

The past and future of political science in Brazil: a perspective comparing old and new challenges

André Marengo

The organization and development of Political Science in Brazil has now lasted for just over fifty years. Its origins go back to the first academic and post-graduate programs set up in the 1960s, a little after the establishment of an authoritarian military government in the country. More recently its expansion was driven by the foundation of the Brazilian Political Science Association in 1996, which led to the nationalization and pluralism of the research agendas. This *paper* seeks to review the conditions for the formation, development and challenges of Political Science in Brazil and involves mapping: (a) the disciplinary professionalization of post-graduate degree programs and departments with the aim of providing academic qualifications to new generations of PhD students and researchers, and (b) research agendas and the challenges these entail. Running parallel with this, it seeks to incorporate a broader dimension in the analysis by comparing the development of political science in Brazil with its Latin American counterparts. In contrast with the period leading up to the mid-2000s, when the scientific output of Political Science in Brazil reached levels equivalent to those of Argentina and Chile – but below those of México – it has experienced a significant rise in the last ten years and according to the SIR (Scimago Institutions Rankings) has now become the leading country in Latin America. The importance of post-graduate studies

in scientific research and induction programs for publications at an international level, testify to the significance of this phenomenon.

Origins

Viewed in retrospect, it is clear that the formation of Political Science in Brazil had three key features that characterized its early stages: (1) the discipline was a late arrival compared with the rest of Latin America; (2) it was only established on a professional basis after the inauguration of the authoritarian regime in 1964, and (3) its expansion accompanied the institutional development of post-graduate university centers.

A preliminary analysis of disciplinary institutionalization requires taking note of temporal variations in the creation of scientific associations. With regard to political science, the formation of scientific associations follows the trend towards greater specialization and disciplinary autonomy, with a strict boundary line being drawn to distinguish it from other subject areas (Almond, 1996; Goodin & Klingeman, 1996; Dogan, 1996, Goodin, 2009). When this process is viewed from a comparative perspective, no temporal discrepancies are found when comparing political science associations with the traditional areas of the social sciences. In the United States, the foundation of the American Anthropological Association (1902), the American Political Science Association (1903) and the American Sociological Association (1905) occurred at almost the same time. In the case of France, although the country experienced a gradual decoupling of political science and sociology, (Favre and Legavre, 1998;

Grawitz and Leca, 1985; Favre, 1985), the Association Française de Science Politique [the French Association of Political Science] was formed in 1949, before the foundation of the Société Française de Sociologie [French Sociological Society] (1962) or its replacement the Association Française de Sociologie,[the French Sociological Association] which was only formed in 2002. Although this was late when compared with the Argentinian Anthropological Society (1936) and the Argentinian Society of Political Analysis 1982, it is a long time before the Argentinian Association of Sociology in 2009 ¹. In the case of Chile, the Chilean Political Science Association has its origins in 1966, but was suspended during the period of the authoritarian military regime, only to be restored in 1983; in contrast, when the 6th Chilean Congress of Sociology was held in 2014, the lack of a professional association in this subject-area led to a milestone, which was the setting up of the Sociology Network for Chilean universities. On the question of international associations, there were simultaneous occurrences: both the International Political Science Association (IPSA), and the International Sociological Association (ISA) were founded in the same year, 1949.

From an examination of the chronological formation of Brazilian associations in neighboring disciplines, it can be seen that there is a temporal gap that separates the foundation of the scientific associations of sociology and anthropology on the one hand and the political sciences on the other – which confirms once again that there was a delay in creating the Brazilian Political Science Association [ABCP]. Although the Brazilian Society of Sociology was established in 1948, its first congress was only held 6 years later in 1954, while the foundation of the Brazilian Association of Anthropology dates back to 1955, after its first congress had been held two years earlier in 1953.

¹ See: Statutes for the Argentinian Association of Sociology in <http://aasociologia.globered.com/categoria.asp?idcat=47>

However, it was only three decades later that the Brazilian Association of Political Science appeared in 1986, and a further ten years passed before its first congress was held on the premises of Cândido Mendes University in 1996.

The delay in the deployment of Political Science in Brazil is corroborated by noting the temporal gap that is found in Latin America, when the information on the dates for the origins of the scientific associations in the region, is collated (Freidenberg, 2015; Marengo, 2014):

