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Teaching and Research beyond Methodological and Disciplinary Traditions

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Book Reviews

Section coordinated by Carla Monteleone and Stefania Panebianco

FOCUS ON:

Teaching and Research beyond Methodological and Disciplinary Traditions

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This issue of Italian Political Science (IPS) focuses on innovation and change in teaching and research, moving beyond the methodological and disciplinary traditions of Political Science. It seeks to highlight the theoretical and methodological richness of the discipline and some of the instruments it offers to analyze a changing political environment. But it also points out how these changes can be conveyed through teaching, and how helpful **technological innovations and social media** can be.

The old debate on Grand Theories *versus* local theories has been *de facto* overcome by the complexity of global political phenomena that require different theoretical and methodological approaches to be explained. For various reasons, some sub-fields and approaches have had more fortune than others, in some countries more than in others, at different times. Moschella and Carta are providing the IPS readership with a specific focus on — respectively — **International Political Economy and Discourse Analysis**. The authors combine the Italian experience with developments in the larger International Political Science community to illustrate the increasing popularity of these fields of studies.

Traditional viewpoints of our empirical discipline deny the utility and applicability of **experimental methods** in Political Science. IPS 1/2014 hosts two contributions that question these views. The richness of the research methodology in Political Science and the high potential of the experimental method are highlighted by Isernia's review and by Baldassarri's research experience.

Since social media have challenged many aspects of society, academia cannot just play the role of observer; it has instead to accept the challenge and catch up with **technological and social innovation**. Curini's contribution argues that Social media analysis is emerging as a new research method to understand politics.

Last but not least, this issue discusses innovative teaching methods by illustrating specific teaching experiences in Italy and abroad. The traditional academic setting risks becoming obsolete, replaced by virtual rooms peopled by students who actively participate in constructing their learning process as it happens in the Hy'School – **hyper campus** – in Grenoble (Schemeil). Also simulation exercise has become a widely adopted **innovative**

learning tool by which students perform different roles to experience a problem-based learning and acquire a problem-solving expertise (Brunazzo and Settembri).

We live in a **global knowledge** society and Political Science is facing new challenges and opportunities – both in teaching and research. The current IPS issue indicates that the Political Science community is ready to react and to reframe teaching and research tools.

Towards a Hyper Campus:
Innovative teaching for tomorrow
(the Grenoble 2012 hy'School project)

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For those who dream of a university with no exams, no too-large lectures to passive if not inattentive audiences, yes, the current ways of teaching are obsolete. Confronted with a changing environment in which technology upsets campuses' bonding and bridging processes, teachers are confused about their future. Off campus events, social networks, and permanent connectivity may be opportunities to improve their working conditions and the effectiveness of their teaching; alternatively, if uncontrolled, this changing environment may become a threat to their self-esteem.

This is the very context in which the "Hy' School project" was released in December 2012 (for a "*high*", "*hybrid*", and "*hyper*" campus). Designed by a group of professors from three departments (political science, management, and engineering) to accommodate the new needs of master's and master's + 1 students, its main aim was to turn existing processes upside down. It relied on flipped classrooms[1] (or reverse classrooms); remote teaching (via videoconference); hybridization of learning processes that would combine e-learning, simulation games (to rehearse real-world negotiations with potential customers or partners), and sometimes personal development (drama, music, eloquence week, festivals). Student-teacher interaction passes through various channels, with less face-to-face meetings, and more opportunities to greet outsiders. Tutorials substitute for class attendance. Auditoriums only bring several groups of students together for special events (inauguration and graduation days; guest speakers; organizational work and planning sessions). On-line instantaneous debriefing and evaluation with follow-up measures is active from day one.

To reach these ends, five pillars were imagined, they are listed here in the very order in which they are depicted in Graph 1, although to understand their interactions one must prioritize them differently: the *tribune* and the *barometer*; the *platform*, the *fabric*, and the *studio* – not to speak of the unavoidable control tower, an administrative division in charge of the whole process. It is of note that to be successful, such a project must rely equally on each pillar.

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[1] What is the Flipped Classroom?, online at: http://ctl.utexas.edu/teaching/flipping_a_class/what_is_flipped.

Graph 1. The Organizational Structure of the Project.
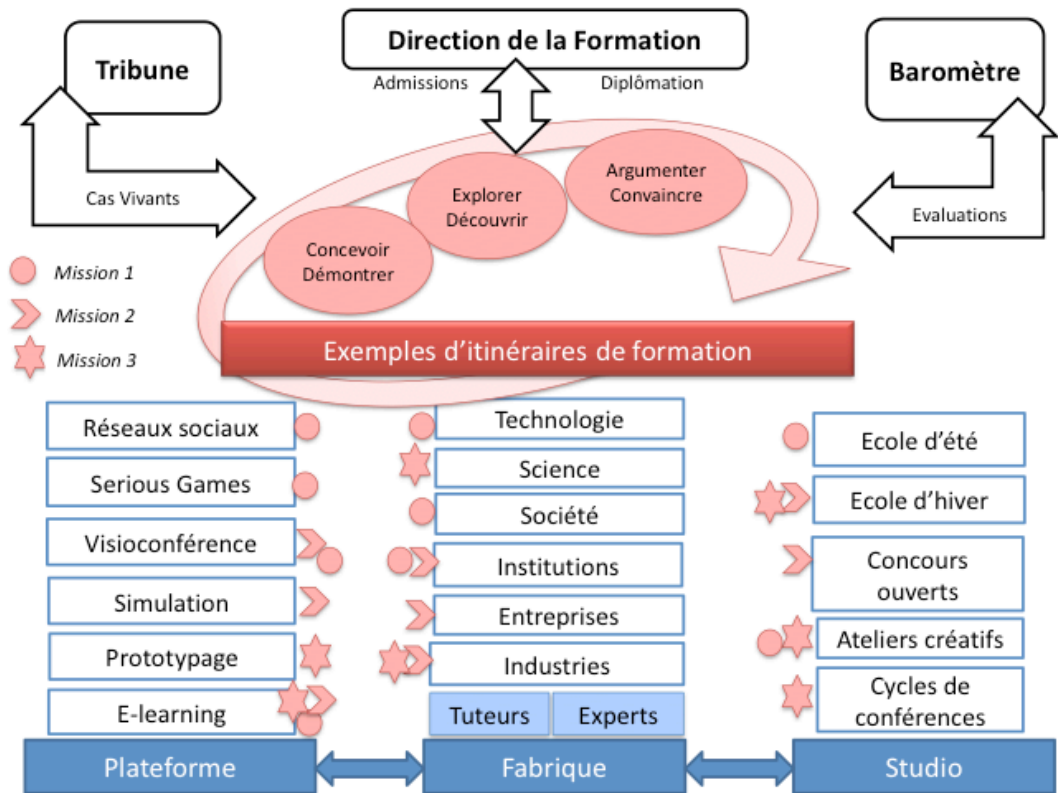
The fabric

Let us start with the core of the system: this is the place where students work together in small multidisciplinary groups of 4 to 6 persons, some being far away and working online, or through videoconference systems. A modular open space office in a dedicated building is attributed to them at the beginning of each semester; they can make any material arrangements they like, and are free to decide on their schedule since the place is open 24 hours a day.

Their mission is to complete a report assigned to them by subscribers of the program, all known as members of a particular club, the Tribune. To this end, they will have sufficient discretion to combine a variety of tools at will. Their mandate stems from a real life cases ("*cas vivants*") that Tribune's subscribers must address (e.g. opening a new department, launching a MOOC, designing a CATI survey, shortening a bureaucratic process in a local public administration, reforming an organization or an NGO, campaigning for a political party, improving the efficiency of a governmental branch, evaluating a business model before it gets financed, selecting a humanitarian aid project, sending troops abroad, and so on).

Within the Fabric, students will assess the challenge to face, select the appropriate means to succeed, and turn to professors for guidance and support at various points in time (either during office hours; using interactive applications like Skype, Line, Google Hangouts, etc.; or intranet systems such as Moodle, Chamilo, etc.). Facts and worksheets,

as well as any necessary data and documents will be posted on demand on these platforms. Once the contract between the School, the students at the core of a single group, and their Professor(s) is signed, the goal endorsed by academics, and the project approved by each partner, teachers just have to respond to student's queries, feed the platform with appropriate materials, reframe the process whenever it is appropriate. In exchange, students commit themselves to reading any text or document posted by the professor(s). A supervisor belonging to the Division (see below) assesses and dispatches the related financial, credit, and time resources that will accrue to all participants, including those outsiders from whom money and orders come (a public administration, a private firm, an association, an academic group, etc.).

Students opt for a strategy, and then design their own agenda. Weekly tutorials help them stay on track, deepen their knowledge on specific aspects, and test their arguments. In order to improve their performance, they may focus on drama, participate in public speaking competitions, and use any means to stay focused, control their fears, master their stress – dreams that come true within the Studio. The closer they come to achieving their ends and completing their report, the more supported they are by their professor(s) and their supervisor. Lagging behind schedule, conversely, means they will receive less attention from the teacher and less assistance from the supervisor. It may also imply that the "course" will not be credited or, still worse, that the end-user will pull out from the project, with the financial consequences that will impact the School.[2]

Of course, agenda, timetable, and self-organization of teamwork or lack of it, the possible division of labor or the absence of specialization – all these are left up to students. Counseling and coaching may help them avoid likely waste of time, possible inefficiency and redundancy, as well as temporary breakdowns. Here again, professors and supervisors matter. They may verbally encourage students, carefully review their mid semester achievements, give adequate advice all along the way, etc. They set the countdown and deadlines and help students meet them.

Once the report drafted, then reviewed, revised, and resubmitted to the professor(s), as in a peer review, the end-user rehearses their future defense behind closed doors. Selected attendees (the academic staff? Other students' groups?) may all react and comment, suggest additional readings, experiments, or surveys, and give a grade. This is what is now called a reverse class or a flipped class, with students preparing lectures and delivering them while professors listen. Evaluation comes from outsiders (they "buy" reports, ask for modifications, or express their disappointment, and reformulate their request for the next session).

The platform

A prerequisite of this new teaching framework is the availability of various course materials needed to help students complete their work: selected textbooks, official documents, Internet links, articles and book chapters on the one hand; a high performance videoconference and Web 2.0 flux of connections with peers all over the world;

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[2] A problem that has many solutions, like increasing tuition fees, imposing compensation in such forms as working for the library, or offering the frustrated end-user another free trial with a different group of students.

software for modeling architectural or technical projects, simulating decision-making processes, and playing serious games.

Of course, the first component of this platform – a database accessible via an Intranet link – is now a classic: Moodle paved the way to similar stockpiling and interactive systems for data finding. Such websites have flourished in every single university over the globe. The novelty here is the tailored-to-the-needs aspect of this data tank, permanently filled and revised by professors – a lot of work for those who hoped that machines could be good substitutes for personalized advices and once and for all recommended reading lists updated from one year to the next! The corpus made available to each group of students may overlap with what other groups may need, but not necessarily so. Beyond the basics of each discipline (remember: teams are multidisciplinary), such welcome overlaps may occasionally happen, but nothing is certain when the class first meets.

The second component of the Platform is the Game Center. To experiment, simulate, and rehearse, students may pick out tools that are available to them, although this requires serious and constant monitoring to allow time slots, authorize the use of costly software, besides watching the discussions run on the Intranet. Students from the school of engineering, architecture, or medicine, may build prototypes and test them to give some guarantee that the real size project is workable.

The studio

One of the most exciting innovations of this project is the invitation made to the students to improve their argumentative capabilities through crash training in rhetoric and body language: drama, opera, dance, public speaking – all these "arts" are henceforth added to "science" to boost the convincing impact of the projects presented to various audiences.

In collaboration with professors and supervisors, students also invite guest speakers, organize special events, and even request the planning of additional courses (such as summer schools), even though some may have little explicit relevance for their tasks.

The barometer and the tribune

To establish and consolidate the relationships with outside stakeholders –such as public administrations, research centers, think tanks, international organizations, and firms– among which sponsors, the press, and end-users, these two bodies are essential. Firstly, they collect yearly subscriptions, registrations for special events, grants and scholarships. Secondly, they give on-line and nearly "live" evaluations of actual progress, criticism, requests, and comments made by partners. Thirdly, they conduct periodical satisfaction surveys. Finally, they organize face-to-face meetings to which every registered person or institution may participate.

To put it briefly, the Barometer gives instant assessments of scores and deadlines, whereas the Tribune offers a unique place to make supply and demand meet, and give maximum visibility to private projects.

How does this work?

Suppose a regional authority of a developing country is assessing the feasibility of a participatory democracy experiment, modeled after the 2004 British Columbia one, with the

particular purpose of training candidates and voters to play the game by the rules. The request is to devise the steps and the calendar required, design the appropriate framework, and also evaluate the costs and benefits expected as well as the risks taken. Once the "participatory democracy" team of professor(s), supervisor and monitors, as well as students of various origins is composed, it has access to a stock of data imagined for its special needs. Its members may test their ideas on a reduced sample of other students or outside volunteers who will simulate a public debate on any issue of the real life agenda; they may organize videoconferences with experts worldwide to collect their views and listen to their particular experience with participatory designs. They may reshape the architecture inherited from the 18th or 19th century to make it better suit the particular context in which the project will be implemented, imagining dedicated buildings, improving electronic votes, facilitating discussions with experts during the hearing sessions that will help participants to make up their mind about the technicalities of the problem raised, etc. This would require skills in various fields: communication technology; comparative politics with a special stress on the history of voting and/or the theory of democracy, and a good knowledge of possible assembly venues (from a local market to a national Parliament building). Psychology may also help students arguing sincerely, with no hidden agenda, and finding out the appropriate timing (coming to a close neither too early nor too late is of the essence when the legitimacy of a decision is at stake), as well as identifying possible allies to rally (and adversaries to block) before making a joint decision on the issue at stake. Since the project may be implemented in a developing country, anthropologists or specialists of the area are helpful. Because it has a cost, an economist may inform the group of the appropriate business model to make the experiment routine and sustainable in the long run, without further assistance or monitoring. Finally, students trained to address international organizations topics will be welcomed, because such schemes would inevitably be developed and followed up by one or several intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

When the semester starts, each team will identify its special needs, and organize its time schedule (an excellent opportunity to learn about scoreboards, logical frameworks, and grids that are extensively used in management). Supervisors will provide the resources. As said, professors will tutor the students once or twice a week, instead of teaching several hour-long classes in front of dozens of people who are more or less focused on his or her lecture. At some points, participants might feel underequipped to confront professional experts and "sell" them their work: support would be expected from the Studio, with its catalogue of on-demand performances and training sessions.

Day-by-day, progression towards completion to the satisfaction of all participants in a project will be watched out by the Barometer's people; additional facilities and funding may be raised via the Tribune. Eventually, defense day brings together all the stakeholders in a single room (some via a videoconference system), and credits accrue to the team. In the end, semester-by-semester, students graduate from the program via the pedagogical Division, and their achievements are posted on the program's website (once the embargo on the data collected is waived).

6

How to make the best use of this framework?

It is of note that teams may (should?) be competing on the same project – although resources available for the same purpose will be reduced. Awards could gratify the best projects, either among rival teams, or across students' groups working on different projects at the same time. Moreover, professors will share the fate of their tutored students: evaluating their pedagogical achievements will no longer be necessary.

