Challenges to the Expansion of IR studies in Brazil

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Abstract

This paper, part of an ongoing research on the state of the International Relations academic field in Brazil, focuses on the challenges it faces in light of its increasing popularization in the last two decades. IR stands as one of the most popular courses in Brazilian universities. More than 150 undergraduate courses were created in the country since 1996 and there are five times more graduate programs today than in 2000. In the policy sector, the Brazilian Foreign Service attracts thousands of candidates every year. However, the identity of the field is fragile, which affects its popularization. There is little incentive for the production of policy-applicable research in graduate programs. In an analog fashion, theoretical approaches have limited – if any – impact on policy making. There is no serious public debate on or concern for foreign policy but there is a widespread idea of the importance of Brazil in international politics. I end the paper by suggesting that a standardized curriculum may help to overcome such challenges, contributing to the popularization of the field.

Keywords

Pedagogy – Curriculum – Brazilian Foreign Policy - Gap Theory-Practice – Higher Education
Introduction

International Relations (IR), as an academic field of study, experienced an amazing growth in Brazil in the last 2 decades. The number of undergraduate courses increased 4,600% in this period. Graduate programs also experienced a higher demand and the number of programs almost duplicated in less than 8 years. Specialization and preparatory courses for the diplomatic career reached their peaks in the early 2010s.

At a first glance, IR seems to be a consolidated field of studies in Brazil especially if one considers the role Brazil is assuming in international politics and the number of courses available. However, the expansion of the field highlights challenges to its popularization. Among such challenges is the eclecticism of the field, the little incentive for the production of policy-applicable research in graduate programs and the limited impact of theoretical works on policy-making. As a result, there is no serious public debate on or concern for foreign policy.

This paper explores such challenges vis-à-vis the development and the characteristics of the field in Brazil. Despite the spread of courses all over the country, there is no single understanding of what IR represents. In that sense, I support Arlene Tickner’s claim that IR has an instable identity in Brazil (Tickner, 2009), negatively impacting its popularization.

I develop my argument in three steps. Firstly, I introduce the expansion of undergraduate courses and graduate programs. Then I investigate 3 challenges to the popularization of IR studies in Brazil: (i) its eclecticism, (ii) the limits on the intellectual production, and (iii) the absence of a public debate on foreign policy. I conclude the paper by offering some thoughts on the proposal of the undergraduate curriculum suggested by the Brazilian Association of International Relations (“ABRI”) and how it may help to overcome such challenges without compromising the particularities of IR studies in Brazil.

The expansion of IR studies in Brazil

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1 This is an updated version of the paper presented at the 55th ISA Annual Convention in March 2014. I would like to thank to Professor Nanette Levinson for the comments and suggestions on the first version of this work.


3 It is important to highlight a key difference between the Brazilian and North American process of admission to university. In Brazil, prospect students apply must point out which major he/she wants to pursue instead of
International Relations are a relatively recent field in Brazil. The first undergraduate course was created in 1974 at the University of Brasília (“UnB”). UnB is also the birthplace of the first graduate program, in 1985. The launching of UnB’s programs broke the monopoly of the Rio Branco Institute (“IRBr”), the Brazilian diplomatic academia, as the only Brazilian institution to offer a degree in IR in the country.

As Brazil’s capital city and due its proximity to embassies and international organizations headquarters, Brasilia held favorable conditions to offer the degree, so it is not a surprise the two first academic programs were created there. Besides, the increasing interest of the military government in foreign policy created a demand for professionals able to analyze international affairs, both in the public and private spheres (Julião, 2009). Both UnB and IRBr focused on foreign policy and they even shared part of their faculty.

The second undergraduate course was created in 1985 at Estácio de Sá University. Estácio’s focused on international trade as Rio de Janeiro had an important economic role (Miyamoto, 2003, p. 112). Estácio’s curriculum was based on its already existing Economics and Business Administration majors and its faculty was composed mostly by professionals engaged on trade activities – there were only a few IR specialists.

This delay may be partially explained by the political interference of Itamaraty, the Brazilian Ministry of International Affairs. Itamaraty created obstacles upon the development and expansion of IR academic programs during the 1980s (Lima, 1992; Tickner, 2009, p. 37).

