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Submitted: 15 nov. 2022
 Accepted: 02 oct. 2023
 Published: 10 dec. 2023

 10.20396/riesup.v11i00.8671460
 e-location: e025027
 ISSN 2446-9424

Antiplagiarism Check



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The Social Scientists at the Top of the Academic Hierarchy: profile and performance of CNPq 1A researchers

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The Brazilian social sciences have carried out a continuous exercise of self-reflection, mainly based on its institutionalization and the relationship between the disciplines. **Objective:** Aiming to contribute to the analysis of this field, this article examines the profile of CNPq Research Productivity fellows level 1A of Social Sciences (Anthropology, Political Science and Sociology), examining their academic trajectories and professional history. **Methodology:** The data used were collected on the CNPQ website and on the lattes platform, seeking to carry out a prosopography of this group, analyzing it based on field theory. **Results:** There was a strong regional and generational concentration among these researchers, with a relevant insertion in academic bureaucracy and scientific associations, in addition to an intense international circulation. **Conclusion:** Although there is a relatively similar scenario between the three areas, there are some differences in the profile of the researchers, mainly with regard to geographic distribution, generation and academic training.

KEYWORDS

University. Graduate studies. Researcher. Social sciences.

Os Cientistas Sociais no Topo da Hierarquia Acadêmica: perfil e atuação dos pesquisadores 1A do CNPq

RESUMO

Introdução: As ciências sociais brasileiras têm realizado um exercício contínuo de autorreflexão, principalmente a partir de sua institucionalização e da relação entre as disciplinas. **Objetivo:** Visando contribuir para a análise desse campo, este artigo objetiva examinar o perfil dos bolsistas de Produtividade em Pesquisa do CNPQ nível 1A das Ciências Sociais (Antropologia, Ciência Política e Sociologia), examinando suas trajetórias acadêmicas e atuação profissional. **Metodologia:** Os dados utilizados foram coletados no site do CNPQ e na plataforma lattes, buscando realizar uma prosopografia desse grupo, analisando-o a partir da teoria dos campos. **Resultados:** Observou-se uma forte concentração regional e geracional entre esses pesquisadores, com uma relevante inserção na burocracia acadêmica e em associações científicas, além de uma intensa circulação internacional. **Conclusão:** Apesar de haver um cenário relativamente similar entre as três áreas, há algumas diferenças no perfil dos pesquisadores principalmente com relação à distribuição geográfica, geração e formação acadêmica.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Universidade. Pós-graduação. Pesquisador. Ciências sociais.

Los Científicos Sociales en topo de la Jerarquía Académica: perfil y desempeño de los investigadores 1A del CNPq

RESUMEN

Introducción: Las ciencias sociales brasileñas han realizado un ejercicio continuo de autorreflexión, principalmente a partir de su institucionalización y la relación entre las disciplinas. **Objetivo:** Con el objetivo de contribuir al análisis de este campo, este artículo tiene como objetivo examinar el perfil de los becarios de Productividad en Investigación del CNPQ nivel 1A de Ciencias Sociales (Antropología, Ciencias Políticas y Sociología), examinando sus trayectorias académicas y su desempeño profesional. **Metodología:** Los datos utilizados fueron recolectados en el sitio web del CNPQ y en la plataforma Lattes, buscando realizar una prosopografía de este grupo, analizándolo con base en la teoría de campos. **Resultados:** Hubo una fuerte concentración regional y generacional entre estos investigadores, con una inserción relevante en la burocracia académica y en las asociaciones científicas, además de una intensa circulación internacional. **Conclusión:** Si bien existe un escenario relativamente similar entre las tres áreas, existen algunas diferencias en el perfil de los investigadores, principalmente en relación con la distribución geográfica, la generación y la formación académica.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Universidad. Posgrado. Investigadores. Ciencias sociales.

CRediT

- **Acknowledgements:** Not applicable.
- **Financing:** Not applicable.
- **Conflicts of interest:** Not applicable.
- **Ethical approval:** Not applicable.
- **Availability of data and material:** Not applicable.
- **Authors' contributions:** Conceptualization, Formal Analysis, Research, Methodology, Project Administration, Writing, review & editing. OLIVEIRA, P.A.
- **Translation:** Cia das Traduções Ltda.

Section Editors: Maria de Lourdes Pinto de Almeida and Charlene Bitencourt Soster Luz

1 Introduction

Despite the relevance that the exercise of self-reflection occupies in the Brazilian Social Sciences¹, which continuously propose to think about their own field, as attested by the literature increase in recent years (Forjaz, 1997; Vianna *et al.*, 1998; Peirano, 2000; Trajano Filho, Ribeiro, 2004; Lessa, 2010; Dwyer, Barbosa, Fraga, 2013; Lima, Cortes, 2013; Feldman-Bianco, 2013; Scott, Campos, Pereira, 2014; Avritzer, Milani, Braga, 2016; Melo, Bernardo, Gomes, 2018; Lima, 2019; Bordignon, 2019; Marengo, 2019, Autor *et al.*, 2021; Autor *et al.*, 2022), much of the studies still focus on the relationship between disciplines, their institutionalization, and the pioneers of Social Sciences (Maia, 2019).

I understand that, in order to analyze the academic field better, it is necessary to know its agents, considering both their trajectories and their positions in the field. Hence, it is also essential to understand the rules of operation of the field, as well as its instances of legitimation and consecration. Given that this is a social universe to which a varied set of investments links us, it is crucial to seek to break with an engaged reading of the social world (Bourdieu, 2011).