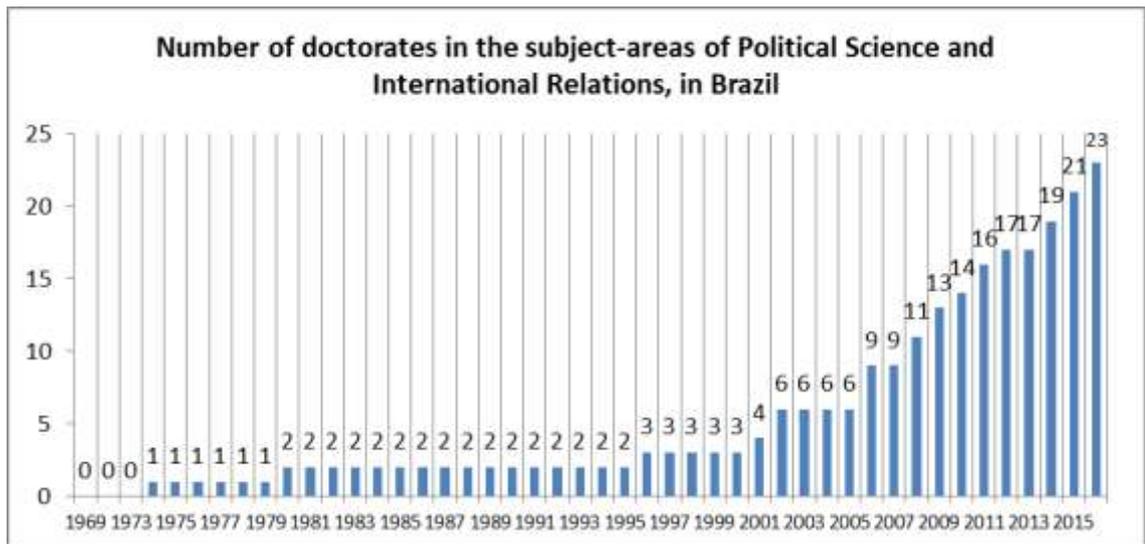
The creation of Political Science associations in Latin American countries

1915	1957	1966	1974	1983	1986	2006	2012
VEN	ARG	CHI	MEX	ARG	BRA	URU	MEX
ACPys	AAC	ACC	College	SAAP	ABC	AUCi	AMECI
S	P	P	National		P	P	P
				CHIL			
				E			
				ACCP			

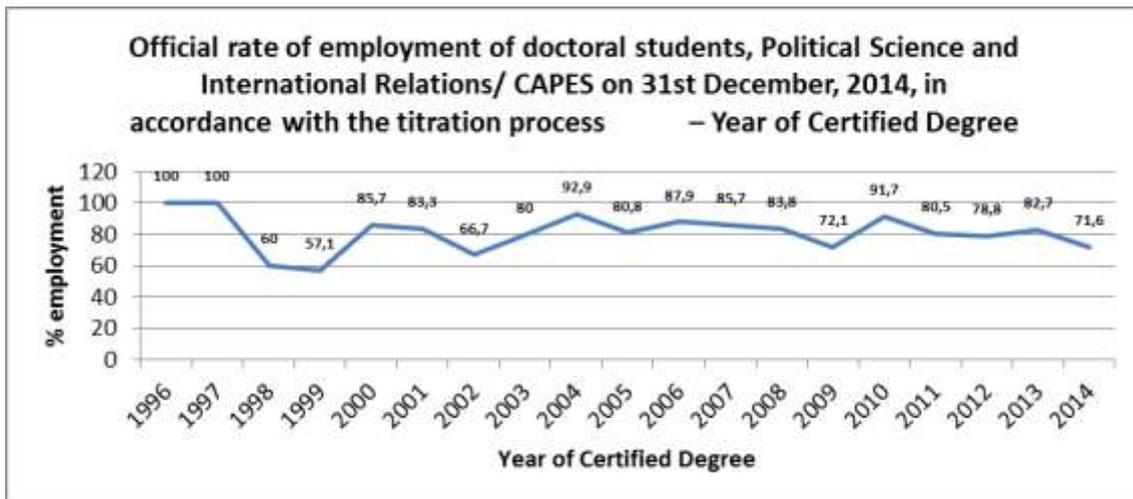
The formation of the Brazilian Political Science Association in 1986 – with its first Congress being held only 10 years later – is a long time after the distant date of 1915, when an *Asociación de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales* [Association of Political and Social Sciences] was founded in Venezuela. But it is also a long time after the following measures in other countries: the first association of this kind which was founded in Argentina - the *Argentinian Association of Political Science* (1957), the first *Chilean Association of Political Science* (1966), a second organization in Argentina, the *Argentinian Society of Political Analysis* [SAAP], founded in 1983, at the *National*

College of Political Sciences and Public Administration, the first Mexican association which was founded in 1974 and closed in 2006, and, finally, the restoration of the Chilean Association of Political Science in 1983.

The setting up of the Department of Political Science at the Federal University of Minas Gerais, in 1966, and three years later, the first Post-Graduate Studies programs at UFMG [Federal University of Minas Gerais] and IUPERJ [University Research Institute of Rio de Janeiro], ushered in a new era for treating this subject-area in a professional way Brazil. Following this, a Master's course was set up at UFRGS [Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul] (1973). In the year after this, this Master's course was accompanied by the first PhD degree course in Political Science in the country, at the University of São Paulo and there was a further Master's course at Unicamp. However, the pattern of post-graduate courses grew very gradually and the second doctoral course (Iuperj [University Research Institute of Rio de Janeiro]) was only introduced in 1980; it was another 16 years before the creation of a third PhD course at UFRGS, in 1996. Thus thirty years after the "inauguration" of post-graduate studies in Political Science, there were only 3 programs with training at a degree level. In the Master's courses, the pace was no different and the threshold of 10 courses was only breached in 1994; in the whole of the decade that followed, only 4 new Master's courses were added to those already running, while the number of PhD courses doubled from 3 to 6.



