The European Higher Education Area: Organizational Structures and the Development of Political Science as a Discipline

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European Higher Education Area: Implications for Political Science as a Discipline

The Bologna Process has been understood as a curriculum reform. Of the original six objectives (Bologna Declaration 1999), the most attention has been given to the new BA-MA structure. Somehow the introduction of the ECTS system, mobility issues and the introduction of quality assurance mechanisms have been taken for granted, maybe because they had been introduced by the European Commission and some national governments already before the beginning of the Process. On the other hand, two remaining objectives, the adoption of a system of easily readable and the comparable degrees and promotion of European dimensions in higher education, have seemed obscure for many (although now they have been linked to the establishment of National Qualifications Frameworks and the creation of joint degrees).

It has become evident, however, that the Bologna Process is not only about the curriculum reform. It has become closely linked to the EU’s Lisbon Strategy (now EU 2020). In parallel with curriculum reform the Commission and national governments have actively driven the funding and governance reforms of universities. The Communiqué of the last regular Bologna Ministerial Conference (Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve 2009) emphasized such priorities as the employability of students, widening participation in higher education for underrepresented groups, laying foundations for lifelong learning, developing student-centered learning mechanisms and the need for universities to seek new and diversified funding sources and methods. The goal is to change the European higher education system thoroughly.
The implementation of the Bologna objectives will gradually change European universities, especially when governance reforms are transforming the system of collegial decision-making of academics into that of professional managers from outside (e.g. Wolf 2009). Privatization and the principles of new public management have invaded the academia as governments and other financiers of higher education want to know what they are getting with the money allocated to higher education. One of the beliefs is that European universities will become more efficient, if small departments are grouped together into larger schools.¹

A question that has rarely been asked is, how does the new emerging European Higher Education Area affect the existing disciplines, not only organizationally, but also intellectually (Berndtson 2009)? For instance, combining small disciplinary departments will already change the context of the existing disciplines. Larger organizational units are part of the quest for interdisciplinary teaching and research, which is one of the objectives of the Bologna Process and the Lisbon Strategy. In its communication on the role of universities in the European Higher Education Area, the European Commission has expressed this clearly, ‘[To] understand modern problems the old academic disciplines have to change, as there is an increasing need to develop interdisciplinary capability of scholars’ (European Commission 2003; italics, E.B.). The goal of interdisciplinarity was first mentioned in the context of the Bologna Process also in 2003 when the Berlin Communiqué (2003) emphasized “the importance of research and training and the promotion of interdisciplinarity in maintaining and improving the quality of higher education and enhancing the competitiveness of European higher education more generally”. From this time on, the demand for interdisciplinarity has remained in the documents of the Bologna Process and the Lisbon Strategy.

It is, of course, an open question, how different partners in the Process will interpret the call for interdisciplinarity. Often it is understood only as a need for scholars from different disciplines to collaborate with each other. There are grounds to argue, however, that the governments and the Commission mean more than just that. The goal is rather - to use Colin Hay’s term, “post-disciplinarity” – the dissolution of disciplinary boundaries in creating an integrated social science (Hay 2010: 124).

¹ Of the Irish situation, see Coakley and Laver 2007: 245. The same is happening also, for instance, in Finland and in the Netherlands.
What would that mean in practice? A good example comes from the United States. The Executive Vice President of the Arizona State University, Elizabeth D. Capaldi has argued for “Intellectual Transformation and Budgetary Savings Through Academic Reorganization” (Capaldi 2009). The Arizona State has already transformed its academic organization “to fit the current mode of intellectual inquiry – which is broader, more individualistic, and more interdisciplinary than previous modes” (Capaldi 2009: 19). According to Capaldi, the discipline-based university is no longer the optimal way to support the contemporary scholarly work or to accomplish the aims of undergraduate and graduate education. Reducing the number of academic departments and combining faculty into larger multi-disciplinary groups, brings together scholars with similar interests, helps to address social problems and, at the same time, conserves university resources (Capaldi 2009: 20).

Capaldi justifies the changes with the observable trends: the boundaries between the disciplines have become weaker and there has been a shift from researcher-driven, discipline-bound knowledge production to research that is funder- or problem driven, highly interdisciplinary, and applied. She also argues that a new system helps academics and students. It helps scholars who publish in interdisciplinary journals and are often disparaged by colleagues who emphasize the importance of disciplinary journals. Students, on the other hand, often suffer from rigid educational programs when too much depth within their majors leaves them unaware of broader perspectives.

Large post-disciplinary departments are also more flexible. Every university needs a tenured core faculty, but the problem is that it is more expensive than contract faculty and tenured professors are difficult to cut in times of budget crisis. That is why increasing the proportion of contingent faculty is necessary, which will leave tenured faculty mainly to take care of course design and supervising students, while less expensive faculty and/or student assistants will take care of course delivery and grading (Capaldi 2009: 25-26).

Capaldi’s arguments are based on the image of universities mainly as teaching institutions. She does not pay attention to the fact that disciplines have also other functions. First, they structure education and research. They also legitimate our necessarily partial knowledge. It is not possible to be an expert on everything, so disciplinary structures legitimate what there is to know (Abbott 2001: 130). Secondly, they constitute the labor market for faculty. As universities contain more or less the same departments, changing the system can deprive many (especially Ph.D. graduates) of their academic future (Abbott 2001: 126).
Although most universities today have interdisciplinary departments (e.g. peace and conflict studies, urban studies, gender studies), there are, however, limits for the number of these units. As Andrew Abbott has argued, interdisciplinarity is generally problem-driven and social problems have their own life cycle. So that would already make interdisciplinary academic system unstable. Besides, there are so many more social problems than there are existing disciplines that a university organized around social problems would be hopelessly fragmented. Problem-based knowledge is too abstract to be really able to compete with problem-portable knowledge of existing disciplines. Besides, the interdisciplinary system would be hopelessly duplicative, requiring more “interdisciplinarity” than does the current system (Abbott 2001: 134-135).

Of course this does not mean that the present disciplinary system could not change. Above all, if academic hiring and/or career structures will change. If higher education institutions aim increasingly at vocational education and if students hope to learn more by abandoning the disciplinary majors and studying more concrete problem-driven subjects, the change comes more probable. Especially, if the hiring (and rewarding) of academic staff changes into the hands of outsiders, administrators and students. That would increase the possibility of moving to interdisciplinary (or post-disciplinary) university (Abbott 149-150).

Another factor increasing that possibility is diminishing resources of higher education institutions (especially in Europe). There is an eternal battle for resource allocation within universities, which creates an increasing pressure for reorganizing disciplines. New demands usually come from different specialty groups which are less well-financed than the old disciplines. In their battle for resources, these groups tend to use abstract justifications for shifts in resource allocation. If administrators think that they can save resources by breaking up old structures and creating new, often practically oriented groupings under larger academic units, administrators and specialty groups may find each other. In that case, the danger before us “is that of organizational dispersal, with a multiplicity of names, akin to the situation that existed in the first half of the nineteenth century” (Gulbenkian Commission 1995: 81).

The existing disciplines are of course in different positions. Demands of change focus mostly on the social sciences (what would post-disciplinarity mean in regard to mathematics!). Political science as a discipline is especially vulnerable for a number of reasons. Although it is one of the core social sciences with sociology and economics (e.g. Furlong 2007: 402;
Gulbenkian Commission 1995: 15), it is more heterogenous than the other two disciplines. Economics has been developing into a coherent, paradigmatic discipline (too paradigmatic, say some) and although sociology has experienced the same internal questioning and break-away movements than political science (cf. Gulbenkian Commission 1995: 52-53), there has been much more debate in political science on whether a discipline is a science or not. Political science is also weak in comparison with the other two disciplines in the sense that it has developed relatively late in Europe and it is not an established field in all countries. In order to understand the precarious situation, the following analysis looks at the discipline from an historical perspective.

