Celebrating 40 Years: The State of Political Science in South Africa in 2014

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ABSTRACT *The last state of the discipline survey was done 15 years ago. In celebration of the 40th anniversary of Politikon the authors take stock of the transformation of the discipline since 1994 to show how changes in the tertiary education sector have influenced Political Science. Results of a survey of the discipline, which includes academic modules offered in Political Science and International Relations, as well as ratings of academic departments and individual scholars are analysed to show the significant changes that have occurred since the last survey. New and a greater variety of modules are offered, research outputs have increased, as have the numbers of students. On the whole, Political Science scholars are more positive about the discipline than 15 years ago. We conclude by arguing that policy relevance remains an issue and that there is a need for a greater African focus.*

Introduction

It has been 15 years since the last survey on the state of the discipline of Political Science has been conducted. As *Politikon* is celebrating its 40th anniversary we thought it apt to take a look at the state of the discipline in the second decade of the twentieth century.[1] Since the last survey the tertiary education landscape has changed dramatically given the demands of transformation of this sector. Some universities and technikons have merged to create new, larger institutions. In most cases student numbers in Political Science have increased, the composition of the student body at historically white (advantaged) universities has become far more racially integrated and Political Science departments are now offering a wider array of courses to satisfy a local and global demand.

Given the impact of academic boycotts on South African universities under the last years of apartheid greater international exposure and networking of Political Science departments have been achieved since 1994. An older cohort of political scientists, who were involved since its beginning, has retired and a younger cohort of scholars (more of them women) specializing in many different fields has

entered the profession. Research projects have experienced a boom, and quantitative political analysis has for the first time become an important methodological trend.

The aim of the survey is to highlight changes, to assess the state of the discipline in South Africa and to point out challenges. The authors wish to thank all the respondents who took the time to complete the questionnaire and to contribute to insights into the discipline. The interpretations remain those of the authors.

Political Science in a global era

The issue of relevance of Political Science remains a vexing question, as is the case in other regions of the world. In 2011 John Trent posed the question of relevance of Political Science in the European and North American contexts, estimating that there are 40,000 political scientists around the world, producing 1000 journals, indicating the expansion of Political Science globally.

The development of the discipline of Political Science in the last two decades includes attempts to go beyond merely description to attempts to give causal analysis. Advances in the discipline since the 1980s include the steady expansion of the discipline, the birth of a collective enterprise (a profession with well-defined standards for training and research), eclecticism (wide range) of research, a leap ahead in methodology and the creation of large datasets (Trent 2011, 192).

According to Trent (2011, 193) the core components of Political Science curricula include political theory and the history of political ideas, the political system of one's country, public administration and policy analysis, political economy, political sociology, comparative politics, International Relations (IR) and methodology. There seems to be two preferred epistemological positions: those favouring quantitative analysis and those favouring philosophical/historical approaches.

Research trends include multi-disciplinary research, the development of large datasets that lead to very sophisticated quantitative analysis of complex problems. There are now a significant number of international datasets that contain large numbers of key variables and indexes.

The challenges that remain, however, are tensions between normative and empirical approaches; mainstream and non-mainstream approaches (such as feminism); qualitative and quantitative research; as well as value neutrality and being an applied science. IR is still viewed as a 'Western' project, now in search of a post-Westphalian model of the state (Trent 2011, 195). Another problem singled out by Trent is the excessive specialization within Political Science, leading to narrower fields of research, while ignoring local issues. This according to him contributes to a lack of relevance of Political Science to the public and over-specialization that hampers the development of the discipline.

The issue of relevance of Political Science in the post-1994 era in South Africa has also remained. With this survey and analysis of the state of the discipline it may be possible to assess the relevance of Political Science but also to compare our findings with those of Trent, who looked at Political Science in the Global North.

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The impact of transformation on Political Science

The discipline of Political Science cannot be separated from the transformation of the higher-education sector in South Africa which poses several challenges to social scientists. These include (1) the merger of different universities with each other and the creation of universities of technology, (2) the creation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) to set standards for course content and (3) the rating of social scientists by the National Research Foundation (NRF).

(1) *The merger of different universities also called the 'size and shape exercise'*.

Since there has been such uneven allocation of resources to racially segregated universities the Task Team of the Council of Higher Education (CHE) report titled 'Towards a New Higher Education Landscape' first raised the issue of institutional mergers, reducing the number of tertiary institutions from over 30 to 23, and creating six universities of technology. In 2001 it was taken up in the National Plan for Higher Education and the mergers started in 2004. Dysfunctional, under-resourced and financially struggling universities were merged with well-functioning universities that could be considered centres of excellence. This had a detrimental effect on the running of universities, physical integration, financial viability and staff morale from which many of the merged institutions have yet to recover.

It also contributed to the 'massification' of higher education with student numbers increasing drastically, with many students being underprepared for university education. In Political Science generally student numbers declined for a while and then started on an increasing trajectory, leading to really large first-year classes but also to more and more time being spent on remedial work to improve students' reading, writing and analytical skills. The 1998 survey showed that the impact of transformation was mainly felt in the changing student composition and finding ways to deal with it. Currently historically Afrikaans-medium universities are also trying to cope with reconciling the medium of teaching with the changing student composition. Teaching in Afrikaans only has become a big obstacle to students entering with no knowledge of Afrikaans. A lot of time, money and energy have been invested in creating different strategies for a viable teaching medium without losing Afrikaans. Some universities chose parallel medium, splitting Afrikaans and English students and teaching them separately. This doubles lecturers' contact time. Other universities opted for a translation service in class, and one university follows the double medium option where Afrikaans and English are varied during the same lecture, which is confusing for students who have zero Afrikaans. The language issue in South Africa as a multi-lingual country remains a political issue that has an impact on lecturers' productivity.

Universities are also still to a large extent divided by their ideological histories, such as universities that were white with English as medium of instruction and that had Political Science/Studies departments which were more focused on the teaching of theory and ideology, while those who had Afrikaans as medium of

instruction were more concerned with empirical studies. These fault lines are, however, fading as a consequence of the transformation of universities.

(2) *The creation of the NQF*

The NQF is a comprehensive system approved by the South African Minister of Education for the registration, publication and articulation of quality-assured national qualifications. It helps students to get recognition for acquired skills and knowledge and therefore ensures an integrated educational system. In 1995 the NQF was implemented as an integrated and fully comprehensive system.

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) oversees the implementation and development of the South African NQF. The aim of this framework is to create standards for all educational institutions including tertiary that could be applied across the board. Given the uneven education curricula of the apartheid era it was necessary to create guidelines for quality education. All tertiary academic programmes have to meet the requirements of NQF levels 5–7.

One consequence is that the content of teaching programmes cannot be changed without submitting a new or revised programme to SAQA, a process that is lengthy and time consuming. After 1994 the Department of Education introduced MPhil programmes (taught two-year programmes at an MA level but with a greater focus of training students for the job market). Political scientists developed these programmes through a time-consuming process of incorporating modules that were never taught before, leading to a lot of time spent on preparation of new courses, and in some cases finding institutions where students could do internships. Because MPhil degrees are two-year degrees directly after a BA degree they had an impact on Honours programmes where student numbers started to dwindle. In 2012 the Department of Education decided to phase out MPhil degrees and to return to previous Honours and MA programmes, once more leading to a lot of time having to be invested in the redesign of Honours and MA programmes.

(3) *The introduction of a system of peer-reviewed ratings for social scientists by the NRF*

In 2002 the NRF introduced what is called the 'peer-reviewed rating system' for the social sciences and humanities modelled on a system developed for the natural sciences, with the aim of encouraging scholars who work on a specific topic to do cutting-edge research. Scholars are requested to submit an application featuring their research output for the last seven years for rating that is then peer reviewed and assigned a rate of A, B or C.

Candidates need to meet the criteria below to be assigned a certain rating:

A: Researchers who are unequivocally recognized by their peers as leading international scholars in their field for the high quality and impact of recent research outputs.

B: Researchers who enjoy considerable international recognition by their peers for the high quality of their recent research outputs. Finer gradations within this category can be B1, B2 and B3.

C: Established researchers with a sustained recent record of productivity in the field who are recognized by their peers as having produced a body of quality work that is coherent, and demonstrated the ability to conceptualize problems and apply research methods to investigating them. Finer gradations within this category can be C1, C2 and C3.

