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Maverick or Naive?

The Positions of the Université de Vincennes in French Political Science in the 1970s

Christelle Dormoy-Rajramanan and Laurent Jeanpierre

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The second university department of political science (described as “political sciences” in this case) to be independent of any other discipline, and in particular of law, was created in September 1970 at the Vincennes Experimental University Centre (Centre universitaire expérimental de Vincennes; CUEV), the future Université Paris VIII, one year after the creation of a teaching and research unit (Unité d’enseignement et de recherche; UER) for political science at Université Paris I. This forgotten or little-known fact has not generally been incorporated into or interpreted within the history of the discipline in France as it has been written up to now. This is not only because there is always a time lag between memory and history, which is even more apparent within the history of the present. For scholarly disciplines in particular, one of the most significant obstacles to the development of a rational history—one released from its founding mythologies and its retrospective illusions—is a presentist and legitimist bias that risks driving the construction of a retelling of origins, a bias that entails writing history exclusively from the point of view of the “victors”. This type of narration has traditionally focused on the “great men” of science or alternatively on concepts, academic doctrines, and ideas. Another way to write the history of disciplines instead highlights the processes behind an increasing specialization of knowledge, as well as the practices and the teaching involved in that knowledge, by seeking to identify the first moments of institutional recognition—that is, the first uses of the label defining the new discipline, the first learned societies and professional associations, the first specialized journals, the first courses and first degrees, the first independent departments and first laboratories, and so forth. But there is then a risk of applying standard biographical patterns of thinking to institutions, limiting any search for origins, in particular through the illusions of causal necessity and subject consistency, and to thus neglect the uncertain nature of moments of genesis—that is, the diversity of practices existing at the time when a new discipline is constituted and introduced into the academic world, as occurred in the case of political science in France in the 1970s.

In taking a fresh, detailed look in the pages that follow at the circumstances of the creation and early years of the “Department of Political Sciences” at “Vincennes” in 1970, our main aim is not therefore to flesh out the history of the discipline in France with a supplementary narrative. Our study of this unique case aims above all to identify the social mechanisms behind the discipline’s emergence, stabilization, and, especially, legitimation, which the history of the institutions now considered dominant in French political science does not reveal in the same light. The challenge for such a study is to better take into account, through the case of what was a lesser department in the collective memory, the diversity of political and social conditions for the academic inclusion of a new discipline and its various institutions. This approach requires us to consider the respects in which two or more departments of political science differ when it comes to giving an account of their inclusion in the discipline and their social recognition. Thus, although the history of the Department of Political Sciences at Vincennes is at the heart of this article, it is not decontextualized or detached from the history of the period’s other teaching institutions for the discipline, with which it will be compared throughout. Accordingly, our investigation is mainly based on the archives of the university and

department and on biographical sources, as well as on oral accounts from former and current leading figures from the department and Vincennes (see our supplementary section on methodology below).

Methodology

The course curricula and lists of teaching staff on which we based this investigation were found in the “student guides” or “study guides” of the Université de Paris VIII (Fonds Vincennes de Paris VIII), as well as in the department’s “learning outcomes” for the 1976-77 academic year (archives of Paris VIII’s qualifications department). The department’s first teaching posts and state-level degree-validation requests were found in the archives of the Ministry of National Education (fonds 19790569/2, 19810337/8, and 19870207/24) in France’s National Archives. Statistical data on the sociodemographic characteristics of the Université Paris VIII’s students were found to a large extent in Charles Soulié (ed.), *Un mythe à détruire? Origines et destin du Centre universitaire expérimental de Vincennes, Saint-Denis*, Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 2012, as well as in the archives of the Université de Vincennes’s statistical department, which are held in the Fonds Mémoires 68 (France): sous-fonds Melamed Assia, F delta res 0696, Bibliothèque de documentation internationale contemporaine (BDIC). Since one of the authors of this investigation has, since 2009, been a professor in the department of political science of the Université Paris VIII, in order to check the bias that could result from such a professional position—in particular, the unconscious acceptance of an “indigenous” legend as to the department’s genesis and its early years—this study was conducted by two researchers. The other author has no affiliation with Université Paris VIII but did complete a thesis on its history.

The institutional form of the university department has not attracted much interest from historians or, in particular, from sociologists of science, except in a few cases judged specifically and on an a posteriori basis to be exceptional, pioneering, or “central”, such as the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago. Likewise, the history and sociology of higher education have only rarely sought to analyze the institution of the disciplinary department in its own right; life there and the constraints under which it unfolds remain less well known today than laboratory life or the history of universities. To address these gaps, it is useful to have a sociological understanding of what the situation of a disciplinary department may be. On the one hand, the department belongs to a hierarchy of higher education institutions; on the other, it is one actor among others in the dissemination and reproduction of a discipline. Because of this double anchoring, any disciplinary (or multidisciplinary) department is therefore part of several different social contexts. In this article, we are primarily concerned with the factors that allow us to understand how political science at the Université de Vincennes managed to survive during the 1970s despite several relative “handicaps”.

As we will see, these “handicaps” seemed overwhelming: degrees from the political science department at Vincennes were not recognized by the state, and its teachers and students had fewer resources than other institutions teaching political science during the same period. Such an initial position might lead to two distinct ideal-type strategies. The first is a strengthening of the department’s unique educational and intellectual features, via reliance in particular on local recognition within the space of the Université de Vincennes, though with the potential risk of permanently exiting the discipline’s social and professional space. The second is the development of a university policy (in terms of recruiting teaching staff and defining course forms and content, for example) of seeking legitimacy at the discipline’s national level, at the risk of the department then being distanced from what made the Université de Vincennes’s institutional, intellectual, and ideological project original. These two ways of responding to an initial marginalization therefore correspond to two ways of occupying a “peripheral” institutional position. We might describe the first stance as one that is “naive” or an “outlier”, in the sense that it means a move outside the orbit

of the dominant teaching institutions of the discipline, to the point of potentially being in opposition to them. And we might describe the second as one of a “maverick” or an “outsider”, in the sense that this expresses a simple distance from these institutions, but within their sphere of influence and without overt opposition.