It took ten years before the expansion of IR courses in the country. The number increased to 86 in 2007. Federal regulations edited in the 1990s eased the administrative processes to open new courses and colleges (Miyamoto, 2003) and higher education in Brazil was turned into a valuable commodity. IR and Law were the two majors that experienced the largest growth as they were courses relatively simple to create and offered the biggest profits. “Much of the upswing is attributable to the marketability of nearly everything that carries the ‘international’ label in a region deeply affected by processes and discourses related to internalization and globalization” (Tickner, 2009, p. 37). Between 1995 and 1999, 23 new courses were created.
According to statistics from the ABRI, there are 130 active majors in IR, mostly offered by private colleges (Visentini, 2008, p. 12) in the southeastern and central-west regions (Tickner, 2009, p. 37). These numbers show a booming increase of 4,600% in the number of undergraduate courses being offered in less than twenty years. Only six states don’t have any college offering the major.

These impressive numbers didn’t lower the competition for spots in the vestibular, the Brazilian SAT. IR ranks among the majors with the greatest competition. According to the statistics available on the universities’ websites, the competition is particularly fierce since 2000 (Miyamoto, 2003, p. 103). The number of students interested in majoring in IR currently outnumbers traditional majors, such as Law, Engineering, and Economics. By and large, Medicine is the only course with a greater competition than IR.

Even colleges that don’t offer a major in IR realized the importance of providing their students with a basic knowledge on the field. Some private schools offer a minor in IR for their students, mostly from majors such as Political Science, Economics, Law, and Journalism. Fundação Getúlio Vargas (“FGV”) is the most notorious example. PUC-Rio, considered the most successful undergraduate course and one of the most traditional graduate programs, offered a minor in IR for their undergrad students until 2003 - in 2004 the university started offering a major in the area.

Graduate programs follow that trend. In 2001 there were only two programs (Herz, 2002, p. 19). This number increased to 8 in 2008 (Santos & Fonseca, 2009, p. 356). The

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3 It is important to highlight a key difference between the Brazilian and North American process of admission to university. In Brazil, prospect students apply must point out which major he/she wants to pursue instead of opting during their time in college. As a consequence, there are careers where competition is bigger, so the passing grade in the vestibular is higher. There are also differences in other aspects of the course, such as the number of spots available for each course, the time of day the classes are held (morning, afternoon, or night), and if there are freshmen classes being offered once or twice in the year (first and second semesters). Each course – or major – has its own structured curriculum, which implies the attendance of mandatory classes related to the major and, depending on the course, a list of optional classes.

4 In the University of Sao Paulo (“USP”), one of the most prestigious universities in Brazil, IR is among the top 4 majors since 2002. The undergraduate course at UERJ is a top 3 since its creation, in 2013. The same scenario occurs in most of the public universities. IR course also have a high level competition in private universities. PUC-Rio and PUC-MG, two of the most traditional departments in the country, experience a higher demand for their courses.
number of graduate programs in the field grew 700% from 2001 to 2013. Currently there are 14 graduate programs in IR in Brazil and six of them offer PhD degrees.\footnote{5}

One of the explanations to the development of IR graduate programs is the Santiago Dantas Program, launched in 2001 by CAPES (Miyamoto, 2003, p. 110).\footnote{6} The program is responsible for providing assistance and financial grants for public universities to develop their IR programs, including the offer of scholarships and tuition exemptions to graduate students.

This general interest in IR also led to the creation of MBAs and specialization courses in international politics. These courses attract professionals from a myriad of fields such as journalists, lawyers, military personnel, historians, and economists willing to engage on the field.

Similarly, there was also an increasing in the number of preparatory courses to the diplomatic academia. In order to attend the academia and become a diplomat, one must be approved in a comprehensive public exam open to graduates from any field. The number of applicants grows yearly – in 2010, for example, there were over 110 candidates for each one of the 125 spots available –, so candidates look for these courses to increase their chances of approval. There is no reliable information on how many courses are currently active.

The identity of the field

At a first glance, the expansion of IR courses all over may indicate a consolidation of the field as an important and unified area of studies. However, and despite institutional initiatives such as the creation of an academic association to represent the field –ABRI– and the increasing involvement of Brazil in foreign affairs, IR is still a distant reality to most people. The diversity of approaches and curricula offered by schools are so diverse that a single answer to the question “what is IR” is not possible.

