

doi:10.5559/di.23.1.07

THE POLITICAL SCIENCE PROFESSIONAL PROJECT IN SLOVENIA: FROM COMMUNIST MONISM, DEMOCRATISATION AND EUROPEANISATION TO THE FINANCIAL CRISIS

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UDK: 378.014.3(497.3)
378.632(497.4)

Pregledni rad

Priljeno: 20. 1. 2013.

In this article, we assess the effects of democratic transition, the introduction of a capitalist economy, the creation of a newly independent state and international economic and political integrations on the employment potential of political science graduates. While we particularly focus on Slovenia, we will also consider the broader challenges faced by many professions across Europe. The empirical study is based on a series of tracer surveys carried out since 1969, as well as an analysis of political science programme curricula, enrolment and graduation statistics and official data on employability. The statistical and survey data is supplemented by stakeholders' views. Our main finding is that, paradoxically, under socialism, the pressures on political science supported internal professional integration so that the profession was better able to adapt to the initial democratisation than to market-induced domestic changes and the challenges of global competitiveness (including the Bologna HE reform). The recent international financial and economic crisis has only reinforced these challenges.

Keywords: political science, democratisation, Europeanisation, financial crisis, Slovenia



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INTRODUCTION

This article focuses on the challenges of the political science profession in a post-socialist context in which multiple transitions have taken place. For some countries (including the former Yugoslavia), there has not only been a democratic transition but also the creation of new independent states, the introduction of a capitalist economy and the related social changes, the European integration processes and the transition to full European Union (EU) membership. The macro-social challenges that the political science professions have faced are especially evident in the changes to the study programmes and the flow of HE graduates to a changing work-place environment.

While democratisation in post-socialist countries was expected to facilitate academic and professional autonomy, the term "Europeanisation" has, as a rule, been closely associated with the rather abstract expectations of wellbeing and generally higher standards in all social spheres. The diffusion of the Bologna Higher Education (HE) model in particular was positively valued as a synonym for both modernisation and the globalisation of HE institutions and their curricula (see Krbec & Škare, 2001; Kovač, Ledić, & Rafajac, 2002). By contrast, little attention has been paid to the professions in these processes, while there has been marked increase in the criticisms of the Bologna reform as well as the problems of employability for social scientists – including political science graduates. Although we will pay particular attention to the case of political science in Slovenia, the more general purpose of this paper is to consider the wider challenges for the profession within national borders as well as internationally.

The main thesis of this paper is that political science was initially able to respond to the challenges of democratic transition both autonomously and pro-actively, but has since experienced problems in continuously (re)establishing the profession under pressure from the marketisation of HE knowledge in the capitalist and global economic environment that has been brought about by Europeanisation. Here the period effects (see Blossfeld, 1986), such as the global financial and economic crisis, have only added to the magnitude of the profession's already-existing problems.

In this article, the challenges of the political science professional project are viewed from the three main angles: addressing the changing state; competing with other occupations; and the broader changing context – particularly globalisation/Europeanisation. In line with the research focus, this analysis combines several theoretical lenses from several sets of literature: the literature on the professional project; democratisation;

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as well as Europeanisation. The impact of the international financial and economic crisis will also be taken into account.

Our research is based on data collected from a range of sources: from graduate tracer surveys carried out since 1969; the curricula of the political science programmes offered at the Faculty of Social Sciences at three separate points in time; official statistical data on the employability and labour market success of political science graduates; enrolment statistics; information personally gathered from stakeholders; and publicly available tools for the oversight of public finances. Taken together, this data offers insights into the impacts of democratisation and Europeanisation processes as well as the impact of the financial crisis on the development of political science as a profession in Slovenia over a forty year period.

In the following section, we will begin by presenting the conceptual lenses followed by the Slovenian political science case study. Within this framework, we will present the general developments of political science in Slovenia, followed by an analysis of the curricular changes, the impact of the professional identity issues and the cross-disciplinary rivalries. We will also consider these developments in light of the ambivalent position of the state and the extent to which the professional community polices the boundaries of its profession. Our findings are summarised in the conclusions.

