

UNDERSTANDING  
THE POLITICAL SCIENCE STUDENT:  
A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE.

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Introduction:

This investigation has been developed by four undergraduate political science students and is the result of several months of effort and dedication. The goal was to conduct a comparative analysis of the political science student. This paper does not pretend to be a completed work, but rather an initial exploration into the topic.

For this study, we tried to build a model profile of the political science and public administration student taking into consideration three variables: *political culture*, or the students' pre-existing *idea* about political science, *motive*, as the more idyllic aspect of the profession, responding to the question "why do I study political science?", and *expectations*, understood as the direction and goals the student seeks in the field.

The samples for this study were collected from the political science departments in Peru and Mexico, specifically from the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (PUCP) and the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), Aclatan campus. Both are recognized as influential and traditional in their respective societies. However there are significant differences between the two. First, PUCP is private, while UNAM is a public university. Second, the political science department at UNAM has a long history, while PUCP's department has only recently been created (its first class has just graduated). These differing populations from which to take the samples, were selected with the intention of identifying the institutional influence that they may have over the construction of the student profile. The most curious and unexpected result of this work is that despite differences the student profiles at both universities are remarkably similar.

This study has attempted to put to test a survey that can be used as a tool for assessing political science student profiles, and has had the objective of implementing it in other countries, expanding the number of cases in future investigations, thus allowing a more diverse comparison.

### Methodology:

This research is exploratory and descriptive, and has utilized an inductive method. This paper has opted to survey undergraduate students (of different levels) from PUCP and UNAM. Through the data collected, patterns on an individual or subject oriented level have been analyzed. The method is inductive, since conclusions have been derived from empirical observation, while searching for patterns and generalizations. The alternative, a deductive vision, would have limited the study to preconceived models that wouldn't have necessarily applied to the specific samples.

The survey is based on three variables: political culture, expectations, and motives, which together allowed the identification of a particular political science student profile. Each level has a number of dimensions that have been evaluated according to specific indicators and their corresponding questions. Once the data was collected, the information was arranged so that the diverse statistical measures that would be used in the next step of our analysis could be calculated.

The survey has been applied to 100 students from each country. Students have been selected at random to self-administer the survey and have submitted them within an average of 4 days. The surveys were completed in approximately 20 minutes and have been taken on campus, with the institutional support of the respective faculties. The survey consisted of 56 questions, 49 of which were based on the variables that correspond to the profile. The remaining 7 were designed to collect additional information such as: number of semesters studied and field of specialty. The margin of error was 8%, which implied the elimination of questions with an equal or greater margin of error.

In both Mexico and Peru, questions not correctly answered were eliminated. These were few, and have not greatly affected the number of dimensions capable of being analyzed. In Mexico, the questions which attempted to investigate the social dimension of political culture were the most problematic. In Peru, the measure of cosmopolitanism, through which the breadth of world perspective in the participants was to be discovered, and

from which the knowledge of different cultures and realities was intended to be extricated, also had to be discarded. In Peru as in Mexico, the questions which attempted to reveal the subject's preferences towards leisure presented problems because they were inadequately answered or left blank. In total, 9 questions were eliminated in Mexico and 7 questions were eliminated in Peru.

With the collected data the mode was calculated and the questions were ordered (from most to least selected). This information was crossed using bi-variable tables, which allowed answers from different questions to be related. The coincidences extrapolated upon the formulation of these tables were very interesting.

### III.- Theoretical Frame:

In the brief lines bellow, variables will be described in a clear fashion to allow the reader to have a solid understanding of the categories and conclusions reached. In addition, authors whose concepts provided a base platform for the creation of these variables will be presented.

Do to the exploratory nature of this paper, it is important to note that most of the concepts used are products of a reflexive process that have been based on proven models, but have left considerable room for intuition. The novel nature of this research makes it difficult to sculpt concepts or tasks to existing models. This has compelled authors to seek unique and creative options.

