

**The trajectory of political science in Brazil and its
autonomization: an analysis from the postgraduate programs ¹**

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***A trajetória da ciência política no Brasil e a sua autonomização:
uma análise a partir dos programas de pós-graduação***

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Abstract:

The article traces the trajectory of institutionalization and autonomization of Political Science within the Brazilian academic field and, to this end, takes the post-graduation as object of study and as a fundamental space to understand the processes of building of this area throughout the twentieth century. Its more general objective is to understand the conditions of possibility of the construction of an academic space specific to Political Science in Brazil, a task developed from a quanti-qualitative approach marked by the revision and dialogue with the literature and by the work with data about the post graduate programs. The text ends by pointing out the correlation between the classical aspects discussed when it comes to objectifying Political Science (such as: relative "backwardness", relation with Sociology or even the financing of international agencies) and the master's and doctoral courses that form this area. It contributes to the debate about the role of postgraduate in the construction of the relative autonomy of Political Science in the Brazilian academic universe.

Keywords: *history of political science, Brazilian political science, Postgraduate studies, academic field*

Resumo:

O artigo percorre a trajetória de institucionalização e autonomização da ciência política no interior do campo acadêmico brasileiro e, para tal, toma a pós-graduação como objeto de estudo e como espaço fundamental para se compreender os processos de constituição desta área ao longo do século XX. Seu objetivo geral consiste em compreender as condições de possibilidade da construção de um espaço acadêmico próprio da ciência política no Brasil, tarefa desenvolvida a partir de uma abordagem quanti-qualitativa marcada pela revisão e diálogo com a literatura e pelo trabalho com dados acerca dos programas de pós-graduação. O texto acaba por assinalar a correlação entre aspectos clássicos discutidos quando se trata de objetivar a ciência política (tais como: relativo "atraso", relação com a sociologia ou mesmo o financiamento de agências internacionais) e os cursos de mestrado e doutorado que formam a pós-graduação dessa área. Contribui, assim, para o debate sobre o papel da pós-graduação na construção da autonomia relativa da ciência política no universo acadêmico brasileiro.

Palavras-chave: história da ciência política, ciência política brasileira, pós-graduação, campo acadêmico

1. Introduction

“... the field is an open experience able to include even those who challenge it” (Lessa, 2011, p. 25).

The debate around the academic and institutional development of Social Sciences in Brazil directs us to an already well-established literature that shows its genesis in the 1930s, when the first degrees of Social Sciences are created. However, it is important to consider that the contemporary limits we have of such sciences, Anthropology, Political Sciences, and Sociology, are relatively new, distant from a broader initial understanding. We can see this when analyzing the sequential degrees offered by the *Escola Livre de Sociologia e Política*, when it started the division of postgraduate studies in the 1940s was the following: Anthropology, Sociology, Political Science, Economics, Psychology, and Statistics (Kantor, Maciel, & Simões, 2009).

It is also interesting to highlight that social sciences assumed different arrangements in each local context, the academic disciplines were closer or more distant depending on the objectives of each course. As stated by Oliveira (2018):

... where there was a more explicit concern with research development and the formation of technical staff, Economics and Psychology were closer to Sociology, Anthropology, and Political Thought; in the context where there was a stronger concern on teacher training, History and Geography had more space in the composition” (pp. 433-434)

In this direction, it is important to understand that, despite the relevance of going back to the history of Social Sciences degrees to make a historical analysis of political science in Brazil, it would be anachronistic to simplify the issue, as social science was, at first, only secondarily present in the formation offered by those courses. Therefore, this discussion places us in a more complex debate about the understanding of institutionalization criteria involving the construction of a specific social space, within the academic field, with its own evaluation rules, recognition, and legitimization of the object of politics (Bourdieu, 2008).

Hence, in this article, we aim to analyze the process of autonomization of a certain academic field in Brazil, in this case, political science. We understand that the degree of autonomy of a field can be seen by its ability to refract outside influences (Bourdieu, 2004). As we will see later, political science becomes autonomous in Brazil through an increasing degree of specialization, which allowed a significant distancing from other social sciences, especially sociology. We understand, and assume as a guiding hypothesis, that the postgraduate programs were the main agents in this process, responsible to consolidate a unique *modus operandi* of this science in its process to produce knowledge.

Thus, this is the theoretical and epistemic scope in which the current work is situated, rooted in a more general exercise to understand the conditions that allowed the autonomization of political science in Brazil. We aim to contribute to the debate about the trajectory of social science in the country, placing its development through different interpretative lenses and narrowing the debate to consolidate it in the postgraduation.

Therefore, we understand that, from the trajectory of the institutionalization of political science and the empirical data raised, it is possible to see the efforts of autonomization from other areas. That means that there is a recognition of the search for autonomization of political science derived, as shown by Leite and Codato (2008), from institutional aspects (such as the creation of specific postgraduate degrees in the area, specialized journals, and the consolidation of representative bodies of the group) to theoretical-methodological aspects (development and consolidation of particular theories, methods, and approaches). In this case, the text situates the process of creating postgraduate programs in the area⁵ through a historical view that dialogues with the initiatives previous to such programs, which serve as their pillars, besides briefly pointing the current unfoldings of this process in the scope of the research lines of these programs.

