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A Análise do sistema *Qualis*: uma revisão narrativa da Revista Brasileira de Pós-Graduação (RBPG)

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Resumo

Os estudos cientométricos e bibliométricos permitem, também, avaliar as diversas avaliações da produção científica, tais como o sistema *Qualis* da CAPES. A questões principal que orientou esta pesquisa é revisar e caracterizar como a Revista Brasileira de Pós-Graduação (RBPG) vem analisando e discutindo o sistema *Qualis* no período de 2004 a 2020. O objetivo deste trabalho e apresentar os principais resultados dessas avaliações. Assim, foi realizada uma revisão das narrativas publicadas na RBPG tendo como descritor a palavra *Qualis*. Dentre os resultados se destacam o grupo de críticas, tais como: o uso exclusivo do Fator de Impacto (FI) para definição do *Qualis* e sua utilização para avaliar docentes e discentes, assim como, e dentre as sugestões, a possibilidade de identificar a necessidade de se induzir periódicos nacionais para estratos mais altos no sistema; e a implementação de uma política de avaliação de livros. Conclui-se que, apesar dos avanços, da contribuição e da dinamicidade, são necessários ajustes para a melhoria da avaliação da pós-graduação brasileira, uma vez que ainda existem disputas internas e entre os diferentes campos acadêmicos.

Palavras-chave: Pós-Graduação. Produção científica. *Qualis* Capes.

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The analysis of the CAPES *Qualis* system: a review of the narratives of the Brazilian Journal of Graduate Studies (RBPG)

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Abstract

Scientometric and bibliometric studies allow the assessment of the various evaluation systems of scientific production, such as the CAPES *Qualis* system. The main issue that guided this research was to review and characterize how the Revista Brasileira de Post-Graduation (RBPG) has been analyzing and discussing the *Qualis* system from 2004 to 2020. The objective of this work is to present the main results of these evaluations. Thus, a review of the narratives published in the RBPG was carried out using the word *Qualis* as a descriptor. Among the results, the group of criticisms stands out, such as: the exclusive use of the Impact Factor (IF) to define *Qualis* and its use to evaluate teachers and students, as well as, and among the suggestions, the possibility of identifying the need of inducing national journals to higher *strata* in the system; and the implementation of a book review policy. It is concluded that, despite the advances, the contribution and the dynamism, adjustments are necessary to improve the evaluation of Brazilian postgraduate studies, since there are still internal disputes and disputes between the different academic fields.

Keywords: Post graduation. Scientific production. Capes *Qualis*.

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El análisis del sistema CAPES Qualis: una revisión de las narrativas de la Revista Brasileña de Estudios de Posgrado (RBPG)

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Resumen

Los estudios cienciométricos y bibliométricos también permiten evaluar las diversas evaluaciones de la producción científica, como el sistema CAPES Qualis. La principal pregunta que orientó esta investigación es revisar y caracterizar cómo la Revista Brasileira de Posgrado (RBPG) viene analizando y discutiendo el sistema *Qualis* de 2004 a 2020. El objetivo de este trabajo es presentar los principales resultados de estas evaluaciones. Así, se realizó una revisión de las narrativas publicadas en la RBPG utilizando la palabra *Qualis* como descriptor. Entre los resultados, se destacan el grupo de críticas, tales como: el uso exclusivo del Factor de Impacto (FI) para definir *Qualis* y su uso para evaluar a docentes y estudiantes, así como, y entre las sugerencias, la posibilidad de identificar la necesidad de inducir a las revistas nacionales a estratos superiores del sistema; y la implementación de una política de evaluación de libros. Se concluye que, a pesar de los avances, la contribución y el dinamismo, son necesarios ajustes para mejorar la evaluación de los estudios de posgrado brasileños, ya que aún existen disputas internas y entre los diferentes campos académicos.

Palabras clave: Posgrado. Producción científica. Qualis CAPES.

