

Political science in Italy after the last University reform

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In 2010 the Italian parliament approved the reform of the university system proposed by Maria Stella Gelmini, education minister of the fourth Berlusconi cabinet. This major reform affects primarily the governance system of universities by strengthening the powers of the rectors and of the administrative boards (*Consiglio di amministrazione*) responsible for university finances. It changes also significantly the whole structure of universities. While in the past the main peripheral units of Italian universities used to be the faculties, large and multidisciplinary bodies in charge of all teaching and recruitment matters, after the reform departments (which already existed but with a lesser role) become the predominant organizational and take over all the functions of faculties. Faculties or schools might survive but only as secondary bodies with functions delegated by the departments.

As the reform prescribes that departments should be formed by at least 35 professors, it is impossible in most of the cases to have homogeneous single discipline departments. More than one discipline have to be aggregated to reach the threshold. Since the numbers of political scientists are in Italian universities generally small they have to join forces with other disciplines (sociology, anthropology, history, etc.). IPS has asked to representatives of some of the Italian universities where political science has a particularly strong tradition to describe the new environment. We have here the answers of professor Marco Giuliani of the University of Milano Statale, Filippo Andreatta of the University of Bologna, Fulvio Attinà of the University of Catania, Alessandro Chiamonte of the University of Florence, Pierangelo Isernia of the University of Siena, and Luigi Bobbio of the University of Torino.

Political Science in Milan: three elements and four scenarios¹ **Marco Giuliani**

Though policy scientists always warn against the possibility of evaluating the effects of a policy immediately after its first implementation, it is fair to say that the Law 240/2010 (Legge Gelmini) and its connected decrees deeply impacted on the organization of the Faculty of political sciences of Milano and on our discipline. At the mid of July 2012 most of the institutional adaptations to the new normative framework have been introduced and the constitutive phase is slowly moving to its end with the election of the new rector due in October 2012 and, immediately after, the composition of the new administrative board.

Three elements may be peculiar to how the new policy has been translated into the pre-existing academic framework of the University of Milano: 1) the continuous regulative drive coming from the highest academic position of the University; 2) the features of the Faculty of political sciences and 3) the evolution of the discipline of political science in the last two decades in that same faculty.

First element. The rector of the University of Milano used to be the president of the CRUI (the Conference of the Rectors of Italian universities) at the time of the approval of the Legge Gelmini, and he often shouldered

the minister, arguing in favor of a reform that would have prized merit and excellence in research and teaching. Once approved, he aimed at implementing the law as soon as possible in spite of the obvious difficulties (e.g. the dimension of the University of Milano, its generalist character that includes humanities and hard sciences, the competitive metropolitan context with several others private and public universities like Bocconi, Cattolica, IULM, Milano-Bicocca, Politecnico and San Raffaele). The "one-size-fits-all" strategy that was followed during the approval of the University statute, in the name of an increased accountability of the new departments, met severe opposition especially from the faculties with a clearer interdisciplinary character. Political sciences was obviously among them, and not because of a peculiar choice, but because of the specific rules governing the adoption and approval of BA and MA programs in the class of political and international sciences. Nevertheless, the university statute was eventually approved and, after "minor" remarks received from the Minister, formally adopted and implemented through a tight schedule for establishing departments, electing their heads, appointing the respective departmental *giunta*, and selecting the representatives who nominate the president for the coordinating institutions (*facoltà* or schools), etc. The swiftness of the whole process contributed to disregarding a series of organizational problems, like a clearer definition of the allocation of competencies between university as a whole, departments and schools; the reassignment or redesigning of technical and administrative staff (especially those of the former presidencies of the faculties); the resolution of all the technical problems connected with the unique university budget, etc. Formally, the new departments are already responsible for research and teaching but, at least in this transition period, they lack the human and financial resources to perform those tasks, in a situation of still ambiguous local regulative framework.