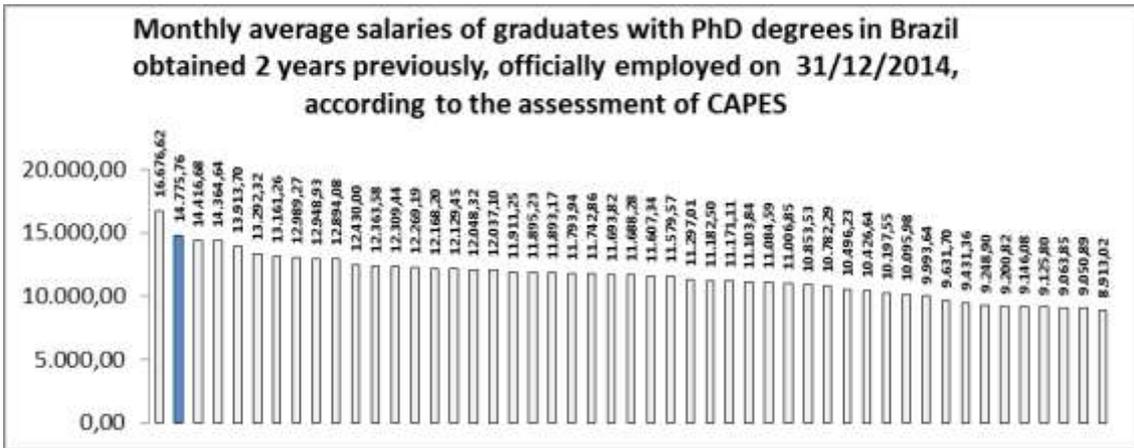
The post-graduate system and the setting up of centers devoted to the preparation of Master's and Doctorate courses in Political Science were essential for spreading this subject through the country at a professional level. The employability of the PhD students who were prepared in the main centers of post-graduate studies in Brazil, is evidence of the recognition of the high standard of these professional graduates in political science in Brazil. Data from the Center for Strategic Research and Management, based on a) the titration data of CAPES [Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel] and b) data on employment and income supplied by the Minister of Labor, make it possible to estimate the proportion of doctoral students employed on 31st December, 2014, in the same year of their graduation.



Source: CGEE [Center for Strategic Studies and Management]

In showing evidence that the employability of doctoral students was at a high rate, it is worth noting that 71% of the doctoral students completing a degree course in 2014, were employed in the same year that they graduated. With regard to the National Classification of Economic Activities (CNAE) of employers' organizations, 75.9% of doctors in Political Science and International Relations were employed in educational activities and 18.3% in public administration. With regard to the Brazilian Classification of Occupations, an equivalent amount of 15.7% of Master's degree students and 12.9% of Doctors in Political Science occupied positions as "senior members of public authorities, managers of public services and directors of business organizations".

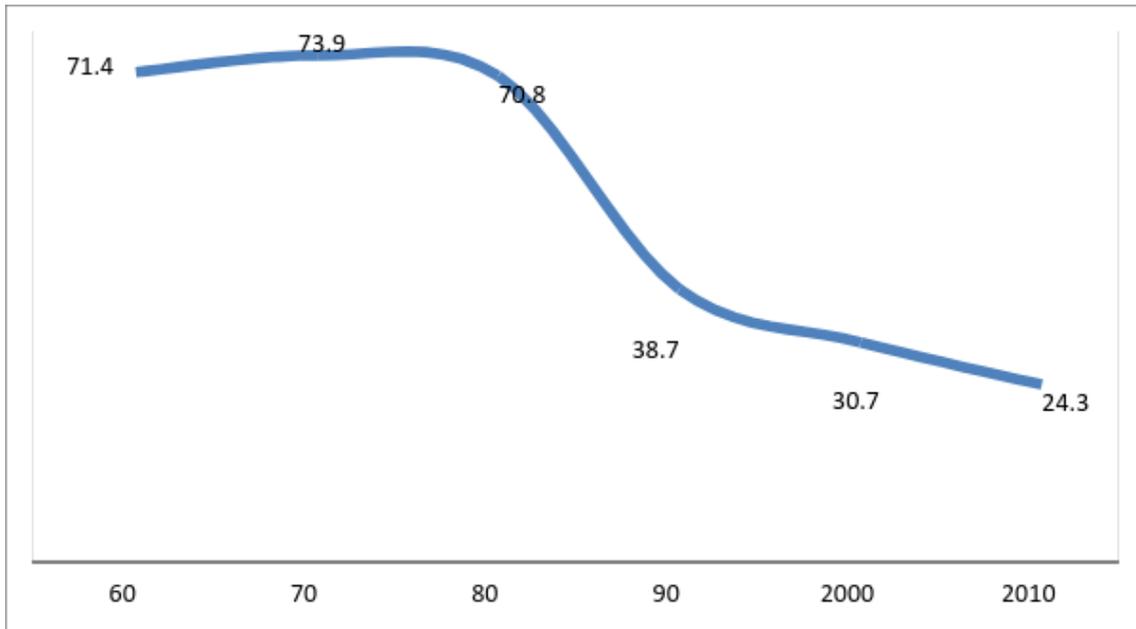
Similarly, the research data provided by CGEE and shown in the chart below, reveal that doctors in Political Science are paid the second highest average monthly salary, when comparisons are made through assesment or by CAPES, and this indicates a widespread recognition of their professional value:



Source: CGEE

How should the presence of qualified teachers abroad be explained? According to Altman (2012), the capacity to recruit teachers with PhDs obtained from institutions with an international reputation, particularly from North America, is a factor that must be taken into account when devising a scheme for ranking the political science departments in Latin America. In other words, the presence *per se* of graduates from abroad should represent an academic capital that makes it possible to distinguish one institution from another, both between, and within, different Latin American countries. Without ignoring the benefits that training in the principal centers of excellence can provide, they may show a tendency to *bias*, which is shown in the occurrence of a preliminary stage of institutional consolidation. A large number of academic degrees obtained abroad were evident in the Political Science Programs found in Brazil before the 1990s and also, until more recently, in the case of Argentina, Chile and Uruguay which mainly shows the sharp reduction in the offer of doctoral programs in these

countries. By contrast, it is expected that the extension of the programs – especially if they are linked to parameters of rising standards – will after a few years be followed by a situation where it is more common for teachers and researchers to be recruited for either their own or other post-graduate programs in the same country.



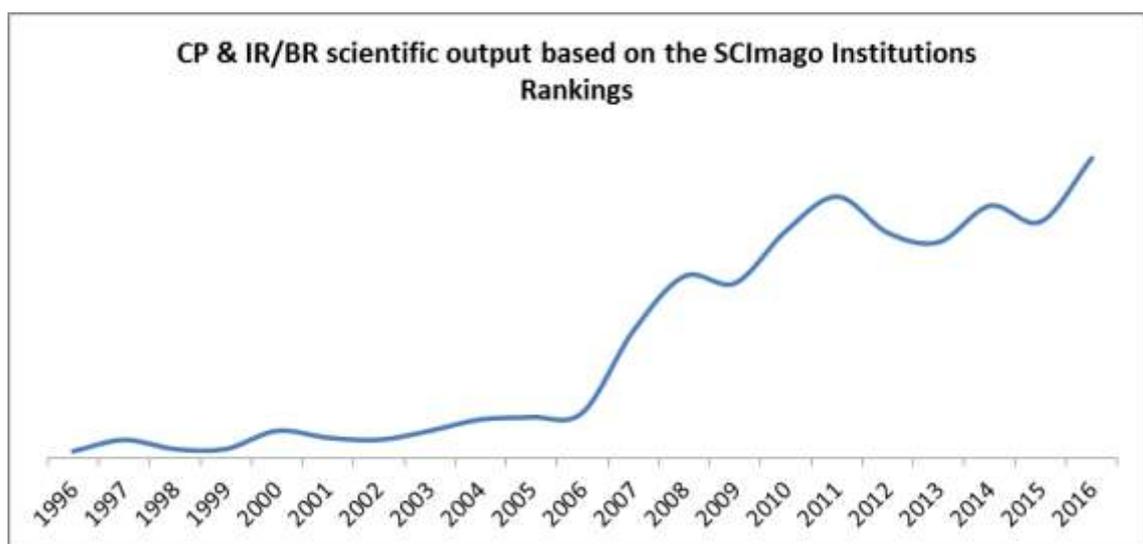
What institutions import

The system of post-graduate studies in Brazil was formed through a combination of activities requiring certification, assessment and financial backing, which are carried out by a Federal Agency called CAPES (Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel). CAPES was established in 1951, as a “National Campaign for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel”, and as a part of a “developmentalist” plan during the second government of Getúlio Vargas (1950-54). The rationalization and ‘professionalization’ of the public administration and the need for specialist professional training to meet the requirements of the growing

industrialization in the country, led to the setting up of a federal agency responsible for the improvement of personnel. Its first measures were to contract visiting foreign teachers, set up cultural exchange schemes and encourage cooperation between Brazilian and international universities, student grant schemes and the promotion of scientific events. Following the seizure of power by the military authorities in 1964, CAPES ceased to be attached to the Presidency of the Republic and became a part of the hierarchical structure of the Ministry of Education. Another peculiar feature of the Brazilian situation is that the various procedures for monitoring and maintaining the system of post-graduate studies are combined within a single agency. CAPES is responsible for: (1) accrediting educational institutions with the legal powers to award Master's and PhD degrees; (2) carrying out a periodic assessment of the students' performance to ensure they comply with the minimum requirements of quality and achieve standards of excellence at an international level and, (3) financing a significant part of the system by providing scholarships and meeting the costs incurred by the accredited post-graduate programs. CAPES has undertaken the assessment of post-graduate studies in Brazil since 1976. The scores range from 1 to 7, 3 being the minimum score required for opening or maintaining a course or program, and 6 or 7 being used as a benchmark for institutions seeking to achieve a performance equivalent to that of renowned international centers.