The first variable, motive, is defined as a group of elements, personal or institutional, which have influence over (or hampers) the decision-making process of each student. The motive is a static element, which is manifested in one particular moment: the choice of major. In the following paragraphs, the different dimensions of this variable, namely: culture, economic condition, relative ease, social status, and family, will be explained.

Through the dimension called *culture* the level of interaction between the subject and their society was explored. That is, the collective opinion about political science in the moment when the student made their decision was identified, as well as the opinion with respects to the type of student who chooses to study the career.

In the dimension called *economy*, by using a measuring standard valid in both contexts, the differences in incomes of those interviewed was distinguished. Following the logic of election presented by John O. Crites (1969:97), within economic theories that try to explain one's vocational option, this dimension represents a limit the student must take into account.

Likewise through the *relative ease* dimension, the external factors that make the choice to pursue political science more attractive were analyzed. Regarding the dimension called *social status*, the manner in which the subject places him or herself in a social perspective was explored. In this dimension, our indicators try to avoid the repetition of economic status, and focus instead on the selection of information and on social activity. Finally, through the dimension called *family*, we give importance to the roll the family plays in the moment of selection. In this dimension the following indicators were utilized: tradition, approval, economic support and economic pressure.

According to John Crites, there are specific elements that influence vocation choosing. These elements include: interest, preferences, aspiration, assessments of limitation and others. From this study certain variables were taken to help in the elaboration of the survey. Within the stimulus variables, the variable of subculture-social class, understood as "what people think collectively", was used as the base to elaborate the *social* dimension (Crites, 1969:240). The variable *family* (Crites, 1969:250) was used for the family dimension, which makes reference to how the family nucleus exercises influence over the decision of the individual (for example when a child chooses to follow in the profession of their parents).

On the other hand, Crites talks about *aspirations*, the formulation of which is determined by the person's wishes and their personal ideals (Crites, 1969:146). Inspired by this element, a second variable was elaborated: expectation, which is understood as the ideal outcome expected by the student when completing his or her career. These expectations fall under three areas: social, personal, academic and professional.

*The social dimension* of this variable looks to investigate on how the subject sees social pressures related to their career, as well as the popular belief in society of what *must be done* and how this is assumed. In this dimension what is being evaluated is the relation subject-society and the "social" expectations, manifested through the contribution that the student wishes to make to their environment.

On the other hand, the *personal dimension* is developed on two levels, the relationship of the student with his or her family and one's personal perception of satisfaction. Furthermore through the *academic dimension* the subject's projection with respect to their later personnel-academic development is investigated. In contrast, the indicators of the *professional dimension* revolve around three aspects, from obtaining work to possessing the necessary skills for an excellent professional development.

Our third variable is political culture. The notion of political culture, can be understood of as a set of guidelines of reasoning, argumentation and representation of reality instead of as a closed set of values, beliefs, attitudes and guidelines of behavior, acquired through an essentially homogenous socialization process (Castillo 1997, p 65).

Nevertheless, even though political culture refers to conditions and guidelines of a collective character, it contrasts with the characteristics of a political culture analyzed as an individual phenomenon. The individual political culture is reinforced by the intellectual formation of the individual and is used as a mental scheme to make a reading of reality (Castro 2005, p 66).

What then is the influence of political culture in individuals? Obviously, individual decisions are made on the bases of expected benefits, and estimated costs of said decisions. In contrast to an individualism that inclines towards the election of individual interests, political culture represents a bet for collectivism, inclining towards the sphere of values rather than the sphere of interests (Castillo 1997, p 28).

Hence, political culture may be interpreted as a concept able to amalgamate values, ideas and political perceptions of the individuals that conform society, in such a way that the political culture of a society would constitute something similar to the "political language" of that society. (Castillo 1997, p. 29).

