The central point that I would like to make is to encourage young Brazilian scholars of public administration to stay engaged in the broader world. My reason for adopting this theme is that, quite frankly, the world needs more diverse voices in what passes for the international scholarly community in public administration. Brazilians have been under-represented in this community. While this is due in no small part to the rest of the (especially Anglo-phone) world not making an effort to listen to Brazilian voices, Brazilians need to do their part and communicate!

In the discussion which follows, I will first indicate why I think this topic is worth addressing, both in terms of whether Brazilians are contributing to global discourse on public administration, and in terms of why they should! I will then suggest some areas where Brazilian scholars can contribute to global discourse on public administration. I will close with an acknowledgement of the difficulty of participating in this global discourse, and offer some suggestions for overcoming these.

**Why Brazil?**

I might best indicate why I want Brazilians more engaged in international discourse by relating a story. In 1997 I did dissertation research in Santa Catarina. Prior to my departure I read everything I could get my hands on in the Indiana University library, which included a handful of Portuguese language, Brazilian journals. As a result prior to my departure I got some sense of the richness of the Brazilian social science literature, both in terms of what I was able to read in these journals available in Indiana, but also because of the numerous, intriguing articles referenced in journals that I did not have access to at Indiana. So I looked forward to my arrival in Brazil.

The dissertation was titled *Civil society and development -- the role of the third sector in the public policy process in Santa Catarina and Sergipe, Brazil.* As a result of this interest in ‘third’ sector ‘non-governmental organizations’ (ONGs), at some point I quickly became aware of Ilse Scherer-Warren, an excellent ONG scholar at UFSC. In the course of discussions with her, and after reading a great deal of her work, I was mildly

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1 Especially useful were *Revista Brasileira das Ciências Sociais,* and *Dados.*
2 For those of you considering going on to a PhD, my reason for this long, awkward title was that if someone on a hiring committee was to read only the title of my dissertation (which is not unheard of!), I wanted them to know what I did.
intrigued at how I had failed to hear of her work before, outside of Brazil. She responded that like a lot of Brazilian scholars, she preferred to spend her time engaged in solving social problems within Brazil, rather than publishing in international academic outlets. This seemed rational, even laudable, as a brilliant scholar was foregoing international scholarly recognition for the opportunity to make a social impact at home.

I then read another statement of this perspective a couple of years later, from memory from Maria Herminia Tavares de Almeida, I think in the journal PS: Politics and Political Science. Again, despite being a brilliant social scientist, she asserted a preference for engaging Brazilian social issues, rather than publishing in international journals.

This, then, is why I want to focus in these comments on encouraging you to be members of the global intellectual community: even if you rise to the top of your field in Brazil, as have Tavares de Almeida and Scherer-Warren, it can’t be taken for granted that you will be so engaged.

A second reason for my focus in this discussion is that Brazilian voices are needed. I can certainly understand the perspective of Tavares de Almeida and Scherer-Warren. Like every society in the world today, indeed every society in the history of our species, Brazil has very real problems, and not necessarily adequate resources, to address these. But my point is that the world has real problems as well, and solving these needs the participation, and the perspectives, of all of the world. Brazilians need to do their part.

A digression on ‘American’ geo-political hegemony

A first problem is the somewhat Americo-centric nature of the international public administration intellectual community. As a 48 year old, I have seen at least one major revolution in international relations: the collapse of the Soviet empire. People refer now to the United States as the sole superpower, and see this ‘unipolarity’ as the defining feature of the current era.

In passing, it is worth noting that the ‘sole superpower’ perception of the world is woefully simplistic. First, the United States has been the sole superpower not just since the collapse of the USSR, but rather since the second world war. The Soviet Union was always a ‘large power’ that was unsustainably trying to act like a superpower, and collapsed in no small part as a result of this over-reach.