⁵ We highlight that we focus exclusively on the postgraduation programs (PPG) of Political Science, though we recognize the heterogeneity of the area in the evaluation of Capes, as well as the formation of Political Science personnel in postgraduation programs in Social Sciences and Political Sociology in Brazil. Many of the current programs in Political Science, emerged from a “dismemberment” of postgraduation programs in Social Sciences and Political Sociology.

From a methodological perspective, it is important to point out our comprehensive view regarding our research object, that, followed by a quant-qualitative approach, demanded the following strategies: review and dialogue with the specialized literature to reconstruct the institutionalization trajectory of Brazilian political science; collect secondary data about the postgraduate program (*programas de pós-graduação* -PPGs) in the area (through *Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior* – Capes)⁶ to create a database on the field; treatment, categorization, and analysis of the whole data.

2. Brief history of Political Science in Brazil

Though inseparable from the history of social sciences, the history of political science in Brazil has particularities that allow us to say that it was only in the 1960s that we could talk about the constitution of political science as an academic subject. This relative “delay” on the institutionalization of the area is not a strictly Brazilian phenomenon (Forjaz, 1997), but has distinctive elements of other experiences to establish academic subjects, especially its development mainly through postgraduate programs⁷. Besides this, distancing itself from the hegemony of São Paulo sociology school, the establishment of political science is seen in the experience of a generational group from the states of Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro, with a strong influence of North-American school and guided by investments from international foundations (Forjaz, 1997; Keinert & Silva, 2010; Marengo, 2016).

However, the definition of a subject genesis implies a discussion of its landmarks and even the discussion on the meaning of institutionalization used. Before moving to the trajectory of political science in the country, it is important to highlight the limits and potentials implied in reviewing and dialoguing with the specialized literature. The works that

⁶ This research also developed a front of raising, treating, and analyzing data of professors/researchers from the PPGs of Political Science in Brazil, however, this front will be analyzed in future works.

⁷ What differs from other Latin American experiences, which first witnessed the creation of undergraduate degrees in Political Science and later the specialization in master's and doctoral degrees, as indicated by Bulcourf and Cardozo (2010).

reflected on the development of this area are, as expected, self-reflections of agents from the analyzed field – naturally, this characteristic is not endemic to political science. The main consequences of such reflections, having authors-researchers who dedicate themselves to the subject in question, that is, people who hold positions within it, revolve, on one hand, around the broader understanding of the autonomization processes of the area due to their privileged perspectives, and, on the other, the interest to present and defend a narrative that benefits their groups, institutions, and theoretical-methodological perspectives (or place them in a leading position).

Though the definition of generational landmark would be consistent in political science as a scientific subject from the 1960s onward, especially due to the influence of the work organized by Bolívar Lamounier (1982), the author himself points to another important element to establish political science in Brazil: the existence of tradition of political thought previous to the boom of economic growth, urbanization, and increase of universities. This tradition, according to the author, would be decisive to understand how social sciences and, more specifically, political science would become more autonomous throughout the 20th century.

Defending this argument, Lamounier (1982) uses as a base the stages drawn by Wanderley Guilherme dos Santos (1967), which pointed out a series of problems to be solved and faced by intellectuals. The themes pursued by these first interpreters of Brazil, especially until the 1930s, represented by Alberto Torres, Oliveira Vianna, and Azevedo Amaral, were marked by the issue of the formation of the State and the Nation, discussed in grand historical narratives and “authoritarian” thought.

In a 2nd stage, after the Revolution of 1930, equality would have more space, facing the issue of increasing participation and citizenship (amongst them election and political parties), coexisting with the theme of economic development and a greater internal autonomy, questions that would last until 1964. In these cycles, names as Vitor Nunes Leal, Guerreiro Ramos, Hélio Jaguaribe and others, built of those interpretations a bridge between

the classical concerns and the new practical dilemmas⁸, according to Lamounieur (1982). Summing up, these renowned interpreter provided new perspectives about Brazil assuming a “mismatch of the political analysis in relation to the legal formalism, projecting agendas, concepts, and diagnoses strange to the conventional knowledge of constitutional lawyers” (Marengo, 2016, p. 166).

This look towards a “broader history” of political science in Brazil (Lessa, 2011) does not ignore a set of practices and studies done much before the establishment of the subject in the university space. Simultaneously, these same authors are agents involved in the process of institutionalization of political science, claiming the idea of tradition, thus they build an effort to draw a growing trajectory of political science. Keinert and Silva (2010), on their turn, indicate that this narrative also has the role of, on one hand, promoting a particular modality of political intervention based in new scientific parameters and, on the other, value the contribution of the attempts from the beginning of the century, relativizing then the idea of the university structure as the core of intellectual legitimacy.

We must remember that social sciences, materialized by sociology, formally enter Brazilian curricula through secondary education, already in the 1920s⁹, passing by the Reforms of Rocha Vaz (1925) and Francisco Campos (1931). It was also a compulsory subject to those interested to pursue higher education. In these complementary course, a series of themes related to the sociological knowledge was included, as well as others connected to politics, such as the origin of the State, contractual theories, forms of State and govern, vote, rights and duties of the State, and individual guarantees¹⁰. It is interesting to note that, despite a majority of self-taught teachers in the classes of sociology in this period, one of its first teachers, in 1925 at *Colégio Pedro II*, Delgado de Carvalho (1884-1980), graduated in Political Science by the Paris Institute of Political Sciences (France), pointing to an incipient subject division at that time.