Second element. The former Faculty of Political Sciences of Milano (now, Faculty of Political, Economic and Social Sciences) was probably the purest expression of the original Maranini-Miglio project for the faculties of Political sciences (plural), with the accent on the plurality of potential declinations of an undefined core of political science (singular). The typical consensus-oriented decision-making structures of each faculty was magnified by the almost perfectly balanced situation between disciplines. Symbolically it could have represented a laboratory for interdisciplinary research and teaching, and partly it even managed to fulfill this ambition, but as a matter of fact it was mostly a very complex organization with clear disciplinary factions and constituencies, which were the dominant actors in each decision regarding the distribution of resources. The result was, especially in periods in which merit, evaluation and internationalization were not ideas in good currency, logrolling and pork-barrel decisions. Some argued that this outcome was the logical consequence of the faculty based organization of the university. In fact, in the absence of any kind of premiality, no one wanted to run the risk of breaking a consensus system that regularly assured the distribution of a certain amount of spoils.

Jeopardizing the implicit rules of the game could have led to inferior results. Thanks to some additional resources of the University of Milano, the Faculty of Political sciences proliferated through the years (and in spite of two marginal disciplinary secessions among economists and sociologists, that contributed to the birth of the University of Milano-Bicocca) becoming one of the biggest faculties of political sciences in Italy, both in terms of professors and of students. In its last period it had almost 200 professors and lecturers, organized into seven departments: Social and political studies, Labor studies and welfare, Economics, History, Law, International studies and Languages. Each of them represented a fierce stakeholder, often with recognized intra-departmental factions, mostly endowed with veto power. Given the plural status of the faculty, the Bologna process further promoted a proliferation of BA and then MA programs, each of them magnifying some elements of a particular discipline. Eventually, the old 4-years course in Political sciences, produced seven new BA programs, eight MA programs, plus four in cooperation with other faculties or universities. In the Academic year 2011/12, this meant more than 4000 students enrolled in programs entirely held in via Conservatorio (the traditional location of the faculty).

In spite of the high rate of drop-outs, the BA program in Political sciences (officially the heir of the old four-years course, initially believed to quickly become a residual choice after the new post Bologna-process teaching offer) continues to have the highest number of students, and to propose a multidisciplinary balanced formation, organized into four curricula. Its capacity to attract is quantitatively high, but on average its freshmen don't have a particularly brilliant high-school background, risk to drop-out already

before the end of the first year, and comparatively take a long time before graduating with low marks. But the variance around the average student in Political sciences is very high, and those who “survive” are often as brilliant as students following a more regular career in other BA programs, included those that rely on a selective admission. Since then, the core teaching in via Conservatorio has remained almost unchanged. The new accreditation systems and criteria put forward by the National agency for evaluation will probably represent the first challenge to its overall organization. More generally, in the medium term, there will probably be an indirect impact because of the “property rules” defined by the new statute of the University of Milano. Each teaching program (*Corsi di laurea*) has been assigned (possibly) to one department on the basis of the various percentages of teaching duties. Majoritarian (or largely pluralitarian) departments have the responsibility of the program as principals, although there may be other associate departments if they teach more than 15% of the credits. Only in a couple of cases it has been impossible to identify a majority department, and in that event (included the BA in Political sciences) the program has been assigned to an interdepartmental committee.

Following the law, and the stricter rules of the Statute, the number of departments in via Conservatorio came down to three: Social and political sciences (SPS), Economics, management and quantitative methods (DEMM), and International studies, law and political history (DILPHS). There are both explicit rules and implicit incentives for departments to assign the teaching duties of their professors and lecturers on their own programs, leaving the teaching of their disciplines included in other programs to internal extra-assignments (*affidamenti*) or external contracts. These will be probably paid by the department hosting the program and not by that providing the teacher, with the result of an overall “pass-the-buck” non-cooperative game. As I said, in the mid-term, this should provide the incentives for a further departmentalization of the teaching programs, reducing the level of interdisciplinarity, in spite of the hybrid education that seems to be required in the new complex labour market. It is evident that not all the disciplines can easily follow that strategy. If the BA (or even MA) courses in Political sciences (plural) still follow the legacy of the Maranini-Miglio model (for good or for wrong), in a system that favors “tit-for-tat” games between departments, they could remain in the Bermuda triangle of high numbers, low quality and deadlock, because of the structure of interdepartmental committees in a context that will gradually lose its consensual imprinting.

