Is There Only One Discipline of Political Science? Cultural Differences Between American and European Political Science(s)

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Is There a Genuinely International Discipline of Political Science?

Political scientists tend to search their identity from time to time. Most of the time these identity crises are attempts to reorient the discipline. On the other hand, as political science has developed unevenly around the world and at different pace, it is natural that the profession wants to take stock at the state of the art now and then. One of the problems of studying the discipline of political science globally is, however, that there are no simple concepts which to use in comparing the discipline in different countries. Political science is still understood in different ways in different cultures. When Americans talk about political science, many British scholars prefer to use the concept of political studies and French still talk about political sciences. Besides, the borders of the discipline are often fuzzy, in some countries even international relations forms a discipline of its own and the study of public administration has transformed itself into a science of management. In many countries the discipline is strongly linked with sociology, while in some other countries it is oriented more towards political philosophy.

There is of course a general understanding that political science studies politics. However, as the analysis of politics has flourished at least from the time of Plato and Aristotle, contemporary political scientists see their discipline as a new discipline, which was first institutionalised in the United States in the late 19th century. And although some European political scientists may refer to teaching of politics already in the 17th century (Swedes usually want to point out that politics as a subject was introduced in Uppsala in 1622), even they usually accept the argument that political science as a discipline started to develop in most European countries only after the Second World War (and in Central and Eastern Europe only in the 1990s after the collapse of state socialist
systems). With the same logic it is argued that it was only in the 1960s when the discipline started to gain status in other parts of the world.

This development has often raised an argument that political science has been an American science. The debate is still on, whether political science is still an American science, “Although political science, as a distinct discipline and profession, might reasonably be viewed as an American invention, it has, at least since the mid-twentieth century, migrated, and been indigenized. Consequently, there is the question of the extent to which it is still an American science of politics?” (Gunnell 2002: 339; see also Stein 2003).

The problem about the American science of politics is of course relevant for the discipline which wants to be a genuinely international discipline. This paper looks at this problem by comparing American and European political science professions. As these two political science communities have a long history of transatlantic relations and their cultures are in many ways near each other, the comparison deals with relatively similar cases. If these cases turn out to be different, one may then try to think about the significance of these differences in the light of a general problem of the nature of international political science today.

The initial question, however, is, what is an academic discipline? In his study of the culture of academic disciplines, Tony Becher argues that academic disciplines are always difficult to define. 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” and “also on the degree to which a free-standing international community has emerged, with its own professional associations and specialist journals”. Disciplines are identified by the existence of academic departments, “but it does not follow that every department represents a discipline”. It is also a question of the legitimacy of departments in academia and “international currency is an important criterion, as is a general thought not sharply-defined set of notions of academic credibility, intellectual substance, and appropriateness of subject matter” (Becher 1989: 19).

Furthermore, academic disciplines also change over time and although it may be convenient in some contexts to present disciplines as distinguishable and reasonably stable entities, there are always historical and geographical variations within disciplines. Change of “knowledge domains” has its impact on the identities and cultural characteristics of disciplines. Some disciplines simply vanish, while some experience a steady evolution to new forms. Today, for instance, traditional
established disciplines (political science among them) are under pressure from different interdisciplinary fields (urban studies, peace research, gender studies) (Becher 1989: 19-20).

Political Science as a Discipline: American and European Histories

Political science as an organizationally independent academic discipline began to develop in the United States in the late 19th century, while in Europe the study of politics was carried out as part of the study of history and/or law. It was not until the end of the Second World War when departments of political science were established in most West European universities (on developments in Europe, see for instance, Quermonne, ed. 1996; Daalder, ed. 1997). It was also the time (from the 1950s to the late 1960s) when American political science influenced the development of European political science in many ways. There was no European political science community as such, as political scientists worked in their own national contexts. If Europeans met with each other, it was usually in the United States (see, Daalder, ed. 1997).

