń jest najwolniej rozmnażającym się ze wszystkich żyjących stworzeń, rewolucja także jest najwolniej formującym się ruchem społecznym'. After: J. Chodak, *op. cit.*, p. 65 (footnote 2); Conf. L. Edwards, *The Natural History of Revolution*, Chicago-London 1973, p. 16; See: idem, *The Mechanics of Revolution*, 'St. Stephen's College Bulletin' 1923, 64, 2.

¹³⁷ The theory of frustration-aggression underscores the consequences of frustration, which is always aggression or aggressive behavior.

A representative example of the analysed perspective was Chalmers Johnson. His beliefs presented in *Revolutionary Change* were based on the idea of the social system by Parson. He assumed that four conditions need to be fulfilled for the system to survive: maintaining of patterns of action (socialisation); adaptation; goal reaching; integration and social control¹³⁸. In this light there are three prerequisites for revolution to take place. The most important is imbalance in a given social system (upsetting of the so-called *equilibrium*), and the ineffectiveness of the groups deciding about the social state in its reformation. The appearance of an accelerator (the army support; revolutionary ideologies; revolutionary strategies) facilitates a revolutionary change¹³⁹. A similar concept was proposed by Neil J. Smelser, for whom social equilibrium was the foundation of social functioning. The author of

Theory of Collective Behavior understood revolution as a non-institutionalised collective behaviour prompting to take action in order to channel tension. His definition is very broad, it contains movements oriented towards values and norms, and aiming at personal changes in the authorities¹⁴⁰. Theories by Johnson and Smelser can be classified as sociological theories, even though psychological influences could be found in the latter.

Research areas based on a psychological inspiration are closely linked with influential and clear concepts proposed by Ted Gurr and James C. Davies. They gained popularity thanks to their simplicity and colloquial nature. The former introduced a concept of relative deprivation¹⁴¹, i.e. a difference between one's expectations and possibilities. In other words, it is a cognitively experienced discord between what one deserves and what is available. It concerns areas such as the fulfilment of needs, the awareness of which stimulates social groups to change their situation, to end their misery. Defining the experienced injustice is a first step towards raising social awareness, understanding of one's position and changing the reality. Together with people's awareness of '[...] what they really *should* have, and perception of the difference between what they *should* have and what they really *can* have, a relative deprivation is born'¹⁴².

¹³⁸ Ch. Johnson, *Revolutionary Change*, London 1966, pp. 51–52.

¹³⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 103–104.

¹⁴⁰ N. Smelser, *Theory of Collective Behavior*, New York 1962, p. 319.

¹⁴¹ Relative deprivation is a term introduced by W.G. Runciman and describes a difference 'between the desired situation and the available one'. See: W. Runciman, *Relative Deprivation and Social Justice*, California 1966, p. 10.

¹⁴² '[...] co tak naprawdę *powinni* mieć, i dostrzegą różnicę między tym, co *powinni* mieć i tym co faktycznie *mogą* mieć – wtedy dopiero rodzi się relatywna deprivacja'. P. Sztompka, *Socjologia*, p. 288.

Relative deprivation as a variable explaining revolution is the essence of Gurr's hypothesis. He mentions its types: diminishing – a decrease in the ability to fulfil one's needs; aspiring – an increase in the expectations of realising one's needs; progressive – a real improvement in realising one's needs leads to the continuation of the trend¹⁴³. The last type of deprivation is closely linked to the hypothesis of the J-curve by James Davies. Aspirations and possibilities intensify for some time until the realisation of one's needs becomes impossible. This results in the so-called 'revolution of the frustrated progress'¹⁴⁴. 'Revolution can take place at ease when an accordingly long period of economic and social growth is followed by a short period of sudden regress. What is most important in the first stage is the creation of a belief in the given society that there are possibilities to fulfil the inevitably growing demands, and in the second stage – a feeling of anxiety and discouragement, when the existing reality does not meet the expected reality'¹⁴⁵. One cannot overlook the inspiration coming from Tocqueville's ideas. Similarly to the French thinker, Davies states that contemplating a better world and throwing off the shackles, as well as experiencing the unknown creates a violent rejection of the burden through revolution. Davies' model borrows from this idea, and its graphic representation takes the form of the J-curve.