⁸ Santos (1967) also presents a 3rd stage, characterizing a future non-accomplished agenda.

⁹ Through *Reforma Alves-Rocha* (Decreto nº 16.732A), also having legislative reforms in 1928, which introduced the sociology teaching at *Escola Normal do Distrito Federal* and at *Escola Normal de Recife*.

¹⁰ Syllabus followed the curriculum established on *Decreto 19.890, de 1931*.

From that, between 1930 and 1964, the institutional and intellectual development of social sciences took place through a straight connection between the “advancement of public universities and the availability of governmental resources to create independent centers of reflection and investigation” (Miceli, 1989a, p. 12). The first courses of Social Sciences in higher education were established in the country at *Escola Livre de Sociologia e Política de São Paulo* (ELSP) (1933)¹¹ and the section of Sociology and Political Science at the *Faculdade de Filosofia, Ciências e Letras* of *Universidade de São Paulo* (USP) (1934), while the degree of Social Science in the former *Universidade do Distrito Federal* (Rio de Janeiro), founded in 1935, was closed few years later¹². There were also degrees at *Faculdade de Filosofia, Ciências e Letras do Paraná* (1938) and *Faculdade de Filosofia, Ciências e Letras da Bahia* (1941).

With the creation of these first courses, Miceli (1989a) points out the crucial differences in the development of social science in São Paulo which allowed its quick and stronger consolidation. According to the author, there was a set of elements which contributed to the creation of an intellectual sector of São Paulo around the university organization (especially at *Faculdade de Filosofia da USP*) which could break with the juridical mentality. The strong French influence was also a key element, emphasizing the sociological treatment, letting space for political science to grow. Contrariwise, states such as Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais could not reach a higher autonomy to develop the degrees of Social Science, prevailing the social sciences with an ideological-political perspective in the first, and a connection to juridical and economic subjects in the later.

Beyond the criticism of the “founding myth” of São Paulo (Trindade, 2007), the fact is that the development of a sociological school in São Paulo introduced other parameters of social “science”, especially, from the 1950s on, when Florestan Fernandes assumes the subject Sociology I, starting a new phase with the creation of sociological works. Despite the São Paulo hegemony and the sociological emphasis, Trindade (2007) points out that since the 1940s there has been postgraduate programs (master’s and doctorate) in Rio de Janeiro

¹¹ Undergraduate degree in Political Sociology, which is currently the only active one in the country, according to research at e-MEC (“Cadastro Nacional”, 2019).

¹² Despite the extinction of *Universidade do Distrito Federal*, its faculty and students were incorporated by *Faculdade Nacional de Filosofia da Universidade do Brasil*, continuing their activities at the Social Science degree.

(*Universidade do Brasil*), and in São Paulo (*ELSP* and *USP*), the later granting titles of master and doctor in Anthropology, Sociology, and Political Science¹³.

Rio de Janeiro, on its turn, was more characterized by an agenda of economic development, with a strong interdisciplinary tradition that encompassed anthropology, sociology, and education, it was even the headquarter of several research centers in the 1930s, such as *Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais (Inep)* and *Instituto Nacional de Estatística (INE)* – which would later become *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE)*. We can highlight the pioneer “*Instituto Brasileiro de Direito Público e Ciência Política*”, founded in 1950 by Temístocles Cavalcanti, connected to *Fundação Getúlio Vargas (FGV)* and the journal with the same name (Trindade, 2007, p. 79), funding the first field research on electoral behavior in 1951 (Pinto & Carneiro, 1955). In the same decade, in 1953, the *Instituto Brasileiro de Estudos Políticos (Iseb)* is founded, as well as the first publication of a research on elections in Brazil, done by Gláucio D. Soares (Trindade, 2007).

Minas Gerais, in turn, faced several problems to keep the Social Science degree in higher education. It was opened in 1947, at *Faculdade de Filosofia*, while in 1953 the degree Political Science was offered at *Faculdade de Ciências Econômicas* (Miceli, 1989b). According to Keinert and Silva (2010), this course had an impact on the establishment of more autonomy in Political Science, as it shaped a world view closer to the aspirations of a more specialized and applied subject. Adding to that, there is the creation of the journal *Revista Brasileira de Estudos Políticos (RBEP)*, in the 1950s, which encompassed collaborators influenced by the studies held by Iseb, projecting analysis on the electoral and party systems (Miceli, 1989b).

Despite these first incursions, Forjaz (1997) still indicates a lack of autonomy of political studies in the period, which was closer to an “applied politics”, strongly marked by law, economy, and business management, but still with little power to move away from the sociological model of São Paulo school. This phenomenon, on its turn, was not only Brazilian, but reverberated a debate in Europe and in the United State, mainly intending to make political science independent from sociology, often taken as a “mother-science”. Terms

¹³ Rio de Janeiro and ELSP granted the title at “Social Science”. Lamounieur (1982) also points out that between 1945-1964, out of the 37 doctoral theses presented at USP, no more than 13 could be classified as studies on Political Science, but with little or no emphasis on the representative or electoral system..

as “sociology (of) politics” would be played against a broader autonomy of “political science”, a conflict that has produced continuous debates– as seen in Sartori (1972), Forjaz (1997), Reis (2002), Perissinotto (2004)¹⁴.