To contribute to this debate, I seek to analyze the profile of the Research Productivity (PQ) grant holders of the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPQ) classified as level 1A, which is the highest classification that a researcher can be granted by the area committee when responding to the body's call². Therefore, my sample comprises the current level 1A PQ grant holders in the areas of Anthropology, Political Science, and Sociology, totaling 43 researchers³. Therefore, this work also contributes to the studies of intellectual elites, a field to be explored in the process of expansion (Rubio, 2020).

I understand that this study is directly related to research on higher education in that it analyzes the performance of agents in this sector, they are researchers consolidated in their universities who obtained what could be considered one of the maximum recognitions in the Brazilian academic field. An analysis of Brazilian higher education could not be complete without also considering an analysis of its agents, their profiles and their forms of insertion in the university field.

The collected data were made available through the CNPQ portal, as well as through the *lattes*⁴ platform. Methodologically, the research proceeded as follows: a) initial survey of

¹It is understood here Social Sciences within the academic tradition that was institutionalized in Brazil from the first undergraduate courses that began to grant the title of bachelor in Social Sciences, still in the 1930s.

²There is also the Senior Research Productivity grant (PQ-Sr), but the researchers who plead this modality respond to a specific call, as will be detailed later.

³ Apesar de serem públicas as informações acerca de quem são referidos bolsistas, considereirei que em termos éticos não mencionaria nominalmente quem são os acadêmicos que compõem esse grupo. Ademais, em termos teóricos, não me interessa pensar os casos de forma isolada e particular, mas sim pensá-los em seu conjunto, buscando compreender o que é revelado a partir desse grupo.

⁴Data collection was conducted in the first half of 2020, after the period of implementation of new grants.

level 1A productivity scholarship holders in the areas of Anthropology, Political Science and Sociology, available at: http://plsql1.cnpq.br/divulg/RESULTADO_PQ_102003.curso; b) delimitation based on the literature review of what would be the main indicators to look for in their profiles; c) collection of data in their respective CV lattes. In analytical terms, the idea is to carry out a prosopography of this group of researchers, who constitute an academic elite within the social sciences, we combine this methodological resource with Bourdieu's theory about social fields (Bourdieu, 1996; 2005; 2011).

Although other resources, such as interviews, have not been used here to understand the institutional academic trajectory of these agents, it is important to note that *lattes* was considered a self-representation that researchers produce from their academic trajectories, highlighting or hiding elements that they consider relevant, attributing a particular meaning to their own biographies (Bourdieu, 1996). Thus, it was understood that the platform could provide us with important elements to analyze these agents' profiles and their positions in Brazilian Social Sciences.

We sought to explore mainly elements related to academic training in terms of areas of knowledge, institution, and generation; insertion in the bureaucratic activities of their own institutions and scientific societies in Social Sciences; international academic circulation, besides the mapping of the distribution of these grant holders in terms of institutions. The objective is to know the profile of Social Sciences researchers located at the top of this academic-scientific hierarchy, which would allow us to understand the dynamics of the field as a whole better.

2 The CNPQ Productivity Grants in Social Sciences

Amid the transformations of this period, the creation of CNPQ's PQ grant in 1976 stands out. Still, only in the 1990s did it gain greater centrality for agents' careers in the academic-scientific field. Being awarded this grant implies a process of inter-recognition in terms of prestige by peers in the academic community. In this sense, it is important to recognize that:

(...) peer recognition, scientific authority, and academic distinction are the symbolic objects of dispute in this specific field. By acting, social actors respond to the challenge of gaining greater autonomy from the academic field in relation to other social spaces, especially the field of power – or the State itself (Azevedo, Oliveira, Catani, 2016, p.784).

In the case of the Brazilian academic field, the PQ grant is precisely one of the main symbols of scientific authority and academic distinction. Having access to a PQ grant unfolds not only in symbolic gains but also in material gains since its holder has access to certain forms of financing that are preferential for researchers with this profile, or in some cases are exclusive. Also, the PQ grant holders are the evaluators of aid applications and grants in their most diverse modalities with CNPQ, clearly demarcating a dominant position in this field.

The CNPQ areas are organized into committees, and the Social Sciences committee is composed of Anthropology, Archaeology, Political Science, Law, and International Relations. This arrangement includes areas in the Human Sciences and the Law in the Applied Social Sciences predominantly. In descending order, the areas that currently have more grant holders are Sociology (219), Anthropology (173), Political Science and International Relations (140), Law (80), and Archaeology (50). In this article, we are interested only in grant holders in the area of Anthropology, Political Science, and Sociology.

Within the different modalities of PQ grants, the PQ-Sr grant holders respond to another call, and these are grants with their own rules. Therefore, within the general so-called PQ grants, we are interested in those who have reached the end of this hierarchy, those at level 1A. It is important to say that, unlike the other levels, in which the Committee indicates a minimum number of publications and guidelines completed so that these grants can be applied for, at level 1A, it is emphasized that such researchers must be leaders in their fields and that they must have brought a substantial contribution to the area (CNPQ, 2018).

Weiner and Viana (2013) pointed out that CNPQ committees have different logics that guide their criteria for awarding grants, with a predominance of two logics, one that aims to reward quality scientists and another that aims to encourage the quality of scientists. It seems to me that, in the case of PQ 1A grant holders in Social Sciences, the awards logic prevails. This hypothesis seems to be reinforced by the research by Lima, Velho, and Faria (2012), who, when analyzing the h factor in different areas of knowledge, found in Sociology a logic inverse to that observed in other areas⁵. While in the other areas of knowledge, 1A researchers had a higher h factor than researchers level 1B, in Sociology, they have a slightly higher index than those. This shows how the attribution of this classification goes beyond a metric of academic production, although it is also relevant.

