

# French Political Science Today: Still Iconoclastic but Internationalizing

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*Abstract: Seen from outside France, French political science is a paradox: although certain French scholars, such as Maurice Duverger, took up key roles in the initiation of an internationalized discipline, since then its representatives have played only a peripheral role. By updating knowledge about the structure and practices of political science in this country, this paper sheds light upon this enigma by tracing the origins and development of its key rules, norms and conventions (i.e. its institutions). Throughout, the following argument will be made: French political science is still iconoclastic in the sense that many of these institutions differ strongly from those of other national communities of scholars. However, over the last twenty years many of its members have nevertheless internationalized their activities in several ways. Over and above the generic external challenges the French political science community faces over its legitimacy and funding, this means that many French political scientists consider they also have to constantly manage a tension between on the one hand mobilizing analytical approaches which often fit uneasily with those that predominate in other countries and, on the other, actively participating in global political science.*

## Introduction

Seen from the outside, political science in France fits almost perfectly with the stereotype of ‘the enigmatic French’: its productions and producers look interesting but are very difficult to understand, leaving the observer wondering if it’s worth the bother! What follows is an attempt to argue that in France our discipline does indeed produce stimulating and worthwhile research which, with a little effort, can be understood by colleagues and readers from other countries<sup>3</sup>. As part one begins to set out, such understanding is best facilitated by description and explanation of the institutions –i.e. stabilized norms, rules and conventions– which have structured political science in France over the past seventy years. Part two then focuses upon the contemporary situation in order to present more fully who is a political scientist in this country, what they produce in terms of teaching and research, and why. Together, these two sections highlight and explain the external and internal challenges which political science faces in the current context. Section 3 then pushes this analysis further by presenting data and analysis of how political science in France has been coming to terms with its ‘internationalization’.

Throughout, the following argument will progressively be made: French political science is still iconoclastic in the sense that many of its institutions differ strongly from those of other national communities of scholars. However, over the last twenty years many of its members have nevertheless internationalized their activities in several ways. Indeed, over and above the generic external challenges the French political science community faces over its legitimacy and funding, this now means that many French political scientists consider they

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<sup>3</sup> For a more thorough introduction to French political science, see R. Elgie, E. Grossman & A. Mazur (2016), *Oxford Handbook of French Political Science*, Oxford, OUP.

also have to constantly manage a tension which is not necessarily so strong in other comparable countries. This tension is often perceived between on the one hand actively participating in global political science and, on the other, fitting with domestic norms which fit uneasily with those that predominate in other countries.

## 1. The Progressive Institutionalization of a Discipline

As with so many social and political phenomena, it is only through looking back in time at their respective development that the institutions which structure the dominant patterns of thought and practice in French political science can be explained and understood. Covering only seven decades, in this instance the history recounted here has nevertheless encompassed four distinct periods which are presented successively below. Ranging from the late 1940s to the early 1970s, the first corresponds to a laying down of initial foundations for genuine autonomization of the discipline which, in turn, occurred during a second period which lasted until the end of the 1980s. Since then the discipline first experienced a short burst of rapid expansion before, as of 2003-4, entering an ongoing period during which resources have tended to stagnate and a number of tensions have come to the surface<sup>4</sup>. As will be underlined, throughout this piece of history, many French institutions have changed considerably, whilst others continue to leave a heavy imprint upon contemporary thought, practice and distributions of resources within our discipline.

### Initial Foundations: 1945 > 1970

Located on the site of today's *Institut d'études politiques* (IEP) in Paris ('*Sciences Po*'), an *Ecole Libre des sciences politiques* existed from 1872 until 1945. However, this privately run and financed establishment had a distinctly distant relationship with the discipline of political science and little direct impact upon its diffusion within French academia as a whole (Favre, 1989). Instead, as Gaïti and Scot have so cogently argued (2017), political science in France was initiated by governmental decrees in 1945 which created the *IEP de Paris*<sup>5</sup> and the *Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques (FNSP)*, and this at a time when the country contained no political scientists at all. In analysing what they call 'the upside-down birth of French political science' (2017: 4), Gaïti and Scot go on to show that the discipline only began to stabilize through 'the availability of other groups' within and without academia to 'rally to the cause'. Indeed, this entire period was marked by a distinct cleavage between stakeholders who saw political sciences as being a 'crossroads' discipline (*les sciences politiques*) and those who instead envisaged it as a discipline in its own right (*la science politique*).