Third element. Political science (singular) in Milano is a happy story with an uncertain “ending”. Not more than 25 years there wasn’t a single course in political science in the public University of Milano, in a faculty whose unique teaching program was called “Political Sciences”. Now we teach around 40 courses from the BA to the doctoral level. Probably a garbage-can interpretation of this proliferation would not be fair enough with regard to the efforts and strategies brought forward by a number of agents, but their entrepreneurship was certainly facilitated by a set of contingent windows of opportunity, started by the 3+2 reform and the norms regulating the programs in each class of study. Given the structure of many programs and the number of their students, we now offer six parallel introductory courses in Political science (included one taught in English). Everything’s fine then? It’s not so simple. Firstly, it should not have been very complicated to regroup all political scientists in a unique department (formerly we were separated in three different ones), but for different legacies it was only partially possible. If the department is the new basic organizational block in the academic architecture, being partially dispersed will probably be a disadvantage. Secondly, the structure of opportunity provided by the national rules defining how to construct a teaching program (at BA or MA level) are different for each discipline, and particularly damaging for political science. Its “natural home” is conflated by other disciplines according to the original cognitive model derived by the Maranini-Miglio’s imprinting, and since all political scientists belong to the same scientific sector, it’s impossible to try to “control” some other programs. As a result, though we participate in quite a few *Corsi di studio*, we have very limited chances of having the leadership any of them. As a matter of fact, there isn’t any political scientist directing one of the new teaching committees, or guiding the newly established faculty of political, economic and social sciences. Thirdly, whereas other disciplines have several overlapping scientific sectors (e.g. law, with several sectors in the fields of public, private and international law), in fact, the SPS04 (Political Science) sector masks non overlapping trainings and capacities going back to the three original subsectors: IR, public administration and public policy, domestic and comparative politics. In a situation of scarce resources, future retirements and a block of turnover, this could represent a further

setback for our discipline. Without the possibility of even partially substituting retiring professors (usually teaching 2-3 courses at all levels) with colleagues of contiguous sectors (as done by economists, sociologists and jurists), the risk is that of gradually abandoning our presence in those teaching programs which we were not able to deeply characterize, but still see our qualified presence. Deciding the “core business” in teaching will be a common task for all disciplines, but in the context we’ve just described, it risks to be a retreat without strategy and without any safe haven.

Having said this regarding the impact of the new reform for our discipline in the University of Milano, which could be the potential scenario for the future?

Scenario A: “*Gattopardo’s rule*” (10%): nothing will actually change. The usual Italian-style adagio could again prevail over the many reforms put in place. In spite of the abolition of the intermediary level between the university and the departments, which assured the typical room for compensating opposing tendencies, the consensus-oriented legacy of the (ex-) faculty, inspired by the original plural model of Political sciences, will survive as an institutionalized practice. In this scenario, Political Science (singular) has nothing to gain and nothing to lose, compared to the status quo. An opportunity would be lost, and a risk avoided. My personal perspective is that this scenario has few chances to be realized, because of the new structure of opportunity which, as I tried to demonstrate, is biased in favor of certain disciplines and programs.

Scenario B: “*Departments rule*” (40%): because of the aforementioned opportunity structure, maybe not in the near future, but already in the medium period, all the teaching programs intrinsically based on an interdisciplinary (and thus interdepartmental) cooperation will suffer a disinvestment of resources. Firstly, in terms of human resources because departments will first assign the teaching duties to their own programs (and possibly to their best teachers), and secondly of financial resources (with no one wanting to pay the bill – contracts, teaching assistants, marketing, placement strategies, time, energies, etc. – for someone else). BA and MA programs without any clear departmental “owner” risk the most, but even the others will probably experience a decrease in their interdisciplinary character, insofar as the national rules permit. (A “tragedy of the commons” translated into our academic organization). Unfortunately, this is the worst scenario for political science in Milano. Being still a minoritarian discipline, fragmented and divided into several departments and teaching programs, there is not the possibility of retreating to a more homogeneous political science program (that cannot exist). Political science risks, in the long term, to become a supplementary discipline, relegated to first year classes in order to fulfill the minimal ministerial requirements.