Although this picture is correct, it also hides some essential facts about the development of political science as a discipline. In many histories of American political science, the founding of the Faculty of Political Science at Columbia has been understood as a symbolic beginning of the discipline in the United States (e.g. Crick 1959; Somit and Tanenhaus 1982). At that time, however, American and European study of politics were quite similar to each other. The study of politics concentrated on problems of constitutional law. In the United States this happened in departments of history and political economy, while especially on the Continental Europe the study of politics was carried out in law faculties. As Peter Wagner has written:

“First, the non-existence of political science at European academic institutions in the early 1900s was not due to the fact that nobody had tried to establish it. In contrast, the historical constellation of restructurations of the nation-states lent itself to such an interest, and movements for a political science emerged, which however, failed. Their failure can be explained to a considerable extent by the facts, second, that a drive towards ‘scientification’ in late-nineteenth-century universities bypassed political science, that no scientific language could be phrased, but that instead public law became the codified language in which to talk about the state; and third, that the existing demand for political-administrative professionals in the new states could to some extent be satisfied with exactly this formal legal training and, for the rest, was matched in professional schools whose orientations conflicted with those required for scientific discourses” (Wagner 2001: 26).

But the situation was similar in Columbia. By the early 1890s the Faculty of Political Science had three internal administrative groupings, “Economics and Social Science”, “History and Political
Philosophy,” and “Public Law and Comparative Jurisprudence”. It was only the latter which gradually became a department concerned solely with political science (Ricci 1984: 61). And when the American Political Science Association was founded in 1903, its main interests dealt with problems of administration, legislation and constitutional and public law. Many of those who took part in founding the Association felt that distinctly political problems required an Association of their own. There was a need to devote attention particularly to questions of public law and administration. As Westel Woodbury Willoughby, the first Secretary of the American Political Science Association wrote in his 1904 Report of the Secretary, “In order to cover effectively the whole field of Political Science, the Association will distribute its work among sections, devoted respectively to such topics as International Law and Diplomacy, Comparative Legislation, Historical and Comparative Jurisprudence, Constitutional Law, Administration, Politics, and Political Theory (Willoughby 1904: 27).

In fact, it was not until the American Political science Association was founded in 1903 that the discipline began to gain its real identity. The launching of the American Political Science Review then in 1906 became the final factor in the disciplinary development, although the real distinctively American political science began to develop only after the First World War. Until the War American social and political scientists followed keenly what Europeans wrote. This development was due to political developments in the United States as well as in Europe. American scholars began to focus more on the internal problems of the country. This coincided with the formation of the departmental structure of the American university between 1890 and 1910, which was internationally unique. As Andrew Abbott has noted, this “departmental structure appeared only in American universities, although since mid-century it has gradually spread to Europe and elsewhere.

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1 It is an interesting fact that most historians of American political science look at the origins of American political science rather in history than in public law (e.g., Adcock 2003). Maybe this is due to the fact that the study of politics found its place in history departments and not in law schools. This can be explained, however, by the nature of American law schools.

2 As was the case with the Columbia Faculty of Political Science itself, its journal Political Science Quarterly was a general social science journal devoted to “the Historical, Statistical and Comparative Study of Politics, Economics and Public Law”.

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

4 “As of 1914, 40 out of 531 colleges and universities surveyed by the American Political Science Association supported independent departments of political science, while approximately 200 offered political science courses in departments embracing also history, economics, ethics, sociology, or philosophy” (Ricci 1984: 61-62)
Indeed, academic disciplines in the American sense – groups of professors with exchangeable credentials collected in strong associations – did not really appear outside the United States until well into the postwar period” (Abbott 2001: 122-123).

As Europe was in ruins after the Second World War, it was no wonder that American political science became influential in Europe in the 1950s. In Germany it was consciously introduced by American occupation forces as the science of political re-education (Kastendiek 1987), in Italy it was used by reform-minded social scientists to advance social change (Graziano 1987) and for social scientists in many other countries, it offered a chance out of the old culture. It was not until 1970 when the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) was launched that European political scientists began to combine their forces (Berg-Schlosser 2006).