The Birth of Political Science as an Organization, Institution and” Knowledge Domain”

In order to understand the nature of scientific disciplines, one has to distinguish three different layers in them. As Tony Becher has argued, academic disciplines are difficult to define, as what constitutes an academic discipline “will depend on the extent to which leading academic institutions recognize the hiving off in terms of their organizational structures”, although “it does not follow that every department represents a discipline”. This means that organizational structures are an essential element of a discipline, but another requirement is a development of the organization as an institution. Institutions consist of norms, values and accepted practices. A disciplinary institution depends “on the degree to which a free-standing international community has emerged, with its own professional associations and specialist journals”. In that sense, departments have to earn their legitimacy in academia and in this, “international currency is an important criterion, as is a general though not sharply-defined set of notions of academic credibility, intellectual substance, and appropriateness of subject matter” (Becher 1989: 19). In that sense, the third requirement of a discipline is its intellectual achievements. There must be a relatively coherent body of knowledge (“knowledge domain”) defining the discipline with research areas, methods and theories. In an ideal situation, organisational structures, institutional norms and practices as well as the intellectual substance of a discipline coincide with each other. However, this is not always the case. When scholars increasingly form small subgroups within the discipline and test its organisational borders, organisational structures and institutions will change, producing also intellectual changes.
The development of political science must be understood from these three perspectives. It is often argued that political science as an academic discipline was first established in the United States. In many narratives of American political science, the founding of the School of Political Science at Columbia in 1880 has been taken as a symbolic beginning of the discipline (Crick 1959; Somit and Tanenhaus 1982). A recent collection of articles on the state of political science in Western Europe (Klingemann, ed. 2007) strengthens this image as political science seems to have found its place at European universities only after the Second World War: France (1945), Norway (1947), the Netherlands (1948), Germany (1949), Belgium (1951), Denmark (1958), Italy (1966), Switzerland (1969), Iceland (1970), Austria (1971), Portugal (1975), Spain (the late 1980s), Greece (1989) and Cyprus (1996). Only in Sweden (1877), the UK (the late 19th century), Ireland (1908) and Finland (1921) one could find a few professors in political science before the War. Even in Britain, however, “it was not until after World War II that politics was studied more widely at British universities” (Goldsmith and Grant 2007: 382). Furthermore, political science in Central and Eastern Europe is a post-socialist discipline, beginning to develop only in the 1990s under the new democratic regimes (Klingemann, Kulesza, Legutke, eds. 2002).

Because of the early development of political science as an academic discipline in the United States, it has sometimes been argued that political science is a distinctly American science (on this, see e.g. Gunnell 2002). However, if one takes a closer look at the intellectual contents of American and European study of politics before the Second World War, the picture becomes more complex. The study of politics has always been present at European universities. Germany is a good example. Politics was taught already in the 14th and 15th centuries in Vienna, Prague, Leipzig and Erfurt. And during the 17th and 18th centuries the special “Politikwissenschaft”, focusing on the general well-being of a political community, spread at German universities (Schüttemeyer 2007: 163-164). Besides, with the reorganization of German universities at the beginning of the 19th century (Humboldt), Staatswissenschaften started to bloom in Germany, mostly as a combination of politics with either law or history and in that sense, “the emergence of political science as an academic

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2 The same is the case with many other countries. Swedish political scientists often refer to the fact that the Johan Skytte professorship of discourse and politics was established at the University of Uppsala in 1622, (although the scholars holding the chair did not concentrate on the study of politics until the 1840s) (Ruin 1982: 299). In the same vein, Professor of Politics was founded at Leiden University in 1613.
discipline in Germany can be traced back to the beginning of the nineteenth century”, as “the first chairs were established as part of the Staatswissenschaftliche Fakultäten” (Klingemann 1996: 87). However, after 1848/49 revolutions the discipline “disappeared” although it was again partly carried on in law faculties under the name of Allgemeine Staatslehre in the late 19th century, when the interest in politics had become a matter of some concern within the faculties of law after the rise of modern state (Kastendiek 1987, 28).

At the same time, the development of the study of politics at American colleges followed European, mainly British traditions. The teaching at the American colonial colleges was based on religion and ethics (most colleges had been founded by different churches). The classical political philosophers were well known, as college courses included works by Burlamaqui, Grotius, Locke, Montesquieu, Publius (The Federalist), Rousseau and Vattel. Besides, Aristotle’s Politics seems to have been the basis for moral and political philosophy (Haddow 1939: 82). In many cases politics was lectured to senior year students as part of the course in moral philosophy. Harvard, for instance, had a professorship in “Natural Religion, Moral Philosophy, and Civil Polity” (Haddow 1939: 57).

The American colleges started to change in the 1820s. One of the new ventures in higher education was the founding of the University of Virginia in 1819, based on secular curriculum (Barber 1988a: 5). Another important new college was the South Carolina College (founded in 1805). In these two institutions law and political economy began to develop within moral philosophy, both receiving academic recognition as disciplines. In both subjects, politics was an essential part of the curriculum (e.g. governmental activity, public welfare). For the future development of political science, it was important that political economy was made an independent subject of teaching at South Carolina in 1825. In 1835 a German “refugee” Francis Lieber was appointed as Professor of History and Political Economy (on the South Carolina College, see Bordo and Phillips 1988). In 1857, he was invited to become Professor at Columbia with the same title. He asked, however, that his professorship would be renamed as that of History and Political Science (Haddow 1939: 122-123; 138-140).

³ In the 19th century the juridical-legalistic point of view began to predominate the theory of the state also in the Netherlands. But then, “between roughly 1840 and World War II Dutch universities practically neglected the existence of political science proper” (Reinalda 2007, 275).
Many intellectual historians see Lieber as the first American political scientist (e.g. Farr 1990), although his teaching duties were wide. He was assigned to teach modern history, political science, natural and international law with civil and common law. His professorship was also at the Department of Jurisprudence (which taught law, political economy and modern history). Later his title was changed into Professor of Constitutional History and Public Law and his position was moved to the Law School (Rozwadowski 1988: 185-188).

If the foundations for political science were laid in the period from the 1820s to the Civil War, the real development began after the War. As Moral Philosophy started to concentrate on individual ethics, law schools to neglect the teaching of public law, and Political Economy to focus mainly on the problems of production and distribution of goods, the study of politics began to reorient itself. Political science “tried to satisfy practical demands, which other academic disciplines refused to meet” (Morgenthau 1955: 436-437; also Crick 1959: 12).

In the new situation, the study of history and political science had close links with each other at some universities, while political science and constitutional law were considered as two sides of the study of politics at some others. In this respect, there were two influential universities, Johns Hopkins and Columbia. Both represent a new modern university, which was born in the United States between the 1870s and the early twentieth century. During this period the Federal government began increasingly to act in the field of education (Veysey 1965: 15). On the other hand, the economic growth after the Civil War created large business empires, whose owners channelled some of their money for the founding of research universities, as private money was used to establish such first rate new universities as Cornell, Johns Hopkins, Stanford and the University of Chicago (Ricci 1984: 33-34).