The *core* of the assessment carried out within the system for post-graduate studies in Brazil can be separated into three key areas: (i) scientific output as a *proxy* for academic quality and the skills required for research (ii) the training of Master's and in particular, PhD degree students and (iii) acquiring an international perspective in each program.

The influence of this institutional assessment (conducted by CAPES) of the development of Political Science in Brazil, has been witnessed in terms of i) a rise in scientific output, ii) the direction it has taken and iii) the concentration on publishing articles in prestigious periodicals and *journals*. These publications have been a key factor in the progressive improvement made by Brazil in the CP [Combat Points] & RI [Ranking Index] in the international rankings for the subject. Running parallel with this, a comparison of the performance indicators of each institution that offers Master's and PhD courses in Political Science in Brazil and the scores obtained in this academic assessment, reveal a close statistical correlation, which is evidence of the consistency obtained by this institutional adjudication.



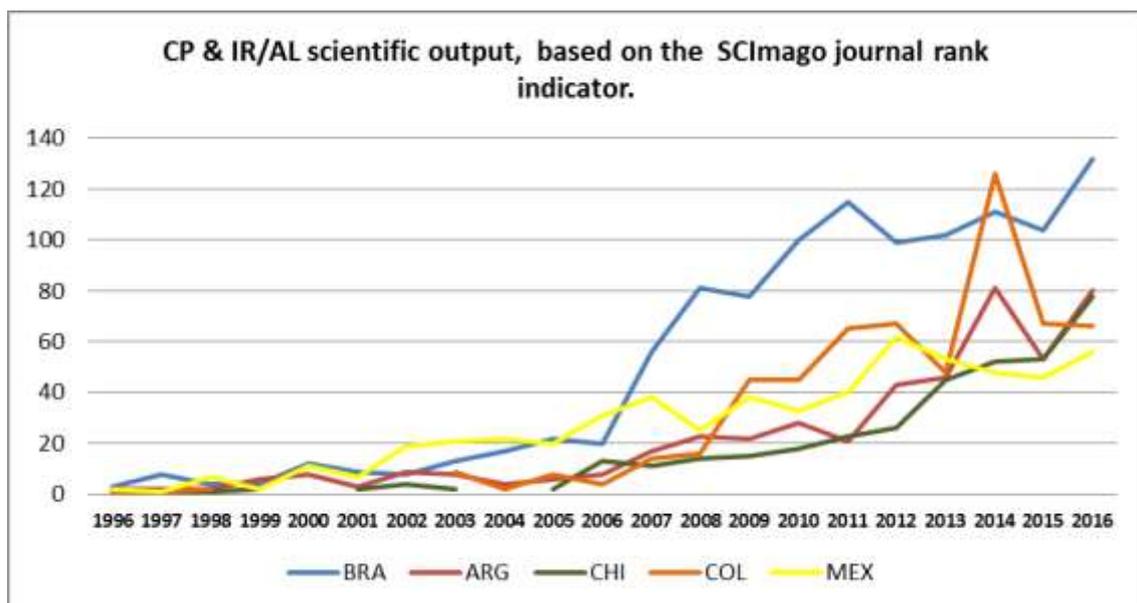
Source: SCImago

The information displayed by the SCImago Journal & Country Rank allows the evolutionary pattern of Political Science in Brazil to be viewed from another angle². The

² <http://www.scimagojr.com/index.php>

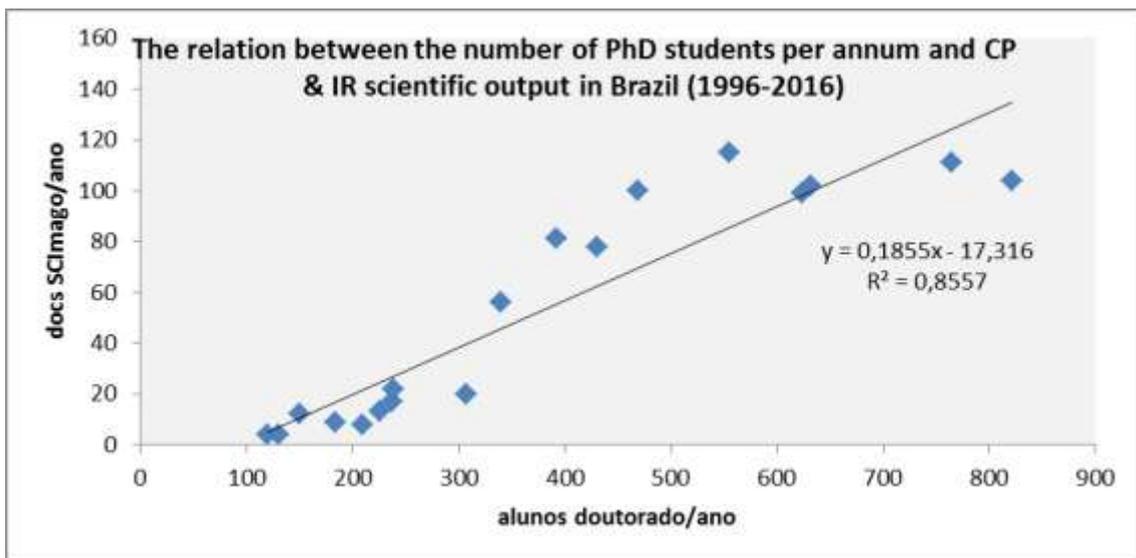
data are obtained from the Scopus database which gathers information about publications in scientific periodicals in all areas of knowledge and ranks the periodicals in terms of the volume of output, the SJR impact factor, number of citations and H-index. The records of SCImago make it possible to compare journals, countries and areas of knowledge by measuring the intellectual output and its effects on the international scientific community.