Fighting the corner of *les sciences politiques* were a range of protagonists who came in to teach at the new IEP in Paris. These included ex-professors from the *Ecole Libre*, academic historians, jurists and philosophers who had jobs in various universities, and a range of

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<sup>4</sup> This rapid journey through history has been informed by a number of detailed studies which should be referred to for supplementary information and insights. Particularly for the latter two periods, it also of course draws upon our own personal experiences and analyses.

<sup>5</sup> This creation was shortly followed by the building of comparable institutions elsewhere in France, especially in Bordeaux and Grenoble.

practitioners within the civil service and the world of business. In many respects, this set of scholars sought chiefly to reproduce the *Ecole Libre's* practitioner-oriented type of teaching and publication in terms of 'political studies'. Indeed, traces of this approach can be found in the archives of the establishments involved, in the handbooks many of these teachers wrote at the time, in the founding of the French political science association and in articles published within the fledgling *Revue française de science politique* – launched in 1951 (Gäiti & Scot, 2017). Throughout these productions, virtually no reference was made to the autonomous political science that had begun to emerge in the United States and to take firmer root in a number of other European countries. Indeed, that political science was often dismissed as 'too academic' and irrelevant to the needs of practitioners.

The corner of an autonomous political science was nevertheless defended by a growing band of enthusiasts and then specialists. Amongst the former was Maurice Duverger, a professor of constitutional law who, having become the first Director of the IEP de Bordeaux in 1948, began to take a strong interest in the study of political parties using approaches to this topic first developed in the USA. Having transferred to the *IEP de Paris* in 1955, Duverger then became the spearhead for a group of young colleagues who all sought to highlight the specificity of political science and its methods. Many of these colleagues were full-time researchers (*chercheurs*) who had been recruited by the FNSP following its establishment in 1949. Once the Ministry of Education authorized the first diplomas, masters (DES) and doctorates in political science in 1956, this set of protagonists found itself much better positioned to press for even more autonomy for their discipline. In so doing, they were also reinforced by the creation of research centres connected to *IEP de Paris* (the *Centre d'études des relations internationales*-CERI- in 1952 and the *Centre d'études sur la vie politique française* - CEVIPOF in 1960), *IEP de Bordeaux* (the *Centre d'études sur l'Afrique noire* - CEAN in 1958) and *IEP de Grenoble* (the *Centre d'étude et de recherches sur l'aménagement du territoire* – le CERAT in 1963). Slowly reinforced by researchers in political science recruited by the *Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique* (CNRS), the FNSP researchers, together with the like-minded professors and lecturers who worked in these centres, came to constitute the basis for a coalition in favour of a French political science that was both autonomized from other disciplines (notably law) and open towards the influences of political scientists operating in other countries.

In summary, by the end of the 1960s, a cohort of academics committed to the discipline of political science had clearly emerged in France. However, at this time they were heavily dominated by another discipline within which most of their teaching had to be fitted, often as an after-thought and usually with difficulty: public law.

### **The Beginnings of an Autonomous Profession: 1970 > 1990**

Indeed, the autonomization of French political science was only achieved once a clear break with law was institutionalized in the early 1970s. Fuelled by the events of 1968 and its varied impacts upon France's universities, this autonomization was symbolized by the creation of a recruitment path for professors in political science that was separate from law -*le concours d'agrégation ("l'agreg")*- and a growing commitment by the CNRS to recruit political scientists and provide career paths for them.

Concerning “*l’agreg*”, what is important to underline firstly is that this biannual *concours* not only created an opportunity to promote political scientists to the highest rank within French universities, it also meant that within their respective universities those who attained it now benefited from the prestigious status that had been the monopoly of law professors until then. If this alone did not immediately radically change the balance of power within the social sciences and humanities segments of French universities, it sowed some seeds for some moderate shifts further down the line.

The second impact of “*l’agreg*” for French political science was more ambiguous, however. On the one hand, because it was a competition based essentially upon a series of lectures, it opened up the possibility of a fast-track career for young political scientists considered to be ‘brilliant’ by a jury of their elders. In some instances, this recruitment path thus gave impetus to colleagues who soon became dynamic leaders within our profession. On the other hand, because, at least initially, this competition gave little priority to the research achievements of its participants, many colleagues became professors at a relatively early age and without much experience of, and sometimes even interest in, research. Moreover, neither did the competition favour participants who had invested in international political science to any considerable degree (a well-known exception here being Yves Mény).