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4 Crick compares American situation with that of Germany, arguing that the vitality of the 19th century German Jurisprudence largely explains why ‘political science’ did not find a separate identity in Germany at the time. Peter Wagner has also argued that on the Continental Europe of the 19th century, “public law became the codified language in which to talk about the state” and “the existing demand for political-administrative professionals in the new states could to some extent be satisfied with exactly this formal legal training” (Wagner 2001: 26).

5 The Johns Hopkins and Columbia were not the only institutions, where political science developed. In many other colleges and universities “Schools of Political Science” were founded, for instance, at Cornell (already a decade before the Columbia School), at the University of Michigan (1881) and at Yale (1886). These other institutions were not able, however, to compete with the Johns Hopkins and Columbia at that time, mainly because they did not pay attention to research and doctoral education (Lepawsky 1964: 42-43).
The new universities were influenced by different European higher education ideologies. From England was taken the idea of a general (liberal) undergraduate education as a principle on training good members for society. The German “Humboldtian” ideology, on the other hand, emphasised freedom and unity of teaching and learning. This came to dominate the post-graduate work and led to the rise of big American research universities. The third ideology was the French “Napoleonic” model, according to which teaching and research were separated from each other. During “the Napoleonic reforms”, a system of elite professional education institutions had been created in France. Research, on the other hand, was carried out in a number of extra-university institutions. The American application, however, incorporated professional schools into the university structure (law, business). The new American higher education system developed out of these three European models (Wittrock 1985: 16; 25).

The American remodelling of European traditions led to the departmentalization of American universities at the turn of the century. Although departments existed already at some universities, the first university to set up a departmental system based on specific disciplines was the University of Chicago (founded in 1892). The system was internationally unique spreading to Europe and elsewhere only after the Second World War (Abbott 2001: 122-123). Departments gave better possibilities for the recognition of new disciplines than, for instance, the German single-chair system (Wittrock 1985: 25).

Political science was a product of this development. The Johns Hopkins University was opened in 1876. One of its departments was a Department of “Moral and Historical Sciences”, consisting of Ethics, Political Economy, History, International and Public Law (Barber 1988c: 206). Soon the University wanted to develop a branch of sciences which came to be described as “Historical and Political Science”. In 1881 Herbert Baxter Adams was hired as “an associate”. He had a Ph.D. degree from Heidelberg, where he had studied history and to some extent also political economy (Barber 1988c: 209-210). The following year Adams was given responsibility to direct the work of the Department of Historical and

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6 The German model was an important model for the restructuring of the American doctoral training in the late 19th century as a first hand experience of the German university was brought home by hundreds of American students going to study at German universities after the Civil War (Haddow 1939: 172).

7 As to the social sciences, Chicago began with separate departments of political economy, political science, history, sociology and philosophy (Barber 1988b: 245).
Political Science. Within the Department, students were expected to choose history, political science or political economy as their major field of specialization (Barber 1988c: 212-213). Although Adams himself taught both history and political science he leaned more towards history than towards political science. Revealing is the aphorism of a British historian, Edward A. Freeman, “History is past politics and Politics present history”, which was inscribed on the wall of Adams’ seminar room (Somit and Tanenhaus 1982: 25). Adams was also one of the prime actors setting up the American Historical Association in 1884.

That is one of the reasons, why Columbia has been seen more as a birthplace of American political science. However, at the beginning even the Columbia School was only a collection of different social science subjects. It was not until the early 1890s that it had managed to evolve into the Faculty of Political Science with three internal administrative groupings, “Economics and Social Science”, “History and Political Philosophy,” and “Public Law and Comparative Jurisprudence”. The Department of Political Science developed later out of Public Law and Comparative Jurisprudence. The legal emphasis of the program was significant, as Burgess and most of his associates had been trained in law (Somit and Tanenhaus 1982: 18-19).

The Columbia School of Political Science was modelled after the Ecole Libre des Science Politiques in Paris. The “founder” of the School, John W. Burgess had studied in Germany and Paris (from 1869 to 1873) and conceived the idea for the School in Europe. As he wrote later, “The institutions, which, as models, influenced me were the Imperial University of Strassburg, which had a separate Faculty for the Political Sciences, and the Ecole libre des sciences politiques at Paris” (Burgess 1916). The Ecole Libre offered the object of teaching, a professional training for civil service with more general, native idea of political studies as citizenship training (Somit and Tanenhaus 1982: 45-48). The method of teaching, seminars and a system of original lectures, however, was taken from Germany.

The development shows that the American and European political sciences reminded each other intellectually and even organizationally. After the Ecole Libre des Science Politiques in Paris had been founded in 1871, other schools had soon followed in Europe, the Facoltà di scienze politiche in Florence (1874), schools for political and social sciences at the Catholic University of Louvain and the Free University of Brussels in 1893, the London School of Economics and Political Science (1895), the Ecole des Sciences Sociales et Poliques at
Lausanne (1902), and later, for instance, the Deutsche Hochschule für Politik in Berlin (1920) and a Higher School of Political Sciences in Athens (1927).

What began to distinguish the American political science from the European one, however, was the evolution of political science as an institution. To strengthen their position departments began to establish publishing outlets as instruments for the dissemination of their research results. The Johns Hopkins Studies in Historical and Political Science was founded in 1883, and in 1886 Columbia began to publish the Political Science Quarterly. In 1890, the University of Pennsylvania came up with the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science (Ricci 1984: 63).

An important factor in the development of political science as an institution was the founding of the American Political Science Association in 1903. With the Association, the discipline began to gain its real identity and the launching of the American Political Science Review in 1906 became the final push in the disciplinary development. This led into a further growth of separate political science departments.

As political science had its roots in moral philosophy, history, political economy and law, the more it began to emphasize itself as a discipline of its own, the more it had to separate itself from these older fields. This meant identifying itself as a social science. Especially sociology and psychology became close allies. However, at the same time it had to distinguish itself from the other social sciences, which led into a system of social sciences legitimating each other (cf. Gulbenkian Commission 1995).

It was also the time when the American political science began to distinguish itself intellectually from the European study of politics. Until the War American social and political scientists had keenly followed European social sciences. After the War, when

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8 As was the case with the Columbia Faculty of Political Science itself, its journal Political Science Quarterly at that time was, however, a general social science journal devoted to "the Historical, Statistical and Comparative Study of Politics, Economics and Public Law".

9 By 1914 there were 38 separate political science departments at American universities. Political science was also offered in 216 departments with other disciplines: history (80), history and economics (48), economics and sociology (45), economics (22) and history, economics and sociology (21) (Anderson 1939: 263; cf. also, Ricci 1984: 61-62).
Americans began to focus more on the internal problems of their own country, European ideas seemed to lose their relevancy\textsuperscript{10}.

The U.S. political development required new perspectives for the study of politics. Constitutional problems had been “solved” and new problems had emerged. The earlier focus of political science, state as a central concept\textsuperscript{11}, was replaced by the study of voting, political parties and pressure groups. This separated political science from history and law. From other social sciences some political scientists took an interest in applying statistics in their research. The old theories of sovereignty gave way to a new pluralist theory of the state, which became a new perspective in understanding the political process (e.g. Berndtson 1987). These changes have even been interpreted as the only real revolution in the development of American political science (Gunnell 2004).\textsuperscript{12} When the organizational and institutional development created a new “knowledge domain”, the discipline of political science was born. But that happened only during the 1920s and 1930s.

\textbf{Comparing the Development of Political Science in Western Europe}\textsuperscript{13}

Before the Second World War, the study of politics flourished at the European schools of political sciences. There was no discipline, however, as there were no separate departments, no political science associations and the intellectual contents did not differ from those in law, history, political economy or sociology.