Introduction

Scientometrics, also known as the "science of sciences," is based on statistical methods primarily aimed at measuring the scientific output of countries, various institutions, and researchers (OKUBO, 1997). In addition to scientometrics, bibliometrics developed throughout the 20th century as a research procedure that initially seeks to measure the dissemination capacity of scientific productions through published articles in journals, books, among others, attempting to assess the quality of each publication (OKUBO, 1997; GARFIELD, 2005).

Despite similarities between the definitions, scientometrics is considered the evaluation of science and may involve both quantitative and qualitative procedures. In contrast, bibliometrics is more focused on assessing production through its dissemination. To this end, various databases have been established, and several indices have been created, such as the Impact Factor (IF), which "[...] counts only the citations made in a given year to documents published in the previous two years" (AVENA; BARBOSA, 2017, p. 2). The H-index is responsible for measuring "[...] the impact and performance of individual researchers based on citation counts over their career" (AVENA; BARBOSA, 2017, p. 2), among others.

In Brazil, the databases and different parameters adopted in scientometrics have been used by the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES) to evaluate Graduate Programs (PPGs), especially the publication of articles by faculty and students through the *Qualis* System. Its first version dates back to 1998 and has been refined to differentiate the quality of PPGs (CAPES, 2004). Initially, the Technical-Scientific Committees (CTCs) of each area of knowledge created a list of journals that published articles by faculty and students of PPGs, which are evaluated according to criteria established by each committee. Thus, according to the adopted parameters, a ranking is created for the journals, ranging from the most important to those not classified as scientific journals on a scale that includes ratings A-1 (worth 100 points), A2, B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, and C (worth 0). Consequently, each CTC publishes a list with the *Qualis* of the evaluated journals (WebQualis), from which the collective production score of each program is determined (AVENA; BARBOSA, 2017).

Over time, *Qualis* has changed its classification system for journals, being recognized as an interesting tool in the evaluation of Brazilian graduate education. Despite consistently facing criticism and receiving suggestions from researchers, coordinators, scientific editors, and area coordinators, it has become a rich source for scientometric and bibliometric analysis.

Considering that this system focuses on evaluating the quality of the graduate education system in Brazil, the issue raised here is to assess how the *Qualis* Capes system has been analyzed and discussed in the Brazilian Journal of Graduate Studies (RBPG) from 2004 to 2020. The general objective was to evaluate the analyses and discussions presented in the RBPG during this period.

This text is divided into two sections. The first presents the methodology. Following that, the main results and discussions regarding the *Qualis* Capes in the Brazilian Journal of Graduate Studies, published by Capes itself, are presented. This journal aims to showcase research results related to graduate education in Brazil (RBPG, 2018b).

Methodology

This bibliographic study is characterized as a narrative review, which allows for "[...] establishing relationships with previous productions, identifying recurring themes, pointing out new perspectives, and consolidating a field of knowledge" (VOSGERAU; ROMANOWSKI, 2014, p. 170).

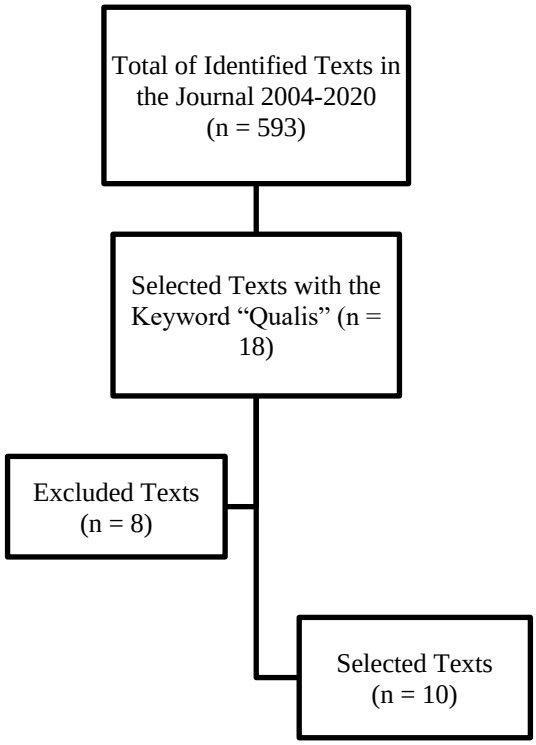
In this case, the objective of the review was to identify the debate surrounding the *Qualis* Capes system as presented in the RBPG. The choice of this journal is related to the fact that it has been published by Capes since 2004, featuring sections such as editorials, articles, experiences, documents, among others, that are more seasonal.