In 2010 Political Science had 17 rated researchers with 1 A, 3 Bs, 11 Cs and 2 Ys (young promising scholars who have the potential to become A-rated scientists). In comparison, by 2013 the number of researchers working within the discipline of Political Science and IR had increased. However, it is interesting to note that many of these researchers were not necessarily aligned with a department of Political Science or IR, but were part of other departments such as media and journalism, history, public administration and sociology, amongst others. In 2013 the NRF had rated 51 researchers working within the broader fields of Political Science and IR with 1 A, 14 B, 30 Cs and 6 Ys.

While the ratings were introduced to benchmark an academic's research with the aim to improve his/her rating every five years, it has led to institutions now using it for the purposes of appointments, promotions as well as research funding. This is inherently discriminatory against scholars who may work in large fields where the competition is fierce (such as comparative politics or political behaviour) as opposed to scholars who may have a niche area that is smaller and therefore international recognition comes easier. The system benefits those who specialize in small areas of research but is punitive towards the 'generalist'—scholars who work in more than one field and publish in all those fields. Feedback from the NRF rating system is that they 'lack focus'.

These issues of transformation in the tertiary education sector had major impacts on Political Science scholars' time and productivity, where creating an equal playing field for teaching and dealing with large numbers of students, without the increase of staff numbers, have diminished time for research, while only rewarding them for research output, such as through the NRF rating system. The fickleness of the Department of Education has not contributed to alleviate this situation.

Past surveys of the discipline in South Africa

For any discipline assessing its own identity, contribution and progress are very important to deal with challenges that the discipline may face and also provide clues for practitioners about their role and the status of the discipline. Given the racially segregated nature of universities and the project of transformation after 1994 it is important to assess how challenges were taken up by Political

Science but also to what extent it has met the demands of transformation and the call for relevance.

The discipline of Political Science in South Africa originated in the 1960s and since then a few surveys of the discipline have been done up to 1990. Since the 1990s the following systematic assessments have been done (Taylor 1990; Du Pisani and van Wyk 1991; Gouws 1993, 2012; Booysen and van Nieuwkerk 1998). At the South African Association of Political Studies (SAAPS) conference in Nelson Mandela Bay in 2012 there was a plenary panel on the 40 years of existence of the official journal of the association, *Politikon*.

What these surveys show is the development of the discipline from its embryonic state to a fully fledged discipline catering to interests in Political Science and IR. In the case of all the surveys there is the challenge of relevance and transformation. The Taylor survey called for new directions such as intellectual decolonization, internal transformation and the development of graduate programmes (Taylor 1990, 125–126), while Du Pusani and Van Wyk pointed out theoretical weaknesses and underdevelopment of the discipline. Gouws (1993) assessed the invisibility of women practitioners in the discipline, its androcentric bias and the lack of the impact of feminism on the discipline. In 2012 she compared developments in gender in Political Science with developments in the rest of Africa.

The survey by Booysen and van Nieuwkerk has been one of the most comprehensive with rich data, specifically on how the transformation challenge was taken up by the discipline, viz. changing its racial composition, dealing with large numbers of students entering undergraduate classes and the retention rate of these students. At that time the staffing profile of Political Science departments showed concentration at the lower levels (Booysen and van Nieuwkerk 1998, 12). The survey also showed a big variety of courses being taught at an undergraduate level. It also assessed the rating of departments and intellectuals in departments. At that point suggestions for the way forward in the discipline included better international contact, unity in the discipline, promotion of the exchange of curriculum information and mentorship programmes for young scholars. The professional body (South African Political Science Association at the time) was to encourage capacity building and interdepartmental and inter-institutional linkages (1998, 24).

The lack of unity could be ascribed to the racial segregation of universities but also to the fact that two professional bodies existed, the South African Political Studies Association (SAPSA) and the African Association of Political Studies (AAPS), which merged in May 2001 to become the SAAPS. This merger brought together scholars from the previously advantaged and disadvantaged universities, and the first few years bore witness to the difficulties encapsulated by such amalgamations.

The official journal of SAAPS, *Politikon*, is published by Taylor and Francis (Routledge). Before 1994 *Politikon* had limited international exposure, even though it published high-quality articles. Today it is included in the ABC Pol Sci, Advance Bibliography of Contents, GEOBASE, Index to South African

Periodicals, International Development Abstracts, Sociological Abstracts, the Social Science Citations Index, Political Science and Government and others. During the last decade the editors of the journal took a lot of trouble to raise its profile to an international level, accepting more articles from foreign scholars and also liaising with international publishing houses.

Since 1994 the content of *Politikon* changed from being more concerned with South African political issues to issues dealing with democratization (also from a comparative perspective), policy issues, political trust, HIV/AIDS, corruption, political theory, political economy, electoral systems and elections, social movements, racism and political tolerance. Many articles on IR-related issues and theory also appeared as well as on issues of globalism, the UN, migration, realism, nuclear deterrence, regionalism, security and peace theory, bringing a balance between Political Science and IR articles.

A couple of thematized special issues made important contributions to developing literature in Political Science, such as issues on 'Gender and Multiculturalism' (2012), 'Xenophobia and Civil Society' (2011), 'Africa's Relations with Emerging Powers: Charting a New Direction in International Engagements' (2009), 'Feminism and Democracy: Women Engage the South African State' (2005). The themed issues bring together scholars who are experts in the field and shift the boundaries of debates around these issues.

Since *Politikon* has gained international stature more scholars from countries other than South Africa also publish high-quality articles in it. It is clear that the authors and readers of *Politikon* have changed and diversified over the years. Book reviews on many important books in the field have also increased in the last decade with high-quality reviews being published.

Methodology

A two-pronged method was used for collecting data for the survey, from July to October 2012. Two separate questionnaires were used: one for political scientists who were members of the SAAPS at that point and a second questionnaire was sent to Heads of Departments during the same time. The questionnaire for individual political scientists aimed to measure perceptions of change and its impact on lecturers in Political Science and satisfaction with a career as a political scientist, while the questionnaire for HODs was aimed at measuring the state of Political Science in South Africa as well as the impact of transformation. For both questionnaires closed and open-ended questions were used. We sent out two waves of the questionnaire electronically, during July and August and also encouraged members of SAAPS to complete the questionnaire at the SAAPS conference held in Nelson Mandela Bay from 28 to 31 August 2012. In September we did a third wave and asked HODs to send the questionnaires to individual members of their departments.

Despite these attempts the response rate remained low. The reasons for the lack of cooperation remain unclear. Any generalizations from this data will have to be done with caution, if at all, but the data, as such, give us a clear indication of

certain trends in Political Science in South Africa. We also tried to create continuity with the survey that was used in 1998. Therefore, similar questions were asked. We were not able to get a copy of the 1998 questionnaire from the authors of the previous article on the state of the discipline who executed the previous survey, for the sake of replication.

Eight HODs in total completed the questionnaire. They represent: the University of Cape Town, the University of the Free State, the University of Pretoria, Rhodes University, Stellenbosch University, the University of the Western Cape and the University of the Witwatersrand. The HOD of Political Science at Stellenbosch University's Military Faculty also completed the questionnaire. These responses are representative of the previously advantaged universities, except for the University of the Western Cape. The data are therefore completely non-representative of historically black universities. There could be two explanations for the lack of response: (1) the state of flux at these universities and a continued situation of being under-resourced. While questionnaires had been sent to all HODs at Political Science departments in South Africa, it was clear that at historically black universities some HODs had changed or some departments even functioned without HODs and some were parts of Public Administration departments. It may thus be the case that the questionnaire never reached the intended respondent. (2) SAAPS as the professional body of South Africa is still viewed as being representative of the previously 'white and advantaged' universities, even though this is not the case. The membership of SAAPS of staff from previously disadvantaged universities is, however, very low.

A total of 25 individuals completed the questionnaire (this constitutes a response rate of about 25% of all SAAPS members). Of these respondents 64% were men and 36% women, 60% were white and 24% black, 4% coloured and 4% Indian. Eight per cent refused to indicate race. The reason for questions about race was to determine to what extent the racial composition of political scientists at academic institutions had changed. Fifty-two per cent were English speaking, 32% Afrikaans, 8% Zulu and 4% Setswana. Forty-five per cent were between 24 and 39 years old, 35% between 40 and 55 years and 20% over 55 years old. The oldest person was 66 years old. These findings show that there was a good distribution in the sample of young, less-experienced and middle-aged and older highly experienced political scientists. The proportion of the sample between 55 and 66 was 20%, indicating that the profession will lose 20% of its highly experienced political scientists in the next 10 years.

Fifty-seven per cent had been teaching less than 20 years, while 43% had been teaching Political Science for more than 20 years. Four per cent had only an Honours degree, while 44% had an MA and 48% a PhD. The data, therefore, are representative of highly qualified political scientists. Many of them got their highest qualification abroad at the following universities: Cambridge, Essex, Illinois (Urbana-Champaign), Wales, Aberystwyth and Birmingham, indicating a wide diversity of theoretical and methodological training.