\textsuperscript{10} This may be seen by looking at book reviews in \textit{Political Science Quarterly} and in \textit{American Political Science Review}. A number of reviewed books by European scholars was remarkable until the 1920s, after which the interest in European scholarship began to vanish (Berndtson 1987: 89).

\textsuperscript{11} At the beginning even the main interests of the American Political Science Association had dealt with problems of administration, legislation and constitutional and public law (Willoughby 1904: 27).

\textsuperscript{12} The pluralist theory of democracy and behavioralism, which developed after the Second World War, were only a continuation of this development.

\textsuperscript{13} The following analysis focuses only on West European countries. Today the differences between Western European political science and the Central and Eastern European one are not as marked as they still were a decade ago. As the discipline in the latter countries is, however, a young one, these countries have been left out of the analysis for practical reasons. As the purpose of this article is to focus mainly on the impact of educational policy on the discipline of political science, this decision should not affect the analysis itself. Naturally it is a shortcoming in the presentation of the overall picture of political science in Europe today. I hope to be able to correct this shortcoming in the future.
John Coakley (2004: 172) has referred to four major national traditions in political science, which moulded the European political science after the War.

- The American approach, open to other social sciences, including psychology (influential in Europe, but also in the Middle East, parts of Asia and in Latin America)
- The British approach, slowly asserting its independence from moral philosophy (influential in most of the Commonwealth countries, especially India)
- The French approach, rooted in the Roman law tradition (influencing Mediterranean Europe, but also Latin America)
- The German approach, originating in constitutional and administrative law and evolving into the systematic study of the state (influencing the Netherlands, Austria, Scandinavian countries, and Japan).

The American approach and the three European approaches have influenced the European study of politics in various ways. As the American approach has influenced also the British, German and French political science, it can be understood as a kind of meta-tradition. American political science had, indeed, a major impact on the study of politics in many European countries after the Second World War (e.g. Daalder 2010). Its impact was both direct and indirect. However, as Britain, France and Germany had their own traditions of political studies, the American influence differed from one country to another. The major factor in institutionalizing political science in Europe was the founding of the International Political Science Association, which led to the birth of national associations. It also contained the seeds of the American influence on European political science. Quincy Wright, the first President of the International Political Science Association wrote in 1949:

“I was impressed at the recent meeting to form an International Political Science Association in Paris with the lack of political science associations in the world and the lack of belief among many people that a political science was possible. … One of the tasks of the international associations in the social sciences therefore is to try to spread what we know about social science in the United States to the rest of the world” (Wright 1949b).

The order of founding of national associations tells about the institutionalization of the discipline in Western Europe: Finland (1935), France (1949), the UK (1949), Netherlands (1950), Belgium (1951), Germany (1951), Norway (1956), Switzerland (1959), Denmark

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14 Coakley mentions also the fifth tradition, the Soviet approach, which is not relevant for the analysis of this paper.
The American political science influenced European academia also through the Fulbright program, which brought European scholars to American universities. There was no European political science community after the War, as early political scientists worked mainly in their own national contexts. If European scholars met with each other, it was usually in the United States (see Daalder, ed. 1997). In fact, it was not until 1970 when the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) was launched that European political scientists began to cooperate at the European level (Berg-Schlosser 2006).

The direct American influence was the strongest in Northern European countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands and partly in Belgium and Ireland), where political science chairs were established in the 1940s/1950s (in Sweden already in 1877, in Finland in 1921). In all these countries political science was seen as a way to educate new kinds of civil servants. Another argument for the founding of political science as a separate university discipline was the experience of occupation during the War (Belgium, the Netherlands, Norway). In these countries there were also some “enlightened” lawyers and historians who were influential in proposing a new academic discipline. The American empirical study of politics was mainly introduced through electoral studies, which later helped to spread the empirical study of politics in other areas of research (see, articles in Klingemann, ed. 2007).

In the other small European countries (Austria, Iceland, Switzerland), the first chairs were founded only around 1970. In the case of Iceland, this was due to the small size of the country and to the fact that the University of Iceland was founded only in 1970. In Austria, there was a strong opposition from theology, law, medicine, history and economics towards a new discipline. Especially the lawyers opposed political science and thought that the study of law was still the basic requirement for working as a civil servant (Appelt and Pollak 2007, 45). The same was the case in Switzerland, where until the 1970s “law was considered a discipline both necessary and sufficient for a good understanding of Swiss politics”, and “practical experience made scientific analysis quite useless. Many saw in political science a passing fashion from abroad and held it in suspicion” (Wemegah 1982: 327).

Cyprus, Greece, Portugal and Spain have joined the European political science community still later. Cyprus became independent only in 1960, and as in Iceland, its first University was
established quite late, in 1990. Before that, Cypriots went to study abroad. In the case of the three other countries, their development was framed by authoritarian regimes until the mid-1970s and it took awhile for political science to begin to develop (see the articles in Klingemann, ed. 2007). The legacy of law schools has also hindered the development of political science in these countries. Greece, Portugal and Spain have been influenced by the French tradition (rooted in the Roman law tradition). A good example is the Universidad Complutense de Madrid during the Franco dictatorship. The study of politics was introduced in the 1950s, but the curriculum was restricted and “[T]o avoid political controversy the dominant approach to the subject was legalistic and constitutionalist” (Etherington and Morata 2007: 325).

Because of their own traditions of political studies, the development of the discipline in Britain, France and Germany is interesting. It must also be remembered that these traditions have developed under the more general higher education ideologies (Newmanian, Napoleonic and Humboldtian). Italy (a country of Machiavelli and Mosca!) is also an interesting case, although the country does not have the same kind of identifiable tradition of political science as the three other big European powers. However, comparing Italian development especially with the German one, helps to understand the developmental logic of European political science.

Many observers argue that today Britain is the leading European political science community (e.g. Mény 2010: 13). On the other hand, it can be argued that German political science has also developed into a strong discipline, especially during the last forty years. In contrast, Italian political science has remained a compact, but small discipline, while France has only recently began to show interest in international co-operation.

Although France was the first country to set up its own political science association after IPSA had been founded and although there have been internationally influential individual French political scientists (e.g. Raymon Aron, Serge Hurtig, Maurice Duverger), the international (American) influence has been weak in France. The French discipline has remained somewhat parochial and some have felt, “marginalized” (Blondiaux and Déloye 2007: 155). It has also suffered from a relative lack of visibility in the French public discussion, as philosophers, sociologists and historians have traditionally talked about politics with greater explanatory power (Favre 1982: 164; Blondiaux and Déloye 2007: 158-159).
One of the reasons for this situation is the French “Napoleonic” higher education ideology, which has moulded political studies in France. The old Ecole Libre was restructured in 1945 and divided into two parts: the Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques (FNSP) became the financial guardian of the new institution (with research), while the Institut d’Etudes Politiques (IEP), Paris became its teaching component. At the same time, a number of other IEPs were founded\(^{15}\). As the French higher education system has been marked by the duality of the system consisting of universities and “Grande Ecoles”, political science has developed above all at the IEPs, while at the universities it has been mainly part of the law faculties (Blondiaux and Déloye 2007: 137). At the same time teaching and research have been partly separated from each other, as much of the research has been conducted in research institutes (CNRS, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique; FNSP; research institutes at universities). The system has kept political science from developing as an independent discipline in France\(^{16}\).

As Hans-Dieter Klingemann (2008: 374) has also noted, French political science had initially profited from its incorporation (in 1954) as compulsory discipline in the curriculum of the law faculties, but although this may have been an advantage at the time, it has created a gap between France and other European countries in the field of political science. Especially as professors and assistant professors at law faculties outnumber significantly those at the IEPs (in 2004, the law faculties had 240 professors and the IEPs 84) (Blondiaux and Déloye 2007: 140-141).

