CONTEMPORARY THINKING ABOUT THEORY BUILDING: A REVIEW OF THE CONCEPT WITH APPLICATION TO ORGANISATIONAL POLITICS RESEARCHING[1]

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Abstract: This article contributes to the rapidly growing body of literature regarding general good theory building practices with regard to organisational politics. The results of the review revealed and highlighted five core components of contemporary thinking about theory building: constrained comprehending, conjunctive theorising, theorising styles, pragmatic-empirical approach, and science-practice gap. Tying together those insights, the authors have developed a framework to distinguish a specific set of recommendations which clarify and organise theoretical foundations of organisational politics researching: cooperation of academics and managers, requisite complexity, contextualisation, versatility, and process perspective. In the authors' opinion, this provides a substantial opportunity for theoretical advancement through a careful methodological application.

Keywords: theory building, organisational politics.

1. Introduction

This study relates to contemporary concepts of theory building in management science, the applicability of which has been evaluated in terms of theory building activities in the field of organisational politics. It attempts to answer the following two questions in the most comprehensive manner. Firstly, what does the contemporary approach to theory building in management science look like? Secondly, is the new, emerging approach important to the development of theoretical foundations of organisational politics and, if so, what are its

consequences? Before we proceed to describe various theoretical approaches which may be useful in the field of organisational politics, we will briefly outline the understanding of theory adopted further in the study. We interpret theory as a set of interrelated assumptions, constructs and causal relationships between them (Bettis, Gambardella, Helfat, and Mitchell, 2014, p. 1411-1413; Kerlinger, 1986, p. 9; Sutton, and Staw, 1995, p. 371-384; Wright, 2017, p. 384-390). A strong theory also indicates processes owing to which we are able to understand systematic reasons for the occurrence of the actions, events, or structures in which we are interested. In general, theory helps to explain, understand, predict and control. Theory progresses as a result of its systematic development and rigorous verification of knowledge in an iterative process.

It is generally worth remembering the four principles of theoretical contribution evaluation. The first of them states that the broader a theory is, in terms of covering different phenomena, the better. The second principle prescribes a simple theory, i.e. a theory requiring a small number of assumptions. According to the third principle, a theory should include clear mechanisms explaining the interrelations proposed. The fourth and last principle states that a theory should provide relatively few viable alternative explanations.

The last decade has been characterised by increasingly strong advocating that a simplified, mechanistic perception of the organisation and processes occurring within it should be definitely abandoned, and a non-trivial, more complex view should be adopted, focusing on the interrelations between the elements of a whole and the processes of emergence (Dougherty, 2016). Following the foregoing, it is postulated that the level of complexity of theory and description language should be aligned with the diversity and the complexity of the organisational phenomena investigated, thus replacing the currently predominant striving for simplicity. This means focus on non-trivial theory building within the assumptions of ontology open to the world, of performative epistemology and poetic praxeology (Tsoukas, 2017, p. 132-153). The overall direction of action is that the theoretical discourse maintains possibly greatest relationality, timeliness, situationality and openness to interpretation. Following the above criteria, the authors selected five approaches to theory building in management science which became the key components of the contemporary view description. Combining the studies, the authors presented the concepts of constrained comprehending, conjugative theorising, theorising styles, pragmatic-empirical approach, and the gap between theory and practice. It leads to the conclusion that the management science methodology is at a turning point.

According to scientists involved in organisational politics, the process has its own specifics. Pursuing in that direction, the authors identified five relevant attributes, namely low visibility to the outside observer, complexity, important role of the context, polymorphism, and dynamics of power. It is worth noting that organisational politics theory building requires formulation of a set of metatheoretical rules which do not deviate from the specific nature of the process investigated. Such theoretical foundations, as the authors postulate and prove, comprise five

primary principles: cooperation of academics and managers, requisite complexity, contextualisation, versatility, and process perspective.