If the growing autonomization of political science was thus led in part by this newly emerging set of *professeurs agrégés*, it is important to underline that this trend was also heavily influenced by the emergence of a strong cohort of political scientists employed by the CNRS and based throughout France in the centres mentioned above, together with a growing number of centres located not only in the increasing number of IEPs but also in “regular” universities. Significantly, it has often been CNRS researchers who have been at the forefront of taking political science closer to sociology than it is in many other comparable countries.

Overall then, over the course of the 1970s and 1980s a community of political scientists progressively grew in size and became increasingly coherent. The dilettantes interested in ‘political studies’ began to be marginalized then replaced by a more distinct professional identity and set of norms. One indicator of this trend is the organization of the country’s first national political science congresses organized by the AFSP in Paris (1981), Grenoble (1986) and Bordeaux (1988). Another is the emergence of new journals within the discipline –notably *Politix* in 1988. Finally, one also needs to highlight a number of initiatives taken during this period to collaborate with colleagues from other countries – especially from UK and the US – who considered France as a case of particular interest. Vincent Wright or Stanley Hoffman, for example, positioned themselves as bridges across the Channel and the Atlantic.

### **Expansion and Consolidation: 1990 > 2006**

As section 2 sets out in more detail, significant growth in political science as a discipline in France took place during the 1990s up until the mid-2000s. During this period, a growth rate of 3.3% in the number of permanent positions for political scientists was maintained between 1986 and 1996, tailing off to 2.8% for the period 1996-2006. (Déloye, 2012) This expansion in

the number of jobs was paralleled with developments in teaching and research which all also contributed to the stabilization and the deepening of the discipline in this country.

On the teaching front, two new IEPs opened during this period (in Rennes and Lille), both with significant input from political scientists. More generally and fundamentally, one of the arguments for creating the positions mentioned above was to be able to open more joint BAs in political science, together with the equivalent of MAs (*DESSs* and *DEAs*). The latter subsequently became 'Masters' as of 2002 and, in keeping with 'the Bologne process', have been translated within French academia as a whole as two year courses. One of the almost immediate effects of this change has been for all the IEPs in France to switch virtually overnight from offering diplomas over three years to diplomas including a Master over five. Indeed, this shift has been paralleled within Universities such as Paris I and Lille 2 who also encourage their best students to remain for five years, or more if they undertake a PhD of course.

Meanwhile, the expansion of French political science during this period was also reflected in, and prompted by, further development of its research capacity. In particular, this was when the study of public policy grew by supplementing and often replacing previous analysis and theories of the state (Smith, 1999). Similarly, socio-historical study of politics also came to the fore, both developing important links with historians but sometimes coming into conflict with them (Déloye, 2017). Finally, and to a lesser degree, research on European integration and social movements also began in earnest in France during this period. This also means that canonical objects for political science –elections and parties- have meanwhile been somewhat marginalized in the discipline. Indeed, it is during the 1990s that more political science journals centred upon other themes were created (e.g. *Genèses* in 1991, *Critique internationale* in 1998 and *Politique européenne* in 2000).

In short, retrospectively the 1990s and early 2000s was *la belle époque* for French political science, one during which many of its organizations grew and its institutions stabilized. In particular, the AFSP's congress became a regular, two-yearly national event.

### **The Re-emergence of External and Internal Challenges: 2006 >**

Like the 'real' *belle époque*, however, that of French political science only lasted around fifteen years. Since the mid-2000s, it has experienced a number of changes and challenges which can best be characterized as exogenously or endogenously driven.

From the first of these angles, destabilization has been caused by governmental moves to better evaluate French science, redirect funding for research and give more 'autonomy' to each university.

