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## The discipline of international relations in Brazil: An analysis from the sociology of science

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## The discipline of international relations in Brazil: An analysis from the sociology of science

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La disciplina de las relaciones internacionales en Brasil: un análisis desde la sociología de la ciencia

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**ABSTRACT.** The sociology of science has become increasingly important, and progressively used by the academic community around the world to account for the development and evolution of different disciplines. Although these studies are conducted regularly in the United States and Europe, international relations, in Latin America, have been seldom explored from the sociology of science. Thus, this article intends to take the first step in this regard. Based on a case study in Brazil analyzing international relations as a discipline in that country, and according to the methodological contributions of Randall Collins, it evaluates and provides feedback on the status of international studies in this national context.

**KEYWORDS:** Brazil; international relations; knowledge; Latin America; sociology of science

**RESUMEN.** Actualmente la sociología de la ciencia ha ido cobrando mayor importancia, y cada vez es más utilizada por la comunidad académica alrededor del mundo para dar cuenta del desarrollo y evolución de diferentes disciplinas. Aunque estos estudios se realizan constantemente en Estados Unidos y Europa, en Latinoamérica las relaciones internacionales han sido poco exploradas desde la sociología de la ciencia. Por esta razón, el presente artículo pretende dar un primer paso al respecto, a partir de un estudio de caso en Brasil: el análisis de las relaciones internacionales como disciplina en dicho país, de acuerdo con los aportes metodológicos de Randall Collins, con miras a evaluar y retroalimentar el estado de los estudios internacionales en ese contexto nacional.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** América Latina; Brasil; conocimiento; sociología de la ciencia; relaciones internacionales

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## Introduction

While the discipline of International Relations (IR) is typically associated with changes in the international context and the roles of different countries<sup>1</sup>, the sociology of science proposes that other internal factors in a country and an academic community must also be taken into account when analyzing this field of study. Such analysis allows to understand how different types of knowledge are produced at different times and places, why disciplines are more or less integrated (conceptually and socially), and why activities in different disciplines are organized around different types of institutions (journals, foundations, teachers, and associations, among others) (Waever & Tickner, 2009, p. 11). According to Robert Merton (1977), there are connections between thought and society; in particular, the social conditions that create or destroy the collective universe of intellectual discourse. In this sense, the sociology of science is presented as a tool to explore, mainly, the relationships between knowledge and other capital factors of society or culture (Míquez, 1977).

Thus, today, the sociology of science has become increasingly important and is increasingly used by the academic community around the world to account for the development and evolution of different disciplines. Various methodologies have been used to explore the discipline of IR; some of the studies conducted have been the analysis of specialized journal contents, literature and study programs, and bibliometrics, as well as the sociology of literature, and the 2016 Teaching, Research, and International Policy (TRIP)<sup>2</sup> survey. These approaches have been able to successfully show the state of the discipline of the RRII in different national environments.

However, as a field of study, IR been little explored in Latin America. In this article, Brazil was selected as the case study because the discipline of IR is relatively developed in this country and has had a period of maturity of more than forty years, as well as having the Associação Brasileira de Relações Internacionais (ABRI), making Brazil a leader in the South American context. In this sense, the objective of this article, using the methodology of the sociology of science, is to answer the question, How and why has the discipline of IR developed in Brazil?

This research, based on the sociology of the science of international studies in the Brazilian national context, delves into the disciplinary reality and accounts for the existing

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1 In 1977, Stanley Hoffmann argued that international relations are a North American science (Hoffmann, 1977), which, according to Holsti (1985), is parochial and based mainly on the experiences and interests of a small number of powerful nations, in detriment to its national study in other countries of the world (Tickner, 2002).

2 Although the TRIP survey has been carried out since 2004, it was not until 2012 that it included four Latin American countries (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico). The most recent was carried out in 2014.

relationship between society, knowledge, and science, providing the IR academic community a better understanding of the regional and global development and projection of this discipline. An analysis of this kind provides not only intellectuals, but the society in general, the possibility of obtaining an elementary but vital knowledge of the existing factors in the generation, verification, and export of knowledge in the IR academic community of the different national environments. It is worth mentioning that besides being a contribution to the study of this discipline in Latin America, this article represents a challenge because of the scarce existing literature and the difficulty in accessing information, as the vast majority of IR programs in the region do not keep updated records of their activities (Tickner, 2001).