The purpose of this article is therefore to determine the factors that mean that the Department of Political Sciences, created in 1970 at the Université de Vincennes, must be considered, at the disciplinary level and up to the closure of the Vincennes site in 1980, as either an outsider or an outlier, or even as “naive” or a “maverick”, to use the terms of American sociologist Howard Becker in his study of different strategies in art worlds. But before specifying what these factors are, it is necessary to revisit the exceptional political and legal circumstances that made the creation of the Université de Vincennes possible, and the space of experimentation that these circumstances established relative to the conventional practices of French higher education in the late 1960s.

The Conditions for the Emergence of Political Sciences at Vincennes

In order to situate what the beginning of teaching and then a department of “political sciences” at the Université de Vincennes between 1968 and 1970 represented in institutional terms, it is first necessary to briefly cover the state of development of what was taught under this same label inside and outside the universities around this period.

The Blooming of French Political Science

For several decades in France, “political sciences” consisted of supplementary training for jurists that was delivered by the faculties of law, as well as a field of multidisciplinary and practical preparation for the senior civil service administrative competitions, which were dominated by the *École libre des sciences politiques* and then by “Sciences Po”. However, the conditions under which the “political sciences” were produced and disseminated evolved substantially with the creation between 1945 and 1956 of six institutes of political studies (*Instituts d'études politiques*; IEP) supported by a National Foundation of Political Science (*Fondation nationale des sciences politiques*), a French Association of Political Science (*Association française de science politique*), a *Revue française de science politique*, and advanced graduate studies in “political science”. Yet in spite of this expansion in spaces for publication and teaching — an increase that was reinforced by competition from the faculties of law, which challenged “the IEP monopoly over studies in political science” more than they had in the past — this discipline remained fairly unspecialized. It can therefore be assumed that the relative position of political science in relation to other disciplines in French universities improved following the circumstances resulting from the events of May '68 and the Higher Education Orientation Act passed in November of the same year.

This reform gave academic institutions greater autonomy from the state, allowing for an increase in the number of courses and even the creation of specialized departments, as was the case at the Université de Vincennes and at Université de Paris I with its UER in political science. The culmination of the growth in the number and independence of political science courses in France appears to have been the creation of a political science agrégation in 1971 and of an ad hoc master's in July 1977. The introduction of a course at CUEV was therefore reflective of this historic trend of relative autonomization and institutionalization of university-level political science and the expansion of its space for dissemination, which has been studied in more depth elsewhere. The course was first taught in January 1969, but was developed during the summer of 1968.

Vincennes and the Creation of an Experimental Institution

By shaking up political authority, the “events” of May and June 1968 had had the effect of opening up new possibilities and accelerating certain educational reforms. Edgar Faure, the minister of national education appointed in July 1968, developed a plan for emerging from the crisis. That plan was based, firstly, on the adoption of a policy centered on “autonomy”, “participation”, and “multidisciplinarity”, and, secondly, on creating multiple university institutions, including a few “pilot establishments”, one of which was the Vincennes Experimental University Centre. Its stated objective was educational reform, both at the level of curricula made “multidisciplinary” (through the American-inspired system of credits, which allowed for the combination of “major”, “minor”, and “free” credits) and in methods of teaching and evaluation intended to be based less on lectures and textbooks and more on work in small groups and continuous supervision. In addition, the student base was expanded to those who did not hold the secondary-school-level Baccalauréat. This group did not have to pass the special university admission examination but simply had to demonstrate at least two years of professional experience. Extending the selection of classes available during evenings and on Saturdays allowed workers to enroll in them. Essentially geared toward arts and humanities, the CUEV also offered classes in the economic sciences, law, political sciences, mathematics, computing, and even artistic disciplines (music, theater, cinema, visual arts) and psychoanalysis. It was thus a place of educational experimentation where old disciplines could be transformed and new disciplines acknowledged, and where entirely new relationships between disciplines could be devised or consolidated.

The CUEV was also one of the institutional frameworks offered by the political authorities to the students and teachers who had been most critical of the way in which traditional universities functioned, and it represented one of the official places for the rejuvenation of teaching practices in “post-’68” higher education—a place that was moreover explicitly conceived by the political authorities as a kind of lightning rod for protest. Without going into further details here about the creation of this new institution or the co-option mechanisms that allowed it to be set up, it should be noted that its early teaching faculty gave prominence to the various forms of political and/or educational reformism or even “revolutionism” that were publicly expressed in the “1968” era. The Vincennes teaching staff were mostly characterized by multiple variants of a “left-wing” political and/or union affiliation. The creation of classes in and then a department of “political sciences” came about in this general atmosphere of exception, where what had until then been the usual educational and teaching rules were locally amended, where the experimentation and politicization of teaching were becoming the norm, and where some strongly represented intellectual currents such as Marxism and structuralism claimed to have a validity and power of transformation in several disciplines.

The Creation of a Department

The creation of a course and then a department of “political sciences” at Vincennes also stemmed, however, from a more “traditional” genealogy. An initial list of teaching staff from the Department of Law was drawn up by a close associate of Faure (Faure was an associate professor of Roman law and history of law at Dijon): Jean Rouvier, a former assistant professor at the National School of Administration (École nationale d’administration; ENA), a specialist in public law and in particular in Roman law, a field that provided the subject area of a book written with the minister in 1961 (*Étude de la capitulation de Dioclétien d’après le panégyrique VIII*). Rouvier recruited another specialist in Roman law, Jacques Dagory; a young jurist, Bertrand Delcros, who was a specialist in administrative liability and who would coauthor a book with Rouvier a few years later; another jurist, Pierre Desmottes, who had just written a book on the criminal liability of ministers in parliamentary systems; and a specialist in Belgian political institutions, André Simonard. Alongside the classes

entrusted to these figures, which began at the start of the new academic term in January 1969, were courses of a less legal nature, including one focused on Hegel's political ideas and another on civil liberties. Rouvier soon came under attack from and was threatened by students, and left the CUEV in March 1969 before being appointed to the Université d'Assas.