Only in the 1960s and 1970s social sciences reached its intellectual “adulthood” (Forjaz, 1997), with the expansion and professionalization of the community of social scientists. According to the author, political science could reach more space, mainly with the implementation of a postgraduate system in the 1960s and, on the other hand, the establishment of funding agencies integrated to the national system of scientific and technological development, aiming policies of planning and economic development, such as *Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico* (CNPq), *Capes*, *Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo* (Fapesp).

This same movement coexisted with the military regime, striking and repressing “sectors of the scientific and academic community more actively oppositional”, at the same time that “it allowed the enlargement of a network of institutions connected to Science and Technology in which several social scientists could participate” (Forjaz, 1997, p. 4). It is in this sense that Marengo (2016) indicates that this paradox also opened up a space for the community of intellectuals that had been creating a type of common agenda (especially based on Iseb), with interpretations disconnected with the predominant sociological frames, introducing variables of analysis of institutional change, with categories and political analysis.

Besides this, the constitution of a political science in Brazil was straightly connected to the North-American thought, influenced by members of this new generation from Minas and Rio and distancing from the French and German schools that were predominant in São Paulo. The investments done since the 1960s by international agencies, especially Ford Foundation, was one of the main pillars to the creation of a political science agenda in Brazil, that invested scholarships and grants in excellence centers in political science in the United States and brought some North-American scholars. According to Keinert and Silva

¹⁴ Faced by this debate and focusing this article on the field of political science, we have chosen not to include the postgraduate programs in Political Sociology.

(2010), political science would assume a strategic position due to its potential to elaborate public policies, allowing a subject profile guided towards a national-political agenda with institutional bases if the liberal-democratic regime, emphasizing the assimilation of quantitative techniques and methods. Summing up, “to form elites and influence policy-making in Brazil was part of the political strategy of Ford and other American organizations connected with a broader project of hegemony in Latin America” (Forjaz, 1997, p. 5)¹⁵.

In this sense, the Department of Political Science of *Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais* (UFMG) benefited from these investments, offering the first master’s program in Political Science in Brazil in 1969. In the same year, the *Instituto Universitário de Pesquisas do Rio de Janeiro* (IUPERJ) started to receive resources from the Foundation, followed by a higher amount of investments on the *Centro Brasileiro de Análise e Planejamento* (Cebap), in São Paulo (Forjaz, 1997)¹⁶. Thus, the two first institutes were the main core of Political Science institutionalization in Brazil, with names as Wanderley Guilherme dos Santos, Fábio Wanderley Reis, Bolívar Lamounieur, Antônio Cintra, Simon Schwartzman, Amaury Souza and others listed by Forjaz (1997), whose first works imprinted another perspective on the political studies in the country.

According to Forjaz (1997), it was therefore the context of postgraduate programs – including those with no ties with the university, as is the case of IUPERJ –, that allowed a higher organizational flexibility to assemble grand-scale projects and more diversified professional and academic formation, leading also to the gathering of researchers into lines of interests, such as electoral studies, social policies, unionism, and others. Besides this, it is in the context of relation with the authoritative State that the political dimension of social thought becomes obvious, together with the emergence of social movements and persecution in the universities, demanding studies about this and politicizing social sciences.

¹⁵ This context has even influenced the studies of international politics, allowing a greater interlocution with the International Relations (IR) – which is better developed in the United States, which become part of the curricula of Political Science departments and postgraduation research lines on the area. We also note that Political Science and IR are part of the same evaluation area at Capes. A deeper analysis of this process can be seen in Miyamoto (1999).

¹⁶ In 1973 the master’s degree in Sociology and Political Science was created at *Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul* (UFRGS), followed in 1974, by the programs at *Universidade Estadual de Campinas* (Unicamp) and USP (Trindade, 2007, p. 102).

Without deepening into the specificities, we note that, contrary to the trajectory of sociology or anthropology that have a higher incursion through undergraduate programs, the first bachelor degree in Political Science was opened only in 1989, at *Universidade de Brasília* (UnB)¹⁷. In the same decade (1986), also late when compared with other associations of “sister” areas, the *Associação Brasileira de Ciência Política* (ABCP) was created, which promoted its first national meeting in 1996, led by renowned names in the postgraduate programs in the area. Simultaneously, political science could not disconnect itself from sociology to regularize the profession of political scientists, staying in the shadows of the sociologist profession, which encompasses bachelors in Sociology and Politics, as well as social scientists.¹⁸

Such findings corroborate the importance of postgraduate programs to establish the recent institutionalization of political science and offer evidences to understand how the process of consolidation passes, mostly, through the recognition criteria tied to this educational and research level, which impact the evaluations in the funding agencies. In this sense, with the evidence of the decisive role of postgraduate programs for the processes of autonomization of political science as an specific academic space in the country, it is noteworthy the exercising of analyzing such programs, be it in a historical perspective, or in a perspective of current diagnosis, in the sense of deepening the debate around the self-reflection of this social science branch. The next section will analyze the construction of postgraduate programs in Political Science in a broader context of structuring Brazilian postgraduation.