There are currently 22 1A grant holders in Sociology, 13 in Anthropology, and 8 in Political Science. This means that in the area of Sociology, 10% of the PQ grant holders reached level 1A, 7.5% in Anthropology, and 5.7% in Political Science. This may indicate a dominant position of Sociology in the field of Social Sciences, which is affirmed not only by the total number of PQ grants but also by the proportion of grant holders who manage to reach the top of this hierarchy. We can infer that the fact that there has been a more recent expansion of disciplinary programs in Anthropology and Political Science weighs on the existence of this scenario, as well as the very process of autonomization of these sciences in relation to Sociology (Forjaz, 1997; Peirano, 2000; Autor *et al.*, 2021).

⁵It is important to say that the researchers compared the different large areas, taking one representative from each, and in the case of Human Sciences they selected Sociology. It is also noteworthy that Sociology has almost zero h -index values, which would be a reflection of an academic culture distinct from other areas more in tune with the international mainstream, according to the authors.

Another fact that we can indicate that reaffirms the position of these agents as belonging to an academic elite within the Social Sciences is the fact that they also have this position recognized by other instances, such as the Brazilian Academy of Sciences. It is important to mention that the Social Sciences section of the Brazilian Academy of Letters, for example, comprises the areas of Anthropology, Demography, Political Science, Economics, Geography, History, International Relations, and Sociology. Therefore, it encompasses a broader scope of Social Sciences than what I refer to in this text. Among the 41 members of this section, we have four PQ 1A grant holders in Sociology and four in Anthropology, concentrated mainly in UFRJ (3 members) and USP (2 members), in addition to another at UFF and another at UFRGS⁶. This distribution by area and region confirms the trend observed by Hey and Rodrigues (2017), who point to the predominance of researchers linked to Anthropology and located in Rio de Janeiro in this space, which does not necessarily reflect the distribution of PQ grants, as we will see later.

3 The So-called Social Sciences in Graduate Studies

By restricting Social Sciences to Anthropology, Political Science, and Sociology, I conduct a movement that approaches a classification that was consolidated from the undergraduate courses that emerged in the 1930s with this title. However, initially, this denomination implied a broader understanding of such sciences, as well attested by the division of graduate studies created at the Free School of Sociology and Politics of São Paulo, which included under the rubric of Social Sciences training in the area of Economics, History, Social Psychology, etc. Therefore, I start from a narrower conception, which reflects the current ordering of undergraduate and graduate courses in the area.

It is important to pay attention to the fact that, despite the strong approximation between these three areas, they have particularities in their formative processes in graduate studies that cause their paths to cross and distance themselves at times. If we consider only the programs created until the 1970s, we have the following: in Anthropology, National Museum in 1968, State University of Campinas (Unicamp), in 1971, University of Brasília (Unb) in 1972, University of São Paulo (USP) in 1972, Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE) in 1977 and Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) in 1979; in Political Science, Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG) in 1960, UFRGS in 1973, USP in 1974 and Unicamp in 1974; in Sociology, UFPE in 1967, University Institute of Research of Rio de Janeiro (IUPERJ) in 1969, Unb in 1970, USP in 1971, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (1973), Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo (PUC-SP) in 1973, Unicamp in 1974, Federal University of Ceará (UFC) in 1976, Federal University of Paraíba (UFPB) in 1977 on campus II (the current Federal University of Campina Grande do Sul), and 1979 on campus I.

⁶There are also PQ Sr grants in Anthropology, Political Science, and Sociology, but they do not enter my analysis since they compete for another public notice.

As we can see, until the 1970s there were ten Sociology programs, six in Anthropology and four in Political Science. Only USP, Unicamp, and UFRGS had, until then, programs in these three areas concomitantly, while UFPE and Unb had programs in Anthropology and Sociology. This scenario reinforces the position of Sociology in relation to other Social Sciences. However, it can be inferred that, in some cases, the insertion of anthropologists and political scientists in Sociology programs was recurrent.

It is noteworthy that institutions such as the National Museum in Anthropology and UFMG in Political Science, despite not offering courses in other areas of Social Sciences until the 1970s⁷, inaugurate the first programs in these areas, becoming a reference in these specialties.

If we take the current moment, considering the programs considered of academic excellence by capes (scores 6 and 7) we have the following scenario: in Sociology, Unb (7)⁸, UFRGS (7), Federal University of Rio de Janeiro - UFRJ (7), USP (6), Federal University of São Carlos - Ufscar (6), Unicamp (6)⁹, State University of Rio de Janeiro - Uerj (6)¹⁰; in Anthropology, National Museum/UFRJ (7), Unb (7), UFRGS (6), USP (6); in Political Science, USP (7), UFMG (7), Unb (6), UFPE (6), Unicamp (6), Uerj (6). With these data, we have that USP and Unb are the only institutions with courses of excellence in the three areas of Social Sciences, in addition to UFRGS, UFPE, Unicamp, Uerj, and UFRJ, which have two courses of excellence in these areas, in addition to Ufscar and UFMG, which have one program each. This design points to a scenario of a strong concentration of courses of excellence in a few institutions (9), mostly located in the southeast region (66.6%).

Despite the strong tradition of interdisciplinary courses in Social Sciences in Brazil, only the disciplinary courses currently reach the level of excellence, the only exception being the Sociology and Anthropology program of UFRJ, evaluated in the area of Sociology of CAPES with a maximum score.