As previously stated, because few studies have been conducted on this subject, this research is exploratory and required a methodological triangulation, consisting of the use of two or more methods for the study of the same object (Arias, 2000). Two methods were used in this research for the collection of information: 1) A bibliographic review (documentary research), and 2) A content analysis of the articles of selected journals between 2010-2015.

This article is divided into three parts. In the first one, the sociology of science is used as a methodological tool to analyze of the disciplines, in this case, IR. Although there are various long-time authors, proficient in the field of sociology of science<sup>3</sup>, in this research, the approaches proposed by Randall Collins in his book *The Sociology of Philosophies* (2005) were selected. In this work, the author offers an analytical framework that overcomes the dichotomy between external<sup>4</sup> and internal<sup>5</sup> explanations, while introducing the analysis of existing microdynamics. The levels of study proposed by Collins are the external context and the material basis; each of these is explained later. In the second part, the discipline of IR in Brazil is approached from the mentioned levels of study. Finally, in the third part, some conclusions are offered as a result of the analysis of the proposed case.

## **Randall Collins: Theoretical contributions to the analysis of disciplines from the sociology of science**

Collins presents his approach in a general way, reflecting on the following two postures: 1) *Ideas engender ideas* and 2) *Individuals engender ideas*. Regarding the first of these po-

3 Durkheim, Max Scheler, Karl Mannheim, Robert Merton, and Thomas Kuhn, among others.

4 According to Wagner, Wittrock and Witley (1991), externalist explanations are those that seek the understanding of the emergence and evolution of ideas and concepts in terms of contexts.

5 According to Medina (1983), internalism holds that the process of production and validation of knowledge is independent of external influences.

sitions, he states that ideas are primarily communication, that is, they are part of human interaction; therefore, they only occur where there is a network of intellectuals that is concentrated around its arguments while accumulating its own conceptual baggage (Collins, 2005). Concerning the second position –individuals engender ideas– Collins maintains that, in the case of historically relevant ideas, it can be shown that the individuals who conceived them were embedded in typical social patterns, namely, groups, networks, and intellectual disputes. He contends that the history of disciplines is largely a tradition of groups of friends, discussion colleagues or circles of colleagues, which are often framed in a structural rivalry. Groups of intellectuals, master-disciple chains, and rivalries between contemporaries form a structured field of forces in which intellectual activity takes place (Collins, 2005).

From these two postures, Collins claims that it is intellectuals that produce ideas that are assumed to be valid or significant, regardless of where or who takes them to practice. Hence, intellectual products transcend individuals charged with truth and intellectual objectivity, which, according to Durkheim, makes them sacred objects<sup>6</sup> (Collins, 2005). In this order of ideas, intellectual groups are characterized by being reflexively and automatically aware of their group identity, as well as having claims of universality and transcendence in the search for truth (Collins, 2005).

To probe the interactions that take place between intellectuals for the creation of ideas, Collins proposes the analysis of microsituations and emphasizes the primacy of local situations, which are embedded in macro-schemes. The latter represents how situations are linked to one another and form a chain of local encounters, which Collins calls interaction ritual chains (Collins, 2005). As a result, participants feel that they are members of a group, morally bound to one another, which results in a symbolized relationship in which the symbols remind members that they must re-assemble the group, as the subsistence of the symbols, and the creation of new ones, is contingent on the frequency with which the group meets. Finally, these encounters produce a constant stream of social motivations (Collins, 2005).

Collins (2005) also indicates that there are other aspects present in intellectual production (economic, political, and social). Thus, he proposes a model of analysis consisting of the following three levels of causality: 1) Political-economic structures that shape them, 2) Organizations in which intellectual life is supported, which, in turn, produce 3) Networks of participants in the centers of attention of intellectual disputes, which constitute the idea-substance of intellectual life. In this sense, for the author,

6 For Durkheim, intellectual truth possesses all the characteristics that he assigned to religious sacred objects, it transcends individuals, is objective, restrictive, and demands respect.

intellectual life occurs in a series of levels embedded in each other. These levels are 1) External context, which refers to external issues and their influence on the discipline –although ideas cannot be reduced to the social conditions of their environment, large-scale political and economic changes can, indirectly, provoke periods of intellectual change– and 2) Material base, which are those elements that not only make part of the context but also provide the material resources to facilitate the development of knowledge in a given field (Collins, 2005).