At the start of the following academic year (1969-1970), the Department of Law was renamed the Department of Law and Political Sciences. Several classes from the latter discipline thus made their appearance alongside law courses: "The Object of Political Science", "Political Science Methods", "International Relations", "Introduction to Political Geography", "Political Theory", and "Administrative Sciences". Two lecturers were recruited in this area: Claudette Savonnet, who had already written a number of articles on Africa and pan-Africanism, and François Victor. A "section" of "political sciences" was also recognized within the department. Over the course of the year, while the number of jurists also increased, they were joined by sociologist Raymond Laffargue, who was appointed as senior lecturer, and most notably by Serge Fuster, known as "Casamayor", an examining magistrate and critic of the judicial system who had published many books on this subject in the sixties. Appointed as assistant professor in political science at Vincennes, he had been suspended four years earlier by the minister of justice and reprimanded by the Supreme Council of the Judiciary for having publicly challenged a judicial ruling related to the Ben Barka case. Fuster was also known to Faure, as he was one of the magistrates from the French delegation at the Nuremberg Trials, which was led by Faure and François de Menthon.

In May 1970, the plan for independent teaching in "political sciences" within the Department of Law was drawn up on a "multidisciplinary" basis: in addition to teachers from the "section", faculty from other departments (sociology, history, philosophy, geography, law, political economy, and computing) were required to contribute. This new teaching was to include a "basic level" with, in addition to introductory courses to the discipline, classes on the sociology of law and political economy, combined with "general teaching" and "specialized fields". However, an entirely different path was ultimately taken, with an independent department of "political sciences" created out of the "section" that preceded it at the start of the 1970-71 academic year. This department was supplied with three new faculty members: sociologist Serge Mallet, as a professor, the only individual with this rank in the department; Jean-Marie Vincent, as an assistant professor; and Daniel Lindenberg, as a new lecturer. The department thus comprised seven tenured teaching staff members and many instructors.

A Minor Department?

In keeping with the beginnings of the new institution, the early years in the life of the Department of Political Sciences at Vincennes were chaotic. In a context characterized by major uncertainty in terms of legitimacy and by many political and educational clashes, for a long time political science remained in a marginal position. It was less attractive than other disciplines; it was politically divided; and it did not represent—compared to other departments—a significant ideological rallying point within the university.

A Relatively Unattractive Field

As was the case at other universities, at Vincennes there were significant disparities between departments, particularly in terms of student and teaching faculty numbers. Taking into account all of the students enrolled in each discipline, the main departments at Vincennes were respectively Anglo-American studies, arts subjects, psychology, and sociology, followed by German and history. Anglo-American studies, psychology, and sociology were chosen as the main "majors" during the institution's early years. By contrast, a discipline such as "political sciences" was for a long time only

offered as “free credits” or as “minor” classes. It was then offered in “major” form but without national accreditation of qualifications. At Vincennes, it therefore belonged to the supplementary disciplines, which were mainly chosen as complements to other disciplines. The staff numbers in the Department of Political Sciences were therefore low for the entire period the university was based in Vincennes (1968-1980), going from two tenured teaching staff for 138 students in 1969 to eight for 484 in 1978 (the numbers for Anglo-American studies went from 33 teaching staff for 1,750 students to 63 for 2,324 over the same period).

Furthermore, in the new university political matters were considered to fall within almost all disciplines: many were skeptical that they could be the subject of specialized study and teaching. This extension of inquiry into power and politics was demonstrated by the temporary creation of a “Center for Political Studies” within the Department of Philosophy, led by Henri Weber, a cofounder of the Revolutionary Communist League (Ligue communiste révolutionnaire; LCR). Finally, in addition to the relatively small size of the Department of Political Sciences within the new university, there were other differences weakening the department’s internal legitimacy, in particular between its faculty members and those of other departments.

The Political Isolation of the Political Sciences Teaching Staff

The divergences in prior political positions among faculty members were one symptom among others. While the history of political divisions and orientations at Vincennes is yet to be written, several first-hand accounts are consistent in their descriptions of a decisive split having been in effect between 1969 and 1973. This divide was between, on the one hand, members or kindred spirits of Communist organizations who criticized the authority of pre-’68 university “mandarins” over lectures but who took part in university elections and aspired to teach students, students in employment, and blue- or white-collar workers in order to “educate the masses”, and, on the other hand, individuals who were more attracted to Maoism or libertarian currents or who were close to what was then called “leftism”. These figures sought to make Vincennes a red or black “base” for continuing the struggles stemming from May ’68 and for revolutionary preparation rather than a “critical university”—that is, a place for reform in higher education or for intellectual propagandizing. The year 1973 seemed to mark a decline in these “leftist” currents, which failed to unite and boycotted university elections to the bodies occupied mainly by representatives from the French National Union of Students, the Union of Communist Students, the National Union of Higher Education, and the General Union for National Education of the French Democratic Confederation of Labor, who were denounced by some as “participationists”. After 1977, the “leftist” currents lost even more of their influence and remained the majority in only a few departments, including the Department of Philosophy.

Faced with these dividing lines, the vast majority of tenured teaching faculty in the Department of Political Sciences seemed to be relatively isolated, as they did not fully identify with either the “leftist” currents or with those backed by older union, socialist, or Communist organizations. Mallet, for example, a French Communist Party (Parti communiste français; PCF) dissident, had been one of the founders of the Unified Socialist Party (Parti socialiste unifié; PSU) in 1960, in which Vincent had also taken an active role through his affiliation with Trotskyist leanings and his running of the party’s weekly paper for several years. Sociologists Georges Lapassade and René Lourau—who arrived in the department at the start of the new academic year in 1972 and during the following year respectively—were closer to the libertarian and worker self-management currents than they were to the Marxist organizations of the Left and the Far Left. The heterogeneous positions

taken by the department's tenured faculty cannot be reduced to the dominant voices of the new university's intellectual or political debates of the 1970s, whether they were Althusserian, Maoist, or more traditionally Communist or Socialist. The Department of Political Sciences therefore appeared to be relatively isolated and in a minority position.