Scenario C: “*A new constitutive pact*” (20%): The old faculty was built on the basis of mutual non-interference. In a period of sufficient resources, no-one was interested in questioning the assignment of a new position or even the record of research and publications of a colleague. There wasn’t the need to choose, and quarreling was counterproductive (the gain would have been marginal, and could have negative feedbacks for the future). Without any clear central strategy or evaluating agency, the mutual non-interference has been applied even to teaching programs. Milano is probably the only Faculty of political sciences in Italy that managed to increase its offer in the last five years, whereas all the others decided to close or aggregate some programs. Being impossible to keep up to that attitude, and with the diffusion at each level of the logic of evaluation, the old logrolling habits could be substituted by a new, commonly agreed, constitutive pact. For example, the three departments could decide to reorganize and reduce the offer of BA level courses on the basis of a common commitment assuring proportional human and financial resources. At the same time, there could be free, and even bitter competition at the MA level. The problem is that exactly the most departmentalized BA programs should restructure themselves in favor of the most interdisciplinary ones: something that goes against the present drift. In any event, this scenario offers some chances for political science, especially in terms of saving human resources employed in introductory courses in order to reorient our presence in more political MA programs (or curricula).

Scenario D: “*Variable geometry*” (30%): It is no more the time for a global logrolling alliance: spoils are too

low for avoiding redistributive choices. But this could not necessarily mean an Hobbesian competition among departments, each one with its stronghold. There could still be place for common projects, for ideas and programs that rise above disciplinary barriers. *Welfare and labor studies* is a pragmatic example of this type of program that we inherited from the past faculty; *Economics and political science* is a more theoretical oriented example of an internationalized MA program entirely taught in English, which nicely represents a niche of cooperation between “sects” of two different departments. The idea of variable geometries for innovative and possibly international programs could appeal to a variety of stakeholders inside different departments. It is not necessary to share everything with everyone, but it could make sense to reduce the overall effort in BA programs in favor of some well-conceived experiments at the MA level. Along the same line, new projects should start together with foreign partners already from the beginning (double or joint degrees), in order to increase the visibility, share the costs, and raise the indices of internationality. They shouldn't be necessarily relegated at the second level of university education. It is possible to conceive even internationally oriented English-speaking BA programs in Political Sciences sidelining the pre-existing traditional ones: the first one would be more clearly inclined towards the social sciences, whereas the others would preserve the tradition of the humanities. This last scenario is not without costs, especially in terms of risks. But the search for innovative paths is probably the only one that will permit to our discipline to avoid playing an ancillary role in the reformed Italian university.

Social sciences are certainly the most innovative disciplines among the broader field of humanities characterizing the original organization of the faculties of Political sciences. On the one side, the university reform impacts on the interdisciplinary character of our programs, but on the other it may represent the opportunity for investing in qualitatively different projects: more scientific, open to evaluations and internationally oriented. Political science, among the social sciences, is well equipped to accept the challenge.

Political Science in Bologna: from the old “social contract” to a new scenario

Filippo Andreatta

Political science at the University of Bologna had, among others, two main peculiarities. On the one hand, the Departments were more autonomous than in other universities, with informal rules allowing them to control recruitment and with the Faculty Assembly limited to a ratification role. Since their inception, the four founding institutes, which eventually developed into pre-reform departments, were largely autonomous and shared on an equal base resources according to an original agreement, named «the social contract». These departments were therefore already in tune with the shift dictated by the Gelmini reform giving them more responsibility, even if their established tradition made them reluctant to revise their composition. On the other hand, because of the multicampus organization of the University of Bologna which had disseminated a series of new faculties in the Romagna region, there were two Faculties of Political sciences, including the one in Forlì. This characteristic, which had generated unusual amount of resources, had also created a sense of territorial identity verging on competition.