The element of political sciences among the research areas which emerged in the 1960s can be clearly seen in the theory of political order in the changing society by Samuel P. Huntington. It was also inspired by functionalism, just like the ideas of a sociological character. Huntington offered a synthesis of this paradigm with the theories of social and economic mobility. The state of imbalance as proposed by the author of *Political Order in Changing Societies* stems from the discrepancy between political, social and economic modernisation, which in its extreme form leads to revolution. The inhibiting factors are high institutionalisation, or the existence of a social structure which is too traditional or too modern. Revolution is not a universal phenomenon, taking place in each phase of

¹⁴³ T. Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, Princeton 1970, pp. 46–52.

¹⁴⁴ 'rewolucji sfrustrowanego postępu'.

¹⁴⁵ 'Najłatwiej może dość do rewolucji w sytuacji – pisał Davies – gdy po odpowiednio długim okresie rozwoju ekonomicznego i społecznego następuje krótki okres gwałtownego regresu. W okresie pierwszym najważniejsze jest wytworzenie się w umysłach ludzi żyjących w danym społeczeństwie przekonania, że istnieją trwałe możliwości zaspokajania potrzeb, które nieustannie rosną, zaś w okresie drugim – poczucie niepokoju i zniechęcenia, gdy istniejąca rzeczywistość nie odpowiada rzeczywistości oczekiwanej'. J.C. Davies, *Przyczynek do teorii rewolucji*, in: *Elementy teorii socjologicznych*, eds. W. Dereczyński, A. Jasińska-Kania, J. Szacki, Warszawa 1975, p. 390.

history. It is reduced to those societies which experienced belated social, economic or political processes¹⁴⁶.

In contrast to such a narrow understanding of revolution, a theory proposed by Charles Tilly appeared. He claimed that revolution is not a special, extraordinary phenomenon but, to paraphrase General von Clausewitz, an extension of politics with a new means. Revolutions are radical forms of fighting for political power and control¹⁴⁷. Tilly's key contribution was to make a distinction between a revolutionary situation and results. Importantly, Tilly was one of the authors and promoters of the studies of revolution within the area of historical sociology in the 1960s and 1970s. It should also be mentioned that the research developed by Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, Immanuel Wallerstein and Barrington Moore Jr. broke with the sociological paradigms connected with ahistorical functionalism directed at social statics¹⁴⁸. Tilly's ideas concerned a wide range of events and linked the major research perspectives of historical sociology. Tilly dealt with the creation of case studies and explanatory models connected with processes forming modern societies¹⁴⁹. Generally, a historical approach in sociology postulates studying specific societies and individuals. Historical sociology deals with specific examples of revolutions (e.g. Tilly studied mostly the French Revolution). An inspiration for such studies were the Marxist ideas (mostly Wallerstein's and Moore's) and the historical approach of the Annales school. They led to the emergence of new school of the theory of revolution which continued the research strategy yet developed it in various directions.

Dennis Smith mentioned Tilly, next to Marc Bloch, Fernand Braudel and Barrington Moore, as representatives of the research approach called 'interrogating judge', i.e. linking scientific objectivity with engagement in important social issues. One of such issues is revolution. Barrington Moore, the author of *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, shaped the following generations of revolution experts. Moore, for whom most of the ideas are of the Marxist roots¹⁵⁰, believed that a transformation of feudal societies into national states followed various paths and had various outcomes. The results of the change are democracy, fascism, and

¹⁴⁶ Huntington made a distinction between two types of revolution: western and eastern. The criterion is the nature or regime against which a given revolution starts.

¹⁴⁷ See: C. Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*, Reading 1978.

¹⁴⁸ See: A. Kolasa-Nowak, *Socjologia w badaniu przeszłości. Koncepcja socjologii historycznej Charlesa Tilly'ego*, Lublin 2001, pp. 11–27.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 9.

