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In search of a lost treasure: cultural mapping studies in the field of Political Science and International Relations in Brazil

Abstract

We investigate how the theme of "culture" has been studied in Political Science and International Relations (PSIR) in Brazilian academia from 1990 to 2017. A "systematic literature review" was conducted, assessing 183 online articles. The data collected suggests differences between PS and IR, a lack of methodology, and some degree of causality between institutions, authors, and the research approach adopted in the articles.

Keywords: Culture; Concept; Methodology; Systematic Literature Review.

Introduction

The philosophy of behaviorism associated the concept of "culture" with generic explanations and stereotypes (Keating 2008). The end of the Cold War renewed the interest for this theme in the field of Political Science and International Relations (PSIR) (Lapid and Kratochwil 1996; Michalowska and Schreiber 2017; Keating 2008). Culture has been instrumentalized to explain domestic and international political phenomena. But, due to its multifaceted nature, culture has been described as "something complicated," "a term that no one knows how to explain," "a question impossible to define, identify and describe unambiguously" or even "something 'sacred' in human and social sciences" (Eagleton 2016; Lane and Ersson 2005; Weber 2014; Michalowska and Schreiber 2017). Such proliferation of definitions and terminologies has caused the concept to be used indiscriminately (Michalowska and Schreiber 2017; Lapid and Kratochwill 1996).

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Nonetheless, the recent publication "Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism" (Norris and Inglehart 2019) illustrates the current importance of the subject. The authors identify the strengthening of populist-authoritarian parties and leaders in several democratic countries, including Brazil. The phenomenon is characterized by the sharing of cultural values, differentiating 'us' versus 'them'. The crisis of democracy is caused by the cultural backlash by pre-dominant sectors of society facing the progressive change of values. Culture gains importance as a key element to understand cases like Brazil today.

The objective of this paper is to map PSIR studies on culture published in Brazil, identifying the characteristics of this literature, particularly its conceptual and methodological aspects. A "systematic literature review" (Ridley 2012) was conducted, involving search strategy (selection), data synthesis, detailed coding, and analysis of the findings. Since Brazil has been leading PSRI-indexed publications in Latin America (Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior 2018), this investigation may contribute to the academic quality indicators.

We analyze the studies published between 1990 and 2017 in Brazilian academic journals rated A1 to B2 according to the Qualis 2013-2016 quadrennial ranking (a Brazilian system for evaluating academic journals maintained by the Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior - CAPES - the Brazilian Federal Agency for the Support and Evaluation of Graduate Education). The Qualis index is composed of eight decreasing strata: A1 and A2, B1 to B5, and C (Barberia, Barboza, and Godoy 2018).

The article is divided into three sections. The first section discusses the "literature review" concept, presents the steps adopted in the study, and the criteria for the universe selection. The second section presents the debate and challenges related to the topic of culture, and how this discussion presents itself in Brazil. The third section presents the data and analyzes this in relation to three aspects: a) academic journals, researchers and articles; b) methodological questions; and c) conceptual questions.

Methodology

This study conducts a systematic literature review, which synthesizes the findings of previous studies on a topic by analyzing a large number of occurrences, adopting explicit methods (Ridley 2012). The data universe is coded, analyzed, and synthesized in search for conclusions. This approach uses methodological standards of primary research, emphasizing transparency and rigor (Daigneault, Jacob, and Ouimet 2014).

Following these principles, we proceed with the following steps: 1) identification of the problem in the literature; 2) identification of variables of interest; 3) search for articles using the chosen selection criteria; 4) definition of exclusion and inclusion criteria; 5) extraction of data from the articles, and classification of the data according to the stipulated variables; 6) presentation of the data; 7) analyses of the data using qualitative methods and descriptive statistics; and 8) exposition of conclusions.

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The criteria for articles selection were: a) presence within the PSIR CAPES evaluation area; b) publishing in Brazilian journals rated A1 to B2 (Qualis) in the area of PSIR; c) the presence of one of the terms ("culture"; "cultural") in the "title" or "keywords"; d) an article format; and e) publishing between 1990 and 2017. Using the criteria listed above, we found a concluding universe of 25 academic journals and 183 articles.

Theory

The topic of culture has been an area of philosophical and political dispute (Walker 1990). In the social sciences, the use of the concept of culture has always represented a challenge (Keating 2008). While it is extremely complex to isolate cultural factors from the influence of other elements, it is also common to see the concept being used as a "catch-all device" (Keating 2008).

In the 1990s, studies in humanities were rekindled during the so-called cultural turn. In International Relations (IR), there was a growing interest in cultural diversity, civilizations, and the representation of the Other (Michalowska and Schreiber 2017; Valbjorn 2008). Seeking to avoid the reductionism and existentialism of the past, culture began to be addressed as a complex set of influences that shape the conditions for rational action (Keating 2008).

The cultural turn generated a plurality of definitions of culture (Valbjorn 2008; Lapid and Kratochwill 1996; Michalowska and Schreiber 2017). However, it is possible to distinguish two dominant conceptions: the humanist and the anthropological. In the field of IR, the predominant tendency moved from the former to the latter. Previously, culture signified the apex of human intellectuality and creativity, manifested through the arts (humanist). In the mid-twentieth century, culture came to represent "all that we are"; no matter the community, every culture has its differences (anthropological) (Reeves 2004).

In Brazil, studies of culture in IR followed on the heels of studies on foreign policy. If culture is a system of values, it has the capacity to bring states closer together or push them further apart (Suppo and Lessa 2007). Initial studies investigated ideas and perceptions (Santos 2005), analyzing psychological elements that influence the decision-making process in foreign policy (Herz 1994), but these have encountered empirical and analytical difficulties (Silva 1998).

However, the relevance of culture in international relations is not unanimous, primarily because of the different world views held by researchers (Martins 2007). This is reflected in the diversity of conceptions of the term adopted in the Brazilian articles (as we will see below). Suppo and Lessa (2007) highlight the lack of specific research and analysis based on numerically significant case studies of countries, regions, or periods. They advocate for a greater identification and analysis of the cultural factor in IR paradigms. There should also be greater dialogue with studies in areas such as anthropology, sociology, and political science, - a circumstance that would enable a multidisciplinary approach and the possibility of integrating new concepts.

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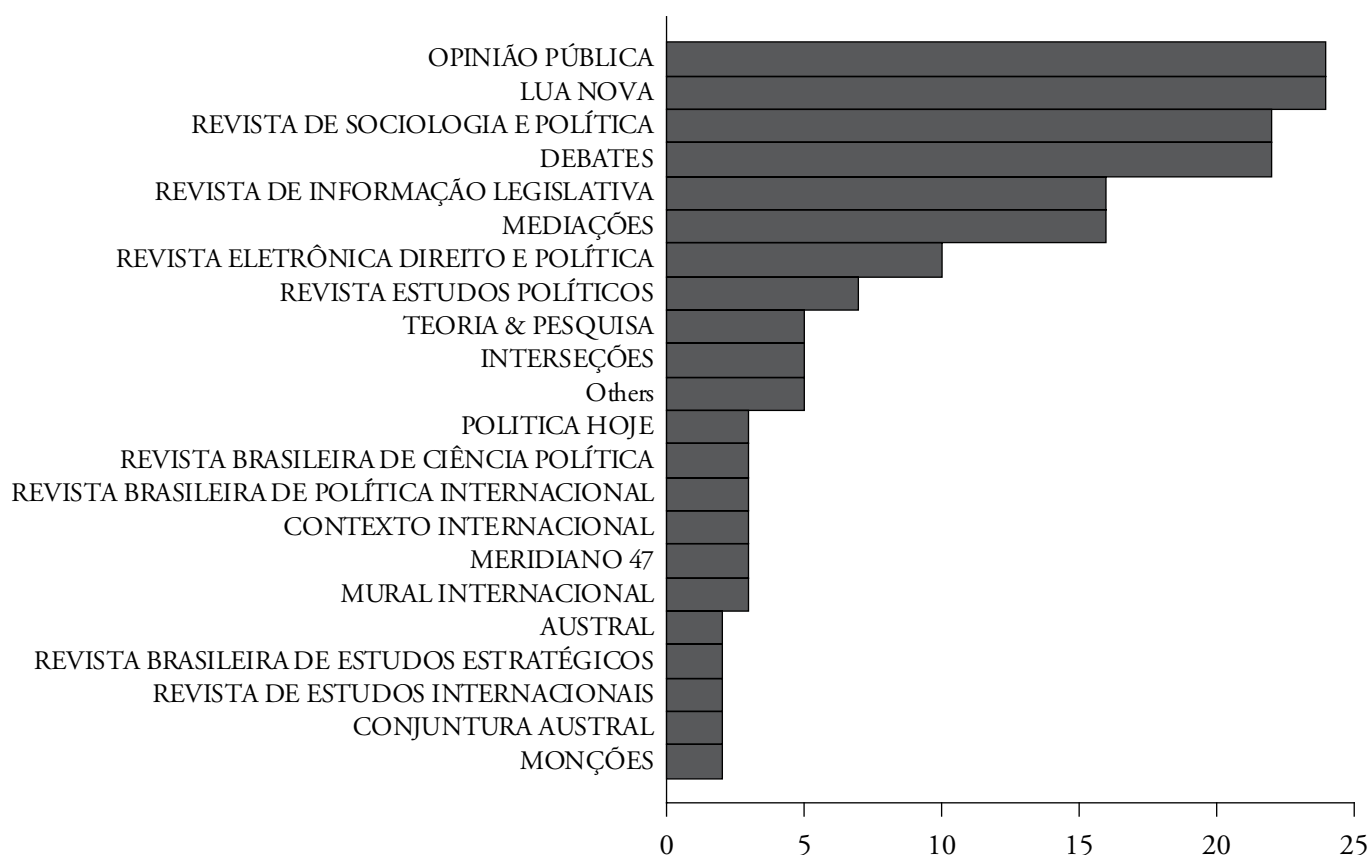
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Data

The literature highlights the plurality and even incompatibility of the concept of culture (resulting from the cultural turn) as well as two key issues for mapping the debate: a conceptual and a methodological. Considering such debate, the universe was selected taking into account a) the academic journals, the institutions and researchers at the forefront of the topic, and b) the *Qualis* (CAPES), year, subject area, keywords, study nature and theoretical foundation. So, the data collected and analyzed from the 183 articles will be presented in the following order: a) variables related to the academic journals, researchers and articles, and b) data on the use of methodology and concepts.