THE PROFESSIONAL PROJECT AND THE DETERMINANTS OF ITS DEVELOPMENT

The Professional Project

The tradition of research into the professions has been closely linked to the structuralist-functionalist approach in sociology, which began with Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons. Since the pluralisation of theoretical orientations in the 1960s, the sociology of professions has also begun to fade away. However, it regained popularity at the time of the third (post-socialist) wave of democratisation, when it was emphasised that professionalisation includes a process by which a layperson becomes an expert in a particular narrow field (Herzog, 1992, p. 73). The definition of the profession's attributes used in this article include: a theoretical knowledge base; a specific education and training with a qualification guaranteed by exams and diplomas and (subsequently) a reputation derived from continuous professional activity; the existence of a professional association to ensure the representation of members' interests in relation to the state, thus excluding the non-qualified and regulating internal competition while setting down ethical standards within the profession; the legal sanctioning

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of all elements of the profession, thereby establishing social competency and legitimacy as well as a code of professional ethics determined by standardised ethical behavioural practice, self-identity and autonomy (Adam, 1992, pp. 9-11), as well as the relationship between the professions and the state, including the functioning of professions as interest groups in Weberian terms (see Macdonald, 1995, p. 30). In order to fully grasp the particular effects of the third (post-socialist) wave of democratisation on this professionalisation, we will introduce two additional theoretical/conceptual lenses: 1) the interlinkage of democratisation, and 2) globalisation and Europeanisation in particular.

According to Macdonald's (1995, p. 32) theoretical model of the professional project, there are four main clusters of variables: the social order; the economic order; culture (specific values and norms); and the state (which needs services, grants monopolies and achieves regulation). The securing of economic and social recognition by members of a profession, including the achievement of upward social mobility, is to an important extent determined by the actions of the state in terms of both 1) market control and social mobility, and 2) the capacity for knowledge-based occupations to act independently (Burrage, 1990; Macdonald, 1995). Generally speaking, professions seek to establish a legal monopoly through state licensure (Parkin, 1979, pp. 57-58) which assists a particular profession in its quest for status in a dynamic social order. Hence, in pursuing the professional project, occupations not only deal with the changing state but also compete with other occupations and educational institutions (Macdonald, 1995, pp. 65-66) and address the social, political and cultural contexts (social values, history, legislation, tradition, technological innovations as well as power relations with other social actors). In post-socialist countries like Slovenia, political science has had to deal with all the major social, economic and globalising (including Europeanising) changes within a very short time-span.

The Influence of Democratisation, Europeanisation and the International Financial Crisis

In understanding the contextual circumstances of political science development, it is important to note that the one-party political system based on social ownership and an idiosyncratic self-management economy did not permit either the development of a capitalist market economy or a democratic political system. It did however permit aspects of social modernisation which were deemed politically less-threatening. Due to this modernisation imbalance, sociologists characterised development in societies like Slovenia as "deformed moderni-

sation" and labelled them "pre-modern" or "by-modern" societies (Bernik, 1989). The transition to democracy in societies like Slovenia not only included deep socio-economic and political system change, but also the creation of an independent state which added to the "multiple transitions" simultaneously taking place, effectively "rebuilding the ship at sea" (Elster, Offe, & Preuss, 1998). In the case of some post-socialist countries (including Slovenia), these transitions have also been connected to the processes of Europeanisation – including the international diffusion of HE reform.

While the processes of Europeanisation have brought about several major national and supranational political system developments (Olsen, 2002, pp. 923-924), determining the institutional (particularly state) milieu of political science development, the public policy aspects (particularly higher education EU policymaking) seem to be better encompassed by Radaelli's definition of Europeanisation as the process of: (1) construction; (2) diffusion; and (3) institutionalisation of formal and informal rules, which include procedures, policy paradigms, styles, "ways of doing things" and shared beliefs and norms, all of which are defined at the inter-/supranational level and are afterwards incorporated within the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies (Radaelli, 2003, p. 30). The Bologna Process HE reform processes aimed to make academic degrees and quality assurance standards more comparable and compatible throughout Europe. Since the creation of the related European Higher Education Area was a part of the wider process of integrating the post-socialist newcomers into Europe, the adoption of both the entire *acquis* as well as the outcomes of the soft modes of governance, such as the Open Method of Coordination – as in case of the Bologna Process – were mandatory preconditions for the accession of all post-communist states joining the EU in 2004 (Alexiadou, Fink-Hafner, & Lange, 2010). These preconditions had not been applied to the older member states when they were candidates.

The financial crisis in the post-socialist EU member states has been managed in line with the previous (neoliberal) state reactions to globalisation. While the Baltic states have held to the neo-liberalist refusal to protect their domestic economies and societies (Bohle & Greskovits, 2007), and have thus even radicalised their management of the recent international crisis (Kattel & Raudla, 2013), the Central European countries with the embedded type of capitalism (Bohle & Greskovits, 2007) have also moved towards a policy of budget balancing via public spending cuts (Myant, Drahokoupil, & Lesay, 2013). Slovenia had until recently proved the exception by maintaining

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a neo-corporatist model of capitalism as well as a generous welfare state (Bohle & Greskovits, 2007); however, following the weakening of trade unions, Slovenia too has belatedly accepted the neoliberal austerity paradigm. Both the problems with Slovenian politics and the shrinking public sector resulting from the austerity measures have touched the vital problems of political science profession.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SLOVENIAN POLITICAL SCIENCE