At the same time, there has been much misunderstanding of the nature of this American ‘superpower’ status. On the one hand, critics of the US allege that it is practically omnipotent, a hegemonic force imposing its will on the rest of the world. On the other hand, there is the palpable evidence of the limits of American power. This goes beyond the current failure of the nation-building experiment in Iraq, the second loss of a major

3 Though I have been unable to find this article subsequently.
4 The ‘war’ in Iraq was very short-lived, ending with the collapse of the Ba’athist regime shortly after the US and allied invasion. Since then the US has been mediating a civil war, while trying to build a
war in barely thirty years. The survival of Cuba, New Zealand’s anti-nuclear policies, the failed interventions in Lebanon and Somalia, the dependence on imported oil, the current borrow-from-China-and-spend economic policies, all point to the very real limitations of American power. Note that these two positions are incompatible: one can’t think that the US is omnipotent, the source of all evil in the world, in the face of massive evidence of the country’s real limitations.

Superpower status is, instead, a statistical artifact. It means little more than the United States is big, far more so than any other country in the world today. The parameters of this are well known: the US economy is as large as that of the next two or three combined, and it spends about 40% of the money spent on defence in the entire world. Another way of putting this is that of the two dozen or so rich countries in the world, the United States is the most populous, and it devotes a relatively large portion of its income to defence spending.

American academic hegemony?

For the purposes of international scholarship, the United States is also a superpower. The exact parameters of this academic superpowerdom are unclear to me, indeed in a recent article I have argued that

…to the extent that few Americans are able or willing to cross language barriers and to bring the lessons of others into the discipline, the U.S. public administration discipline will be collectively impoverished.

So I argue that rather than an academic superpower, American academia is, to paraphrase the children’s nursery tale: an emperor with no clothes. We strut around telling ourselves that we’re beautiful, but our inability to engage the rest of the world leaves us unable to understand that world, and so incapable of exercising global intellectual leadership.

democracy in the Middle East. For an almost tragic-comic example of the American failure, see the following quote from the then adviser to US Presidential candidate George W. Bush:

“The President must remember that the military is a special instrument. It is lethal, and it is meant to be. It is not a civilian police force. It is not a political referee. And it is most certainly not designed to build a civilian society. Military force is best used to support clear political goals, whether limited, such as expelling Saddam from Kuwait, or comprehensive, such as demanding the unconditional surrender of Japan and Germany during World War II. It is one thing to have a limited political goal and to fight for it; it is quite another to apply military force incrementally, hoping to find a political solution somewhere along the way.”


6 Depending, especially, on whether one adopts purchasing power parities to estimate the size of the Chinese economy.


Still, my point here is that just as American military superpowerdom is largely a function of its large size and willingness to invest in weapons; so its academic superpowerdom is a function of its size, and its willingness to invest especially in graduate education. The World Almanac, a general reference source widely available in the United States, lists some 1600 four year colleges and universities in the United States. The result is a mass of research equaled (I’ll hazard what I think is a safe guess) by no other country. Internationally, this is also matched by massive funding for international exchanges of various sorts. So one source of American influence is just its overwhelming size.

Language constitutes a second source of this American intellectually hegemony, as English has (ironically) become the global lingua franca. For Russians to communicate with Brazilians, for instance, English often has to be used as an intermediary, as few Brazilian scholars speak Russian, and few Russians speak Portuguese. This knowledge of English by both parties makes the American academic literature accessible to both.

Global academic multi-polarity

I think the ‘American hegemony’ view presented above would be roughly consistent with how most people see the global academic environment, so at this point I should add some comments that qualifies this view considerably. In short, rather than dominated by an American-led, English language intellectual community, global intellectual life is multi-polar. More accurately, there are a number of intellectual communities, with linkages (some strong, some weak) between these.

Brazilians are able to communicate with Argentines, for instance, without the intermediary of English. Argentines and Peruvians have no language barriers between them, but it is likely that Argentine and Peruvian public administration scholars do not constitute a single epistemic community as each, like Scherer-Warren and Tavares de Almeida, focus on their national contexts. Still, not least through efforts of groups like the Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos, Hispanic Latin-American scholars of public administration constitute an epistemic community of their own, with ‘provincial’ divisions for each national community, and Brazilians a sort of semi-autonomous region of this Latin American community of public administration scholars.