\footnote{5}{For a complete list of graduate programs in IR, please refer to http://conteudoweb.capes.gov.br/conteudoweb/ProjetoRelacaoCursosServlet?acao=pesquisarIes&codigoArea=7090000&descricaoArea=CI%C3%93NCIA+POL%C3%93TICA&descricaoAreaConhecimento=CI%C3%93NCIA+POL%C3%93TICA+E+RELA%C3%B5ES+INTERNACIONAIS. Access: February 12\textsuperscript{th} 2014.}

\footnote{6}{CAPES is one of the governmental agencies responsible for funding and regulating higher education in Brazil. More information on the Santiago Dantas Program is available at http://www.capes.gov.br/bolsas/programas-especiais/san-tiago-dantas.}
According to Arlene Tickner, a key term to explain the field in Latin America is eclecticism. “(...) [I]nternational studies in the region are the offspring of a variety of other areas of the social sciences, including history, law, sociology, economics and finance, development studies, and administration” (Tickner, 2009, p. 36). It is no surprise that a sociologist, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, developed the most notorious regional theoretical contribution to the field – the dependency theory (Cardoso & Faletto, 1969).

Given this scenario, the identity of the field is fragile and allows the emergence of different perspectives and understandings. This fragility explains the characteristics of the field in Brazil, as well as the proliferation of such different curricula offered all over the country. Courses were created in a scenario without regulation or consensus on what disciplines should be offered to IR majors. The fragile identity is also compromised by the gap between theory and practice and the general perception of IR as an elitist area of studies.

This section discusses some of the challenges to the strengthening its identity and its popularization. The first one is the eclecticism of the field, which leads to its multidisciplinarity and the multiple understandings of what IR represents. To support such argument, I will investigate the academic backgrounds from the lecturers across the country. Secondly, I will explore the intellectual production in the field. Graduate programs offer little incentive for policy-applicable research and theoretical works have little impact on policy making. It increases the gap between theory and practice in the field and the perception of IR as elitist.

Finally, I discuss the absence of a serious public debate on or concern for foreign policy. Brazilian foreign policy is historically coherent and has clear goals – autonomy and relevance (Saraiva & Valença, 2011). However, the Itamaraty monopolizes the agendas and policy making, marginalizing the role of the Congress. The public debate on foreign policy, then, is limited mostly conducted on ideological basis and perceptions.

* The eclecticism of the field

IR graduate programs in Brazil average 10-15 MA students annually. The few programs that offer a PhD degree average 5-8 students per year. If one considers that not every graduate choose to pursue an academic career, how such great number of undergraduate courses manage to compose their faculty bodies?
As discussed in other opportunities, many colleges launch their IR majors using the infrastructure they already have from other undergraduate courses. By doing this, they manage to hire only a few IR specialists – if any – to offer IR related disciplines. Especially outside the southeastern and central-west regions, the number of faculty members with academic background in IR teaching in IR undergrad courses is limited. It is possible to note that the number of full-time faculty members is reduced as many of them are professionally engaged on activities other than academic.

As a consequence, the majority of disciplines offered are related to Economics, International Trade, and Law, with a strong connection to business. These fields are more consolidated in Brazil than IR and they provide a stronger connection to the professionals already working with international affairs so colleges could justify that option based on the current stage of the professional needs. The actual connection to IR studies is very thin.

Moreover, schools that do not offer a graduate degree don’t carry full time IR faculty. Professors with recognized professional experience in their areas lecture the courses, even though the majority of faculty members do not hold the academic qualification needed to teach at undergraduate level.\(^7\)

Professors in charge of lecturing International Relations specific-related disciplines fulfilled the academic requirement for the composition of faculties. These professors hold a MA or a PhD degrees in Social Sciences, mostly Law, History, and Political Science. IR specialists constitute only a small percentage of lecturers and are hired mostly as adjunct faculty. Their courses represent a small part of the curricula and cover general areas such as history, international organizations, and introductory courses to International Relations theories, foreign policy studies, and processes of regional integration.

\[--)\text{ Although its prestige, public schools face similar challenges in attracting IR graduates. Public universities are the only higher education institutions to offer tenure-track positions. In order to get hired by a public university, one must submit to a series of public exams that will evaluate the candidate academic formation, her/his publications, services, and other relevant information. Only PhD may apply to these positions.}\]

\(^7\) The Ministry of Education issued regulations stating that colleges and universities must compose their faculties with the majority of professors holding PhDs and MA degrees. Specialists, graduates, and other academic-levels lecturers should be hire only to attend to specific demands. However, that rule is not enforced after the granting of official authorization.
As PhDs in IR are quite recently, most public universities’ faculty members are graduated in other areas. Statistics show that the majority of professors have a degree in History, Political Science, and Sociology. PhDs in Economics, Geography, Social Studies, and Law are also common. --]