¹⁵⁰ Barrington Moore's basic category is social class, and the ruling class wants to subordinate the subordinated class.

communism, achieved through different types of revolutions¹⁵¹. In order to explain the beginnings and consequences of modernisation processes, Moore mentions four variables: the power of bourgeois impulse; serfdom work or market; revolutionary potential of peasants¹⁵²; the relationship between the state and various social classes. The case studies, which he analysed, were India (result: no revolution), China and Russia (peasants' communist revolution), Germany and Japan (fascist revolution), France, England, the United States of America (bourgeois revolution). The theory by Moore did not concentrate only on revolution but also inspired other generations of thinkers, including Charles Tilly. Jeffery M. Paige noted: 'We are all students of Barrington Moore, not only Theda Skocpol or Charles Tilly, who had the privilege of carrying out studies with him, or Jack Goldstone or Jeff Goodwin [who also cooperated – author's note] with one of his students [Theda Skocpol – author's note] but also Victoria Bonell, Susan Eckstein and myself were greatly impressed by his work. He created modern studies on revolution and contributed to the golden age of historical-comparative sociology and revival of political sociology'¹⁵³. Moore and his studies were ground-breaking for the theory of revolution and analysis of long-term processes.

Theda Skocpol, Moore's colleague, is related to the innovative work, *States and Social Revolution*, marking a beginning in new methodology of studies over radical social changes. It focused on three major revolutions in France, Russia, and China, where a radical change occurred in the early phase of modernisation. She compared these cases with the cases of modernisation processes where revolution did not take place, e.g. in Japan in the 1960s and Prussia at the beginning of the 19th century. The historical-comparative method serves as a tool of finding similarities

¹⁵¹ B. Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy. Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*, Boston 1966, pp. XIV–XVII.

¹⁵² Studies by Jeffery M. Paige, Eric R. Wolf and James Scott were based on the revolutionary potential of peasants. See: E.R. Wolf, *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century*, New York 1969; J.M. Paige, *Agrarian Revolution. Social Movements and Export Agriculture in the Underdeveloped World*, New York 1975; J. Scott, *The Moral Economy of Peasant*, New Haven 1976.

¹⁵³ 'Wszyscy jesteśmy studentami Barringtona Moore'a, nie tylko Theda Skocpol czy Charles Tilly, którzy mieli przywilej prowadzenia z nim wspólnych badań, czy Jack Goldstone i Jeff Goodwin, [którzy współpracowali – author's note] z jednym z jego studentów [Thedą Skocpol – author's note], ale także Victoria Bonell, Susan Eckstein i ja sam znajdowaliśmy się pod głębokim wpływem jego pracy. Stworzył on nowoczesne studia nad rewolucją, podobnie jak przyczynił się do obecnego złotego wieku socjologii historyczno-porównawczej i odnowy socjologii polityki'. After: J. Chodak, *op. cit.*, p. 152; Conf. J. Paige, *The Social Origins of Dictatorship, Democracy and Socialist Revolution in Central America*, 'Journal of Developing Societies' 1990, 6, 1, p. 37.

and differences. The basis for Skocpol's studies was the structuralist perspective, highlighting objective relationships and conflicts between groups and nations¹⁵⁴ but not '[...] between interests, perspectives or ideologies of particular individuals active during revolution'¹⁵⁵. To support her thesis, Skocpol quoted Erica Hobsbawm, who wrote that '[...] unquestionable significance of actors in a drama [...] does not mean that they are also playwrights, producers or set designers'¹⁵⁶. This approach was labelled as *state-centered approach*, which focuses on the state, an autonomous structure, organised to control its people and territory. The state has its own affairs, which are realised on an international stage. Hence one of the decisive variables are international relations or international pressure, caused by the unbalanced development of capitalism on a global scale and the emergence of national states. The guiding principle of the author of *States and Social Revolution* was: '[...] revolutions are not made, they come'¹⁵⁷.

A typical feature of structural studies was to look for a decisive cause of revolution. According to Skocpol, it is international pressure. Others were of a different opinion. Jack A. Goldstone, in his work *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World*, raised a question of why certain crises happened on a global scale in particular periods of time. The explanation seems to be simple; it is all about population growth that influenced all the institutions of social life. For example, the demographic explosion of 1500–1650 resulted in weakening of the state. It resulted in a surge in inflation, an increase in mobility, rivalry among the elites and caused a great mobility of the masses¹⁵⁸. These factors stem from demographic 'explosions' and can be decisive when it comes to a crisis. It is a specific synthesis of the analysis of a demographic character and a causal model.