Academic journals, researchers and articles

In the universe of 25 academic journals, 6 predominate: Lua Nova, Opinião Pública, Debates, Revista de Sociologia e Política, Revista Mediações, and Revista de Informação Legislativa[1]. These academic journals represent 67.8% of the production on the topic.

Chart 1 – Journals that published articles about culture

Source: Prepared by the authors.

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1 The bar for "Others" corresponds to the periodicals that published less than 1% of the articles and were therefore grouped together.

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Some academic journals did not publish any articles on the topic and were excluded from the database[2], most of them Qualis B2, and almost all in the field of IR[3]. Two hypotheses arise: 1) IR in Brazil is struggling in a philosophical and political dispute (Walker 1990) and 2) the Qualis B2 classification of IR journals is probably because of the youth of undergraduate and graduate programs.

One of the hypotheses of this paper is that the areas of PS and IR differ between them. This is corroborated by Capes' last evaluation (2013-2016) which identified that the increase in qualified scientific production is strongly correlated with the increase in the offer of doctoral courses, enrollments, and graduated doctors in the area (Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior 2018). In other words, since IR is a more recent course and, therefore, with a lower supply of doctoral programs, this data may be more influenced by PS. However, since Capes does not differentiate the areas separately, it is difficult to compare the evolution of the disciplines in terms of academic production quality.

The publication volume indicates that the topic is of interest to the academic journals. However, this does not necessarily entail diversity among the articles. One example is Opinião Pública whose articles largely concern "political culture," limiting variability in the studies as the ratio of the articles' subject areas is 23 to 1. The same is true for Revista Debates. The journals Lua Nova, Mediações, and Revista de Informação Legislativa present a broader range of topics, discussing approximately 5 or 6. In Revista de Sociologia e Política, although most of articles are about "political culture," there are also articles on "cultural factors," "types of culture," "behavior," "cultural policy," and "topics," To verify whether the publications from these journals have a pattern of presenting an explicit methodology, we developed the cross table below.

Table 1 - Academic journals that have published most articles about culture, and use of an explicit methodology

Methodology	Periodical						
	Lua Nova	Mediações	Opinião Pública	Revista de Informação Legislativa	Revista de Sociologia e Política	Debates	Total
Yes	7	4	19	0	12	19	61
No	17	12	5	16	10	3	63

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Comparing the "Yes" and "No" rows, it becomes possible to separate the journals into two groups. The first contains Opinião Pública, Debates, and Revista de Sociologia e Política, whose
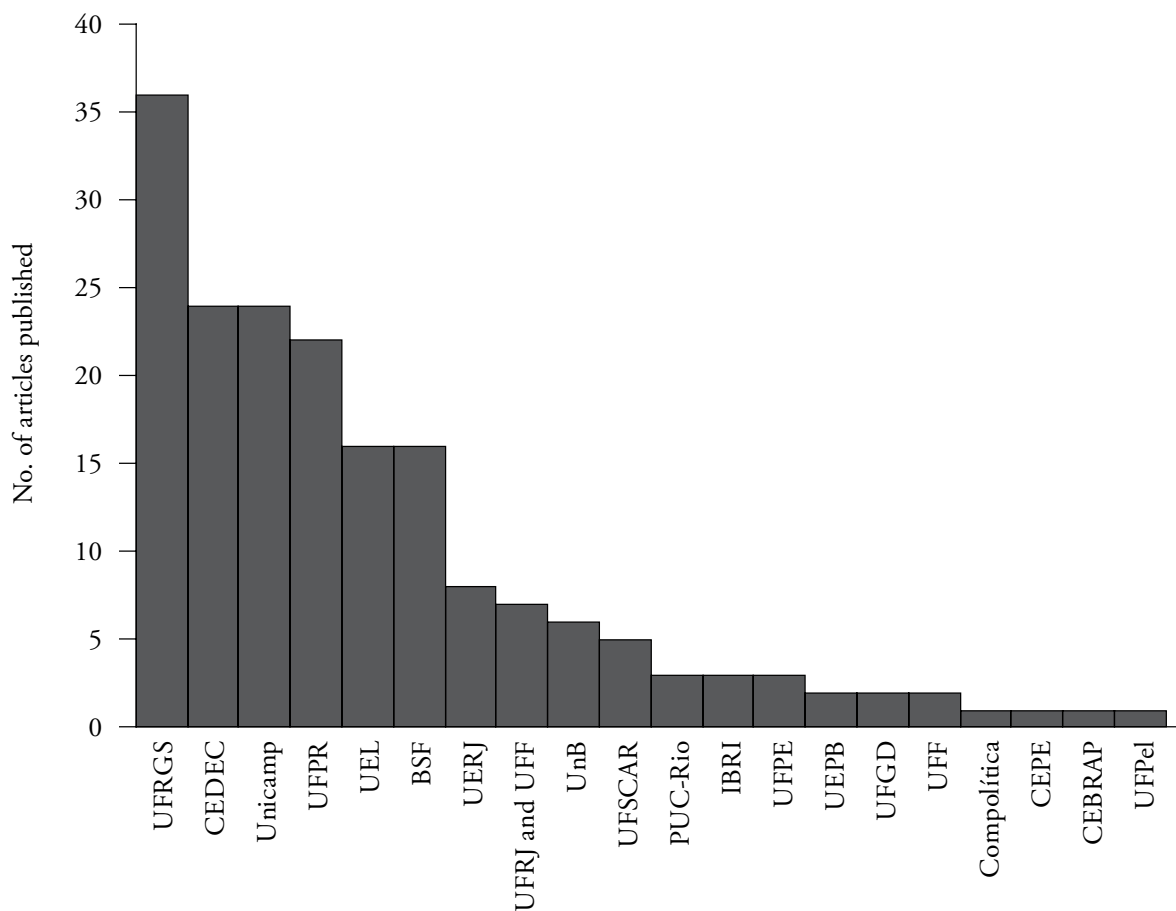
2 Brazilian Journal of International Relations, Brazilian Political Science Review, Carta Internacional, Conjuntura Internacional, Estudos Internacionais e Revista Estudos de Política.

3 With the exception of Revista Estudos de Política.

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articles typically present a methodology. The opposite occurs with the journals Lua Nova, Mediações, and Revista de Informação Legislativa in which articles without a methodology predominate. It is noteworthy that the former corresponds to those that are devoted almost exclusively to the topic of "political culture."

It is relevant to investigate the institutions responsible for the journals, as academic journals usually are affiliated with undergraduate or graduate programs. Chart 2 lists the institutions responsible for the journals that published the articles.

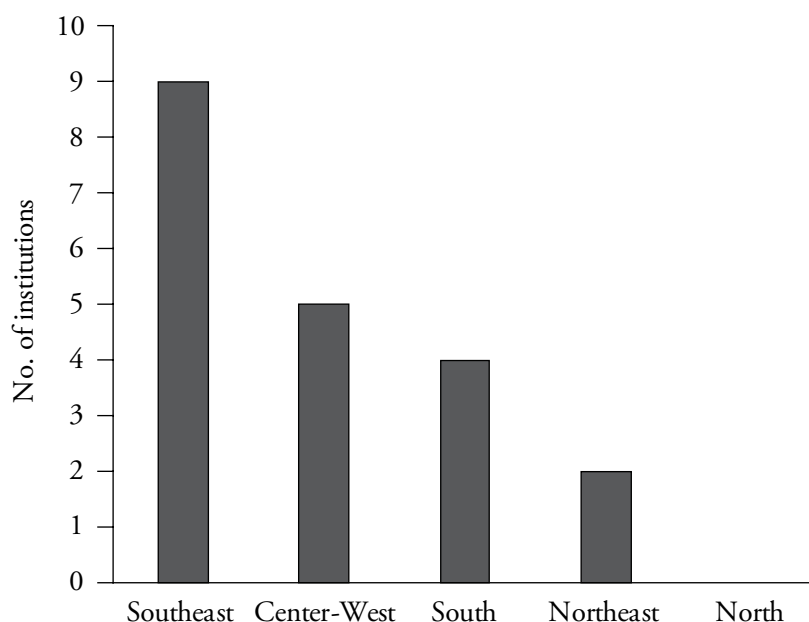**Chart 2 - Journals' institution of the articles published**

Source: Prepared by the authors.

The Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) predominates and is responsible for four journals: Austral, Conjuntura Austral, Debates, and Revista Eletrônica Direito e Política (all Qualis B2). Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CEDEC) and the State University of Campinas (Unicamp) have the same frequency; they are responsible for Lua Nova and Opinião Pública, respectively. The Federal University of Paraná (UFPR) ranks fourth (more than 20 articles). In contrast, the four lowest numbers correspond to Compolítica, CEPE, CEBRAP, and the Federal University of Pelotas (UFPel); the last is a University, and the others

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are either associations or centers[4]. The University of Brasília (UNB), the Federal Fluminense University (UFF), and Rio de Janeiro State University (UERJ), as well as UFRGS, have more than one journal. However, they do not present the greatest number of publications on the topic (except for UFRGS). The total numbers of articles published in these journals are 9, 9, and 8, respectively.

The universities responsible for the journals that have the most publications on culture are located in Brazil's south-southeast (UFRGS, Unicamp, UFPR). However, there seems to be no regional concentration with respect to the universities that published the least, including Paraíba State University (UEPB; northeast), Federal University of Grande Dourados (UFGD; center-west), UFF (southeast) and UFPel (south). Chart 3 shows the distribution of the academic journals' institutions by region.

Chart 3 – Academic journals' institutions by region in Brazil
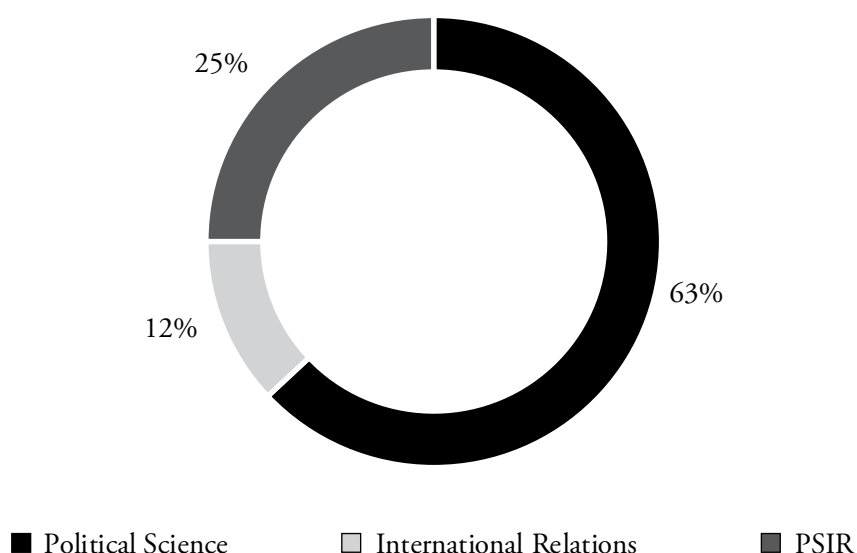

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Analysis of all the institutions reveals a clear concentration along the country's southeast axis, followed by the center-south axis. This reflects the theoretical or methodological orientations of the articles since the composition of the programs responsible for the journal influences the establishment of editorial priorities and the selection of articles. However, it also involves resources made available to the institutions responsible for fostering academic research. If studies on culture are located along this axis, we can assume three explanatory hypotheses for this predominance:

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4 Respectively, the Brazilian Association of Communication and Policy Researchers (Associação Brasileira de Pesquisadores em Comunicação e Política – ABPCP/Compolítica), the Center for Political and Strategic Studies at the War College (Centro de Estudos Político-Estratégicos da Escola Superior de Guerra - CEPE) and the Brazilian Center for Analysis and Planning (Centro Brasileiro de Análise e Planejamento - CEBRAP).

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a) these universities have a greater interest in the topic, b) they may develop more research on culture in PSIR, and c) researchers are more interested in publishing in these journals. It would be interesting to examine whether culture appears, for example, in the curricula or research lines in these universities' teaching programs.

From the outset, we have addressed the areas of Political Science (PS) and International Relations (IR) together, replicating the classification found on the Sucupira Platform (Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior 2014). This grouping is also used by the Scimago Portal, widely used in Academia. However, the data collected demonstrates clear distinctions between the areas, with PS articles using PS literature and IR articles using IR literature. Therefore, the journals that demonstrated an exclusive focus on IR, PS or PSIR were differentiated.

Chart 4 - Distribution of articles (%) by the academic journals' area of concentration

■ Political Science　　□ International Relations　　■ PSIR

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Chart 4 shows that the journals are predominantly focused on PS (63%). IR-specific journals represent 12%, and PSIR-specific journals represent 25%. One might ask whether this data might be more of an indication of a lack of dialogue between the areas and the existence of two independent disciplines. A probable explanation for this preponderance would be that PS has been studied for a longer period in Brazil. PS is therefore expected to have a greater number of journals. At the same time, the data may also indicate a greater interest in the topic in the PS area than in IR.

Another fact to be analyzed is the distribution of production in the different ratings (Qualis A1, A2, B1 and B2) of the academic journals. In Table 2, we see that Qualis B2 academic journals have the largest number of publications. We can also see that there are no publications in A1 PSIR journals. The A2 journals have an emphasis on PSIR, while in the B1 journals, there are no specific IR journals that address culture, with a low number of publications. Finally, the B2

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journals, with a great disparity in the number of journals specifically interested in PS, have the largest number of publications[5].

Table 2 – Journals in PS, IR, and PSIR by Qualis rating

	A1	A2	B1	B2
PS	46	1	3	66
IR	3	3	0	16
PSIR	0	24	1	20
Total	49	28	4	102

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Most of the articles are published in Portuguese, which can be expected since only Brazilian journals were considered. However, there is a tendency for Brazilian journals in the highest stratum to switch their main language to English due to the need to become part of the international debate. Nonetheless, the existence of few works in a language other than Portuguese allows us to question the quality of the dialogue between the Brazilian and international academia, as language would be a limiting factor.

We will now look at data referring to the authors. It is common for researchers with a particular agenda to publish with certain frequency on a topic. To identify the main authors responsible for the articles on culture, we collected the most frequently encountered names. Three authors stood out — Marcelo Baquero, Ednaldo Ribeiro, and Julian Borba — who were responsible for 11, 9 and 6 articles, respectively. All work on the specific topic of "political culture." They thus guide the research agenda and are at the forefront of discussions on the topic.
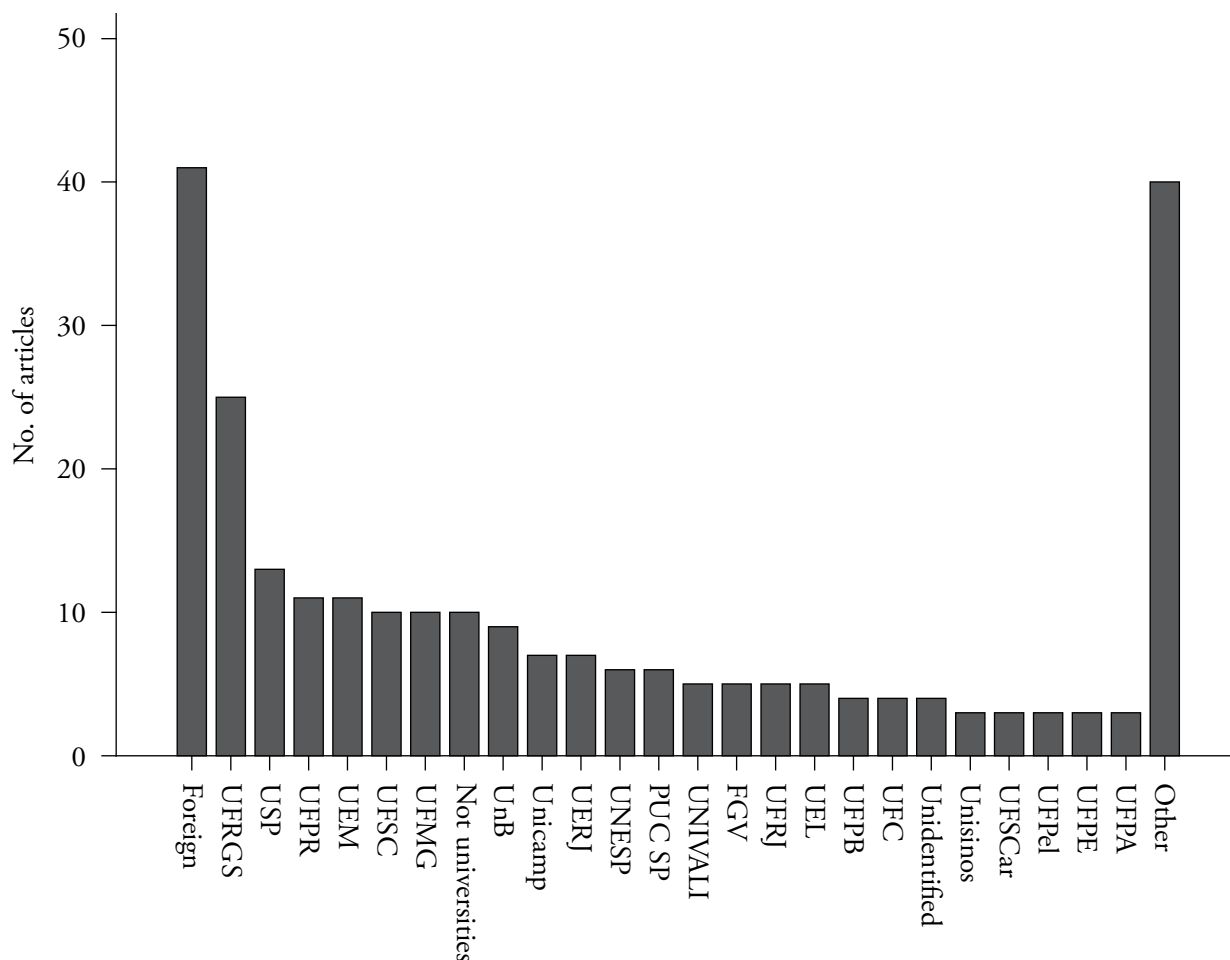
Next, we find four authors with the same number of publications on culture: José A. Moisés, Paulo R. N. Costa, Pierre Bordieu, and Henrique C. O. Castro. Once again, studies on political culture predominate. Of the 3 articles by each author, only Pierre Bordieu — a French author — does not study political culture. His articles correspond to what we call "types of culture." Henrique C. O. Castro has published only one article on the topic of "behavior." We can thus assume that the research agenda on culture involves more discussion on "political culture" than any other topic, and that this forms a research agenda that has already been consolidated.