[---The overall balance of disciplines focuses on the theoretical aspects of the field in order to prepare students to be able to reflect on international politics based on a holistic understanding of events, history, and its implications. Curricula are more inclined to offer disciplines of theories in International Relations, integration processes, security studies, and foreign policy. --]

[--- Thus, a culture of IR studies is based on these fields’ understanding of what should be studied as international relations. And these understandings are subjected to be replicated, in an authoritative fashion. --]

[---As a consequence, the multiple approaches offered provided the eclecticism that characterizes IR as a field of study in Brazil. Need to retrieve the information on the regional perspectives on the field – Leticia? Monica?

Replication of US/European based curricula in universities where faculties got their degree abroad.--]

*The intellectual production*

The volume of intellectual production -books, articles, and journals- in the field increased since the 1990s (Herz, 2002, p. 29). The late 2000s marked the internalization of the field: the number of academics and graduate students presenting papers and drafts of their researches in conference increases yearly as well as the number of articles published in international journals by Brazilian scholars. The 2013 Qualis CAPES report highlighted a growth in the number and variety of journals, as well as in the number of titles – especially text books – published in the field. Still, the intellectual production in IR is still limited in Brazil, both quantitatively and thematically.

8 I still need to find reliable sources to support this statement, but based on pure observation, the number is indeed growing.

9 Qualis CAPES is the Brazilian official ranking to measure the impact factor of journals in every field of study. It is updated each 3 years based on technical, institutional, and political criteria. It is available at http://qualis.capes.gov.br/webqualis/principal.seam.
On the thematic issue, a considerable part of the Brazilian IR bibliography is composed by historical researches and diplomatic studies (Herz, 2002, p. 16), especially in Brazilian foreign policy studies (Pinheiro & Vedoveli, 2012). The debate focused on the contributions of foreign policy to the nation building process (Fonseca Júnior, 1989). Despite a significant number of regional studies, mostly on South American integration, area studies are not a recurrent theme.

These areas constitute the great concern of academics. I understand this happens for two reasons. Firstly, the diversity of academic backgrounds, especially of senior faculties – most with degrees in History, Sociology, and Economics – makes this kind of analysis something related to their main agendas of study. Another reason is that Brazilian international involvement and, consequently, Brazilian foreign policy, are major themes in the national political agendas. In that fashion, these themes attract visibility and leads to research granting and funding.

Theoretical discussions, on the other hand, are most frequently found in thesis and dissertations and, in a lesser degree, a few journals. However, these are the top-ranked journals in the country.

A small number of graduate programs – being PUC-Rio’s the most notorious example – focuses heavily on theoretical debates. Top tier programs offer incentives so their students can participate in conferences, to develop their own researches, and to publish, both nationally and abroad. College administrators believe it is important to showcase the methodological tools offered by the programs, so the theoretical focus on grad schools may be partially explained by these reasons. This exchange of ideas stimulates the development of critical approaches to traditional theories. However, this production shows little resemblance to the policy problems faced by Brazil and is mostly ignored by policy-makers as the themes and discussions are largely based on US and European approaches. Graduate programs, then, offer little incentive for this type of research.

Considering this, why the number of policy-oriented works is low? Many scholars blame the CAPES criteria to evaluate the impact factor of publications and researches (“Qualis”) as the main responsible for the lack of policy-oriented production. According to the Qualis ranks, policy-oriented works is considered less influential as it produces problem-solving knowledge. It is a political discussion within the field in Brazil that highlights the fact that only journals with theoretical concerns manage to achieve the highest grades (A1 and
A2) as the criteria used to evaluate them benefit academic programs that offer graduate degrees – preferably PhDs.\(^\text{10}\)

As a result, scholars choose to not submit their researches to policy-oriented journals, even if they would benefit their research agenda. These journals include the ones published by military schools, research centers, and think tanks.

Quantitatively, and despite the number of institutions granting university degrees, only a few institutions have full-time faculty (Tickner, 2009, p. 37) and even fewer conduct some kind of long-term research programs. Schools that neither offer graduate program nor do not have full-time faculty don’t require their lecturers to publish or do research.