The paradigm started by Moore evolved with time towards multidimensional studies together with new cases of revolution in Latin America, Third World and Eastern Europe. The authors such as Jeff Goodwin, John Foran, Timothy Wickham-Crowley, Farideh Farhi, Eric Selbin, John Walton, and Goldstone all belonged to 'the Skocpol's school'.

¹⁵⁴ T. Skocpol, *States and Social Revolution. A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*, Cambridge 1979, pp. 14–18.

¹⁵⁵ '[...] interesami, perspektywami lub ideologiami poszczególnych aktywnych podczas rewolucji jednostek'. After: P. Sztompka, *Socjologia*, p. 290; Por. T. Skocpol, *op. cit.*, p. 291.

¹⁵⁶ '[...] niepodważalne znaczenie aktorów grających w dramacie [...] nie oznacza, że są oni również dramaturgami, producentami czy scenografami'. After: *ibidem*; Por. T. Skocpol, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

¹⁵⁷ '[...] rewolucje nie są tworzone, one nadchodzą'. *Ibidem*, p. 17.

¹⁵⁸ J.A. Goldstone, *Revolutions*, pp. 83–128.

They all presented their theoretical stance in a clear way, which, according to Krzysztof Brzechczyn, is a manifestation of cognitive development. A high quality of methodology helps to verify the assumptions and gives an opportunity to use them in future studies¹⁵⁹.

The state-oriented model and international context proved to be extremely flexible and subject to modification. However, this interesting way of explanation, on the grounds of structuralism, has its limitations. For instance, it is the exclusion of issues such as mentality, social mobility, or psychological grounds for taking action. The belief that revolution is made in specific structural conditions (e.g. a crisis, a war) and not as a consequence of an effort by mobilised groups, acting in the name of values and ideas, seems to be contrary to historical experience. An act of ignorance towards revolutionists, their interest, ideology, motivation leads to a biased view of a given revolution. The structural causes (e.g. international pressure or population growth) are not explanations from the point of view of the subjects who decide on the start of a revolution or participation in it.

The structural perspective found its counterbalance in studies inspired by the theory of rational choice. Micheal Tien-Lung Liu paraphrased Skocpol's famous words when after the revolution in Iran in 1979 he said: 'Revolution was made, it did not come'¹⁶⁰. The models of rational choice appeared as early as the 1970s. A source of inspiration was the theory of collective action by Mancur Olson. Looking back in the past of the rational choice theory, its foundations were laid by Adam Smith and David Hume. They tried to explain social phenomena by relying on theories of individual behaviour. Olson assumed that people act in a rational way. Rationality was understood as an action which aims at maximisation of the expected results¹⁶¹.

On the basis of Olson's theory, Gordon Tullock put forward a theory accounting for the participation of individuals in revolutionary activity. His work titled *Paradox of Revolution*, published in 1971, was a starting point for studies focusing on a logical explanation of motives for collective action. Tullock noted that a choice whether to participate in revolution or

¹⁵⁹ K. Brzechczyn, *Polityka jako proces rewolucyjnej zmiany społecznej. Od Marksa do współczesnych teorii rewolucji w socjologii historyczno-porównawczej*, in: *Koncepcje polityki*, ed. W. Wesółowski, Warszawa 2010, pp. 309–310.

¹⁶⁰ 'Rewolucja została zrobiona, ona nie nadeszła'. After: J. Chodak, *op. cit.*, p. 153; Por. M. Tien-Lung Liu, *Explaining the Revolutionary Outcomes in Iran and Poland*, 'Theory and Society' 1988, 17, 2, p. 179.

¹⁶¹ M. Olson, *Logika działania zbiorowego. Dobra publiczne i teoria grup*, Warszawa 2012, pp. 9–12.

not is not made on the basis of the category of public goods. People expect individual rewards. The underestimating of gratification and punishment may be decisive for participation. Individuals make choices for their own good, out of three possibilities, i.e. joining revolutionists, supporting the authorities or being passive. Each of the possibilities is construed as a model¹⁶², which is characteristic of the construction of formal theories of a general nature. Morris Silver followed Tullock and defined a revolutionary act as '[...] extraordinary or (whether violent or not) taken by the agents in order to reach a change in the government composition, its structure or politics'¹⁶³. What is more, it modified Tullock's idea of highlighting the mental benefits of revolutionary activity.