## Cultural dimensions between Peru and Mexico

A study made by Geert Hofstede (1994), titled "Cultures and Organizations" mentions five cultural dimensions used to understand the difference between countries, people and organizations:

1. The image that one has of authority and one's relationship with it.
2. The relationship between the individual and the group.
3. The application of masculine and feminine concepts at work
4. The way to handle uncertainty
5. The difference in direction towards the future, with a short or long term vision.

According to the study's results, the highest dimension in the Mexican case is uncertainty avoidance with 82 points in a scale of 100, understood as society's level of tolerance to uncertainty. In the Peruvian case it also turns out to be the highest dimension with 87 points.

The above demonstrates that the population looks to have total control in order to avoid uncertainty, in such a way that rules, laws and regulations of all type are adopted and implemented.

Both countries show a low level of individualism, with 11 points for Peru and 30 for Mexico. These results reveal a long term commitment between members of a "group", where members take responsibility for one another.

Using these indices as a base, the variable of political culture has been evaluated through 3 dimensions that investigate what the subject knows of politics (political theory), what is more or less political in his or her perception (between political institutions and actors), and the ideological current he or she is more compatible with.

#### IV. - Profiles

##### 4.1 - Profile of the Student of Political Science – Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú

General performances:

The average political science student of the PUCP is 22 years old. They show preference for the specialty of Administration and Public Management, and are just completing their first career.

The student's perception of the career and their past political participation.

The average student that opts for political science has a conflict between: what others think about the career and what he or she esteems it to be. Although the student considers that the people that surround them think the career is theoretical and unstable, the student perceives their career to be useful. Therefore we can deduce that the student's opinion is not easily influenced by their environment, with the exception of a proportion of them that were (22%).

Furthermore, 50% of the students who described the career as useful, are from the specialty of administration and public management. Simultaneously the people who described the career as theoretical are those that study the specialties of comparative politics and international relations. Thus, it can be seen that there is a direct relation between the perception of the career and the student's area of concentration. The students perceive themselves to be responsible, committed and liberal. With respect to their political activities, the students have either not participated in any activity or have engaged in political manifestations, 40% respectively.

Economic situation and facilities.

According to the applied survey the students of political science do not feel that studying the career has generated them the necessity to obtain more income (70%). They are students who dedicate themselves exclusively to the university because the majority of them do not work (50%). Thus, we can assume that parents cover the cost of the career as well as the student's maintenance.

The relative ease or the facilities which are granted by the university or by the context do not seem to have generated much influence in the student's election. For that reason, those that have not obtained scholarships are the majority (98%), as are also those that were not influenced by the exchange program (62%).

Media and interest areas.

The political science student is informed mainly through the Internet and by the written press. They prefer journalistic biweekly publications like "Caretas" (37%) and academic research publications like "Coyuntura"

(19,5%). Likewise, students do not realize any type of social voluntary service (52%).

## Family Environment

The students received high levels of approval with respects to their decision to study political science (50%). Hence, 66% of those who received high family approval were not pressured to look for economic security. Furthermore, there is no tradition within the student's family of parents who studied political science (90%).

## About personal, professional and academic expectations

The political science student's perception is that the political scientist does not have a superior or inferior status with respect to other social science specialties (63%). Nevertheless they have expectations that the career will offer them the tools and whatever else necessary to be able to continue with their option in the future (69%). Of these results, we can see that 100% of those who wish to begin a political career or dedicate themselves to political analysis, think that the career offers stable employment.

The students plan once they've finished their career: to study a postgraduate degree (33%) or to dedicate themselves to public administration (25%). Thus they consider that network contacts (98%) are vital for their later development and that they individually as much as through the career, will be provided of them (52%). In this sense most of those who mentioned that contacts should be provided by both personal and career based sources, are those that chose to study a post graduate degree when finishing the specialty (38,5%). Those that think that the career allows you to obtain these networks alone are by 40% public administration students.

The average student has the goal to obtain personal satisfaction rather than family or social satisfaction (76%). They seek specialization, because it is considered important (92%). Also, students believe that at the end of their studies they will have the sufficient academic level to choose to study

abroad (82%). On the other hand the student believes in his or her own capacity to analyze political and social phenomena (96%).