It was also divided over some of the major educational directions that dominated the debates of the period at Vincennes. For example, here is what was written, in a spirit comparable to the most "leftist" positions, in the 1971-72 academic year by a member of the department after debates regarding the direction of its future and educational strategy:

It would be more appropriate to increase the dissenting character of teaching in political sciences at Vincennes, giving it the spirit, the content, and the methods likely to make it as dangerous as possible for the bourgeoisie. This will be the only way to snatch, through fighting tooth and nail and not through resignation, the degrees and standing that the department needs. . . . The problem is ascertaining definitively if the department ought to become an institution for training a petty bourgeoisie that can be integrated into the system, or an institution for dissent that, by contrast, makes the people whom it trains able to integrate into the system and eager to destroy it. The task for all of us is to contribute to this destruction, starting now, by attacking the mental structures that perpetuate, especially at Vincennes, this system's existence.

Two years later, the department, in line with the university as a whole, was still a stage for heated conflict. Some faculty members—for example, Claude Alzon, then an assistant professor — called for a "moral recovery" so that Paris VIII would not become a "scrap heap for failures" and would allow students to "access knowledge and criticism". Others accused them of wishing for nothing better than "a Swedish kind of egalitarian and policed society" and denounced the fact that the relationship between learners and educators provided preparation for obedience to employers. "The rupture of this [hierarchical] relationship", added one instructor, "cannot be left to the good intentions of a few teachers or to the will of a group of learners; it must be institutionalized, taken charge of by the institution". And there was a rejection of "educational self-management" as merely "self-management of subordination", which did not allow adequate space for exchanges of lived experiences between students and paid personnel. However, these latter positions were not enacted, and the department essentially adopted the Vincennes conventions on higher education, which, innovative as they may have in part been, would subsequently be partially adopted by other universities, particular with regard to credits.

Dominated within the university, political science at Vincennes could not rely on the symbolic resources of the institution to exist beyond it. In addition, during the 1970s, while the Université de Vincennes certainly achieved public and media recognition—even if the media attention was often negative—it lacked academic and institutional weight. A pioneer to the extent that it was one of the first to claim an affiliation to "political sciences" independently of any other affiliation to a constituted body of knowledge, the Department of Political Sciences at Vincennes was therefore also dominated within the emerging national political science space. This double weakness of political science at Vincennes—within its university and within the discipline—at the beginning of the period under study could have had two types of opposing consequences. It could have become a factor for independence from institutional norms, whether those of the university or of the discipline, at the risk of losing legitimacy in these two social universes. By contrast, it could have led to a dependency either on other departments of the Université de Vincennes or on the ways in which political science was done in France at that time, whether in relation to teaching or to research. To explain the way in which the Department of Political Sciences at Vincennes in fact took a path between these two

scenarios during the 1970s, it is necessary to introduce variables other than its low level of recognition in the larger institutional spaces that it was part of and invested in.

The Deviations and Resources of Political Science at Vincennes

It is therefore useful to turn to the constituent elements of any university department: classes, students, and teachers. We will first assess the distance of political science courses offered at the Université de Vincennes during the period under study from the “canon” of the time, represented here by the curriculum of the IEP Paris. The deviation of the curriculum at Vincennes from the disciplinary norm did not undermine the institutional basis of the Department of Political Sciences, as the department had its own student base, which itself was atypical if one compares its social characteristics to those of the student population, the university, the IEP Paris, or the discipline. The students thus represented an initial condition for the autonomy and atypicality of political science at Vincennes. The second of these conditions lay in the social relational capital built up by faculty members in the political and publishing worlds.

A Limited Distancing from the Disciplinary Canon

Within this young, small institution emerging within a new establishment, one might expect to find significant innovation compared to the canon then being taught at the main political science institutions. Throughout the history of the Université de Vincennes, until its destruction in 1980, the lack of national accreditation for degrees in political sciences from the establishment—these were considered “university degrees”, one of which was at the bachelor level, with a distinction in “political sciences and social policy” brought in from at least 1975-76—might in theory have offered a certain freedom when it came to defining programs and content, even though national accreditation was nevertheless requested in 1978 for a bachelor’s degree and a recently created master’s in “political and social analysis”.

In this general context, several ruptures occurred in the organization of courses and the definition of their content during the 1970s. Until 1971, the curriculum was divided into a “basic level” comprising general classes and more specialized courses. It included just under twenty classes, whereas about double that number could be linked to political science at the IEP Paris during the same period (if we include the headings “The Contemporary World and States”, “International Relations”, and “Political and Administrative Sciences” but exclude “Administrative Sciences”). If we confine ourselves only to the course names and what they convey, a majority of the topics proposed under the first two headings for courses at Vincennes were also offered at the IEP Paris: there are parallels between “The Object of Political Science” and “Introduction to Political Studies”; “Economics and Politics” and “Principles of Economic Analysis”; “Political Science Methods” and “Science and Politics”; “International Relations Level 1” and “International Relations, 1914 to 1953”; and “International Relations Level 2” and “International Relations, 1953 to 1970”. “Political Ideas in the Third World” is reminiscent of “The Evolution of Political Ideas in the Contemporary World”; “Trade Unions and Politics” of “Workers’ Unions in France”; “Relations between Universities and Society in the Maghreb” of “North Africa”; and “African Revolutionary Movements” of “African States and their Problems”. Of course, behind the differences in the titles chosen for the same topic by the two institutions, we might assume a difference in approach on the part of the teachers. Furthermore, in the 1970-71 academic year, political science at Vincennes nevertheless distinguished itself from the discipline at IEP Paris through several unique preferred subjects: analysis of national and international Marxist theory and politics, criticism of the state, the question of revolutions and conflicts, and classes on quantitative methods and on political anthropology that had no apparent relationship with the other courses.