As a result, the intellectual production is mostly intense in institutions offering graduate degrees, as the quality and relevance of their production impacts on the governmental funding and, scholarships, and other financial incentives received. Funding is contingent to good evaluations. And to get a good evaluation departments should publish in top tier journals – the ones that benefit theoretical works over policy-oriented ones. Thus, one may notice a gap between what is produced in academia and what instructs real world policy-making – they become irrelevant to politics.

This asymmetry between theoretical and policy-oriented works compromises the popularization of the field as scholars have a difficult time to present their research to a general audience or to get involved in policy issues. Few think tanks are active on trying to engage scholars and policy makers. CEBRI, a think tank created by former diplomats, offers lecturers, and roundtable at their headquarters to mixed audiences, as well as publish working papers on current issues and make them available at their website for anyone interested. Additionally, and dating from mid-2000s, a series of events brought together academics and policy makers – an example are the *Forte de Copacabana* Conferences, focused on security, defense, and development issues. Such initiatives are still incipient but attract a broad audience. Which leads to the next argument, the absence of a serious public debate and concern on foreign policy.

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\(^{10}\) There are other criteria such as the reviewing process, editorial board, and number of yearly editions. However, the criteria may create some distortions on the importance of the journal. International Organizations and International Studies Quarterly, for instance, two of the most prestigious journals in the field are only ranked as C, the lowest grade.
Absence of a serious public debate on foreign policy

The two previous challenges showed that the identity of the Brazilian International Relations – as well as in other Latin American countries – is fragile because of the myriad of approaches that formed the field in the region and the gap between theory and practice, which is reinforced and replicated by institutional procedures.

These two challenges are leading to and being aggravated by a third one, which is the absence of a serious public debate on foreign policy. As a rule of thumb, foreign policy is not a major concern in Brazil. As a postulant to a UNSC permanent seat and a major global player, one should expect that international agendas would be a more relevant aspect of Brazilian policy-making. However, international themes – and even regional ones – are not a priority in Brazilian politics.

One explanation for the absence of a public debate on foreign policy is that Itamaraty has historically monopolized the foreign policy-making process (Lima, 1992). The federal government focused its attention and resources to domestic politics while Itamaraty, as a specialized bureaucracy, would advise and conduct foreign affairs.

This scenario was dominant in Brazil until the 2000s, during the president Lula government. During his 2-term government, he had a decisive involvement with foreign policy and conducted it personally. The foreign policy strategies at that time reflected the interests of his party, the Work’s Party (PT) (Saraiva, 2010). An incipient discussion on Brazilian international strategies was held – mainly on Brazil’s involvement in MINUSTAH – but no formal participation of other parties or civil society was worth to note. The same happens on discussions on large events – such as the World Cup or the Olympic Summer Games – and international conferences held in the country, such as the Rio+20.

[—the Congress does not get involved with foreign policy. Brazilian Constitution determines that the Congress is responsible for discuss and assist the foreign policy, but only a few congressmen do get involved with the agenda. Fewer actually do offer some proposal on the subject during their campaigns.—]

[—The foreign policy debate at the federal level is polarized between the government and the opposition. Critics are made based on ideology from both sides – the government support regional allies even if their domestic and international actions violate international norms – most notorious example the debate whether Venezuela is a democracy or not and its participation in Mercosur.
The government accuses the opposition of compromising national interests by vetoing proposals and plans.

Recently, some cable channels created roundtables with “specialists” to discuss international affairs. These specialists are columnists of journals and magazines, journalists, economists, and political scientists. Most programs bring the same people to discuss different subjects, which may compromise the credibility of such information. And the programs do not offer opposite points of view – most guests only agree with each other.

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A standardized curriculum

The previous section presented the challenges and particularities that compromise the identity of IR studies in Brazil. *A priori*, eclecticism does not seem to be the problem to weaken the identity of the field. I understand that such eclecticism is important to fulfill local needs that may and do exist in a country as large and as diverse – economically, socially, and culturally – as Brazil is. However, it also generates obstacles to the popularization of the field, as the regional specificities are not tackled nationally. What should be avoided is to describe anything barely international-related as international relations.

In that fashion, I support the proposal of the Brazilian International Relations Association (ABRI) on the definition of a standardized curriculum to all IR courses.¹¹ This idea is not intended to impose one specific approach or to declare that IR should benefit a given field. A standardized curriculum is important to provide guidelines to any school interested in offering a major in the field and to create incentives for IR graduates to perform their trade in any region or state of the country. For instance, is it possible to imagine a Law school that do not offer at least introductory courses on all legal fields or a Med school that selects which specializations it teaches to their students? In other words, each school would still be able to determine the profile of their students and to focus on the expertise of their faculty members.