Data

Our analysis is based on the following sources of data: 1) a previously published analysis of political science developments in Slovenia (Bibič, 1996; Fink-Hafner & Boh, 2002; Zajc, 2010; Deželan & Fink-Hafner, 2012); 2) a range of surveys of political science graduates – Podmenik (1969), Bibič (1982), Fink-Hafner and Boh (2002), Fink-Hafner, Deželan, Slana, and Topolinjak (2007) and Deželan and Fink-Hafner (2012);¹ 3) an analysis of the curricula of 1985, 1991 and 2006 – the political science programmes were acquired from the Head of the Organisational Unit for Study Activities at the Faculty of Social Sciences Administration (N. Babič, personal communication, 26 July, 2013); 4) the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (A. Kozmelj, personal communication, 20 October, 2011) and the Employment Service of Slovenia (A. Gorše, personal communication, 28 August, 2012) – data on the employability and labour market success of political science graduates; 5) the enrolment statistics from the University of Ljubljana data archive (UL, 2013), and alumni statistics and activity from the public relations officer of the Faculty of Social Sciences (N. Erjavec, personal communication, 5 August, 2013); 6) personal communication with stakeholders (M. Brglez, personal communication, 9 September, 2013; C. Toplak, personal communication, 25 July, 2013; A. Grizold, personal communication, 25 July, 2013); and 7) publicly-available databases of the Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Public Legal Records and Related Services (KPK, 2013).

Contextualising the Slovenian Political Science Professional Project and its Curricular Development

When it first began, Slovenian political science could be said to be more or less indistinguishable from the state. It was first established from the top-down on the initiative of the ruling Communist Party in the 1950s and was inspired by UNESCO's recognition of the need to develop political science; the institutionalisation of political science was closely tied to the needs of the ruling party for the training of its political cadre. How-

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ever, political science gained some autonomy in 1961 with the establishment of the Higher School for Political Sciences (Bibič, 1982). The initial general two-year study programme for promising cadres employed in the regime's political organisations and state apparatus evolved into a unified four-year study programme with a general admission in 1962. During the 1970s, political science diversified into domestic politics (the Socio-Political Programme) and International Relations, and a People's Defence Study Programme (later Defence Studies) (Bibič, 1982, p. 32).

The rationale behind the initial institutionalisation of political science was the intention to create a new profile of state-employed professionals, experts in the methodological and technical tools of analysis and the alteration of social relations, alongside the necessary theoretical proficiency (Bibič, 1996, p. 426). Since these early days, the dilemma of inter-disciplinarity versus specialisation (Bibič, 1982, p. 34) has remained one of the main challenges of the profession.

The political science programme of the late 1970s and early 1980s was supposed to excel in methodology, statistics and other analytical orientations (Bibič, 1996) in order to provide the regime with the requisite scientifically-based know-how in political and policymaking processes. In fact, political science was regarded as a tool for legitimising the political system of self-management, and it was hoped that it would act as one of the many "socialist forces". Subsequently, the political science study programme taught from the end of the 1970s to the early 1980s remained heavily burdened with the ideology of the ruling regime (Bibič, 1982, pp. 20-21). Although the applicability of political science in society served to promote the profession, it was slow to develop its own area of specialisation. Along with the above-mentioned specialisations of the political science programmes in the 1970s, and in spite of maintaining a common core of subjects, the proliferation of sub-fields also developed separate identities and even divisions which prevent the creation of a common goal for the professional political science community as a whole. When we examine the curricula from the socialist period (Table 1), we can indeed observe a strong interdisciplinary focus with some methodological courses and more general political science orientation (except for Defence Studies). The prevailing interdisciplinary orientation, which entailed a wide range of disciplines from social sciences and humanities, clearly prevailed over any sub-field specialisation. Here the focus was on the domestic socio-political system that graduates of these programmes were expected to engineer.

TABLE 1
Changes to the curricula of the political science programmes over the years (% of all pedagogical hours)