This study offers three potentially important implications for the progress of the management theory and practice, in particular for strategic management researchers, irrespective of their theoretical orientation. The first implication is of a methodological nature. It illustrates the building of a theory which is more developed and dynamic than traditional points of view. Following researchers believing there has recently been a methodological breakthrough, others have recently contested theory building based on determinism-related arguments and going as far as the sources of the static view of the organisation. Inclusion of the most important contemporary concepts, suggesting how to build a theory in management science, contributed to a more nuanced course of thinking about theory formulation and updating. This, in turn, made it possible to develop a more comprehensive approach towards theory building activities, and to discuss the complex role of a theorist.

Secondly, when trying to integrate contemporary literature on theory building into a single methodological perspective, the authors allowed for the most recent and the most important approaches. The efforts made enabled a more comprehensive perception of things, comprising the main five components which may be treated as specific aspects of modern theory building in management science. It should be noted and recognised that theorists were given greater choice so they could apply various approaches to theory building based on management science.

Thirdly, and apparently importantly, a new view was included in the theoretical research into organisational politics owing to the development of theoretical foundations aligned with the specifics of organisational politics. The suggested framework, covering five metatheoretical recommendations, even if slightly speculative, still improves our understanding of the way towards a more sophisticated organisational politics theory. The entire study is the first attempt of its kind in the subject literature.

2. Contemporary view of theory building in management science

An outline of the contemporary view of theory building in management science has been based on five emerging principles: constrained comprehending, conjugative theorising, theorising styles, pragmatic-empirical approach, and the gap between theory and practice.

2.1. The concept of constrained comprehending

Forty years ago, it was noted how often we happen to act although we cannot predict the consequences of such action, plan without the required knowledge, and organise despite lack of control (La Porte, 1975, p. 332-356). Weick rightly notes that as management science researchers we are still stuck in the circumstances surrounding the three aforementioned

inabilities, trying to link perception of reality to theoretical concepts (Weick, 2016, p. 333-346). From this perspective, of crucial importance are the eight types of theory building activities that constitute the concept of constrained comprehending. At this point, it is worth adding the assumption regarding lack of direct access to reality, and the inability to perceive neutrally.

The first of the tools constituting the theory building set of instruments are the assumptions being sets of claims regarding the phenomenon studied. The second type of theory building activity is differentiation. This type activity is aimed at strengthening explanation through determining how and why the activity subjects perceive a situation in a given manner, and how it affects their behaviours. Management science theorists also link perception and concepts so as not to perceive organisational reality without any conceptual reference, while not using concepts separated from perception. Concepts and observations limit each other. Another category of theory building activity is validation, i.e. a kind of confirmation of poorly documented assumptions in the areas of interest to other researchers. If a group of researchers see a validation having nothing to do with the assumption, they consider it inappropriate. If the validation is related to obvious things, it is considered unnecessary. All that plays a particularly important role in the context of statistical novelty, or significance. According to the constrained comprehending concept, the fifth element of theory building is related to the rule of requisite complexity, and it consists in complexification. This means that a variety of concepts is generated in order to define more-accurate-than-ever orientation in the complex circumstances of organisational differentiation and simultaneous organisational integration. Sixth of all, theory building is reflected in the outcomes of the wit and the insight, when experiences are realigned, reorganised, or reconstructed. This type of activity results in doubt and disbelief as to the knowledge possessed. Such proceeding is important as knowledge and ignorance need to be balanced, which means that wisdom does not manifest itself in what we know about facts, but in what we accept with limited confidence. The essence of the seventh component of theory building is in the interruption to find time for conscious feeling and thinking. The whole theory building activity completes the presentation of organisational phenomena to explain them in a clear and relatively detailed manner.

2.2. Theory complexification postulate

One should agree with Tsoukas who claims that coping with the complexity of the organisational world requires adoption and application of certain metatheoretical principles in conjugative theorizing (Tsoukas, 2017, p. 132-153). Recognition of three dualities is the starting point. The first one is the ontological duality, reflected in that the organisation as the subject of the research is an integrated whole, but also a process. The principle of ontology open to organisational reality emphasises that organisations are in a constant process of becoming, and that is why the future is open. Organisation members interact, owing to which organisation properties emerge, and organisational processes follow.