### **The external context and its incidence on the discipline**

Collins (2005) defines external context as the last level of macro-causality, framed between the economic and political forces that sustain all the organizations that facilitate the creation of knowledge. External conditions do not determine ideas directly, they shape and, above all, transform the intermediate level (material base) of intellectual production. Intellectuals maneuver within their own space and adjust the tools they have at their disposal, continuously reshaping the internal controversies of their sphere while receiving the energy of the structural opportunities that are opened from the material basis and the external context that surrounds them (Collins, 2005).

His specific analysis, concerning external context, is directed towards state economic, political, and geopolitical issues that can determine the allocation of resources and, thus, extend the material bases of some new intellectual networks to the detriment of others. In this article, the level of external context takes into account the review of the historical background of the emergence of the discipline of the IR in Brazil, as well as examination of the political and economic facts that framed its birth and development in that national context.

### **The material base and its influence on the development of the discipline**

Collins (2005) regards the material base as the organizational basis that enables intellectual networks. Among the actors that are part of this level, highlighted by the author, are the universities, editors, academic associations, and church. Thus, all of the suppliers of material resources that influence the number of competitors in the intellectual occupation and whose organizational dynamics affect the field of knowledge and reorganize the channels for intellectuals to continue their journey or restructure the space of attention are found at this level.

In this sense, intellectuals maneuver within their own space and remodel the tools they have at their disposal; thus, reshaping the controversies of their sphere continuously while receiving the energy of the structural opportunities that are offered in the material

base that surrounds them (Collins, 2005). In this way, the material base becomes an external factor that indirectly affects the academic community and its interactions for the construction of knowledge. In this sense, the legal provisions on education and research, as well as publication in specialized journals and participation in academic scenarios of a discipline, are part of the material base that frames the interaction between intellectuals.

The analysis of the material base in Brazil was framed in the review of aspects such as research, IR teaching, and publications in specialized journals. Regarding the second aspect, two IR programs of education were selected (one undergraduate and one postgraduate), according to the QS Ranking Subject 2018. For each of the selected IR programs, the permanent professors, their academic level, training, and country of training were examined, as well as the study plans offered. The selected programs were the following:

- Degree in International Relations (The University of São Paulo, undergraduate)
- Postgraduate in International Strategic Studies (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, postgraduate)

According to authors like Helen Turton (2015), specialized journals play a decisive role in the propagation of academic knowledge; because they can be considered as a microcosm of the discipline, they are a necessary convention of modern science. Their publication is vital to deliver information and inform intellectuals of contemporary debates and issues addressed in a specific field. It is also worth mentioning that, in Latin America (and globally), within the current logic of internationalization of higher education, the pressure on academics to publish in indexed specialized journals has increased to achieve a more significant impact on the intellectual community of a discipline.

The specialized journal, *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* (Brazilian Journal of International Policy), was selected to determine the current inclinations and tendencies in the discipline. The period of analysis used was 2010-2015. This journal fulfilled the two selection criteria, which were, that it was published from 2000 to 2015 uninterruptedly and, included in a national or international intellectual production classification system. The chosen publication is ranked Q4 in Web of Science and has a biannual periodicity with 150 articles published during the analyzed period<sup>7</sup>.

Given that content analysis—which consists of a method to classify or codify diverse elements of communication products (messages, texts or discourses) systematically and

7 Information obtained from Web of Science, CAPES <http://www.capes.gov.br/avaliacao/instrumentos-de-apoio/classificacao-da-producao-intelectual> and Colciencias, <http://scienti.colciencias.gov.co:8084/publindex/EnArticulo/busqueda.do>.

rigorously (Gómez, 1999)— is a qualitative research technique of the sociology of science, its effectiveness for the analysis of articles was considered in this study.

Because the theory used is analyzed in the vast majority of the exercises carried out, it was considered pertinent to delve into less “popular” aspects that may reflect the intellectual concerns of an academic community; for example, the topic of analysis subjects, the study subjects, and the geographical coverage. To this end, we read each of the articles to determine, on the one hand, the issues faced by academics during the study period—to determine a thematic classification<sup>8</sup>— and, on the other, to determine which were subjects of analysis<sup>9</sup> and which were geographic coverage<sup>10</sup>.