Within such a framework, innovators are awarded with symbolic as well as material benefits. Teaching is improved; the least involved soon emulate pioneers' work. Autonomy grows because learners, teachers, and people who manage the support system are on an equal footing – and are paid accordingly. Relevance also increases, as partnerships multiply. Funding expands, due to the inclusion of outsiders at an early stage of research. Pedagogy and research are linked to an unknown extent.

Though this is not yet paradise, it very much resembles a brave new world. At the very least the professors' nightmares (decline in academic authority, possible irrelevance of the field invested, lack of attractiveness, and lack of resources) will be bygones.

Learning Through Simulation Games

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Today, the increasing availability of information and the complexity of the problems that need to be addressed require universities to not only equip students with the skills necessary to understand the debates and issues relevant to specific disciplines, but also with meta-skills (the ability to undertake research, organize meetings, speak in public, and defend a position through reasoning); the latter can be applied in diverse environments (at school and, more specifically, in the workplace).

This change entails the need to identify teaching methods that respond better to the new requirements. The main reason for such a need is the emergence of a global knowledge society. As Bursens and Van Loon (2007: 2) point out, "this era—the 'information age'—can be characterized by an 'infinite, dynamic and changing mass of information' (Dochy and McDowell, 1997: 280) and requires cognitive, meta-cognitive, and social competencies of its citizens. Students need to achieve not only a sound base of discipline specific knowledge and skills but also a number of 'higher order' skills and attitudes. In this way, students should become able to cope with ever-changing environments and abstract and complex work processes." In light of these developments, many contemporary teaching activities adopt the problem-based learning (PBL) approach. PBL is "the learning that results from the process of working toward the understanding or resolution of a problem" (Barrows and Tamblyn, 1980: 18). The theoretical approach that underpins these teaching methodologies is one and the same, i.e., constructivism, whereby what we learn is the result of the construction, interpretation, and modification of our representations of reality, which are, in turn, the result of our experiences with the real world. Simulations are one of the main instruments adopted in the PBL approach.

Simulations have acquired prominence in contemporary teaching, especially in international relations (Brunazzo and Settembri, 2012). The indexes of leading journals on contemporary politics, teaching, and the discipline of political science are evidence of how extensive the use of simulation games is and how complex and structured they have become. The pedagogical and educational foundations of simulations are based on the so-called "student-centered" approach (Jonassen and Land, 2000), where students actively participate in a learning process that is "constructive, cumulative, self-regulated, goal-oriented situated, collaborative, and individually different" (De Corte, 2000: 254).

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From an educational point of view, simulations have been widely used in several fields including international relations, economics, and sociology. Certainly, simulations have not been used with the same frequency since the 1970s. In the late 1980s, Dorn (1989) identified a peak in scientific contributions on simulations between 1971 and 1975 and a contraction between 1981 and 1986. However, the continuing importance of simulations and role-playing games is confirmed, for example, by the existence of *Simulation and Gaming*, a scientific journal established in March 1970 that is dedicated to simulations, and several international associations working exclusively on this issue.[1]

Despite the many examples and contributions (or probably because of them), it is not easy to define a simulation (or a "simulation game"). In fact, to be precise, a distinction should be drawn between simulation games, games-simulation, gaming simulation, games with simulated environments, teaching games, learning games, instructional games, and educational games. Thus, here we embrace the minimalistic definition proposed by Dorn (1989: 2-3):

A game is any contest or play among adversaries or players operating under constraints or rules for an objective or goal. A simulation is an operating representation of central features of reality. A simulation game is an exercise that has the basic characteristics of both games and simulations. Consequently, simulation games are activities undertaken by players whose actions are constrained by a set of explicit rules particular to that game and by a predetermined end point. The elements of the game constitute a more or less accurate representation or model of some external reality with which players interact by playing roles in much the same way as they would interact with reality itself.

The adaptability of simulations is one of the reasons for their success. A simulation can be organized for a few or many participants, and a number of observers. Participants may be homogeneous with regard to several variables (e.g., a class of students or a group of officials). The rules may differ in their degree of specificity. The skill level of participants can be varied and they may have access to various amounts of resources. A simulation can also be organized according to the time available. The aim of a simulation is, in general, to achieve a goal (e.g., approval of a legislative text) through interaction among the participants (Brunazzo and Settembri, 2012).

In a *role-playing* simulation, each participant is given a role and is required to act according to their character. To this end, the characteristics and objectives of the person that he/she is playing become an important resource for each participant. Playing a role can be very difficult; especially if the participant does not agree with the ideas of the character they are playing. However, this is one of the factors that make a simulation useful: it forces the participant to assume the guise of a "stranger" and to understand their point of view. The participant may play the role of a real person (the president of the European Council), an imaginary person (King of Alpha Centauri), an individual (head of government), or a collective actor (European Commission).

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[1] International associations include the Association for Business Simulation and Experiential Learning (ABSEL), the International Simulation and Gaming Association (ISAG), Simulation and Gaming Association of Japan (JASAG), the North American Simulation and Gaming Association (NASAGA), the Society for Intercultural Education, Training, and Research in the USA (SIETAR-USA), and the Society of Simulation and Gaming of Singapore (SSAGSg).

A simulation consists of individual and collective activities. The former may, for example, comprise the preparation of positions, writing reports or press releases, or the drafting of amendments; the latter comprises the more or less formalized interaction among participants. The interaction may take place during the formal simulation sessions or after the session (e.g., by e-mail or through informal contacts). This means that simulation activities have a formal beginning and end. Anything can happen between those two moments as long as it remains within the limits established by the simulation: while players can bargain according to the initial position of the character that they represent, they are not permitted to go beyond their mandate. This does not mean that the role remains the same: characters may change their minds, as happens in any real-life decision-making process. As in reality, however, changes of position must be justified.

The fact remains that a simulation is a simplification of reality. Some positions may be caricatured and certain rules oversimplified. There is no minimum degree of simplification: it depends on the number of actors, on the process to be simulated, and on the rules to be followed. Therefore, the simulation of a decision-making process that in reality involves numerous actors requires to be carefully simplified if there are very few participants. Experience, but also common sense, will guide the teacher in selecting the process to be simulated.

The usefulness of simulations has sometimes been questioned by scientific literature, especially in international relations courses (Butcher, 2012: 177). However, other scholars have emphasized how simulations enable students to:

- Benefit from active learning defined as "anything that involves students in doing things and thinking about the things they are doing" (Bonwell and Eison, 1991: 4);
- Experience relevant aspects of the real world that had previously only been studied in abstract through traditional courses;
- Feel the impact of the stress and constraints found in crisis situations (e.g., time, information availability, and information reliability);
- Witness the prevalence of different decision-making models under specific circumstances (e.g., rational actor model, governmental process model, organizational process model, and groupthink);
- Measure the importance of personalities, trust, and personal relationships in the decision-making process as well as the role of leadership;
- Understand the nature of public opinion and assess its reliability as a tool for decision making;
- Appreciate the importance of information in decision making and recognize the remarkable amount of information that policy-makers need about current affairs, historical situations, scientific progress, and so on;
- Observe the interaction between domestic and international politics;
- Assess the validity of different explanations of policy-making in different situations (e.g., elitism, pluralism, and hyperpluralism);
- Gain first-hand experience in empirical research;
- Acquire a range of skills that may be valuable in a future profession, such as the ability to place oneself in someone else's shoes, organizing events, reading between the lines, understanding the nuances of diplomatic language, and realizing the importance of reasoning and rhetoric to convince or to refute;

- ▪ Finally, given the fact that the teacher is always in the background, to work as part of a group and help each other.

There is no straightforward approach to prepare a simulation exercise: the design of a simulation can be tailored to specific pedagogical needs (Brunazzo and Settembri, 2012). For example, teachers of European Union (EU) politics have utilized simulations to explain to their students the functioning of the European Parliament (Jozwiak, 2012), of the European Council or Council of the Union (Jozwiak, 2012; Kaunert, 2009; Zeff, 2003; Galatas, 2006), of the Council Presidency (Elias, 2013), of the Commission's staff (Giacomello, 2012), or of some specific features of the EU decision making (Switky, 2004; Bursens and Van Loon, 2007; Van Dyke et al., 2000).

Although the constructivist approach is deliberately celebrative of simulations as tools to teach and learn how the EU works, simulations do not constitute a panacea. For example, they do not replace traditional learning, and they work better when they build on solid knowledge about the political dynamics and its institutions. Moreover, they have intrinsic limitations regarding reproducing the dynamics of real negotiations. Four of these limitations concern timespan, socialization, contingencies, and complexity.

The duration of a simulation exercise is limited to a few weeks at most. Real negotiations rarely last less than one year; rather, they often last for more than two years. The difference is not so much in the amount of time taken by an institution to discuss an issue, which is limited, but the time taken for the issue to be debated at a technical level and, more importantly, addressed between meetings. In a simulation, the negotiation must necessarily proceed through an intense sequence of meetings concentrated into a few days or weeks. There is little or no time for national positions to be properly articulated, for contacts to be established, or for like-minded delegations to recognize each other. In simulation exercises, issues are inevitably dealt with more superficially than in real negotiations.

A related issue is socialization. The participants in a simulation play their roles for a limited number of days and have little time to familiarize themselves with each other's preferences, skills, and attitudes, whereas real negotiators get to know each other relatively well. In some cases, negotiators are required to meet several times a week. They learn to cooperate, understand difficulties, accommodate preferences, and most importantly, build and sustain trust in their counterparts. Real negotiators often operate in small circles or communities that develop not only specific codes of behavior but also a genuine mutual understanding. Simulations do not allow for this.

Moreover, real negotiations do not happen in a vacuum: they are embedded in a specific context that determines their pace, their development, and their outcome. These factors cannot be fully reproduced in a simulation: an imminent election, a critical juncture, or budgetary reasons may compel negotiators to conclude within a certain deadline. In addition, the threat of a pandemic, the imminence of an international conference, or the sudden fall of a national government may have a decisive impact on a negotiation. Simulations cannot cope with these contingencies well.

Finally, real negotiations are inevitably more complex than simulations, even if they are based largely on the same documentation. Simulations usually take place in one language, whereas real negotiations are multilingual. Simulations cannot focus on highly technical issues that are impenetrable to non-experts. On the contrary, real negotiations

can be painfully complex and require experts to discuss the details of certain provisions over several weeks. Further, the participants in a simulation are alone, whereas a national negotiator can and does draw on a huge body of expertise available at various levels of the public administration. Simulations are by definition concerned with a single issue, but this is rarely the case for real negotiations: concessions are sometimes made and compromises reached across procedures, and not necessarily at the same time. This dynamic can be replicated in simulations to a very limited extent.

As stated above, the scientific literature is divided on the efficacy of simulations. Some authors are enthusiastic: they only see the positive effect of simulations. Others are more critical: they consider the traditional approach more useful and regard simulation as some sort of trivialization of the teacher's activity. Our position is midway between these two. Simulation games can be effective if they are well organized and if they go together with other formative opportunities. In other words, simulation games demonstrate their potential only if they are included in a teaching course structured into different learning opportunities, and based on both "traditional" and "innovative" methods. It is likely that not all the students will react positively to the simulation, given that they also react differently to more traditional classes. However, our experience is that simulations motivate students to learn more about politics.

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12

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Nowcasting (and forecasting) politics through social media? A personal view

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The exponential growth of social media and social network sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, and their potential impact on real world politics has increasingly attracted the attention of scholars in recent years. Broadly speaking, I think we can identify four main areas of research in this respect. The *first* area links social media with collective actions. For example, scholars have studied how social networks have been used to organize demonstrations and revolts during the "Arab spring" to engage individuals in mobilizations and to build social movements and political parties, such as the Pirate Party in Sweden and Germany or the Italian *Movimento 5 Stelle*, which use the web to set the party line and select candidates. The *second* approach investigates the possibility for the web to become an "uncoerced public sphere." Thus far, several authors have debated about the potential of the new media to act as a "habermasian public sphere." While some authors have suggested that the Internet and social media are potential sources of direct democracy, which may contribute to increasing responsiveness and accountability of real world politics, others have proposed diverging views strongly criticizing this same idea (see Hindman, 2009). The *third* (large) stream of research in the literature on social media adopts a more "political supply-side" approach, analyzing how the Internet and the diffusion of social media has affected the content of electoral campaigning and the candidates and parties' political communication. While some of the initial hope for e-democracy has been unfulfilled, the Internet still provides new opportunities for electoral campaigning, which enables politicians to engage with the wider public.

However, the diffusion of social media makes it possible to delve into the web to explore and track the political and electoral preferences of citizens. It is this latter (*fourth*) area of study that I want to further discuss here.

More recently, scholars have started to explore social media as a device to assess the popularity of politicians, to track the political alignment of social media users, and to compare citizens' political preferences expressed online with those reported by polls. Analyzing social media during an electoral campaign can indeed be very interesting for a number of reasons. Besides being cheaper and faster compared with traditional surveys, social media analysis can monitor an electoral campaign on a daily (or on an hourly) basis. Consequently, the possibility to *nowcast* a campaign, that is, to track trends in real time and capture (eventual) sudden changes (so called "momentum") in public opinion faster

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than is possible through traditional polls (for example, the results of a TV debate), becomes a reality. Some scholars, however, go even further, claiming that analyzing social media allows a reliable *forecast* of the final result. This is quite fascinating, as forecasting an election is one of the *few* exercises in social science where an independent measure of the outcome that a model is trying to predict is clearly and indisputable available, i.e., the vote share of candidates (and/or parties) at the ballots.

To reach this aim, however, at least two challenges need to be successfully overcome. Some months ago, while attending a conference, I heard a speaker arguing that Giuseppe Civati won the primary election of the Italian Democratic Party, at least on Twitter. The speaker justified this statement by asserting that all the people the speaker was following on Twitter were posting messages in favor of Civati. After collecting and analyzing almost 600,000 tweets through *Voices from the Blogs*, which discussed the primary election posted in the three weeks leading up to the day of the election,[1] I can confidently say that this was not the case. In fact, Civati was the third (and therefore, the last) candidate in terms of declared support on Twitter, clearly beyond Matteo Renzi as well as Gianni Cuperlo. This example warns us against the risk of political homophily and selective exposure that is always present nonetheless the promise of a virtual world where everyone can freely connect with anyone else (Colleoni et al., 2014). Moreover, relying on random sampling of Big Data Internet is extremely complex, more than working with traditional surveys. There is nothing like a comprehensive phone list of the entire Internet community on which the standard techniques of sampling are applied. Other than that, no reliable information about the individual traits of social media users is currently accessible, making the possibility of a stratified sample unfeasible. However, unlike traditional surveys where we have to rely on a sample precisely because analyzing the universe is unattainable, when we talk about social media, the entire universe is—in principle—available, at least the universe referring to public posts. However, reaching such a "universe" poses a technical and/or a financial problem. Regarding the technical problem, to be able to download all the public tweets, posts, and mentions, published on Internet on a given topic, you need to rely on an efficient crawler; moreover, you need to possess extremely good informatics knowledge to program such a crawler. Regarding the financial problem, a researcher can purchase such data from a firehouse on the market; however, this is normally (quite) expensive.

Both problems are clearly far from being irrelevant, but they are only the initial challenges confronting researchers. Imagine if you could collect the "universe." The difficult part would only just begin: how does one analyze such a large amount of data? How would one extract politically significant meaning from the data?