The second duality is of an epistemological nature, and it is related to generation of reliable knowledge: the organisation may be known either through identifying the existing relation patterns or through focusing interest on emerging interrelation patters. Those representations capture the essence of the phenomenon studied, and they are systematically interrelated. Each case studied contains elements of configurative uniqueness, although it also covers similarities with respect to other cases. The organisation constantly changes its internal states, and changes of its operation and development logic follow.

Performative epistemology assumes that cognition is an action oriented at seeing the logic of a practical activity carried out in a unique organisational situation. Here, theorising is of a performative nature in a dual sense. On the one hand, organisational phenomena are interpreted as interactive accomplishments, hence orientation at performance (action) facilitating occurrence of the phenomenon involved. On the other hand, theorising practises the consequence of open ontology, i.e. formulation of open concepts which are partially defined by the management practice (experience is of an epistemological value as it provides theoretical constructs with their final shape).

The third duality manifests itself in the praxeological aspect, when the instrumental impact on the organisation meets with the organisation being interpreted as the context of an unintentional action. In their work, practitioners may apply their knowledge instrumentally, considering it a tool to improve organisational effectiveness. However, one should not ignore the fact that circumstances, events, time, history and subjective preferences matter. Poetic praxeology perceives a practitioner as the creative subject of the action, pursuing proactive behaviours, changing her or his motivation, situated in the organisational context and in time.

2.3. Theorising styles, or argumentation methods

Cornelissen distinguishes three styles of theorising, constituting specific ways of argumentation (Cornelissen, 2017, p. 1-9). The first of them focuses on a set of claims, where the aim is to formulate an idea in the form of a set of claims linking the cause to the effect. One also needs to ensure that the claims are not too narrow in their scope, and that they do not only summarise the current literature on the subject, but they are also sufficiently detailed from the causality perspective. The second style is theorising oriented at developing a process model, entailing a narrative regarding a series of interrelated management or organisational processes. The whole thing is to result in the development of a process model characterising a set of mechanisms explaining specific events and results, and describing the dynamics of those mechanisms. The third style consists in the development of a theoretical typology which links different aspects in a manner casting more light on new constructs and new causal relationships. The point is to explain the complex nature of numerous concepts through incorporating them into consistent sets creating configurations reflecting the types distinguished.

2.4. Theory building as a scientific narrative

There has recently been a systematic review of the paths leading to the progress of knowledge in the field of management science through theory building (Shepherd, Suddaby, 2017, p. 59-86). It resulted in an integration of numerous theorising tools which were grouped into five key elements: a conflict, a construct, a theorising perspective selection, a sequence of events, and a plot. The entirety is set within an approach referred to as pragmatic-empirical theorising which uses the results of quantitative empirical research to stimulate theorising as a part of the scientific research process.

The first component refers to the narrative conflict (anomaly, tension, collision) as an incentive to theorise. Theorising begins with observing a pattern and moving forward to develop more reliable explanations of it. Secondly, initiating theorising through discovering, or generating a conflict – a paradox, a problem, a challenge – a theorist begins to formulate a research idea, expressed as a simple construct at first. The act of naming the key construct at the onset of the process is a critical step, even when the phenomenon itself is still uncertain somehow. The third area of theory building is the specification of the background that may take various forms, through the selection of the right theorising perspective: (a) a shift in ontology; (b) a shift in the manner of conceptualisation carried out by the theorist with respect to the nature of the phenomenon, resulting in a new perspective, (c) which typically requires a relevant shift in epistemology; (d) a change of the level of theory complexity; (e) transition back and forth between empirical data and theory, selection of levels. Another field of the theory building narrative involves allowing for time through the specification of the sequence of events, interpreted as the order in which events occur. Time should be considered from different perspectives, such as time experienced, time characterised as periods of stability and change, time studied with respect to the rate, extent and pattern of change (e.g. frequency, rhythm and cycles), time studied with respect to relations occurring between the past, the present and the future, and interrelations between constructs over time, expressed in mutual causality (e.g. positive or negative spirals). The last area of theory building narratives is the plot that maintains the versatility and the consistency of the argumentation.