3. Postgraduate education in Political Science in Brazil

Brazilian *strictu sensu* postgraduation, as we know today under the format of master’s and doctoral degrees and their respective programs, historically dates back to the 1950s and

¹⁷ Consulting the site e-MEC (“Cadastro Nacional”, 2019), there are currently 112 active undergraduate degrees in Political Science in Brazil. In our data analysis, we could see that only 10 researchers did their undergraduate course in Political Science, and only 2 in Brazil (at UNB).

¹⁸ See *Lei nº 6.888, de 10 de dezembro de 1980*.

the processes of modernization of Brazilian university, which gain legal materiality in the following decade¹⁹. Sucupira (1980) alerts to the fact that the emergence of this educational level is not due to a sudden decision of *Conselho Federal de Educação* (Federal Council of Education)— as an analysis solely of the legal acts might suppose —, there is the need to understand postgraduation as a result of a process closely linked to the social and educational history of Brazil. This process ends up tying the knots of movements that took place in different times and spaces, but that laid the conditions of possibilities to build this formation level, such as: the arrival of foreign professors to the first Brazilian universities, in the early 1930s, and the consequent creation of a tutoring model between the main professor and a small group of followers who would become future professors (Balbachevsky, 2005); the gradual consolidation of researches on what we currently call research groups and the scientific community itself; the creation and action of bodies connected to science in the country, such as *Museu Nacional*, *Academia Brasileira de Ciências* (ABC), *Sociedade Brasileira para o Progresso da Ciência* (SBPC), *Museu Nacional*, and *CNPq*.

Luiz Antônio Cunha (1974) identified, still in the 1970s, the great transformations through which Brazilian higher education was going through and highlighted its “internal vertical differentiation” as a central element to understand that scenario. This meant paying attention on the diversity of degrees granted by higher education institutions (HEI), as well as distinct academic values that such degrees started to have in society. The institutionalization of post-graduation represented in this context a type of consequence (i) to the tendency of increase in the undergraduate enrollments between 1960 and 1965; (ii) to the figure of the “surplus” student that becomes more prominent since the 1966— a candidate that was approved in the admission tests, but could not enroll in a certain HEI due to the lack of places (Cunha, 1974; Durham, 2005); (iii) to the increasing need of faculty

¹⁹ It is worth reflecting that in 1941, the *Escola Livre de Sociologia e Política de São Paulo* created a division of its postgraduate studies, in which political science was offered.

qualification in the universities (Sucupira, 1980); (iv) and also to the “authoritarian modernization” typical of the military dictatorship (Motta, 2014), that has as a *sui generis* expression of its contradictions in the process of constructing, publicly debating, and implementing the University Reform of 1968 (Fernandes, 1979).

The immediate results of the institutionalization of postgraduation in the country are tied to a new emphasis on research and formal titles, followed by a fast proliferation of postgraduate programs in Brazilian universities²⁰ (Verhine, 2008). Since the beginning postgraduation became itself an object of study and analysis of its professors/researchers, in a movement of self-reflection that has crossed the last five decades. To Darcy Ribeiro (1980), the postgraduation experience would be the most positive thing in the history of Brazilian higher education. This euphoric declaration has been followed by assertions and analysis that highlight the role of this educational level in Brazilian scientific field²¹ as a whole and for the specific academic spaces of each subject or knowledge area (Silva, 2017).

In this sense, the history of postgraduation is one of the most relevant marks to think the construction and consolidation of a scientific community in Brazil (Moritz, Moritz, Pereira, & Maccari, 2013). In the case of political science, the “younger sister of social sciences” (Forjaz, 1997, p. 2), its identity is affirmed from the mid-1960s on, what allows us to connect its particular movements of autonomization as an academic field from the institutionalization of postgraduation in the country.

If, as we have seen so far, the ways taken by political science in its process of academic autonomization are revealing of broader movements of maturing of Brazilian scientific field, in general, and in social sciences, more specifically – as well as indicating

²⁰ Such context led to the creation of its own regulation and the National Postgraduation Plans (*Planos Nacionais de Pós-Graduação* -PNPG), besides the investment of the federal government granting master’s and doctoral scholarships through Capes and CNPq, since the 1960s, what exemplifies the dimension that postgraduation has taken along the way, eve in the governance of science and technology (Morosini, 2009).

²¹ The critical and revealing analysis of the contradictions and challenges faced by this education level are also highlighted on the production about the theme, for example Santos (2003) and Steiner (2005).

fighters for legitimacy amongst the different subjects that make up social sciences—, it is possible to affirm that the postgraduation is the most well-finished expression of the gradual construction of its specific academic space.

Furthermore, we should reaffirm here the idea that the postgraduation, in the case of Brazilian social sciences, is *per excellence* the space of disciplinary academic formation. Given our intellectual tradition – which follows the interdisciplinary model in the undergraduate degree, articulating anthropology, political science, and sociology²² – it is through the postgraduate programs that Brazil has guaranteed the academic formation in specific areas of knowledge, though there are still postgraduate programs with an interdisciplinary formation.

This means that a closer look on the field of political science in Brazil, in the formation and research level, demands a more careful analysis of the existing postgraduation.

Thus, analyzing the postgraduate programs (*programas de pós-graduação* -PPGs) in Political Science implies examining the main products of a long trajectory of building political science as a relatively autonomous subject. We will start by observing the establishment of PPGs in time and space:

²² Since the 2000s, especially in the context of *Programa de Apoio a Planos de Reestruturação e Expansão das Universidades Federais* (Reuni), started to emerge undergraduate bachelor degrees in Political Science in Brazil, however, such courses are not numerically expressive. There is a predominance of political science formation, in the undergraduate level, through the degrees of social science.