Of the four departments – Economics, Sociology, Politics and History, Political Science – only the first one, with approximately 100 units from various faculties, had a sufficient dimension for the threshold of 50 which the University of Bologna had adopted (raising it from the number prescribed in the Gelmini Reform). The other three departments had each about 40 members from the two Faculties, making it necessary to reduce the number to two departments at most. There could have been two possible solutions which proved to be unfeasible due to past legacies and difficulties in the negotiations. First, it would have been possible to follow a territorial and teaching criterion by establishing two (very similar) departments out of the old faculties, one in Bologna and one in Forlì. Second, following a disciplinary and research criterion it would have been possible to unite the 40 sociologists from the political science faculty with the about 20 sociologists teaching in other faculties, allowing the remaining two departments (politics and history, and political science) to merge given their cultural proximity. Given the problems which made either solution impossible, the most

ambitious objective of a single department was even more out of reach.

Since no top-down solution could be found, one group of professors launched a bottom-up initiative, inviting all of their colleagues which either taught in one of the political science faculties or were specialized in a socio-political discipline to join a new Department of Social and Political Sciences (SPS). Overall, this invitation reached about 150 individuals: little more than 90 who had both characteristics, about 30 who met the teaching criterion and 30 who met the disciplinary one. About half (73) replied positively, including all those from the Political Science Department, about a third of the Politics and History Department, a little contingent from the Sociology Department and a dozen of those coming from other faculties. In the meantime, the Sociology Department had reached an agreement with one of the Law departments, leaving without a solution only about 20 professors from the old Politics and History Department, who were assigned to the SPS Department by the Academic Senate.

The new SPS Department is therefore composed of about 90 professors. Little more than 40% of these are political scientists *stricto sensu* reunited after having traditionally belonged to two distinct departments. Most political scientists came from the Department of Political Science which had a monodisciplinary character, while a smaller but significant contingent had belonged to the multidisciplinary Department of Politics and History. Even if there is no longer an almost monodisciplinary department of political science, the discipline is conspicuous in the new department and there is the further advantage of having all political scientists within the same institution. There are also about fifteen sociologists (about a quarter of the University total), a dozen historians of political thought or of specific geographic areas (almost all of the University total), nine contemporary historians, ten scholars of public law, and a few more belonging to other disciplines (linguistics and social psychology). The dimension of the Department is analogous to that of traditionally important departments such as Economics or Business and this should enhance the influence of the discipline within the University as a whole. This has already happened on the teaching side, as the department is primarily responsible for two bachelor degrees (one in Forlì) and 7 masters degree (three in Forlì), and it participates to 10 bachelor and 9 master degrees, offering courses well beyond the confines of the two old faculties.

Political Science in Catania: a ten percent minority in the new department **Fulvio Attinà**

The University of Catania (UniCT) moved fast and stubbornly to adopt the main aspects of the reform. The new Statute incorporated the important reform principles concerning department reorganization and the establishment of the new teaching structures, generally known as the Schools. But only the School of Medicine has been put in place, and no other School is in sight, at present. Undergraduate and graduate Courses are organized by the Departments. The end of the Faculty of Political Sciences and of two of the three Departments previously existing within it brought to the incorporation of all institutional and human resources in the DAPPSI, the Department for the Analysis of Political, Institutional and Social Processes, probably to be renamed in the future as the Political Sciences Department. The merger had the positive effect of drawing in one Department the thirteen political scientists formerly affiliated to the DAPPSI and the Political Studies Department. The political science share of the DAPPSI scientific staff is a little bit over 10 %. It falls behind the sociologists' share, who have the largest, and the lawyers' one. History, economics, law, sociology and other social and human studies are represented at the same time in the DAPPSI and in other departments. With regard to teaching, the political science share of CFU/ECTS is also around 10 % of the DAPPSI's total. The undergraduate political science course on *Politics and International Relations* has given way to an interdisciplinary (History & Political science) course due to the constraints imposed by university laws. The existing graduate political science course (LM 62) on *Global Politics and Euro-Mediterranean Relations* (known as the GLOPEM) has 36 CFU/ECTS in Political science and is entirely given in English. Briefly, the reform did not bring any remarkable transformation to the affiliation and teaching tasks of the political scientists.