Since 1970 the situation vis-à-vis American political science has changed. Although most European political scientists still follow keenly what is happening in American political science, there are also clear differences between American and European disciplinary practices today. Many of these differences can be traced to conduct of political studies before the Second World War. The strengthening of political science in Europe has meant a return to some of the old traditions of political analysis. Because of that it is no wonder that there are big differences between various European political science communities. It is even questionable, if there is anything like “European political science”. There are political science communities which have been oriented towards empirical Anglo-American political science (mainly political scientists in Northern Europe and in some Central and Eastern European countries), there are policy-oriented scholarly communities (the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden), sociologically oriented ones (France, Spain) and philosophically oriented ones (Italy). The nature of relations between American and European political science must be analysed in this light.

**European Political Science and the Americanization Thesis**

The argument about political science being an American science is usually presented in too simple way. The area of “Americanization” must be specified. The thesis may refer to at least five different aspects of academia: areas of research, origins of theoretical thinking, methodological orientations (ontology, epistemology, methods), organisation of the study of politics (departments, relations with other sciences) and strength of the discipline (a number of political science departments and political scientists, relations with society).
**Areas of research**

As political systems are different the emphasis given on different research problems varies country by country. American political scientists are more interested in judicial politics, for instance, than political scientists in Europe. Eastern and Central European political scientists have focused more on the problems of democratic transformation than political scientists in Western Europe. One can easily come up with examples such as these. The problem is, if strong academic communities affect research orientations in smaller academic communities through mechanisms of academic power struggle. This was one of the main forms of criticism on the impact of American political science on the study of politics around the world in the 1950s and 1960s. The behavioural mood having its heyday in the U.S. political science at that time, made European political scientists to adopt models of the American discipline and to introduce them in their own countries. Many European political scientists did this also willingly, because they used their American contacts and new ideas to advance their own careers.

The problem was, however, that what was possible in the United States often led to one-sided research in smaller countries. As Alan C. Cairns (1975) has argued, because of the smallness of many political science communities, American political science has determined much that has been known about politics around the world. This is one example of how politics has been defined by American concepts and interests. The other problem has been that the imitation of American political science in smaller countries has led to the neglect of important research questions. The flexibility of the American university system has made it possible to expand research into many territories. The system has had a capacity to specialize and to form heterogeneous research groups with meetings and journals. Specialization in other countries has, however, often led to an unstable situation and to changing fads, leaving many important country-specific problems untouched. A good example is the spread of behavioralism. It led to a situation where the basic structures and formal features of many political systems were left unexplored. Young scholars were eager to follow international trends, not the needs of their own countries.

Although this situation still prevails in some cases, it can be argued that this kind of Americanization does not play much role in developed European political science communities any more. Partly this is due to the growth of the profession, partly to the consciousness of European political scientists of the specificity of political problems from the European perspective.
**Origins of theoretical thinking**

On the other hand, theoretical influences from European to American scholarly work, and vice versa, are easy to detect from the 18th century to today. It is as legitimate to argue that European political thought has been behind the American political tradition, as “political science originated in the halls of the old College of Glasgow and the salons of Condorcet’s Paris” (McLean 2006: 122), and that the transatlantic exchange was influential for the birth of American social science (Adcock 2006), as it is to argue that political science has been an American science of politics. It is natural that theoretical ideas move from one direction to another.

However, although many of the key concepts and theoretical innovations in US political science have their roots on European political thinking, American political scientists have restructured old ideas and presented them in a new mode. For instance, the revived interest in the work of Max Weber in Europe after the Second World War was much influenced by its interpretation by Talcott Parsons. Theories and theoretical models are not so innocent that they seem to be on surface. One of the best examples is also the functionalism of Gabriel Almond and others, which clearly reflected the idea of American division of institutional power (Teune 1990).