Instead, the British political science has been a success story. Nevertheless, even there doubts about the possibility of the scientific study of politics have been quite common. The 19\(^{th}\) century British political studies had been marked by a strong anti-scientific culture. The defeat of Benthamism (and an attempt to develop “a science of legislation”) by the Whig protagonists praising the excellence of the British Constitution had left the field of political studies to philosophers, historians and jurists as well as to politicians and journalists and until the 1960s “skepticism about the possibility of political science was deeply rooted in the British intellectual tradition, represented notably by the University of Oxford. … The belief that a liberal élite education could best be acquired through an acquaintance with the political philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, coupled with a knowledge of the history of the political

\(^{15}\) Today there are eight other IEPs: Aix-en-Provence, Bordeaux, Grenoble, Lille, Lyon, Rennes, Strasbourg and Toulouse.

\(^{16}\) There are only two independent political science departments in France, at Paris I (Panthén-Sorbonen), founded in 1971 and at Paris VIII (Saint-Denis), founded in 2007 (see, Déloye and Mayer 2008: 3).
systems of Athens and Rome, survived the Second World War, when mainstream political science was having difficulties in institutionalizing itself” (Hayward 2003: 18-19).

The founding of the London School of Economics and Political Science was the first attempt to break this British tradition, as Sidney Webb’s plan to create the London School as a replica of the Ecole Libre to train an elite for the country represented “a meritocratic-technocratic break with the gentleman-amateur Oxford tradition” (Hayward 2003: 12). The School had a professorship in political science (since 1914), the first professor being Graham Wallas, whose 1908 book “The Human Nature in Politics” had been widely praised among American political scientists as an approach to a scientific study of politics. The early LSE failed, however, to create a true replica of Sciences Po, with its practical concern to train an élite to serve the state. Other similar attempts failed, too. The creation of Nuffield College in Oxford in the 1930s tried to institutionalize a model of applied political science, but the College did not succeed in its plans (Hayward 2003: 19).

This situation helps to understand why the reception of American political science in Britain after World War II was often critical, best expressed by Bernard Crick’s book “The American Science of Politics” (1959). American behavioralism was strongly resisted after the War. Nevertheless, parts of it were adopted into the British political studies (not science!). The British approach to the study of politics has in many ways been an independent, but a practical one. The British approach has resisted the wholesale importation of any orthodoxy, being “characterised by eclecticism and a willingness to adapt and change in order to improve” (Goldsmith and Grant 2007: 382). In that sense, the American influence on Britain can best be described as “the muted impact” (Hayward 1991). This has led to a gradual change of the British liberal élite education model. The founding of new universities, especially in the 1960s, gave a chance to a new generation of political scientists to redirect the study of politics in the UK. The empirical (and quantitative) study of politics started to gain support in many places, the University of Essex being a prime example of these.

The German and Italian developments have again been different and more complex. Both countries had to restructure their societies after the lost War. New democratic systems also required a new political science. The social and political context as well as cultural and

17 “Sidney had long considered that Britain needed an institution devoted to the social sciences. On his American tour he had been impressed by the work of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; he had envied the Ecole Libre des Sciences Politiques in Paris; and his work on the Technical Education Board had made him see the need and the possibility of doing something similar in London” (MacKenzie 1979: 214).
organizational factors, help to explain why the discipline has grown in Germany but remained small in Italy.

In explaining the emergence of political science in Italy, Luigi Graziano has argued that the emergence of political science as a discipline in Italy can be explained by four factors: 1) a conscious effort by a few authoritative scholars (Giovanni Sartori, Norberto Bobbio and Bruno Leoni), 2) the social and economic development of Italian society, 3) the impact of American political science in the age of behavioralism (“arguably the most important factor”) and, 4) changes in the Italian university structure (Graziano 1987: 42; see also Cotta 1996; Freddi and Giannetti 2007; Capano and Verzichelli 2008).

The impact of American political science is a good starting-point. In the case of Italy, this meant the impact of American behavioralism. Political science was a latecomer in Italy, being recognized as an academic discipline only in the 1960s (Sartori becoming the first Italian political science professor in 1966 in Florence). As the 1960s was a heyday of behavioralism, Italian political science emphasized its identity as an empirical and quantitative study of political behavior. The American influence came through American scholars, foundations (especially the Ford Foundation) and universities. Foundation money became available for research projects, for the founding of Italian/American institutions (e.g. the Bologna Center of the Johns Hopkins), for postgraduate agreements with American universities and for the translations of American articles into the Italian language (Graziano 1987; Freddi and Giannetti 2007).

The emerging discipline, however, faced a cultural barrier, as the Italian intellectual culture was heavily influenced by the Hegelianism of Benedetto Croce and there were many “idealistic preconceptions against the social science and a deep-rooted tradition of anti-empiricism” (Graziano 1987: 43), consisting of “a tri-partite coalition of axiological philosophers, Kelsenian law professors and historians preaching neo-idealistic historicism” (Freddi and Giannetti 2007: 257). Many political scientists saw empirical political science and “its realism” also as instruments “in bringing about reform and the political modernization of the system” (Graziano 1987: 42). This did not fit in well with the governing political powers. Political science was attacked as well by old Liberals and Catholics as Marxists (Freddi and Giannetti 2007).

A further factor for the underdevelopment of Italian political science has been a slow change of higher education structures. Especially the recruitment process of Italian professors has
been antiquated. Georgio Freddi and Daniela Giannetti have argued that selection procedures for full professor positions until the early 1970s made sure that the power structure of universities could continue unscathed (Freddi and Giannetti 2007: 267). Although new rules have since then been enacted, Giliberto Capano and Luca Verzichelli still claim that “if there is one thing that has survived … relatively unscathed, that is precisely the university recruitment and career system in Italy, the ‘inbreeding’ rate remains startling, a result of the lack of any real competition for academic posts. Without any significant degree of competition, ‘what you did or you will be able to do’ matters less than ‘to whom you belong’” (Capano and Verzichelli 2008: 31).

This situation has not given possibilities for the Italian political science to grow. Identifying itself as an empirical study of politics has also meant that the discipline has been forced to compete against political philosophers and historians of political ideas, which represent their own scientific fields in the Italian faculties of political sciences (with legal scholars). In that sense, the Italian case has some similarities with the French one.

The impact of American political science has been more complex in Germany. Although American occupation forces (“the High Commissioner of the American Occupation Government”) funded the organizational efforts of political scientists in the late 1940s/the early 1950s (Rupp 1996: 83), an important part of the development process was in the hands of German refugee scholars. Quincy Wright wrote to one of his colleagues:

“Apparently political science as an academic discipline has been dead in Germany for a generation, but this group was anxious to re-establish it. Our colleague Karl Lowenstein of Amherst had organized the meeting under the auspices of the Military Government and emphasized the importance of creating an understanding in Germany of what we mean by political science” (Wright 1949a).