In this respect, relying on a proper assessment method matters. Furthermore, this is clearly a statistical/methodological problem. For example, is it enough to count the volume of data related to candidates or parties to try to predict their final electoral result? Let's go back once again to the example of the Italian primary election, but this time, we will analyze the 2012 center-left election: in November 2012, Matteo Renzi had approximately 73,000 mentions on Twitter (i.e., posts that contained the word "Renzi"), while Pierluigi Bersani reached approximately 26,000 mentions.[2] According to these numbers,

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[1] See for instance: http://sentimeter.corriere.it/2013/12/08/primarie-pd-e-per-la-rete-the-winner-is/.
[2] See: http://www.chefuturo.it/2012/11/twitter-la-tv-e-i-voti-reali-analisi-del-primo-round-delle-social-primarie/.

Renzi should have exceeded Bersani by approximately 73%; however, Bersani won the polls with a 10% margin in the first round (and over 20% in the second round). Of course, this should not be that surprising. Indeed, the number of mentions are indicative of only the notoriety (positive *or* negative alike), not the popularity or the (potential) support (at least online) for a politician. We recently conducted a meta-analysis on 80 social media-based electoral forecasts published over the last few years, covering diverse countries, such as the United States, Italy, France, Spain, Germany, and Singapore (Ceron *et al.*, 2014). Our aim was to ascertain the reasons that could explain the accuracy of the electoral forecast. The results of the analysis show the crucial role played by the method adopted to analyze social media. Supervised and Aggregated Sentiment Analysis (that is, techniques that exploit the human codification in their process and focus on the estimation of the aggregated distribution of the opinions, rather than on individual classification of each single text)[3] increases the accuracy of the forecasts by 5%, compared with forecasts based on volume of data or naïve techniques of Sentiment Analysis mainly based on ontological dictionaries. Interestingly, the analysis also reveals that, overall, social media is a better predictor of election outcomes because of the presence of electoral systems, either based on proportional representation or in which voters cast their vote on a specific candidate rather than choosing a party list or when the share of Internet users within a country increases. This last finding brings us to our final consideration.

When social media is analyzed in an attempt to nowcast or forecast politics, a traditional puzzle arises. Socio-economic traits of social media users do not exactly match the actual demographics of the whole population: people on social media are generally younger (albeit the percentage of elderly people is rapidly increasing) and more highly educated, concentrated in urban areas, as well as more politically active. However, do we need a representative sample when, for example, 22% of voters spontaneously declared their voting behavior on social network sites, as it happened during the U.S. Presidential campaign?[4] Perhaps the sheer magnitude of data available on social media, i.e., the "wisdom of crowds," may compensate for this partly unrepresentative information. For a crowd to be wise, it needs to be diverse, independent, and possess decentralized decision-making procedures. This is something that is usually attained in the world of the Internet.

Moreover, to cast an accurate forecast, we should be more worried about the distribution of political preferences on the web. Previous (albeit quite dated) analyses showed that left-leaning citizens are over-represented, though only marginally. We clearly need more (updated) analyses in this regard.[5] Accordingly, one way to improve the social media forecast would be to develop an appropriate set of weights based on the representativeness of certain groups of users or, even better, according to the political preferences of social media users, provided this type of information is available (and reliable). Nonetheless, some of the potential bias that arises from social media analysis may be softened in the medium (short?) term with the increase in social network usage.

Finally, although the social media population is so far not always representative of one country's citizenry, there are still some doubts about whether such bias could affect the *predictive skills* of social media analysis. Indeed, the latter aspect (the predictive skills

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[3] For a discussion of the different methods available to analyze social media texts, see Ceron et al. (2013).

[4] See: http://www.pewinternet.org/files/old-media//Files/Reports/2012/PIP_TheSocialVote_PDF.pdf.

[5] For a first step in this regard, see Vaccari et al. (2013).

of social media analysis) does not necessarily need the previous factor (i.e., the issue of representation) to hold true in order to be effective. This can happen, for example, if we assume that Internet users act like opinion makers who are able to influence (and thus, often anticipating) the preferences of a wider audience, including the ones of the broader media ecosystem. The same applies if social media discussions are able to reproduce the (more general) public opinion of a broad section of the community.

In sum, despite the well-known limits and challenges faced by social media analysis, there are reasons to be optimistic about the capability of sentiment analysis becoming (if it is not already) a useful supplement/complement to traditional offline polls.

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Lab in the Field Experiments and Collective Action Research:
Evidence from a study of Ugandan producer organizations

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*L**ab in the field experiments** that incorporate behavioral games into socially meaningful settings are an interesting addition to the social sciences' research tool-kit. This article describes how I used lab in the field experiments to study the mechanisms through which small groups can overcome collective action problems. Namely, I took behavioral games out of the aseptic walls of the laboratory and brought them to the field, conducting research with members of pre-existing groups – i.e., Ugandan producer organizations – that face collective action problems on a regular basis. By adopting an innovative research design that combines behavioral games and observational data, I was able to isolate some of the mechanisms that make group members cooperate in real life.

In very general terms, behavioral games (BGs hereafter) are abstract situations in which individuals have to allocate resources between themselves and other players, and they are uniquely suited to capture actors' interdependence in decision-making. BGs have been originally developed to study general traits of human behavior, such as altruism, cooperation, and sanctioning (Marwell and Ames, 1979; Camerer, 2003; Fehr and Gachter, 2002; Fehr and Gintis, 2007) using convenience samples (often college students), and experimental settings and protocols that guaranteed complete anonymity. Over the last decade, however, BGs have been deployed by some scholars in order to capture macro-cultural variations across societies (Henrich et al., 2004; Henrich et al., 2010; Herrmann et al., 2008), and, more recently, they have also been used to measure individual or group differences that stem from contextual variations and individual experiences (Fearon et al., 2009; Barr, 2003; Karlan, 2005; Ermisch and Gambetta, 2010). This last development is critical: the fact that behavioral games have been shown to be sufficiently sensitive to detect differences between individuals within a society makes them an exceptionally powerful tool for research in those fields that rely on "hard-to-measure" concepts, such as altruism, trust, and reciprocity, among others.

In collaboration with Guy Grossman, I conducted a study of Uganda's largest recent rural development intervention – the Agriculture Productivity Enhancement Project (APEP) –, whose goal is to support small farmers integration into commercial farming by

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exploiting economies of scale and increasing farmers' productivity. To achieve their objectives, these producer organizations have to overcome classic problems of collective action that affect some of their core activities, e.g., collective marketing and quality improvement. In order to understand how these farmer groups solve collective action problems, our research design was conceived in order to capture both centralized solutions, in which a leader or small elite are the locus of coordination, control and enforcement of cooperative efforts, and decentralized solutions, in which cooperation emerges through repeated interaction and social networks and mechanisms of group solidarity, reciprocity, and peer pressure are at work.

In particular, one of our working hypotheses was that the legitimacy of the organization leaders and their willingness to monitor and sanction non-cooperative behavior greatly influences group outcomes. Unfortunately, this hypothesis is hard to test relying exclusively on observational data: although we do show, relying on observational data, that there exists a positive relationship between the perceived legitimacy of the organization managers and members' level of cooperation, this result cannot be deemed conclusive, because of selection and measurement issues, and the possibility of reverse causality.

Thus, to demonstrate that mechanisms of centralized sanctioning and leadership legitimacy positively affect cooperation we designed a novel adaptation of the public goods game (PGG), which is a game that captures how players balance the trade-off between individual and group interest (Camerer 2003).[1] Experimental evidence shows that, in PGGs participants initially contribute, on average, between 40 and 60% of their endowment. In repeated games, however, conditional cooperators who wish to avoid being exploited by free-riders gradually refrain from cooperation, leading to a drop in contributions in subsequent rounds (Fischbacher et al., 2001; Ostrom, 2000). By contrast, when participants are allowed to punish other subjects, overall levels of contribution increase, since conditional cooperators can discipline defectors (Fehr and Gachter, 2002).

In our adaptation of the PGG, members of the farmer organizations were randomly assigned to three different conditions: a baseline condition (with no monitoring authority), a random monitor condition, in which the monitor was selected through a random lottery, and an elected monitor condition in which the monitor was elected by the players using a secret ballot. Through this experimental component, we were able to show that in the presence of a centralized sanctioning system, individuals are more likely to cooperate. Moreover, we also show that the process of monitor selection is consequential: elected monitors are perceived as more legitimate and thus elicit greater contributions to the public good (Baldassarri and Grossman, 2011).

Performing laboratory experiments in a field setting and with members of preexisting groups that face collective action problems on a regular basis does not only increase the external and ecological validity of the findings; more importantly, it makes it possible to relate experimental behavior to 'real life' behavior. In the third part of the anal-

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[1] In a classic PGG, participants anonymously decide how to split an initial endowment between private and public accounts. What players put in the private account remains theirs; what is contributed to the public account is doubled and redistributed evenly among all group members, regardless of their personal contribution. The most profitable outcome for the group occurs when all players contribute their entire endowments. Nonetheless, the most profitable strategy for the individual is to keep the entire endowment in his private account and benefit from what everyone else contributes to the public account.

ysis we compare organization members' behavior in behavioral games with their level of cooperation in the producer organization and show that farmers' deference to authority in the controlled setting predicts cooperation in their natural environment: those individuals who contribute more in the elected monitor condition are also the more cooperative members of the farmer organizations, thus suggesting that centralized sanctioning and leader legitimacy are relevant factors in explaining organizational outcomes (Grossman and Baldassarri, 2012).

Does this mean that we have demonstrated the existence of a *causal relationship* between perceived legitimacy of the leader, and cooperation? Within the boundaries of the experimental setting, we can confidently conclude in favor of such causal relationship. This result alone, however, would be discarded by some social scientists for its modest external and ecological validity. The value added of carrying out the behavioral experiment in a field setting is the capacity to test whether the behavior observed in the 'real' setting is consistent with the mechanisms captured in the controlled experimental setting. In this analytical framework, the lab in the field experiment is therefore used as a 'petri dish' in order to isolate the mechanisms that are likely to be at work in 'real life'.

I used a similar logic in a second set of lab in the field experiments, in which I explored the mechanisms through which horizontal social relations may have contributed to enhance cooperation among farmer group members (Baldassarri, 2014). Repeated interaction and social networks are commonly considered viable solutions to collective action problems. However, assessing the relationship between social networks and pro-social behavior is not sufficient in order to determine the building blocks of cooperation. To understand how cooperation emerges in a specific social setting, it is important to focus on how patterns of social relations affect actors' motives and their expectations about others' behavior. Although previous scholarship has identified few mechanisms that may trigger cooperation among interconnected actors, these mechanisms have been rarely compared with each other, or tested across diverse settings.

To address this issue, I identified and systematically measured four general mechanisms, i.e., generalized altruism, group solidarity, reciprocity, and the threat of sanctioning, using different variants of the dictator and public goods game. Namely, I used the basic version of the dictator game,[2] in which deciders have to divide an endowment between themselves and a stranger, to measure generalized altruism, and a version of the DG in which the recipient is a farmer group member to measure group solidarity. Second, I used different variants of a Public Goods Game (PGG) to study the relative effectiveness of reciprocity via communication and the threat of sanctioning.[3] Namely, I randomly assigned participants to one of three variants of a iterated PGG: a baseline condition, a

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[2] In a classic DG two subjects are given a common endowment. One of them, the decider, has to decide how to divide the money between him/herself and the other player, the receiver. The decider keeps whatever s/he has decided to allocate to him/herself, while the receiver takes home whatever s/he has been given. The DG is conducted under conditions of anonymity. If deciders were completely selfish, they would keep the entire endowment to themselves. Instead, individuals typically share between 20 and 30% of their endowments. A few share up to a half, whereas the modal behavior is to give nothing. Behavior in DG is usually interpreted as an expression of other-regarding preferences (Camerer, 2003).

[3] While sanctioning is widely considered the most common solution to collective action problems, scholars have also shown that face-to-face communication produces substantial increases in cooperation (Ostrom et al., 1992).

sanctioning condition with an elected monitor, and a communication condition in which participants were allowed to discuss their strategy.

Following the logic of the previous field experiment, first I established a positive relationship between position in the social network structure and propensity to cooperate in the producer organization relying on observational data, and then used farmers' behavior in dictator and public goods games to test for the different mechanisms that may account for such relationship. Results show that cooperation in 'real-life' is not induced by other-regarding preferences like altruism or group solidarity. Rather, repeated interaction through communication favors the development of mechanisms of reciprocity (Baldassarri, 2014).

Although, drawing from my own experience, I have here focused on their use for the study of collective action, lab in the field experiments have been recently deployed in diverse settings and to study a variety of social and political phenomena, ranging from micro-level studies of social preferences to the evaluation of institutional performance (for some examples in political science, see Grossman 2011). All social sciences can greatly benefit from this new and exciting research tool in their quest for empirically rigorous explanations.

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Last but not least:
Experimental Political Science in Italy

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Experimental political science is now "hot" in our discipline (Morton, 2010). Indeed many indicators attest to a lively and well-established disciplinary sub-sector: formal graduate training courses (and syllabi);[1] handbooks (Druckman, Green, Kuklinski and Lupia, 2011) and manuals (Morton and Williams, 2010); research centers;[2] a professional journal;[3] professional organizations;[4] and infrastructural resources.[5] All this corresponds to a steady increase in the number of articles published in professional journals that use and report experiments on a wide number of issues in the spheres of domestic and comparative politics and international relations.[6] While in the early 1970s McConahay (1973: 361) indicated that manuscripts reporting experimental results were unfairly treated, fifty years later Druckman et al. (2006: 632-633) claim that experimental articles have a greater chance of being cited – a relevant, though imperfect, measure of attention – than non-experimental ones.

How good is this flurry of activities for the discipline? Where do we in Europe and in Italy stand as to these trends? Is experimental political science only a fad, to soon pass by from this side of the Atlantic? Three main points will be made here. First, the experimental move in political science is here for the long run and the betterment of the discipline. Second, Italian political science is lagging behind. Third, we have an interest in catching up.

Experimental political science is here to stay due to a fundamental (and silent) methodological revolution that is taking place in the discipline. Key to cementing its presence has been the progressive erosion of the clear-cut barrier between experimental, compara-

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[1] See some examples at this link: http://ps-experiments.ucr.edu/syllabi.

[2] See the Center for Experimental Social Science (C.E.S.S., http://cess.nyu.edu/) at New York University, that has organized an annual NYU-CESS experimental political science conference over the past seven years.

[3] The forthcoming Journal of Experimental Political Science published by Cambridge University Press.

[4] See the APSA experimental research section and section panel list online: https://www.apsanet.org/sections/sectionDetail.cfm?section=Sec42. The section also publishes a bi-annual newsletter, *The Experimental Political Scientist*.

[5] See the Time-Sharing Experiments for the Social Science (http://www.tessexperiments.org/) as well as the experimental political science labs at MIT (directed by Adam Berinsky), Northwestern University (directed by Druckman) and the Experimental Lab Consortium (http://labconsortium.wikispaces.com/Table+of+Contents).