What the data of individual respondents tell us about the discipline in general

Changing staff composition

In terms of the race and gender integration of the Political Science departments that are represented in the sample the picture is still disconcerting. In the case of all the universities, except the UFS white staff are still in the majority and at UWC they are equal in number. (The numbers exclude foreign nationals.) The proportions are as follows for white and black: Rhodes University 6:1, Stellenbosch University 8:2, Stellenbosch University (Military Faculty) 2:1, UCT 8:5, UFS 4:7, UP 5:3 UWC 2:2 and Wits 4:1. The gender distribution is also disconcerting. At Rhodes University, Stellenbosch and UWC men and women are equal in number, but at all other universities men are in the majority. (These numbers include foreign nationals.) The proportions are as follows for men and women: Rhodes 4:4, Stellenbosch 5:5, SU (Military Faculty) 2:1, UCT 12:5, UFS 9:2, UP 7:3, UWC 2:2 Wits 5:3. What these findings show is that Political Science as a discipline in South Africa is still 'white' and male dominated. Women are still concentrated at the lower ranks with women in the rank of full professors only at Stellenbosch University (where there are two women full professors and only one man), UP (two men and one woman), UCT (one woman and five men) and Wits (where there is no male full professor and only one female full professor). One would have expected a different staff profile at historically more progressive universities such as UCT and Wits.

Publication rate

The publication rate for journal articles are as follows: 56% ($N = 14$) published one article per year, 20% ($N = 5$) published two articles, 4% ($N = 1$) published 2.5 and 4% ($N = 1$) published three articles, 48% ($N = 12$) published on average one chapter in a book per year, while 23% published between three and seven popular articles per year. Sixty per cent ($N = 15$) agreed or strongly agreed that their academic workload prevented them from publishing more. Forty-eight per cent ($N = 12$) had published at least one book. Fifty-two per cent indicated that they reviewed articles for international journals and 80% indicated that they had international networks.

NRF ratings and remuneration

Only 16% ($N = 4$) of the sample have an NRF rating: one has a B1, one a B3 and two a C2 rating. Despite the lack of ratings for the majority of respondents, 44% believed it is a fair system while 36% did not think so.

Open-ended comments on the NRF rating system included the following: that the bureaucracy is time consuming, that it is subjective and favours certain environments or authors publishing in Western journals and that the system was tailored to the natural sciences and not appropriate for social sciences. One

HOD indicated that he/she does not encourage the staff to apply for a rating because the rating they get may be quite demoralizing and the financial rewards are insufficient to make it attractive. Some on the other hand felt that scholarly outputs of a high standard are rewarded and much needed financial incentives are given.

The majority of respondents, 56% ($N = 14$), did not feel that they are being fairly remunerated by their departments and 56% ($N = 14$) indicated that they had to do consultancy work to augment their income. Fifty-two per cent of respondents indicated that they generated third-stream money for their universities, ranging between R10,000 and R1,000,000.

The state of Political Science

In the last 15 years the discipline of Political Science grew from what the Booysen and van Nieuwkerk (1998, 20) Survey characterized as 'small new beginnings' to a discipline that is now perceived as internationally competitive and able to produce innovative research in gender studies, IR, South African political parties and governance. Some respondents characterized the discipline as 'strong', ' . . . not as bad' and ' . . . vibrant and innovative'. Indeed, it seems that, as the Booysen and van Nieuwkerk (1998) survey noted, the last 15 years saw the maturation of Political Science as a discipline, moving from an uncertain, emerging discipline in an early post-apartheid context, to a discipline that is perceived as strong, innovative and internationally competitive.

In 1998, Booysen and van Nieuwkerk noted that internal assessments with regard to the state of the discipline were closely linked to the drive of transformation, which characterized the early transition period of South Africa's socio-political landscape (1998, 3). They further stressed that the transformational agenda was driven by a need to increase student numbers and improve access for historically excluded students. The main areas of debate within the Political Science community, Booysen and van Nieuwkerk found, were achieving a balance between research and teaching, and relevance of the discipline and output of quality graduates, amongst others (1998, 3).

Fifteen years later similar issues seem to dominate conversations of political scientists within the academic community. Indeed, the 2012 Survey revealed that the South African Political Science community are concerned with four areas: (1) strength of research, teaching challenges and quality at both undergraduate and post-graduate levels, (2) the need for both staff transformation and transformation of the discipline with regard to both teaching and learning, (3) research focus to promote a more postcolonial and South-focused agenda and (4) a need to find more of a balance between IR and traditional Political Science. Therefore, when assessing the state of the discipline in 2012, the Political Science community stressed similar issues to that of the 1998 assessment,[2] which include the transformation agenda of Political Science as a discipline, balancing research and teaching and learning, quality of graduates *vis-à-vis* quality of research within the discipline and a dire need to balance Political Science and IR.

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Research, teaching and learning: continuing challenges

One positive outcome of the SAQA process is regular curriculum review. Most respondents indicated that their departments have gone through rigorous processes of curriculum review. The inherent core modules of Political Science curriculums have, however, not changed much in the last 15 years. This is quite significant as the current assessment occurred after many universities merged to form comprehensive universities, as discussed above. The merger process created a space for departments to merge curriculums and develop creative syllabuses that could effectively cater to the changing socio-political landscape in South Africa as well as Africa as a whole. However, as Table 1 reveals, most departments chose a conservative route with regard to curriculum development during this period and, essentially, the syllabuses that comprise many Political Science offerings have not changed.

The Booysen and van Nieuwkerk (1998) Survey stressed that qualifications needed to aid societal restructuring and facilitate nation-building (1998, 7). This is not surprising, considering the dominant political rhetoric of democratization and nation-building that dominated the political landscape in the late 1990s. Certain critical areas such as gender-focused modules still remain marginalized within many mainstream Political Science curriculums. Only three institutions offered gender-specific modules at the Honours level, and at the undergraduate level only two institutions seem to offer a gender module as part of the mainstream Political Science curriculum.

What is particularly worrying is the lack of research methodology and epistemology training at the undergraduate level. One respondent highlighted that Political Science as a discipline needs ' . . . a major revolution in the way we teach graduate students, and a new commitment to systematic, evidence based research'. Of the various departments of Political Science, only two institutions offered methodology training at the second-year level, four institutions offered research methodology at the third-year level and eight institutions offered methodology at the Honours level.

This is a serious cause for concern as many students are only exposed to methodology in the fourth year of their study, and in some cases it seems that research methodology does not form part of the mainstream Political Science syllabus within some departments. A respondent stressed that 'we need to think seriously about the pedagogy of the subject. There is some attention given to research, but we are not really encouraged to think about teaching and learning, beyond how to appeal to more students'. Similar opinions emerged as other respondents noted a 'severe lack of undergrad [sic] attention to well-rounded formative education', 'serious deficit in theoretical rigour', 'quantitative studies often flawed' and 'few departments engage systematically with political theory (contemporary and classical); too few engage systematically with quantitative approaches'.

Coupled with this lack of focus on research methodology and epistemology is also the reality that in many institutions the majority of students have English as a second language. Indeed, one of the respondents stressed

Table 1. Comparative Overview of Political Science Offerings, 1998 and 2013

Political Science offerings 1998		Political Science offerings 2013[a]	
Theme	Offered in number of departments	Theme	Offered in number of departments[b]
First year		*First year*	
Introduction to Political Science	14	Introduction to Political Science	13
Introduction to IR	7	Introduction to IR	6
South African politics and government	7	South African politics and government	7
Theory (including state theory)	3	Theory (including state theory)	2
Comparative politics	3	Comparative politics	1
Political philosophy	3	Political philosophy	2
African politics	2	African politics (including African political thought)	2
Political dynamics	1		
Conflict studies	1	Conflict studies	1
Fundamentals of state and society	1		
Ideologies in global politics	1		
Southern Africa	1	Southern Africa	2
Methodology/epistemology	1		
		Public Policy (including governance)	3
Second year		*Second year*	
IR/organization	9	IR/organization	4
Political theory/philosophy	7	Political theory/philosophy	8
Comparative politics (also democratic systems)	5	Comparative politics (also democratic systems)	8
Political sociology/behaviour/dynamics	4	Political sociology/behaviour/dynamics	4
Political ideologies (also nationalism)	4		
South African politics	3	South African politics (including South African political economy)	2
African politics/Southern African politics	3	African politics/Southern African politics	5
International political economy	3	International political economy	2

(*Continued*)