Since some researchers generally publish on the same topic, we might be able to determine whether the institution with which they are affiliated had an influence on their research and the published article. Once again, we begin with the assumption that the way a certain program

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5 The following were classified as PS journals: Opinião Pública, Revista De Sociologia E Política, Revista Debates, Mediações, Revista Eletrônica Direito E Política, Revista Estudos Políticos, Interseções, Teoria & Pesquisa, Revista Brasileira De Ciência Política, Novos Estudos CEBRAP and Revista Compolítica. IR journals: Revista Brasileira De Política Internacional, Contexto Internacional, Meridiano 47, Mural Internacional, Austral - Brazilian Journal of Strategy & International Relations, Conjuntura Austral, Monções, Revista Brasileira De Estudos Estratégicos and Revista De Estudos Internacionais. Finally, PSIR: Lua Nova, Revista De Informação Legislativa, Política Hoje, Revista Da Escola De Guerra Naval and Revista Sul-Americana De Ciência Política.

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(undergraduate or graduate) is structured largely guides the research that will be carried out in this academic environment, from both a theoretical and methodological point of view. We thus present the authors' institutions in Chart 5[6].

Chart 5 - Distribution of articles by the author's institution affiliation

Source: Prepared by the authors.

The chart emphasizes the number of foreign institutions. This finding can be explained by the fact that it is common for researchers to develop part of their research in universities outside the country, - particularly in graduate programs. Another factor that explains the number is the inclusion of foreign researchers in the universe studied. We have found, for example, foreign articles that were translated and published in Brazilian journals as well as foreign authors publishing with Brazilian researchers. In Brazil, the university that has generated the most articles on culture (based on the researchers' education/employment affiliations) is UFRGS, followed by the University of São Paulo (USP), UFPR and the State University of Maringá (UEM).
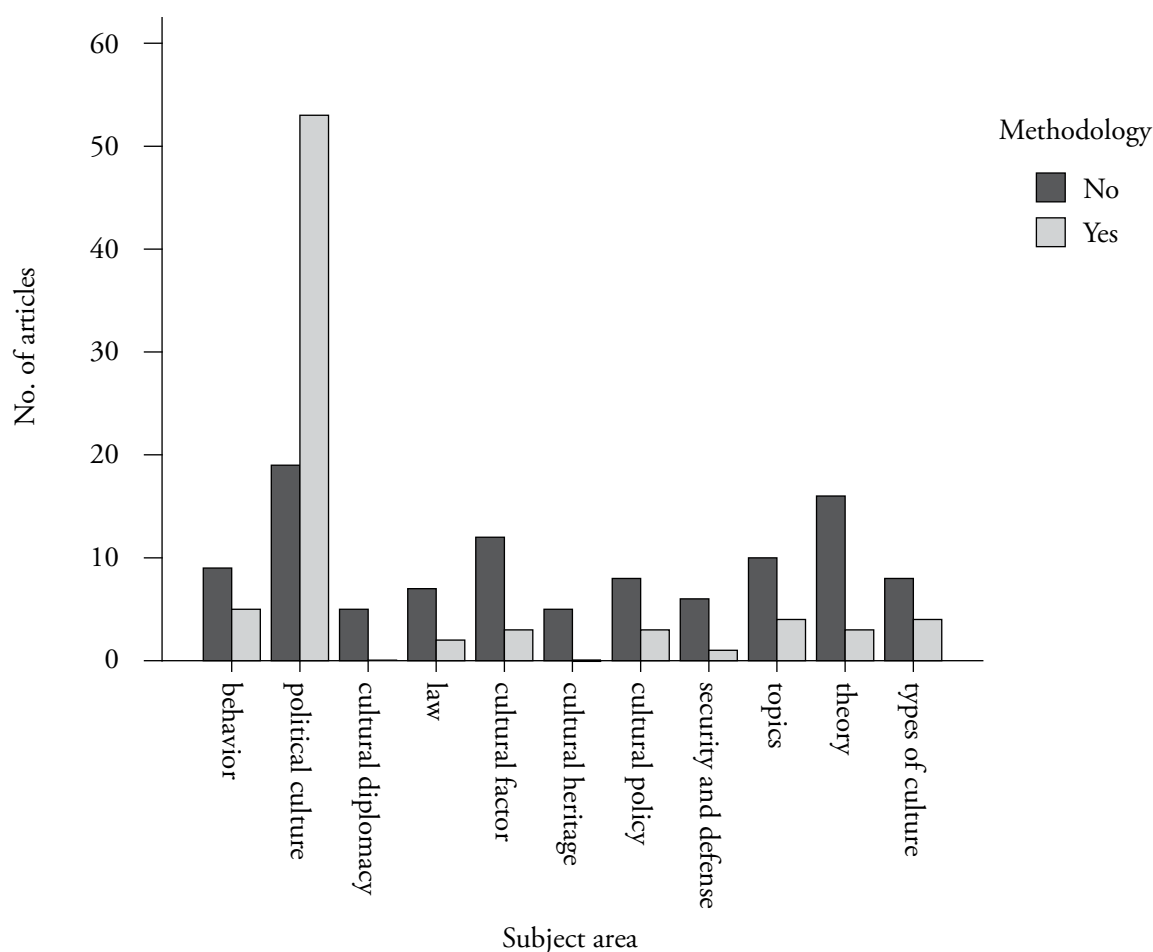
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6 The bar "Other" corresponds to the institutions affiliated with authors who wrote less than 1% of the articles and were therefore grouped together.

Would journals mainly publish articles by Brazilian scholars? To investigate this hypothesis, we compare the proportion of non-Brazilian researchers who published about the theme 'culture' with the proportion of non-Brazilian researchers who published about all other subjects in the journals. It is important to note that almost half of the journals (48%) make the list of authors and their respective institutions available on their websites. The numbers presented below are only part of the sample and an estimate of the percentage of non-Brazilian authors (we refer to those linked to foreign universities). They are an estimate because of the availability of the data and the criteria for a more practical identification; they may not represent the exact numbers. Thus, in almost half of the journals, the average of non-Brazilian authors who published from 1990 to 2017 about all subjects is 26%. Regarding the subject 'culture', our sample concludes that 16% of authors are affiliated with foreign institutions.

As seen, the university that has published the most academic journals about the topic (Chart 2) is the same university that has the highest percentage of authors affiliated with it: UFRGS. Authors affiliated with a university may tend to publish in its academic journals. However, this is not the case with Unicamp. Although it is one of the institutions that has published the most academic journals on the topic (Chart 2), Unicamp is not one of the institutions that has the most authors affiliated with it (Chart 5). This may indicate the opposite of what is occurring at UFRGS: the articles published in Unicamp's academic journals are not necessarily written by authors affiliated with this university. Moreover, it is likely that the Unicamp journal's Qualis classification - which is A1 - influences the desire of researchers from other institutions to be published in it. In the case of the journals affiliated with UFRGS - with a B2 classification - their desire would be lower. We can thus assume that the higher a journal's Qualis ranking is, the greater the desire of researchers from other institutions to be published in it. Similarly, the Qualis rating may lead some authors to seek out foreign academic journals.

The articles differentiate themselves on several fronts. One factor that differentiates the articles is the subject area. Since culture is a broad topic, encompassing different research paths, the decision was made to group the studies that are most similar in order to identify these paths, i.e., the more specific areas in which culture is studied. We refer to this as a subject area. In the charts above, we saw that "political culture" predominates, with a greater number of publications. Next is "theory." The least studied topics include "cultural heritage" and "cultural diplomacy." These topics are more related to the areas of law and IR. The same occurs with "security and defense" and "law." We can therefore observe, based on this sample of the literature, that there is an emphasis on the area of PS in the studies on the topic.

We have sought to verify whether the choice of a certain topic influences the existence or absence of a methodology. Chart 6 shows the distribution of the subject areas divided according to whether their respective articles present a methodology.