	In hours (=100%)	PS sub-field		Total PS	Interdisciplinary	Methodological	EU-related	Global focus	Domestic focus		Sociological	Economic	Languages	Praxis	Psychological	Historical
		specific %	%						%	%						
1985*																
Socio-Political Programme	3885	33.6	8.5	42.1	46.8	6.4	0.0	0.7	26.5	0.2	9.0	5.0	4.6	3.1	2.7	14.3
International Relations	4225	29.0	15.5	44.5	39.2	5.9	0.0	6.4	26.9	0.0	7.8	6.4	10.6	2.8	0.0	8.5
Defence Studies	3709	8.5	39.6	48.1	42.5	5.7	0.0	2.4	17.8	2.4	8.9	4.9	3.2	1.7	4.4	6.9
1991*																
Policy Analysis and Public Administration	3120	31.4	23.1	54.5	39.8	7.7	0.8	8.7	2.9	5.2	9.5	5.8	1.9	3.8	2.9	6.7
Theoretical-Analytical Programme	3150	30.0	18.7	48.7	42.7	14.3	8.4	4.1	2.9	0.7	2.9	5.7	4.8	3.8	3.6	9.5
International Relations	3000	22.0	23.0	45.0	34.0	11.0	3.0	33.3	3.0	4.0	6.0	10.0	21.0	0.0	3.0	6.0
Defence Studies	3120	14.4	38.9	53.4	36.1	10.6	0.0	2.9	2.9	2.4	4.8	2.9	4.8	3.8	2.9	5.8
2006**																
Policy Analysis and Public Administration	2890	28.6 - 45.2	22.8	51.4 - 68.0	18.7 - 35.3	6.2	4.2	0.0	4.2	4.2	2.1	6.2	7.3	3.1	2.1	4.2
Analytical Political Science	2750	18.0 - 37.7	40.3	58.3 - 78.0	15.9 - 35.5	6.5	2.2	9.9	4.4	1.5	2.1	2.2	4.4	0.0	0.0	4.4
International Relations	2840	15.6 - 28.3	35.1	50.7 - 63.4	19.0 - 31.7	4.2	2.1	25.8	2.1	6.3	1.6	11.4	16.9	0.0	0.0	3.7
Defence Studies	2970	12.1 - 28.3	35.8	47.9 - 64.1	16.8 - 32.9	4.0	3.2	6.7	4.0	3.5	2.0	0.6	4.0	10.1	0.0	5.6
European Studies	2880	12.0 - 30.7	12.8	24.8 - 43.5	37.7 - 56.5	4.8	47.6	4.5	0.0	4.5	10.3	6.9	16.7	0.0	1.4	0.0

*Four-year BA; ** Four-year Bologna BA. Note: Since not all programmes included a diploma, only pedagogical hours are taken into account.

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Since the beginning of the 1980s, the orientation from the production of the political party cadre became more clear-cut. The reformist orientation within the political science programme in Slovenia made the transition easier. Under the pressures of the evolving social change in the mid-1980s, the discipline prepared the reforms that were put into practice in the 1990/1991 academic year (Fink-Hafner & Boh, 2002). The reforms brought about a modern political science curriculum with many new political science sub-fields and themes as well as a shift from a domestic political science orientation to a global orientation that also took into account the need to provide more of a methodological background due to comparative orientations (see Table 1). In spite of the fact that some expectations about the outcomes of the new programmes proved incorrect, this transformation on the whole ensured that the study programme adapted to the environment which increased the interest of potential applicants while at the same time supporting the consolidation of a professional community. This was reinforced by both the demographic trends and the governmental policy of encouraging mass study during the 1990s.

The EU-diffused HE reform has furthered the trend in the marketisation of HE. The cornerstone in the evolution of political science in Slovenia was the reform of the curriculum to accord with Slovenia's integration into the European Union's political system. As a young post-communist Central European democracy, conditions were imposed on Slovenia's accession. Both the adoption of the entire *acquis* as well as the outcomes of soft modes of governance, such as the Open Method of Coordination (OMC), were mandatory preconditions for all post-communist states – including Slovenia – which acceded to the EU in 2004 (Alexiadou et al., 2010).

By institutionalising the priorities of the Lisbon agenda, the new EU member states have imported a particular paradigm into their national education policies. Within this framework, education has been dealt with primarily as a form of knowledge support to increase the global economic competitiveness of the EU as a whole as well as the competitiveness of each EU member state. In this sense, education has been expected to function primarily as a support service for society (Haskel, 2009, p. 283). In Slovenia, as in many other European countries (following the German and Italian models), the additional hallmarks of "mass education had been superimposed on university structures, which had changed little from the time of very small elite cohorts" (Haskel, 2009, p. 277).

The new Bologna study programmes prepared in 2003 included an extensive and widely-disseminated development of the research that had proliferated in the 1990s in the field of political science. Some nascent EU-oriented courses from the 1991 curriculum were amended by a number of different

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EU-focused modules and courses, or simply by adapting the previously-existing courses to the new conditions. In addition to the creation of an entire programme devoted to European studies, the sporadic optional courses on the EU which had been scattered across different programmes in the pre-Bologna curriculum were now transformed into a substantive (although still not extensive) mandatory basis for all political science students (see Table 1).