Development studies/political development (also politics of the developing state)	3	Development studies/political development (also politics of the developing state)	2
Political economy (also regional political economy)	3		
Foreign policy	2	Foreign policy	3
Research methodology/political analysis	1	Research methodology/epistemology	2
		Public Policy (including governance studies)	3
		Gender and Feminist Theory	2
Third year		*Third year*	
IR/organizations	11	IR/organizations	5
Political theory/theories of the state/ philosophy/feminist theory/ (also state, society and markets)	10	Political theory/theories of the state/philosophy/ feminist theory/ (also state, society and markets)	10
Comparative politics/development (also politics of the Third World)	7	Comparative politics/development (also politics of the Third World)	4
Research methodology	5	Research methodology	4
Political dynamics/political sociology (also social movements, citizenship)	5	Political dynamics/political sociology (also social movements, citizenship)	4
African politics/comparative African politics (also African political economy)	4	African politics/comparative African politics (also African political economy)	3
South African politics (also SA state, theory, KwaZulu Natal politics)	3	South African politics (also SA state, theory, KwaZulu Natal politics)	3
Public policy/policy analysis/politics for public servants	3	Public policy/policy analysis/politics for public servants	2
Foreign policy	3	Foreign policy	2
IPE (also political economy of Asia)	3	IPE (also political economy of Asia)	5
Conflict and conflict management	2	Conflict and conflict management	7
Southern African politics	1	Southern African politics	1
Strategic studies	1	Strategic studies	1
Citizenship in community service	1	Citizenship in community service (including Urban politics)	2
Honours courses		*Honours courses*	

(*Continued*)

Table1. Continued

Political Science offerings 1998		Political Science offerings 2013[a]	
Theme	Offered in number of departments	Theme	Offered in number of departments[b]
Political theory/state theory/philosophy/ normative theory (also post-modernism, state and economy)	12	Political theory/state theory/philosophy/normative theory (also post-modernism, state and economy)	10
Research methodology/analysis	8	Research methodology/analysis	9
IR/theory/international organizations	8	IR/theory/international organizations	8
South African politics (also SA transition)	6	South African politics (also SA transition)	5
International political economy	6	International political economy	4
African politics/political change in Africa (also Africa and the world)	5	African politics/political change in Africa (also Africa and the world)	5
Foreign policy (also SA foreign policy)	5		1
Political dynamics/behaviour/political violence	5	Political dynamics/behaviour/political violence	4
Political development	4	Political development (including political economy of development)	3
Conflict studies (also international conflict)	4	Conflict studies (also international conflict)	4
Political ideologies	3		
Comparative politics	3	Comparative politics (including comparative systems of government)	5
Southern African politics	2	Southern African politics (including Southern African political economy)	2
Public policy and policy analysis	2	Public policy and policy analysis (including social policy)	5
Governance (in cooperation with public administration)	2	Governance (in cooperation with public administration, also Governance and Regionalism, and Governance and Transformation)	4
Environmental politics	1	Environmental politics	1

(*Continued*)

Ethnicity and nationalism	1		
Strategic studies	1	Strategic studies	1
		Israel and Palestine relations	1
		Gender (including feminist IR theory)	3
		Research essay	6
		Internship component	1

[a]The table presents data from the current departments, including those that are now part of merged institutions, like the NMMU and the University of the Free State.

[b]Data obtained from departmental websites for Rhodes University, Stellenbosch University, NMMU, University of Cape Town, University of Western Cape, University of Free State, University of Zululand, UNISA, University of Johannesburg, University of the Witwatersrand, and North West University. The data are representative of North West University Potchefstroom Campus and Mafikeng Campus (undergraduate only). The campuses offer different curriculums although they are one university. We could not access Political Science offerings at the University of Fort Hare, although there is a department. At Walter Sisulu University, Political Science is offered as an elective to the B.Admin programme in the first year. The University of Zululand's Political Science department forms part of Public Administration and the degree programme is part of a B.Admin degree. There is however a Political Science Honours programme, but the modules that comprise the programme are not accessible on the website.

> . . . four-fifths of the class is writing in their second language, it was absolutely essential that they practice writing full sentences before graduation. This compels political scientists to correct up to fifty spelling & grammar errors in a ten page essay, and one hundred and fifty errors in an Hons mini-thesis & a MA thesis. Very time-consuming, and intellectually deadening.

Further challenges with regard to teaching and learning relate to the large number of classes and, very often, an increase in student numbers did not guarantee the appointment of more staff. Forty per cent of the sample teaches two modules at the undergraduate level, 32% teaches two postgraduate modules, while 24% has six Master's students and 16% has four PhD candidates. Thirty-six per cent considers their teaching load to be average, while 28% considers their workload to be heavy and 20% considers their workload to be very heavy. Of the departments surveyed, many have demonstrated an increase in student numbers with most departments having 100–300 first years, second years and third years. At the postgraduate level however, most departments had between less than 20 or 21–50 Honours and Masters' students, and between 1 and 10 PhD candidates. While for some this might seem relatively manageable, the reality of post-school education is that many matriculants are ill-prepared for tertiary education. Therefore, as noted, academic staff spend more time on assessment and remedial activities, often at the cost of their research. Many respondents stressed that they had to sacrifice their research time in lieu of the greater demands that teaching and learning activities have placed on their time. Some respondents noted that 'I think that student numbers keep increasing but staff does not. So our workload increases but salaries do not' and 'the marking load had a devastating impact on my research output'.

The creation of a stronger teaching component in research methodology at the undergraduate level is quite important, as this lays the foundation for postgraduate and postdoctoral research. Essentially, if the foundation in research methodology is weak, the postgraduate output will also be weak. Some institutions focus on laying a foundation of a culture of learning and innovation with a strong focus on research and knowledge production, whereas others do not. This had led to a duality with regard to quality in the Political Science academic community, as highlighted by one respondent:

> There is a contradiction in terms of knowledge generation, specifically in terms of conceptual richness and methodological richness. In some cases the emerging scholarship is quite rich and internationally competitive, whilst at the same time, we see extremely weak scholarship with no conceptual framework and methodological framework.

While there seems to be disciplinary stagnation at the undergraduate level, some interdisciplinary innovation seems to occur at the postgraduate level with specific regard to student supervision of their research projects. It emerged that postgraduate supervision occurs within a vast array of fields that fall outside the scope of traditional Political Science, such as Development Studies. Postgraduate students now focus their studies on aspects of land reform, refugee rights, HIV/AIDS, global health, space policy, sport and media, from a Political Science perspective.
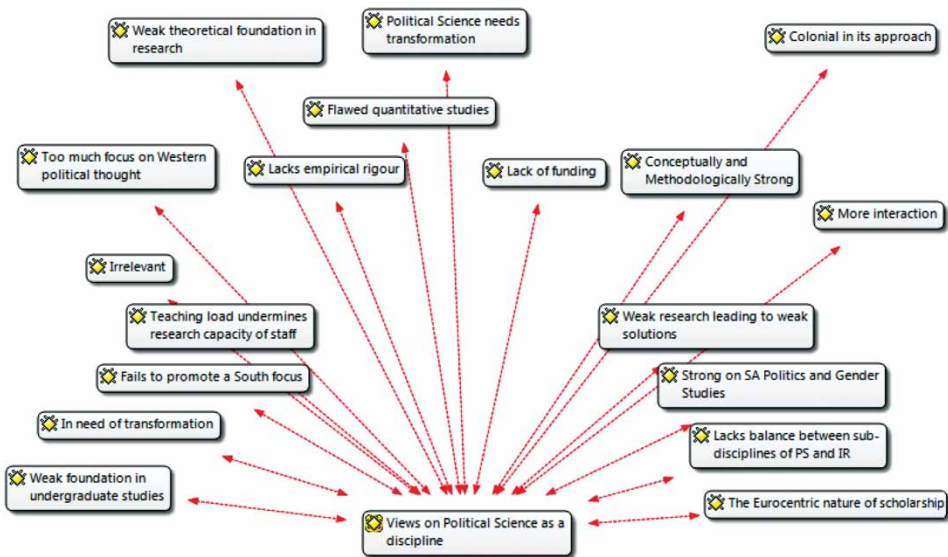
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Figure 1. Main Challenges Within the Political Science Discipline as Identified by the Sample

This is also closely related to the research specialism of their supervisors. This demonstrates that innovative research is happening, but the rest of the Political Science community may not be aware of this due to a lack of communication and interaction amongst the various departments (Figure 1).