It is pertinent to observe which types of tasks the student would like to perform in their work place, in relation to their specialty. We have discovered that the average student prefers to design projects in their labor unit (34%). 56,2% of these belong to the administration and public management specialty . On the other hand, 41% of those who want to be in charge of an entire organization are specialized in international relations, where as 67% of those who are interested in analyzing cases study comparative politics. In this case we see a coherent relation between the areas of specialization and the rolls preferred in their labor centers.

### About political culture

The average political science student defines politics as: a form of organizing society (51%). The approach of preference is institutionalism (37%) and the most read authors are: Samuel Huntington (48%), Douglas North (41%), Karl Marx (35%), and Francis Fukuyama (38%).

For students, the problem that most affects society is the inefficiency of the state (48%) and inequality (31%). The perception of politics within the structure of these problems is positive as students consider it to be a solution (58%).

Furthermore, students believe that the greatest virtue that politics must have is that of being inclusive (42%), in this sense the majority of those who have this opinion see politics as a form of organizing society (52%). On the other hand, more than half of the students who study public administration and political communication claim the problem to be the inefficiency of the state (55 and 57%). Those that study compared politics and international relations, in addition to giving importance to this problem (33 and 46%), also adjudicate responsibility to the problem of inequality (41 and 40%).

When we establish a relation between analytical approaches and the perception of the problem, the students who prefer approaches of rational election, institutionalism and games theory see the inefficiency of the state as the problem that most disturbs society (57 and 56%). It is interesting to see that those who prefer a systemic approach and a structuralist-marxist one mention that the problem is inequality (50 and 56%).

When comparing the preferred approaches with the role politics plays in the problem seen as most urgent, the following results have been obtained: Of those who consider politics to be part of the problem, 37.1% of them prefer a game theory perspective. 47.6% of students who believe politics to be part of the solution, identify themselves with institutionalism.

Students who prefer rational choice tend to read Machiavelli and Huntington. Those who prefer institutionalism have chosen authors such as Huntington and Douglas North. Furthermore, it has been found that students who tend to read with more frequency Machiavelli, followed by Huntington, and Martin Tanaka have opted for a systemic approach. All those who prefer a structuralist-marxist perspective, read works by Marx, followed by Gramsci and Machiavelli. Lastly, those who prefer a game theory analysis read insistently, Fukuyama, North and Huntington. Evidently there is no coherent relation between the theoretical approaches and the authors most frequently read, with the exception of students that prefer a structuralist-marxist perspective, and in part of those who have chosen institutionalism.

With respect to what is or isn't a political activity, the students surveyed ordered the following options from most to least political: run for a public position, seek dialogue, work in public administration, vote in elections, protest in the street, and lastly, realize social work.

As far as national institutions are concerned, the average political science student ordered in the following manner, from most to least political: the national parliament, the executive power, the government's political party, the judicial power, the ministry of economy, the armed forces and the mass media.

In the same manner, the students ordered from most to least political, diverse international organizations: UN, OAS, IMF, OPEC, International NGOs and religious organizations.

Students were also presented with a series of political figures, both national and international, that in the same way had to be ordered by their political relevance. The result was the following:

National Figures: Jorge del Castillo, Gonzáles Posada, Abimael Guzmán, Mario Huamán, Raúl Vargas.

International Figures: Al Gore, Andrés Oppenheimer, Amartya Sen, Gustavo Gutierrez, Nicholas Negroponte, Benedicto XVI, Enrique Iglesias.

#### 4.2- Political Science Student Profile - Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.

The Autonomous National University of Mexico (UNAM) in our days

Over the past 450 years, the UNAM has been the largest and most prestigious public university in Mexico. Of the six campuses that make up the university, one of them will be the subject of this investigation: campus Facultad de Estudios Superiores Acatlán (FES-A).