[6] For statistics on the growth of experimental papers in the main political science journals see: McGraw and Hoekstra (1994); Morton and Williams (2008); Druckman, Green, Kuklinski and Lupia (2011: 4-5); Kittel, Luhan and Morton (2012).

tive and statistical designs erected in the 1970s. For many years, the prevailing mood in the discipline was of deep pessimism about the utility of experimental research in political science. Lijphart (1971)[7] set the tone when he contrasted experiments, "the most nearly ideal method for scientific explanation," with the comparative method, seen as "only a very imperfect substitute" of the former. While the first choice on Lijphart's methodological wish list was experiments, he lamented that "unfortunately it can only rarely be used in political science because of practical and ethical impediments." (Lijphart, 1971: 683-684). This view, however, was not universally held. At around the same period, Brody and Brownstein (1975) were optimistically arguing in favor of a more militant approach to experimentation in political science. In what is usually considered the first systematic review of experimental political science, Brody and Browstein (1975: 253) claimed that it "has a useful place in political research, and ... it represents a powerful tool."

With the benefit of hindsight, Brody and Browstein appear to have been closer to the mark than Lijphart. This is, I surmise, attributable to three converging, though quite different, developments that have made the distinctions among research designs less impenetrable and the borders more porous. First is an explicit attempt by political science to distill a unifying logic of research in political science (King, Keohane and Verba (KKV), 1994). Although severely criticized (see e.g. Brady and Collier, 2004 who still share KKV's main scientific thrust), this attempt has socialized a new generation of political scientists to think in experimental terms even when their key interests are firmly grounded in observational designs.

Second is a thorough revision of several statistical assumptions underlying the linear model and its most popular tool, regression analysis, by philosophers and statisticians. The Holland-Rubin model (Holland, 1986) and the debate about causality in observational and experimental research (e.g. McKim and Turner, 1997), has contributed to making political scientists more alert to the implications of different models of causality.

Third, and connected to the first two, we have seen in the last two decades a determined – and by and large successful – attempt to ground case studies and comparative research designs on a firmer methodological base (see Ragin, 1987 and George and Bennet, 2005). The experimental design can now be seen as "a template for case study research" (Gerring and McDermott, 2007)[8] and rules of scientific inference for experimental and statistical or observational designs are often discussed together.

While there is greater interaction between experimental and non-experimental, observational, research, the very nature of what defines the experimental has undergone significant change as well. In short, what is now an experiment – as seen from our discipline's view point- is better described as a family resemblance concept. To appreciate this conceptual change, let us compare the hallmarks of an experiment with what now runs under this heading in political science. Specifically, there are three key elements of an experiment: (a) a comparison, usually between those who are exposed to the treatment of

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[7] Of course, Lijphart was not alone in his indictment of experimental design. Most of the comparativists, Sartori (1970) included, shared this pessimistic evaluation of its applicability.

[8] Again, to show that the seeds of where we are now were planted well before, Sam Stouffer (1950), in his seminal paper on "Study Design" in the *American Journal of Sociology*, used the controlled experiment as a template for the future of political science, predicting that "we will see more of full experimental design in sociology and social psychology in the future than in the past." (Stouffer, 1950: 358) While we had to wait 50 years or so, he was right.

interests (the 'test group') and those who are not (the 'control group'); (b) the random assignment of individuals, objects or things to one or the other group; and (c) the manipulation of the independent variable (the 'treatment') whose effects the scientific team want to study.

In practice, experimental political science has been extremely flexible in accommodating various violations of these requirements and adapting its design to the needs and problems typical of political science. Quasi-experiments and natural or field experiments especially convey this flexibility of design and logic. Quasi-experiments (Cook and Campbell, 1979) compare nonequivalent groups when random assignment is far from perfect or even possible. Natural experiments (Dunning, 2012) forego the manipulation of the treatment and instead look for naturally occurring random assignment.[9] What both these methods have in common is their departure from the standard laboratory experiment with its controlled environment. In this way, they circumvent what was perceived as one of the main obstacles to the wider application of experiments – artificiality – that had deemed the design unpopular in political science. At the same time, our colleagues' ingenuity and creativity have contributed to increasing the frequency of laboratory experiments and enlarging their scope of application to a variety of sectors in political science (for a review see Webster and Sell, 2007).

A third, this time technological, development that has sped up the diffusion of experimental political science is the introduction of CATI (and later CAWI) in survey research. The use of computerized-assisted telephone interviewing (and now web-based interviewing) has rendered experimental designs useful in the very area of political science in need of such a tool: the study of public opinion through surveys. A key innovation by Sniderman and his collaborators at Berkeley[10] was "to combine the distinctive external validity advantages of representative public opinion survey with the decisive internal validity strengths of the fully randomized, multifaceted experiment." (Sniderman and Grob, 1986: 377). This development has made population-based experiments (Mutz, 2011) one of the most popular applications in political science and a vital source of data on a wide variety of issues.

Where are we in Italy and in Europe in relation to recent developments? The answer is, well behind. In one of the first systematic attempts to offer a European perspective on experimental political science, Kittel, Luhan and Morton (2012) lament that articles using experimental design are still "a rare bird in European journals." (Kittel, Luhan and Morton, 2012: 7).[11] If in Europe experimental political science is in its infancy, in Italy we are still at the gestation stage. The Italian political science community has long espoused Lijphart's dissatisfaction with experimental approaches. In the most influential political science introductory book in Italy, the *Antologia di Scienza Politica*, edited by Giovanni Sartori in 1970, Urbani opens the section on methodological issues by reiterating that

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[9] Natural experiments relate to observational studies in that causes are randomly (or "as-if" randomly) assigned by nature and not by the experimenter to the test and control groups. On the other hand, they share with experimental settings the fact that the confounders are taken care of by the research design and not by statistical control.

[10] See Sniderman and Grob (1996) for a short description of this development.

[11] Kittel *et al.* (2012: 7-8) report that the first experimental panel at ECPR was set up at the 2009 General Conference in Potsdam, followed by another in 2011 at St Gallen Joint Sessions of Workshops. Only 13 experimental papers have been published in the most important European Journals between 2000 and 2011, most of them after 2007.

"[f]or obvious reasons, the experimental method in political science can be used only in very rare circumstances, such as the study of small groups that can be observed only in almost exceptional circumstances." (Urbani, 1970: 41). Not much has changed since then. The most recent review of methodological issues, published in 2014 to celebrate the last 40 years of Italian political science (Calise and Cartocci, 2013), has not a single reference to experimental applications. This is not surprising. There is simply nothing to report about. In the 40 years of the *Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica* only a single article (written in 1972 by Calcagno and Sainz) has the word *sperimentazione* in its title.[12]

Change is, however, brewing under the surface. In the last few years, ITANES has embedded experimental manipulations into some of its questionnaires.[13] The Laboratorio Analisi Politiche e Sociali of the University of Siena has started to include experimental manipulations and vignettes in surveys conducted for both private and public clients. For the past two years the graduate program in political science of SUM/University of Bologna and Siena has offered crash courses in experimental political science, inviting political scientists and economists to discuss their experiences and results.

Given the situation is slowly moving forward, I conclude by offering three reasons why young researchers – as well as those experienced – should seriously consider experimental methods. Experimental political science is sharper, simpler, and easier to analyze than other research designs. First, experimental designs help us shape our causal statement. What makes experiments theoretically rewarding is pinpointing our thinking on the precise nature of the causal relationship under test. The clarity and precision implied in setting up an experiment is useful to making our theoretical models sharper, a crucial condition for theoretical progress.

Second, experiments are cheaper to implement than other designs. I refer not only to readily available, free-of-charge resources such as Time-sharing Experiments for the Social Sciences (TESS),[14] but also to the potential pool of interested students accessible through graduate and undergraduate courses. Experimental laboratories are now available in some Italian universities and present the opportunity to conduct experiments within a controlled environment. For the young graduate student looking for potentially interesting and promising venues for research, these laboratories offer a useful launching pad to investigate issues ranging from voting behavior and institutional cooperation to gaming and coordination.

Lastly, experiments are easier to analyze than many quantitative observational designs. That is not to say that all one needs, once a proper experimental design has been set up, is a comparison of means or proportions, but rather that given the array of methods and techniques one must master in order to publish papers in professional journals today, experimental political science can let you get away with less.

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[12] This result is based on a quick search of the entire dataset of issues of the *Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica* scanning the keyword esperiment*, speriment* and experimen* in the title for the period 1970 to 2011. I thank Luca Verzichelli for making this dataset available to me.

[13] I thank Paolo Bellucci for this information. See also Corbetta and Colloca (2014).

[14] TESS uses a representative sample of adults in the United States using GfK (formerly Knowledge Networks) Internet survey platform. KN is one of the most respected internet samples available today. The principal investigators at TESS are currently Jeremy Freese and James Druckman of Northwestern University.

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Italy and the
International Political Economy

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Introduction

After attending the annual convention of the International Studies Association and an ECPR Joint Session Workshop on the politics of banking regulation, I found myself wondering about the state of the international political economy (IPE) discipline in Italy. I have especially been wondering why Italian scholars, who make important contributions to other subfields of political science and whose works are internationally recognized and respected, do not have the same standing in IPE. In the words of a leading IPE scholar who recently offered an overview of the field, "[i]n Italy, IPE remains largely ignored" (Cohen, 2014: 118).[1] The apparent neglect of IPE in Italy is also puzzling in light of the recent global financial crisis and its impact on the discipline. As the editors of the Review of International Political Economy (RIPE) stated in their 20th anniversary issue, if the Cold War and the events of 9/11 prioritized security studies and relegated political economy to the backseat, today's crisis and its implications have given renewed impetus to IPE scholarship (Johnson et al., 2013).

Based on these insights, in this paper, I will reflect on some of the characteristics of IPE in Italy in both numerical and substantive terms.[2] I will also attempt to develop some comparative insights: what do IPE scholars write about in Italy as compared to their international counterparts? In addressing these issues, the paper will speculate on some of the reasons that account for the specificities of IPE in Italy.

Before proceeding, some caveats are in order. Data on the publications of IPE in Italy as presented below are by no means exhaustive, and the methodology employed to collect the data is rather embryonic. Furthermore, my assessment of the issues dealt with in the international IPE is more suggestive than systematic. Despite these methodological weaknesses, however, I believe that the data and insights that follow provide a helpful starting point to reflect on the state of IPE in Italy. Finally, in this paper, I solely examine the presence of IPE scholarship in Italy—not the impact of Italian scholars on international IPE

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[1] To do justice to Cohen's interpretation of the state of IPE in Italy, he cites some exceptions to the virtual absence of IPE in the country, including the (failed) attempt of a group of economists to set up an IPE community at the end of the 1980s and my works on the politics of international financial organizations.

[2] For the purposes of this paper, I will not investigate the methodological differences across Italian IPE publications given the negligible sample of IPE publications as presented below.

(which would require an assessment of publications by Italian scholars in international journals and of their impact factor).

1. IPE in Italy

Let us first try to quantify the scientific production that can be broadly included under the IPE heading. To this end, I collected data on the articles published in two Italian journals whose publications cover the broad spectrum of political science scholarship: Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica (RISP) and Quaderni di Scienza Politica (Quasp). Data include articles issued between 1990 and 2013 (Table 1).[3] Articles were coded as IPE or IR articles based on the content of their abstract (explained in detail below).

Table 1. IPE and IR articles in RISP and Quasp, 1990–2013

	RISP			Quasp		
	IPE	**RI**	**Total**	**IPE**	**RI**	**Total**
1990-94	1	3	83	0	1	9
1990-94	1	3	83	0	1	9
1995-99	0	2	77	4	6	59
2000-04	4	3	81	2	6	79
2005-10	3	15	97	1	14	104
2011-13	3	8	52	0	4	41
Total	**11**	**31**	**390**	**7**	**31**	**292**

Following the definition offered by Jeffrey Frieden and Lisa Martin (2002: 118), according to whom IPE include "all work for which international economic factors are an important cause or consequence," all the papers where international economic factors are either a dependent or an independent variable were coded as IPE articles.[4] Both theoretical and empirical contributions authored by Italian scholars alone were coded as IPE articles.[5] As for the articles that deal with the globalization phenomenon, I included them into the IPE list only if the author/s explicitly refer to the economic dimension of globalization. The following were coded as IR articles: all articles, both theoretical and empirical in scope, that address issues related to international politics, regional integration, interstate relationships, and relationships between state and non-state actors and among non-state actors when they occur at the international level. Articles about the European Union (EU) have not been coded as IR unless the EU is explicitly studied from the perspective of IR. The data analyzed include RISP research articles and focus sections, and Quasp research articles, reviews, as well as "classici," "letture," and "research notes."

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[3] Whereas the data on RISP articles are accessible during this period, the number of observations for Quasp articles begins from 1994, when the first issue of the journal was published. Furthermore, the 2013 issues for Quasp are not yet available online.

[4] Since the coding is based on abstracts, I acknowledge potential mistakes in the coding process. That is, I could have missed some IPE article if international economic variables do not figure clearly as dependent or independent variable in the abstract. Furthermore, I might have even coded the works of those scholars whose works do not expressly engage with the IPE literature as IPE.

[5] I did not include articles authored by non-Italian scholars as Italian IPE articles even if the dependent or the independent variable is an international economic factor.

The results presented in Table 1 clearly show that IPE is not particularly well represented in the Italian political science discipline. The percentage of IPE scholarship, in the context of political science as a whole, is negligible throughout the period under examination. However, if we compare IPE scholarship with IR scholarship, we obtain a different picture. Indeed, from 1990 to 2013, the total number of IPE articles represents approximately 35% of the total number of IR articles published in RISP. As for Quasp, the percentage is approximately 23%. Interestingly, although there are differences across the five intervals of time, these percentages are well above the international average. For instance, data from the 2011 Teaching, Research, and International Policy (TRIP) global survey of 3464 IR scholars in 20 countries, reveals that 735 respondents report IPE to be their primary or secondary field of research—that is, IPE scholars represents approximately 21% of international respondents (Sharman and Weaver, 2013) and approximately 30% of US respondents (Maliniak and Tierney, 2009: 10).[6]

Does the data suggest that the Italian IR community is host to a crowd of IPE scholars, thus proving Cohen's conclusion regarding the absence of an Italian IPE wrong? I strongly doubt that. While it is certainly difficult to extrapolate firm conclusions from the data just discussed, I assume that more than a case of IPE dominance, the strong representation of IPE depends on the criteria on which the coding of IPE scholarship has been carried out. Indeed, as I will argue in following section that a glance at the content of the Italian IPE scholarship reveals that articles coded as IPE only rarely engage openly with the recent theoretical debates and findings of the international IPE scholarship. More often, articles coded as IPE engage with IR literature. Furthermore, the apparent over-representation of IPE as a percentage of IR may also depend on the nature of issues under investigation. That is, many international problems that are the object of investigation of the IR community can no longer be examined without taking into consideration at least one political-economy variable.