2.5. Cooperation of theorists and practitioners

Although the central mission of management science is to contribute to management practice effectiveness, the existence, the scope and the increase of the management science theory-practice gap, in particular the absence of the right links between them, continue to be the greatest ones that researchers face (Bansal, Bertels, Ewart, MacConnachie, and O'Brien, 2012, p. 73-92; Kieser, Nicolai, and Seidl, 2015, p. 143-233). Therefore, attempts aimed at modelling the gap deserve utmost recognition. Among them, particularly noteworthy is the concept covering the sources of and potential solutions to the theory-practice gap, reflected in mutually complementary models of knowledge creation and knowledge transfer (Banks,

Pollack, Bochantin, Kirkman, Whelpley, and O'Boyle, 2016, p. 2205-2231). The problem is that knowledge does not only need to be created in the right way, but it also needs to be communicated adequately. Lack of good communication between theorists and practitioners of management science prevents knowledge transfer in a manner contributing to the creation of value.

3. Specific nature of organisational politics

Without dwelling into the understanding of the nature of organisational politics, the authors adopted an organisational politics definition based on the concept of providing a sense as an important strategic process. Such understanding of organisational politics puts an emphasis on the strategic processes of creating, reinforcing, modifying and abandoning shared meanings (Kulikowska-Pawlak, 2018). Politics is an essential everyday element of the organisational life and an important prerequisite for a more comprehensive documentation of the behavioural strategy, the activity of the organisation members, and the limitations of purely economic decision-making models (Hu, He, Blettner, and Bettis, 2017, p. 1435-1454). So comprehended organisational politics has its specifics that are reflected in five discriminants. The first characteristic feature is the low visibility to persons who are not involved in politics, as intentions and political behaviour itself are extensively vague and full of emotions. This is accompanied by the organisation members' incomplete understanding of the dynamics in which they are, in particular of the incompletely recognised rules of the games far from the logic of instrumental rationality.

The emergence of the second discriminant of organisational politics should be attributed to the complexity originating from a variety of individual, team or organisational interests creating a complex network of relationships. One cannot ignore the fact that looking at the organisation through the prism of coalitions joining tender proceedings, negotiating, seeking compromise, striving to gain a dominant position complexifies the whole picture. However, if the entire process is function-oriented, it may be a far-reaching, hard-to-follow source of competitive advantage, especially in uncertainty, hypercompetition and volatile environment.

If one allows for the adopted organisational politics definition, they will know that providing a sense, inclusive of setting the environment (context), cannot be overestimated. Therefore, the third discriminant of the process studied is the important role of the context (time in which political behaviours are pursued, organisation's current history, size and age, dynamism and hostility of the environment, or the strength of the organisational situation) which determines the significance and the content of politics in given situations. One thing is certain – organisational behaviours involving a large dose of politics interact with unique circumstances.

The three, currently distinguished discriminants of organisational politics need to be complemented with the fourth one, namely polymorphism. It is easy to imagine we are dealing with overlapping social, cultural, strategic, managerial, leadership and institutional aspects. Indeed, rationality eventually occurs along irrationality and arationality, and everything is based on affective, cognitive and behavioural microfoundations (Bratnicki, 2014, p. 109-127).