### The external context of international relations in Brazil

When reviewing the historical background of the discipline of IR in Brazil, we find that its institutionalization is marked by the creation of the Rio Branco Institute (the diplomatic academy) in 1945, under the tutelage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (known in Brazil as Itamaraty). The Rio Branco Institute was the first to offer courses in international relations; however, only for diplomats. Its curriculum focused on traditional aspects, such as diplomatic history and international law (Kristensen, 2015, p. 474). It is worth mentioning that some academics have indicated that the monopoly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ (Itamaraty) diplomats—in both IR practice and thinking— (Tickner, 2009); the shortage of trained academics to analyze international phenomena; and the country’s almost non-existent international involvement, until the 1970s (Jatobá, 2013), are among the factors that have historically inhibited the development of the discipline in Brazil.

In 1974, the University of Brasília offered the first university course in international relations. The growing interest to understand the dynamics of international politics drove the creation of a Department of Political Science and International Relations when the country was experiencing the so-called economic miracle (Jatobá, 2013). This period was marked by the transformation of the economic situation, beginning with the oil shock of 1973, that motivated the formulation of a more creative and assertive foreign policy in Brazil, free from the ideological preconceptions of the Cold War and open to the interna-

8 The thematic classification was as follows: 1. Regional integration, 2. International trade, 3. Conflicts, 4. Conflict resolution or peace processes, 5. Foreign policy, 6. IR Theories, 7. Sociology of IR, 8 International Law, 9. International Political Economy, 10. International Security, 11. Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law, 12. Environment, 13. Migration, 14. Gender, 15. Drug Trafficking, and 16. Others.

9 The subjects of analysis were the following: 1. State, 2. Individuals, 3. Movements, 4. Companies, 5. Intergovernmental organizations, 6. NGOs, 7. Terrorist groups, 8. Integration groups, and 9. Other.

10 This was the geographical coverage: 1. The United States, 2. Canada, 3. Central America, 4. South America, 5. Western Europe, 6. Eastern Europe, 7. Asia and Pacific, 8. The Middle East, 9. Africa, 10. Other, and 11. None.

tional economic expansion. Internally, a phase of measured, gradual, and secure opening began, in which the military regime relaxed domestic politics (Lessa, ca. 2000-2005).

The military regime supported the creation of this department, through Itamaraty. The government's marked interest in foreign policy generated the demand for professionals capable of analyzing international affairs (Valença, 2014). It should be noted that IR as a career did not emerge as a subarea of political science in Brazil. Instead, in the absence of a minimum curricular IR structure, this undergraduate program served as a parameter for the creation of other programs, in both public and private institutions (Jatobá, 2013). The second IR undergraduate program was created in 1985, at the Estácio de Sá University; it focused mainly on international trade issues (Valença, 2014).

The first graduate degree, the Master's Degree in International Relations at the University of Brasília, directly related to the discipline, was created in 1984. In 1987, the Institute of International Relations (IRI) of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Río de Janeiro began its Master's in International Affairs. In 1995, the Universidad Católica de Brasília began offering its IR undergraduate program. A consolidation of the area was evident in the country in the nineties. There was a considerable increase in international studies, above all, a quantitative expansion in undergraduate programs (with a lower presence in postgraduate studies). There was also an increase in the study of issues specific to the field (Vigevani, Forti, & Batista, 2014).

Currently, there are 126 IR undergraduate programs, 12 master's degrees, and six doctorates registered in the Ministry of Education's information system. However, there are postgraduate studies in political science that have IR research lines; this could reflect an even more favorable trend for the expansion of this discipline in Brazil (Jatobá, 2013). Authors, such as Marcelo Valença (2014), indicate that the academic field of the IR has increased 4600 percent in the last two decades in the country. One of the reasons that drive this development is the general interest in matters concerning international affairs. Processes such as the debt crisis, the hyperinflation of the 1980s, the trade liberalization of the early nineties, the creation of the Southern Common Market (Mercosur), and the growing importance of trade negotiations within the framework of the World Trade Organization (WTO), as well as Brazil's international projection with a new phase of economic prosperity, and the most active profile of foreign policy have motivated the interest and demand for undergraduate courses in the field international (Jatobá, 2013).