From the 1971-72 academic year to that of 1977-78, Vincennes's "political sciences" curriculum was structured along three thematic dimensions ("Economics and Labor", "Political Organizations and Social Movements", and "Ideology and Culture"). An examination of the list of credits issued during the first year of this new period reveals a growing divergence from what was being taught at the IEP Paris during the same years. The most distinctive features of political science at Vincennes included the place reserved for economics (in the following courses, for example: "Labor Organization and Societal Organization", "Wages", "Foundations and Theory of Planning", "Techniques and Practices of Planning", "Structures and Functions of Consumption in the Market Economy", "International Economic Relations and Neocolonialism") and above all labor relations, an area that was absent from the "economic sciences" courses offered at the IEP Paris, just as it was considered outside the scope of the "political and administrative sciences". In terms of the classes that could be related to comparative politics or to studies of cultural areas and contemporary foreign states, what was offered at Vincennes was oriented more to what was then called the Third World ("The Political Specificity of the Third World: Toward a Sociology of Underdevelopment"), and in particular to Latin America ("Revolution and Reform in Latin America: Mexico and Chile", "Technology and Ideology in Cuba") and Africa ("Contemporary African and Maghrebi Societies and Postindustrial Societies", "Revolutionary Movements in Africa", and "University and Society in the Maghreb"). Finally, the analysis of political ideas that took place at the IEP Paris was retranslated at Vincennes through a perspective of criticism of ideology in which the social functions of the school and the university were questioned ("School and Society", "The School: The 'Separate Institution'", and "Pretext and Discourse: The Organization of Neocolonialist Society and the Role of Academic Knowledge"). Therefore, without being revolutionary in terms of its internal break from the major areas of political science teaching—following the three categories of economics, politics, and ideology—compared to the IEP Paris, the department at Vincennes took a transformative approach to their interpretation and content.

The creation of a national-level master's in political science in 1978 further indicates the unique nature of Vincennes, since the content of the required courses for obtaining this level of degree were as follows: analysis of political behavior, methods in political science and data processing, comparative political institutions and organizations, political philosophy, and analysis of ideologies. The first two of these four subareas do not seem to have been addressed by the department. But the department was not entirely removed from a discipline that was in the process of defining itself and developing: it even shared several forms of internal classification and categories of understanding. Political science at Vincennes was therefore never totally divergent from disciplinary conventions, something that is also reflected in the fact that national recognition of its degrees was one of its objectives throughout the 1970s, in particular at the end of the decade.

An Atypical and Mostly International Student Base

However, there are reasons for the apparent differences between the definition of political science at Vincennes and at the IEP Paris. They were primarily permitted and reinforced by the existence of a specific student base that explains how the department was able to survive and even grow in terms of numbers during this period, despite the fact that its degrees were not nationally recognized. To understand this specificity, it should be recalled that at the end of the 1960s, law faculty students tended to come from higher social classes than the average French student, particularly in comparison to students in arts faculties—the home of the Department of Political Sciences at Vincennes—with double the proportion of male students. The social rooting of political science students in the "dominant" socioprofessional categories was even more striking at the IEP Paris, where between the 1965-66 and 1968-69 academic years, more than 60% of students

came from these categories, compared to a figure of “35% or less in arts and sciences faculties, university technical institutes, and trade schools”. Along with the HEC business school and ENA, it was in this period one of the “schools with the most ‘bourgeois’ social recruitment”—a trend accentuated between the 1960s and 1980s by the fact that “the share of children of junior public servants and clerical staff sharply fell” there. Unsurprisingly, IEP students therefore had different social characteristics from those of the political science students at the Université de Vincennes during this period.

Nevertheless, the latter group included a low proportion of women, with the department having the most male-dominant recruitment at Vincennes—84% of students were men in the 1974-75 academic year, while the average was 56%—in an institution that itself contained fewer women than other universities as a whole. The share of foreigners among these students, which was already much more significant at Vincennes than it was at the national level (33% compared to 10.8% in the 1975-76 academic year)—in particular because of the relaxed conditions for enrollment relative to the regulations in force—reached 77% in the political sciences department during the 1976-77 academic year. This peculiarity in the social profile of the department’s students was certainly strengthened by the department’s being open, again to a more significant extent than across Vincennes as a whole, to students who did not hold a Baccalauréat. In the 1976-77 academic year, this latter group accounted for 42% of the department’s students, compared to 39% for the whole university. However, the proportion of students in employment—which stood at 55% in the 1976-77 academic year—was lower than elsewhere within Vincennes. It therefore seems that students in this department were recruited to a significant extent from among expatriate children of the bourgeoisie from the countries emerging from its former colonial empire. The economic and relational advantages offered by their social environment of origin, as well as the likelihood of the overseas nature of the professional career that they had in mind, undoubtedly allowed these students to overcome the absence of national recognition for the degrees, which was more of a barrier to French students. The Department of Political Sciences at Vincennes may in fact have fulfilled the function of school-cum-refuge for foreigners with inherited wealth. It also accommodated several waves of students from activist and revolutionary circles in the Americas (Brazil, Chile, and Colombia). Replicating the academic community was therefore far from essential to the department, and this explains the relatively small quantity of degrees issued, particularly in the two more advanced levels of study.

There was also a nonspecialist demand for courses in political science from students enrolled in other programs at Vincennes. From 1973, the department was responsible for running an initial undergraduate degree, the national equivalent of the general academic studies degree in economic and social administration. The choices of “majors” and “minors” made by students indicate the close ties between “political sciences” and the departments of law and political economy, but also, in a more novel fashion given traditional faculty enrollment for the discipline, sociology. The presence of sociologists and psychosociologists among the department’s tenured teaching faculty, some of whom taught in parallel in the departments of sociology and education sciences at Vincennes, such as Nicos Poulantzas on the one hand, and Lapassade and Lourau on the other, was certainly not unrelated to this.

On the whole, the specific social properties and size of the student base of the Vincennes Department of Political Sciences explains how the department maintained sufficient margin for maneuver to adopt course content that was somewhat different from that of the discipline’s top teaching institutions. It also makes it possible to understand how the department was able to survive in the absence of national recognition and how it even managed to grow during the 1970s, even while it remained relatively marginal in its own university.