2. What does the IPE in Italy write about?

Examining the content of the articles and papers coded as IPE, one observation regarding the empirical material is the proximity to IR scholarship. In general, articles coded as IPE deal with issues such as the evolution of the international political system (Andreatta, 2003; Fossati, 1995) and the impact on state sovereignty (Cesa, 2002), the relationship between economic interdependence, democracy and peace (Baroncelli, 2003; Baroncelli, 2008), and security (Baroncelli, 1998). Since these themes also feature prominently in the abstracts of the articles coded as IR, it is plausible to argue that the IPE has made its way into the Italian academic community via the traditional areas of IR expertise (see also Lucarelli and Menotti, 2002). From this perspective, we can say that, in Italy, IPE is clearly a sub-field of IR, whereas at the international level, the discipline is much more "pragmatic" with the implication that, to examine real world problems, it draws from different sub-fields of political science and economic sociology (Johnson et al., 2013). A further sign of the insularity of IPE in Italy is the lack of involvement with the rationalist-constructivist debate that has animated the international IPE community over the past decade

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[6] For more information on the TRIP project, see this link: http://www.wm.edu/offices/itpir/trip/?svr=web.

(Moschella, 2011).[7] Furthermore, a glance through the content of the articles coded as IPE reveal that the authors only rarely engage explicitly with the debates and findings of IPE scholarship published in the international political economy journals, such RIPE and New Political Economy (NPE). Of course, RIPE and NPE are not the only journals that publish IPE research; journals such as International Organizations, International Studies Quarterly, and World Politics have long published what is considered to be the most authoritative IPE scholarship. However, RIPE and NPE were created (and are dedicated) to give voice to high-quality IPE research. The lack of reference to articles published in these journals can thus be read as a sign of the limited involvement between Italian IPE scholars and their international counterparts.

But what issues do international IPE scholars focus on? While it is very difficult for such a varied field, focusing on diverse issues such as trade, finance, and development, to answer these questions in a systematic manner, it is possible to extrapolate some of the themes that have recently received increasing attention; this can be undertaken by browsing the program of the latest ISA Annual Convention, and in particular, the panels sponsored by the International Political Economy Group (which is one of the 28 thematic groups that the ISA supports for its more than 6,500 members). The 2014 IPE sponsored panels include 86 items covering well-established areas of IPE scholarship (e.g., governance of trade and finance, foreign economic policy making, businesses behavior, and the role of emerging and developing countries in international economy) as well as topics that have recently attracted attention, such the politics of the Eurozone crisis and the management of resources.

Insights into both present and future IPE research can be further gleaned from the 20th anniversary issue of RIPE. Indeed, the RIPE editors provide a number of illustrative examples of research topics which ought to be covered more comprehensively by scholars in future research including topics with a long-terms dimension such as geopolitics, transnational financial regulation, currency competition, resource struggles, demographic shifts, climate change, and welfare state sustainability; they also include short-term issues such as trafficking, shadow finance, policy networks, lobbying, and the creation of deliberative forums. While I am aware that the data here do not provide a comprehensive picture of global IPE scholarship and that my analysis of the content of IPE in Italy provides only an impressionist account of the field, I believe that the themes dealt with in international scholarship are largely absent from the Italian agenda—for the moment, at least.

Conclusions

The analysis began with Cohen's observation that IPE is largely ignored in Italy. In contrast to this assessment, the empirical analysis reveals a more nuanced picture. In numerical terms, IPE represents a fairly good share of the Italian IR scholarship. Further, even if the result is largely influenced by the coding technique, Italian IPE scholarship is far from being totally absent. So is Cohen completely off the mark in reading the state of

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[7] In this respect, the state of IPE in Italy lends support to the observation that are also applicable to other fields, that the Italian political science discipline tends to be largely impermeable to international academic trends (Giuliani, 2009; Lucarelli and Menotti, 2002).

the Italian IPE? Not entirely. As I argued in this paper, articles coded as IPE do not explicitly engage with the findings and theoretical debates that dominate international IPE scholarship. This finding thus casts doubt on the existence of a fully-established IPE subfield, especially of a community of scholars that speak to, and engage with, the international scholarly debates and findings.

Is the limited development of IPE an Italian specificity? To answer briefly, no. In fact, we are in good company. Focusing on Europe, there are few countries outside the UK where a well-developed IPE community is established—a situation that has led some scholars to conclude, "the study of international political economy is largely absent in continental Europe" (Jabko 2009: 213). There are few exceptions to this trend. In particular, some Scandinavian countries (notably Denmark), Switzerland, and the Netherlands are host to a fair amount of IPE scholarship (Cohen 2014, Ch. 6). In general, however, IPE remains a nascent field in much of continental Europe; this may be explained by the Anglo-Saxon origins of the discipline (Cohen, 2008). Indeed, it is in the United States and the UK where the two scholarly communities are the most developed (Phillips and Weaver, 2010).

In spite of these common trends across non Anglo-Saxon countries, it is possible to speculate on a number of features that are specific to the Italian scholarship and that have probably hindered the development of IPE. The first is the widespread specialization of IR Italian scholarship in security-related themes. Given the strong connection of IPE to IR scholarship, it is not surprising that economic problems trail behind in the list of issues that are of interest to Italian scholars. Furthermore, Italian IR has a strong theoretical orientation and focus. For a strongly empirically-oriented field such as IPE, this characteristic could obstruct its development. Finally, the dialogue between political science and economics is not well-established in Italy. Neither economists nor political scientists see the reason (and have the academic incentive) to work jointly on issues of mutual interest. Of course, difficulties in dialogue among different disciplines are not confined to those between economics and political science. However, combined with the other general and Italian IR-distinctive features, the result is that IPE in Italy lack a sufficient number of scholars in order to claim to be a distinctive subfield or a community of scholars that share research interests and methods.

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Discourse Analysis and International Relations: What for?

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Introduction

Since the 1990s, the application of Discourse Analytical Approaches (DAAs) has boomed in International Relations (IR). DAAs posit that 'things' – "objects, subjects, states, living beings, and material structures – are given meaning and endowed with a particular identity" through language (Hansen, 2006: 18). Accordingly, discourses are seen as an inescapable medium through which we make sense and reproduce reality. By and large, IR DAAs take a critical stance in theorising. The contestation of the neutrality of science and the objective character of the social world informs a criticism to both empiricism and positivism (Ashley and Walkers, 1990). Accordingly, diverse DAAs have criticised ways in which "dominant forms of representations in IR participate in and serve to reproduce the very realities they claim only to explain" (Laffey, 2000: 429).

With few exceptions, the Italian political science tradition remained indifferent to the blossoming of DAAs in IR. Overall, both DAA's 'interpretive, non-causal epistemology' (Kratochwil, 1988: 277) and its commitment to critical theorising help explain the little attention that discourse analysis has received in the Italian political science scene. Admittedly, for long and with few exceptions, Italy has remained as a 'no-costructivist land' (Lucarelli and Menotti, 2002) and Italian political scientists have tended to adopt an 'excessively positivistic, anti-normative bias within political science' (Capano and Verzichelli, 2008: 27).

Hoping to sparkle greater dynamism in the Italian political science debates, this contribution aims at shedding light on DAAs' different research agendas and to explain how the application of discourse analytical approaches can enrich political analyses. It proceeds by reviewing the main theoretical assumptions of Social Constructivism, Post-structuralism and Critical Theories. It argues that the linguistic turn in IR can help enquire issues of identity, processes of norm-making and relations of power. Finally, the contribution gives some examples of 'DAA at work' as applied to the European Union (EU). The conclusions retrace the key points.

2. Theoretical and methodological diversity and discourse analysis

Although discourse analysis has been defined as 'an emerging research program, engaging a community of scholars' (Milliken, 1999: 226), discourse analysis is characterized by a plurality of disciplinary, theoretical and methodological approaches marked by internal heterogeneity (Laffey and Weldes, 2004). Constructivist, Post-structuralist, and critical IR

scholars have largely drawn on discourse analytical methods in the pursuit of different research agendas. Simplifying, constructivist scholars have mainly focused on identity, norms and institutions and Post-structuralists, neo-Gramscian and critical scholars explored the nexus between *Knowledge/Power* (Foucault, 1980) and focused on power struggles and the emergence and resilience of hegemonic discourses.

Among different constructivist variants (Checkel, 2007), interpretative constructivism emphasises the intersubjective process which underpins common norms and defines social structures. In constructivist accounts, social norms have 'communicative, rather than merely referential functions', ones that 'guide, inspire, rationalise, justify, express mutual expectations' (Kratochwil and Ruggie, 1986: 769; 767). Through discursive interactions agents endogenously construct social reality. In turn, the structural context contributes at re-shaping agents' preferences and identities (Guzzini, 2000). To explain dynamics of discursive interactions, constructivists largely refer to Habermas' distinction between communicative and strategic action: the latter type is oriented to gain hegemony in discursive practices, the former strives to gain recognition and build consensus. Accordingly, discursive processes sustaining the making of common norms seldom rely on authoritative interpretation (Kratochwil, 1988: 276). The focus on consensus-building, rather than power, explains the ideational character of interpretative constructivism vis-à-vis other DAAs.

In contrast to this tendency, Post-structuralism promises a thoroughly framework to enquire 'subtle methods of power' (Joseph, 2010: 226). The objects of social enquiry are 'power relations, bodies, forces, and ourselves as 'objects of discourse'' (Brass, 2000: 316). Discourses provide horizons of understanding; they establish rules, limits and markers of individuals' identity, together with their location in both the social system and the discursive field. The coterminous and mutually re-enforceable relationship between knowledge and power assumes, therefore, a central position in poststructuralist DAAs.

In post-structuralist accounts, language constitutes the very entry point to reality. The centrality of language in the process of co-constitution of subjects and the social order brings post-structuralists about denying the 'genealogy of the duality' of structure and agency. Yet, this point divides post-structuralist and constructivist from more critical approaches. Neo-Gramscian and critical approaches to IR strive to retrieve the material basis of hegemony and implicitly recognise the foundational character of the structure over agents.

A materially-informed perspective on discourse does not deny the process of social construction of both signifiers and signified, but posits that this process is engineered by interests and arbitrated by power contests. Echoing Gramsci, critical DAAs aim at enquiring and deconstructing hegemonic discourses, where the multifaceted concept of hegemony refers to a – mainly unquestioned – 'structure of values and understandings' (Cox, 1997: 517) that underpins a given social system.

As follows, the foundations of such constructions are *material* rather than ideational. In this light, a critical research agenda aims at linking *ideas*, 'understood as intersubjective meanings as well as collective images of world order, *material capabilities*, referring to accumulated resources; and *institutions*, which are amalgams of the previous two elements and means of stabilising a particular order' (Cox, 1981: 136).

The level of the context and the level of the text are treated as separate, discrete, units of analysis, in that 'macro-notions such as group or institutional power and dominance, as well as social inequality, do not directly relate to micro-notions such as text, talk or communicative interaction' (Van Dijk, 1993: 250-1). The methods of analysis focus on discursive strategies, such as referential/nomination; predication; argumentation; framing and discourse representation, mitigation or intensification of discursive patterns.

3. Applying discourse analysis to the EU

DAAs offer promising avenues to study the EU. The unprecedented levels of inter-state cooperation, transfer of policy competences and institutionalisation that characterised European integration since its inception have posed an incredible challenge to IR scholars. This challenge encompasses the analysis of the three facets of political analysis: politics, that is, the sphere of power, in the sense of ability to influence other decisions (Lasswell and Kaplan, 1950: 5); policy, the acts of policy and decision-making processes; and polity, the political community subject to a given political system. And yet, when it comes to research agendas and theoretical and methodological standpoints, it is hard to find a single, clear-cut, way of applying discourse analysis to the EU.

Epstein suggests that a focus on *subject-positions within a discourse*, rather than *subjectivities* allows constructivist DAAs to focus on what one 'says and does', and 'travel across levels of analysis [...]' (2011: 16). Accordingly, scholars progressively worked on interspersed discursive constructs such as myths (Della Sala, 2010) and public philosophies (Jørgensen, 2014). Taking steps from the European External Action Service (EEAS) communication strategy, Jørgensen widens the EU's discursive field in including the relationship between foreign policy elites and the public in the construction of foreign policy paradigms (Jørgensen, 2014). The focus on public philosophies, mythologies and discursive sharewares allows Jørgensen to widen the analytical perspective 'from one characterizing the predominant (vertical) mode of analysis to a horizontal, transnational perspective on the politics of European diplomacy' (2014: 90).

In analyzing the EU, post-structuralists generally acknowledge that beyond the EU policy-making field, discourses over European governance are articulated in wider semantic fields, which includes the member states' internally heterogeneous polities. Following the layered structure of the EU discourse, the focus of post-structuralist DAAs with regard to European integration varies widely.

Some post-structuralist scholars focus on *engines of discourse*, such as articulations or discursive struggles, rather than on 'speaking subjects'. By following 'discursive struggles' Diez (2014) retraces the producers of utterances on three level, the level of the individual discourse participants; the level of collective discursive positions; and the level of the overall discourse. In a slightly different fashion, Rogers explores the nexus between strategic context and culture, which allowed the EU to stand out as a 'locus of identification' (2009: 849) and 'a focal point for the realisation' (2009: 834) of different projects promoted by discourse coalitions.

This posture generally recalls one of locating the speaking subjects in a wider discursive field. Yet, in some empirical analyses, the Copenhagen School narrowed down the scope of the analysis to the particular national contexts. Waever suggested relying on the distinction among discursive fields to unfold discursive productions *in* and *of* Europe. The

first layer is a 'state-nation core concept'; the second, 'the relational position' of states 'vis-à-vis Europe' and the third expresses 'the kind of Europe which is promoted through discourses' (2004: 39). In this perspective, Larsen (2014) focused on ways in which the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs articulates its state identity with the EU. The analysis of 'national articulation of actorness' allows Larsen to explore changes in discourse across geographical and thematic areas, whereas in some areas the national and EU's and national identities are interwoven and in others more loosely connected.

Overall, discourse analysis allows grasping the dynamic context which underpins changes in policy ideas (Schmidt, 2011; Morin and Carta, 2014). Contrary to the idea that it is possible to disentangle normative, value-oriented components from strategic thinking, interest-oriented components in the making of the political discourses, DAAs contend that ideas embedded in discourses are not tied up to a single philosophical core, but are the result of a sort of *bricolage*, 'where bits and pieces of the existing ideational and institutional legacy are put together in new forms leading to significant political transformation' (Cartensen, 2011: 147).

Studying discourses is thus a way of following the evolution of prevalent political ideas and accounting for change. Taking the steps from the analysis of the prevailing economic discourses in Europe, Morin and Carta noticed that, in Europe, domestic and foreign economic policy discourses alike have tended to emphasize a distinctive European brand of liberalism (2014: 11). Despite the resilience of this discourse, several authors noted a discontinuous, but steady process of change in institutional discourses, whereby, "depending on their favored terminology, Europe has moved from a 'managed globalization' to a 'Global Europe' discourse, from a 'Ricardian' to a 'clash of capitalisms' phase, from a 'market-correcting' to a 'market-enabling' approach, from a 'neo-mercantilist' to 'embedded neo-liberal' hegemony, or from a 'neoliberalism 2.0' to a 'neoliberalism 3.0' ideology" (2014: 12). By analyzing 990 press releases published by DG Trade from January 2003 to December 2011, totaling 494,426 occurrences of 12,252 different word forms, Morin and Carta have retraced patterns of both continuity and change in DG Trade communication (see figures below, Morin and Carta, 2014: 12).