Campus FES-A, is made up of 17,525 students, that study one of the 17 careers offered. Of these students, 1,200 study political science and public administration; a career that is completed in a period of 4 years, which has been taught since 1976.

Studying in the “Place of Canes” (translation of ‘Acatlan’ from native language of nahuatl)

In Mexico, the average political science student on campus FES-A is 22 years old. This indicates that most of them began the university directly after finishing school, thus, political science is their first career. The majority of these students are men; 55% of the total population. Evidently, the proportion of men and women is almost equal, there is no predominance of one over the other.

The data collected showed that while society perceives the career to be theoretical and unstable (31%), the future political science student perceived it to be useful and practical (46%). Furthermore, half of the political science students perceived that society considers them to be responsible and liberal, whilst the other half believe that society considers them to be in part individualists, and in part committed.

In Mexico, the political science student is considered a “grillo”<sup>11</sup>; that is to say, a person who actively participates in political issues. However, surprisingly enough, the data obtained showed that before entering the career half of the students in question had not participated in any type of

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<sup>11</sup> Popular Mexican expresión to describe an activist in political issues

political activity with a minor exception of those who participated in public manifestations.

In the process of choosing a career, the political science student was not subject to any type of either economic or tradition related pressure (that is to say, strain imposed by parents who have also studied and wish for their son or daughter to study political science). In this case, we can identify a process of personalization of the decision making process, analyzed by Lipovetsky (2002), who sheds light on the danger present in neutral and supposedly invisible opinions.

In attempts to identify socioeconomic patterns, a series of questions were made which revealed that when the majority of students initiated their career, they believed there would be a necessity to increase their income (56%). In the long run, this seems to have been only a false perception, as now only a small number of these students work to finance their studies. This perception proved to be erroneous as costs have been assumed by the family in the majority of cases (75%). We must also keep in mind that the UNAM is a public university that only charges an annual fee of approximately US\$0.2 or €0.12.

As far as scholarships are concerned, only a marginal percentage of students acquired one in order to begin their studies (12%). This leads us to conclude that in effect scholarships are not important motives that persuade students to study political science. Similarly enough, the exchange program, although available and made known to students, does not seem to be a factor that induces students to choose the career over another.

Following the steps of Quetzalcóatl (Aztec god of wisdom and knowledge)

One of the axes of this investigation is to describe the conditions in which the students study and interact on a daily bases. With this in mind, questions have been made concerning time of commute to and from the

university, extracurricular activities, academic formation, amongst other factors.

Since campus FES-A is of particular importance, most political science students of Mexico City study here. Due to the size of this metropolis, the majority of the students (50%) commute between 1 and 2 hours from their home to the university. This has obvious repercussions in the time available for participation in political activities, for working and for improving their academic performance. Proof of this was found in the interviews, as few students (37%) participate in social voluntary work, which in another light, may also be interpreted as a lack of interest for the wellbeing of local communities.

This tendency to detach oneself from local problems can be explained by the preference shown in understanding issues of a more national relevance, identified by a common preference for publications that from different and equidistant perspectives analyze and explain national related issues. This is made evident through the written media preferred by the students, being the most popular the magazines *Proceso* and *Negocios* (the first of a leftist orientation and the second of a businesslike nature, not even political).

The political scientist considers his or her status to be equal to the status of other related careers (52%), and thus, considers that the career provides the necessary tools for obtaining stable employment (74%), as well as for studying a master's degree abroad (71%); most of the students speak at least two languages (62%)

There is a clear tendency in the students of political science to want to study a master's degree (27%), and to dedicate themselves to the praxis of public administration (35%). This can be related to the opinion sustained that creating political relations is important for one's professional development (87%), which denotes a preference for administrative tasks as they are considered more stable than a political career.

As this investigation was being executed, another investigation of Dutch sociologist, Geert Hofstede, who through a survey explored the cultural tendencies and dimensions of various countries, was used.

In Mexico's case, it was concluded that the culture tends towards collectivism by 70% and towards individualism by 30%. Hofstede explains that this is due to family and friendship bonds present in the Mexican

society, and in consequence, also in political science students, who seek to satisfy both themselves and their families by studying the career.