As in the case of research areas, “theoretical Americanization” has clearly diminished in Europe. European political scientists are more interested in their own theoretical traditions and in some cases it seems that Europeans are influencing American political scientists more deeply than vice versa (think of the works of Habermas and Foucault, for instance). Still in the case of political science there are still areas which the American influence is felt, namely research programs, such as, behavioralism and rational choice.

All in all, it may be argued that American and European political science communities have lived most of the time influencing each other (see also, Gunnell 1993). The only exceptions have been the interwar period, when the two communities were partly separated from each other, and then again, the 1950s (and 1960s), when the American overwhelming cultural, economic and political power was behind its influence also on academic life.
Methodological orientations

Behavioralism and rational choice deal with methodological orientations. It is an interesting question, how much American culture and political conditions have been behind a strong tendency to make political science a science (in the sense of natural science). Bernard Crick’s (1959) argument that political science is a peculiarly American science must be understood in this light, although one can also find examples among Europeans (even before Crick’s argument) to argue about the “scientific” study of politics (Gunnell 2006: 139-140).

It may be that a strong quantitative orientation and attempts to formal modelling in American political science are at least partly due to the professionalisation of American political science and the position of American political scientists in society. Social science disciplines are important for American intellectuals, because the American market for public intellectuals is incapable of supporting more than few non-academic writers. For many intellectuals the Academia is the only practical recourse, which in its turn requires a membership of a specific academic discipline. Disciplines “provide the core identity for the vast majority of intellectuals in Modern America” (Abbott 2001: 130).

European political scientists have always had closer relations with politicians and “the influential” than the American political scientists (there are exceptions, of course). Harold Lasswell visited England at the beginning of the 1920s, from where he wrote to Charles E. Merriam:

“Here in England these academicians have a sense of power. They actually feel that they have a hand on a wheel of state. Their opinions are widely read and quoted in The Times. They meet … the men who run things, and they can hope to influence them at dinner parties, club lounges … In politics they find the boys they knew at Oxford … or whose great grand-uncle married an equally great grand-aunty. What about the U.S.? … our serious students of social problems moon in their cubby holes over plans of world reformation … they are relatively impotent, and driven to vagaries in consequence” (Lasswell 1923).

As American intellectuals are disciplinary intellectuals, their future is in science. This produces a world of its own, which doesn’t even have to think about society outside the Academia. As Giovanni Sartori wrote some time ago, “American-type political science (to be sure the “normal science,” for intelligent scholars are always saved by their intelligence) is going nowhere, It is an
ever growing giant with feet of clay….read to believe, the illegible and/or massively irrelevant American Political Science Review. The alternative … is to resist the quantification of the discipline. Briefly put, think before counting; and also, use logic in thinking” (Sartori 2004: 786).

In this sense methodological orientations can be tied to the position of intellectuals in society. In this respect European and American societies are still different. In many European countries political scientists are still able to influence politics (this seems to be the case especially in Eastern and Central Europe). As Philippe C. Schmitter has noted, “I do not think it exaggerated to claim that, while American political scientists see their task as exclusively ‘professional’, their European counterparts see it as equally ‘intellectual’ (Schmitter 2002: 29).

On the other hand, in some of the old West European countries, it seems that social scientists have partly lost their contacts with decision makers. This has increased the amount of quantitative studies in political science journals. It is difficult to say, which, is the cause and the effect. It is also difficult to say, if the increase in quantitative studies is a sign of Americanization of the discipline. However, quantitative political science has spread to Europe through American model and practices.

Organisation of the study of politics

In fact, the real meaning of political science as an American science is due to the model of organising the study of politics. The departmentalization of the university coincided with the formation of national disciplinary associations (from which amateurs were gradually excluded) (Abbott 2001: 126). Alain C. Cairns refers to Edward Shils in describing the American system:

“One of the major factors contributing to tension in Canada, as elsewhere, has been what Shils labels the institutionalization of the social sciences. By this term Shils refers to the creation of specific structures by means of which the intellectual activity of the particular discipline takes place, its intellectual products are disseminated, its standards are maintained, new recruits are socialized, and incentives and disincentives are systematically given to intellectual work in accordance with evolving criteria of quality. The relevant structures include courses, departments, libraries and undergraduate and graduate programmes which give recognition and support to particular disciplines. To these university aspects of structure must be added professional journals, learned societies, publishers, funding agencies. And the ‘invisible college’ of colleagues working on related problems who use these instrumentalities to coordinate their efforts and to transmit cues to each other, In these terms it is clear that political science is far more institutionalized in the United States than in any other country, a fact possessed of crucial intellectual consequences (Cairns 1975: 203).
The institutionalization (and size) of the American political science has had a mass-effect in moulding political science communities everywhere. There has been no way of not taking the American political science into account. Its dominance in the world has been due mainly to the degree of its institutionalization with structured programs, journals and strong associations. This model with political science departments and political science associations was introduced in Europe after the Second World War. Quincy Wright, the first President of the International Political Science Association, wrote in 1949:

“One difficulty of course is that social science is a very recent growth and few people really believe in its possibilities. 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. Really as disciplines seeking to utilize so far as possible the objective methods which have developed in the natural sciences, social science comes near to being an American phenomenon of the last fifty years. Little as there has been to spend on social sciences in the United States there has been infinitely more than in any other country. 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 1949).

The institutionalization of political science in Europe has brought with it practices and standards used in American academia. This means, among other things, norms with regard to how political science should be practiced and the fetish attached to peer-reviewed articles in journals (Schmitter 2002: 31).

Strength of the discipline

The institutionalization of political science as a discipline is also a sign of its ability to oppose outside pressures. One of the arguments for political science being an American discipline has been the size of the American political science community. At the beginning of the 1960s political science was still in many ways an American discipline in that respect. Giving his presidential address in the 1965 APSA meeting on the state of political science, David Truman did not see anything wrong by saying that “I am wilfully going to commit the sin of parochialism by confining my remarks primarily to the discipline in the United States. In justification I would argue that the problems of political science are, if only because of the number of practitioners involved, chiefly problems of American political science” (Truman 1965: 865). In 1982 William G. Andrews still gave an estimate of 75-80 percent of world’s political scientists being Americans (Andrews 1982: 3), and (strangely) that figure is still used in describing the situation today (Schmitter 2002: 28).
However, there are no exact figures for political scientists today in the world. One of the reasons is a difficulty of determining how to define political scientists (should one include political sociologists, scholars in management studies, etc.). There are no exact statistics either. In 1997 I counted the members in national political science associations (belonging to the IPSA). The share of members belonging to the APSA was 41 percent (Berndtson 1997). This measure was highly problematical, as national political science associations have different bases for membership. The figure gives some indication of the present situation, however. The American Political Science Association has some 15000 members today (one third of being PhD students and nearly 2000 being foreign scholars). At the same time there seems to be over 5000 political scientists working in political science departments in the European Union (counted using figures in Quermonne, ed. 1996; Klingemann, Kulesza and Legutke, eds. 2002)\(^5\). When one takes into account political scientists in other countries, it seems reasonable to estimate that the share of US political scientists in the world today is less than half of all political scientists.

In that sense the relative strength of American political science has diminished during the last forty years. American political science has not lost its importance, however. American political scientists form still a major scholarly community. It must also be remembered that European political science, is not culturally homogenous, but consists of different intellectual traditions\(^6\).

**The Future of Political Science as a Discipline**

*Is the United States a Hegemonic Power in Political Science?*

In the light of the above discussion, it is possible to argue that political science as a discipline is still partly an American science. It is not so much a question of research problems or theoretical traditions, but the organizational model of studying politics, which comes from the United States. As the size of the American political science community is still large, other political science communities cannot ignore developments within American political science. This situation may be illustrated with an example of the current debate on globalization and the role of the United States in this process.

\(^5\) There are some 400 political science departments in the European Union.