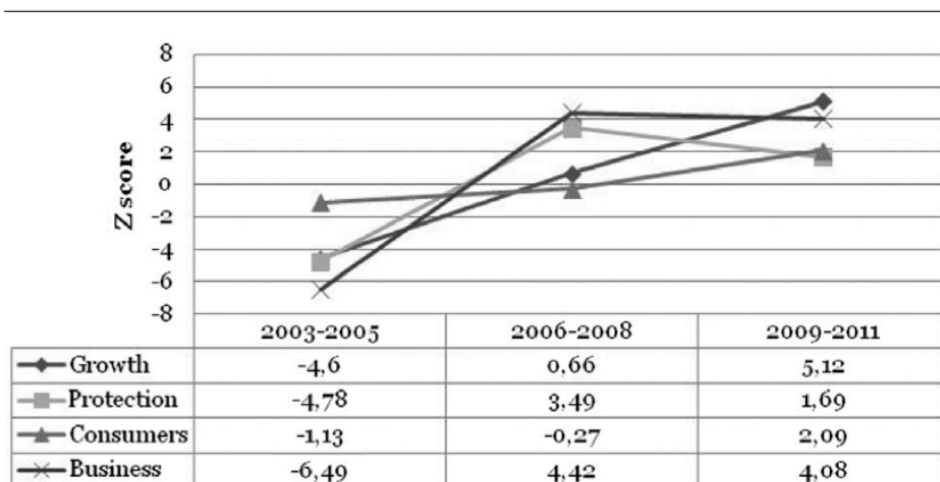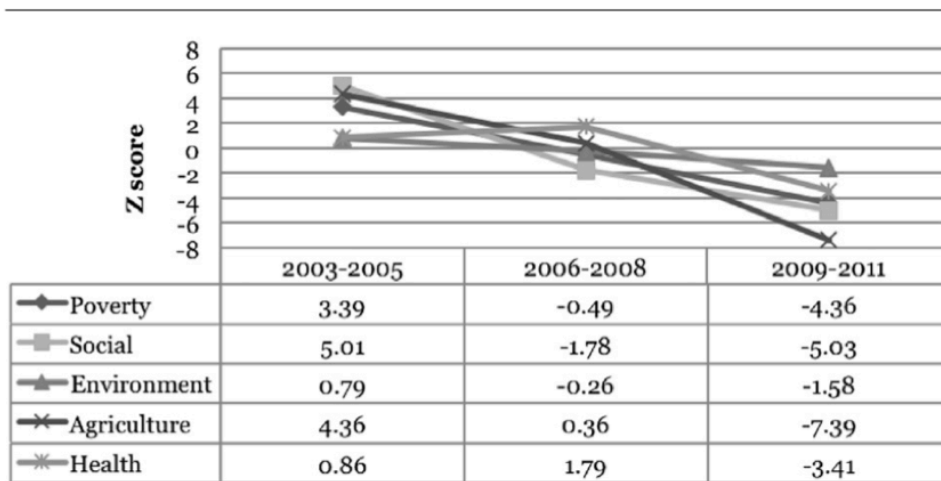**Figure 1.** Increasingly used semantic fields in DG Trade press releases.

	2003-2005	2006-2008	2009-2011
Growth	-4,6	0,66	5,12
Protection	-4,78	3,49	1,69
Consumers	-1,13	-0,27	2,09
Business	-6,49	4,42	4,08

Figure 2. Less frequently used semantic fields in DG Trade press releases.

	2003-2005	2006-2008	2009-2011
Poverty	3.39	-0.49	-4.36
Social	5.01	-1.78	-5.03
Environment	0.79	-0.26	-1.58
Agriculture	4.36	0.36	-7.39
Health	0.86	1.79	-3.41

In the same fashion, taking a critical approach, Orbie and De Ville noted that, despite the EU's Commission 'surprisingly resilient free trade agenda' (2014: 95), trade policy discourse at the EU's level has been slightly re-articulated following four main stages between 2008-2012. In a first instance, the discourse on protectionism followed a defensive path, clustered around the adagio "*beware of protectionism*". By mid-2009, institutional discourses started highlight the positive role of trade in 'fostering economic growth'. This re-articulation of the Commission's discourse corresponded to a wave of cautious optimism occurred in the summer 2009, when policy-makers had the impression that global economy was undergoing a more positive momentum. This optimism, however, faded away in 2010, when problems with bailing out Greece arose. This momentum was accompanied with a changed institutional rhetoric: from 'financial/economic crisis' to 'euro/sovereign debt' crisis, a rhetorical construction which importantly shifted the blame from the 'market' to the 'state'. By 2011, therefore, the Commission prescribed further trade liberalisation as a means to preserve the social model. In a final stage, since the summer 2011, following the rising interest rates on Spanish and Italian bonds, the Commission tailored its discourse around the need to loosen monetary policies of the ECB. In parallel, DG Trade adopted a rhetoric aimed 'not to persuade third countries such as China, Brazil and India to install strict market-correcting social standards as is the case in some EU member states, but to liberalise their public procurement markets to the same extent as the EU' (Orbie and De Ville, 2014: 104). The thoroughly analysis of texts allows the authors to unfold resilient patterns of neo-liberal discourse and to unmask the exclusion of any possible alternative.

4. Conclusion: Discourse Analysis and the 'what for' question

This short essay has tried to sum up the theoretical richness that characterises IR DAAs and to address the famous 'what for' question. It has argued that, by retracing the link between language and social reality, discourse analysis can help researchers tackle with questions related to identity, emergence of social norms and strategies to achieve and maintain power and hegemony in a social context.

When tackling with identity issues, most DAAs tend to assume a non-fondationalist approach and deny that the real self of social actors can be accessed. On the contrary, by expanding the analysis to a wider discursive field and focusing on discursive positions in the production of meanings, DAAs help grasp the social context that co-constitutes individual identities. When focusing on power, DAAs explore the binary relationship between power and resistance and dig into the social processes that underpin the emergence of widely accepted interpretations of social facts. Post-structuralist DAAs tend to inlay the analysis of discourses into their wider societal contexts. This move allows them to follow the dynamic dialectic between consolidation and contestation of hegemonic meanings.

Finally, when analysing hegemony, DAAs complement the analysis of material elements of powers – such as the military and the economic – with an attention to immaterial sources of power, that is, techniques through which hegemony is achieved by consent, rather than coercion. This brief contribution, however, constitutes all but an appetiser in a rich menu: all it takes to whet the reader's appetite!

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Book Reviews

Section edited by Stefania Panebianco

FABRIZIO COTICCHIA, *Qualcosa è cambiato? L'evoluzione della politica di difesa italiana dall'Iraq alla Libia (1991–2011)* (Pisa, Italy: Pisa University Press, 2013). 265 pp., €18,00 (paperback), €14,50 (ebook), ISBN: 9788867412143

Contemporary armed conflicts tend to be characterized by greater complexity than traditional armed conflicts. They are mostly intrastate and occur in weak states with multiple centers of power, internal fragmentation, as well as an erosion of vertical and horizontal legitimacy. They are fought by a variety of actors (regular and irregular troops, cells of various types including terrorist groups) that do not respond to a central authority and are often funded through illegal activities. In contemporary armed conflicts, frontal clashes between the fighting groups are limited; however, both rebels and governmental groups tend to use violence against civilians. Bringing an end to this type of conflict is particularly difficult. Nevertheless, the international community intervenes in these conflicts and its operations have become increasingly intrusive. As Richmond reminds us, traditional peacekeeping operations were characterized by consent of the parties to dispute for establishing the mission, non-use of force except in self-defense, and voluntary contributions of contingents from small neutral countries and impartiality. The end of the Cold War led to the idea that the United Nations (UN) should play a more active and decisive role, and that its operations should become more "robust." Starting from the 1990s, a new generation of peacekeeping operations emerged, characterized by the willingness to restore peace and security by defending one party (victims of aggression) from another (aggressors). Contemporary interventions tend to lack consent and impartiality, and they use force in enforcement actions often legitimized and authorized under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. This results in an increasing use of military instruments, at times in the presence of combat operations. In this new era of peace-keeping operations, the rhetoric of peace operations may clash with the situation in the field, making it difficult for contributing countries to justify their presence and for troops in the field to operate.

Fabrizio Coticchia's book focuses on Italy's choices to intervene with military instruments by looking at how the country tried to play a role in this new security

environment, while maintaining the use of the frame of peace and humanitarianism to justify its interventions. In particular, the book traces the evolution of the use of military instruments in Italian foreign policy, identifying its characteristics over the past two decades under the hypothesis that, despite structural changes (in particular the end of the Cold War), there are some constant factors in Italy's defense policy in relation to regional crises, intrastate conflicts, and humanitarian crises, which are related to Italy's strategic culture. Coticchia identifies the following constant factors: 1) the search for a multilateral framework within which the Italian intervention should take place; 2) bipartisan support; 3) the rhetoric of peace and humanitarianism; 4) lack of transparency and information regarding the operations; 5) the multidimensional nature of security challenges; 6) a "low profile" military approach (p. 14). The author verifies the existence of the identified factors by analyzing strategic documents and military missions since 1991 and by using discourse analysis.

The first chapter analyzes the context of Italy's defense policy by examining the transformation of contemporary armed conflicts and military operations, the transformation of the structure and composition of military forces, and the concept of strategic culture. The second chapter analyzes various strategic documents that the author deems useful to explain the evolution of Italy's defense policy from the 1977 *Libro Bianco* [White Book] until the 2013 Ministerial Directive. The third and fourth chapters analyze the most important Italian military operations (involving more than 1,000 soldiers for a period longer than three months) since the 1990s, starting with Desert Storm and ending with Libya; IFOR, SFOR and Althea in Bosnia are excluded because, in the author's opinion, their similarity to operations in Kosovo and Albania would not offer any additional insights (p. 106). However, the analyzed operations belong to different categories. While it adds variety to the analysis, it also makes the comparisons appear overstretched. Overall, operations in seven countries are analyzed (Iraq [Desert Storm and Antica Babilonia], Somalia, Albania, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Lebanon, and Libya); the operational context and political debates are discussed for each case. The final chapter recaps the main argument.

The book successfully sheds light on military operations of which very little is known, and calls attention to both the contradictions between the rhetoric used to justify the operations and the situation in the field, and the lack of a proper debate on the use of military instruments. In particular, the book highlights the ancillary role played by the Parliament in all the operations and the intentional ambiguity of Italian governments, who prefer to be seen as playing the role of the executor of multilateral bodies rather than to take responsibility for their political choices. Interestingly, the military dimension is removed even when operations become combat operations, and important restraints in the use of force are constantly imposed on Italian troops. Maybe underestimating the possibility that restraints are intentionally imposed in order to keep operations consistent with the idea of "peace operations" and with the Italian model of intervention as identified in the book, the author supports the possibility that the domestic political context made it impossible to even discuss war. The book also contributes additional insights regarding the

"Italian approach," here described as "low profile," that strenuously and constantly promotes a non-intrusive and non-militarized presence, even at the cost of clashing with important allies like the US or with mandating institutions like the UN.

Considering the main argument and the importance attributed to the end of the Cold War, the book might have benefitted by giving more importance to other elements of the context within which Italian political choices have been made. Among them, it may have been worth mentioning the role Italy was willing to play in the "new world order" as well as in the decision-making processes of the "Western coalition," the greater and more intrusive role played by the UN and NATO as a result of input provided by Western countries, and the constraints imposed by a European strategic culture in the making. Furthermore, a comparison with other European countries might have helped to identify factors in the "Italian model" that are uniquely Italian as a result of domestic processes, and factors that Italy shares with other countries as a consequence of international processes. Finally, analyzing operations before and after the Cold War, rather than before and after September 11, 2001 may have helped to better highlight continuities of a model that, according to Coticchia, had already emerged during the Cold War. However, these factors need not be considered as missing elements in the book, as it clearly states its interest in explaining the "how" rather than the "why" of the Italian model of intervention and its intention to adopt a more descriptive approach (p. 64).

In sum, this book represents an interesting contribution to an underexplored subject and is effective in reminding readers of the consequences of the lack of a debate on the topic.

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ROSITA DI PERI AND RAFFAELLA GIORDANA (EDS.), *Revolutions without revolutions? The challenges of the tourism sector in Tunisia* (Bologna, Italy: Emil, 2013). 176 pp., €15,00 (paperback), ISBN: 9788866800705

In December 2013, Mehdi Jomaa was appointed as the new Prime Minister, following several months of a political stalemate. Tunisia's economic crisis was undeniably the greatest challenge facing the new Prime Minster. An increase in tourism advertising immediately unveiled that the tourism sector would receive the greatest support and be the flagship of governmental activities.

The volume edited by Rosita Di Peri and Raffaella Giordana is a timely book. Beginning with an analysis of this strategic sector, the book retraces the events leading to the Jasmine Revolution and questions the conceptual underpinnings adopted by analysts to describe Bourguiba's and Ben Ali's Tunisia. The common thread underlying the contributions is whether the focus on tourism is part of a strategy contributing towards democratic development or another *myth about Tunisia*.

In the introduction, Rosita Di Peri clearly explains why the government selected the tourist sector to fuel Tunisia's socio-political development. From an empirical point of view, exploring the dynamics of tourism entails debating the structure of the country's national and regional administration, the failure of the decentralization process, and the political and legal framework for local governance and economic management. Theoretically, it necessitates reconsidering the arguments regarding major paradigms, such as *alternative development*, *authoritarian resilience*, *democratization*, and *neo-liberalism*.

In the first part of the book, Francesco Cavatorta and Fabio Merone outline the blurred picture of post-Ben Ali's Tunisia, pointing to the three myths created by the previous regime; these myths prevented most analysts from grasping the country's internal power dynamics and understanding its economic and political development. The rhetoric about the economic miracle, democratic gradualism, and secularism succeeded in hiding the increasing dissatisfaction of a globalized middle-class that, instead of becoming insular, fought back in part through a return to a private practice of Islam that would be turned, after Ben Ali's fall, into fully-fledged party activism. Furthermore, besides being a reaction to the corruption of the regime, religiosity was very well rooted in central and western regions where the economic miracle was neither a reality nor a myth, and can now explain the rise of the Salafi movements. The authors compellingly describe the puzzled political landscape of pre- and post-Ben Ali's Tunisia by emphasizing how and to what extent personal rivalries amongst party leaders add to ideological and strategic divisions in diminishing the prospects for cross-party cooperation. These insights pave the way for future researches on local (economic) governance in that they add a variable for examining regional disparities and uprisings.

The second part of the volume tackles the development of the Tunisian economy before narrowing the analysis down to the tourist sector. Ammar Aloui retraces the six phases of Tunisia's economic history, discussing the country's socio-economic performance. The picture drawn by the author is that of a Mediterranean country passing through post-colonial nationalization and pervading state intervention from 1960 to 1967 under President Bourguiba, before entering a phase of capitalism in the 1970s, which gave birth to Tunisian entrepreneurship. Ben Ali's era is marked by the adoption of the structural adjustment plan in 1986, which provided the framework for the negotiations with the European Union that led to the signing of the Association Agreement in 1995. Consequently, this liberal turn moved Tunisia into the global order and changed its economic structure by linking national investment to multilateral cooperation, and soon after to direct foreign investments. The partial and unequal achievement of Ben Ali's economic objectives led to protests on the one hand, and to a parallel economy coming to surface on the other. The author conveys the idea that this *new economy* risks blurring the analysis of the country's current and prospective socio-economic performances to a similar extent as the myths described in the first part of the book. Dynamism is neither real nor a benefit to the entire population; rather, it benefits foreign partners exporting low quality products to the country. Similar to chapter one, the added value of Aloui's contribution is to highlight that the revolution did not burst into the everyday lives

of Tunisians or radically alter the economic and socio-political landscape. Economic performances, and those of the tourist sector in particular, collapsed in 2011 as insecurity and political instability ensued; however, the country's economy has been seriously weakened because of low diversification and the lack of a strategic tourist policy consistent with the national development plan.