Although only a part of German scholars who had fled Nazism to the United States in the 1930s returned to Germany, those who did return represented a variety of scientific traditions. Klaus von Beyme has described how German political science was highly fragmented from the beginning in its political outlook and metatheoretical views, consisting of four main schools, 1) the normative-ontological school of Freiburg under Arnold Bergstraesser, which extended to Munich and included “single combatants” (e.g. Eric Voegelin), 2) the early

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18 According to Capano and Verzichelli, the share of law professors in Italian faculties of political sciences (2008) is about 23%. political philosophers and historians of political ideas comprise 6.5%, while the share of political scientists proper is only 7.2% (Capano/Verzichelli 2008: 6).
mainstream political science by traditional liberal institutionalists (e.g. Dolf Sternberger, Ernest Fraenkel, and Carl J. Friedrich from Harvard/Heidelberg), 3) method-conscious behaviorists concentrated in Cologne and Mannheim (e.g. Rudolf Wildenmann) and, 4) Marxist oriented political scientists (e.g. Wolfgang Abendroth in Marburg) (Beyme 1982: 170).

A coalition of returning émigré scholars, the American occupation forces and social democratic scholars and politicians promoted political science as a science of democracy, its task being “to build up democracy” and to “re-educate” Germans (Kastendiek 1987: 34). This created opposition within universities. For a number of reasons, universities were not really reformed after the War, which in itself restricted opportunities for significant changes at universities (Kastendiek 1987: 31).

The development of the discipline was slow in the 1950s. German political scientists debated whether political science should join ranks with older, more traditional disciplines, such as political history and practical philosophy, or whether it should be organized after the model of American political science. Those who favored the American model complained of the discipline’s underdeveloped “provincial” character and lack of professionalization (Pfotenhauer 1972: 556-559).

There were, however, a number of factors which helped political science to grow. In a way, German federalism helped those setting up political science as a discipline. Political science began to develop in Länder, especially in Hessen and West Berlin, where the political and intellectual climate was favorable for a new discipline. The influence of the Deutsche Hochschule für Politik was important. The founding of the Hochschule in 1920 in Berlin had followed the Ecole Libre tradition to teach civil servants, diplomats, journalists and laymen in economics, history, law and politics. Although at the beginning the School was a mixture of liberal and conservative national goals (and was then suppressed by the Nazi takeover) (see Eisfeld 1996 on the history of the School), its refoundation after the War helped to create a political science profession in Germany. The reopening of the Hochschule in 1949 provided a new start for the establishment of an independent study of politics in Germany. The School was integrated into the Freie Universität in Berlin in 1959. At the time there were ten chairs in political science at Freie Universität, out of the total of 24 chairs in the whole country. (Schüttemeyer 2007: 165).
Also, the education project got another form in 1960, when the government decided to establish “Civics” as part of the primary and secondary schools’ curriculum and political science was given a task to offer courses for future teachers. Although political science did not have a monopoly on teacher training, the 1960 decision gave an important boost for the discipline (Klingemann 1996: 88; Beyme 1982: 172).

The political situation for the development of political science was also more favorable in Germany than, for instance, in Italy. As Italian political scientists were caught between Christian Democrats and Communists, the German political scientists could benefit from the need for political knowledge in a divided country involved in the worldwide competition between “the West and the East” (Kastendiek 1987: 26).

The brief survey of the history of political science in Western Europe shows how the development has been dependent on the number of factors. The American influence, political conditions and decisions, the existing cultural and scientific traditions as well as higher education structures, other disciplines (especially law) and even certain individuals, have all either hindered or helped the growth of political science as an independent discipline in Europe. For the field to develop, it has been essential to become a separate discipline at universities. The example of those countries where political science has been most successful (Britain, Germany, Northern Europe) seems to indicate also that the theoretical and methodological pluralism is a further condition for the growth. The different scientific traditions may clash with each other, but it has been important to create a large discipline in a competition with other disciplines. Pluralism means also that the discipline has to be open to international influences and co-operation. This can be seen by looking at the present organizational strength of political science in different Western European Countries.

The Organizational Strength of Political Science in Western Europe

As was argued earlier, the British political science is the leading political science community in Europe today. The argument can be corroborated by empirical facts. Around 2005\textsuperscript{19}, the country had more professors (419) and organizational units (93) in political science and more members in its disciplinary association (1650) than any other country. The second strong

\textsuperscript{19} The following figures are based on the data in Klingemann 2007.
political science community was in Germany, which was not far behind Britain in regard to its organizational strength (313 professors, 67 organizational units and 1400 members).

Other European countries fall far behind the UK and Germany. France had 131 professors, 41 organizational units and 600 members in its association. The figures for Italy were much the same (128 professors, 37 organizational units), except for the members of its association (only 280 members). In that sense, the position of political science in France and Italy is relatively weak, even compared with many smaller European countries. Although the number of professors and organizational units were lower in smaller countries, the relative strength of political science in these countries can be said to be strong. One indicator is the number of political science professors/ country’s population\(^{20}\). Especially in the Nordic Countries the number of professors/population is high (Iceland 1/75,000, Norway 1/96,000, Finland 1/130,000, Denmark 1/135,000, Sweden 1/214,000). In the UK the figure is 1/142,000 and in Germany 1/264,000, while in France it is 1/457,000 and in Italy 1/452,000. In that respect, the worst situation is in Spain where there is only one professor in political science for every one million Spaniards.

Another way to evaluate the strength of different political science communities is their scientific output. In Simon Hix’s (2004) ranking of the 100 best European political science departments (based on the number of published articles in major political science journals), there were 53 British departments. The number of German departments was ten, followed by eight Dutch departments, while there were only two French, one Italian and one Spanish department on the list\(^{21}\).

The situation can be explained partly by the dominance of English-language as a lingua franca of modern political science, one consequence being that the British political scientists are in a better position linguistically and culturally to publish in English-language journals, which dominate the field of political science. British political scientists are also able to benefit from the English-language organisations, above all, the Essex-based European Consortium for Political Research, which is a leading pan-European political science

\(^{20}\) Counted by the author from the figures in Klingemann 2007.

\(^{21}\) The figures for other countries were: Norway and Switzerland (4), Sweden (3), Belgium, Denmark, Finland and Ireland (2), Austria (1), Cyprus, Greece, Iceland and Portugal (none). Hix’s ranking has, however, raised much criticism, e.g. Haverland 2005; Bull and Espíndola 2005.
organization. At the same time, it must be noted that the number of British ECPR member departments has decreased in recent years (at the moment it is 58), while especially the number of German members has increased (at the moment 52).

Other indicators could be used to evaluate the strength and visibility of different European political science communities (e.g. participation in international conferences in different capacities). However, even the indicators used in this paper show that there are still differences in the organizational and institutional development of political science in Europe. And although one can criticize the Hix list, together with the ECPR membership it reflects the international visibility of different national political science communities. It is revealing that in some smaller countries practically all political science departments are members of the ECPR. In some countries there are even more members than political science departments (e.g. the Netherlands 4 departments, 14 members). In that respect the French political science is still very inward-looking, as there are only 15 French ECPR members at the moment.

The intellectual contents (“knowledge domain”) of European political science are out of the scope of this paper. To analyze these would require much more research on scholarly publications. The country chapters in Klingemann, ed. 2007, seem to indicate, however, that in most countries the study of the political system of one’s own country is the most common research area. On the other hand, the interest in International Relations and European Studies has been increasing in recent years and continues to do so everywhere. Public administration has become an own discipline in some countries (e.g. Finland, the Netherlands), while in some countries it is still an integral part of the study of politics (e.g. Spain). There are also countries with a strong law component in the study of politics (France, Greece, Portugal, Spain), while in many of the latter countries there is a parallel interest in political sociology (especially in France, the French-speaking Belgium and Switzerland, following the French IEP-model). How much these different emphases affect the contents of the study of politics is difficult to say. They may also affect, however, the attitudes of political scientists addressing the external and internal pressures on the discipline.
Education, Research and Interdisciplinarity

How do political science communities with different historical experiences and with different institutional strengths respond to the changes introduced by the European Commission and national governments?