However, in the process of accreditation, some of the top-down requirements have pressured teachers in EU member states to maintain courses and programmes alongside the reformed Bologna programmes. This has questioned the education vertical, which in the past had included undergraduate, graduate (academic masters) and doctoral studies. Now, however, the first and second (master's) are joined together replacing the former undergraduate studies in the job market, while the academic link to the doctoral studies no longer exists. Furthermore, the already challenged political science professional project has also been endangered by the reform of higher education without a proper financial framework. This has led teachers to pursue survival strategies, struggling for a shrinking amount of teaching hours,² while study programmes and departments have fought each other to attract the shrinking cohorts of freshmen. The commoditisation of study programmes, teachers, students, their knowledge and skills as well as the threat posed by the privatisation of HE have become particularly evident during the recent financial crisis. In these circumstances, the political science professional project appears to be threatened. However, there are also other reasons for this which we will examine in the following sections.

Identity Issues and the Problem of External Recognition

The internal divisions arising from sub-field expertise/specialisation as well as subsequent competition for prestige between individual political science programmes hindered the profession's achieving wider recognition, particularly in comparison to the competing legal and economist professionals. As a Chair in International Relations put it, graduates and teaching staff face serious dilemmas regarding their prevailing identity – sub-field (e.g. international relations specialists) or political science (M. Brglez, personal communication, 9 September, 2013). The institutional fragmentation within the only political science HE institution in the country – the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ljubljana (FSS-UL) has added to the identities linked to particular chairs (i.e. sub-discipline study programmes) while the functioning of the political science department, which was set up to integrate political science chairs organisationally, has in practice ceased to function during the last decade (as is the case with all departments at the same faculty).

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The divided identities, which have grown over time, and the perceived lack of specialisation due to the extensive inter-disciplinarity of the political science programmes has been accompanied by the recent indications that potential employers do not know what to expect of political science graduates, which makes employers very cautious about employing one (Melink & Pavlin, 2012). The official recognition of political science as a profession came comparatively late. It was officially registered only in 1984.³ Further specific recognitions of sub-professions have been delayed (e.g. the registration of "policy analyst" as a profession). Furthermore, political science graduates feel threatened by other competing profiles (legal professionals and economists) due to being considered "jack-of-all-trades" but with a particular lack of expertise in law and economy. To be precise, surveys from 1982 to 2012 indicate that around 35% of graduates feel that they are in a worse position than competing profiles within their organisations (see Table 2). What is more, they perennially bemoan their lack of expertise in statistics and quantitative methods, economy, law and lately also in rhetorical and managerial skills.

TABLE 2
Clusters of findings
from graduate surveys

Surveys	1969	1982	2002	2007	2012
Motives for study					
	Predominantly political cadre	Personal interest in social sciences	N/A	N/A	
Demand for additional skills and knowledge					
	N/A	Methodology, knowledge of economy and law	Practical managerial skills, analytical skills, EU-related knowledge, foreign languages, rhetorical skills	N/A	Practical skills, rhetorical skills, knowledge of economy and law, statistics
Employment milieu (sector)					
- public	Almost exclusively	54.2% employed	73.8%	65.3%	43.0%
- private	public sector employees (education, public enterprises, mass media)	in politics, teaching and public administration	26.2%	34.7%	49.7%
Position vis-à-vis other profiles					
-worse	N/A	37.5%	25.6%	48.8%	35.4%
-better		-	4.9%	5.8%	5.1%
Horizontal education-job matching					
- social science	N/A	64.6%	67.9%	62.0%	43.2%
- any field		14.6%	22.6%	30.6%	53.0%
Vertical education-job matching (university diploma)					
	N/A	40%	83.7%	81.4%	65.6% (42.2% Bologna)

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When examining the curriculum data, we can observe that graduates do have the opportunity to attend these courses, but to a far lesser extent than had previously been the case (Table 1). The negative trend is also expressed in the decreasing horizontal education-job matching. Political science graduates are becoming more replaceable by other social scientists and they increasingly believe that they can be replaced by professionals from any field (this estimation increased from 14.6% in 1982 to 53% in 2012).

The Policing of Professional Boundaries and the Role of Professional Associations

So far in Slovenia, a professional community which would systematically and holistically be able to safeguard their profession has failed to develop anywhere near the extent that has occurred in competing professions. The relative failure of the professional project may be especially elucidated by the virtual lack of policing of the professional boundaries. There are several indicators of this. Firstly, due to the shrinking generations and budgetary security of having a large number of students, the quality of enrolled students is fast declining. While the International Relations programme had the highest average GCE A-levels ("matura" in Slovenia) threshold to enter the study in 1997 due to the fact that students could have been selected from a rather large pool of applicants, it failed to gain enough applications (with the first round) to fill the number of posts designated for new undergraduates in 2013 (UL, 2013). Secondly, for graduates of other disciplines (mainly law and economics), a considerable number of old-format academic MA programmes presented a short-cut to acquiring an academic title due to the "loose" curriculums and very entrepreneurial guardians (heads) of certain graduate political science programmes. It was even possible for graduates from other professions who had failed to obtain academic titles in their own disciplines to enrol in these programmes and gain graduate political science titles with a deficient knowledge of political science. Thirdly, more recently it has become rather common that a non-political scientist becomes the head of a political science research centre (e.g. an economist or sociologist), the convenor of a political science MA programme (e.g. an economist or legal professional), or head of the BA programme (e.g. a geographer or sociologist), and even the president of the main political science association (e.g. an historian). Fourthly, since the Bologna reform, anyone with any university diploma and any grade average may enrol in the political science PhD programme. And while most of these individuals (more than 100 in the first year and much less later) failed to