The volume succeeds in deconstructing the history and development of Tunisia before and after the revolution, as understood thus far; moreover, it highlights overlooked variables that are worthy of being considered by scholars. The governance structure and power dynamics within the tourist sector are glimpsed and can lay the theoretical and methodological groundwork for future researches, thus openly enhancing the debate on the Arab uprisings.

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ALDO DI VIRGILIO AND CLAUDIO MARIA RADAELLI (EDS.), *Politica in Italia. I fatti dell'anno e le interpretazioni.* Edizione 2013 (Bologna, Italy: Il Mulino, 2013). 352 pp., €27,00 (paperback), €18,99 (ebook), ISBN: 9788815246707

A book dedicated to the facts of the year which presents the main facts in chronological order, is difficult to review. A year is defined as being of great political significance when key events, derived from internal and external challenges to the political system, are able to produce discontinuities. This is what occurred in 2012; it was a crucial turning point in the Italian political system. In 2012, a technocratic government, led by Mario Monti, was established and the downgrade suffered by the Berlusconi party (PdL) signaled the likely end of an era dominated by Berlusconi. Throughout the year, it seemed clear that what was called the "Second Republic" was breathing its last breath along with the bipolarity, however imperfect, that had characterized this period of Italian politics. Moreover, it was the year in which a severe financial crisis called into question the economic policies of the country and led to a political discourse aiming to achieve "policy coordination" among institutions and a "communication channel" between leaders and the public (Radaelli). Addressing the financial crisis changed the government's priorities. According to some literature (see, for example, Bosco, A. e Verney, S., 2012, *Electoral epidemic: the political cost of economic crises in Southern Europe, 2010-11*, in «South European Society and Politics», n. 2), pressure from international organizations, such as the European Central Bank (ECB) to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), led Italy down the path of a "semi-sovereign democracy," or according to another interpretation, of an "irresponsible democracy" (see Mair, P., 2009, *Representative versus responsible government*, MPIfG Working Paper, n. 8, Max Planck Institute for the

Study of Societies, Köln) where the parties have neither the will nor the ability to make unpopular decisions.

As the chapters in this volume illustrate, 2012 can be seen as the year of the "Podestà Straniero" ("Foreign Mayor") as referenced in the title of the introduction. The volume—as is usual for a political work published by the Istituto Cattaneo—is organized around three main sections: politics, institutions, and society. The editors (Aldo Di Virgilio and Claudio Radaelli) used the political triangle—politics, policies, and polity—to address the topics covered in the book. This distinction is not only an editorial criterion, it also indicates a choice: "The urgency of the issues on the table led to the absolute priority being given to policies" (p. 44). From this perspective, policy issues were critical in 2012. The response of the political élites, in general, was to change the formal "rules of the game". The executive lacked direct electoral legitimacy and their entire raison d'être and source of public support was based on its policies of fiscal austerity and economical recovery. Herein lays the paradox or perhaps the illusion of a "government" that defines its legitimacy as output oriented, but needs political support to implement its decisions and actions. Hence in the process of policy making politics remains still decisive. It was placed on the back burner, downgraded to providing necessary support for the work undertaken by the technocrats in government, and squeezed between the policies (seen in the discourse of the government as "non-majority decisions") and the polity (the Europeanization, the inter-institutional relations, and decentralization).

By reading the chapters in the section dedicated to politics this is not "wholly" in default. What was downgraded was the politics of the Berlusconi government, which was ensnared in personal legal proceedings and internal conflicts within the majority (e.g., the episode with Tremonti) and of the traditional parties represented in parliament who failed to react effectively to the three overlapping crises: moral (corruption and the mismanagement of public funding as described by Stella and Rizzo), fiscal (see chapters by Stolfi, Goretti and Ruzzuto, Sacchi) and institutional (the weakness in a form of government still rooted in a proportional and consensual logic). During 2012, politics was weakened by the dissolution of innovation and political transformations acquired during the previous two decades: the role of leadership (more or less charismatic) and their relationship with the party organization—both in the models of "leader with party" (PdL and Berlusconi; Bossi and the League) and "party with leader" (PD). However, a return to politics has been reassured by non-conventional participation, "sub-politics," or anti-politics. Social reaction against so-called neo-liberal policies in Italy has been belated and fragmented when compared with other European countries (Melloni), such as Greece and Spain. Moreover, Italian protest movements during 2012 were engaged in territorial and highly symbolic conflicts (mainly the No-TAV movement against high-speed trains in north-western Italy). On the other hand, disaffected and discontent voters reacted by addressing electoral choices towards an anti-established party, external to the two rival coalitions, bringing about the success of the Five Star Movement (M5S) in municipal elections in May 2012 and Sicily's 2013 regional elections, known as an "earthquake election" (Vignati). In such political uncertainty, the primary elections, organized in November–December 2012 by the center-left

coalition for the selection of parliamentary candidates including for the President of the Council of Ministers helped the Democratic Party to seek a solution to the wave of protests demanding change. Further, despite primaries being viewed as a participatory innovation, in reality, they turned out to be a mechanism of manipulation (Pasquino and Valbruzzi). A party's leader can lose their grip and appeal, as evidenced by the experiences of the Northern League (Bull).

While Italian politics was wedged between crisis and protest, or from a different perspective, between privileges (enjoyed by the political class) and delegitimization (by citizens), the formulation of policy was adopted as a means of addressing emergencies that transpired as a result of the government's narration of the crisis and the depoliticization of its decisions. Another important objective was to achieve policy reform: recovering international credibility and securing access to European institutions and markets. Thus, Monti's government was characterized by its peculiar interaction with other political institutions, including the head of the state and parliament. The response of the President of the Republic could be interpreted as a desire to implement a structural change (de facto presidentialism) or as a reaction to contextual factors (economic emergencies and crisis with the center-right and its leader). The parliamentary parties supported the government until the two main parties distanced themselves from the executive, turning their attention to the forthcoming national election (Pedrazzini and Pinto); in similar fashion the interest groups and (partially) the unions are not much different from parties in removing the support to the caretaker government (Mattina). As explained by Stefano Sacchi, the austerity measures introduced by the government had an impact on pensions and labor market reforms, expenditure programs (in the search for efficiency in the production of public services), and policy priorities (for the reprioritization of public action). However, the outcomes were stymied by political obstacles, both "internal" and "external" to the institutions (Goretti and Rizzuto).

Daniela Giannetti's following analysis of the different phases of the Monti government demonstrates that relations between the technocratic government and the parties offered the latter an opportunity to redeem themselves and recover lost ground. The phases of the Monti government included: 1) December 2011–March 2012, the phase of internal reforms (tax, pension, labor market); 2) April–July 2012, the diplomatic phase aimed at creating a "growth agenda for Europe"; 3) from September to December 2012, opposition to the Monti government resurfaces and, then, forces Monti to resign. Therefore, the experience of the caretaker government did not prevent a return to party politics. Rather, politics still matters.

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FRANCESCO MARANGONI, *Provare a governare, cercando di sopravvivere* (Pisa, Italy: Pisa University Press, 2013). 208 pp., €16,00 (paperback), €12,99 (e-book), ISBN: 9788867412402

Within the literature on governments, Italy represents a particularly interesting case. Over the past 20 years, Italy has experienced significant changes as it has transitioned to a more majoritarian Second Republic. To this end, many systemic reforms have been introduced in order to promote the bipolarization of the Italian system, which had been locked into centrist politics and a blocked government for the past fifty years. As a result, there has been a trend toward greater personalization of politics and leadership, government alternation, and adversarialism. This would not have been possible during the First Republic, when Italy represented a paradigmatic example of *input* democracy in which the main effort of parties in such a fragmented system was to provide citizens with an "entrance" into the circuit of representation through the parliament. In contrast, systems where alternation is plausible—as in the Second Republic—are *output* democracies; the key actor is the government and attention is paid to its capacity to provide citizens with outputs through policies. Whereas governments in the First Republic were characterized by amorphous policy making, mostly based on micro-policy of a clientelistic nature and by the allocation of public office, in the Second Republic, parties and their leaders present themselves to voters as transformative forces with the capacity to deliver concrete policy change. Thus, since the advent of the Second Republic in the mid-1990s, a new generation of politicians has announced a shift in the system toward greater governmental leadership, policy innovation, and government accountability and responsiveness. In his book, Francesco Marangoni assesses whether these announced changes have indeed taken place in Italy, particularly regarding the government's capacity to lead legislation as per its announced priorities and pledges.

The book is organized in six chapters along with an introduction and a conclusion. The first chapter presents the concepts of government performance and legislative output to which the empirical analyses in the volume are dedicated. The second chapter analyzes these two concepts from a descriptive point of view with reference to the Italian First Republic. The results of this part of the analysis constitute a benchmark against which to measure the achievements and scope of change introduced by the supposedly more majoritarian Second Republic. The third chapter presents the framework for the analysis and isolates the main causal factors for the explanation of government performance and legislative output. In particular, the proposed framework integrates different strands of literature, such as those concerning coalition governments and law making, and promotes an assessment of government performance from the perspective of the mutual relationship between executive and legislative politics, assessing their capacity to collectively produce relevant policy. Chapters four, five, and six examine whether the Italian executive was able to promote meaningful legislation and to defend its contents throughout the legislative process, and finally see it approved by the Parliament. For this purpose, the intensive empirical analyses conducted by the author cover aspects of agenda

setting and policy making, inter-party conflicts and their management, as well as the relationship between parliament and government.

The author shows that, over the past 20 years, all attempts to drive democracy toward a more majoritarian model have produced mixed and largely unsatisfactory results. Alternation in power has failed to produce a more efficient and responsive government. The capacity of the executive to lead the legislative process has been uneven across the different cabinets and overall limited. Bargaining complexity has not been reduced; on the contrary, intra-governmental conflicts have been recurrent and have paralyzed the legislative process, while coalition agreements have not helped to reduce the transaction costs in coalition governance. The government's attempts to increasingly anchor its proposed legislation to its programmatic priorities and pledges have faced the problem of undisciplined majorities with a large number of veto players. In general, those bills implementing the pledges of the coalition agreement have not been particularly successful in the Parliament; on the contrary, they have often proved divisive even among the majority supporting the government. The main solution adopted by the various cabinets has been the ordinary use of extraordinary measures, such as decree laws and confidence votes for common legislation, in order to ensure that policy is enacted. This is a growing practice, one that certainly goes against the paradigm of efficient government-led policy making. In the end, the analyses in the volume show that the main attempts to change the nature of the Italian government over the past two decades have largely failed. Overall, Italy has not become an output democracy; while some limited achievements pertaining to the capacity of the government to initiate content-rich and pledge-oriented legislation could be acknowledged, this has often proved unsuccessful in Parliament unless mandated by extraordinary legislative measures.

Marangoni's book explores established and under-explored issues of governmental change in Italy and provides a comprehensive, dynamic, and empirically rich enquiry. The book is particularly far reaching in its analysis of the mutual relationship between executive and legislative politics and makes a considerable contribution to the field of government studies and Italian politics.

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GIOVANNI MORO, *Contro il non profit* (Rome, Italy: Editori Laterza, 2014). 188 pp., €7,99 (e-book), ISBN: 9788858109946

At some point, scholars of democracy are likely to come across the phenomenon of the so-called nonprofit or third sector. The encounter is unavoidable because the examination of the ways in which citizens organize themselves involves addressing the role of nonprofit organizations, whose work is inspired by the principles of social solidarity.

However, the mere attempt to acknowledge the complex reality of the nonprofit sector is frustrating for students because they become immediately immersed in a vast and heterogeneous web of organizations that appear to have little in common. Facing with this difficulty, students tend to focus on a few organizations that are *species* of a *genus* – the non profit sector – which is devoid of clear connotation.

Moro's book has the great merit of showing the conceptual, legal, legislative, and cultural flaws that contribute to making the nonprofit sector an inscrutable entity. Frequently using the strong tones of the pamphlet the book discusses several polemical issues: a scientific community culturally subjected to an "economicistic" vision of social commitment, confused legislators, formalistic bureaucracies, and opportunistic companies and operators who profit from the legislation. The polemical fervor makes the reading pleasant without detracting from the rigor of the arguments or the quality of the documentation.

The objective of the book is twofold. First of all, the author emphasizes that associations with unequivocal social goals comprise citizens trying to promote the rights of the sick, protect consumers, demand that the judicial system functions as an effective public service, support people in need (e.g., immigrants, elderly, and ethnic minorities), maintain or increase public goods such as the security of public buildings, and assert the needs of populations subjected to disaster risks.

Secondly, the associations involved in promoting social solidarity must be clearly distinguished from other types of organizations—restaurants, gyms, clinics, sports clubs, private universities, fee-based legal services, gastronomic societies, and trade unions. These institutions and organizations are considered to be part of the nonprofit sector owing to a culturally subaltern legislation based on the North American idea of a residual welfare state, which mostly relies on the efforts of the "community" (understood in the broadest sense) to provide services to the population.

This resulted in legislation that supports a range of activities of dubious social utility; this has allowed unscrupulous actors to engage in tax evasion, gain personal rewards, and impose unhealthy labor practices. Such illegal behavior proliferates under the guise of prestige and public recognition of the good work undertaken by those associations that implement socially useful activities.

Moro points out that, in Italy, there are more than 300,000 organizations belonging to the non-profit sector, with nearly a million workers, more than 4.5 million volunteers, and with revenues close to € 85 billion, i.e., 3.3% of GDP. However, the phenomenon is even more sizeable in countries such as the United States, to which the author devotes many pages for explaining the history and development of the nonprofit sector.

The distortions caused by the invention of the nonprofit sector do not seem, however, amendable with controls. The initial error of assigning the same normative status to a large number of complex organizations has forced the state to refrain from engaging in effective monitoring of the nonprofit sector.

Similar problems are also found in other countries, where public institutions have limited their involvement in the monitoring process to purely formal checks. This laxity allows some organizations to abandon the management of public services entrusted to them and to engage in profitable business under the guise of the

nonprofit status. In addition, the Agency for the third sector, which was subsequently suppressed by Monti government's spending review, was also ineffective. Moreover, control based on democratic accountability appears impractical, because nonprofit organizations have members to whom they are accountable. Potential beneficiaries have, in fact, no way of controlling the initiatives of nonprofit organizations.

Is there a way out of a situation that creates unfair tax advantages and where the bad reputation of some organizations impacts the work of other organizations who do valuable work for the community? Moro argues that we need to radically rethink the entire system, according to a simple criterion, which has so far been ignored: to consider the activities actually performed by the organizations and their achievements. The activities of most social value will be those that are closest to the general interests of the community, namely to the promotion of fundamental human rights as enshrined in national and international constitutions and international conventions.

Redefining third sector organizations according to their achievements would allow the state to provide adequate financial support and direct funding to organizations that truly deserve it. Moreover, this would create an additional advantage for such organizations in terms of donations by the private sector and citizens. In addition, the diversification of organizations would make it possible to instigate effective controls on the activities of the different sub-sets, which at the moment is unfeasible.