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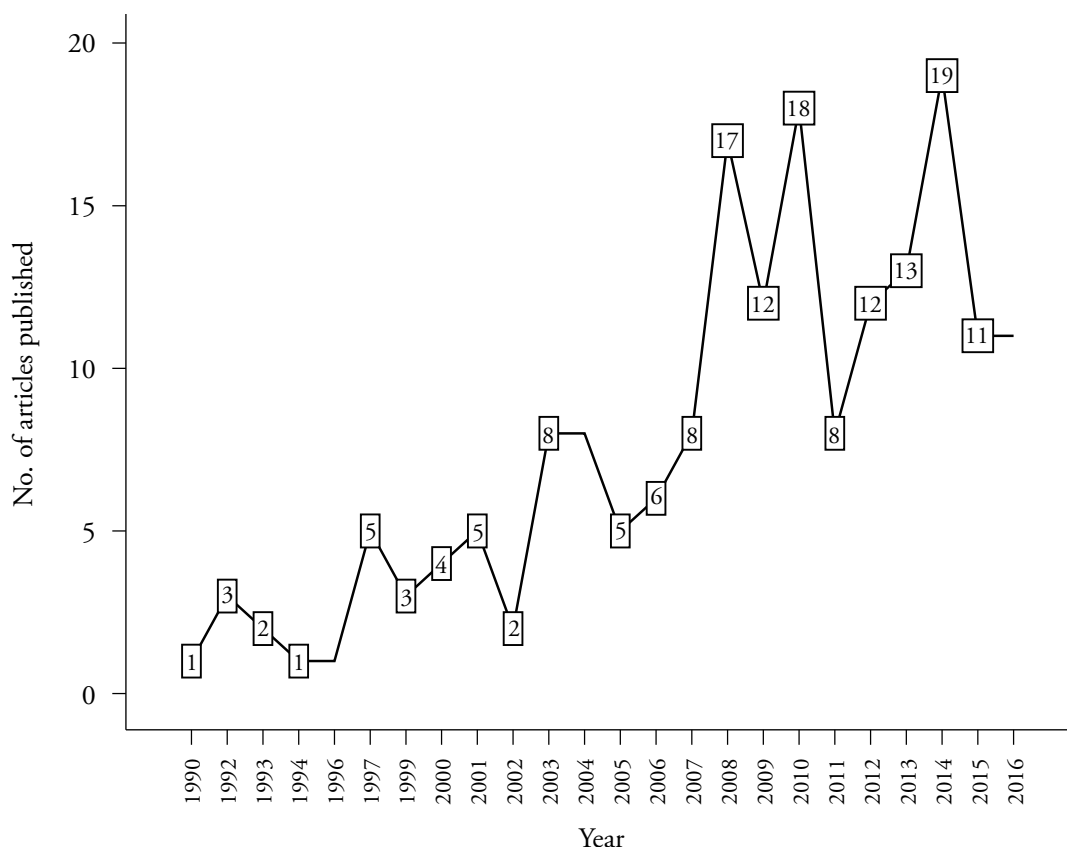## Chart 6 – Articles' subject area classified by use of methodology

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Among the subject areas proposed in this literature review, we see that "political culture," in addition to being the most frequently studied subject area, is the only one that has a larger number of articles with a methodology. All the other subject areas have considerably fewer articles, with no explicit methodological procedure. This is particularly the case for two topics - "cultural diplomacy" and "cultural heritage" - neither of which contain an article on culture with a methodology. It is interesting to note that while "political culture" corresponds more to the debate in PS, "cultural diplomacy" and "cultural heritage" correspond to IR and law, respectively. Once again, we find that researchers in IR: a) publish little related to specific topics on culture; and b) use little methodology in their articles on the topic.

Another question was asked: was there a predominance of a certain subject area during the time period studied, from 1990 to 2017? The frequencies of the subject areas indicate that there was not. "Political culture," for example, despite comprising of the most articles, undergoes frequent fluctuations from year to year. This subject area has been studied since 2001, but 2008 was the year with the largest number of publications. The topic "cultural factor," however, was no longer being studied as of 2013. While some topics are constant over the years, studies on "cultural diplomacy"

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and "security and defense" began only in 2007 and 2009, respectively. The chart below (Chart 7) presents the frequency of the articles over the years. The chart[7] shows that many articles only appeared from 2008 - the year that also saw the third largest number of articles (17) in the period.

Chart 7 - Frequency of articles by year (1990 - 2016)[8]

Source: Prepared by the authors.

If we read the chart according to decade, there is a clear evolution in studies on culture. Between 1990 and 2000, 20 articles were published. However, from 2001 to 2010, this number more than quadrupled: 89 articles were found. From 2011 to 2016, we have a total of 74 articles. The average number of articles produced, respectively, is 2, 8.9 and 12.3. While the comparison among these three decades indicates an increase in studies, journals focused specifically on IR have had no publications on culture over the last 26 years. This finding suggests that the topic may be of greater interest to other areas.

The second factor that illustrates the variability among the articles is the keywords. To identify possible approaches, concepts, or levels of analysis that are common among the articles, we have generated the following cloud (Figure 1) based on the keywords.

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7 There were no publications in 1991, 1995 or 1998, and thus, they do not appear in the chart. The years 1996, 2004 and 2016 have the same number of publications as the previous year, and therefore, there is no label on the data.

8 2017 was not included because it was not possible to collect data for the entire period.
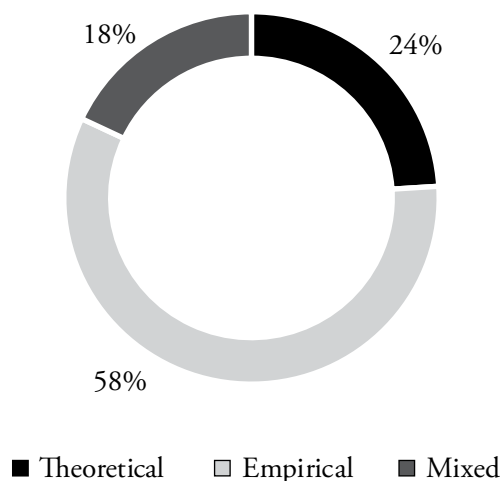
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Figure 1 - Word cloud from the keywords used in the articles

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Particularly since we are dealing with an extensive database (183 articles), the keywords are expected to vary quite widely. However, the cloud shows what the articles mainly have in common. Once again, corroborating the findings above, we see that "political" and "culture" go together as the most cited words. There is also an emphasis on "cultural," "democracy" and "participation," - words close to the previous ones. The cloud thus suggests that within the analytical approaches, culture is primarily studied through the political perspective. We do not see any words that refer to economic or social analyses, for example. Additional relevant information can be found in Chart 8, which identifies that most of the studies are empirical. This finding suggests that the debate on epistemological questions related to culture is 'taking over' or that there is an avoidance of theoretical and conceptual discussions, thus prioritizing empirical studies. The difference in the proportions of theoretical and empirical studies can be justified by the predominance of the topic of political culture, usually more associated with case studies.

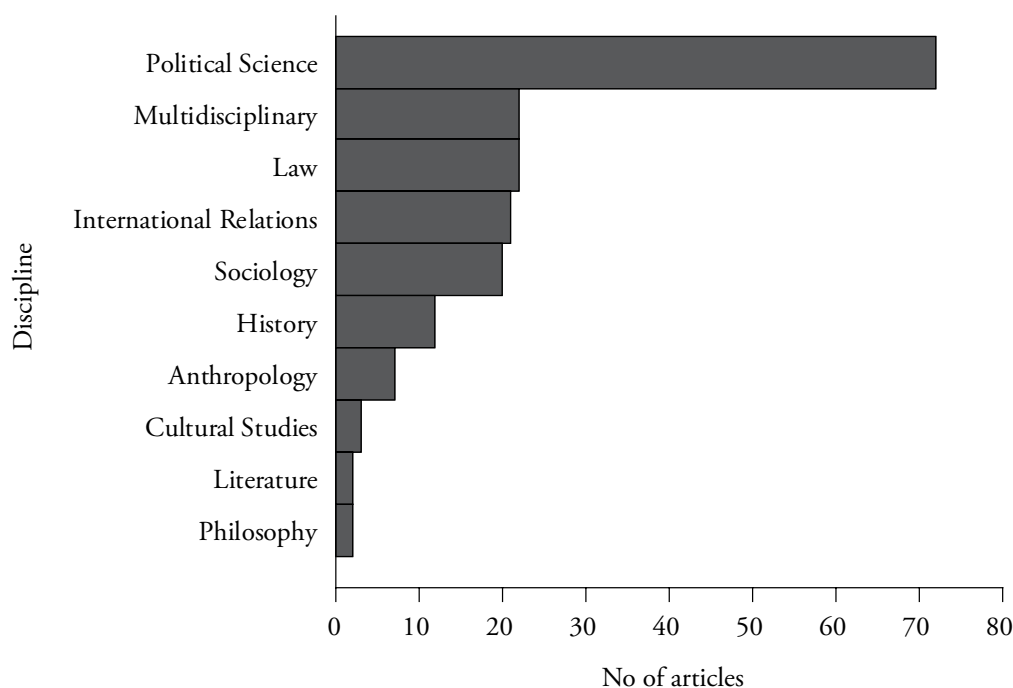**Chart 8 - Distribution (%) articles from the nature of the studies**

Source: Prepared by the authors.

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If the studies are mostly empirical, it is important to investigate which cases are being analyzed. The studies primarily address states. Since we are working with articles published in Brazilian academic journals, it was thus expected that Brazil would be the most frequently analyzed country[9] (bias). In fact, most of the articles (over 100) were about Brazil, representing a considerable proportion of the sample. The next most common countries are Chile and Argentina. Europe and the United States have not been the focus of Brazilian studies on culture; rather, countries in the South American region have been emphasized.