The small reorganization of the departments, however, is a true failure. At mid-large Italian universities, academics missed the opportunity to reorganize the Departments by strengthening the scientific coherence and the *homogeneity* the reform law wanted. In such universities, the minimum number of department

members required by the law is a hard obstacle to those who want to make *homogeneous* social science departments staffed by political scientists, sociologists, political philosophers and the other scientists of the *Area 14*. The scientific coherence of the Department is key to enhance political and social science research in Italy. Political scientists share few research interests with lawyers and economists but many with sociologists and other social scientists. *Homogeneous* departments are good to research as well as teaching. They will offer curricula more up to date than the multidisciplinary curricula of the Faculty of Political Sciences that belong to obsolete notion of education in political science.

Political Science in Florence: saving the “Cesare Alfieri” tradition ***Alessandro Chiaramonte***

According to the “Gelmini reform”, approved in December 2010, broader and more coordinated functions of teaching and research are allocated to the new departmental structures. In the following months, the governing academic bodies of the University of Florence began to discuss and work on its implementation. On the 24th of September 2011, the *Senato Accademico and the Consiglio di amministrazione* approved the guidelines for the departmental reorganization. The main points decided were:

- the membership of each new department should be such as to ensure not only the minimum requirement of 35 components established by the Law 240/2010, but, taking into account the planned retirements, a higher minimum of 50 components (counting full and associate professors, and researchers). To ensure a better management and a fair representation in the higher bodies, the new departments should not have, generally, a number of members three times higher than the minimum for activation.
- the fourteen research areas defined by the CUN (National University Council) should be the first reference point for the establishment of departments. In other words, the new departments should be established by aggregating scientific sectors in the same CUN area or sub-area. Only reasonable exceptions to this rule would be allowed (see later). Moreover, professors and researchers of the same scientific sector should belong to only one department.
- for the coordination of teaching activities and for the management of related facilities, the departments, individually or jointly, should establish connected structures (what the new Statute would later call the “schools”). The schools would play a primary role in the case of degree courses in which multiple departments contributed significantly.

In accordance with the guidelines and rules for the establishment of new departmental structures, in December 2011 the professors and researchers, belonging to the fields of political science, sociology, political philosophy, history of political ideas, history of institutions, history of international relations, and contemporary history proposed to establish the Department of Political and Social Sciences. The promoters came from different departments and faculties, but, except for contemporary history, belonged to the same CUN research area (Area 14: political and social sciences). The primary scientific objective of the new department is to provide a qualified contribution to the study of contemporary political and social phenomena, of their interdependence, and of their historical roots. Taking into account this scientific objective, it is clear why the presence of contemporary history has been considered necessary for the new department, even though its scientific sector belongs to a different CUN research area. A number of inter-university and inter-departmental research centers, previously based in other departments, will join the new department.

The official constitution of the new Department of Political and Social Sciences will take place at the beginning of 2013, while the election of the director is scheduled for October 2012. Subsequently, the new departments will work on the creation of the schools as the structures in charge for coordinating teaching activities. The Department of Political and Social Sciences is expected to join forces with the departments of Law and of Economics in order to create a school in continuity with the cultural inheritance and tradition of

Political Science in Siena: sentiments, rational calculations and windows of opportunity

Pierangelo Isernia

Having, over the years, developed a modicum of skepticism about the "reforming" spirit that periodically animates the Italian political and administrative system, I am quite reluctant to step into the discussion of what the Gelmini reform might imply for the small group of political scientists in Siena, for their role in the University of Siena and, even less, for the Italian University system as a whole. To meet the kind invitation of IPS's editor, however, I will first tell the story of goals, calculations, and strategic moves behind the decision of the Siena team in Political Science to help setting up a brand new department hosting together, for the first time, most of the social sciences present in our University. Second, I will offer a few disparate thoughts about the future. For the sake of clarity, I will use the capital letters to indicate our discipline and the lower letters to indicate the late Faculty of political sciences.

Political Science in the city of Palio is a very tiny reality, made of just 5 people – 4 full professors and an assistant professor – surrounded in the old Faculty of political sciences by historians, lawyers and economists. Once Faculties were doomed to disappear by Gelmini's fiat two alternatives faced us. The first option was to simply transpose the Faculty into the new Department. This was a tempting option indeed. Over the last two years Political Science had, in fact, come to play a crucial and visible role in the management of both the Department and the Faculty of political sciences. Both the Director of Department and the Dean of Faculty were two political scientists coming from our small group. Should we have tried to preserve this leading role and influence more than anything else? The alternative was to create something new. And being Political Science a party of five, this immediately raised another question: with whom? We were not, flattering as it might be, short of offers, coming especially from the two economics departments. So what was to be done?