The author is well aware of the fact that the proposals to remedy the defects of the law regarding nonprofit organizations are nothing more than suggestions. On the other hand, the proactive part of the book is a matter of additional merit for a work that aims to draw attention to an unresolved social policy issue with which we have become accustomed, on account of losing the threads of the political-cultural canvas that justifies the current, indefensible, nonprofit system.

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STEFANIA PANEBIANCO, *L'Unione Europea "potenza divisa" nel Mediterraneo* (Milan, Italy: Egea, 2012). 122 pp., €14,40 (paper), €9,90 (ebook), ISBN: 9788823843486

Over the last 25 years, a series of significant events have transformed the Mediterranean region into a hotspot of politological analysis. In the Anglophone and Francophone academic sphere, the attention paid to this region's political processes has long-standing roots that date back to the Second World War; however, this is a recent phenomenon for Italy. Research into Mediterranean politics has long been considered at the crossroads between international relations and European Union

studies. The recognized centrality of this geographical area has restored dignity and legitimacy to the study of Mediterranean politics, demonstrating the complex inter-relationship between political events and historical-cultural legacies.

With these considerations in mind coupled with years of experience teaching Mediterranean politics, Stefania Panebianco published the first book dedicated to this field of analysis in Italy, leading the way, after years of waiting, to a scientific recognition of this academic discipline within the framework of Italian political science. Accordingly, the volume, as noted by the author in the preface, is addressed not only to students but also to "scholars with a specific academic interest or to curious readers who want to better understand the complex dynamics of relations between the European Union and its neighbors of the southern shores of the Mediterranean" (p. 9). The result is a thorough and painstakingly written book, divided into four chapters wherein the author reflects upon the evolution of a field of studies that, at least in Italy, lacks systematization; moreover, she examines the theories of regionalism and discusses how they can be used to describe the complex relationships between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean Sea.

The first chapter offers a reflection of the international role of the European Union whose "actorness" was often crushed by internal dimensions, yet increasingly stretched, especially in the late 1980s, by external dimensions. This continual tension between internal and external dimensions characterized, at least at first, the European Union's activities beyond its borders; external needs often became subordinate to internal ones. To undertake an effective analysis of this "actorness," the author begins with a basic assumption, which runs through the entirety of her work, namely to "consider equally relevant for the international action of the European Union both the external context (namely, the international political system) and the internal one, which consists of the European Union's institutions, socio-economic actors, and member states" (p. 15). This integrated reading is the lens through which Panebianco surveys the evolution of the European Union's Mediterranean policy, namely, a complex and layered set of strategies and activities that have guided Europe's actions towards the southern Mediterranean area, experiencing unparalleled development since the start of the Barcelona Process in 1995.

The reflection on the "actorness" of the European Union urges Panebianco to address the debate about the nature of the institution. In this regard, she offers an overview of the theoretical approaches that have sought to define this nature from a comparative perspective. On the one hand, the focus is on those explanations that have regarded the European Union as a political system, similar in every respect to other existing political systems; on the other hand, it is upon those who have considered the European Union as a political system "sui generis," that is, complex and fragmented. At the same time, Panebianco questions the methods of cementing the external relations of the European Union, that is, how an articulated political system edifies its outward action, which strategies are adopted, and which principles are adhered to. However, at this stage, matters start to become complicated as the European Union's foreign policy appears neither to follow linear processes as dictated by the Treaties nor the suggestions made by member states. From this moment on, the European Union (especially the European Commission) becomes

an important policy entrepreneur, and according to its new vocation, the European Union launched innovative measures pertaining to the Mediterranean region.

The author devotes the second chapter of the book to this matter. Here, attention is focused on the European Union's Mediterranean policy, how this policy was created, and how it evolved as a "result of a complex set of political, security, economic, and commercial agreements, as well as the result of a series of measures aimed at the promotion of democracy and human rights" (p. 37). This evolution is addressed in an in-depth analysis on regionalism (and neo-regionalism) and its role in relation to the conceptualization (and construction) of the European Union's Mediterranean policy. This regionalism focuses on sharing common paths and attempts to solve common problems, rather than as a holistic effort that, relying on the pattern of European integration, would tend to "impose" or reproduce this model in very different geographic areas. Panebianco proposes an operational definition of regionalism in the Mediterranean that looks at the concept in its multi-dimensionality, taking into account the political and security aspects as well as its economic and socio-cultural identity; "Each of these three dimensions could be imagined as a continuum that ranges from the highest level of interaction to a minimum level (or even absence) in each sector" (p. 43). This operational lens is the most effective way to observe the evolution of the Mediterranean policy over the last thirty years. The author dedicates the last part of the chapter to this evolution, highlighting, on the one hand, the progress made as well as the impasse caused by difficult relations at the political, economic, and social levels, and on the other hand, focusing on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, which was undoubtedly the most concrete and comprehensive attempt at reaching a process of regional construction that would indicate a new model of regionalism.

The institutional complexity of the European Union, but above all the continual tension between the wishes (often in opposition to one another) of the member states and the international vocation, make the European Union, according to Panebianco, a "divided power" regarding its policy towards the Mediterranean region (chapter four); this power is characterized by a multiplicity of interests and foreign policies rather than a "regional power" *stricto sensu*. This conclusion is substantiated not only by the space that the author dedicates to a discussion on how the European Union's foreign policy is weakening as a result of the Treaty of Lisbon, but also regarding the impact of the Arab uprisings (chapters three and four); this has exacerbated the diverse positions of the member states, as well as highlighted the limitations of the policies implemented by the European Union to promote democracy and human rights, especially in the Mediterranean region.

Panebianco's book fills a gap in Italian publishing regarding an increasingly crucial issue (considering current developments in the Mediterranean area as well as other political crises at Europe's borders). In addition, it also offers a theoretical systematization of some of the most fruitful debates on international relations and European studies over the last thirty years.

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JOHN RAVENHILL, *Economia Politica Globale* (Milan, Italy: Guerini Editore, 2013). 451 pp., €32,50 (paperback), ISBN: 9788881073368

The book is the Italian translation of an international political economy (IPE) handbook edited by John Ravenhill and published by Oxford University Press. Published in January 2014 in its fourth edition, the book contains a collection of essays from a number of distinguished scholars in the field of IPE, covering several important theoretical and empirical issues that drive the research agenda of the discipline.

In the introduction of the Italian version, Giuseppe Gabusi, who supported and edited the translation, articulates the reason behind the decision to translate the book, which is edited by John Ravenhill. In particular, Gabusi reflects on the recent global financial crisis and how the crisis has shaken our belief in the international economic system being a pillar of growth. In this light, the IPE toolkit developed over the past two decades can help us examine what went wrong in the global economy and what political and economic challenges lie ahead. Given that the Italian scholarship has only been marginally exposed to IPE thus far, a point highlighted by Gabusi, the translation of this book is a first step towards elevating IPE to the center of scholarly and public debate.

It is worth noting that the book is aptly titled *Global Political Economy* (GPE) and not *International Political Economy*. This is not an accident but a clear attempt to link the IPE scholarly debate to real world problems. In other words, Ravenhill's book is explicitly intended to speak to an audience that is larger than the one provided by IPE scholars by reaching those that have an interest in understanding the political issues that surround the organization of the global economy. Furthermore, the book, probably more than any other handbook on this subject, is explicitly tailored for students. This is further attested by the wealth of supporting teaching material that OUP provides through its online platform.

The book is divided into four main sections. The first section introduces the reader to the major theoretical debates in IPE. The remaining sections deal with more substantive issues by exploring the research agenda in trade, finance, and globalization.

In the first section, Ravenhill sets the tone by discussing the distinctive features of IPE. In this respect, Ravenhill clearly places IPE within the larger political science scholarship. As he writes, "Like other branches of the discipline, GPE seeks to answer the classic questions posed in Harold D. Lasswell's (1936) definition of politics: who gets what, when, and how?" (Ravenhill, Chapter 1, 4th edition, p.19). At the same time, as Gabusi argues in the introduction, IPE/GPE is explicitly intended to build a bridge between political science (that revolves around questions of power and distribution) and the economics science (that revolve around questions of wealth). The "mutual neglect" of the two sciences, as Susan Strange has already

noted in the 1970s, impairs scholarly capacity to read about the most important challenges of our time. The first section also discusses various approaches to the study of IPE going beyond the conventional division of liberalism, nationalism, and Marxism (Watson's chapter) and examines the factors that support (or hinder) international economic cooperation (Aggarwal/Dupont's chapter), paying particular attention to domestic determinants (Hiscox's chapter).

The second section of the book focuses on the evolution of trade relations, first at the global level (Winham's chapter) and then at the regional level (Ravenhill's chapter). The third section of the books shifts attention from trade to finance. To begin with, it examines the global financial regime since 1944 (Helleiner's chapter). Subsequently, Louis Pauly's chapter reflects on the reasons that hinder international financial cooperation in light of the failures brought to the surface by the recent crisis.

The last section of the book addresses various issues regarding the debates about globalization. First, the book reflects on the concept of globalization and assesses the extent to which today's globalized economy is different—and in what respects—from previous eras of economic interdependence (McGrew's chapter). Four substantive contributions follow. Specifically, the chapters examine the consequences of economic integration, from the policy options available to domestic political authorities (Hay's chapter); the role of international production networks in driving globalization (Thun's chapter); and the impact of globalization on inequality and development in developing economies (Wade and Phillip's chapters, respectively).

As this overview reveals, IPE/GPE research agenda spans across some of the most pressing problems confronting the world today. In the introduction of the Italian version, Gabusi draws attention to two problems that are only implicitly addressed in Ravenhill's book: the implications of the recent financial crisis for growth and political stability, and China's rise to the top of the international economic hierarchy. These are exactly the types of problems, Gabusi argues, where IPE can provide an invaluable analytical toolkit. The need for IPE is further attested by a wave of handbooks sponsored by several international publishers over the past few years. These include Routledge's 2009 IPE as a Global Conversation (edited by Mark Blyth) and 2013 Handbook of Global *Economic Governance* (edited by Manuela Moschella and Catherine Weaver); Palgrave's 2014 *Issues and Actors in the Global Political Economy* (by Andre Broome); and Edward Elgar's 2014 *The Handbook of the International Political Economy of Governance* (edited by Tony Payne and Nicola Phillips) and *Advanced Introduction to International Political Economy* (by Benjamin Cohen). Among these books, Ravenhill's *Global Political Economy*, which was first published in 2005, is a precursor and a point of reference for the most recent scholarship. Gabusi made a wise decision to edit the Italian translation of the book as it makes an important contribution to the diffusion of IPE in Italy.

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MARIO TELÒ (ED.), *Globalization, Multilateralism, Europe: Toward a Better Global Governance?* (Farnham, United Kingdom: Ashgate, 2014). 510 pp., £22,50 (paperback), £25,00 (ebook), ISBN: 9781472405388

Exploring the evolution of global governance in the twenty-first century is not an easy task, given the significant political, economic, and social changes taking place. This book edited by Mario Telò, Jean Monnet Professor of International Relations at the Université Libre de Bruxelles and the European Union (EU) Institutions at LUISS Guido Carli, however, provides a substantial contribution to the complex set of interactions between national, regional, and global levels of governance. In doing so, the volume openly challenges two strongly established theoretical frameworks within the field: the orthodox, realist tradition in terms of international relations studies, and the accepted Eurocentric perspectives of European Union studies. Going beyond the mainstream and often Western-centric approaches that have been discussed by political scientists for decades, this book argues that, to understand the complex processes that shape our new world order, it is necessary to move beyond traditional analyses of world politics; this includes examining alternative accounts in theoretical terms and strengthening our political knowledge of new actors.

The book is divided into four parts. The first part introduces the main issues discussed by the contributing authors. According to the editor, these issues are essential for understanding why the current multilateralization processes represents a preliminary step in order to deal with what he considers to be the "twenty-first century's multipolarity" (p. 2). Accordingly, all four chapters focus on the efforts to find convergence in terms of research strategies and to the extreme richness derived from common language as it is advanced by diverse academic cultures and locations, with contributions from Europe, America, and the BRICs. In this light, the book begins with a detailed account of the on-going debate within globalization studies (Kim and Caporaso). Subsequently, the book provides an illuminating historical analysis of the three different epochs of multilateralism (Telò), an alternative account of the multipolarity debate—from a Chinese perspective (Chen and Pan)—and last but not least, an analysis of EU international actorness, which highlights how the EU represents a new fundamental global actor, contributing to shaping the world order (Schwok). This is precisely why the EU should never be considered as a mere isolated case study; rather, it constitutes a key actor both at the regional and global levels.

The second part of the book points out the multidisciplinary theoretical approaches currently used to deal with global multilevel governance. The intent is to show how the debate is not exclusively confined to studies of international relations, but is radically interdisciplinary. This explains why comprehensive theorizing on global governance should include philosophical accounts of global justice, as presented by Maffettone, as well as legal studies, as presented by Levrat in his chapter on global law and global studies.

The third part of the book discusses the current global architectural dimension of multilateral institutions. The broad concept of "institution," as analyzed by the different authors, includes both organizations and regimes (from the United Nations to an analysis of global monetary governance); in addition, the authors discuss

the difficulties and challenges related to multilateral and institutionalized settings in a post-hegemonic world. Morin's fascinating contribution introduces the concept of ecological interdependence, arguing how this concept should not be understood as being only about the codependency between states in terms of environmental degradation; rather, Morin demonstrates the importance of looking at the positive side given that "global environmental governance has a great variety of instruments at its disposal" (p.229).

The fourth part of the work includes nine cases studies, which examine the crucial challenges of multilateral governance dealing with major controversies at both the global and regional levels. A diverse range of topics is analyzed, including economic globalization, poverty and regional development in Africa, regional security communities, interregional studies, humanitarian intervention and international security and conflict management. In this regard, Marchetti's contribution in analyzing the role of civil society in global governance is substantial. Marchetti reminds us how, in order to deal with the current configuration of international affairs, we have to include alternative, non-state actors within the discourse, and in particular, their role in offering "nonconventional alternatives available to the global political debate" (p. 309).

Overall, the volume is highly innovative and undoubtedly constitutes a pioneering contribution to the field of global studies. First, it was the editor's decision to publish the book as a textbook—a choice that all the contributing authors supported. The result is an academic work ideal for those interested in global studies and for students who wish to enhance their academic understanding by exploring multidisciplinary and multicultural perspectives. Indeed, each chapter is equipped with test questions and a list of useful readings on similar topics. More specifically, some chapters are also equipped with boxes providing further analyses in terms of theoretical concepts and controversial issues. In this light, the textbook is strongly recommended for university students, particularly students of advanced master courses and Ph.D. programs. In addition, this book was made possible because of the efforts of a wide community of scholars from different academic and cultural backgrounds. In this sense, the publication may ignite exciting discussions beyond purely academic topics, potentially catching the attention of national civil servants, officials serving in international organizations and civil society organizations, and more broadly, members of the decision-making community.

Finally, apart from the richness of the many challenging and controversial issues presented within this book, this publication helps us to think about how in the future we will deal with a genre of world politics that is increasingly at odds with the orthodox Westphalian assumptions about the international system, but is one with unconventional international relations theoretical framework.

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