Regarding the theoretical foundations adopted in the articles, the disciplines that underpinned the studies were identified. This identification was not made in advance. As the articles and their bibliographic references were read, the reader noted the discipline to which a particular theoretical discussion most closely corresponded. To identify the corresponding disciplines, the studies were grouped based on the following areas: anthropology, political science, law, cultural studies, philosophy, history, literature, international relations and sociology. Articles that emphasized at least two areas were classified as multidisciplinary. Chart 9 summarizes the theoretical origin of the studies on culture.

Chart 9 – Main disciplines presented in the articles as theoretical foundations
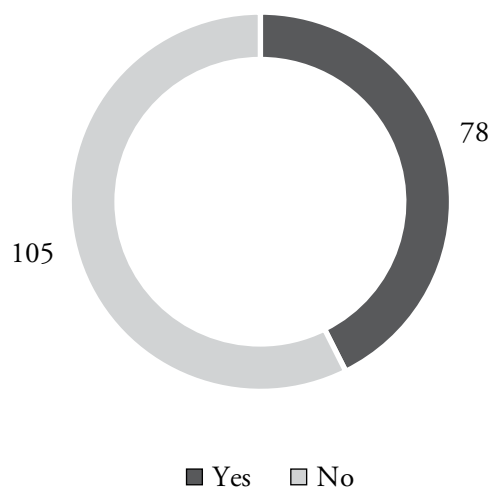

Source: Prepared by the authors.

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9 The chart does not include countries that correspond to less than 1%, those that were not specified in the articles (for example, when a regional block or region was being addressed), and those that did not analyze countries (for example, theoretical articles). When two countries were being addressed, both were included in this variable.

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The methodological question

From the methodological point of view, different methods can be used in cultural explanations to explore beliefs, identities, and values that are common among individuals (Swidler 1986; Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti 2006; Lapid and Kratochwill 1996; Harrison and Huntington 2000; Reeves 2004; Lane and Ersson 2005; Martins 2007; Keating 2008; Lebow 2008; Geertz 2017; Michalowska and Schreiber 2017). The method employed will depend on three key elements: a) how the concept of culture was constructed; b) the link between the macro and micro levels of analysis; and c) whether the study uses a social science perspective that seeks to explain or understand. The survey is the most commonly used method in studies on culture (Keating 2008).

In trying to identify whether a methodology was used by the Brazilian articles; it was necessary to establish a criterion common to all of them. For this reason, we consider a methodology to be any explicit indications (written in the text and here designated as methodological procedures). This category thus included techniques, tools, methods and indexes, among others. After the data collection, we classified the procedures in the studies with a qualitative and quantitative approach. Based on the criteria established above, Chart 10 presents the results regarding the use or lack of a methodology.

Chart 10 - Use of methodology in the articles

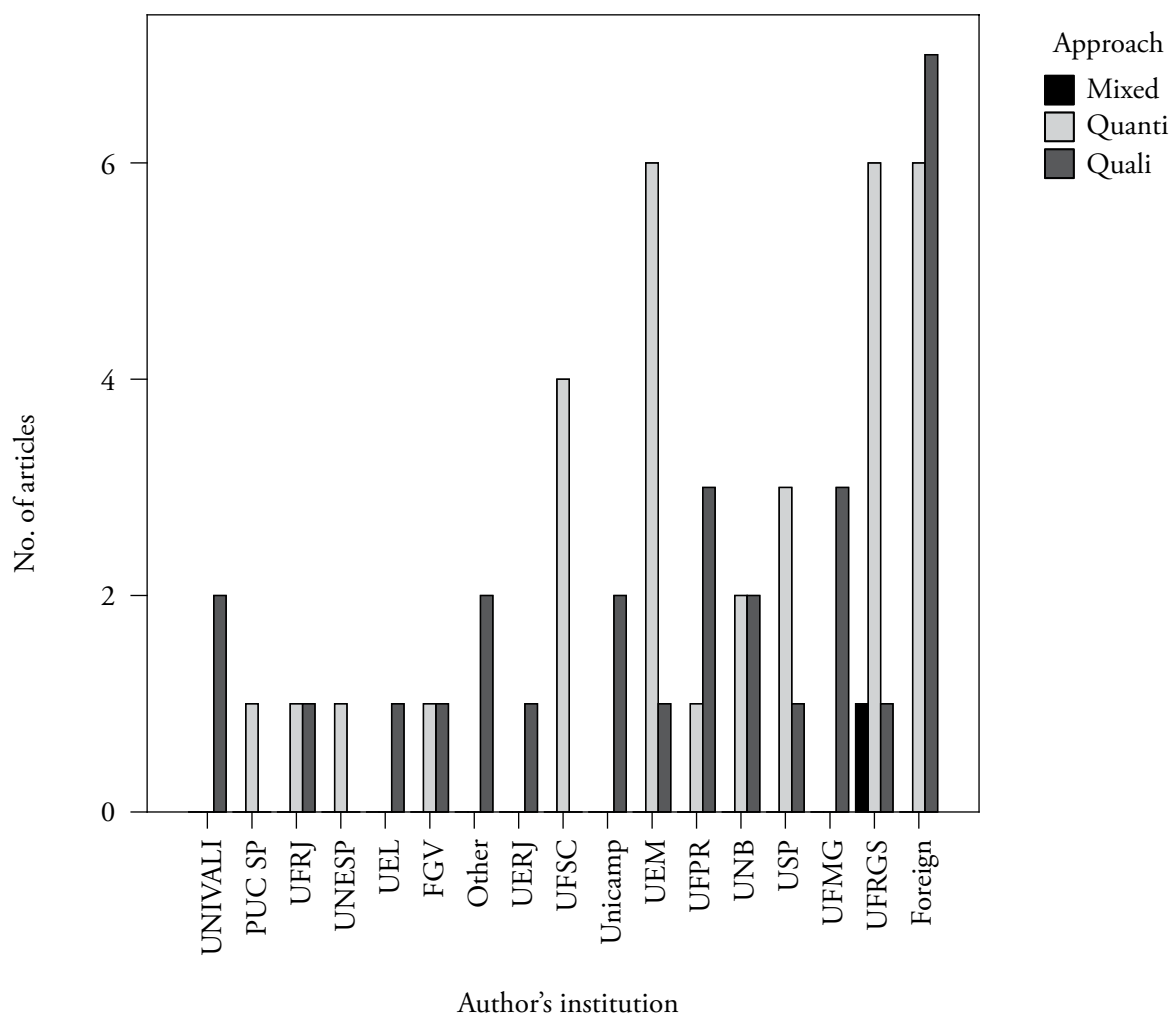

78

105

■ Yes   □ No

Source: the authors.

Of the 183 articles, most do not present a methodology. One might wonder whether this finding indicates a gap in the academic research on the topic of culture in the universe analyzed, as it is only with explicit, codified, and public methods that data analysis can be considered reliable. If the method and logic of the observations and inferences are implicit, it would be impossible to judge the validity of the research. There would consequently be doubts about the conclusions presented, limiting the analytical contribution of this type of academic production (King, Keohane

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and Verba 1996). The weight of the Brazilian contributions on the topic are therefore still up for debate, as most of the articles lack an explicit methodology.

The research approach was classified in 3 ways: qualitative, quantitative, or mixed. The number of studies with a qualitative or quantitative approach were roughly equal. However, the largest number of articles had no identifiable approach, as they did not have an explicit methodology. For Soares (2005), quantitative or qualitative research is in the minority, as Brazilian journals largely contain works that are closer to essays rather than scientific articles. Our sample of articles on culture seems to corroborate this statement. According to Soares (2005), the solution to this deficiency would be to train professors and students in qualitative methods, raising the standards for this type of research.

Based on this idea, the study identified the institutions responsible for training researchers in the use of certain research approaches. Chart 11 provides a visualization of the possible influence between institution/author and the research approach adopted.

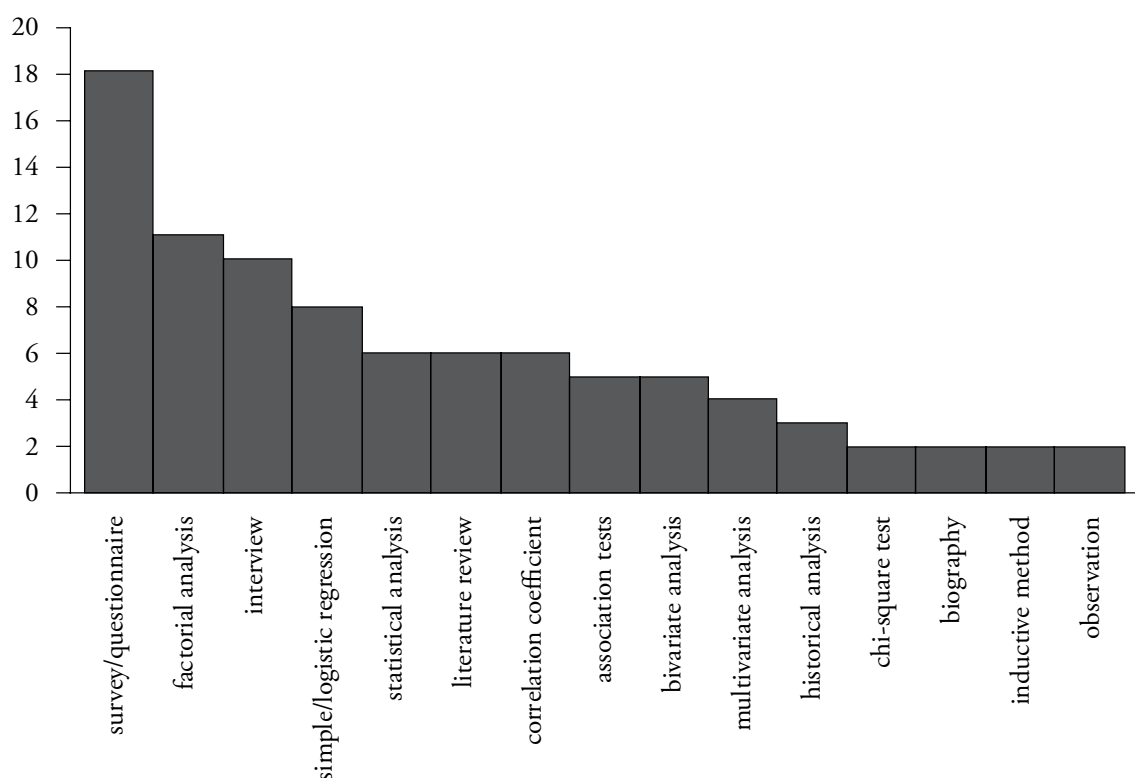**Chart 11 – Methodological research approach classified by author's institution**