In relation to the stated above, most of the Mexican students give equal importance to personal and family satisfaction (67%), in other words, studying their career is a task realized in search of both individual and collective fulfillment. Family satisfaction reveals a necessity to show that one is a good student, and thus a good political scientist due to the family's support.

With respects to their academic formation, the students believe that the career provides the necessary tools for analyzing political and social phenomena (89%). It must be bared in mind that students consider political science to be a multidisciplinary career. This characteristic explains the vast variety of preferences that have been expressed with respects to the labor market, which includes options of a both academic and political nature.

The students were also questioned about their academic preferences, in particular, about authors most frequently read. Machiavelli and Max Weber revealed to be the most popular, and explains why the majority of political scientists interviewed consider politics to be the exercise of power and the way by which society is organized. Omar Guerrero was the third most read author, and reveals the importance national authors have in the study public administration.

Karl Marx as the fourth most read author, that in unison with the authors previously mentioned, reflects an academic liberty that provides knowledge of a variety of theoretical approaches. However, when asked which is the preferred theoretical perspective, 30% of the students favored rational choice, a vision which may be related to postmodernism and that implies the possibility of choosing between a series of options, as long as there is a benefit to be obtained.

The political scientist considers that politics should be above all things, useful. This is a vision once again in tune with rational choice and a postmodernism perspective. Secondly, the political scientist believes that politics should be honest. This reflects the current tendency to promote transparency in Mexico's public administration.

Lastly, the students were asked about what they considered society's main problem to be. The first answer was the state's inefficiency (38%).

However, what stood out the most was their perception that politics was part of the problem (57%). This characteristic may be considered contradictory with what is being studied and its objectives.

The variables above compose the profile of the political science student of UNAM.

## V.- Comparing Profiles:

### 1.- Significance of politics for both countries

One aspect considered important to compare is the meaning given by those interviewed to the headstone of our academic field: politics and its role in society.

Students of both countries agree that the main problem that affects society is the state's inefficiency. This is a problem that responds to an overall feeling of discontent generated by a transition to democracy lived in both countries, which created an incipient democracy with many diluted expectations.

The majority of the population expected important changes in their living styles and waited for the immediate solution to their problems, within a period of 6 years. However the government alone was not capable of making such changes (and is still incapable of it), as a democratic transition implies not only a change in government but also a change in society, as well as in the social and political debate of ideas. Of these conditions, in Peru and in Mexico, changes in government have been made, yet changes in the other two areas are only beginning.

The role politics plays in the state's lack of efficiency is perceived in a different way in each country. For the political science student in Peru, politics is part of the solution. If it is assumed that politics is an inherent part of society, than it is understandable why political science students of Peru consider politics to be a means by which society is organized.

When asked how politics *should be*, the political science student of Peru agreed it should be inclusive. Thus, it can be concluded that politics is seen as an elitist activity, which needs to be more open if democracy is to be consolidated, and if effective suffrage is to be transformed into effective democracy.

On the other hand, Mexican students believe politics to be part of the state's lack of efficiency. This may be understood as a sign of apathy of students who cease to see in their academic preparation the possibility of finding solutions and making positive changes through politics.

Most Mexican students define politics as the exercise of power. Thus, politics is seen as a purpose in itself obtained through political activity. If the Mexican society always expects positive changes to be made through the government's control of power, then we can understand why this society has tolerated the structure of past regimens where the state was the only organization that held power, and society only respected the decisions made.

When questioning the students from Mexico on what politics *should be*, the majority answered that politics should be useful. This is a posture in accordance with Rational Choice, which is the preferred focus of analysis, and also to the persistent expectations that democracy alone and with the government's help, should solve social problems.

More words, less words. Politics possesses many definitions and many social perceptions that go from a virtuous activity to simply a section of the newscast, a lamentable but real situation in a world that has given value to the search of the pleasure and where freedom is no longer a mean, but an end in itself.