Authors like Carlos Lessa (ca. 2000-2005) believe that Brazil's redemocratization process, experienced since the mid-1980s, facilitated the access to government documentary sources and made it more transparent. It also allowed the creation of spaces for academic debate, which contributed to the consolidation of teaching and research of this

discipline in the country (Vigevani et al., 2014). Another factor worth mentioning is the Santiago Dantas Program, created in 2001 by Capes, in the namesake of the promoter, to a great extent, of this boom. The Universidad Estatal Paulista (Unesp), Universidad Estatal de Campinas, and the Pontificia Universidad Católica de São Paul participate in this program, which provides assistance and financial pledges to public universities to develop their IR programs (Valença, 2014).

Although International Relations have experienced a significant boom in Brazil, the shortfalls in its teaching programs cannot be ignored. Authors, such as Miyamoto (2003), indicate that most university libraries lack the essential and necessary bibliographic material for IR education, making them a negative factor. Furthermore, finding specialized literature in the field in Portuguese is challenging and, because of the language factor, the dissemination of the Brazilian academic community's production is limited. Another shortcoming is the scarcity of specialized IR teachers and experts to satisfy the high demand of the programs; this has meant that, in a good part of the cases, the teaching staff does not have graduate degrees specifically in the area of IR but in related areas, as can be seen later with the analysis of academic programs. In this regard, it is worth noting that, at the doctoral level, there are few programs in International Relations in both the United States and Europe, most of the existing programs focus on political science.

Nonetheless, the Associação Brasileira de Relações Internacionais (ABRI), created in 2005, is evidence of the discipline's process of consolidation in Brazil. Besides symbolizing the search for the autonomy of the field of IR in Brazil, this entity is the result of an effort of cooperation and consensus of the leading universities of education and research in the subject (Associação Brasileira de Relações Internacionais, n.d.). Since its first national meeting (in Brasília, 2007), the ABRI has sought international articulation with homologous associations. To this end, it has participated in joint initiatives with associations in Argentina (Federal Council of International Studies, CoFEI), Chile (Chilean Association of International Specialists, ACHEI), Colombia (Colombian Network of International Relations, Redintercol), and Mexico (Mexican Association of International Studies, AMEI); for instance, in the creation of the Latin American Federation of International Studies (FLAEI) (Jatobá, 2013).

## Material bases

### Research in Brazil

Brazil's current structure of science, technology, and innovation (STI) system is relatively recent. Most of the higher education institutions and existing research centers and funding agencies were founded since the fifties. In the mid-1980s, a complex, multidisciplinary

mensional, and consolidated structure was formed, capable of performing the functions of coordination, implementation, and promotion of government activities in the science, technology, and research (STI) system (Gusmão, 2010, p.132).

It is worth noting that the national postgraduate system represents Brazil's achievement of a long-term scientific policy, which began more than half a century ago and which, in one way or another, has been responsible for the training of new scientists (Donoso, 2001). In fact, the increase in the number of graduate programs offered in the country in different areas has increased considerably in recent decades (De Mendonça, 2012).

### **Research in international relations**

IR research in Brazil dates back to the 1970s, when a generation of academic researchers, interested in exploring issues related to international affairs, emerged. It should be noted that during the dictatorship that began after the 1964 coup d'état and until the mid-seventies (before the formal emergence of international studies in Brazil) the literature produced was characterized either by strategic and geopolitical studies –carried out primarily by the military and published in their own journals– or by studies conducted by diplomats on topics such as diplomatic history, foreign policy, and international organizations (Jatobá, 2013).

The insufficient importance given to the study of the international system and Brazilian foreign policy was evident in 1977 when the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) began to evaluate the areas of knowledge. This deficiency was reflected in the limited IR education programs in the country (Dos Santos and Fonseca, 2009, p. 358). This situation gradually changed through the strengthening of postgraduate programs and government initiatives aimed at consolidating IR research. One of these initiatives was the Renato Archer Program of Apoio à Pesquisa in International Relations, in which the CNPq network –in partnership with the Expansão, Renovação e Fragmentação das Agendas e Atores de Política Extranterna– aimed at strengthening research in international affairs, which were rarely explored (Pinheiro & Milani, 2012). The objective of the Renato Archer Program was to create research networks on issues considered a priority for Brazilian foreign policy, namely, peace and international security; the poles of power; South America; development, science, and innovation; and global governance (Dos Santos & Fonseca, 2009).