It would be possible to assume that it will also be these institutions that will concentrate most of the PQ grant holders, even if CAPES' evaluation criteria in relation to the programs are not the same as those of CNPQ in relation to PQ grants since we are referring to "collective" evaluations in the first case and "individual" evaluations in the second. However, as we will

⁷Currently, UFMG has programs in Anthropology and Sociology, and the National Museum, despite its autonomy and specialty, currently integrates the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro which has a Graduate Program in Anthropology and Sociology.

⁸Unb has two programs evaluated in the area of Sociology, and only the Graduate Program in Sociology has a score of 7.

⁹Unicamp has two programs evaluated in Sociology, and only the Graduate Program in Sociology has a score of 7

¹⁰The UERJ has two programs evaluated in Sociology, and only the Graduate Program in Sociology has a score of 7.

see in the next section, the distribution of PQ grants also seems to be ordered by other factors, which may have a greater weight than the institutional evaluation of the programs to which the researchers are linked.

4 Profile of 1A Grant Holders: sex, training, and generation

It would be possible to observe the profile of CNPQ researchers from different angles, considering various issues, such as gender, age, research themes, etc. Some trends observed in this group draw attention, such as that men mostly form it. In total, there are 28 men (65.11%) and 15 women (34.8%) at level 1A. This profile confirms the trend Moema, Azevedo, and Ferreira (2015) observed when analyzing the profile of PQ grants in large areas and Hey and Rodrigues (2017) when they turn to the Social Sciences section at the Brazilian Academy of Sciences.

Nevertheless, this distribution occurs heterogeneously between the different areas since in the area of Sociology there are 12 men (54.5%) and 10 women (45.4%), pointing to a greater balance between men and women in this group. In Anthropology, we found 10 men (76.9%) and 3 women (23%); something similar to the scenario of Political Science, formed by 6 men (75%) and 2 women (25%). Although the PQ grant holders in Social Sciences are not limited to the faculty of graduate courses in this area, also incorporating researchers linked to programs in related areas, gender inequality is quite evident compared to the composition of graduate programs in Social Sciences. According to the survey by Cândido, Feres Júnior, and Campos (2019), women represent 33% of the faculty of the Political Science and International Relations programs, 47% in Sociology, and 52% in Anthropology. It is noteworthy, therefore, that even in Anthropology, a field in which women constitute the majority of graduate professors, we find in their academic elite – represented here by the PQ 1A grant holders – a male majority.

It is possible to infer that this unequal distribution between men and women among grant holders 1A may reflect the unequal conditions of academic work in these two groups. In any case, this is not enough to explain why this phenomenon occurs more intensely in Anthropology and Political Science, something that would require a new research front that goes beyond the scope of this article and the scope of the methodological approach employed here.

It is also interesting to note that the number of FP 1A grant holders is quite concentrated geographically and institutionally. Although there has been a significant expansion of Graduate Programs in Social Sciences in the recent period, accelerating in the 2000s, researchers at the highest levels of the academic hierarchy tend to focus on a relatively small number of institutions. This points to the tendency to have a stratification within the social sciences itself, in which a few institutions start to concentrate not only more prestige, but also resources. This phenomenon was observed by Weeber (2006) in American Sociology.

Taken together, we have the following scenario: 9 grants at UFRJ, 8 at USP, 7 at Unicamp, 6 at UFRGS, 3 at Unb, 2 at Ufscar, besides a researcher from each of the following institutions: Uerj, UFMG, Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC Rio), UFPE, Paulista State University (Unesp), UFC, Federal Fluminense University (UFF), University of Araraquara (Uniará). This scenario shows, at first, a strong concentration of researchers in the states of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, which concentrate 74.41% of the grant holders at this level, and there is also a clear emphasis on three institutions: UFRJ, USP, and Unicamp, concentrating 55.81% of the grant holders. It is also interesting to note that UFRGS stands out as the main institution outside the Rio-São Paulo axis at the level of 1A researchers,

Notably, this distribution has certain particularities in each of the areas. In Political Science, they are more equally distributed; there are two grant holders at Unicamp and one grant holder at each of the following institutions: Uerj, UFMG, UFPE, USP, PUC Rio, Unesp. In Anthropology, there are 5 grant holders at UFRJ, 3 at UFRGS, 2 at Unb, and one in each institution: Unicamp, USP, and UFF. Finally, in Sociology, there are 6 grant holders at USP, 4 at UFRJ, 4 at Unicamp, 3 at UFRGS, 2 at Ufscar, and one at UFC, Unb, and Uniará.

This scenario reveals interesting issues, such as the fact that there is not necessarily a direct relationship between the number of 1A researchers and the existence of courses of academic excellence, as shown by the emblematic cases of UNB, which has two score 7 courses (Anthropology and Sociology) and one score 6 course (Political Science), and UFPE, which has two score 6 courses (Political Science and Sociology), but which, however, have few researchers classified at this level. This leads us to think about the weight that geopolitical relations have in the distribution processes of PQ grants, and the weight that this element has in the hierarchy process of institutions in the field of Brazilian social sciences (Reesink, Campos, 2014).

In Sociology, the strong concentration of grant holders occurs with the Graduate Program in Sociology at USP, while in Anthropology, this occurs with the National Museum. The existence of these two poles also reveals how the hegemony of these institutions in the field of Social Sciences occurs led by different areas in each case, although in the case of UFRJ the presence of 1A researchers is also significant in Sociology. This leads us to realize that, apart from the hierarchy in terms of prestige among academic institutions, there are still the internal hierarchies of each institution, which once again do not necessarily follow the classification of programs elaborated by CAPES, if we consider, for example, the fact that the USP Anthropology and Political Science Programs have “only” one 1A grant each, even if they are programs of academic excellence.