Distinctive Symbolic and Militant Resources

The singularities relating to the collective and individual profiles of teaching faculty are the other factor explaining the viability of the divergence between the department and the disciplinary canon gradually taking shape at the same time, in particular at the IEP Paris. The first difference relates to the size of the teams of tenured teaching faculty, affiliated faculty, and faculty otherwise connected to teaching political science(s). In the department of political science at Université Paris I during the 1976-77 academic year, for example, there were twelve professors, five senior lecturers, and twenty-one lecturers. At the IEP Paris in the same academic year, the teaching staff who were classed as “permanent” and delivered courses in political science included one professor (Georges Lavau), a director of studies for the National Foundation for Political Sciences, a senior lecturer (Pierre Gerbet), and two teachers (Raoul Girardet and Alfred Grosser) who had completed doctorates and agrégations, though not in political science or law. On paper, the Department of Political Sciences at Vincennes was not smaller in terms of tenured faculty numbers, but at this time it had no professor—Mallet, the only individual to hold this rank (despite the fact that he did not hold a Baccalauréat), died in 1973—though there were five assistant professors, four senior lecturers, and two lecturers (as well as around thirty instructors).

The hierarchy of these three political science teaching institutions based on the status and size of their teaching faculty remains the same if one focuses on degree levels (see Table 1), with there being notably more individuals who had completed higher-education agrégations and doctorates at Paris I than there were at the other two institutions. As was the case at the IEP Paris, the political science teaching staff at Vincennes most often came from other disciplines, the exception being Vincent, who completed his thesis on political studies under the supervision of Grosser in 1961. The other “A level” tenured faculty members in the department were doctors of arts, and, as highlighted above, in most cases they were focused on sociology or psychosociology. This was true of Mallet, Lapassade, and Lourau. Law figured much more strongly in the training of educators at Paris I and the IEP Paris, but was only present in the Department of Political Science at Vincennes in the form of “Casamayor”, who left before the start of the new academic year in 1972; Alzon, a doctor in Roman law and a specialist in feminist thought; and Poulantzas, who formally taught in the Department of Sociology but undertook some of his duties in the Department of Political Sciences.

A comparison of the collective or individual academic standing of the political science(s) teaching staff across the three institutions considered here reveals a few significant facts. First, publications and book reviews in the *Revue française de science politique* were much more frequent occurrences for the IEP Paris faculty, something that came about all the more “naturally”, perhaps, because Lavau was editor of the journal from 1973. No tenured teaching faculty member of the Department of Political Sciences at Vincennes appeared in the journal during the period. When the spectrum of references is expanded by taking as the basis for comparison publications or citations in one of the journals included in the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), the Paris I and IEP Paris teaching staff receive comparable representation, with the total citations of the two faculty members appearing most frequently from each institution—Duverger and Merle, on the one hand, and Grosser and Lancelot, on the other—being almost equivalent, even if, because of its size in particular, the collective academic standing of Paris I appears higher in databases of this type. The political science teaching staff from Vincennes then come next, with the most cited (Mallet, Lapassade, and Lourau) being two to four times less cited than the most cited teaching staff from the other two institutions considered here.

Table 1: Academic Standing and Public Visibility of a Selection of Political Science Teaching Staff Members at Vincennes,* the IEP Paris,** and Paris I*** in the 1970s

	Year of birth	Main position during the period	Highest qualifications (1970-1980)	Publications in RFSP, 1960-1980 (1970-1980)	Citations in RFSP, 1960-1980 (1970-1980)	Publications included in the Social Sciences Citation Index, 1960-1980 (1970-1980)	Citations of works included in the Social Science Citation Index, 1960-1980 (1970-1980)	Number of works published, 1970-1980	Main publishers
Closeness to intellectual journals									
Main editorial and journalism activities									
MALLET*									
Serge	1927	PR	Works-based state thesis	0	0	5 (2)	10 (6)	2	Seuil
			L'homme et la société, Arguments			Ce soir, France-Observateur, NouvelObservateur			
VINCENT*									
Jean-Marie	1934	Asst.P	Doctorate in political studies	0	0	12 (6)	2 (2)	12	
			Anthropos GaliléePUF L'homme et la société			Tribune socialiste (PSU,			
			until 1972)						
			Critique de l'économie politique (LCR,						
			1973-1979)						
LAPASSADE*									
Georges	1924	Asst.P	Doctor of arts, philosophy agrégation	0	0	12 (11)	8 (8)		
18			Gauthier- Villars Épi L'homme et la société, Arguments						
LOURAU*									
René	1933	Asst.P	Doctor of arts	0	0	18 (18)	8 (8)	10	Galilée Minuit
			Anthropos Épi L'homme et la société						
LAVAU**									
Georges	1918	PR	Law agrégation	5 (3)	0	8 (5)	4 (1)	2	Hachette
LANCELOT**									
Alain	1937	DoS	Doctorate in political studies	11 (7)	1 (1)	12 (8)	15 (10)	5	
			Armand Colin PUF Projet						
GROSSER**									

Alfred	1925	-	Doctorate, German agrégation	12 (7)	3 (3)	21 (12)	34 (19)	20	
Armand Colin FayardPUF			La Croix, Le Monde,						
Ouest France,									
L'Expansion									
GIRARDET**									
Raoul	1917	-	Doctorate, history agrégation	1 (0)	2 (1)	1 (0)	4 (2)	7	Dalloz
La Table Ronde Le Livre									
de Poche									
GERBET**									
Pierre	1918	SL	History agrégation	8 (0)	1 (1)	9 (1)	6 (5)	4	BruylantPUF
HAMON*** Léo									
	1908	PR	Law agrégation	2 (2)	3 (2)	4	8 (3)	6	PUF
Bordas Esprit, Cahiers politiques, La revue de défense nationale									
GRAWITZ***	Madeleine		1911	PR	Law agrégation	0	0	5	8 (4) 2
Dalloz									
DUVERGER***									
Maurice	1917	PR	Law agrégation	0	6 (3)	1 (1)	30		
(16)	17	PUF							
Albin Michel Robert Laffont			Le Monde, L'Express, NouvelObservateur						
MERLE***	Marcel		1923	PR	Law agrégation	7 (5)	5 (2)	18 (12)	20 (12) 5
Dalloz			La Croix						
BIRNBAUM***									
Pierre	1940	PR	Doctorate and state thesis	5 (4)	3 (3)	16 (11)	21 (19)	17	PUF
Armand Colin Seuil Grasset									

Sources: Catalog of the French National Library; database of the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI); Who's Who in France 1979-80, Paris, J. Lafitte, 1980; Claude Penetier (ed.), Le Maïtron. Dictionnaire biographique du mouvement ouvrier français, Ivry-sur-Seine, Éditions de l'Atelier, 1997, consulted online in 2013; Jacques Julliard and Michel Winock (eds), Dictionnaire des intellectuels français, Paris, Seuil, 2002; Index of the Revue française de science politique.