Areas of research specialization

A strong theme that emerged from the 2012 assessment was the need to create a balance between Political Science and IR or, alternatively, separate the fields in the curriculum. Most departments have an IR component to their degree offering, whereas other departments have separate qualifications for IR, such as the University of Johannesburg, UNISA, University of Pretoria and Stellenbosch University amongst others. In some institutions, like the NMMU, only one track-degree programmes in Political Science are offered and therefore this programme incorporates both Political Science and IR. With a small staff component, splitting the fields and offering two qualifications is challenging, especially given that, although student numbers have increased, academic appointments remain in short supply (Figure 2).

Engagement with the SAAPS

SAAPS holds a biennial conference and, in the years in between, regional colloquia. The profile of the conference that has always been national has also lately been attracting more foreign scholars. Exposure to the research activities of
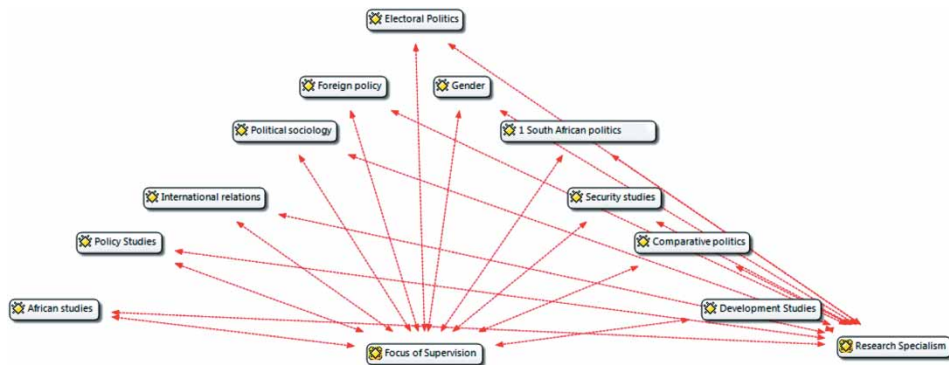
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Figure 2. Focus of Supervision Vis-à-vis Research Specialism

different departments seems to occur at the SAAPS conference where all depart-
ments who participated in the survey indicated that their staff members partici-
pate. SAAPS conferences were found to be fairly useful and very useful by
36% of the sample, while only 28% found the SAAPS colloquia a little useful.
There is thus a need to explore alternative avenues through which the academic
community of Political Science can communicate with one another. To this
effect, one participant suggested a ' . . . blog within the departments to discuss
the current issues and analysis of the current affairs. From these discussions, I
am sure there will be ideas and drive to publish'. Another avenue could be to
embrace social media such as Facebook as an avenue for SAAPS to discuss emer-
ging research and facilitate research collaboration.

The state of IR

Surveys on the state of IR as a discipline are rare in the South African context with
Schoeman (2009) and Taylor (2000) the most notable exceptions. In her survey,
Schoeman (2009, 53) observes that 'doing IR (teaching, research, publication)
in South Africa' is rooted in a 'triple history', namely colonialism, apartheid
and the country's relations with Southern Africa and the world. To this, she
adds several drivers, namely the end of the Cold War and apartheid, the globaliza-
tion of the ideology of neo-liberalism and the politics of transformation in Africa.

   In order to assess the results of the current survey, it is important to draw atten-
tion to some changes in the global and South African environment which may
have had an impact on the study of IR in South Africa. Since the surveys of
Booysen and van Nieuwkerk (1998), and Taylor (2000) global events such as
the Al Qaeda attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon
in Washington, USA on 11 September 2001 (hereafter referred to as 9/11), the
US-led invasions in Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003 occurred. The USA's
War on Terror resulted in new global dynamics and the rise of new and non-
state global threats and issues.

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The period since these surveys also saw changes in South Africa's foreign policy and diplomacy. Some of the most notable changes are the Mbeki presidency's African Agenda and Mbeki's clarion call for an African Renaissance, his involvement in the establishment of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Union (AU), and the country's expanded role in peacekeeping in Africa. In addition to these developments, South Africa served two terms as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and emerged as an alliance partner for developmental groupings of the Global South such as the India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum (IBSA) and the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa grouping (BRICS).

One of the most notable changes in South Africa's post-apartheid IR has been the 'recall' of President Thabo Mbeki in September 2008 in the wake of the incumbent African National Congress' (ANC) National Elective Conference in Polokwane in December 2007, which saw the election of Mbeki's former Deputy President, Jacob Zuma, as the ANC's president. Once Mbeki was recalled, Kgalema Motlanthe took over as a 'caretaker president' until the national general elections of 2009. Zuma's election as president resulted in several changes in the country's IR. The name of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) was changed to the Department of IR and Cooperation (DIRCO), and Zuma appointed the first post-apartheid career diplomat Maite Nkoana-Mashabane as Minister of IR and Cooperation. Further outcomes of the Zuma developments include the establishment of the South African Development Partnership Agency (SADPA), Cabinet's adoption of the amended White Paper on Foreign Affairs (GCIS 2012) and the release of the South African Defence Review 2012 (the first since 1998) in support of the country's IR.

South Africa's global and continental expansion resulted in several developments which coincided with the changes in the country's tertiary sector. Apart from the changes in the South African student population reported by Booysen and van Nieuwkerk (1998), several other dynamics are at play since their survey was conducted. Students from other African states increasingly enrol at South African universities, with an increase in intra-African faculty exchanges. Moreover, cooperation agreements between the South African government and some of its African counterparts often provide for educational exchanges. These exchanges often result in the government sponsoring foreign students to study at South African universities. Examples of this include Ethiopian students enrolled at the University of South Africa (Unisa) and South Sudanese students enrolled at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU).

In South Africa, IR is considered as part of Political Science and taught at most universities. Separate IR departments exist at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) and Rhodes University. The majority of South African Political Science departments offer IR along with other areas of Political Science.

Student numbers and staff in IR

In response to an open-ended question on the changes in the composition of students, responding HODs indicated that, amongst other changes, an increase in the

number of students from African countries is evident. More than two-thirds of respondents indicated that the number of IR students in their departments has increased, with 36% indicating these numbers 'increased' whereas 20% indicated that these numbers 'increased a lot'.

Worldwide, technological advances have contributed to the improvement of student support. This is particularly evident in the global advances in distance education. Unisa is the country's only dedicated distance-education institution with an annual student population of more than 300,000 students, making it one of the world's 10 mega-universities. Unisa, however, is not the only university engaged in distance education as 12.5% of Political Science HODs indicate that their departments are engaged in this mode of education. The remaining 87.5% of responding HODs indicate that they are not engaged in distance education.

Foreign nationals are employed in several responding departments with the University of Cape Town (UCT) employing the largest number (4) of full-time foreign nationals, followed by Wits (3), University of Pretoria (2) and Rhodes (1).

The IR curriculum

HODs were asked to indicate which modules are offered in their department. A wide range of IR and IR-related modules are offered at South African universities. At the undergraduate level, IR courses are often generic. Fundamentals of IR, for example, are offered in most departments ($N = 5$). The most common IR and IR-related courses are International Political Economy (IPE) and Peace, Conflict and Security Studies ($N = 7$), followed by African Politics and Foreign Policy ($N = 6$). Modules on International Organizations ($N = 5$) and Diplomacy ($N = 4$) are also offered. European Politics is offered in one department.

In response to an open-ended question on the impact of the policies of the Department of Education on teaching Political Sciences, HODs indicated that changes in the Department of Education necessitated changes in curricula and a revision of postgraduate courses and programmes. This corresponds with HODs' observations in response to an open-ended question on curriculum renewal over the past 15 years. HODs observed that curriculum development is either annual, ongoing or has occurred recently. In respect of IR, an HOD observed that his/her department's Master's Programme in Diplomacy and its Master's in Security Studies have been 'completely restructured'. In one instance, European Studies had been introduced.

Postgraduate supervision

Respondents identified 31 focus areas of their supervision. South African politics ($N = 6$) and IR ($N = 6$) are equally the major focus areas of academics' supervision, followed by African Studies ($N = 4$) and Security Studies ($N = 3$). Disconcertingly, foreign policy and diplomacy ($N = 1$), and Global South Studies ($N = 1$) receive much less attention. A similar trend is evident in other African-related

focus areas such as Africa's position in the IPE, conflict studies and strategic studies.

Research and publication

IR scholars' main outlet for the research is *Politikon* or the *South African Journal of International Affairs* (SAJIA). The latter is published by the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) which was established by General Jan Smuts and is housed at Wits.

In her review, Schoeman (2009, 63) concluded that between 1990 and 2007, *Politikon* published a total of 225 articles. Of these, only 73 (32%) were IR articles. These articles were also predominantly applied theory- or policy-related or descriptive with only 8% purely theoretical. For the same period, SAJIA published a total of 342 articles with 324 (95%) being IR articles. Although, 85% of these articles were policy-related or descriptive and only 5% pure theory.