The fifth and last discriminant is the dynamics of power, ensuring the uniqueness of the ongoing process. Contrary to what may be predicted through the application of instrumental rationality (for instance bureaucratic rationality), purely substantive rationales do not always prevail within the organisation in the organisational politics process. This is partly so because organisation members tend to increase and use their power to influence. A rich repertoire of the tactics applied, and a wide range of the sources of power used are of substantial importance. All that results in the entire organisation turning into a highly dynamic entirety. In conclusion, the authors illustrated five attributes which enable a relatively precise description of the nature of organisational politics. Such a specification is a good starting point to discuss the specific theoretical framework of the process in a more detailed manner, which has been done further on.

4. Recommendations for organisational politics theory building

Current deliberations regarding the contemporary view of theory building in management science should be summarised with respect to the organisational politics theory building. Although the currently discussed literature indicates a wide range of scientific concepts and tools, it is still not a set of features specifying whether something is an element of the theoretical foundation characteristic of organisational politics or not. Given the foregoing, the authors identified a relevant framework covering five rules, namely cooperation of academics and managers, requisite complexity, contextualisation, versatility, and process perspective.

Discussing the first component of the organisational politics theoretical foundations, it is worth emphasising that in this case we are dealing with a theory regarding an organisational phenomenon, a case extremely difficult to observe from the outside due to the fact that mainly managers applying those political practices are familiar with them. Consequently, practitioners typically have a narrow picture of the organisational situations in which they are involved. Above all, it is worth noting that the cooperation of academics and managers is the primary idea underlying the organisational politics theory building. Theorists' belief of their superiority cannot be accepted, although such a positive distinction is otherwise a natural process. Thus, acceleration of the theoretical advancement regarding organisational politics requires an ongoing effort towards the integration of the scientific discourse and the managerial discourse.

Another important issue is the need to build theory at the level of complexity that corresponds to the level of complexity of organisational politics. Management science traditionally perceives theory building through the prism of mechanical philosophy. Emphasis on complexity is only a matter of recent years in which complexity became central to organisations and those managing them. In organisational reality, stability alternates with changes, repeatability alternates with creativity, an organisation member alternates with context in which they are situated, cognition alternates with affection, and target-oriented organisational behaviour alternates with measure-oriented behavior (Sonenshein, 2016, p. 739-758). Consequently, organisational politics theory building needs to be aligned with the resulting complexity by allowing for breakdowns, surprises and breakthroughs. Moreover, one needs to reasonably balance the complexity and the simplicity of the theory built (Bratnicki, 2004, p. 17-23).

Given the richness of the world of organisational politics, one should not ignore the context, uniqueness, process, time and, last but not least, the tension between the everyday, practical experience of the organisation and its scholaristic reflection in scientific rationality. This leads to the next component of the theoretical framework of qualification, namely contextualisation. Management science in general, and organisational politics science in particular, causal relationships are always located in time, and they depend on the situation. At the same time, there is often a dependence on the current path of the organisation's development and the nature of organisational learning. Similarly, facts should be linked to values. Therefore, ethics should be part of scientific models, in particular those referring to organisational politics. One should also mention organisational politics contextualisation, advancing due to the incorporation of various mediators and moderators in the theories being created.

The fourth principle, versatility, has two aspects, that of methodological pluralism, and that of theory building activity completeness. As already mentioned, the methodological pluralism postulate provides some important guidance on the road to the organisational politics theory. It is important that further research perspectives should be treated as a complement to the picture of the phenomenon studied. Naturally, this means complicating the organisational politics theory. However, this is the only way in which we can explain the whole complexity of the organisational politics process in question and ensure that its picture is complete.

Reliable organisational politics theory building also requires versatility of the research instruments applied. A whole range of useful tools comprises various theory building activities and strategies which help understand, predict and control organisational politics. The general direction of action is to link the perception of the organisational politics reality to relevant theoretical constructs.

Organisational politics science advancements need to be ongoing and iterative. The logic of building a relevant theory has the nature of a five-element narrative in which a specific set of theorising tools may be used in each of the elements. Adoption of the right theorising perspective, emphasising relationality, timeliness, situationality and openness to interpretation,

cannot be overestimated. In this case, focus needs to be shifted from politics within the organisational to the organisational politics process.