\(^6\) Although American political science is divided into different scientific traditions also, it operates, however, in a single cultural context.
In this debate it has been pointed out that the two major positions are between “homogenizers” vs. “heterogenizers”. While the former group tends to find increasing levels of homogeneity across a wide range of phenomena in a world system and tends “to speak of commodification, cultural imperialism, Americanization, consumerism, Westernization, global culture, and so forth”, the latter group tends “to speak of hybridity, interculturalism, and indigenousness” pointing also to local (mis)readings and (misappropriations) of dominant culture and “to the influences that Eastern cultures have exerted on Western culture” (Semati and Sotirin 1999: 177-178).

From this perspective it is clear that hegemonic cultures are never total, but partial. Secondly, the reception of a hegemon culture in other countries has always been selective. Different countries have adopted a dominant culture in degrees that have suited their own needs and cultures (Ellwood, et. al 1994: 41). Thirdly, the influence of a hegemonic culture on other cultures is most efficient through introducing social practices, not by trying to influence cultures by political actions (Ellwood, et. al. 1994: 39; van Elteren 1996: 81).

In this sense, political science as an American discipline means primarily that because of the position and resources of American political science, it will be the major originator of scholarly processes around the world. The question is about power, which is never absolute, but a complex web of relations. It is also natural that the hegemonic position of American political science often creates strong criticism against the American discipline. This is one reason why it is possible to argue at the same time that political science is an American discipline and that it is not. However, as Philippe C. Schmitter has noted, “if. ‘as goes the practice of politics, so will (eventually) go the science of politics’, then there is every reason to expect a decline in the US hegemony in the future… Only once this has happened and the ‘American’ science of politics has been put in its proper (comparative) place will one be able to speak of an authentically globalised science of politics (Schmitter 2002: 36-37).

*Should Disciplinary Structure of Political Science Be Changed?*

If the major reason for understanding political science as an American discipline is the organizational structure of the discipline, should that structure be changed in order for political science to develop into a genuinely international 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 2006: 159).

This is a good question and there is no simple answer. However, it must be remembered that there are still many countries in which political science is understood as political sciences. In regard to France, Pierre Favre has written about the place of an independent study of politics in France:

“French political scientists find their scientific serenity with difficulty, for they constantly encounter philosophers, sociologists, and historians who publicly announce their own claim to talk about politics and to talk about it with incomparably greater explanatory power” (Favre 1982: 164).

Although this quotation is not very flattering to political scientists, the situation has changed during the last twenty years and political scientists have found their place in the French academia. The meaning of the quotation is to point out that politics can, indeed, be studied also from other perspectives than that of “political science”. Political science as political sciences would mean that the study of politics would be more loosely organized and political scientists would be working in close cooperation with political sociologists, historians, philosophers, etc. This model has worked in the French Institutes of Political Studies (IEPs), so it would not be an impossible solution.

However, to propose to change present institutional structures of political science with the French model, is not very realistic. If the discipline will change, the change must come from other directions.

*Pressures to change disciplinary structure of political science*

It is difficult to change existing structure of disciplines, as they fulfil key academic functions. As Andrew Abbott has described the situation:

“The extraordinary resilience of the American system of academic disciplines lies in this dual institutionalization. On the one hand, the disciplines constitute the macrostructure of the labor market for faculty …. Careers remain within discipline much more than within university …
On the other hand, the system constitutes the microstructure of each individual university. All arts and sciences faculties contain more or less the same list of departments. This duality means that no university can challenge the disciplinary system as a whole without depriving its Ph.D. graduates of their academic future (Abbott 2001: 126).

Disciplines 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).

In spite of these features of the disciplinary system there are three tendencies today which can change it. The first is a continuous demand for interdisciplinarity. Most universities today have departments, such as, urban studies, gender studies, peace and conflict studies, etc. Interdisciplinary departments have been increasing and one can ask, why these departments have not replaced the disciplinary system? There are, however, logical reasons, for that. Interdisciplinarism is generally problem-driven and social problems have their own life cycle. 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 (Abbott 2001: 134-135).