As part of a drive 'to professionalize' all its sciences, in 2006 the French Ministry of Education and Research created its first agency: *l'Agence pour l'évaluation de la recherche et l'enseignement supérieur*: ACERES (which in 2012 became the *Haut Comité pour l'évaluation de la recherche et l'enseignement supérieur*). As its name indicates, this organization evaluates both teaching (at the level of faculties and doctoral programmes) and research (at the level of

research centres). Although individual researchers are not evaluated directly by this organization<sup>66</sup>, the evaluation of their centres has acted as an incentive to modify their publication strategies (e.g. exhortations to publish more articles than book chapters, particularly in English) and the way they work with their immediate colleagues (because emphasis is placed upon the coherence of local teams and their respective collective projects). Welcomed by some political scientists as a tool for encouraging 'increased rigour', rejected by others as 'bureaucratic interference', this mode of evaluation is now a stabilized part of being a political scientist in France. This type of evaluation has not however lead to dramatic changes. In particular, funding has never been directly related to evaluation outcomes.

The second exogenously imposed change experienced by our discipline in recent years has been the creation in 2005-7 of a single *Agence nationale de la recherche* (ANR). Whereas previously research in political science in France had most often been funded through relatively small programmes financed by the CNRS and individual ministries, since then most national funding has been channelled through the ANR. This agency has a number of specialized instruments (e.g. for Franco-German projects) but most of the money for which political scientists are eligible comes from a 'generic fund'. The challenge for our discipline here is that over the last five years this fund has increasingly been restricted to projects that are interdisciplinary (where possible entailing co-operation with the bio-chemical sciences) and/or which clearly show how they will be of use to practitioners in the worlds of business and administration. When one adds that the overall budget of the ANR has been repeatedly cut, needless to say political science is increasingly rarely being funded by it. Although other sources of funding still exist, the scope for financing 'fundamental' and disciplinary-specific research in political science has thus become strongly reduced. The newer programmes for large scale public investments for universities (through various instruments IDEX –dedicated for excellence at level of federation of universities-, LabEx –newly created research center of excellence- and EquipEx –infrastructure of excellence) have benefitted political scientists in France only at the margins, with some exceptions. Funding at the European level has also had a moderate impact in France. Although FP framework programmes have involved a number of French political scientists over the years, this involvement has rarely been from a position of leadership. ERC grants have also rarely been obtained by our profession in France.

The third and final exogenous change that has affected our disciplines concerns a government policy for higher education which, since 2007, has transferred more 'autonomy' to each individual university. This has naturally been translated into a number of changes but the one which has concerned us the most is the number of positions that our discipline has been able to obtain – a process now decided by power relations within our respective universities. For this reason, as well as general governmental 'austerity' drives, since 2006 the number of jobs created merely reflects the number of colleagues who have retired. The autonomization of universities can also be linked to the geographical fragmentation of our discipline. As Yves Déloye underlines (2017, p. 6), in 2013 there were political science posts in no less than 67 French public higher education establishments. However, 35 of these were in organizations where there were 3 or less political scientists and 18 where there were between 4 and 8. More fundamentally still, he has identified elsewhere that in 2012 for every post of professor or

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<sup>66</sup> Evaluation of individual researchers is in the hands of the *Comité national des Universités* (CNU) for lecturers and professors, and of the CNRS for its researchers.

lecturer in political science, in law there were 21 (Déloye, 2012, p. 112). To borrow a term from the health sector, in France political science is 'a rare' discipline.

In addition to the above government imposed changes (supported by some political scientists, rejected by others), two more endogenous changes also need flagging. The first concerns the significant changes that have gone on within Sciences Po Paris since the early 2000s. Although this is only one organization, it is a particularly large one that, above all, is highly central to the discipline of political science in France, and this because between 10 to 15% of the positions of professors and researchers are located there<sup>7</sup>. Sciences Po occupies a specific position also because of changes in the recruitment strategy it has implemented over the past few years. Its status as a private foundation has always made it possible to employ not only professors from the public service, but also to hire researchers initially and now professors on the basis of private sector regulations. Recently, this has led not only to an autonomous policy in terms of increasing the number of positions opened over the years, but also to launching a shift away from the French academic market and towards a market that is at least European. This shift has also been possible thanks to more flexibility over the pay scales linked to these private positions and the lighter bureaucratic burden associated with these recruitments.