Numerous further links exist, then between individuals in this Latin-American community of public administration scholars and the American community, with the relationship between myself and Dr. Salm an example of this! For the purposes of my discussion, note that Latin-Americans are able to interact without the mediation of we English-speaking, hegemonic Americans.

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9 Another factor that probably accounts for the mass of research done by American scholars may be the ‘publish or perish’ philosophy in granting tenure at a good portion of these 1600 American universities.
10 In a good example of American insularity, this ‘world’ almanac easily is 80-90% composed of American information.
11 For the organization’s Portuguese language website, see http://www.oeibrpt.org/
The French public administration community, no doubt dominated by l'École Nationale d'Administration, offers another distinct group of scholars, and again various individuals link this to the American and Brazilian communities.

Where I am going with this is pretty clear: the French are also part of a European Community of scholars, which includes the Portuguese who share a common language with Brazil, and the British who share a common language with the Americans, as well as Australians, New Zealanders, sundry other English speaking countries (the Indian Journal of Public Administration, for instance, is published in English), and Canadians, who also feature a French minority with their own École Nationale d'Administration (Publique), which lists the French École among its partner institutions.

So the point is that there is certainly a global public administration epistemic community in the sense that all are aware of the others, and people from one country publish in another from time to time. But there is not a global public administration epistemic community in the sense of a homogeneous group of scholars who share consistent values, perspectives, and such.

More important, American scholarship is not at the centre of this global public administration epistemic community, nor does it lead this community. Instead, the global public administration epistemic community is multi-centric, with distinct communities in Latin America, Europe, and North America, and at least a couple of dozen national literatures within these, both part of these communities and also with their independent links to other national literatures.

Yet while there is no American hegemony in this global community, the problem is that while America’s literature is neither at the center of this global community nor does it lead this community, it does exercise a preponderant influence. This is not a good thing, as America and its academy is woefully insular, and still has far too much of the ‘manifest destiny’, neo-colonial arrogance that Alberto Guerreiro Ramos and many Americans criticized in the 1950s.

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13 For their website, see http://www.ena.fr/accueil.php
14 John Rohr and Richard Stillman are good examples.
15 Maurício Serva is a good example.
16 For their website, see http://www.enap.uquebec.ca/enap/fr/accueil.aspx
17 I've documented this to some extent in some of my own research, focusing on Australia, Brazil, Canada, and the United States. See:
Candler, G.G. (2006), “The evolution of public administration in Australia, Brazil and Canada,” Canadian Public Administration 49(3); and
18 These would include especially Fred Riggs. See my ‘Linguistic diglossia’ article and:
Brazilians and others, therefore, have an obligation to create their own links within this global epistemic community, to contribute to this global epistemic community, and not least to educate the Americans!

**What Brazil has to offer**

I will especially focus in this section on what I know best: my own research, and what I have found in the Brazilian literature that I have shared with others. More broadly, the logic of bringing Brazil into the discussion in international intellectual discourse is compelling if only because, as the fifth most populous country in the world, with nearly 3% of the world’s population, surely it deserves at least, well, 3% of the attention.

This isn’t the case. As an experiment, I will punch a number of countries into JSTOR, an electronic database of largely English language, American journal articles. In the table below, I list a handful of countries, their population, and the number of hits in JSTOR.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries in American scholarship</th>
<th>JSTOR category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Population (millions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that Brazil is under-represented: Mexico, with less people than Brazil, gets much more attention than Brazil. This is perhaps understandable, given the proximity of Mexico to the US. But what of Argentina: less than a quarter of the population of Brazil, but as much, if not more attention from American scholars? France, with 1/3 of the population of Brazil, gets far more attention. So my point is that Brazil is under-represented, and so global discourse (in English, anyways) is impoverished if the lessons of Brazil are not brought in to this.

But what, the Brazilian student of public administration might fairly ask, does Brazil have to offer the rest of the world?