The relationship between the regional concentration of 1A researchers, notably in a few institutions, and the unequal distribution of resources is evident when we observe that the institutions with the highest number of grants also publish journals evaluated with a maximum

qualis score in their areas¹¹. For example, in Sociology, the journals *Cadernos Pagu* (Unicamp)¹², *Dados* (Uerj)¹³, *Educação & Sociedade* (Unicamp), *Sociedade e Estado* (Unb), *Sociologia & Antropologia* (UFRJ), *Tempo Social* (USP) are classified as *qualis* A1; in Anthropology, we have the journals *Estudos Avançados* (USP), *Horizontes Antropológicos* (UFRGS)¹⁴, *Mana* (UFRJ)¹⁵; and in Political Science, we find the journals *Opinião Pública* (Unicamp) and *Saúde e Sociedade* (USP).¹⁶

It is noteworthy that UFRJ, USP, Unicamp, and UFRGS, which are the institutions with the highest number of PQ grants in Social Sciences, are also those that concentrate the largest number of journals classified as *qualis* A1, which tends to reinforce the hypothesis about the unequal distribution of available resources so that agents can reach the top of the academic hierarchy. Moreover, following a recurrent model in Latin America of national publication circuits (Beigel, 2014), it is important to bear in mind that publishing in journals classified as A1 is central both to obtaining grants and individual aid from CNPQ, as well as to the institutional evaluation of Graduate Programs in the CAPES system.

Another interesting fact to be brought up here concerns the initial training of researchers in this area, mainly considering the division between those who graduated in Social Sciences courses and those who graduated in other areas. We mostly found researchers who underwent initial training in Social Sciences, a course performed in 25 cases (58.13%). Regarding this data, there are some significant differences between the areas since in Political Science 7 (87.5%)¹⁷ researchers conducted the training in this area; in Sociology 19 (86.3%) and in Anthropology, only 5 (38.46%). This particular design of Anthropology confirms a trend, already observed by Debert (2004), referring to a disciplinary professionalization that occurs mainly in graduate studies. However, we can infer that there are generational differences, given the expansion of the number of undergraduate courses in Social Sciences and Anthropology in recent decades (Autor, 2015; 2019).

¹¹ *Qualis* is currently undergoing a reformulation process, so that the last available *qualis* (2013-2016) was used here, considering that the publications of these researchers were also evaluated by the old system at the time they were classified as PQ 1A grant holders.

¹² Also A1 in Anthropology.

¹³ Also A1 in Political Science.

¹⁴ Also A1 in Sociology.

¹⁵ Also A1 in Sociology.

¹⁶ All journals classified as *qualis* A1 by the three areas of Social Sciences were not included here, but only those that are included in this stratum of the evaluation and that are published by institutions that have PQ 1A grant holders in Social Sciences.

¹⁷ The only case of 1A research professor in Political Science who is not in this group did not indicate his undergraduate degree at the undergraduate level in lattes.

In the scope of undergraduate and graduate education, we have some interesting differences to be perceived. First, we have that in undergraduate studies, mostly, we have graduated researchers in Brazil, only 5 of them performed this training abroad. USP stands out as the institution that most graduated these researchers, there were 7 cases, also highlighting UFF with 5 cases; PUC Rio, Unb, and UFRGS with 4 cases each; UFMG has 3 cases; Unesp and the Free School of Sociology and Politics of São Paulo have two cases each; and with one case are PUC SP, Federal University of Bahia (UFBA), UFC, UFRJ, Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences, and Letters of Palmas (FFCLP), Education Foundation of the Vinhedos Region (FEVIR). In each area, different institutions stand out in the initial training of 1A grant holders. In Political Science, UFF has 3 grant holders; in Anthropology, PUC Rio has 3; and in Sociology, USP was responsible for the training of 4.

There is a strong tendency that, among those who underwent undergraduate studies in Brazil, they remain in the states where they underwent their initial training, which happened in 29 cases (78.37%), which may also point to the existence of personal and family motivations in the choice of the institution in which they developed most of their careers. This phenomenon is observed even among those who leave their states to conduct doctoral studies abroad or in other regions of the country; or even among those who started teaching at other universities in the country, with some cases of academic mobility among these professors in the direction of returning to their states of origin. It should be emphasized, however, that in these mobility processes, which occur mainly in the federal education network, there is always a movement from smaller universities towards more prestigious ones, which leads us to believe that, in addition to motivations of a more personal and family nature, these motivations are also guided from the incorporation of the rules of the field (BOURDIEU, 2005), inserting themselves into the strategies developed from the own disputes in the university field (Bourdieu, 2011).

Concerning doctoral training, there is a significant change in the scenario compared to the initial training since we found more strongly the presence of titles abroad, which was the case of 20 researchers (46.51%). These agents were titled mainly until the 1980s. Only two of them obtained their titles in the 1990s, reinforcing the increasing nationalization of the academic training of researchers in Social Sciences in Brazil (LIMA, 2019). Although there is some institutional dispersion, which the specialty of the research theme may have mainly guided, there is a predominance in relation to the destination countries. Among these 20 cases with doctoral training abroad, 7 researchers conducted their studies in France and 7 in the United States, 3 in England, one in Germany, one in Canada, and one in Mexico. In Political Science, the main dialogue is carried out through English-speaking countries, with two researchers studying in the United Kingdom and one in the United States; this trend can also be observed in Anthropology, where 4 researchers studied in the United States, one in England, and two in France; while in Sociology there is a greater approximation with French education, which was the destination of 5 researchers, while two others did it in the United States, one in Germany, one in Canada, and one in Mexico.