Alongside the expansion of the area, recently there has been a significant consolidation in the indicators for measuring academic standards, which suggests that growth and quality are not mutually exclusive. Until 2004, Political Science in Brazil was behind Argentina, Chile and Mexico in the indexed publications of the AL. Since 2006, Brazil has strengthened its leadership position in Political Science in Latin America. The sharp rise in the scientific output of Political Science and International Relations in Brazil can be attributed to a wide range of factors, such as i) the expansion of the Post-Graduate system, ii) the establishment of assessment procedures and the QUALIS system of CAPES and iii) the internationalizing of the main periodicals in the area.



Source: SCImago

At the same time, it can be argued that the expansion of highly qualified scientific output is closely correlated with the broadening of the number of PhD courses available, as well as the number of enrolments and academic degrees in the area. The diagram below shows the link between the number of PhD students per annum and the registration of scientific documents on the SCImago index for each year. On the basis of R^2 , it can be estimated that in about 85% of the cases of the growth of the number of enrolments in the CP & RI doctoral courses, there was an annual variation of scientific output in the area:



Source: SCImago and CAPES

Research Agendas

As shown in a previous study (Marenco, 2016), when returning to examine the *founding generation* of Political Science in Brazil, there are three key issues that feature

prominently. All of them share a concern to make interpretations that can be distinguished from those based on strictly sociological models and employ political variables that are able to explain the way the political order is shaped in Brazil: (i) the building of a national State in Brazil from a histórico-comparative perspective; (ii) institutional changes and the collapse of institutions belonging to the Constitution of 1946 and the authoritarian regime and (iii) electoral patterns and trends in multi-party and two-party systems (Marenco, 2016).

The influence exerted on comparative studies by one of the main principles of the theory of modernization – the ties between economic and social development and political change, suffered a serious setback in academic prestige after the collapse of the Republic of 1946 and the establishment of an authoritarian regime in Brazil. This phenomenon not only took place against the background of an accelerated pace of modernization – industrialization, modernization, factors triggering social interests – but were also followed by the pro-industrialization policies promoted by the military authorities. This is a paradox that makes room for interpretations that can be detached from sociological frameworks and introduces political variables for the analysis of institutional change. Thus, whereas the sociologists from São Paulo will insist on relying on an interpretation of the period based on a criticism of “populismo varguista” [the populism of President Vargas], the generation formed in the the ISEB and, subsequently merged with the IUPERJ, will attempt to formulate a diagnostic method by introducing the categories of political analysis. After having previously explored this avenue in “Who will strike the first blow in Brazil ?” (1962), Santos renewed the analysis of the institutional crisis of 1961/64, by introducing categories such as “polarized pluralism” and “decision paralysis” (Santos, 1979). Running parallel with