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19 Some years ago I was talking to a good friend from Turkey. I explained how much of my scholarship to date involved looking at what Americans were talking about, looking to see what Brazil had to say about this topic, and then applying the Brazilian literature to the topic in America. My friend indicated that in Turkey, this sort of scholarship was somewhat disparagingly referred to as ‘translation’. Still, I unabashedly do this: not to literally translate, but to draw on a theoretical literature that most (effectively all) of my colleagues do not have access to. I can’t help but believe that the English language public administration literature is richer for my contribution.

20 I searched for these countries in the abstract of articles.
The Brazilian federal laboratory

Americans often refer to their fifty states as a federal laboratory. The logic is that these fairly autonomous states adopt a wide range of policies, effectively constructing experiments that the rest of the country can observe. Comparative research within the country is also very common, using both the fifty states as well as myriad other sub-national units. Indeed, the most recent Census of Governments listed 87,525 governments in the United States.\(^{21}\)

With its own federal system, Brazil also offers enormous scope for comparative analysis, indeed it may be the most fertile federal system for comparative analysis in the world. This is reflected in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Regions</th>
<th>Ratio of GNP pc 1990</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>N. Ireland/ Southeast</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>North Aegean/ Central</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>S. Holstein/Hamburg</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Extremadura/ Navarre</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Corsica/Ile de France</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>Madeira/ Lisbon-Tejo</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Calabria/Lombardia</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brasil</td>
<td>Northeast/Southeast</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Piauí/ Brasília</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This comparative leverage comes, I would argue, from making some good from what is otherwise one of the country’s most serious social issues: its inequality, and the way that this is mapped out geographically. Note that Brazil features the greatest regional inequality of any of the countries in the table. I used this regional inequality in my doctoral dissertation, a 1999 article in *Policy Studies Journal* and a translation of an earlier draft of this article that appeared in *Revista Tomo*.\(^{23}\) My approach in this research

\(^{21}\) The Census of Governments is conducted every five years by the Bureau of the Census. The link for the 2002 census can be found here: http://www.census.gov/govs/www/cog2002.html. Beyond the fifty states, these governments also include 3034 counties (broadly similar to Brazilian *municípios*), 19,439 municipalities and 16,504 town governments (most located within, but independent of their counties), as well as 13,506 school districts (often independent of both their counties and their municipalities), and 35,052 ‘special district’ governments, which I only barely understand myself!


The table is reproduced from my 1998 Doctoral dissertation, p. 42.

\(^{23}\) The key document here is:


This draws from material in the dissertation, and the *PSJ* article was also translated and published in a local academic journal in Sergipe, as:
was fairly simple: to compare a relatively developed southern Brazilian state to a relatively under-developed northern one. The logic of this would seem readily transferable to other topics. A number of Brazilian states or municípios, for instance, have gotten very good press for various reforms: Ceará, Porto Allegre and Curitiba come readily to mind. A contrast between these and comparable non-reformers, for instance, would make for an interesting study.\(^{24}\)

**ONGs**

A second area that I have found fascinating about Brazil concerns the development of civil society. This is an important issue throughout a world experiencing another wave of democratization, especially in post-Communist Eastern Europe, where the lack of civil society has widely been cited as a challenge to be overcome. Brazil, I would argue, provides an interesting contrast. This is especially so given that many argue that the military coup of 1964 occurred in part to *prevent* broader participation in Brazilian civic life, yet in response to this Brazilian society organized through ONGs to combat this, and so civil society paradoxically grew. With a Ukrainian friend I attempted to do a comparison of this sort, looking to see what the Brazilian experience has to offer Eastern Europe.\(^{25}\)

More broadly, Brazil reflects a country with a long history of experience with civil groups, as well as an enormously rich academic literature on this topic. I’ve drawn on this in a handful of papers, looking at the issue of the accountability of nonprofit groups,\(^{26}\) the involvement of professional associations in public policy,\(^{27}\) and the role of NGOs in the privatization movement.\(^{28}\) As another example of how Brazil might inform the rest of the world, as I write this it is being reported that doctors make up a majority of the handful of suspected militant-Islamist bombers arrested recently in the United Kingdom. As someone interested in professional associations, I have also heard over the years that doctors and other professions have been prominent in the Islamic Brotherhood

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\(^{24}\) I don’t mean to imply that this sort of comparative research is not done in Brazil. Indeed while doing dissertation research under the local sponsorship of José Ernie Seibel of UFSC, I recall he and a graduate student developing a database meant to apply the logic of the United Nations’ Human Development Index to Brazil’s municípios. I would, though, like to see more of this research reported internationally!