The geographical concentration observed among grant holders is reinforced by these researchers' doctoral training sites in Brazil since it occurs in only five institutions. USP was the destination of the doctoral training of 13 researchers, UFRJ of 4, IUPERJ of 2, and Unb, UNESP, Unicamp, PUC SP each have one researcher. In Anthropology, 4 were graduated by MN/UFRJ, one by USP, and one by UNB; in Political Science, 4 are graduated by USP and one by IUPERJ; in Sociology, there were 8 by USP, besides one case in each of the following institutions: Unicamp, PUC SP, UNESP, IUPERJ. We can state, therefore, that, except for a single case (Ph.D. in Anthropology by Unb), all 1A grant holders in Social Sciences in Brazil who hold their titles in the country did so in the southeast region.

It is important to consider that USP plays a central role in training researchers in Political Science (3) and Sociology (8). At the same time, the main educational institution in Anthropology is the National Museum (4). This distribution shows how the affirmation process of certain institutions in the field in the dominant position occurs not only because they have more grant holders in the highest positions of the academic hierarchy but also because they are important institutions that train researchers located in other institutions and who also reached the same position in this hierarchy. Of course, in part, this scenario is maintained by the endogeneity existing in these programs, as shown by the data presented by Bordignon (2019), something that is relatively recurrent in institutions located at the top of the academic *rankings* (WEEBER, 2006). Once again, it draws the attention of UFRGS, in which all its 6 1A grant holders graduated abroad, which may indicate a distinct strategy for legitimizing this institution in the academic field.

Despite the strong interdisciplinary tradition of the Social Sciences (LIMA, CORTES, 2013; OLIVEIRA, 2023), the doctoral training of this group occurred mostly in a very disciplinary way, considering that only two are not PhDs in Social Sciences, even though they are PhDs in related areas: one in Economics and one in History. In Anthropology, all researchers are PhDs in the field¹⁸, in Political Science, only one holds a degree in History and the others in Political Science¹⁹, and in Sociology, only one holds a Ph.D. in Economics, and the others are PhDs in Social Sciences²⁰.

Finally, it is also interesting to note the generational approach in this group of researchers. Among the 1A grant holders, eleven completed their undergraduate studies in the 1960s, 28 in the 1970s, 3 in the 1980s, so we mostly have a group that conducted undergraduate studies between the 1960s and 1970s (90.69%) at a time marked by political and ideological repression in universities, and also by the expansion of undergraduate and graduate courses in Social Sciences (LIEDKE FILHO, 2005). It is, therefore, a generation that experienced decisive academic moments in the formation of the field, having been students and often guided by

¹⁸Including a doctorate in Social Sciences and one in Sociology.

¹⁹Including a doctorate in Political Sociology.

²⁰Including two PhDs in Political Science and one in Social Sciences.

many of those who were considered responsible for the institutionalization of Social Sciences in Brazil at the graduate level. We also find here some differences between the areas, distributed as follows by decade:

Chart 1. Distribution by decade in which PQ 1A grant holders completed their undergraduate degrees

Decade	Anthropology	Political Science	Sociology
1960	5	1	5
1970	7	5	16
1980	1	1	1

Source: Prepared by the authors (2020)

This distribution highlights a relatively homogeneous scenario between the three areas. However, in the case of Sociology, considering the largest total number of grant holders, it is evident that proportionally it is the area that has fewer younger researchers;. At the same time, it is interesting to note that, in Anthropology, a significant proportion (38.46%) of researchers trained in the 1960s.

Concerning doctoral training, the majority of agents obtained the title of doctor up to 15 years after graduation, which occurred in 36 cases (83.72%), so we have the following scenario: 8 (18.60%) obtained the title in the 1970s, 27 (62.79%) in the following decade, and 8 (18.60%) in the 1990s. Although we can find here a significant presence of those who integrated the first generations of researchers who became doctors after the University Reform of 1968, the most significant contingent of these grant holders obtained the title of doctor already in the process of democratic transition, or after the end of the military dictatorship in Brazil, which may have had an important impact on the development of their research agendas, whose hypothesis to be verified would require another methodological approach²¹. In relation to these numbers, we have the following distribution by area:

²¹Despite escaping the focus and scope of this article, it is interesting to point out that this hypothesis emerged by observing the main research themes that these researchers developed in their doctoral work, such as social movements, transformations in the rural and labor world, indigenous rights, etc., in a frank dialogue with the political and social transformations that Brazil was experiencing in this period. Nevertheless, as already stated, this would require another investigative effort, giving up other methodological tools.

Chart 2. Distribution by decade in which the PQ 1A grant holders finished their doctorates

Decade	Anthropology	Political Science	Sociology
1970	1	1	6
1980	11	4	12
1990	1	3	4

Source: Prepared by the authors (2020)

Therefore, we can observe that, proportionally, Political Science tends to have a more expressive presence of doctors (37.5%) who graduated in a more recent period, which may also reflect its later institutionalization in graduate studies in relation to other areas. At the same time, the inverse logic can be used for Sociology, which has a larger contingent (27.27%) of researchers who graduated in the 1970s.

In a very brief way, the data presented in this section demonstrate the strong regional, generational, and disciplinary concentration of the researchers who constitute this group, which gives us clues to understand the recurring characteristics of the ruling class within Social Sciences in Brazil. Some particularities are present in each area, such as the fact that in Anthropology, there is greater disciplinary dispersion in the area of initial training of its agents; in addition to the fact that there are different formative routes prevalent in each of these areas when we refer to those who have conducted doctoral studies abroad.