In terms of publications in social sciences journals, the most active faculty members from Vincennes appear to have featured more frequently than faculty members from Paris I, but behind those from the IEP. This finding is misleading, however, since almost all of the publications by Lapassade, Lourau, and Vincent in the journals indexed by the SSCI come from L'Homme et la société, a journal that was not at the center of political studies, even in the broadest sense: it was published by Anthropos editions—which was created between 1964 and 1966 from within Henri Lefebvre's circle and edited by Jean Pronteau (an important figure in the PCF until the early 1970s) and then by Serge Jonas—with

which the Vincennes political scientists had close connections, putting out several of their works during this period with the publisher. In short, compared to the ranks of the teaching body with the highest status, the Department of Political Science at Vincennes had a lower output in specialized journals than the discipline's other teaching centers, and thus its academic presence seems to have been minor.

However, a different image of the political science teaching staff at Vincennes emerges if one focuses not just on publications from the area of academic journals but also from intellectual journals and publishing. If one does so, Lapassade, Lourau, and Vincent appear among the political science teaching faculty with the most publications during the 1970s. Only Duverger and Birnbaum at Paris I and Grosser at the IEP Paris had a comparable level of publishing output. Of course, the types of works written, prefaced, or introduced by these authors were very different, as were the generalist journals in which they published. Duverger and the main professors at Paris I—with the exception of Birnbaum—mostly published textbooks and worked with Presses Universitaires de France (PUF), for which Duverger edited the *Thémis* series. Grosser, Lancelot and the other IEP Paris academics were more likely to publish studies of electoral and national and international political life or personal points of view on politics than they were textbooks. Although these books were sometimes published by PUF, Armand Colin was really the epicenter of their publishing activity, with Lancelot editing a series for the firm.

The publications from Vincennes's political scientists were entirely different. They came from publishing houses that were usually new and had little or no involvement in scholarly publishing, such as Galilee (created in 1971), Anthropos, and Gauthier-Villars (created in 1790 but bought out by Dunod in 1971). These works were much more frequently positions on current political circumstances or statements of a general research direction, as was the case, for example, with the institutional analysis by Lapassade and Lourau. Within political science at Vincennes, Vincent was in fact the only teaching staff member who was clearly part of the discipline as it was practiced at Paris's other educational establishments and as it was presented to the public in the publishing world. His thesis, defended under Grosser's supervision at the IEP Paris in 1961, focused on the labor movement in West Germany from 1945 to 1960. In 1975, with François Châtelet—a member of the teaching faculty at the Vincennes Department of Philosophy—and Évelyne Pisier, he coedited an anthology entitled *Les marxistes et la politique* as part of the series edited for PUF by Duverger. In 1978, with Birnbaum, he coedited *Critique des pratiques politiques*, the contributors to which included Lavau, among others. Despite Vincent's relationship to a few dominant players in the French political science of the era, the Vincennes teaching staff remained distant from the discipline's editorial canons and hubs while being more visible within the editorial "avant-garde" represented by young publishing houses.

In the world of journalism, aside for Mallet, an old hand in the field and a contributor to *France Observateur* in its early days, and then to *Le Nouvel Observateur*, the political science teaching staff at Vincennes did not have the same presence as their colleagues Duverger, Grosser, and Merle, who appeared in *Le Monde* (in the case of the first two), *La Croix* (in the case of the latter two), and several weeklies such as *Le Nouvel Observateur* and *L'Express*. The public activity of the Vincennes political science teaching faculty was also significant, but took place in smaller and more diverse arenas, with the common factor being left-wing opposition to the PCF. Outside of his duties in the PSU, Mallet was involved, for example, with the editorial board of the intellectual journal *Arguments* (1956-62). Vincent was the primary driving force behind the PSU's weekly *Tribune socialiste* until 1972, and then with the publication produced by the LCR, *Critique de l'économie politique*, from 1973 to 1979. Within this party, he also contributed to *Marx ou Crève*, which gave way to *Critique*

communiste, a publication set up in 1976 and edited by Weber, whose position as a faculty member of the Department of Philosophy has already been mentioned. Lapassade, who was involved with the Fourth International dissident group Socialisme ou Barbarie and its eponymous publication in the 1960s, as well as the journal Arguments a few years earlier, was hostile to the PCF from the outset, and gradually turned toward libertarian ideas. In 1971, he was an activist within the Homosexual Front for Revolutionary Action (Front homosexuel d'action révolutionnaire; FHAR). These positions did not all converge, but what they did have in common was opposition to the PCF, to Maoism, and to Althusser as an intellectual and political figure. This opposition appears to have connected these partisan groups, with one of the most visible works associated, even if only indirectly, with one of the teaching staff at the Vincennes Department of Political Science during the period probably being *Contre Althusser* (1974), which was published in paperback with a preface by Vincent. When one compares these public activities as a whole to those of the political scientists at Paris I or the IEP Paris, they thus come across as more regular and more militant, as well as located more to the "left" in the French political space of the period.