2. – Are there are shared expectations among the students of political science of Peru and Mexico?

Through the carried out surveys and in order to identify the elements that characterize the students of political science of both countries, a series of points have been discovered, that together, give the impression that there is a shared profile with counted distinctions of the student of both countries.

The similarity between profiles was an unexpected yet pleasant surprise. This investigation has had as particular and innovative, the fact of wanting to compare samples that come from distinct populations, contexts and diverse historical backgrounds. Hence, it was expected that the profile of a student from a public university studying a career of a long trajectory to be different, of that of a student from a private university, where the career is

new and within a completely different national context. Nevertheless, the result has differed.

An important dimension of this profile consists in the expectation that the student has with regards to their future, and in that sense, the degree in which the career will allow him or her to obtain this result. In this respect, it was discovered that the political science student of Peru and of Mexico share the same objective of either working in public administration (a vast majority) or of extending their studies through a graduate degree. Also, the students consider that specialization is an important requirement for their professional development. To understand these inclinations, let us remit ourselves to the motives that forced the student to opt for the career.

In both samples, the perception of the student of political science before entering the career was similar. It was thought in both countries that the student is responsible, committed and liberal. If responsible is understood as an adjective that reflects a desire to carry out conscious and informed changes, then it can be understood why the student has the determination of acquiring a rigorous education through a master's degree that allows him or her to specialize in one or diverse topics. Specialization is an idea that has gained much popularity amongst this generation of students, as it is conceived as the most practical, viable and efficient way of competing in the labor market.

The decision to opt for the career of political science seems to respond to a necessity of finding a practical path that guarantees certain professional development. This is affirmed by two reasons. In first place because those interviewed perceived the career as useful, and in second place because there proved to be a high level of trust in the tools that this career provides. The second fact is interesting because in Peru this was not expected, as the professionalism of the Peruvian political scientist is yet to be proven, through graduated students.

On the other hand, if committed is understood as an adjective that makes the political science student one in obligation or in commitment with their studies or with their career, it can be understood why he or she seeks to acquire full academic development. Likewise, if commitment is understood as an obligation towards the problems that the country or the society in general suffers, then why the student of political science wishes to work in public administration can be understood. In both countries it has been said that the largest problem that society endures is the lack of efficiency of the state, and because of this, the reason behind the expectation of working in

public administration is comprehended. In this sense, the career can be considered practical as it offers students the most direct form of solving problems or of assisting topics which are from their personal perspective, more relevant.

Expectations are the reflection of the student's aspirations in regards to the career, created based on cultural motives, perceptions and opinions (of the individual, not the collective) related to the student and their line of study, ignoring exogenous motives such as facilities, the student's economic conditions, and possible family related pressures.

## VI. - Conclusions

The study has proven that the student of political science both of Peru and of Mexico understands their professional role in society, making a clear distinction between the politician and the political scientist, identifying him or herself with the second of the two. The average political science student has chosen the career because it is practical, because they consider it guarantees stable employment, and because they are aware of the need to specialize. The majority of those interviewed seek to continue their studies through a graduate degree or dedicate themselves to public administration. This is why the 'traditional' politician, he or she who plays a protagonist role within the public scenario, who generates public opinion, who represents the 'people', the ideologist, and the leader, is not a highly demanded role. The political science students of both Mexico and Peru, are much more practical subjects, they look for solutions to concrete problems, and consider that the best way to do this is through specialized knowledge, within specific areas of interest, through direct contact with these problems, within the apparatus that generates them: the state.