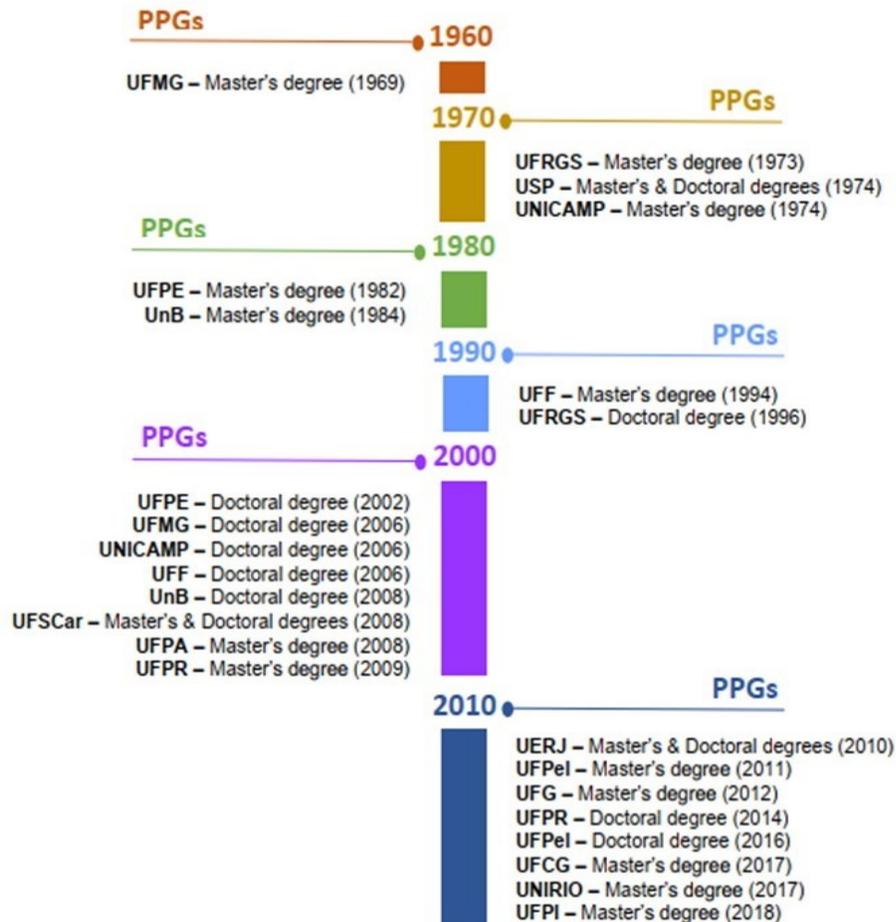


Figure 1 – Timeline showing the creation of Postgraduate programs in Political Science in Brazil ²³

Source: Authors (2019).

A first examination of Figure 1 shows some relevant issues for our debate, namely: (i) the indication of pioneer institutions in the late 1960s and 1970s, i.e., those where the first postgraduate programs in the area started to be developed, highlighting UFMG²⁴ with the

²³ We are only considering the programs that are current active. Because of this the creation of the program in Iuperj in 1969 does not appear in this timeline, as it was re-founded in 2010 at Uerj.

²⁴ On the studies of Forjaz (1997) and Keinert and Silva (2010) the main pioneer institutions are UFMG and Iuperj, however the postgraduate program of Iuperj does not appear in our data collection due to the merge of this institution with the PPGs of Sociology and Political Science, which originated a new postgraduation program in Political Sociology. The history of the restructuring process of these programs can be seen at: <https://www.iuperj.org/historia/>.

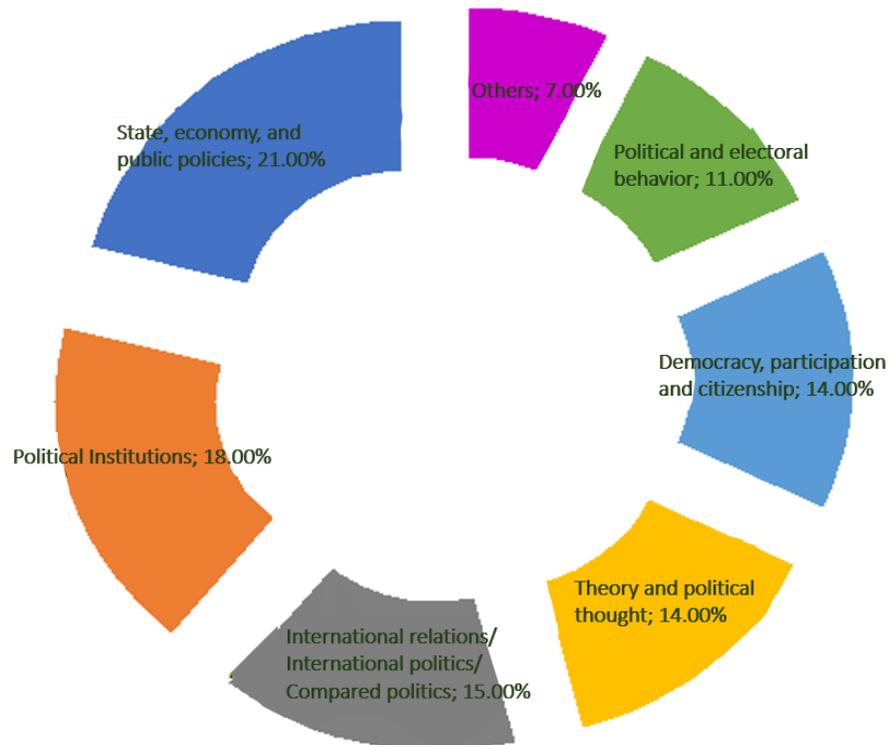
first master's degree in Political Science in Brazil (Forjaz, 1997); (ii) the force of USP in the area that in 1974 starts the program with both master's and doctoral degrees; (iii) the absolute notoriety of public institutions to the development of political science since the 1960s, as all postgraduate programs are in federal and state HEIs ; (iv) the predominance of master's until the 2000s, that starts to be complemented by the emergence of doctoral degrees due to the consolidation of the PPGs established in the prior decades; (v) the numerical pungency and diversification, considering the presence of new institutions in the political science scenario, which can be seen in the last two decades, following a broader expansion of higher education in the recent period and, especially, the postgraduation.