Our story is made of three elements: sentiments, rational calculations and windows of opportunity and, of course, it did not unfold in the rational, coherent way I pretend it did, but very much in bits and pieces.

Starting with the cool, rational calculations, three considerations were up in our minds. First, an assessment of the structural context. As others might have experienced, when Political Science – as a discipline – is a minority, life is not easy in political sciences – as a Faculty. Life for Political Science in a world in which others play the hegemon can be nasty and brutal (how short we do not know yet, in Siena...). Not being able (for lack of resources, not for lack of lust for aggrandizing the power of Political Science in Siena) to become an hegemon, we thought that life would have probably been better in a multipolar world (*pace* Mearsheimer...), in which you compete with other disciplines more or less of your size. And to add a constructivist twist, if the system had a common culture (especially in methodological terms), such as the one that is shared by social sciences, we could have come to live in an age quite similar to the golden one of the balance of power in the Nineteenth century; admittedly not an era of peace, but of limited conflicts and cross-cutting alliances.

Assuming that life would have been better in a multipolar world, which partners should we have chosen? We did choose partners whose methodological underpinnings were as homogeneous as possible (given the available options, of course) to ours. We did so for two reasons; or, if you like, under a couple of working hypotheses that are, as such, still untested and only time will tell whether they were correct. The first hypothesis is that we need to rethink how political science – as a set of teaching curricula – was taught in Siena, injecting into it a greater dose of scientific and empirical research and less "interdisciplinarity" *à la carte*. Siena is a medium-size University that has not the luxury of a vast endowment of young and ambitious would-be students to draw upon. It crucially depends on its capacity to attract students from Tuscany and outside (around 35% of our students come from other regions of Italy). We hypothesized that making the teaching offer (the so called *offerta formativa*) more *coherent*, *scientific* and *empirical* could possibly capture an increasing share of this mobile group of Italian students. Unfortunately, not all our

colleagues in the old Faculty of political sciences shared this conviction. On the contrary, for many of them the core teaching component of a strong political sciences department was and still is a solid formation in legal and/or historical disciplines and, the more of them the better. We believe otherwise.

The second hypothesis (or bet?) is that, in the future, the results of the evaluation system for both teaching and research will play a greater role in allocating resources, in influencing recruitment and in catalyzing projects and initiatives. Any future Department will actively compete in an environment in which, at both the local (i.e. Siena) and national level, the results of the evaluation process will determine its growth. In this connection, we thought that we needed to join with people that appreciated the need to carry forward a vibrant research program.

These calculations were met by a sentiment: the human desire for change. Having (some of us) spent 20 to 30 years with the same old chaps, Political Scientists wanted to try new ones. In marriage, this is not always seen as positive. We think it has a positive side in other contexts.

As in the garbage can model of decision making (not incidentally first conceived to explain the University system) sentiments and calculations – no matter how strongly shared by our small group of Political Scientists – had to find a window of opportunity to transform themselves into an institutional program. And here the window came, when we were approached by a group of social scientists, based respectively in the Department of Communication and of Social Sciences and Philosophy (both located in the Faculty of Humanities), who invited us to consider the possibility of joining forces in creating for the first time a social science department at the University of Siena.

To go down this road was quite a departure from our initial, incremental, plans. It implied, in organizational term, to fuse scientific groups coming from different walks of life, never used to work together and to face resistances (that indeed quickly materialized) from those sectors of the old Faculty of political sciences less eager to see legal and historical studies being “diluted” into the larger (and turbulent?) sea of social sciences. And here the major debate came. It was acrimonious, but at time also passionate and articulated, both within the old Faculty – on what political sciences should offer both in terms of training for students and research – and among those keener to follow the new project – on what a Department of Social Sciences means in Siena and what it should and could offer in terms of teaching and research. Let me add that the Political Science team, as always working hand in hand, played a key role in making all this possible, following to the word the teachings of strategists like Thomas Schelling and Alexander George.