Demonstrating lower levels of academic involvement and standing than those of their colleagues located in the center of Paris, and an involvement in politics that was simultaneously stronger and less visible than these counterparts, the activities of the political science faculty at Vincennes during the 1970s were therefore politically overdetermined. They did not avoid a form of common dependence on political science output focused on issues from the political field, something which was also true, though without the same effects, of some of the teaching staff at the IEP Paris and Paris I. To get a sense of this, one only has to note Girardet's engagement against decolonization, Hamon's past as a parliamentarian with the Popular Republican Movement and then the Popular Democratic Union, Merle's engagement with Catholicism, or the place of Grosser in Franco-German relations during his time. Behind differences in political orientation, there was a shared articulation of political science and political combat as well as notable social differences, with the origins of the teaching staff at Vincennes almost always being more modest than those of the leading lights of the teaching staff at Paris I or the IEP Paris in the same discipline. The former owed much to schooling and, even more so, to activism, which often had brought them, against any expectation, into the university. At Paris I or the IEP Paris, by contrast, such engagement had never been, and was almost never necessary, with several faculty members pursuing their careers in the shadow of the public space, while others continued to produce classical academic output with no connection to the most immediate political issues. There were therefore social and institutional conditions that made a preference for scholarly or educational detachment possible, and these were not truly present in the Department of Political Science at Vincennes during the 1970s given the history of the institution, of its teachers, and of its students.

The militant intellectual activity of political science at Vincennes can ultimately be understood as one of the tools that it mobilized to overcome its relative handicaps in the institution and its divergences from the emerging disciplinary canon. Demand from activists and domestic publishers who sought an analysis of the "post-'68" national and international political and economic situation that came from the "Left", was independent of that of the PCF and Communist intellectuals, and had academic legitimacy, gave opportunities to several faculty members from the Department of Political Science at Vincennes. And extra-academic public familiarity with them enabled them to maintain greater independence in terms of class content without their having to leave the discipline or the university.

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To explain the Université de Paris VIII's creation in 1970 of a department of political science that was a pioneer in the history of academic teaching of the discipline, we have drawn upon two sets of factors: first, the medium-term trend of increases and diversification in the academic offering of political science from 1945, and secondly the unique post-1968 political context, which facilitated the official institutionalization of a university described as "experimental", which acted as a meeting point for several of the new currents in the humanities and social sciences emerging during the period, and for individuals who otherwise would likely not have had access (or not have had it so quickly) to tenured positions in academia. This "opening up of possibilities" was at work, though to very different degrees, at both Université de Paris I and Université de Paris VIII, where the first two departments for the discipline independent of law were created. However, the Department of "Political Sciences" at Vincennes had fewer resources (particularly in institutional, academic, and social terms) than the other centers teaching the discipline in the Paris region, and it was not in a position of strength within the disciplinary space of the experimental university itself.

After noting this twofold weakness, we incorporated three other variables into our analysis in order to account for the conditions behind this department's institutional survival: its fairly limited distance from the discipline's teaching conventions in force during the period; the social characteristics of the department's student base, which mostly comprised foreign students from the former colonies of the empire; and the nonacademic, and mainly militant, resources held by the department's teaching staff insofar as they offered increased standing within Vincennes, where the criteria for legitimacy were at least as political as they were intellectual or educational. Under the effect of these three variables, the position of the department within the discipline changed over the 1970s: having been naive/an outlier, it simply became an outsider/maverick.

Our investigation therefore suggests that the position of a university department within a disciplinary space cannot be grasped through a one-dimensional language such as that expressed, for example, in terms of a routinized spatial opposition between center(s) and peripheries, and thus it is necessary to expand the analytical variables used. We have shown the importance of considering several social properties pertaining to faculty members (qualifications, professional status, and number and place of publications) and comparing them to those of their colleagues from departments belonging to the same discipline at other institutions. We have also evaluated distance from the teaching "canon", an important factor of legitimacy in the academic arena. Finally, we have paid greater attention to student bases since they are one of the necessary impetuses, even though they alone are not enough, for the existence and stabilization of a department. From this point of view, we have shown that, even in a national, state-controlled university system like that of France in the 1970s, the local arena remained crucial.

This explanatory framework gives a special place to social and symbolic resources accumulated outside the university. One of the variables able to define the position of a department in this context is the social multipositionality of its members. While French critical sociology has emphasized the social multipositionality of scholars from the IEP Paris, the comparative overview that we have provided with this investigation shows that they certainly did not hold a monopoly over it in the 1970s—at least not in political science. This study is therefore an invitation to distinguish between various regimes of social multipositionality in characterizing the teaching staff of a disciplinary department and the resources that it holds in the competition for academic legitimacy. And because the multipositionality of teaching staff is a resource, one condition for the organizational autonomy of university departments is therefore a certain heteronomy in relation to actors operating in a wider social arena.

We have highlighted how the creation of the Department of Political Sciences at Vincennes was the result of a combination of exceptional political circumstances and the common and contradictory resolve of conservative law professors and progressive sociologists who were atypical from an academic point of view. Once this department had been created, its “relative autonomy” was never simply granted: achieving this depended on other social forces inside and outside the university. We have also emphasized the extent to which the creation and existence of an experimental institution such as Vincennes and of an “autonomous” department of political science able to issue recognized degrees depended on the state. It goes without saying that the situation is not the same in all countries. But the case study presented here confirms that the history of social science disciplines cannot be written, including for the most recent period and for the seemingly most marginal innovations, without considering the role of the state and public authorities.

By focusing attention on the history of a department that is usually overlooked in the memory of its discipline, the idea of a necessary linear evolution in disciplines toward more autonomy or toward a growing specialization appears to be a generalization linked to historical conditions—namely, as in the case studied here, a demographically driven growth in student demand and state recognition of the humanities and social sciences—that are not always present. In studying the early years of a newly created department during a period when political science was being recognized as a full-fledged discipline in university institutions, we also wished to emphasize the pertinence of studying the history of a teaching area not at a national scale but at a local one, as has long been the case in the history and sociology of science and technology, or in a different vein, in the sociology of public policy. This approach makes it possible to consider the internal heterogeneity that exists behind a common disciplinary label and which a legitimist writing of the history of knowledge tends to neglect. Analyzing the conditions for the emergence and development of political science at Vincennes in fact reminds us of the diversity of French political science in the 1970s, which was strengthened by the then-uncodified nature of its emerging practices.

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