\(^{25}\) Though not terribly successfully, as we weren’t able to adequately develop the Ukrainian side of the comparison. The relevant paper is G.G. Candler and Vladimir Pigenko (2000). “The third sector and democratization -- Brazil and Ukraine compared,” International Political Science Association, Quebec, Canada, 1-5 August.


and in militant Islamist groups in general. This sits oddly with what we know about professions, who are generally seen both as secular, and as inherently conservative supporters of the status quo. My own research (drawing, again, on a rich Brazilian literature) shows this to be the case, though the professions in Brazil have hardly been quiescent. One only has to think of the role of the OAB in contributing to the end of military rule. But I would argue that the Brazilian experience would provide a nice starting point for an exploration of the radicalization of the professions in the Islamic world.

*Administrative reform*

Nelson Mello e Souza once referred to ‘um debate interminável’ on administrative reform in Brazil. That it has been interminable is a good thing, as at least since the founding of DASP in the 1930s Brazil has engaged in systematic thought about reforming and improving public service provision in the country. Brazil shares with the rest of the world the occasional inability to either properly formulate of or to implement such reforms. Still, the issue has stayed on the policy agenda, giving Brazil a long history of reform.

It is also a history with relevance to much of the rest of the world. Again in some of my own current research I’ve pointed out that the traditional, bureaucratic administrative reforms of Max Weber and Woodrow Wilson, indeed the ‘scientific management’ of Frederick Taylor, have unfairly been widely criticized in the United States. Bureaucracy, rules, hierarchy, merit, and a focus on technique are seen as inferior to a more contemporary, hip approach to administration favouring civic participation, a humanistic approach, and such, with the ‘New Public Service’ of Robert and Janet Denhardt probably the best current example of this approach. This is all fine, but what I fear my compatriots have forgotten is that Weber’s bureaucrat was once considered a radical reformer, in contrast with patronage-riddled government in which connections often trumped competence. In a patronage system, the administrator owes fealty not to the public like Weber’s bureaucrat, but rather to the patron who obtained the position. I think it is fair to say that the transition from ‘pre-modern’ to bureaucratic public administration is still underway in Brazil. Portuguese scholars of public administration see this same dynamic in their country, to quote Juan Mozzicaffreddo:

> Relativo à forma organizativa da administração pública e sem deixar de considerer as justificada críticas ao modelo e ao funcionamento da burocracia afigure-se necessário assinalar aue, pelo menos no caso português, uma das razões da sua limitação em material de eficácia e de eficiência assentam precisamente numa **insuficiente burocracia**. O modelo burocrático da organização, no sentido quo os clássicos da teoria da organização o postularam -- Weber, Fayol, Taylor e

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mesmo mais recentemente, Mintzberg e Friedberg --, sublinha justamente que, para limitar as disfuncionalidades de uma administração menos professional e arbitrária, a administração reger-se pela [POSDCORB friendly reforms]… Ora consideramos que uma das razões das disfuncionalidades evidenciados resultada da não observância do chamdo modelo burocrático de organização.31 (2001a, p. 14; see also Dray 1995, p. 134-8)

Again, I have found a number of aspects of Brazilian administrative reform to be of interest. Those which editorial boards of academic journals have also found of interest include a series of articles on the incorporation of social equity concerns into public administration scholarship,32 the uniqueness of the Brazilian reform experience,33 two articles that look at the development of public administration in Australia, Brazil and Canada,34 and especially the work of Alberto Guerreiro Ramos, which touches on most of these issues.35

The development experience

Alberto Guerreiro Ramos also highlights the role of Brazil as a key country in the experience of ‘international development’. Dependency theorists, for instance, based their thought heavily on the Brazilian experience, and the country has since come full circle with what have widely been described as ‘neo-liberal’ reforms instituted by the Cardoso government and continued by the current Worker’s Party government.