More generally, the situation which has evolved thus over the past years is one of the growing penetration of political science in curriculums in French universities and, at the same time, a relative stagnation of the number of jobs created. This gap has been bridged by the intensive use in universities of PhD candidates and post-docs without a position to fill in holes in the capacity to actually provide the increased number of teaching hours entailed by this change. France has some institutionalised non-permanent positions at the graduate level (called *contrat doctoral*, funded by the national government, and which can encompass a fixed number of teaching hours per year (64 hours) and for post-docs (called ATER, once again funded by the national government, which offers a position for PhD candidates upon completion of their thesis or to new doctors a contract for up to a maximum of 2 years, and this for a 96 hour teaching workload per year). But a large portion of this work is in fact paid through hourly contracts, all of which creates a situation of great "precariousness".

In summary, this section has sought to retrace the development of French political science by focusing in particular upon the institutions that have structured it. With these elements squarely in mind, the focus can now switch to the current situation.

## 2. French Political Science Today: A Portrait Explained

Finding reliable data on French political scientists is still an uncertain endeavour. Yet, a number of sources are now available, which are extremely quickly sketched out in this section. For now, we only describe permanent lecturers (MCF) and professors of political science, using data of the Ministry of Higher Education<sup>8</sup>. This represents only 369 positions. For a more thorough description, we should add to these about 110 researchers from the CNRS, 30 from

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<sup>7</sup> There is however no lecturer in Sciences Po for historical reasons. If we add to these figures the number of permanent teaching and research positions held on a private sector status (and not that of a civil servant), Sciences Po represents about 90 permanent positions in political science.

<sup>8</sup> <https://data.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr>

the FNSP, and temporary positions from the Ministry of Education (for instance, about another hundred people who have a “contrat doctoral” in political science in 2016). To these numbers, we should also add all people without any fixed term or permanent contract about whom little is systematically known today.

NB. All these figures will be updated and examined in depth in the next version of this paper.

### **Who is a Political Scientist in France?**

Out of 369 permanent teaching positions in France, 240 are lecturers (MCF), 129 professors. 126 are women, 243 men, with an imbalance even more pronounced at the professorial rank. Out of the 126 women in the profession, 99 are lecturers (close to 80% instead of about 60% for men).

In terms of age, 40 out of 369 persons are less than 35. 64 are 56 or older. Women represent 27/40 of the youngest, 9/64 of the oldest. In other terms, the strong imbalance in terms of gender ought to fade out in the years to come if the dynamics stay the same as today.

### **Teaching**

The workload of lecturers and professors of political science is, by contract, of 128 hours a year of ex cathedra lectures (or any equivalent, given the fact that that teaching in small classes is counted less than teaching in large classes).

A majority of lecturers and professors teach in the various universities of France, generally in joint degrees with history, economics and law at the BA level. However, a number of BAs in political science have been created over the past few years, now 14 in total<sup>9</sup>. Nevertheless, 104 out of the 369 teaching positions in political science are located in the various IEPs of this country which do not deliver BAs in political science.

## **3. An Internationalization Packed with Ambiguities**

As flagged earlier in several places, the degree to which French political science is part of a global discipline has been a recurrent issue, and even subject of controversy, throughout its development. Although today virtually all political scientists working in France see themselves as part of this community, and most formally even embrace it, their institutions and actual practices do not always reflect this discursive commitment<sup>10</sup>. In order to grasp this gap, this section first examines how ‘internationalization’ plays out within recruitment in France, before turning to the its interpretation within research, then publications. As will be underlined, in France as elsewhere, the internationalization of our discipline has different

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<sup>9</sup> These are offered at the universities of Paris 1, 2, VIII, XI, Paris-Est Créteil, Paris-Est Marne la vallée, Lille 2, Picardie, Rennes 1, Lyon 2 and Montpellier 1.

<sup>10</sup> For a more general overview, see for instance the *Oxford Handbook of French political Science*, edited by A. Mazur, R. Elgie, and E. Grossman (2017).



dimensions, all of which need analysing if we are to understand, and work to enhance, this phenomenon.

### **Recruitment: National by Code more than by Rules**

There are now five main ways of getting a job in French political science:

- i) As a lecturer (*maître de conférences*) recruited by a University of IEP;
- ii) As a researcher recruited by the CNRS<sup>11</sup>;
- iii) As a professor recruited by the bi-annual national competition: *l'agrégation* ('l'agreg');
- iv) As an assistant-professor or professor recruited by Sciences Po Paris; notice that the Toulouse School of Economics has also offered recently such a kind of position.
- v) As a lecturer or professor recruited by the private or semi-private universities, such as *Université Catholique de Lille*.