The axis Belo Horizonte - Rio de Janeiro responsible for the main initiatives related to the first efforts to institutionalize political science in the country, ratify in 2019 its importance through the longevity of the PPG at UFMG and the power of Rio de Janeiro as the city with the greatest number of Political Science postgraduate programs in the country: as there are *Universidade Federal Fluminense* (UFF), *Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro* (UERJ), and *Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro* (Unirio).

The most recent expansion of the programs may indicate on the middle and long term a change in the academic geopolitics, though the most consolidated institutions might keep a relevant role on forming personnel and the routinization of knowledge in the political science field. We can infer that this movement of personnel formation in the more "peripheric" programs also tend to suffer gradual changes with the expansion process of postgraduation and the geographic dispersion of the programs, as can be seen through the programs of academic excellence outside this axis, as are the cases of *Universidade Federal de Pernambuco* (UFPE) and UFRGS. At the same time, we can infer that this reality leads to the consolidation of certain theoretical paradigms and thematic agendas.

Under this perspective that connects the history of building these PPGs to its current unfolding and expression, we also highlight an element that was able to give a portray of the area by revealing the maturity of political science in Brazil: we are referring to the research lines that establish the specific academic space. We mapped, based on the sites

of PPGs in Political Science, 57 research lines in our sample of 16 postgraduate programs in the area. The categorization of the research lines is shown in graphic 1:



Graphic 1 – Research lines in postgraduate programs in Political Science in Brazil

Source: Authors (2019).

From a methodological point of view, the work with research lines in Political Science PPGs implied collecting the data, organizing, reading their descriptions, and categorize them – it is worth noting that the categories were not created *a priori*, they were drawn as the data was build, for which it was crucial a dialogue with the literature. This movement revealed interest aspects: (i) when analyzed, many research lines show fruitful dialogues among different themes and objects of studies, leading us to attribute more than one category in these cases – an emblematic example is the line “Institutions and political

behavior through a comparative perspective” at *Universidade Federal de Goiás* (UFG), that, due to its size, was categorized in “Political Institutions”, “Political and electoral Behavior”, and “International relations/International politics/ Compared politics”; and, (iii) its complementarity, many programs have lines classified into different categories, showing the diversity within these PPGs, for example, USP, Uerj, Unicamp, and UFMG.

From an analytical perspective, the categories shown in Graphic 1 present how the research agenda of political science in Brazil institutionalized itself in the scope of postgraduate programs. We highlight the strength of classic themes, as the State, economy, and public policies, sharing the space with new themes that are emerging in the area – for instance (i) the term “compared politics” that was categorized together with international relations and international politics, but that shows an increase in the number of agents inclined to make compared studies on different political contexts; and (ii) the category “others”, which encompasses lines as “political culture”, “political elites”, “companies, society, and politics”, and “power, subjectivity, and political change”.

When comparing this scenario with the analysis done by Lima and Cortes (2013) about the research lines in the programs of Sociology/Social Science, it is even more evident the process of autonomization of political science in postgraduation, as these programs seem to have assumed the ability to develop their own research agenda, encompassing themes that are not priorities in the agenda of the Sociology/Social Sciences programs. However, in this same study, the authors also point out that the most recurrent research lines in these programs were related to the theme “State, Politics, Institutions, Democracy”, what reaffirms the role that the programs of social science and political science still have in establishing the research agenda of political science and, more specifically, connected to the historic disputes among the different areas of social sciences in Brazil. It also reaffirms the processes to search for authority over the legitimate discourse around the different themes that integrate such agenda. This debate resumes the issue of overlapping amongst sociology, anthropology, and political science besides the effort to outline the epistemological specificities of these areas, which has marked the last decades with strength within each area. Peirano (1997), when analyzing the works and discussions that have marked the debate on

the work group “Culture and Politics” of the *Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Ciências Sociais* (Anpocs) in 1996, finds a certain apprehension and discomfort around the disciplinary definitions, in the end of the 20th century, influenced more strongly by political science and sociology, differently from anthropology²⁵.