¹¹ ABRI released a draft on the guidelines of a standardized curriculum in June 2013. As the document matches many of the arguments I was developing to answer the questions posed in this research, I understand it would make sense to engage on the discussion proposed by the Association instead of raising flags on specific themes, as described in my research plan. In that fashion, I will develop my argument based on ABRI’s draft. However, it is important to highlight that I don’t belong to the Association’s Ex-Com or have any responsibility on the document.
Firstly, the document stipulates the minimum number of in-class hours one must take to get a degree in the field. The draft suggests 3,000+ in-class hours – approximately 8 academic terms based on a 20-28-hours weekly schedule. This amount of time is required in order to take all mandatory classes required to get the degree, as well as optional disciplines.

Secondly, the draft indicates the required skills an IR graduate should possess at the end of the course. Among the skills are basic notions of methodology and epistemology, a critical approach to international issues and its connections to domestic politics, and written/read proficiencies – both in Portuguese and in one or more relevant foreign languages. Other relevant skills listed relate to the comprehension and the analysis of economical, strategic, legal, and cultural events vis-à-vis their historical and political importance.

The only commitment schools have to make before adopting the standardized curriculum is to guarantee the offer of the disciplines listed below. The list represents the core disciplines of the field as it is understood by ABRI and they broadly correspond to a major understanding of IR globally.

1. International Relations 101;
2. Introduction to Research in International Relations;
3. Theories of International Relations;
4. International Organizations;
5. Foreign Policy Analysis;
6. Brazilian Foreign Policy;
7. World History;
8. History of International Relations in Brazil;
9. International Political Economy;
10. Security Studies and Strategic Theory;
11. Contemporary Agendas in International Politics.
It is important to highlight that this set of disciplines is not exhaustive. Each school has the freedom to expand them and offer more courses on each subject in order to capacitate their students and provide them with abilities relevant to their social environment or regional challenges.

Furthermore, a standardized curriculum would strengthen the identity of Brazilian IR studies. As it may be noticed, the core disciplines are concerned with the traditions of Brazilian international affairs and focus on providing students with the main discussions on the field. The standardized curriculum does not replicate a foreign framework without any connection to the country’s reality. From the Brazilian academic production on the field (Herz, 2002) to policy relevant subjects (Miyamoto, 2003; Tickner, 2009; Visentini, 2008), the core disciplines allow students to familiarize themselves with the main discussions and problems faced by academics and policy makers. In that fashion, the gap between theory and practice may be mitigated.

Furthermore, regional particularities would still exist and would positively impact on students from a given region or state, but they will no longer limit their trade by narrowing their formation to these elements. However, it will no longer affect the study of International Relations as an academic field in Brazil. Regional particularities will still exist and they will enrich the backgrounds of each and every student.

Concluding thoughts and future research proposals

This paper is a part of an ongoing research. Many of the proposals listed in the original submission of this paper could not be developed, as the data gathered was insufficient to support my argument. In that fashion, this paper consists on a rough draft of what is expected to be present in depth in a near future.

However, despite the blanks and under-discussed issues raised here, I understand that many points are worth to be further explored. The criteria of evaluating the impact factor of Brazilian journals are the most relevant. While many A-grade journals are indeed relevant to the field, there are journals poorly ranked that produce a significant impact both in academia and in the policy-world. For instance, International Organization and International Studies Quarterly, two of the leading IR journals in the world are only ranked as a C, the lowest grade. The same may be said of military journals, especially the ones targeting relevant themes to the Brazilian political agenda, such as the one published by the Navy War School.
I believe it will help to mitigate the gap between theory and practice, as well as stimulate policy researches.

Other relevant aspect that should be discussed within the academic IR community is the elitist image of the field. Scholars should get more involved with the Brazilian society by presenting their research agendas in news programs or public lectures. Most scholars, especially senior faculty, are refractory to this exposition.

On the standardized curriculum for undergraduate courses, there is an ongoing discussion to ease its adoption in all courses. By adopting it, the strengthening of the identity of the field seems possible, as one may be able to discuss what the field is about by analyzing the field from a common basis. ABRI is engaged in this proposal and is offering support for private and public colleges to help the transition from their current curricula to the new one. The draft of the standardized curriculum is still being discussed, but it reflects good practices from the academic association and the evaluation exams that are offered to students before their graduation.

References