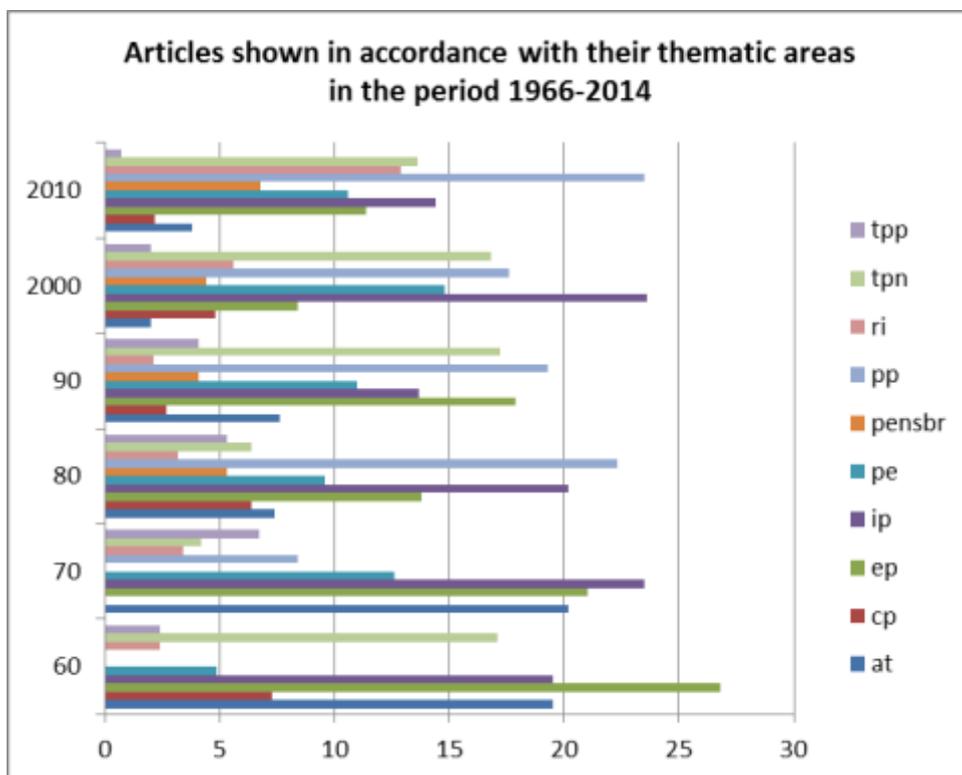
this, the contribution made by Reis can be found in the inclusion of concepts such as *political development*, *praetorianism* and *institutional instability* (Reis, 1974). Moreover, it is important not to overlook the work of Guillermo O'Donnell at this time, on the new models of authoritarianism, such as i) the *Bureaucratic-Authoritarian States* for the dissociation of the duality made up of modernization and the political regime (O'Donnell, 1972; 1982), ii) the study of transitional stages and iii) the setting up of a research agenda based on categories of political analysis (O'Donnell, 1988).

In previous work, Marengo, (2016) sought to reconstitute a framework of agendas and research areas in Political Science in the five decades since this subject-area was first established in Brazil. This takes account of the fact that the scientific congresses run by the Brazilian Association of Political Science only began to be held on a regular basis after 1996, and that most of the academic periodicals in the area only began to appear in the 1980s. Moreover, only the articles on Political Science published in the review "Dados" were drawn on as source material for this investigation. Two factors explain why this choice was a suitable sample for a historical account of the academic output of Political Science in Brazil: (a) it is the most long-lasting review in the area and has been published since 1966, and thus covers the whole period of the professional development of Political Science in the country; (b) it is one of the periodicals with the highest rankings of SCImago among all the journals concerned with the social sciences in Brazil and the rest of Latin America, in terms of the rigor of its peer review, as well as its impact and citations.

It was decided to catalogue a set of traditional areas of the discipline in an arbitrary way and to highlight the papers that were linked to each of them. These included the following: (a) the players involved and collective action; (b) culture and

political behavior; (c) the political economy; (d) political institutions; (e) parties and elections; (f) political thinking in Brazil; (g) public policies; (h) international relations; (i) standard political theories; (j) positive political theory.

In the following section, an attempt will be made to determine how each of these thematic areas has performed throughout the period under observation - which corresponds to the five decades in which Political Science in Brazil has existed in an institutional form.



The *Players and Collective Action* category featured in the most significant and prominent way in the 1960s and 1970s, and then made a recovery later on; *Political Economy* reached its peak in the 1960s, and was the area with the most commonly recurring amounts of data in that period; *Political Institutions* was the most stable area with peaks in the 1970s and again in the period of 2000-10; *Parties and Elections* had a

residual value in the 1960s and retained its regular presence in the research agenda until the 1970s; *Public Policies* was an area that was absent in the 1960s, and only increased in terms of frequency after the 1980s; *Standard Political Theories* reappears in the 1990s, after an interval during the 1970s and 1980; *Political Behavior*, *Political Thinking in Brazil*, *International Relations*³ and *Positive Political Theory* had a residual frequency.

However, each thematic label shows different configurations and degrees of emphasis at different times. Thus during the 1960s and 1970s, *Players and Collective Action* seems to have had a political agenda characterized by a pluralist theory, with work on entrepreneurs, elites, and interest groups, as well as the introduction of groups affiliated to the Church during the 1980s and finally turning the spotlight on social participation, feminism, and judicial deployment in the last decades. *Political Institutions* shifted away from an agenda centered on debates about the imposition of the authoritarian regime and the processes of statebuilding (in the 1960s and 1970s), political transitions (during the 1980s), and reached the point where there was a stress on the importance of elections and intergovernmental relationships at the end of the 1990s. Studies on *Public Policies* only began to appear at the end of the 1970s (until then there had only been two articles published), with an analysis of public policies implemented by the military governments, such as public housing programs, education, science and technology; more recently articles have been published that compare different Welfare State systems, the effects of social programs, federalism and policymaking. *Parties and Elections* had a wide range of studies on the parties of the

³ A significant proportion of the academic output on international relations in Brazil is published in specialist periodicals such as *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* [Brazilian Review of International Politics] or *Contexto Internacional* [The International Context].

Republic in 1946 and recently, there have been studies about the behavioral patterns of the electorate, elections for parliamentary seats and the dynamics of competition for the presidency. The most common questions found in the area of *Political Economy* are models of industrialization, distribution of income and later in the 1990s, economic reform. The *Standard Political Theory* displays a more steady pattern with studies of traditional political thinking in the West, the rediscovery of neglected authors or questions such as republicanism and alternative theories about the nature of democracy.