5 Institutional Insertion of 1A Grant Holders: local, national, and international articulation

Due to the career time of these researchers, it was expected that they would have dedicated some time in their careers to the most bureaucratic activities, as was the case with 34 (79%) of them. These activities are relatively varied, ranging from course coordination, department heads, graduate coordination, academic unit direction (College, Center, etc.), pro-rectory management, university publisher direction, etc. Nevertheless, in this set of bureaucratic activities, those that would be more linked to the academic *ethos* stand out, such as coordinating a graduate program and directing an academic unit, which in the case of the latter position also usually implies the participation of the highest collegiate bodies of their institutions. This data is similar to what Caregnato, Miorando, and Leite (2018, p. 226) found among researchers in the area of education by indicating that:

Regarding the performance in academic management positions, the data seem to indicate that, as the departments become more bureaucratic instances and the department head disengages from the image of academic leadership, this position becomes less attractive as a resource of scientific-political capital. The same does not occur with the coordination of graduate programs or with the direction of academic units and the pro-rectorate positions with a distinctive character.

We can hypothesize that the position of PPG coordinator, compared with that of department head, has a greater association with pure scientific capital: graduate education is the most related space to research. It also confers greater political scientific capital: PPGs tend to have greater typification, articulation, and power in the national subfield of Education than departments. On the other hand, leadership positions in academic units and pro-rectories grant prestige and influence superior to those of department heads, as well as a greater dominance over the resources of the scientific field at the institutional level.

In the case of Social Sciences in Brazil, this is evident by the fact that usually, the main events in the area reserve spaces in their schedules for meetings of program coordinators with representatives of the area in CAPES, so occupying such a position seems to be something relevant in distinctive terms in the field, which also seems to have importance to act in relevant committees such as CAPES and CNPQ, in which such researchers have a strong insertion. In the case of researchers from São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Rio Grande do Sul, working with the local Research Support Foundations seems to have a relevant weight.

The prestige of these researchers can also be perceived through two relevant, distinctive elements: a) participation in the boards of scientific societies in the area, with emphasis on the positions of president/director and vice-president/director; b) receipt of awards. Participation in scientific societies can also take place through scientific committees, special juries, board positions, etc., which obeys the organizational logic of each association²²; as well as the participation of these academics in certain areas of knowledge that have their own associations, such as in the area of labor sociology, rural sociology, etc. Therefore, we mainly consider the positions of president and vice-president in ABA, ABCP, ANPOCS, and SBS. Also with regard to the awards, there is some heterogeneity in the areas, as well as in the level of recognition they represent. Also, there are also the very criteria used by researchers to indicate the awards received, so that in their *lattes* there are grants awarded through international competition, honors received in their institutions, and in scientific associations, commendations, the orientation of awarded dissertations/theses, etc. For this category, we included only the award for best scientific work and tributes made by scientific associations regarding the trajectories of researchers without thereby belittling or denying the importance of other modalities.

Among these 43 researchers, we found 18 (41.86%) who held the position of president or vice-president in one or more of the aforementioned scientific associations, and 23 (53.48%) have already received one or more awards from these associations. Among the 1A Political Science grant holders, 3 of them (37.5%) have already been presidents of ABCP, and among these one was also president of ANPOCS; in addition, 6 of them (75%) have already received awards/honors, the most recurrent being the best academic work in Social Sciences granted by

²²Currently, ABA has a presidency and a vice-presidency, a general secretariat and an adjunct, three directors, a general treasury and an adjunct; ABCP has a presidency, an executive secretariat and an adjunct, seven boards (publications, graduate education, undergraduate education, projects, research, international cooperation), and three members of the fiscal council; ANPOCS has a presidency, an executive secretariat and an adjunct, a publication board, as well as three directors and three members of the fiscal council; finally, SBS has a presidency and two vice-presidents, a general secretariat and an adjunct, five directors, a treasurer and a fiscal council with three members.

ANPOCS, received by 4 of them. Among the anthropologists, 5 of them (38.46%) were presidents or vice-presidents of ABA, having also been one of them president of ANPOCS; 10 of them (76.92%) received awards from ABA and/or ANPOCS, being more recurrent in these cases the honors of ABA, received by 6 of them. In the case of Sociology, the position of presidents or vice-presidents of SBS was occupied by 9 of them (40.9%), two of whom were also presidents of ANPOCS, and one of these agents held the presidency of ANPOCS without occupying the same position in SBS; on the other hand, in this group 7 of them (31.81%) received awards from ANPOCS and/or SBS, especially those from ANPOCS, received by 5 of the agents of this group.

Some differences in the proportion of winners and agents who became presidents of scientific associations in their specific areas can be explained by the different temporalities of the associations, as was briefly indicated in the first section of this article. Thus, as ANPOCS has continuously maintained its activities since the 1970s, this may help explain the centrality of its awards in this group of researchers.

These positions taken in the field from important institutional spaces, both in their own institutions and national scientific societies, refer us to some hypotheses launched by Coradini (2018) to think about the distribution criteria of CNPQ grants in the highest positions of the academic hierarchy, according to which the highest positions of this hierarchy would be closer to what he called the “political pole”, as opposed to the “technical pole” of this field.

The absence of “quantifiable” elements in the committee’s specific criteria to achieve these hierarchy levels tends to reinforce this author’s hypothesis. In any case, it is important to recognize that the elements of consecration indicated above, such as ANPOCS’s “award for best academic work”, also tend to point to the fact that the political capital of these agents also originates from the reconversion of scientific capital, even if one can reach a 1A grant holder without having been president of these associations, or have received any of their awards.