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complete their programme, this fact seriously indicated the inability of political science to police its own boundaries.

In addition, as the implementation of the Bologna reform has brought about market and managerial pressures, the activities of political-science professional associations have gradually declined or even ceased entirely. The Slovenian Political Science Association, which was established in 1968 and has represented the core of associational activity and has acted as the guardian of the profession in the field of political science, has begun to languish. This has been due both to financial difficulties (KPK, 2013; SPOD, 2013), as well as to the declining enthusiasm of the leading national political scientists to participate in its activities, absenting themselves from the annual events, key discussions and leadership of the association. Even though certain discipline-related panels are convened at annual events, these are infrequently attended and fail to reach the entire professional community with its modest membership numbering 234 (Zajc, 2010, p. 286) and budget-conditioned communication tools (e-newsletter and e-books) (SPOD, 2013). In addition, the only other professional association of political scientists – The Slovenian Defence Studies Association – has failed to convene any events and activities for more than a decade and is, according to a former representative, in "hibernation" (A. Grizold, personal communication, 25 July, 2013; KPK, 2013). On the other hand, certain other associations are comparatively active, but fail to act as a "guardian" of their profession since they are composed of a variety of professional and occupational profiles such as legal professionals, economists, and diplomats etc. (e.g. The Slovenian Association for International Relations, the United Nations Association of Slovenia, the Euro-Atlantic Council of Slovenia) (M. Brglez, personal communication, 9 September, 2013). The 2012 graduate survey indicates that only 10.1% of graduates (of all political science programmes) are members and/or active in any of the above-mentioned associations, with only 1.6% of them regularly attending their events. Hence, there no longer appears to be a particular professional community to take systematic and holistic care of the profession in spite of the fact that the public view persists that political scientists are incompetent and politically/ideologically biased professionals (Bibič, 1982, p. 35). Indeed, the public image of political science has been further undermined by a new blurring of the borders between politics and political science as a profession due to the practice of a "revolving door" which changes or combines the status of academic staff and politicians of the only political science HE institution in the country.

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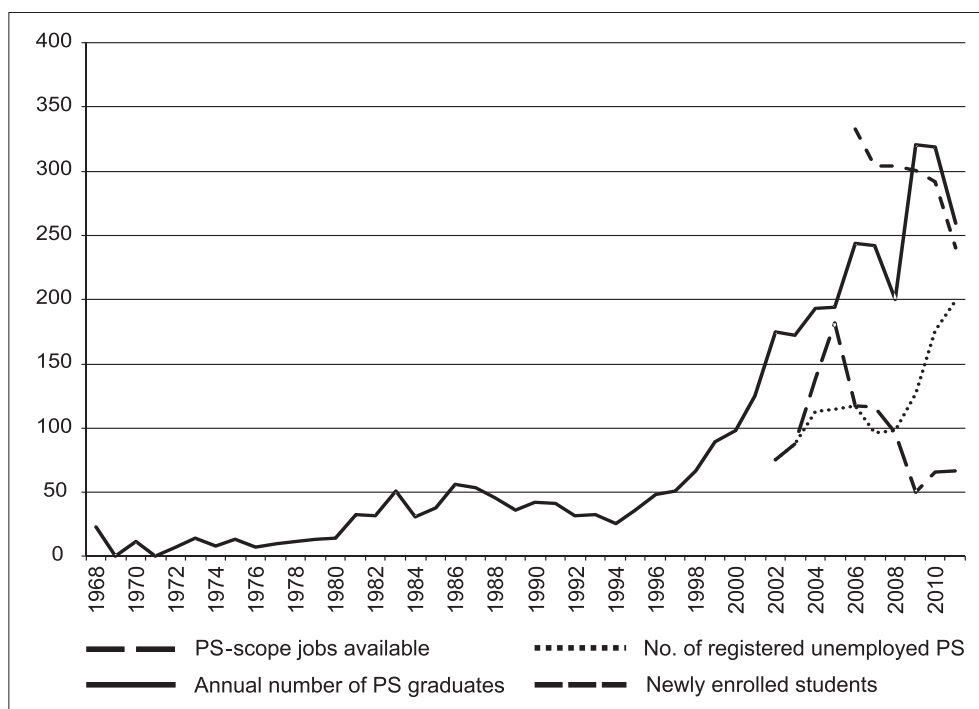
The absence of attention to the fortunes of the profession in general and the employability of its graduates in particular are evident from the activity overview of political science alumni networks. Within the general overhaul of the alumni activities of the Faculty of Social Sciences, five political science alumni clubs were established in 2012. According to official data, they comprise 240 members in total, with only one alumni club organising an event so far (N. Erjavec, personal communication, 5 August, 2013). The 2012 graduate survey confirms this, since only 18.0% of graduates reported being members of an alumni club, while 66.4% testified a lack of information or their unwillingness to become members.