We could add to this list all jobs in non-academic institutions that also offer research positions (in government agencies or specialized foundations and private firms).

Formulae iv) and v) generate few jobs and essentially are filled following a relatively classical recruitment system of advertisements, applications and interviews familiar to colleagues in other countries and relatively open to candidates from, or trained in, other countries. The first three formulae, however, entail more jobs, are more specific to France and need describing more fully in order to tease out how they help or hinder the internationalization of political science in this country.

As regards the lecturer recruitments, these occur when political scientists within a University or IEP first manage to convince their internal hierarchy that a post needs creating (e.g. when teaching loads have increased or diversified, or when a colleague retires), then when this project is successfully taken forward to the Ministry of Education and ultimately accepted. The autonomisation of universities gives them a little more leeway in the way arguments for new jobs are presented. However, it is still the Ministry which has the power to 'open' a post (and pays the salary that goes with it). A second national aspect to the recruitment of lecturers is the intervention of the political science committee of the *Conseil National des Universités* (CNU). All those wishing to apply for any public lecturer job must first be 'qualified' as a political scientist in the eyes of this committee. The formal criteria for so doing are relatively straightforward (a Phd. in political science, at least two publications in political science journals or a body of work that shows the candidate's inscription in the discipline). However, at times interpretation of this criteria has worked against candidates trained outside France (notably because French Phds. are generally much longer and empirically more detailed than many dissertations accepted in other countries). Once qualified, the next hurdle for candidates or course is their application for a specific lecturer post<sup>12</sup>. These applications are processed at the scale of each university or IEP through selection committees of 10-12 members which, today, are made up of both internal and external members (50: 50) and at least 50% by women. Two meetings take place: one that selects the candidates for interview (generally 8-10), then another during which all the interviewees are successively 'auditioned' by the whole committee in the space of one intense day. Three features of this overall

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<sup>11</sup> Or similar research agencies, such as INRA, IRSTEA ou INRIA which today feature a very limited number of political scientists.

<sup>12</sup> In the past ten years, between 8 and 16 lecturer jobs have been created each year in our discipline.

recruitment process have been criticized as discouraging candidates from abroad. First, the CNU qualification stage is seen as favouring French-trained applicants. Second, an application and interview stage which gives relatively little time for the latter (often only 30 minutes) is also seen as a disincentive. Third, the high level of university-ministry interdependence means that posts are often defined in broad terms, thus leaving large room for manoeuvre for selection committees. In short, for many foreigners, this recruitment track is often experienced as too full of unusual (or even bizarre) hurdles.

By contrast, the CNRS in general has a much better record of recruiting candidates who have been at least partly trained outside France<sup>13</sup>. Particularly strong in the bio-physical sciences, this trait is also present in political science, encouraged in particular by recruitment to the CNRS being based chiefly on a written project, publishing records, as well as the authority given to a national selection committee (*la Commission 40*)<sup>14</sup>. Nominated for five years and made up of political scientists and sociologists, the latter selects candidates for recruitment and makes recommendations regarding the careers of in-post CNRS researchers who work on the broad theme of ‘power and organizations’ which, in practice, translates into all of political science and much of sociology. Each year, between three and five posts are created purely at the entry level (research fellow: *chargé de recherché*), a number that corresponds roughly to the number of annual retirees from the disciplines concerned<sup>15</sup>. As outlined above, each application contains a written research project, C.V., list of publications, the candidate’s Phd. and two publications. This material is then examined by the committee in order to first select between 40 and 45 candidates for interview, then to conduct such interviews collectively. The committee then compiles a list of the best candidates which, in general, the CNRS as a whole endorses (sometimes with some modifications) by deciding to employ them. What is important to underline here is that within the committee’s selection process, internationalization is very much part of how each candidate’s existing research and project are evaluated. Bibliometry is eschewed in favour of careful reading of the written material involved and the inscription of their work in global debates is highly valued. The next two sub-sections go into greater detail on these points. What is important to stress here however is that although far from perfect, the very existence of CNRS posts (i.e. ones where incumbents are supposed to spend most of their time conducting research), as well as the recruitment procedure at least as regards political science, provides opportunities for different aspects of internationalization to be encouraged and supported.