More recently, Lessa (2011) faces once again this debate and helps us understand the specificity of political science when compared to sociology and anthropology:

... political knowledge seems to fall into a nominalist trap. Because it carries on the name its object, Politics— as a discipline and as an investigation habit – it is confused with politics, as an ontological domain. The belief in the existence of neutral objects and eminently political impose the practitioners in the field a sort of mimetic culture, inattentive to what does not seem as such. Anthropologists and sociologists are more characterized by using a perspective of analyzing things than by capturing fragments of social ontology, which would belong to them according to customary disciplinary rights. In this sense, more agile and diversified disciplinary cultures could be developed, with no respect to rigidly established frontiers of objects allowed and forbidden (p. 24)

Using the philosopher Willard Quine, Lessa (2011) ratifies the need to think the area not only through the circumscription of particular objects, but also the ways to refer about such objects. In this sense, assuming that “ ...*there are no objects to investigate, outside the disciplinary fields that define them as such*” (Lessa, 2011, pp. 5-6, author’s highlight), the fights for autonomization that have historically placed political science in dispute with other area, mainly sociology, are part of processes to build its *doxa* (consensual opinion) and its *nomoi* (general rules) (Bourdieu & Eagleton, 1996), i.e., that which is specific to it.

Generally, the historical process of establishing the space of political science in the context of Brazilian academic field gains contemporary outlines when analyzing the current research lines in the PPGs of the area. The relation with the domain of international relations and foreign founding agencies resulted in a rich exchange of Brazilian and foreign researchers when building the autonomy of political science in the country, thus it is key to

²⁵ The author explains such difference: “To the anthropologists perhaps this disciplinary issue in the end of the century may be less distressing. Having as a craft and as a responsibility, since the hopeful times of the early century, the search for the reason of the ‘primitive’ and the ‘overseas’ the anthropologists have learn (and have incorporated) relativization as a key principle, from which more sophisticated approaches were built” (Peirano, 1996, p. 18).

think about the gradual consolidation of fronts of investigation and studies that resulted in the present research lines of PPGs. This connection between political science and international relations that is shown here through the research lines, but that in other studies had been demonstrated through the postgraduate programs in the areas and their scopes, can be an expression of the specialization of political science in Brazil, as well as of the broadening and complexification of its research agenda (Lessa, 2011).

Finally, we should highlight that the relation between the trajectory of Political Science and its current configuration, surely we are not referring to a direct and simple causality relation, but a complex web of comings and goings, fights for space and legitimacy within the social sciences and the broader academic field that results in the rules, logic, and the conflicts that feed Political Science today in Brazil.

4. Final remarks

The processes of building and affirming scientific and academic autonomy of an area of knowledge involve non-linear trajectories inscribed in the history of development of an academic field in a certain context. In this article, we have tried to analyze the scientific action and its organization in areas of knowledge through the autonomization of specific academic spaces. Political science was our object of study and the institutionalization trajectory and its postgraduation programs were used as a base to deepen the debate around the specificities of this space.

Contrary to what happened in other Latin American countries, in which political science became autonomous and established itself mainly through undergraduate degree, we observed in Brazil a movement through which this science became part of a broader framework of social sciences in the undergraduate level since the 1930s, becoming autonomous only in the 1960s, with the first postgraduate programs. Even with the emergence of specific undergraduate degrees in political science, the disciplinary formation in this science is still focused in the postgraduation.

Even though we can see the porosity of disciplinary boundaries, the fact is that in Brazil there was an intense formation of personnel in the postgraduate program in Social Science, Political Sociology and other similar areas (as International Relations). We have tried to show along this article, recursively using the historic reconstitution of this field, the role that postgraduation has in the process of autonomization of political science in Brazil. Thus, we understand that the postgraduation programs are key agents in this process, responsible to systematize, create routines, and legitimize the rules of the field.

We also observe that, despite the growth in the area especially of programs in “peripheric” universities withing a certain geopolitics of knowledge, we can affirm that political science has had a later process to consolidate its institutionalization when compared with the other social sciences (anthropology and sociology). At the same time, as we have tried to show this cannot lead us to a flimsy interpretation that hides the trajectory developed by this area in the last decades. The substantial number of specialized publications, the increasing production, and the international insertion of the Brazilian researchers who compose the faculty of these programs are evidences of the power of the area within the broader field of social sciences. Brazilian political Science when seen from the postgraduation perspective is, therefore, a solid area with its own research agenda, marked by an intense circulation of researchers, what can be an object of analysis for future works.

We have started this article with the words of Renato Lessa (2011) about political science as an open field, we want to resume his analysis in the end of this work:

We have in Brazil a long tradition of political thought and reflection, with different styles and emphasis and divergent centers from which multiple outlines of the field can be traced. A field is also established by its gaps. It can even be presented as a gap space, here and there, filled by spots more or less blurry, concentration of colors, and more systematization. (p. 25)

The idea of open field in the scope of Brazilian political science, considered in this text in the dual form of its historic and cultural expressions, seem to be rich as it can encompass a trajectory that continuously dialogues with what is external to it, from the social sciences to the foreign influences; with its fights for autonomization, which reveal competing

narratives on its own history; and even with a heterogeneity of epistemological, theoretical, and methodological contributions, that have supported a gradual diversification of themes, research lines, and research objects.

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