Samuel L. Popkin customized the abovementioned theory to study specific revolutions. The topic of his study in *Rational Peasant* was the Vietnam revolution, and to be specific, the issue of peasants' mobilisation. With the assumption of rational actions, Popkin reached a conclusion that the peasants in Vietnam decided to join the revolution only when they assessed that it would give them better life opportunities. It was the benefits offered by the sides of the conflict that influenced the peasants' choices. It is exactly for that reason that the support for communists was conditioned by Marxism and Leninism. Selective motifs (the term borrowed from Olson), i.e. real and pragmatic rewards in the form of lessened workload tipped the scale for the Communist Party's advantage¹⁶⁴.

Popkin's work appeared in 1979, at the same time as Skocpol's work. They represented totally different perspectives of the study. On the one hand, individualism, on the other – methodological structuralism. In a wider context, it is a perennial dilemma of social sciences: the choice between an individual and structure. The two perspectives seemed to be irreconcilable¹⁶⁵. Skocpol's perspective won in general scientific circles,

¹⁶² The strategy of passivity is expressed in the formula $P_{in} = P_g * L_v$, where P_{in} is passivity, P_g is benefits from a change of the authorities, and L_v is the probability of a victory of revolutionists. See: G. Tullock, *The Paradox of Revolution*, 'Public Choice' 1971, 11, pp. 87–100.

¹⁶³ '[...] nadzwyczajny czy (z użyciem przemocy lub nie), podjętym przez aktora w celu osiągnięcia zmiany w składzie personalnym rządu, jego strukturze lub polityce'. After: J. Chodak, *op. cit.*, p. 159; Conf. M. Silver, *Political Revolution and Repression: An Economic Approach*, 'Public Choice' 1974, 17, pp. 63–64.

¹⁶⁴ S. Popkin, *Rational Peasant: The Political Economy of Rural Society in Vietnam*, Berkeley 1979, p. 262.

¹⁶⁵ It was believed that a real 'scientific' study within sociology entails a construction of general theories rather than historical generalisations as proposed by historical sociology. Methodological mess was the major accusation made against the historical approach. The advocates of the model of rational choice were accused of impracticality and artificial objectivity. Nicolasa Olssona Yaouzisa noted a lack of consequence and the incompleteness

becoming a study paradigm. Contemporary multidimensional theories grew within the idea of focusing on the category of the state as a basic object of revolution studies.

The dichotomy between agency and structure became more considerable with time. The authors to come tried to bridge that gap¹⁶⁶. The 1980s and 1990s witnessed a synthesis of the two paradigms. Jeffrey Berejikian placed radical agents within the structural frame. He was aware of the limitations of the rational approach and relied on the prospect theory by Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky. It is a link between the paradigms. According to Berejikian, the concept of the socio-structural frame is crucial to explaining revolutionary actions. Framing is one of the fundamental concepts in the prospect theory and it acknowledges the importance of prospect in decision making. The choice made by an individual is placed in their individual perspective of gains and losses. The conclusion is that structural explanations are necessary to account for the state's receptivity to revolutionary changes and their potential results. A rational choice is the basis of collective action, which is a sum of individual choices¹⁶⁷. Berejikian's idea can be described as a theory of the structure of subject commitment¹⁶⁸.

This borderline trend is still valid today¹⁶⁹. The discussion between the advocates of two methodologies does not resemble 'a dialogue of the dumb with the deaf'¹⁷⁰. An interaction between rational action and structure seems to be obvious. A theoretical reflection over revolution produced ideas synthesising opposing perspectives (micro-mezzo-macro, subject-structure, locality-globalisation). An expression of such tendencies

of the model of rational choice. The assumption of revolutionists' rationality implies rationality of despots. I agree with such a statement and believe that a solution to the problem may be the game theory applied to a given revolution. See: N. Olsson-Yaouzis, *Revolutionaries, Despots and Rationality*, 'Rationality and Society' 2010, 22, pp. 283–299.

¹⁶⁶ Which was connected with other methodological dilemmas.

¹⁶⁷ See: J. Berejikian, *Revolutionary Collective Action and the Agent – Structure Problem*, 'American Political Science Review' 1992, 86, 3, pp. 647–657.