Source: Prepared by the authors.

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The chart[10] presents the main institutions (affiliated with the authors) that published the most articles on culture. It is curious to note that only one university presents articles with a mixed approach (UFRGS). Moreover, as we have seen, researchers affiliated with foreign universities have published most of the articles on the topic. Most interesting is it that no researcher affiliated with the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG), Unicamp, UERJ, the State University of Londrina (UEL), the Universidade do Vale do Itajaí (University of the Vale do Itajaí; UNIVALI) or "other institutions" published quantitative works on culture. The opposite occurs with the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo (PUC-SP), São Paulo State University (UNESP), and the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC), which only published quantitative articles. The exclusivist character that seems to exist in the studies suggests that there is an influence between the educational institution and the approach adopted in the study.

There are many possibilities for studying culture. Regardless of the research approach, it is possible to find tools for data analysis or collection. We can thus summarize the methodological procedures used most frequently in the articles on culture in Brazil. To collect these procedures, the exact names used to specify the research methodology in the articles were taken directly from the text. Chart 12 lists the main methodological procedures used.

Chart 12 - Main methodological procedures used

Source: Prepared by the authors.

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10 The chart only includes the institution of the article's primary author. In other words, for articles with more than one author, only the primary author's institution was considered. Institutions that corresponded to less than 2% of the articles were grouped together and do not appear on the chart. Articles that do not present a methodology are not included in the chart. When there are no bars, it means that the production of articles by that institution (affiliated with the authors) is zero, regardless of the research approach.

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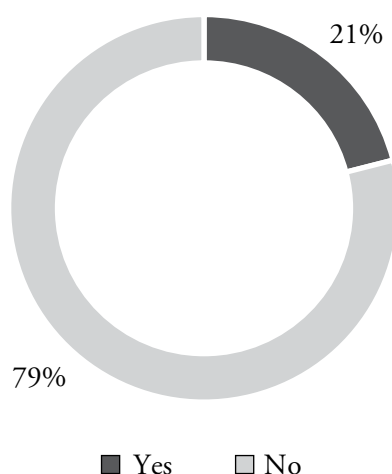
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Chart 12 shows the tools usually linked to the research approaches. The survey and questionnaire were the most frequently used tools and the only ones common to all the approaches, proving to be relevant tools for conducting research on the topic. Next, we find factor analysis and interviews. These approaches are the main methodological procedures for quantitative and qualitative research, respectively. However, of the 15 main procedures listed in the chart, 6 correspond to studies with a qualitative approach, while the rest (8) come from quantitative research. It thus becomes clear that there is a greater number of tools for the latter, at the cost of qualitative research.

Other quantitative procedures are also used. These include association, cohort and variance analyses and panel studies. The other qualitative procedures include "structural and cultural analysis," "qualitative analysis of the data," "interdisciplinary comparison," "exploratory and descriptive" and "regional segmentation." Given the scope of these last methodological procedures, we can question the extent to which they provide information about the articles' methodology. The data leads us to reflect on the quality of qualitative research in the social sciences in Brazil.

The conceptual question

In this section, we will observe how the articles address the concepts of culture. First, the number of articles that use explicit definitions in the body of the text were identified. Chart 13 shows the results of the analysis, emphasizing that only 21% presented the concepts explicitly, i.e., 38 articles.

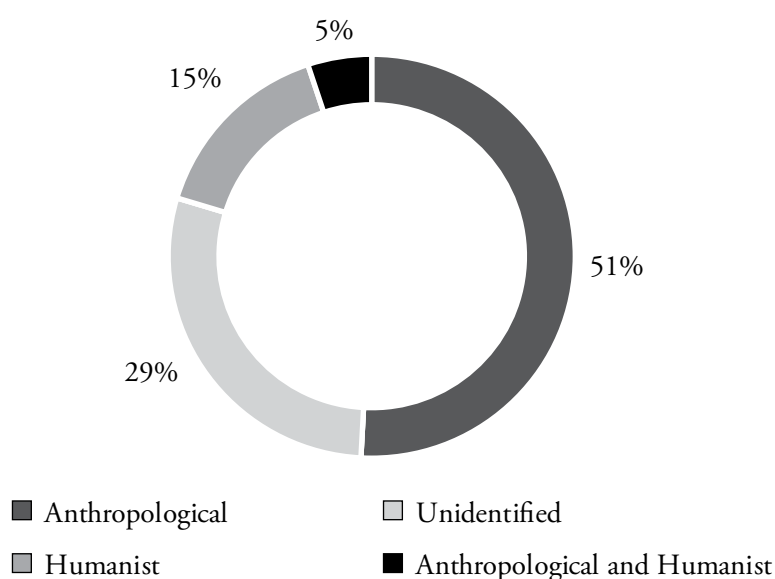**Chart 13 – Presence of the concept of culture in the articles**

Source: Prepared by the authors.

In the 38 articles cited above, we found 59 explicit definitions, demonstrating that there is little conceptual consensus in the area of studies. In this sense, the problem identified by Lapid and Kratochwill (1996) as an excessive number of definitions is highlighted. It thus becomes

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relevant to investigate the divergences presented by the plethora of concepts found or, in the words of Valbjorn (2008), to analyze merits or demerits. Nevertheless, it is important to ask whether the articles choose to omit the concept of culture in order to avoid a theoretical dispute, which was pinpointed by Keating (2008). To this end, the universe of articles that present the concept of culture has been analyzed (29%). In Chart 14, we classify the concepts of the articles based on Reeves (2004), who makes a distinction between humanist and anthropological conceptions of culture.

Chart 14 – Concepts of culture used in the articles classified by types of approaches, based on Reeves (2004)

Source: Prepared by the authors.

First, the chart shows the portion of definitions for which it was not possible to identify the conception used (29%). Then, corroborating the proposition by Reeves (2004), it is clear that the majority (51%) of the studies on the topic in Brazil use the anthropological conception, in which culture is a broad phenomenon, representing what a group of people has in common and what differentiates it from other collectivities (Reeves 2004). Only 15% use the humanistic conception, related to the idea that culture is a product of human effort in intellectual and artistic terms.

For the rest of the articles, those that did not explicitly present the concepts (79%), the assumption is that these articles, regardless of whether they present the concept, are based on some idea of culture. While trying to capture the understanding of culture underlying the study, an attempt was made to summarize the 'concept' of culture with a word or expression that is repeated in the article's text. The results are shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2 - Word cloud of terms or expressions about the understanding of culture according to the authors of all articles
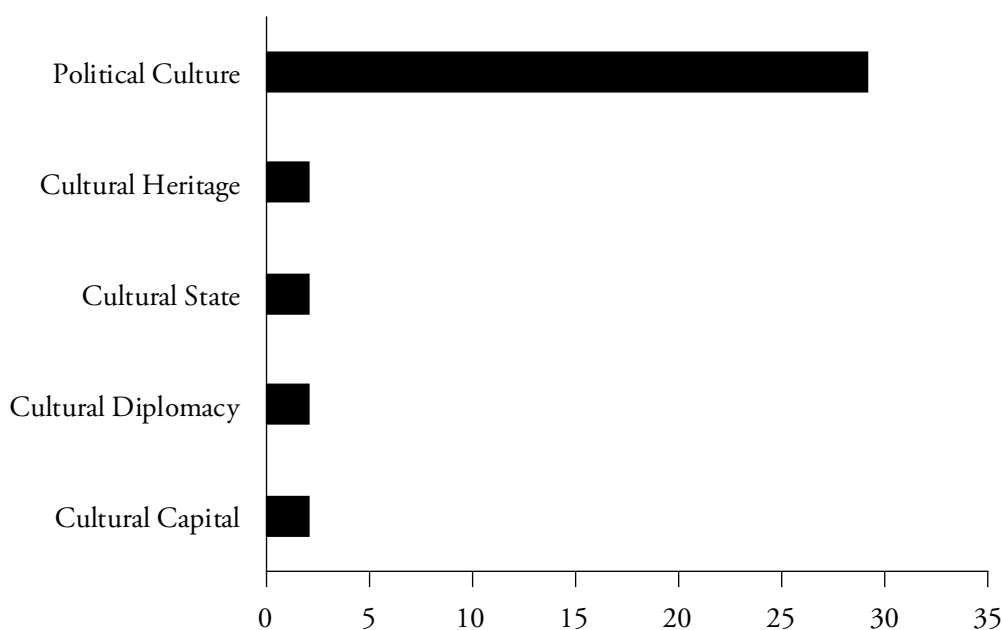

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Figure 2 helps us understand the underlying concepts contained in the articles since - despite not presenting an explicit definition - the articles use some understanding of culture. Culture can thus be 'defined' through different abstract terms. Based on this word cloud, we can see that art (on the left edge of the figure) is referenced less frequently than the rest. No other word - such as literature, cinema, or handicrafts - refers to art. What are clearly emphasized are the words values, attitudes, politics, custom, and cultural heritage. We can interpret this finding as evidence, in line with Reeves (2004), that the predominant concept of culture today is the anthropological concept rather than the humanist one.