There is also significant participation of these researchers in scientific and evaluation committees of CAPES and CNPQ, in addition to a strong presence in the local Research Support Foundations. These spaces are also deeply relevant to these researchers’ legitimacy in their academic hierarchy. This item, in a very broad way, can be considered practically unanimous among researchers since the condition of the CNPQ researcher automatically leads to the condition of the organ evaluator through the issuance of opinions on aid applications and grants that other researchers conduct. It is also important to emphasize that the CNPQ committees are composed exclusively of level 1 researchers, reinforcing the tendency for these researchers to integrate these representative bodies.

Another important fact is the international circulation of these researchers, considered a symbol of academic and social distinction. This circulation is mainly guaranteed through grants granted by funding agencies in Brazil, which have a central role in this process (Mazza, 2009). However, there are also foreign funding cases for postdoctoral studies and acting as visiting professors.

This issue has become central in a recent period in the three areas of Social Sciences (Rial, 2014; Madeira, Marengo 2016; Scalon, Miskolci, 2018). Although there was a certain inflection in the number of grants to conduct activities abroad in the 1990s, there is growth that is resumed in the 2000s, from which many of these researchers benefit, also intensifying in this period the publications in international journals. This relationship has been mainly with countries located in the Global North, following the trend observed in doctoral training. However, in the case of acting as visiting professors, circulation in Latin American countries is also highlighted. It is important to note that, despite academic asymmetries, agents in the Global South are often able to develop active roles, which have repercussions on the development of partnerships and the possibility of publications in international journals (Connell *et al.*, 2010).

Numerically speaking, 38 of them (88, 37%) conducted postdoctoral studies and/or acted as visiting researchers abroad, 20 (90.9%) in Sociology, 7 (87.5%) in Political Science, 11 (84.61%) in Anthropology. These data point to international circulation's relevance to reaching the highest levels in the hierarchy of PQ grants. Even in the cases of those who did not indicate such activities in their *lattes*, there is incisive participation in international events, and which may indicate other forms of academic dialogues at the international level, although not institutionalized from a more "traditional" one. As Beigel (2013) acknowledges, the Brazilian case of graduate training and international circulation in the social sciences case is quite idiosyncratic compared to what happened in other Latin American countries, which is reflected in the scenario found here.

Together, the data in this section indicate that scientific capital alone is insufficient to reach the highest positions in the academic field of Social Sciences. It is also important that agents have a significant political capital, which will be elaborated at least at three levels: a) at the local level, from the university bureaucracy; b) at the national level, from participation in scientific societies and scientific committees; c) at the international level, from academic circulation through internships abroad.

6 Final Considerations

The exercise elaborated in this article allowed us to advance in the reflection that the Brazilian Social Sciences have conducted on the field itself, taking as a guideline those researchers who are at the highest levels of the academic hierarchy, using as a criterion the criteria used by CNPQ in the process of classification of PQ grants. To a large extent, we can affirm that the prosopography of an elite group can bring us interesting elements to understand a given field, insofar as those who are located in privileged positions in the field, possessing the greatest volume of symbolic capital, are also those who have the ability to deform the rules of the field.

I once again state that an analysis of higher education is only possible to the extent that we carry out an analysis of its agents, their profile and actions. Despite the survey conducted to confirm some trends already pointed out in the specialized literature on the academic field in Brazil, such as the strong concentration of PQ grant holders in the southeast region and the numerical predominance of men in these groups, especially at the highest levels; it was also observed the existence of certain particularities in the field of Social Sciences, especially when comparing the three areas that compose it, understanding how such particularities produce hierarchies in the field is fundamental for us to understand the exercise carried out here as something that goes beyond the description of a given social reality.

Although these researchers mostly focus on programs of excellence in the area, the gap between the evaluation of the programs by CAPES and the number of PQ 1A grants is noteworthy, with, in some cases, programs with the same scores, with a significantly different numbers of grants, or in some cases with better scores and with fewer grants. It is recognized here, of course, that the evaluation criteria of the programs by CAPES and grant holders by CNPQ are different, operating the former at a more collective and institutional level and the latter at an individual level. Nevertheless, it is an interesting fact to reflect on a possible role that the prestige of the institutions has in awarding CNPQ grants. Or how material and symbolic resources are unequally distributed among institutions, which could potentially interfere with agents' ability to reach the highest levels of the academic hierarchy. This data is especially relevant to understand that the prestige of certain agents may come from their institution, however, this prestige is often individualized and legitimized from other spaces of consecration.

These researchers have as their most recurrent profile the institutional link with universities located in the southeast region, mainly in the Rio-São Paulo axis, with the completion of undergraduate studies between the 1960s and 1970s and doctoral studies in the 1970s and 1980s, their doctoral studies occurred almost unanimously in foreign institutions or located in the southeast region. It is observed that, among them, there is active participation, throughout their careers, of the university bureaucracy, the boards of scientific societies, and the committees of funding agencies, in addition to having circulated internationally through internships abroad in the form of post-doctorates and/or as visiting professors.

At a more qualitative and less descriptive level, we can also say that they are agents who actively participated in the constitution of the research agenda of their fields of expertise in Brazil so that their scientific capital is widely recognized by peers, as well as attest to the various awards and honors received, in addition to the invitations received to partner with foreign universities, so that the PQ 1A grant would synthesize this recognition. Understanding their trajectories, therefore, considering the position they occupy in the field, also helps us to understand the very configuration of the Social Sciences in Brazil.

The questions raised here can open a relevant research agenda with regard to understanding the agents who are located at the top of the academic hierarchy, thus making visible the “unspoken rules” that exist in the field. In a homologous way, it would be possible to analyze other fields, thus revealing two internal dynamics and disputes.

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