This paper focuses on one particular aspect of the Process, that of interdisciplinarity. As was pointed out earlier, interdisciplinarity can mean different things, however. If it is taken as "post-disciplinarity" in the social sciences – the dissolution of disciplinary boundaries into an integrated social science – this questions the rationale of the existing social sciences. In itself, the Bologna action lines can enhance a disciplinary system or they can work against it. The 3+2 model seems to require more planning than was the case in the "old" system. In that sense major subjects have become more important. Joint degrees can also be organised more efficiently as disciplinary degrees. On the other hand, if the undergraduate degree would be organized as a loose collection of different courses (cf. the Arizona State University model), the BA-degree would develop into a program of general education and there would be no need for disciplinary departments to organize teaching. In some evaluations of the Bologna Process this kind of development is already anticipated:

“To achieve labour-market relevance of the first degree, curricular content needs to be reshuffled and become more applied at an earlier stage, while some theoretical foundations move “upwards” into the graduate phase. On the other hand, a gain is achieved in that learning paths become more flexible, students have more scope for inter-disciplinary orientation” (CHEPS 2006: 53).

This policy statement shows how interdisciplinarity is linked to the objectives of employability (to teach more practical skills) and student-centered learning with flexible study paths. However, this might not work as planned. In some American universities, students are allowed to create their own majors (with adviser’s help). The problem is that these majors do not necessarily help students to land jobs in a specialized area. Employers have complained that individualized majors make it confusing to assess graduates’ skills (Shellenbarges 2010). But maybe the real intention is not employability, but social dimension, to create the first cycle “for masses” and the second and the third cycles “for an elite” (see Capano 2002: 87).
If the first cycle of studies develops into an intensified form of mass education, it will then have an effect on research opportunities in universities. Teaching and research personnel will more and more grow apart, especially as the lack of public funding compels universities to look increasingly for outside research funds. Dividing the time between teaching and research will always be a problem. It is probable that a division of labour within universities will increase between those who teach and those who do research. It has been even asked seriously, whether universities will stop being the main organizational base of scholarly research in the future. The growth of the “institutes of advanced studies” and other non-teaching research structures could point to that (Gulbenkian Commission 1995: 83). If that would happen, university education would not necessarily be based on state-of-the-art research.

Another problem is lowering of the standards in general. It has often been argued that a three-year Bachelor’s degree is not enough to give a solid education in the social sciences. In many European countries, a new degree has created narrower degrees than the old ones were (e.g. Hansen 2007: 299). In the interdisciplinary degree the standards would probably be even lower, as the curriculum would not be structured according to disciplinary standards. Besides, as higher education institutions face decreasing public funding new funding requirements tend to undermine academic standards. Christopher Clausen has described how with increasing student population only the most prestigious institutions in the United States can admit highly qualified students. Most universities simply try to keep their classrooms full (cf. Berglund and Ekman 2007: 353). As Clausen writes, “To reduce the chances that these under-prepared students and their tuition dollars will flunk out, most universities now tie faculty raises and promotions to student evaluations of teaching, thereby encouraging easier courses and less stringent grading. The days when a flagship state university would routinely fail a quarter or more of its freshman class in order to maintain academic standards ended before the last baby boomers graduated in the mid-1980s” (Clausen 2006: 35). Although Clausen describes the situation in the United States, the same trends can be noticed in Europe.

In the long run, these developments will have consequences to research. The research skills of new Ph.D.s have already now got worse. If in the future students learn the basics of research only at the MA-level, it can harm the Ph.D. education still more. In this light, the

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22 Already the requirements for doctoral theses in many countries have been lowered (see, Goldsmith, ed. 2005).
question of interdisciplinarity is more complex than is usually thought. Although there are scholars who have made a distinction between education and research in their quest for interdisciplinarity (e.g. Dogan 2004: 429), it is impossible to separate these from each other without changing the whole academic system.

A crucial question is, how political science communities with different historical experiences and with different institutional strengths are able to respond to the challenge of interdisciplinarity? It is probable that big political science departments can face the challenge better than small departments or departments which already are linked organizationally to other social sciences or to law. In that respect, the situation of political science in Europe is problematic.

The list of ECPR members gives some indication of the situation. The separate “Political Science Departments” are not a majority on the list. At the moment there are 197 political science members from the countries analysed in this paper (out of 410 members overall). Of these only 112 are political science departments standing alone (over half of them in Britain and Germany). In 68 departments political science is with some other social science discipline and in 17 with law. As Hans-Dieter Klingemann (2008: 376) has estimated that there were 347 political science units in Western Europe around the year 2005, this would indicate that there are c. 160 political science units in Western Europe, which are not ECPR members. Many of them are small units.

This increases the probability that these units will resort to interdisciplinary solutions. Suzanne Schüttemeyer has already pointed out how difficult it is for small departments to carry out three cycles alone as their teaching capacity is limited. This means that small political science departments must organise courses with other departments with only a remote resemblance with political science. This constitutes a possible danger to the identity of political science as a discipline (Schüttemeyer 2007: 166-167). At the worst political science can become a minor subject suppressed by stronger subjects in larger faculties/institutional units reminding of the situation in France and Italy.

23 There are also 43 non-political science departments (e.g. departments of sociology) and 25 social science research institutes as members. The rest of the members come from the other parts of Europe (64) and from non-European countries (81).
The Internal Quest for Interdisciplinarity

The quest for interdisciplinarity is strengthened by the increasing fragmentation of social sciences and by blurring of boundaries between them. Political science is not an exception. When the International Political Science Association was founded there was discussion about what constitutes the subject matter of the discipline. It was agreed that political science embraced a rather distinctive set of areas, which were defined and classified as follows (Coakley 2004, 179):

I. Political theory: (1) political theory, (2) history of political ideas
II. Political institutions: (1) the constitution, (2) central government, (3) regional and local government, (4) public administration, (5) economic and social functions of government, (6) comparative political institutions
III. Parties, groups and public opinion: (1) political parties, (2) groups and associations, (3) participation by the citizen in government and administration, (4) public opinion
IV. International relations: (1) international policy, (2) international organisation and administration, (3) international law.

These areas are still the backbone of political science as a discipline. However, political science already has been divided in many countries into just these four areas. Administrative studies have already become a separate discipline in many countries. There is an immense pressure from the IR scholars to break away from political science. Besides, in many countries political theory has developed into a strong sub-discipline and there is a cultural division between political theorists and political scientists (Gunnell 1993).

The breakaway tendencies are often justified as a sign of progress and specialization, as research has moved from broad speculative approaches to more empirical studies. Scholars also tend to carve out their own niches of research in order to make the name for themselves. This development has led to hundreds of specialties and subfields within the existing disciplines. This can be seen, for instance, in organized groups which form the basis of international social science associations (Dogan 2004: 430).

The organized groups within major political science associations in the world (APSA’s Organized Sections, IPSA’s Research Committees and ECPR’s Standing Groups) illustrate the situation well. There are today 132 organized research communities in these three
associations. Many of them overlap, but even if one takes into account the overlapping, this still leaves some 80 specialties within political science.

Reflecting the division of political science into Politics, Public Administration and International Relations, those political scientists specializing in two latter fields have their own groups (e.g. Public Policy and Administration, Administrative Culture, Comparative Public Policy, Foreign Policy, International Security and Arms Control, International Political Theory, Geopolitics, Quantitative International Politics, International History and Politics, New World Orders?).