Political Science is 'useful'. The problem is the inefficiency of the state. The preferred way to reach the solution is through rational choice (Mexico) or through institutionalism (Peru). The utility of the profession is exploited when theoretical currents are used to approach politics and its problems. According to rational choice, the best option or solution depends on how low the costs are and how high the benefits can be. According to institutionalism, solutions to society's problems are identified, through a careful analysis of both formal and informal institutions, allowing us to obtain realistic perspectives, which is a jumpstart to the creation of more effective solutions. Once again, the practicality of this new generation of political scientists stands out, and thus, we ask ourselves, to what does it owe? A first answer can be constructed by means of a long-term analysis,

through cultural and social variables of both countries, and a second through an institutional analysis, by means of academic and programmatic variables of each university. The construction of these answers depends on a rigorous investigation which can and should be conducted in the future. However, one thing is for certain: public administration, the more technical and least ideologically oriented branch, has gained much importance.

Our study reveals that as far as expectations are concerned, coincidences between students of both countries exist, and cannot be explained through the educational institutions or academic programs, as the universities studied are different, one public the other private, one of a long trajectory, the other of a short one. Thus, the relationship between samples is due to the fact that expectations can be explained by external factors that are more influential than the universities themselves, such as the labor market and society's necessities which guide students towards certain paths.

As has been pointed out previously, the political science student is influenced by his or her environment, that is to say, by their countries; which in spite of belonging to the same region, have particularities that make each one differ from the other, more so when considering that students come from different universities, of careers with diverse trajectories. When asking students about the perception of political science in their particular context, the answer in both countries was the same: theoretical and unstable. It is odd that in a country like Mexico where diverse universities, through out various decades, have taught political science, there is a society that sees the profession as abstract, with little applicability, and with a limited labor market. This is an answer to be expected in Peru, nevertheless, what is certain is that students of both countries have seen in political science something most have not: a feasible profession.

As far as participation is concerned it is important to mention that contrary to what may be expected, the political science student before entering the university does not actively participate in politics. In both countries students have either not participated politically before entering the career or have only engaged in public manifestations. This together with the results concerning voluntary participation in diverse activities denotes a contradiction to the sum of ideas and preferences of how students have defined political culture, that is to say, if we evaluate results that identify politics as the solution to problems, as a virtuous activity, and as the search for consensus, as well as take into consideration the tools the career offers, what stands out is that students prefer the analysis of social

phenomena rather than active participation in their solution. Thus, although students are sure to have good academic standards, which will allow them to continue their studies in graduate school as well as to find stable employment, they do not count with the component of social participation, which has not been thoroughly developed in the career.

It is remarkable to see that most students dedicate much time to their studies, in this sense, it is important to mention that while 70% of the students in Peru did not feel a necessity to work when first entering the career, 56% of Mexican students did. This reveals that in both countries the search for political practice is not a main motive to develop a labor record jointly with a student life. In addition, in both cases, students are not influenced by scholarships, which facilitate studies and their choice of career, even though it is expected to be a decisive factor for students of a private university, like the case of Peru.

Questions were developed to decipher the main reason for which the students chose political science, demonstrating that it is neither due to an academic trajectory of the family in the study of the profession, or to the advantages the career offered in comparison to other professions (beyond the interdisciplinary character which appealed to most students, and was mentioned as attractive and of interest), which brings us back to the question of, which is the main factor that impels students to choose political science? We consider this to be the guideline for understanding the influential elements, the behavior and preferences of the pupil, their little interest in the development of complementary political activities and the great interest for developing academic and administrative activities.

Without a doubt, diverse external factors related to life, system and culture of each country influences the development of the students. Although obvious differences such as the preferred ideological focus, cosmopolitanism, amongst others, mark distinctions between students of Peru and Mexico, coincidences can also be found, in particular, related to the political development of each country, the existing democratic conditions, and the general characteristics present in Latin American countries. The satisfaction the students have expressed with respects to the formation received in their universities is notable, which is reflected by their parallel consideration that the profession offers the same standards and advantages that do other careers within diverse areas of knowledge.

Finally, these annotations and comparisons are interpretations that we propose. Readers are invited to reach their own conclusions and to

generate proposals, to be pro-active and to continue to prepare themselves for the creation of new opinions, sustained by the search for knowledge and by an ample criterion.

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