Secondly, the study of politics is developing into a fragmented scholarly enterprise. John G. Gunnell has referred to that by looking at different “handbooks of political science” and “state of the discipline studies”. These works show that political science is becoming more differentiated and specialised, which, in turn, “creates concerns about what, exactly, defines the discipline internally and in terms of its understanding of its cognitive and practical relationship to its subject matter” (Gunnell 2002: 352). J. Tobin Grant has also pointed out that although the hard-soft division is one of the defining elements of American political science, this division is often secondary to the primary importance of research areas, “political scientists have organized themselves so that they are more related to other political scientists who study similar events and concepts, not to those who study politics in a similar ways” (Grant 2005: 384). Grant finds concentrations of American political scientists in different groups, the horizon being dominated by three areas of concentration: comparative politics, a collection of interdisciplinary scholars and American politics scholars. The other areas of concentration are political methodology, public administration, public policy, international relations and political philosophy. An interesting detail is that a concentration of political philosophy scholars seems to be outside the other concentrations. The other subfield which is more disconnected from other subfields is that of international relations.
These tendencies have also raised demands to organise political science in a new way. For instance, Robert O. Keohane has argued that international relations is changing into a discipline of world politics. "In the process, the field of international politics will be transformed. It has already become more than interstate politics, since nonstate actors are so important today. Over the next decade, it will increasingly merge with the field of comparative politics, to become the field of world politics… the subject of our study will be less individual states and their policies than governance at various levels, from town meeting to institutions with a global scope" (Keohane 2005: 317).

These developments are more essential than interdisciplinarity. Even they may not change the existing disciplinary structure, however, if there are no administrative changes in universities. Abbott has argued that the change is possible only, if academic hiring and/or career structures will change. If there would be a systemwide switch in the control mechanism of academics, replacing the existing system in which academics control each others’ rewards, to the system in which students, administrators, and others control them, this would help to bring down the disciplinary system (Abbott 2001: 149-150). A drift towards this direction can be seen as a third pressure towards the existing disciplinary system.

It is an interesting fact that these tendencies are more prevalent in European academia than they seem to be in the American system. The whole European university system is under pressure today, as European political decision makers want to harmonize the system and cut down the costs of higher education.⁷ This has meant restructuring of degree structures as well as narrowing chances for career development, especially in social sciences. The difference between American and European situation may well be seen by comparing articles in PS: Political Science and Politics and European Political Science. While the American journal is full of articles on the state of the discipline and on new teaching experiments, the European journal contains articles on problems of young academics (Bahle 2002; Daguerre 2004), on the misuse of quality assurance techniques (Norton 2001; Charlton and Andras 2002) and on managerialism in education (Taylor 2003; Melchior 2004).

The breakdown of the existing disciplinary structure may also be easier in Europe, because there is no European Political Science Association to organise political science as a profession. The much heralded European Consortium for Political Research is mainly a research organization which acts

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⁷ It must be remembered that most European universities are public institutions.
as an umbrella of different research interests. There is no organization to take care of the problems of higher education and professional interests. The other European organization, the European Political Science Network (epsNet), which was established in 2001, has tried to fulfil that role, but for a number of reasons the organization has remained weak. At the same time many national associations are small and do not have resources to really organise the discipline in their own countries (exceptions are the associations of big European countries: British, French and German associations). But the majority of European countries are small countries with few political science departments and few political scientists.

In this situation individual interests in different national contexts have much more influence than they have in the United States. Also, as there is no real European labor market for different disciplines, there is no hindrance for restructuring existing disciplines in that respect. One can see already now many attempts to organise the study of politics from different perspectives. In many countries the study of international politics has severed itself from the study of national politics. The study of public administration, which once was an essential part of political science, has also become a discipline of its own and more and more those studying administrative problems prefer to identify their field as management studies. The European academia seems to be developing into a network of different research groups with similar interests. Political science as an academic discipline may not fulfil the needs of these groups in the future. It may be that although political science has been approaching the status of a genuinely international discipline, the time of existing social science disciplines has already passed.

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