However, specialization also applies to core political science problems (e.g. Comparative Political Institutions, Parliaments, Presidency Research, Representation and Electoral Systems, Political Parties, Public Opinion and Voting Behaviour in a Comparative Perspective, Political Socialization and Education, Political Communication, Interest Groups, Political Elites, Federalism and Regionalism, Local Government and Politics, Democratization in Comparative Perspective, Quality of Democracy).

Different research orientations and methodological approaches have their own groups (e.g. The Study of Political Science as a Discipline, Political Science Education, Political Philosophy, Foundations of Political Theory, Theoretical Perspectives in Policy Analysis, Concepts and Methods, Qualitative and Multi-Method Research, Experimental Research, Analytical Politics and Public Choice, New Political Science, Language and Politics, Political Power).

There are also groups which may be called interdisciplinary (Grant 2005: 383). They link political science with some other discipline (Political Sociology, Political Psychology, Political Economy, Biology and Politics, Political Geography, Politics and History) or they focus on specific social problems or phenomena outside politics proper (e.g. Gender and Politics, Sexuality and Politics, Politics and Ethnicity, Religion and Politics, Politics and Business, Law and Courts, Organized Crime, Political Finance and Political Corruption, Extremism and Democracy, Armed Forces and Society, Politics and the Arts, Science and Politics, Politics and Technology, Internet and Politics, Green Politics, Rethinking Political Development, Conflict Processes, Human Rights, Health Politics). Area Studies belong to this category, too (e.g. European Union, Central and East European Politics, Southern European Politics, Latin American Politics, Asian and Pacific Studies, Canadian Politics).
This growing number of specializations within political science and other existing social science disciplines is already changing the nature of disciplines. The trend is strengthened by “the multiplication of new hybrid journals building bridges between disciplines and between specialties” (Dogan 2004: 433). One of the consequences is the fragmentation of political science into separate “communities”, which contest the borders of the discipline in the everyday research practice. If the specialists of a given sub-discipline cite mostly their colleagues within the same specialty, read only literature in their own field of interest and participate mainly in the meetings of their own specialty, the internal coherence and legitimacy of the discipline will weaken (Dogan 2004: 431-437). This has direct consequences to political science as an organization, as an institution and as a “knowledge domain”.

**Does Political Science Matter?**

Many social scientists see the existing academic disciplines as too narrow, which they see to hinder the understanding of social processes. In that respect it is easy to agree with the argument that we should try to “overcome the artificial separations erected in the nineteenth century between supposedly autonomous realms of the political, the economic, and the social (or the cultural or the socio-cultural)” (Gulbenkian Commission 1995: 85-86). As to political science, it is also true that politics cannot be explained by politics alone (Dogan 2004: 441).

Does this mean that the study of politics should be pursued as part of “multispecialities”? Mattei Dogan has argued that “fields that do not interact outside the discipline tend to stagnate” and his conclusion is that “[T]he networks of cross-disciplinary influences are such that they are obliterating the old classification of the social sciences. The trend that we perceive today is from the old formal disciplines to new hybrid social sciences. The word interdisciplinarity is not adequate because it carries a hint of dilettantism and consequently should be avoided and replaced by the terms ‘multispeciality’ or ‘hybridization of scientific knowledge’” (Dogan 2004: 437, 442).

The problem is, however, that Dogan does not say what these new hybrid social sciences
would be. He also does not seem to notice that “specialties that do not interact outside the specialty tend to stagnate”. The “hybridization of scientific knowledge” would bring with it an ever-changing field of hybrid specialties without any firm ground.

Colin Hay has recently argued that although the political, the economic and the cultural are ontologically interdependent, they can be analytically distinguished from each other, if we do not succumb to another extreme and ontologize this analytical distinction. The analytical distinction is still valid and useful as we have to simplify the complexity of the world. What we need to do, however, is to get rid of disciplinary (and sub-disciplinary) parochialism, be more sensitive to the interdependence of social interaction and actively seek dialogue with those in other disciplinary and sub-disciplinary fields (Hay 2010).

Hay’s practical defence of political science as a discipline is reasonable. However, the disciplinary system could be justified also from a methodological perspective. Disciplines are the best compromise between the extension and the intension of knowledge. Using the idea of Giovanni Sartori’s “a ladder of abstraction” (Sartori 1970), one could see a single post-disciplinary social science as a high level abstraction of social reality, maximizing the extension of knowledge, but minimizing its intension. On the other hand, a multispeciality social science would represent social reality as a low level abstraction, maximizing the intension, but minimizing the extension. As in comparative politics, the best research strategy, however, is to rely on medium level abstractions making a compromise between the extension and the intension of knowledge. Although the study of politics would be based on the discipline of political science, that would not hinder to move both towards post-disciplinarity or multispeciality sciences if needed. Sartori’s strategy for comparative politics

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24 The same has been the case with earlier critics of political science as a discipline. Writing on Bernard Crick’s *The American Science of Politics*, Michael Kenny notes that, “the implications of his thinking for the question of whether and how the study of politics should be institutionalised within the modern university, remained frustratingly elusive. If it was a mistake to found an independent discipline on a par with the natural sciences, where exactly should political studies be located intellectually? And how should it manage its borders and relations with neighbouring subjects – history, philosophy, law?” (Kenny 2007: 159).

25 There are also other practical views on the relationship between disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity. For instance, in the Gulbenkian Report on restructuring the social sciences there are concrete proposals how to enhance interdisciplinarity based on disciplinarity: 1) the expansion of institutions, which would bring together scholars for a year’s work on common themes, 2) the establishment of integrated research programs within university structures that would cut across traditional lines, but having funds only for limited periods of time, 3) joint appointments of professors in two departments, and 4) joint work for graduate students (Gulbenkian Report 1995: 116-118).
applies also to political science as a discipline, “The remedy resides … in our combined ability 1) to develop the discipline along a medium level of abstraction with better intermediate categories, and 2) to maneuver, both upwards and downwards, along a ladder of abstraction in such a way as to bring together assimilation and differentiation, a relatively high explanatory power and a relatively precise descriptive content, macro-theory and empirical testing” (Sartori 1970: 1053). If one accepts this argument, political science can be justified as a science of one of the main social spheres, the political.

But this justification may not satisfy European policy makers and administrators. Their goal is to create a new European Higher Education Area based on new principles. What will happen to the existing social science disciplines is still an open question. Political science is especially vulnerable as the majority of European countries are small countries with few political science departments and few political scientists. Besides, many departments are already now multidisciplinary units. At the same time, many national political science associations are small and have started to co-operate only recently. Most of them have no real resources to organise the discipline even in their own countries (except of the British and German associations).

An important mechanism affecting the future of disciplines will be the development of the European Quality Assurance system. Quality assurance has become one of the main steering mechanisms at European universities (see, e.g. articles in Klingemann, ed. 2007). Thus far the Quality Assurance exercises have tended to harmonize the disciplines, as the Bologna Process has developed common criteria for the quality of education (ENQA 2005). However, if the future evaluations will start to emphasize more the fulfilment of such action lines as employability, social dimension, student-centered learning, external funding, and of course, interdisciplinarity, the disciplines may really be in trouble.

However, some of the conditions for viable disciplinary communities are still dependent on the scholars themselves. From the historical perspective, a strong political science discipline seems to require methodological and substantial pluralism, transparent and democratic recruitment mechanisms as well as commitment to international cooperation. The international visibility of scholars has become a factor, which can also help to strengthen the domestic political science institutions. But the realization of these objectives needs separate political science organizations, strong institutional cultures and theoretically solid knowledge domain.
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