As alluded to earlier, the same cannot be said for ‘*l’agreg.*’. Recruited by a competition where lecturing skills and the capacity to fit with ‘the role’ of a professor within French universities and IEPs, research achievements are not the selection criteria which predominate. Given the emphasis upon oral presentation in French, it is therefore unlikely that candidates trained elsewhere stand much chance of entering political science in France via this narrow avenue.

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<sup>13</sup> Jobard (2010) calculated that there were 129 political scientists employed by the CNRS, i.e. approximately a quarter of full-time colleagues in France. We calculate that in 2017 the CNRS employed about 110 political scientists (a figure derived from a list of its employees whose primary affiliation is to the *section 40*, cross-checked by examining the web-sites of each colleague on that list).

<sup>14</sup> Here a potential ‘conflict of interest’ needs to be declared: since 2016, Andy Smith has been a member of this committee.

<sup>15</sup> Today, virtually no recruitment to the CNRS in our discipline takes place at the higher level of research professor (*directeur de recherche*). This is because such recruitment would result in an entry-level post being withheld from the discipline the following year “for budgetary reasons”.

In summary, if the internationalization of political science in any country can in part be measured by the number of foreign-trained academics who obtain jobs there, this indicator is definitely in the red in the French case, and this largely for the institutional reasons indicated above. But to delve deeper into who gets recruited and what do they actually do when in post, one needs to look closer at the countries actually studied, as well as the character of the scientific influences which drive how this has been gone about.

*Countries Studied: Still French-Centred but less than before:* Historically, some data exists regarding the countries that have featured in France's longest standing and most prestigious political science journal, the *Revue française de science politique* (RFSP)<sup>16</sup>. Drawn from Thibault Boncourt's Phd. dissertation, this data highlights that between 1973 and 2007, no less than 53% of articles published in the RFSP were centred upon France, 19% on the rest of Europe, 5% on the USA and 16% on the rest of the world (Boncourt, 2011: 236)<sup>17</sup>.

*Publications and Inscription in extra-National Debates:* To our knowledge, only two relevant datasets exist which enable us to examine this question rigorously. To this we add some new material regarding the publications and projects of candidates to the CNRS in 2016-7.

The first set of existing data concerns publications in the RFSP. Boncourt has also produced data regarding the geographical location of their authors. According to his database, between 1951 and 1972, only 16% of the RFSP's authors were based outside France (2011: 171), and this figure only rose to 19% for the period 1972-2007 (2011: 203)<sup>18</sup>.

The second dataset of interest to us here was compiled by Emiliano Grossman (2010) on the basis of a questionnaire-based survey he conducted with the political scientists in post in France in 2009 regarding their respective publications strategies. Amongst the findings drawn from the 243 responses received, Grossman highlights first that the journals French political scientists prefer to submit to are virtually all French. Secondly, however, he shows that many of them read international journals, notably *International Organization*, *West European Politics* and the *Journal of European Public Policy*. Third, he suggests strongly that the key variable which determines whether a French political scientist seeks to publish in the highest ranked international journals is whether they use quantitative methods or not.

In conclusion, Grossman tentatively proposes an analysis of the publications strategies of French political scientists as falling into one of three types: 1) a set of around 100 colleagues who publish only in French (and who mostly see themselves as in 'political sociology'; 2) a smaller set (c. 50) of colleagues who are highly engaged in international publication; and 3) a large but disparate grouping of colleagues (c. 250) whose strategies of publication appear to have no consistent logic (other than perhaps a tendency to publish in sector-specialized journals).

Finally, a third set of data we ourselves have produced allows us to focus upon the practices of younger political scientists who, over the course of the last year, have sought to be recruited

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<sup>16</sup> To our knowledge, little systematic data exists on the centrality of the RFSP. However, Fabien Jobard (2010) has shown that for the 130 CNRS political scientists, no less than 9% of their articles were published there in the period 2004-8.

<sup>17</sup> For the corresponding period, Boncourt also shows that 45% of articles published in *Political Studies* were centred upon the United Kingdom (2011: 236).

<sup>18</sup> By comparison, the corresponding figures for *Political Studies* were 26 and 38% (Boncourt, 2011: 174 & 203).

to the CNRS. Here the focus has been narrowed to the 41 candidates that the *commission 40* selected for interview, i.e. those applications this committee thought stood the best chance of becoming CNRS researchers this year. Material taken from these applications has been analysed here in two ways.