Respondents of the current survey listed 50 areas of specialization. African politics/studies (20%) and South African politics (20%) are the most popular areas of specialization. IR-related areas indicated as areas of specialization include foreign policy and diplomacy (12%), IPE (8%), IR (8%), Maritime Security (8%), Global South Studies (4%), International Development (4%), AU (4%), Africa's position in the world (4%), Security and Strategic Studies (4%) and Defence Policy (4%).

International profile of South African Political Science and scientists

HODs provided insight into the IR of their respective departments. Membership of IPSA is equally divided between membership (50%) and non-membership (50%). Half (50%) of the responding HODs indicated that their departments have exchange programmes with foreign universities with all responding HODs indicating that their departments have cooperation agreements with international universities. According to respondents these exchange programmes typically include student and staff exchanges, and short visits. However, HODs indicated that the high costs of these exchanges limit outbound exchanges and that more inbound exchanges occur. According to HODs, cooperation agreements with international universities include common research projects, research cooperation, conference organizing and participation, student exchanges and research collaboration. One respondent indicated that his/her department has a 'partnership exchange agreement' with Bjørknes College in Oslo, Norway, whereas another indicated the existence of an 'exchange agreement (students and staff)' with Leipzig University, Germany.

In terms of the responses received for this survey, South African political scientists tend to 'look north' to cooperate with their fellow political scientists. Very little cooperation and exchange between South African political scientists and their counterparts in the South seem evident. This reflects badly on the South African government's efforts to foster cooperation between academics in IBSA.

The 5th IBSA Academic Forum was hosted by South Africa in March 2013. Participation in the event was not publicly communicated and, like in the past, South African political scientists were excluded from the event.

It is also clear from the results of this survey that despite the global debate about China's entry into Africa and South Africa's warm relations with China, respondents have not once referred to China, their cooperation with Chinese counterparts or supervision of dissertations on the topic. IR in South Africa has not made significant progress since the surveys by Booysen and van Nieuwkerk (1998), Taylor (2000) and Schoeman (2009). The field continues to lack theoretical and conceptual innovation. Instead it remains predominantly stuck in a need for policy relevance. Whereas Thabo Mbeki as a 'foreign policy president' contributed to an academic interest in foreign policy and IR, it seemed that the focus has shifted to South African politics given the domestic shenanigans of the current incumbent president. Within SAAPS, a useful start will be the establishment of an IR Caucus, similar to the Gender and African Caucuses.

Engagement with the international community

More than half (52%) of the respondents indicate that they serve as peer reviewers for international journals. Respondents listed a total of 38 international journals for which they have acted as peer reviewers. Most respondents have reviewed articles for *Democratization* ($N = 3$), followed by the *Journal of Modern African Studies* ($N = 2$), *Development South Africa* ($N = 2$) and *African Affairs* ($N = 2$).[3]

Eighty per cent of respondents indicated that they maintain international networks. Respondents were asked to describe the nature and scope of their networks as well as the projects and individuals involved. Research projects focus on a variety of topics ranging from think tanks in Africa; African agency in international diplomacy; the regional dynamics of the Indian Ocean; South Africa and the Group of 20 (G20); gender research; teaching gender in an African context; the Afrobarometer; comparative national elections; generational change in post-authoritarian societies; transnational issue networks on public health, global health governance and HIV/AIDS; armed forces; local government; the global arms trade; responsibility to protect (R2P) and African security. Respondents indicated that they cooperate with scholars and researchers from institutions such as the Open University; Harvard University; the Universities of Toronto, Leipzig, Lund, Bergen, Roskilde, Michigan, Sydney, Addis Ababa; London School of Economics (LSE); Princeton University; Loyola University of Chicago, Northwestern University and St. John's University. Respondents also indicated that they cooperate with inter-governmental organizations such as the UN, the World Bank, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the European Union (EU); foundations such as the Stanley Foundation (USA) and the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation (Sweden); training institutes such as the Kofi Annan Peacekeeping Training Institute (Ghana) and the Nordic Africa Institute (Sweden). Respondents also indicated their involvement in several international research

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projects such as the Afrobarometer Survey; the Comparative National Elections Project (CNEP); the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES); the Global Barometer Surveys (GBS); the Regional Integration and Social Cohesion Consortium and the African Security Sector Networks.

This shows a wide variety of networks and contacts—a remarkable increase in international exposure since 1998.

The continuing transformation project of Political Science

When the 1998 survey was conducted, the tertiary education landscape was in the midst of a mass transformation agenda to change the face of tertiary education to cater to an emerging post-apartheid state. Ironically, the 2012 assessment is also done in the midst of another mass tertiary education transformation, where the Department of Higher Education and Training released its Green Paper for Post-School Education and Training. Furthermore, the Charter for Humanities, released in 2011, will also affect the nature, character and identity of disciplines within a changing tertiary education landscape. The Green Paper for Post-School Education and Training stresses the urgency to deal with unemployment, and stresses the need for universities to be at the forefront of knowledge production and innovative research. A central theme that emerges from this Green Paper is transformation of higher education to overcome enduring gender, class, racial and other inequalities with regard to access to higher education, and to surmount the structural challenges through expanding access to education and training opportunities, increasing equity and achieving high levels of innovation and excellence (Department of Higher Education and Training 2012, x). The Green Paper on Post-School Education and Training identifies the following challenges in the tertiary education landscape: (1) historical burdens and enduring reproduction of apartheid gender, class, racial and other inequalities; (2) inequality and discrimination; (3) inadequate quality, quantity and diversity of provision (2012, 7–11). For universities in particular, the challenges relate predominantly to inequality:

> Our universities are generally characterised by low success rates and therefore low through-put rates. The number of overall postgraduate qualifications obtained, particularly PhD candidates, is too low. Many universities do not see student support as part of their core role. Many forms of discrimination remain part of the experience of students after they have been accepted to university, and this inhibits their academic progress. While the enrolment pattern indicates that social exclusion on the basis of race and gender is decreasing, class exclusion clearly remains an issue ... (2012, 11).

Previous assessments of Political Science as a discipline have found that the discipline is 'elusive in taking up the challenge to be at the intellectual forefront of politics in South Africa. There is a persistent sense to make sense of the past, rather than with asserting future directions through innovative academic work' (Booysen and van Nieuwkerk 1998, 5). This particular characteristic seems inherent to the discipline in that previous surveys had also revealed an

unwillingness to deal with more substantive issues, although the discipline has been well-established since the 1970s (1998, 5). Indeed, the 1990 Taylor survey concluded that it is this reluctance coupled with a mediocre level of conceptual and theoretical development that severely hinders the discipline to effectively fulfil a transformational role (1998, 5). To this effect, the direction recommended by the Taylor survey stressed ' . . . intellectual decolonization, internal transformation, and graduate development programmes' (1998, 5). The problems with the inherent character of Political Science in South Africa is a strong theme that emerged from the 2012 assessment. The 2012 assessment revealed two themes within the transformation project for the discipline of Political Science: (1) the need for transformation within the discipline and (2) the need to generate relevant knowledge.

The question that emerges when dealing with transformation of the discipline is what exactly is meant by transformation? Generally, transformation is often directly associated with Affirmative Action programmes geared towards creating a more equal society and attempting to deal with the vestiges of the past. Yet, the 2012 assessment reveals that the transformation agenda for Political Science is related to the inherent nature of its pedagogy. Of the respondents, 48% indicated that changes should be made to the discipline of Political Science. Changes included transformation, deeper levels of interaction amongst colleagues and departments, strengthening research and separating the fields of IR and Political Science (Figure 3).