However, despite the evidence of development in IR research, this discipline does not enjoy the same CNPq recognition as political science. When consulting the list of researchers that currently have a CNPq research productivity grant<sup>11</sup>, IR is not included

11 This grant is awarded to scientists selected for the quality, quantity, and relevance of their scientific production.

in the area of human and social sciences, the closest is political science, indicating that IR research in Brazil is not highly consolidated or still considered under the umbrella of political science.

Furthermore, today, most of the research in Brazil is carried out in public universities. These institutions have the most qualified scientists and the largest subsidies for research, as well as the best possibilities for the production of knowledge (De Mendonça, 2012).

## **Teaching international relations in Brazil**

As mentioned previously, the undergraduate degree in International Relations of the University of São Paulo and the graduate program in International Strategic Studies of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul were selected, based on the QS Ranking Subject 2018, for the analysis of IR education in Brazil. It is important to mention that, in Brazil, postgraduate programs have received a strong boost in all areas and that, in the case of IR, they have become a means both to qualify future teachers in the discipline and encourage research in IR-related topics.

According to the analysis of the selected undergraduate and postgraduate IR programs in Brazil, they are at the full-time teaching staff (hereinafter, DTC) and researcher educational levels. This level has been reached given the implementation of different government policies to strengthen postgraduate programs in Brazil. Interestingly, in the programs analyzed (and, in general, in the different IR teaching programs), the DTC's level of training corresponds to a doctorate. The IR organizations in the different universities are integrated by DTC with postgraduate degrees in different areas of knowledge; some institutes perceive this as favorable and beneficial to the development of interdisciplinary research. Differently, some critics indicate the existence of a DTC with very high qualifications but low specialization in matters related to the discipline of IR.

The vast majority of DTC postgraduate training takes place in Brazilian universities, quite possibly as another result of the policies implemented by the Brazilian government to strengthen postgraduate programs. European universities ranked second while the United States and Asia had the lowest figures.

It is noteworthy that despite the United States' relevance and background in the development of the international discipline of IR, American universities are not the place of preference for the postgraduate training of the DTC of the assessed programs. An explanation of this could be the possibility of enhancing the intellectual autonomy of Brazilian teachers by training at universities in their country.

The curricular structure of the evaluated undergraduate program's study plan clearly has a basic and professional core. It also has a relatively large number of electives,

which while it makes the curriculum flexible, it also implies a reduced number of IR-specific subjects. Overall, the International Strategic Studies (The Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul) postgraduate program's study plan emphasizes regional studies (Asia, Africa, and Latin America) and has a strong foundation in international politics, security, and international economic policy.

## Specialized journals

As previously stated, specialized journals are part of the material base of a discipline. In this sense, in the case of Brazil, the *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* was selected and evaluated from 2010 to 2015. Based on the reading of the articles published in this period, a thematic classification of subject of analysis and geography was determined that in one way or another reveals the concerns of academics on such issues in the given period.

The *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* (RBPI) is a publication established in Rio de Janeiro in 1958 by the Instituto Brasileiro de Relações Internacionais (IBRI). Since its creation, this publication has assumed an important role in Brazil's political and academic culture. In 1993, the magazine was transferred to Brasília, from where it has continued to be a privileged instrument for the study of Brazilian diplomacy and IR. It has also become a written report on Brazilian foreign policy and a reference source for research on IR issues (Instituto Brasileiro de Relações Internacionais, n.d.).

The IBRI is a think-tank for the reflection and scientific dissemination of IR in Brazil. It was founded in 1954 and since then has had the collaboration of Brazilian and foreign academic and cultural institutions, promoting IR research (Instituto Brasileiro de Relações Internacionais, n.d.).

