

## Dossier

### Brazilian political thought: new perspectives and classic problems

DOI: 10.12957/irei.2023.85310

Paulo Henrique Paschoeto Cassimiro<sup>1</sup>  
Hélio Maurício Pirajá Cannone<sup>2</sup>

Brazilian political thought studies have developed alongside the institutionalization of political science in Brazil. Beginning in the 1970s with pivotal studies by Wanderley Guilherme dos Santos (2017) and Bolívar Lamounier (1974), this sub-area of political science has explored themes such as authoritarianism, political ideologies, and the history of political Brazilian thought prior to the establishment of political science as a formal discipline. These foundational themes were further solidified by the contributions of Gildo Marçal Brandão (2010) in subsequent decades. This research area is distinguished by its focus on the evolution of Brazil's national political culture and the formulation of its core problems and concepts. It addresses several critical topics: the challenges of integrating ideas from the 'global North' within Brazil's 'peripheral' self-image, the dynamics of modernization and its implications for national identity, the tension between nationalism and cosmopolitanism, the complexities of establishing and shaping a democratic order, and the relationship between State and society. These topics form a comprehensive and varied research agenda that continues to evolve.

Brazilian political thought is characterized not by a singular theme, but by a diverse approach to various subjects linked to intellectual reflection, discourse production, and the transmission and reproduction of languages. This field inherently embraces an interdisciplinary approach, integrating insights from history, literature, sociology, economics, and philosophy. The diversity of its research sources further underscores this complexity. As a result, the study of Brazilian political thought extends beyond traditional academic texts to encompass a wide array of materials. These include written and spoken speeches, pamphlets, newspapers, official documents, and even

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<sup>1</sup> Doutor em Ciência Política pelo IESP-UERJ e professor do Departamento de Ciência Política da Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro. Email: [phpcassimiro@gmail.com](mailto:phpcassimiro@gmail.com).

<sup>2</sup> Doutor em Ciência Política pelo IESP-UERJ, pós-doutorando no Programa de Ciências sociais da UFBA, com Bolsa de pós-doutorado Júnior concedida pelo CNPq e professor substituto no Departamento de Ciência Política da UFBA. E-mail: [helio.cannone@gmail.com](mailto:helio.cannone@gmail.com). <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8774-4197>

works of fiction. Each of these sources contributes to the rich complexity of national political life, offering valuable perspectives for understanding the multifaceted nature of Brazil's political thought.

In recent years, the study of Brazilian political thought has undergone significant revitalization. This renewal encompasses a broad examination of the history of political science and political theory in Brazil, with a particular focus on the languages and ideologies that shape the nation's political culture. This focus integrates an analysis of both the interpretive aspects and the normative dimensions of political thought. The collection of articles in this dossier highlights the contributions of intellectuals who have significantly influenced both the theory and practice of politics in Brazil. These authors range from those firmly established in the canon of Brazilian political thought to those who have been marginalized or considered peripheral. The analysis of these figures extends beyond just their writings, encompassing the broader contexts of how their ideas were produced, received, and circulated within the intellectual community. Each article within the dossier adopts unique approaches and perspectives to reexamine classic debates surrounding traditional authors and themes in the study of Brazilian political thought. Simultaneously, these pieces introduce new research agendas aimed at advancing the field.

Wesley Dias' article explores the complex connections between two perspectives on the racial issues that pervade Latin American societies. He contrasts the views of Cuban Fernando Ortiz and Brazilian Gilberto Freyre, focusing on their differing interpretations of transculturation and miscegenation in nations with colonial legacies marked by slavery. In a similar vein, Marcelo Badaró's article offers a fresh interpretation of the racial themes in the works of Fernando Henrique Cardoso. Badaró argues that the racial question is central to understanding Cardoso's analysis of Brazil's societal formation and his vision for the country's developmental trajectories.

In her insightful article, Camila Góes addresses a pivotal issue in the field of Brazilian political thought: the appropriation and reception of foreign political theories. She explores how sociologist Francisco de Oliveira engaged with the ideas of Antonio Gramsci, particularly concepts like passive revolution and hegemony. Góes illustrates that Oliveira initially embraced Gramsci's theories as a means to integrate political analysis into sociological studies, seeing them as vital for understanding Brazilian society. However, beginning in the 1990s, Oliveira began to critique the applicability of Gramsci's theoretical framework to the Brazilian context, questioning its effectiveness in addressing the unique challenges faced by the country. Through this analysis, Góes demonstrates that the interaction between Brazilian scholars and foreign intellectual traditions is not merely imitative but involves a critical and creative process. This process results in original interpretations that reflect the complex realities of Brazil.

Directly concerned with this last dimension, Pedro Paiva Marreca's article focuses on the pioneering work of sociologist Alberto Guerreiro Ramos in developing a social and political theory from a peripheral capitalist perspective. Ramos, deeply engaged

with Brazil's own intellectual heritage, revisited the the intellectual production of the 1930s to uncover the core issues and concepts that shaped the early development of Brazilian social sciences. Marreca emphasizes that Guerreiro Ramos championed the significance of Brazilian political thought as a crucial lens for understanding the country's unique social and political dynamics. He argues that Ramos saw this national perspective as essential not only for interpreting Brazil's historical context but also for addressing its contemporary challenges and future possibilities. Guerreiro Ramos advocated for a form of left-wing nationalism, proposing it as a framework to critically engage with and influence Brazil's trajectory.

Helio Cannone's article takes a different angle on the political language of nationalism by examining it from the conservative right-wing perspective. His focus is on Humberto Castello Branco\*, exploring his speeches and lectures delivered between 1945 and 1964 while he was a member of the Military Academy and the War College. Cannone argues that Castello Branco's writings are key to understanding the political leanings of the military figures involved in Brazil's 1964 coup. According to Cannone, Castello Branco and his contemporaries harbored a skeptical view of political parties and believed that the modernization of the country should be undertaken by what they considered an enlightened leadership (the military forces themselves), centered around the federal executive. Cannone points out that Castello Branco's version of nationalism was distinctly conservative, framed through an objectivist view that prioritized maintaining an idea of national Christian traditions and staunchly opposed the influence of foreign ideologies, particularly communism.

The articles in this dossier, authored by emerging scholars, highlight the dynamic nature and robust vitality of research in Brazilian political thought. These contributions showcase a rich diversity in theoretical approaches, methodologies, and themes, reflecting the evolving landscape of the field.

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\* T.N.: The first president of the Military Dictatorship, having been one of the articulators of the Military Coup of 1964.