Given the foregoing, orientation at developing an organisational politics process model appears to be the most relevant style of theorising. Such an approach to theory building entails a narrative regarding a series of interrelated processes constituting organisational politics. The final result is to be a specification of a set of mechanisms explaining the dynamics of organisational politics, resulting in better understanding of conceptual interrelations in the continually improved model of the process.

The fifth rule, that of a process perspective, supplements the briefly discussed four principles. A model bridging the gap between theory and data, and setting the direction of research methods and statistical analyses, is a critical element of a research project. Models serve as tools of empirical cognition and organisational politics learning. Management science deals with two types of them: the variance model, and the process model (Payne, Pearson, and Carr, 2017, p. 11-18). As far as the variance model is dedicated to the questions about the antecedencies and consequences of organisational politics, the process model provides an answer to how organisational politics changes over time. Although the foregoing models complement each other, the process model appears to be more useful in discussing organisational politics. In particular, it makes it possible to explain sequences of events constituting organisational politics and leading to the organisational effectiveness of an enterprise.

5. Conclusion

The main purpose of this study was to present the contemporary approach to theory building in management science as a basis for the development of a set of recommendations for researchers studying organisational politics. The current literature describes a wide range of activities aimed at theory building in the field of organisation and management. A significant part of it has been published only recently, suggesting that until recently some important aspects had not been covered, which thus contributed to the emergence of significant research gaps in our understanding of theory building. The review of the most recent approaches to theorising enabled identification of five complementary ways of thinking. The reasoning provided valid arguments making it possible to claim that the characteristic components of the contemporary approach to theory building may be used as important theoretical foundations of organisational politics researching. However, despite the noteworthy advancements, scientists researching into organisational politics have failed to fully capitalise on the fact.

The fact that organisations face ongoing challenges regarding improvement of their effectiveness in order for them to survive and develop in the turbulent and volatile environment

continues to be the main attribute of the organisation. That is the reason for which over the last years there has emerged plenty of literature promoting new theory building concepts that allow for the current nature of organisational phenomena. Based on the theoretical contribution evaluation criteria, the authors focused on the five concepts of theory building in management science covering the main research areas. Firstly, the constrained comprehending researching indicates a need to implement eight theory building activities oriented at the alignment of the organisational reality perception and theoretical constructs so that an organisation and management theorist is able to benefit from the perspective of the correctness of the theory being built. Secondly, the conjunctive theorising concepts sheds light on the ontological, epistemological and praxeological dualities, and it emphasises both the role of integrating those three contradictions together, and the need to integrate them. The theorising styles approach induces reflection and selection from the three argumentation strategies: claim development, process modelling, and typology. Fourth of all, the pragmatic-empirical approach characterises theory building as a scientific narrative around a conflict motivating the theorist to act, a construct, a theoretical perspective selection, a sequence of events, and a plot. In particular, the concept discussed overviews and integrates the key scientific instruments which may be used by management science researchers. The last is the approach focused on the gap between the management's theory and practice. Accomplishments in that area deepen our knowledge of the fundamental sources of the gap between theory and practice which need to be counteracted so as to arrive at effective cooperation: information asymmetry, purpose inconsistency, and poor communication.

The authors believe that the outlined most important elements of the contemporary approach to theory building in management science may help understand their implications for the merits of the organisational politics theorising. What is more, the overview of the primary theory building concepts suggests that it is essential to go beyond assumption or speculation based on the traditional perspective. It is but the more modern approach that results in better organisational politics theory building as it facilitates the testing and possible expanding of the existing theoretical framework.

Indeed, there are valid reasons for assuming that the current approaches to theory building in management science may well be applied to theory building in organisational politics. The matter is very important; despite the fairly well recognised, significant impact of organisational politics on organisational effectiveness (Kulikowska-Pawlak, 2018), the process itself has not been sufficiently studied, and one of the reasons for it was the absence of satisfactory theoretical progress. Simply speaking, according to the authors' knowledge, specification of the theoretical foundations of organisational politics has not enjoyed any great interest on the part of scientists so far. Unfortunately, we know much less than we should about the matter.