The Ambivalent Role of the State and the Hostility of the Marketised Labour Market

When the political science programmes enjoyed an increased interest in enrolment at the beginning of the 1990s, the nature of the study changed irreversibly. The change was reinforced both by the positive demographic trends as well as the governmental policies which encouraged mass study. The number of enrolment places permitted for new undergraduate students of political science, which is subject to annual approval of the government as the funder (see Rules on Enrolment in Higher Education Institutions, 2010), rose from less than one hundred places in the early 1980s, through 180 places for fully funded students in 1997, to 235 places in 2008 (UL, 2013). In fact, in the 1990s, political science in Slovenia joined the phenomenon of "massification" of higher education graduates (see Figure 1) which was witnessed across Europe (Teichler, 2009). The rationale behind this process that affected the majority of social science and humanities programmes in Slovenia was not only intended to educate professionals for the newly available state jobs, but also to raise the general level of education in Slovenia and temporarily postpone the entrance of young people into the job market during the transitional period of high unemployment (Kopač, 2002).

The major increase in the number of graduates was, however, accompanied by a number of problems. Following the saturation of the newly created job opportunities in Slovenia and in the Slovenian institutions in Brussels and the relevant jobs in EU institutions that had resulted from Slovenia's independence and its joining the EU, it became increasingly difficult for political science graduates to find employment quickly. They were pushed to search for jobs in the private sector. As is indicated in Table 2, this trend is rapidly intensifying: in 2012 only 43% of political scientists were employed in the public sector compared to 65.3% in 2007 and 73.8% in 2002, not taking into account the old regime where almost all poli-

tical scientists worked within the previously enormous public sector. Job opportunities have been further reduced by the state's attempts to manage the impact of the international financial and economic crisis, with both left- and right-wing governments since 2008 firmly defending the ban on new employment in the public sector (Lončar, A., 2011, June 9; MMC, 2012).



Source: A. Kozmelj, personal communication, 20 October, 2011; Employment Service of Slovenia (2012); A. Gorše, personal communication, 28 August, 2012.

FIGURE 1
 The Annual number of newly enrolled students in political science programmes, political science graduates, jobs available to political science graduates and newly registered unemployed political scientists

According to the Employment Service of Slovenia (2012), the supply of political science graduates significantly outnumbers the demand of the labour market (see Figure 1). New graduates in particular are increasingly forced into less stable temporary employment arrangements (Teichler 2009, p. 50) and their early careers are accompanied by an educational mismatch which are symptomatic of the increasing incompatibility between a graduate's education and professional destination (see Deželan, Fink-Hafner, & Melink, 2014). Political science graduates have increasingly begun to occupy positions far from the ideal match with many working as administrators, secretaries, door-to-door salesmen, public relations counsellors, and journalists (ESS, 2012). It should be said though that political scientists are not alone in experiencing this; virtually all social science and humanities graduates suffer the same fate of over-education and a deficient education-job match (Me-

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link & Pavlin, 2012). However, with the increasing shift of attention to the private sector, the business and law graduates are better-off due to their possession of the extra skills demanded by their private sector employers and their greater awareness of how their potential employers view their capabilities and skills. The post-2000 surveys clearly confirm this.

The state has acted ambivalently towards political science. Within the "patronage" framework of the one-party state, it was difficult for the profession to act independently. In the 1990s, the newly-established independent and democratised Slovenian state created both a) a new space for the more autonomous development of the profession, and b) new ways and modes of instrumentalisation of HE institutions and the profession within the context of developing capitalism, the cartelisation of national political parties and Slovenia's joining EU with its politically-led HE reform. Furthermore, the Slovenian state opened many opportunities for the employment of political scientists within the newly-created state institutions – and after joining the EU also in the European institutions. It has however also allowed a bifurcated policy of financing a significant number of new political science graduates while at the same time closing their main channel to the world of work.