First, we examined the publications list of each candidate in order to ascertain the quantity of publications produced, their type and, in the case of articles, the journals applicants had been successful in targeting. The aim here was to first obtain an overall picture of publishing practices, then to see whether any pattern of normed behaviour emerged from this data. Our principal findings regarding the population of applicants taken as a whole were that virtually all had already published a great deal. We also note a relatively high number of journal articles per applicant<sup>19</sup> but also a relatively low number of journal articles published in English.

As regards any pattern that appears to emerge from this overall data, it appears firstly to confirm that books, edited books and book chapters are still given great importance by top applicants to the CNRS. Despite the exhortations to social scientists to publish more journal articles that have recurrently been made by the CNRS for many years, the weight of institutionalized priorities as regards books still appears to be firmly in place. Indeed, this trait goes hand in hand with the relatively low importance accorded by these candidates to publishing in journals in English. Despite the potentially much greater audience a journal article can have when published in English rather than in French, the latter is still a relative rarity. At least two explanations of this finding can be made. The first concerns the continued difficulty many young (and old) French political scientists have in writing in English. Although their English is infinitely better than that of previous generations, and although many of them speak English just as well as their peers in say Germany or Central Europe, actually writing in English is seen by many as a bridge too far. A second, more fundamental explanation is that, at least until now, it has been possible to be recruited and have a career in France without ever writing in English. This in turn can be explained by the size of French social science (which many feel is big enough to sustain singular debates), by the path dependency of many of the institutions which structure recruitment (see previous sub-section) and, for some colleagues, the perception that foreign political science is dominated by a 'mainstream' that, because it is somehow so different from the more 'sociological' version of this science practiced in France, is not even worth engaging with.

At least for the population of young applicants studied here, the latter hypothesis is only partly born out by a second set of data we compiled on the bibliographical references listed in their respective research projects. Although simply counting these references does not tell us whether they were really used to construct the project, nor whether the applicant was in agreement or in disagreement with those they cited, what they do provide is an overall indication of how these applicants have positioned themselves within a literature that is either essentially global, global and French or essentially French. The average number of publications cited per applicant was 122 (with a range from 44 to 402). 51% of all references were in French, 48% in English and 1% in other languages. On average, each applicant's project contained 59 references in English. Of the 41 candidates examined, there was only one

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<sup>19</sup> Relatively high at least as compared to the average number of articles produced by in-post CNRS researchers in 2004-2008: just one a year 1, of which only 34% were in a language other than French (Jobard, 2010: 122). That said, this population did publish on average a book every four years and, in all, nearly four publications of different types per year.

essentially 'global'-type applicant for whom English references constituted more than 80% of their bibliography. Similarly, there were also only two essentially French-type applicants for whom references in French accounted for more than 80% of their references. Instead, 38 of the applicants found themselves within the broad category which now dominates French political science identified by Grossman (2010) – i.e. they used French and non-French references.

We fully admit that the data mobilized above is imperfect and only tells us so much about applicants who apply to join the CNRS via its *Commission 40* and who, this year, were seen as being the top applicants in their category. However, given that we have used this data to supplement that derived on other parts of French political science, not as an end in itself, it nevertheless adds an additional angle to the analyses already undertaken by others. Indeed, to summarize this section, what we can conclude here is that an internationalization of political science has taken place over recent years. This has taken the form of:

- considerable investment being made in fieldwork in and on countries other than France;
- an increased inscription of French research in international debates (as witnessed by references made to the work of non-French colleagues).

However, the balance sheet is less clear as regards the publications by French political scientists in English-language journals, or via books and book chapters in English.

- Most continue to publish more in French than in English
- Many continue to be frustrated that they cannot successfully communicate their theories and research results outside France (either because of language problems or because their approach is self-evaluated as different from 'the mainstream').

## Conclusion

This paper is very much work in progress. However, it has sought to set out what French political science looks like today and how it became so. We suspect that many of the challenges it now faces are mirrored in other countries, and therefore particularly look forward to discussing these points with colleagues from elsewhere. Many, however, are no doubt also specific to France. Hopefully, the explanation of these singular features begun here will help colleagues from other countries, but also from France itself, reflect deeply upon why and how French political science has been institutionalized as it has. Indeed, it is only by developing this posture and knowledge that proposals can emerge about improving the situation both nationally and internationally.

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