¹⁶⁸ Similar ideas of breaking with the existing dichotomy were proposed by Micheal Taylor and Jack A. Goldstone. See: M. Taylor, *Rationality and Revolutionary Collective Action*, in: *Rationality and Revolution*, ed. M. Taylor, Cambridge 1988; idem, *Structure, Culture and Action in the Explanation of Social Change*, 'Politics and Society' 1989, 17, 2, pp. 115–162; J.A. Goldstone, *Is Revolution Individually Rational?: Groups and Individuals in Revolutionary Collective Action*, 'Rationality and Society' 1994, 6, pp. 139–166.

¹⁶⁹ A perfect example is Erica Selbin's ideas. He claims that it is necessary to follow the thoughts and feelings of revolutionists. Storytelling should be used as a tool for understanding, which is a comeback of the narration to the methodology of social sciences. In myths, memory, and mimesis Selbin sees factors spurring people to take revolutionary actions. A story is an attempt to find the missing link in the studies on revolution. See: E. Selbin, *Revolution, Rebellion*.

¹⁷⁰ 'dialogu niemego z głuchym'. It is a paraphrase of Peter Burke's expression. See: P. Burke, *Historia i teoria społeczna*, Warszawa 2000, p. 11.

in social sciences are the models such as the game theory, prospect theory, the concept of becoming, structuration theory, world-systems theory, theory of network society, the concept of habitus. They are not limited to the tools of one discipline but rather integrate various methods and create the new ones. The theory of revolution has been a specific area for which new phenomena are a development factor. They generate new questions. Waves of revolution have an impact on theorising, and the timeliness of certain paradoxes behind revolutionary changes, dressed in different intellectual tendencies, provides a wealth of answers. The importance of revolution understanding, especially those ignored or not identified, is expressed by Martin Malia, claiming that '[...] the drama of a great revolution happens only once in the history of a given country. Its cause is not a metaphysical historical imperative but the down-to-earth fact that in each country there is only one old order that the society tries to handle, and once it manages to or even tries, the epoch-making, irreversible event is over. The features of the revolution, the historical moment at the time of its outbreak, its course and direct consequences, all have an effect or even determine the future history of a given country, its politics, mythology, and the way it reacts to changes'¹⁷¹.

(translated by Konrad Żyśko)

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¹⁷¹ ¹⁶⁸ '[...] dramat wielkiej rewolucji rozgrywa się tylko raz w historii danego państwa. Powodem nie jest jakikolwiek metafizyczny imperatyw dziejowy, lecz ten przyziemny fakt, że w każdym państwie istnieje tylko jeden 'stary' porządek, z którym naród chce się uporać, a gdy tego dokona – lub chociażby spróbuje – ma już za sobą epokowy, nieodwracalny przełom. Cechy rewolucji – poziom rozwoju historycznego w chwili jej wybuchu, przebieg i bezpośrednie skutki – wywierają wpływ i wręcz determinują przyszłe dzieje danego państwa, styl jego polityki, mitologię, a także sposób w jaki reaguje ono na zmiany'. M. Malia, *Lokomotywy historii. Zwroty w dziejach i kształtowanie nowoczesnego świata*, Warszawa 2008, p. 292.

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STRESZCZENIE

Głównym celem artykułu jest analiza historii pojęcia rewolucji i zmian w ramach teorii rewolucji. Teoretyzowanie na temat radykalnych zmian społecznych od początku napotykało podstawowe problemy związane z omawianym zjawiskiem. Szereg pytań nie znalazło 'ostatecznej' odpowiedzi: Czy rewolucja różni się od innych zmian społecznych? Czy rewolucja ma początek i koniec? Czy rewolucja jest skutkiem przypadku czy konieczności? Dlaczego do rewolucji dochodzi w tym czasie i na tej przestrzeni? Jak rewolucja ewoluuje? Te podstawowe problemy wciąż są przedmiotem refleksji teoretyków rewolucji. Celem tego artykułu jest zaś wskazanie relacji między historią a teoriami rewolucji, jak i historią samej teorii.

Słowa kluczowe: rewolucja, zmiana społeczna, teoria, historia, przeszłość

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Karol Kasprowicz (born in 1992) – PhD student in history at the Maria Curie Skłodowska University in Lublin. Specializes in theory and methodology of history, digital humanities and history of Portugal.