CONCLUSION

In many respects, the developments and challenges of the political science profession reflect the broader trends in the former socialist countries joining the European integration processes. Political science had been expected to legitimise the old political system and to act as one of many "socialist forces". With the multiple transitions in the Slovenian society, this direct political pressure has since been replaced by an indirect pressure in terms of: 1) the government's dictate of the numbers of students enrolled and the amount and dynamics of public financing; 2) the import of the global and particularly EU's paradigm of HE education reform which is primarily linked to economic goals; and 3) the recent HE policy of publicly financing allegedly private HE institutions.

Our study has shown that it is particularly difficult for such a young profession that has not yet been consolidated to meet the various challenges that have resulted from the changing environment. It is indicative that the profession, which was established top-down by the political elite within the framework of an authoritarian political system, had been more able to manage the transition to democracy when it was left to modernise study programmes on its own and primarily based on autonomous international comparisons than either 1) in the post-transitional capitalist and multi-party context, or 2) in the context of importing HE reform subordinated to the global economic competition.

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As with all social sciences in Slovenia, political science has responded to these changes by increasingly fragmenting its self-identity among HE institutions and accredited courses and programmes and even into units within the individual institution. In such circumstances, the responses to the considerable social and political changes have been merely to reform the curricula without any broader reflection on the status, social role and the prosperity of the profession. This situation threatens not only HE institutions and those employed in these institutions, but also the quality of education, the quality of reproduction of HE academic cadres and, last but not least, the social role of the political science profession in its many aspects. Although the Slovenian experience has been rather alarming for the profession, it should be emphasised that marketisation and institutional fragmentation of HE have been delayed and remain relatively moderate when compared to developments in other Central European post-socialist countries/EU member states. Therefore, while it may not be the worst, it is nevertheless an indicative example of this region.

We can conclude that the pressures on political science under socialism were paradoxically more transparent and, by causing internal professional integration, more supportive of a rising professional community in reaction to such pressures than the current multiple indirect pressures arising from market competition and more implicit ideological and economic pressures in the democratised and Europeanised context. The public visibility of political scientists mixing political and academic roles in the context of increasing public disappointments with both democracy and the EU add to the problematic professional project. All in all, the current primary problems of the political science profession in Slovenia have not been caused, but rather reinforced, by the impacts of the recent international financial and economic crisis.

NOTES

¹ The 1969 survey was conducted on the 24 graduates of the only political science programme at the time and had a response rate of 62.5%. The 1982 survey had a 27.0% response rate (48 responses) and encompassed all three political science programmes (Socio-Political, International Relations and Defence Studies). The limitations of the first two rounds led us to focus on the later rounds, thus utilising them as indicators of certain processes and trends. The 2002 survey, which was conducted on graduates of the Socio-Political Programme and two programmes deriving from it (Policy Analysis and Public Administration, and Theoretical-Analytical) had a much higher response rate (49.2%; 115 responses), while the 2007 survey of just the graduates of the Policy Analysis and Public Administration Programme reflects a drop in turnout (40.6%; 164 responses). The 2012

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survey had a similar response rate (40%; 704 responses) and was conducted on graduates of all political science programmes.

² E.g. Personal struggles for the shrinking amount of teaching hours (see Table 1 for a diachronic overview), inter-departmental hostility in terms of competing to attract the shrinking cohorts of freshmen students.

³ In 1984, the former regime's public employment agency acknowledged the profession in its Codebook of Professions and Vocations (A. Gorše, personal communication, 28 August, 2012).

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Stručni projekt studija političkih znanosti u Sloveniji: od komunističkoga monizma, demokratizacije i europeizacije do financijske krize

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Autori u članku procjenjuju učinke demokratske tranzicije, uvođenja kapitalističkoga gospodarstva, stvaranja nove neovisne države i pristupanja međunarodnim gospodarskim i političkim integracijama na mogućnosti zapošljavanja diplomanata studija političkih znanosti. Iako je pažnja usmjerena na Sloveniju, članak otkriva općenite izazove s kojima se suočavaju mnoge struke diljem Europe. Empirijsko

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istraživanje temelji se na nizu "tracer" istraživanja provedenih od 1969., na analizi kurikula studija političkih znanosti, statistici upisa i diplomiranja i službenih podataka o mogućnostima zapošljavanja. Statističke i istraživačke podatke podržavaju i stajališta dionika. Glavni nalaz autora jest paradoks da su, u socijalizmu, pritisci na političke znanosti poticali unutarnju stručnu integraciju, tako da se struka mogla bolje prilagoditi početnoj demokratizaciji nego tržištem izazvanim domaćim promjenama i izazovima globalne konkurentnosti (uključujući bolonjsku reformu visokog obrazovanja). Nedavna međunarodna financijska i gospodarska kriza samo je ojačala ove izazove.

Ključne riječi: političke znanosti, demokratizacija, europeizacija, financijska kriza, Slovenija