Allowing for both the results of the overview of the contemporary approaches to theory building in management science and the foregoing considerations, five metatheoretical

principles matching the specifics of organisational politics were formulated. The pentagon of methodological rules covers: cooperation of academics and managers, requisite complexity, contextualisation, versatility, and process perspective. So developed theoretical foundations provide organisational politics researchers with the ability to carefully extend the theoretical and the practical contribution resulting from their research. In other words, the proposed series of recommendations for organisational politics theory building makes it possible to expand the methodological base of the scientific research carried out, and it is a good starting point to undertake work aimed at extending the list of methodological rules for organisational politics theory building. In general, the discussion held results in several new implications for the theory building practice in the field of organisational politics. Striving to ensure the correctness of the manner of procedure, one should refer to a short checklist. Have conditions for the cooperation of academics and managers been provided? Is the level of complexity of the theory being built sufficient to reflect the level of complexity of the organisational politics process? Does the detailedness of the context considered enable correct reflection of the organisational politics conditions? Does the organisational politics theory building process include methodological pluralism? Has a full repertoire of theory building activities been used? Has the organisational politics theory building been process-oriented?

Although this study represents but a step towards a more insightful study of the theoretical foundations of organisational politics, it does indicate several possibilities regarding future research. First of all, it would be valuable to determine sometimes subtle, but always critical similarities and differences between various concepts, followed by the identification of a significant to develop our theory building understanding with reference to an important yet hardly discussed theoretical foundation of organisational politics. It is to overcome unnecessary barriers originating from the outdated metamethodological rules without allowing for the current beliefs and accomplishments.

Secondly, not only theoretical foundations but also the ways in which empirical studies are carried out and the nature of the statistical analyses carried out determine the quality of scientific research (Osborne, 2008). This reminds of the need to attribute individual empirical research methods to metatheoretical rules in organisational politics. The process perspective, for example. According to it, longitudinal studies are the most useful. In general, aligning a project and empirical research performance with organisational politics theoretical foundations is so fraught with outcomes and consequences that it provides an opportunity to develop a more complete approach, and it is a significant step on the way towards it.

Third of all, it is obvious that finding reliable instruments is the key to the proposed approach, which is difficult if one allows for the wide range of available research methods and techniques. However, it needs to be noted that one should apply them to organisational politics in a reasonable manner. Without contesting their substantive value, one needs to remember the time and other costs of use of each of those tools. In other words, a scientific activity analysis may be enriched as a result of incorporation of the problem of economisation. Despite its

relevance, the problem has hardly aroused the interest of management scientists. Simply speaking, it is a promising area of future research.

Last but not least, creation, not forecasting, ensures true validation of the practical applicability of a theory (Kaplan, 1998, p. 89). That is when abductive reasoning plays a pivotal role. Conventional hypothesis generation and learning, although important to theory building, should be more extensively complemented by abductive reasoning which provides the most likely explanations to a specific set of facts. Those reliable explanations may be further developed, and then tested in further research (Bamberger, 2017, p. 235-238). This form of inference enables best identification of surprising organisational phenomena. The point is that neither induction nor deduction is a generated premise of something truly new, as both ways of searching for the truth depend on the past (Paavola, 2004, p. 267-283). Therefore, hypothetical explanations do not need to be confirmed in empirical studies so much as they need to be confirmed in a specific organisational activity.

The content of this article sheds more light on theory building. The authors also noted possible use of the results obtained in the context of political behaviours, demonstrating how the contemporary approach to theorising can be used by organisational politics researchers. As a final remark, the authors wish to express their confidence that the foregoing deliberations constitute a useful supplement to the current literature on the development of organisational politics theoretical foundations, in particular in that they provide a better perspective on how to build such a theory in a new way.

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