There are calls for a disciplinary 'revolution', accusations of a lack of a 'discernible identity' with a lack of producing knowledge that is 'informed by the South African environment'. Similar sentiments were expressed with the 1998
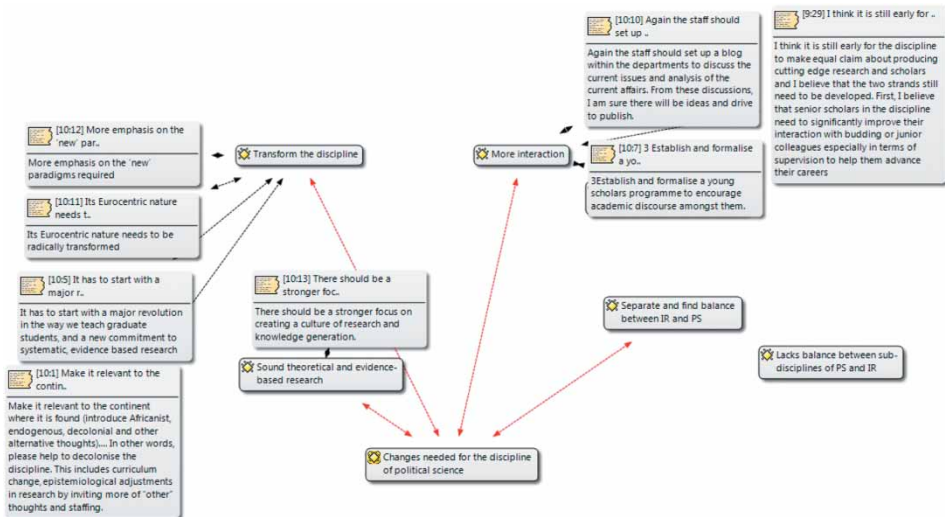

Figure 3. Main Areas of Change Needed Within Political Science as Identified by the Sample

Booysen and Van Nieuwkerk survey, which found that scholars viewed the discipline as lacking creative thinking, conceptually and methodologically weak, underdeveloped, unable to compete internationally and scholars apprehensive about the next generation of political scientists (1998, 20–21).

Rating of departments, top scholars and public intellectuals

Respondents were asked to rate the top three Political Science departments in the country. The following departments were rated as the best: University of Johannesburg ($N = 7$), UCT ($N = 6$) and Stellenbosch ($N = 4$). The universities that received ratings as first, second and third by more than two respondents in each category are UCT, Stellenbosch, Wits, Rhodes and Pretoria. It is not clear how objective this assessment is since respondents may have rated their own departments highly. Therefore, ratings may depend on how many respondents of a specific university completed the questionnaire. Yet, it is clear that the historically advantaged universities are still rated the best in the country.

There is no consensus about who the top political scientists in the country are. We are reporting the names of individuals who have been named by two or more respondents in first, second and third place: Amanda Gouws, Deon Geldenhuys, Robert Mattes, Adam Habib, Shireen Hassim, Peter Vale, Albert Venter, Susan Booysen, Tom Lodge, Dirk Kotze, Sheila Meintjes and Roger Southall.

The top IR scholars rated by more than two respondents in each category of first, second and third are Maxi Schoeman, Deon Geldenhuys, Adam Habib, Karen Smith, Chris Landsberg, Peter Vale and Gilbert Khadiagala. (Some scholars fall into both fields.)

The findings may be the result of good scholarship but also of visibility in SAAPS and in the public media, and a low response rate. These findings have changed significantly since the 1998 survey, which is an indication that some of the top scholars then have by now retired, left the field and Van Zyl Slabbert, who was rated in 1998, has died (he was, however, a sociologist). It is also interesting to note the increase in the names of women as top scholars.

There is greater consensus about who the public intellectuals are: Susan Booysen, Steven Friedman, Adam Habib, Peter Vale, Amanda Gouws, Dirk Kotze, Chris Landsberg, Somadoda Fikeni, Anthoni van Nieuwkerk and Anthony Butler. These scholars were all rated by two or more respondents in the categories first, second and third. They all are public analysts, writing in newspapers and doing analysis for radio and television.

Feminism/gender as a subfield of Political Science

The 1993 Gouws' survey of gender in the discipline indicated that women were entering the profession as lecturers in larger numbers but that they were concentrated at the lower ranks at that point. Fifteen years later, many of these women are now senior academics at the level of full professor. There is also a new cohort of younger women teaching Political Science. Even though the number of women in

Political Science has increased, interest in teaching gender has not necessarily increased, but it has improved since 1993.

The 1998 review by Booysen and Van Nieuwkerk showed no listing for gender courses except where they were embedded in political theory. In this survey five respondents indicated that they teach gender courses and two have indicated that gender is the focus area of their post-graduate supervision. In open-ended comments a few respondents indicated that gender courses are taught mainly at the undergraduate level but not at the postgraduate level. One respondent indicated that teaching gender in Political Science is not a priority because his/her institution has a Gender Studies programme. This, of course, is a misunderstanding of teaching gender as a subfield of *Political Science*. In some institutions gender is only taught at the postgraduate level. If there is no undergraduate feeder courses fewer students will take gender at the postgraduate level because of their lack of familiarity with the subject. Some of the open-ended responses indicated a desire for more teaching in gender-related topics in Political Science.

In 1998 *Politikon* dedicated a whole issue to gender in Political Science. This was a milestone because it was the first time that the official journal of SAAPS considered gender important enough to devote a whole issue to it. The guest editor for that issue, Shireen Hassim, argued at the time that it 'reflects the new editor's commitment to represent debates in the wider sphere of the discipline, and to bring those debates—often marginal, excluded and even silenced within the mainstream of the discipline—into the pages of the journal' (1998, 3). Yet, articles on gender in *Politikon* are still scant. In 2005 another special issue titled 'Feminism and Democracy: Women Engage the South African State' edited by Cathy Albertyn and Shireen Hassim appeared. This special issue also made an important contribution to our understanding of the state from a feminist perspective. In 2013 Amanda Gouws and Daiva Stasiulis of Carlton University in Canada guest-edited a special issue of *Politikon* on gender and multiculturalism, titled 'Gender and Multiculturalism—Dislodging the Binary between Universal Human Rights and Culture/Tradition: North/South Perspectives'. This issue compared multicultural problems in the global north and south and was the first issue since 2005 that dealt with gender issues in its entirety.

As the 1993 review by Gouws of gender and the discipline demonstrates, Political Science has an androcentric bias. The discipline treats the citizen as male and the male-domination of the discipline reproduces and reinforces unconsciously and uncritically the marginalization of women as political subjects (Hassim 1998, 3). One of the issues causing this lack of focus on women as subjects of Political Science is its disciplinary borders. Unlike other disciplines, like sociology, for example, many political scientists do not work in a multi-disciplinary fashion so that their understanding of the complexity of gender-related subjects is not influenced by insights from other disciplines. Some political scientists still view gender as a 'soft option', and it is mainly women teaching gender-related topics in Political Science.

Many respondents indicated that women are now a majority of the students at the undergraduate as well as graduate levels. It begs the question of why fewer

male students take up the study of Political Science. It may be the case that at historically advantage universities white students see fewer job opportunities in South Africa, due to the Africanization of the civil service—a sector where Political Science students historically found work. An increase in the number of students studying IR as compared to Political Science may be an indication that students see future job opportunities with international agencies such as the United Nations or see their futures outside South Africa. Given the poor responses received from respondents at historically black universities we lack comparative information on student composition and perceptions of the discipline.

The survey indicated that the main topics of research by gender scholars have been the institutionalization of gender through the National Machinery for Women, the representation of women in terms of the bigger debate about special mechanisms, quotas, policy issues, law reform, HIV/AIDS, issues of culture and multi-culturalism as well as the important issue of citizenship. Social welfare policy and its link with the ethics of care have also been scrutinized. Most of these studies have been interdisciplinary in nature.

Four very important books produced by political scientists who are gender experts have appeared in the past five years dealing with issues of transformation, representation, the electoral system and citizenship. These are: Goetz and Hassim (2003), Gouws (2005), Hassim (2006), Britton, Fish, and Meintjes (2009).

Hassim received the Victoria Shuk Award for the best book on 'Women and Politics' for *Contested Authority* in 2007, presented by the American Political Science Association. In June 2012 Gouws received the Wilma Rule Award for the best paper in Gender and Politics at the International Political Science Association conference in Madrid, Spain. In 2012 Heidi Hudson, who is one of the editors of the *International Feminist Journal of Politics* (an outstanding achievement for a South African scholar), hosted an international conference of the journal at the University of the Free State, from 1 to 3 August, which attracted an international audience. The keynote speaker for this conference was Inderpal Grewal, a highly acclaimed feminist scholar working in the USA. This conference gave gender-related issues in IR and Political Science high visibility and showed that research done in South Africa compared very well internationally.

Most political scientists who are gender scholars in South Africa draw on Western models that are applied to South Africa but at the same time, they modify, critique and develop new theoretical insights for the local context, thereby creating a body of indigenous knowledge. The international recognition that they receive is an indication of the strides that gender scholars have made since 1993. These scholars publish in interdisciplinary journals or gender journals, more so than in the disciplinary journal, *Politikon*. This contributes to a lack of visibility of gender research by feminist political scientists in the discipline to other political scientists who work in the mainstream. Unfortunately, most interdisciplinary activity takes place outside the mainstream of Political Science and the research of gender scholars is slow in leading to curriculum reform in Political Science. A narrow definition of politics as related to only the public sphere is still used as *the* definition of politics.