Keating (2008) theorized that the abandonment of the concept occurred as a result of the methodological and critical difficulties presented above. We have thus investigated whether this conceptual 'flight' also has occurred in the Brazilian studies. To identify possible concepts used as a proxy for culture, we have established the following variables: a) a concept related to culture, for example, cultural diplomacy or political culture, and b) another concept not related directly to culture, i.e., any other concept that has a definition, for example, democracy or institutions.

We will now look at the first variable (concept related to culture). To begin, note the use of specific concepts of culture, varying according to the topic. Often, the article did not use a general definition of culture, but a specific one. To encompass these definitions, this variable can show the topics being studied within the broad topic of culture and even which conceptual definitions are predominant. Only the concepts with related words were therefore included, e.g., culture and cultural. Now, we will look at the findings in Chart 15 below.

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Chart 15 – Main concepts culture-specific used in the articles
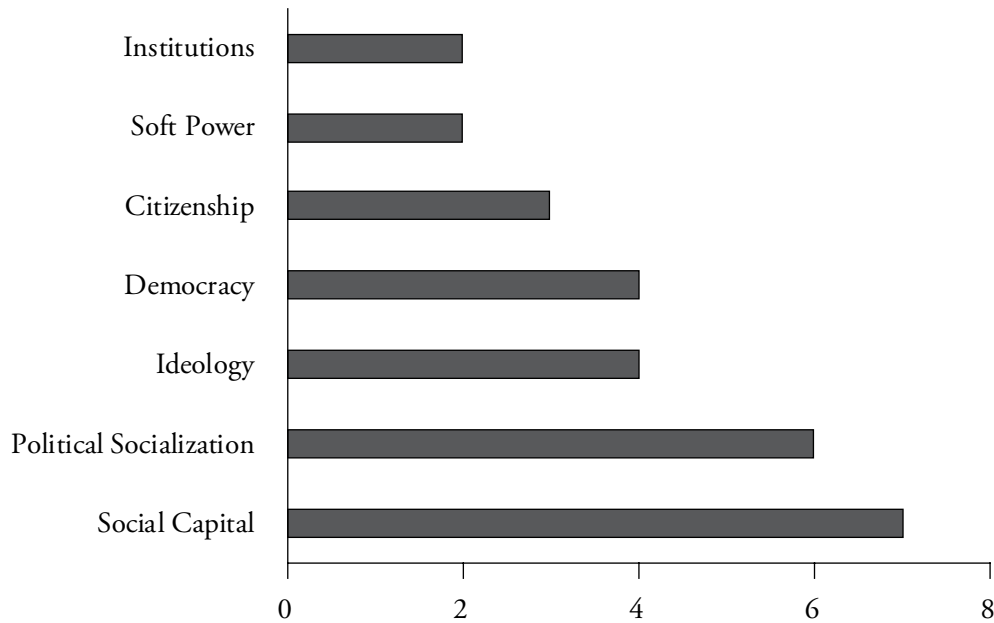

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Except for political culture, the other concepts have a similar frequency of use. Among the different concepts cited, the chart emphasizes cultural heritage, cultural state, cultural diplomacy, and cultural capital. This finding shows not only that the dominant topic is political culture, but also the importance of this concept, particularly in the definition of Almond and Verba (2015). This definition is referenced 20 times in the articles, while the others are cited only once[11].

The data suggests that political culture is a topic placed in a relevant academic debate. This could be explained: first, because it is a topic of interest for the Brazilian researcher. As the data shows, 62% of the countries analyzed in the articles are about Brazil. Second, studies in political culture are mostly studied in PS, a discipline that has been using different methodological tools. This produces more findings in scientific research and, thus, more robust articles. Therefore, journals tend to publish such articles. From the publication of more articles, other researchers want to study political culture in Brazil, likely because of frequent scenarios of political crisis in the country.

We now move to the second variable (concepts not directly related to studies on culture). Chart 16[12] shows that the most frequently used concepts are social capital and political socialization.

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11 Almond and Powell (1972), Inglehart (1988, 2001), R. Putnam (1993), J. A. Moisés (1995), R. H. Chilcote (1997) Rodrigo P. de Sá Motta (2009) L. Avritzer (2002), L. Madueño (1999), R. Inglehart and C. Welzel (2009).

12 Concepts that correspond to less than 2% of articles are not included in the chart.

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Chart 16 – Other concepts non-culture-specific used in the articles

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Looking at the findings, one might ask whether these concepts are merely replacing (or avoiding?) the concept of culture. As an example, we can look at the most frequently cited concept: social capital. Keating (2008) explains that studies on social capital emerge following the rebirth of culture, using the logic of culture but avoiding the use of the term itself. The chart suggests that despite not using the term culture, these studies are in fact investigating the same phenomenon. This fact becomes particularly striking in political science studies.

Conclusion

A pellucid specification and definition of the concept(s) to be used in any research is fundamental. It is also true that 'root' concepts might have their minimal meaning expanded. According to Giovanni Sartori, it is not the number of meanings that matter, but to make explicit where the used concept is in the ladder of concept abstraction (Mair 2008). This research has hypothesized that the PSIR discipline has neglected such issue when approaching culture due to the difficulty in operationalizing this concept.

Being shared among several areas of knowledge, the concept of culture has fragmented in multiple and even contradictory meanings. Aware of this fact, the present article maps the use of the culture concept published in PSIR Brazilian journals from 1990 to 2017, showing how that concept is defined. In order to do so, this work identified the conceptual diversity concerning culture used from 1990 to 2017. It is also demonstrated that a small fraction of the analyzed articles presented a clear concept of culture. When the concept is presented, it is mainly derived

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from the anthropological perspective, corroborating the hypotheses of Reeves (2004) and Keating (2008). However, according to Reus-Smit (2019), this anthropological conception has already been rejected in other areas of knowledge. The new concept of culture indicates that cultures are heterogeneous, porous, intertwined, and interrelated. Consequently, there is no unified culture. Nevertheless, most IR theorists remain stationary in the old conception, making a "conservation zoo for concepts long dead in their natural habitats" (Reus-Smit 2019). This current debate reinforces the importance of analyzing the use of the culture concept in recent PSIR academic production in Brazil as other selection universes.

The findings of this study also made clear that the great majority of the articles studied do not present the concept of culture, validating another of Keating's (2008) hypothesis which identified the escape of the "use of the term culture" in human sciences field. So, the relevance of questioning the implications of such facts for the empirical findings of the research published stands clear. We have also identified the existence of a common matrix for most definitions named - or not - as culture. It would be related to attitudes, values, and beliefs, in tune with classical concepts of foreign authors. That fact decreases the possibility of a Brazilian contributions in the cultural conceptual field. A derivative question would be inquiring for new concepts in international academic production, since Brazilian production has only applied classical concepts. Those findings expose that the shirking of the use of the culture concept may have occurred as a result of theoretical and methodological difficulties.

Most of the articles observed do not explain how their respective research was carried out, indicating a lack of methodology. When methodology is explicitly presented, there is a relative balance between the qualitative and quantitative approaches. The main tools used are questionnaires, factor analysis, and interviews. In addition, the data collected in this study suggested the use of non-methodological *stricto sensu* procedures in the qualitative approaches, which allows us to question the methodological accuracy on the qualitative studies in the area of PSIR.

The nature of this study does not allow us to advocate for causalities, but it sparked suggestions of what might be defining the Brazilian academic production. The findings did not only bring about contributions to the PSIR study area, but also suggested reflections on this field itself. While most IR journals have not published articles on culture, PS articles; have focused on political culture; present a methodology; are empirical studies; and contain theoretical references. In addition, it is important to reflect on the role of educational institutions and academic journals in their possible influences on the research agenda. The data presented suggested some degree of causality between institutions and authors and the research approach adopted in the articles.

The systematic review conducted in this work is expected to provide meaningful findings due to the in-depth theoretical and methodological analysis carried out. Also relevant is the fact that, until the present moment, the choice of the time period (1990-2017), the method applied (systematic literature review), and the data used were, all combined, unique among the PSIR Brazilian studies. But we are aware of its limits since only articles were included, leaving out other

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kinds of academic production such as theses and dissertations. However, if on the one hand, the universe choice allows bias, on the other, the analyzed sample represents a significant portion of the Brazilian production, making the results of the study a humble but relevant contribution to understand how culture is studied in PSRI field area in Brazil.

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