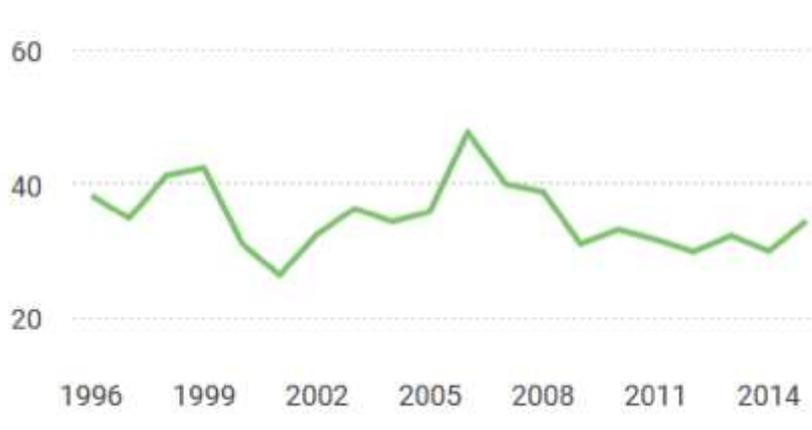
As pointed out by Marengo (2016), it seems clear from the retrospective record of the Political Science output in Brazil, that the predominant trend is for research designs, and particularly in the case of Brazil, in study-areas that are more empirically oriented. Studies concerning “Brazilian policies” account for about two-thirds of the academic output published in the oldest and most highly ranked scientific periodical. One feature of the social sciences was to define a territorial boundary for research agendas since it was expected that economic policies, institutions and policymaking in Brazil would constitute the areas of interest for national political scientists. At the same time, it should not be overlooked that in recent decades, Political Science in Brazil has made significant advances in obtaining a better knowledge of the following: the morphology of Brazilian “presidential coalitions”, the political party system in Brazil, federalism and intergovernmental relations, the behavior of the Brazilian electorate, and the increase of social expenditure and public policies. On the other hand, the residual frequency of studies related to positive political theory, as well as the limited scale of the output geared towards more comparative approaches, may indicate the lack of a nomological ambition among the national political scientists, as was repeatedly pointed out by Reis (1991).

Another factor that needs to be taken into account concerns the degree of international collaboration. The formation of international research networks leading to publications of articles with co-authors from other countries, has extended the audience of the output and its likelihood of being cited by the international community concerned. However, there has been a limited degree of international collaboration in the scientific output of Brazil which has been at a lower level than that of the Colombian and Mexican researchers in the area.

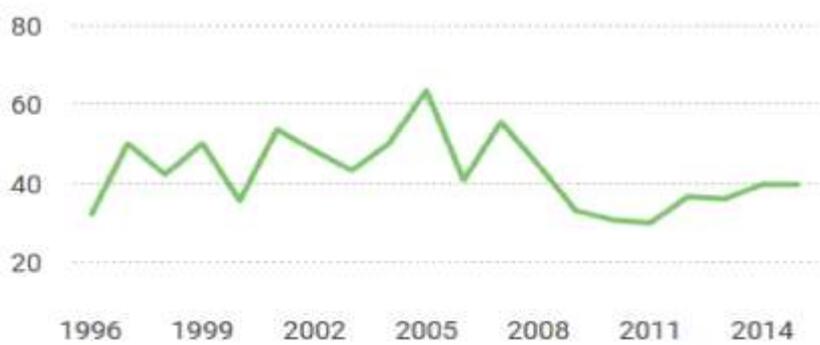
● Brasil



● México



● Colômbia



Conclusion

As stated earlier, Political Science in Brazil has now completed fifty years of professional academic work in Brazil. There have been advances in post-graduate studies with regard to undergraduate programs and the formation of academic associations, as well as the institutional assessment that has been conducted by CAPES since 1976. This has been assisted by institutional incentives and has led to the formatting of a model for scientific output, that is set in parameters such as scientific research as a substitute for a dependence on essays and a dilettante's approach, formal rigor and the peer review process. The results of this disciplinary institutionalization can be measured through an exponential growth of PhD students with a capacity for being employed as academic researchers or *policy-makers* in the national public administration. It is also reflected in the indices for scientific output, which in recent years have surpassed the levels attained by the community of political scientists in the rest of Latin America.

Once it had become fully institutionalized on a professional basis, Political Science in Brazil was able foster a form of academic pluralism inside the country. Nonetheless, it still has to overcome the challenge of increasing the extent of its internationalization (Marenco, 2014; Amorim Neto e Santos, 2015), by strengthening its comparative analytical perspective for its research agendas. After having established its disciplinary identity, it is the responsibility of Political Science in Brazil to make a serious attempt to have an influence on the deductive-nomological construction and the

generalization of its findings, that have resulted from the intense, productive and highly skilled activities involved in scientific research.

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