The period of analysis (2010-2015) involved the review of 150 articles, most of which focused on foreign policy issues. International security and the environment were the other two topics of study interest not only *motu proprio* of Brazilian academics but to be part of the foreign policy that Brazil has developed in recent years concerning the region and the world in general. The subject of analysis is the State, followed by International Organizations (especially the European Union, Mercosur, and the United Nations Organization) (Table 1). Regarding geographic coverage, Brazil once again excelled, followed by Asia (mainly China, South Korea, Japan, and India), the United States, and Western Europe (Table 1). It seems that the positioning of the country, as well as the political, diplomatic, and economic relations that the countries advance with the different actors of the international system (mainly the other States), is an aspect that academically worries the intellectuals dedicated to the study of the RRII. Likewise, these results reflect the academia's interest in the inclusion of Brazilian knowledge and research at a regional and global level, as well as the influence of Itamaraty's interests on international issues.

**Table 1.** *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* (2010-2015)

Classification by subject		Subject of Analysis		Geographic coverage	
Subject	Number of articles	Subject	Number of articles	Subject	Number of articles
Foreign Policy	74	State	99	Brazil	58
International Security	12	International Organizations (OIG)	21	None	20
Environment	12	Individuals	7	Asia	19
International Political Economy	10	Enterprises	3	South America	18
Regional Integration	8			United States	14
Conflict Resolution	7			Middle East	2
International Trade	3			Africa	2
IR Theories	3			Eastern Europe	1
International Law	3			Canada	1
Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law	3			Central America	1
Conflicts	2				
Drug Trafficking	1				

Source: Created by the author.

It was also evident that individual authorship prevailed in the articles (76%), followed by those with two authors (19%), three (4%), and four (1%). These figures evidence a low index of interuniversity collaborative work, although they are often publications derived from research projects resulting from academic alliances between institutions.

From a gender perspective, the data reflect a majority of male authorship, with 75% of male and 25% female authors. Lastly, to counteract the language issues that hinder the export of IR knowledge produced by the Brazilian academic community, the *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* has begun to publish articles in other languages, English and Spanish mostly. Thus, for the 2010-2015 period, the number of articles

published in English was 85 out of a total of 150 –equal to 57%– while only six were published in Spanish.

## **Final considerations**

As observed throughout this article, the sociology of science has become more important and is increasingly used by the global academic community to account for the development and evolution of different disciplines. Understanding the relationship between society, knowledge, and science allows us to understand the nature and direction of scientific development. While a good number of disciplinary studies using the sociology of science have been conducted in the United States and Europe, few have been conducted in Latin America; it is only recently that this field has been subtly addressed. Therefore, exploring the development of IR as a discipline in Brazil could contribute to the study of the field.

In Brazil, the development of the social sciences coincided with the changes in the Latin American educational system; this shows the growing importance and status of government analysis in the academic sphere. Fittingly, before the State, the social sciences began to acquire an “agent” role as “carriers of the knowledge” it requires to exercise its changing role (Tickner, 2002). With the arrival of the nineties, there was a significant increase in the number of IR education programs (undergraduate and graduate) in Brazil. This boom was driven by different reasons, such as the commercial opening at the beginning of that decade, the creation of the Southern Common Market (Mercosur), the increasing importance of trade negotiations within the World Trade Organization (WTO), and Brazil’s international projection during its new phase of economic prosperity and more active foreign policy profile. The role of the transition to democracy (1985-1990) is also worth mentioning, mainly, the 1988 Constitution, which facilitated access to government document sources and allowed spaces for academic debate (Jatobá, 2013).

In reviewing the government-proposed education policies since the nineties, we find that these have been aimed at strengthening and improving education in Brazil. It should be noted that in addition to the external context factors that influenced the discipline’s upsurge, these policies have played a fundamental role in driving the development of this field of knowledge. It is evident that the interest of different governments in Brazil in developing guidelines to improve the quality of programs and bolster research has forced universities to implement strategies to achieve this objective.

Strategies to strengthen research have been hand-in-hand with education policies. Although strides have been made to develop this field, obtaining specific information on

the advances in IR is challenging. The scarcity of information impedes a total certainty on the panorama; it is entirely possible that there are many more advances that are not adequately documented.

Moreover, the content analysis of the articles published in the 2010-2015 period in the *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* determined that foreign policy was the main topic addressed by the academic IR community; this hints at the importance of the analysis of Brazil's insertion at the regional and international level in terms of Itamaraty's foreign policy interests.

Although the results show that there is still a way to go; this analysis is an X-ray of the IR disciplinary scenario in a national context that allows us to diagnose and project new research agendas that clamor to be explored.

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