The results are not exactly what an Olympic mind would have designed. Part of the reason is that in Siena we are short of gods, and professors (myself first in the row) are much more at ease in teaching strategy than in actually practicing it, but this is what happened: the old Faculty of political sciences split itself. Approximately one third of it (including all those trained in social sciences and some historians more used and keen to work with the other social sciences) decided to join the project of a new Department, quickly named the Department of Social, Political and Cognitive Sciences (DISPOC), while those remaining set up another Department (also with political sciences in the title). And here we are, ready to roll in this new Department, made of more than 40 people, ranging from psychology, to economics, from political science to anthropology, from sociology to geography, with some engineers and computer scientists as well. Too early to say whether the bird will fly high. We will definitely try hard. In all cases, we look forward to the fun as well as the debates and controversies and, alas, the bureaucratic hurdles.

What have I learned from this experience that can be relevant for others? Some lessons are more personal and, may be, harder to generalize. First and foremost that leadership, when you embark yourself upon the task of changing (no matter how little) things, is more about patience and tolerance for your counterpart’s arguments than about power and influence.

What role for Political Science (the discipline) in the future of Siena? My impression is that the reform, at least as interpreted locally, makes the future of Political Science possibly more problematic, especially when it will come to the recruitment stage (a prospective quite far away in the future as far as Siena is concerned). In the past, at least in Siena, major decisions about recruitment were taken through logrolling and bargaining first at the faculty level and then at the Senate level. It is not clear how all this process will unfold in the future. For sure, Departments will not have anymore, like old Faculties had, a sounding board like the Academic Senate to make the voices of different institutions and interests heard. In Siena, as an example, out of 13 departments no more than 8 will find a seat in the Senate, 2 for each of the four big

“Areas” in which sciences have been divided in Siena.

In the new Gelmini system, I suspect that small size disciplines like ours that cannot play the hegemon will be able to make themselves heard both in the Departments and at the University level only through two indirect channels: students and research; how many students you attract and how much money you bring to the University. This might be good or bad, as far as it goes. Political Science is no match for natural science departments (although DISPOC budget, based on the last three years average, in terms of financial resources ranks first among the soft sciences and fifth overall). But we do feel we can compete for excellence and quality. However, for leveling the playing field we need a strong and independent evaluation system, able to take into account the specificities of the different disciplines and to reward those Departments that do good and to punish those that do badly, with a view to encouraging them to do better next time. How much the ANVUR system is able to deliver such a result it is probably, like for the French Revolution, too soon to say, but it is something that deserves a careful monitoring by all of us in Political Science, the discipline.

Political Science in Turin: three departments into one **Luigi Bobbio**

There are at present 16 political scientists at the University of Turin (5 *ordinari*, 1 *associato*, 10 *ricercatori*). Fifteen of them are classified in the sector SPS/04 (Political science) and one in the sector SPS/11 (Political sociology). In a couple of months we will have four new entries (three SPS/04 and one SPS/11) – as temporary “Gelmini” researchers – and the overall number of political scientists will rise to twenty.

All political scientists were part of the Faculty of Political Sciences which is soon going to disappear. Political science was taught only in courses run by this faculty.

The new department. A new large department has been set up, through the fusion of three pre-existing departments (Political studies, Social sciences, and Anthropology). The new Department of “Cultures, Politics and Society” gathers sociologists, political scientists, anthropologists, political philosophers, historians of political thought, some historians, some geographers and some foreign language specialists. All political scientists but one have joined the new department. They are then 15 over a total membership of 97. The director of the new department is a sociologist. There are two vice-directors: a political scientist and an anthropologist.

Nothing changed in the courses that are at present run by the Department often in cooperation with other Departments (mainly Law and Economics).

Phd program. The institution of the new department has entailed a change in the Phd program, that from the next year will be called “Doctoral school in sociology and political studies” and will gather sociologists, political scientists, political philosophers and historians of political thought.

Perspectives. Perspectives for political science at the University of Turin seem to be not too bad.

Notes

¹ The views expressed in this paper are entirely personal, and do not institutionally involve any academic organization to which the author belongs.