The role of ideology in government and in scholarship is another issue that I have found Brazil to be a good window into. In current work I criticize Canadian, Australian and American public administration scholars for not having engaged ‘critical’ (Marxist and post-modern) approaches as much as Brazilians have.36

It is fair to say that Brazilian scholars have also occasionally reflected a bit of ideological bias. Criticisms of Cardoso probably best reflect this ideological influence. Yet in an

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35 References here include multiple articles in a December 2006 symposium in Administrative Theory & Praxis, and:
36 See the 2007 AJPA paper referenced above.
early (unpublished) article I highlight the pragmatism that has characterized his career. I argued that Cardoso was

“never a Marxist ideologue; rather, Cardoso has always been a pragmatist keen on furthering the broad goals of Marxist analysis; and he has always worked from a strong empirical foundation. As a result, Cardoso’s pragmatic accommodation of the ends of socialism with the realities of late twentieth century international political economy offers an alternative to a broad ideological movement suffering the dual blows of the collapse of communism and the retrenchment of the welfare state.”

Others (cited in the footnote above), have also made this point.

This issue of ideology and development has also caught my attention in the Brazilian context in relation to the reforms in Ceará attributed to the PSDB government of Tasso Jereissati. I went to Fortaleza to assess local reaction to these reforms, and in the course of a week in the library of the Universidade Federal de Ceará, I found that about 90% of dissertations written on the reforms were negative. Why this should be the case escapes me. As Mozzicafreddo suggests above: just as for Portugal, so for Brazil.

Overcoming obstacles

What I’ve argued above may seem valid enough, but the real problem, indeed I suspect a good part of the reason why Tavares de Almeida and Scherer-Warren have not published internationally as much as they (or I!) would have liked is simply because this can be very challenging. I’ve addressed this a bit in my own research, in which I lament the woefully insular monolingualism that characterizes American scholarship. This also applies to its foreign policy. The most recent edition of The Economist newsmagazine (a conservative, pro-Bush publication) has characterized Bush administration foreign policy as “schoolboy howlers.” Part of the problem here was surely that a lack of Arabic language skills contributed to American intelligence failures in Iraq.

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38 “Still No. 1.” The Economist, 30 June 2007, p. 12. The phrase ‘howler’ refers to something so embarrassingly stupid as to make one howl in disbelief. A ‘schoolboy howler’ is such a mistake that one would expect from a schoolboy, not from the foreign and defense establishment of the world’s largest country.


Of course, complaining about the mono-lingualism that characterizes the Anglophone world is not the purpose of this discussion, but rather it is to encourage Brazilians scholars and practitioners to engage in international discourse and so possibly limit the ignorance that drives the “schoolboy howlers” that too often characterize American foreign policy. I should also acknowledge that simply engaging in dialogue is no guarantee of having an impact. I can’t help but note a certain, almost neo-colonial arrogance among many of my (especially monolingual) colleagues, who tend to dismiss non-English scholarship as inferior, and to assume that the American literature represents the world’s best. Indeed, Public Administration Review, widely considered the premier journal in public administration in America, used to tout itself as the “premiere journal of public administration.” Note first the vaguely French, superfluous ‘e’ on the end of premier. Unfortunately this vaguely French spelling of ‘premiere’ is about as far as an international perspective in American public administration often goes. Generally less than 10% of articles in PAR are on non-American topics, and my own research has shown that in one sample well over 90% of articles published in five of the top American journals in public administration and policy cited no sources not published in English. Even when writing about non-English speaking societies, Anglo-phones generally cite only English language sources. The subliminal message that this conveys to readers is that all one needs to know about public administration is reflected in the American literature, indeed the rest of the world learns from American scholars in PAR.