In 1993 Gouws argued that a period of self-reflection, a critique of sexist institutions and the transformation of curricula and existing knowledge are necessary to change a situation of only adding women and perpetuating bad science rather than transforming Political Science (21). This transformation is slow in coming. For gender specialists, this often leads to a 'double burden': carrying on research in mainstream Political Science areas as well as doing gender research at the same time (see Gouws 2012, for an elaboration).

Conclusion: the way forward

The discipline of Political Science in South Africa has seen the same advances as mentioned by Trent about the Global North: there has been an expansion of the discipline to most tertiary institutions in South Africa, it is a collective enterprise, there is eclecticism of research, a variety of methodological approaches (including qualitative and quantitative approaches) and the creation of large datasets. Examples are the Afrobarometer developed by Robert Mattes and his collaborators, being acknowledged internationally, as well as the political elite surveys of Hennie Kotzé and his collaborators, also recognized internationally. Both these datasets have led to the publication of cutting-edge public opinion analysis in leading journals and books by international publishers and a contribution to theory building. The core courses referred to by Trent are also taught in the South African discipline.

Compared to 1998, however, there are far more positive comments and optimism about Political Science as a discipline in general. Comments made include the fact that rigorous cutting-edge research is now being produced and that scholars are internationally competitive, dynamic and innovative. Areas that were singled out for cutting-edge research are: parties, elections, gender, governance and IR. The fact that 76% of respondents are fairly and very satisfied with Political Science as a career and that 92% would encourage their students to take up Political Science as a career speaks for itself.

The challenges, however, are different in South Africa. Overspecialization is not a problem, but rather the lack of theoretical development and a conceptual deficit to deal with African politics. Open-ended comments on what respondents think of the discipline included the following: that it is too 'western' and Eurocentric and shows an inability to deal with political phenomena of Africa. As one respondent puts it: 'It represents only a small portion of South African society, with very few black scholars (and black thought) allowed into (sic) centre stage'. Some lamented the lack of theoretical rigour in teaching and research, especially post-colonial and subaltern thought.

The 1998 Booysen and van Nieuwkerk survey also highlighted a lack of focus on Africa and a reluctance to 'push the African agenda' (1998, 21). One respondent noted:

> Political Science in South Africa, as elsewhere in Africa, is still enmeshed in Western standpoints/paradigms that have very little consonance with African political realities. We have yet to develop African-based knowledge and theories of Political Science that speak directly

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to the continent including South Africa. Surely South Africa has produced a few [*sic*] cutting edge Political Science research and scholars that are conceptually rich and internationally competitive; however, their relevance to the South African political reality remains questionable. Secondly, there is a tendency towards policy-orientated research in South Africa, which has also negatively impacted on producing Political Science knowledge, especially 'out of Africa' theory.

Fifteen years later, a strong push for an Africanization of the curriculum is encouraged. One respondent argued: '

… make it relevant to the continent where it is found (introduce Africanist, endogenous, decolonial and other alternative thoughts) … . In other words, please help to decolonise the discipline. This includes curriculum change, epistemological adjustments in research by inviting more of 'other' thoughts and staffing.

It becomes evident that creative curriculum development that is more inclusive of alternative viewpoints from feminist theory and postcolonial thought appears to be lacking in mainstream Political Science curricula at a majority of departments and, consequently, there is a strong sentiment that South African political scientists are not doing enough to work within alternative theoretical and philosophical frameworks from mainstream Western political thought. For that reason one respondent stressed that 'more emphasis [needs to be placed] on the 'new' paradigms'. While there are universities that have embraced alternative paradigms and Africanist curriculum by presenting modules on African political thought and Ubuntu, and other universities have full degree programmes in African politics, there remains, it seems, a need to strengthen the African philosophical and postcolonial theoretical component to the pedagogy of mainstream Political Science curricula. This will be especially relevant with the vision of a future university graduate postulated by the Charter of Humanities and Social Science, which pushes a strong focus on the African Renaissance and renewal of African scholarship (2011, 19).

The need for a mentorship programme was identified as an immediate need in both the 2012 assessment and the 1998 survey (9). Only 36% of the sample felt that their departments had assisted them with career development, while 20% indicated that they had received no assistance from their departments with regard to career development. A mentorship programme as a possible project for SAAPS could have a dual benefit. First, one will strengthen research capacity within the discipline through a transfer of knowledge. Whilst some universities, like the NMMU and Stellenbosch, encourage supervisors to co-publish research findings of postgraduate studies with their students, it seems that this is not sufficient to dispel the perception that there is not sufficient mentoring of young academics. Second, it could lead to a reinvigoration of creative and innovative research as established researchers are exposed to new ideas and younger academics are exposed to older knowledge. Mentors can also be international scholars, and given the perception that the discipline lacks an African identity, perhaps increased exchanges with other African universities could be a way forward. Indeed, one participant stressed that 'there is a need for the discipline in South Africa now to emphasise the following: (1) greater and more proactive

collaboration with other African scholars and participation on continental scholar/ academic exchanges and (2) more deliberate collaborations at inter-, intra-, and multi-disciplinary levels'. Similarly, another participant stated that

> I think it is still early for the discipline to make equal claim about producing cutting edge research and scholars and I believe that the two strands still need to be developed. First, I believe that senior scholars in the discipline need to significantly improve their interaction with budding or junior colleagues especially in terms of supervision to help them advance their careers. Second, the overall engagement with international partners especially in Africa and African colleagues is still minimal.

In the current context of the overall transformation of the tertiary education system with a strong focus on creating *African solutions for African problems*, it is clear that for the discipline of Political Science to remain relevant is to embrace a more African or non-Western identity. This would entail reinvigorating its curriculum to reflect this reality. Although feedback regarding the quality of scholarship is relatively mixed, ranging from 'top-notch' and 'cutting-edge' to 'irrelevant' and 'conceptually and methodologically weak', it does seem that in the last 15 years there have been significant developments to the discipline of Political Science.

The issue of policy relevance also remains. Some respondents commented that Political Science is not relevant to real-life politics and one argued that it is too caught up in the immediacy of the moment. There is of course a tension between being 'relevant' and developing theory that remains on an abstract level. The aims of science, including social science, are to explain and predict, not necessarily to inform policy. Many policies/political practices are analysed retrospectively and in that way make a contribution to point out failures or shortcomings. The question is whether policy makers learn from these. Are these results communicated to policy-makers? If anything, a failure to influence policy may be due to a lack of communication with policy-makers. There is a consensus in the South African Political Science community that it is very difficult to do research involving the governing party, the African National Congress (ANC), and that there is a relationship filled with tension between ANC politicians and the intellectual community due to an 'anti-intellectual' tendency in the current government. It may also be the case that government resists taking note of policy criticism and advice—often made by the political scientists who are public intellectuals. Their advice is often called 'mischievous' by government.

The last 15 years have seen the discipline of Political Science transforming in some areas, but not in others, to attempt to meet the needs of a post-apartheid South Africa. The emerging challenge for the next 15 years for the development of Political Science as a discipline will be to find its identity. The discipline of Political Science is still in the process of transforming and finding its identity in a constantly changing political context. Therefore, the next challenge for the discipline is to address questions around its character, pedagogy and creating an increasingly African identity to be able to meet the demands of relevance for the African context.

Notes

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1. The survey of the discipline was a project of Amanda Gouws as the president of SAAPS, 2010–2012. Jo-Ansie van Wyk and Joleen Steyn Kotze helped compile the questionnaire and co-authored the article.
2. The 2013 assessment and 1998 assessment focus on similar themes, and therefore the responses reflect similar identified issues with regard to the themes the questionnaire dealt with remained.
3. Respondents also mentioned the following other international journals: Politics and Gender; Journal of Southern African Studies; Journal of Contemporary African Studies; International Journal of Feminist Politics; Antipode; British Journal of Political Science; Political Behaviour; Law and Social Inquiry; Journal of Politics; American Political Science Review; American Journal of Political Science; Comparative Politics; Comparative Political Studies; Journal of Modern African Studies; Political Studies; World Politics; International Political Science Review; Third World Quarterly; Global Change; Peace and Security; African Journal of Political Science; African Journal of Political Science and IR; Armed Forces and Society; Conflict, Security and Development; Journal of Military History; Gender and Society; Foreign Policy Analysis; International Affairs; Review of International Studies; Journal of International Politics and Development; CAFRAD Journal; Journal for Interdisciplinary Social Sciences; Global Policy; Canadian Journal for Military and Strategic Studies; and the British Journal of IR.

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