So my point here is that though a Brazilian speaks, it is possible no one will listen, at least to the extent that your speech is mediated by the American, or broader Anglo-phone academic community. Still, if I am correct that global intellectual discourse needs more voices, it is the obligation of neglected voices to do what they can to be heard. This still leaves the issue of a linguistic hurdle for Brazilians. Despite the limitations in language skills of Americans and other Anglo-phones, the rest of the world tends to be considerably better. Yet as I point out in my “Linguistic diglossia…” paper (drawing on Barbara Wallraff),

“although it is true that a greater percentage of the world’s population every year will be using English as a second or third language, the quality of that proficiency will not be sufficient to allow American business people, lawyers, aid workers, and such to rely on English. Indeed, one study found that as few as three percent of people in many major European countries had excellent English skills.”

I understand this especially well, as for all my success in building bridges between the Brazilian literatures and the English speaking world, while I can read (technical) Portuguese very well, I can barely speak Portuguese adequately (as those of you who will attend this talk will soon discover), and am certainly unable to write professional Portuguese (as evident in my writing this in English!). This, as indicated in the quote

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40 I have joked that no American public administration scholar who can read only English has ever read anything that they found interesting in a language other than English, confirming their belief that all worth reading is written in English.

41 This vaguely French ‘e’ has since been dropped, I like to think because I and co-authors highlighted the “schoolboy howler” of this attempt at sophistication.


above, is probably the case for many of you, as well: able to read well, speak casually and write emails when necessary, but unable to write adequately for an academic journal.

Overcoming this is most obviously done through sheer hard work. Not an easy fix, I know, but an alternative is to develop a partnership. With the internet it is relatively easy to identify and to communicate with people elsewhere who share your interests. Try, especially, to find the eccentric Anglo-phone like myself who appears at least competent in Portuguese, and with whom you might alternate publishing co-authored works in Portuguese and English, with each translating the works of the other. Though there was no explicit quid pro quo, this is broadly what Ariston Azevêdo and I have done with our Guerreiro Ramos initiative. Developing an arrangement with an English speaker who is willing to translate your work for free is unlikely, I know, but it can’t hurt to try.44

I would also like to return to those non-Anglo-phone intellectual communities that I mentioned above. Portugal has a small, but vibrant public administration community, providing a foot in the broader European community. French, as well as German and Italian speakers (of which there are many in Santa Catarina!) will find access to these communities much easier.

Beyond this: at the risk of using a term that is somewhat politically incorrect in Brazilian academia, one needs to be entrepreneurial, or at least pro-active. America’s university system,45 for instance, is anything but a system. Save for higher education commissions in most states that provide some basic coordination of public universities, there is no central coordinating board for universities in America. Each operates largely independently, indeed most departments in these universities enjoy ‘academic freedom’ and make decisions largely on their own. In practical terms for the Brazilian seeking some international experience in her/his education, this means that one has to contact each institution individually, indeed it may be necessary to contact individual departments46 in a single university individually, when seeking opportunities for graduate studies, post-doctoral studies, or other sorts of exchange opportunities. Yet again, with the internet this is easier than it has ever been.

The central message of this discussion is that Brazilian voices need to be heard. In this closing section I won’t pretend that the ‘solutions’ I’ve offered above are adequate to overcome the challenges faced by Brazilians seeking to engage the ‘international’ literature. But what I can offer is ‘my good offices’. My career to date has been inspired by the work of Brazilian scholars, has benefited enormously from my studies in Brazil, and I welcome the opportunity to do for young Brazilians what Brazilian scholars have done for me. So please feel free to contact me for any help or advice that I can offer!47

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45 I’m also fairly familiar with Canada and Australia as well, and can confirm that their tertiary education is as decentralized as that of the US.
46 Dr. Salm may be able to confirm this, as his son João
47 My email is gcandler@iusb.edu. In the event that I move in the next couple of years, I can generally be found through Google.