Moreover, as a publication of Capes, it gains relevance by disseminating a series of documents and analyses linked to Brazilian graduate education, with one of the criteria being the analysis of the quality of the journals to which faculty from national graduate programs submit their work, whether they are national or international journals.

This research was conducted between March and August 2021 and utilized the keyword "Qualis" to identify the texts for analysis. Initially, 18 texts published between 2004 and 2020 were identified. According to the RBPG website, there were no publications throughout the entire year of 2018. Of these, eight texts were discarded after a full reading because they did not meet the objectives of the present research. These studies used *Qualis* to define criteria but did not focus on discussing this parameter itself.

The selection process for the texts is described in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Selection Process for the Texts Analyzed in the Study



Source: Own elaboration

The texts that met the objectives of this study are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Distribution Table of Editions, Titles, and Authors of Articles Analyzed on Qualis in the RBPG (2004-2020)

Nº	EDITION	TITLE	AUTHOR (S)
1	v. 1, n. 1 (2004)	*QUALIS*: conception and basic guidelines	RBPG – Capes/Diretoria de Avaliação
2	v. 1, n. 2 (2004)	*Qualis* in Letters/Linguistics: an analysis of its foundations	Adair Bonini
3	v. 3, n. 5 (2006)	*Qualis* in the area of Biological Sciences III: criticisms and suggestions regarding the journal classification model as a criterion for evaluating graduate programs	Pedro Marcos Linardi, Marcos Horácio Pereira, Jaime Arturo Ramírez
4	v. 7, n. 12 (2010)	Challenges of evaluating publications in journals: discussing the new *Qualis* in the Engineering III area	Marcos Pereira Estellita Lins, Leonardo Antonio Monteiro Pessôa
5	v. 7, n. 14 (2010)	*Qualis* journals: concepts and practices in Engineering I	José Nilson B. Campos
6	v. 9, n. 18 (2012)	The *Qualis* Journals from the perspective of a group of graduate program coordinators	Maria Goretti de Lacerda Maciel, Ivan Rocha Neto
7	v. 9, n. 18 (2012)	Identity of the Human Sciences and evaluation metrics: *Qualis* journals and book classification	Gladis Massini-Cagliari
8	v. 13, n. 30 (2016)	Ten things you should know about *Qualis*	Rita de Cássia Barradas Barata
9	v. 13, n. 30 (2016)	The *Qualis* Journals and their use in evaluations	Nei Y. Soma, Alexandre D. Alves, Horacio H. Yanasse
10	v. 13, n. 30 (2016)	*Qualis*: implications for evaluating graduate programs in different fields of knowledge - a preliminary analysis	André Luiz Felix Rodacki

Fonte: Elaboração própria.

The analysis has a quantitative-qualitative nature, according to Santos Filho and Gamboa (1997), as it is understood that quantitative and qualitative elements do not exclude each other; rather, they can establish quite interesting relationships when this information is cross-referenced. According to these authors, it can even occur from a dialectical perspective when studies have a historical-comprehensive focus regarding their techniques, addressing quantitative and qualitative aspects within the principle of movement because these categories modify, complement, and transform each other. These dimensions interrelate as phases of reality in a cumulative and transformative process, so that both are presented as inextricable (SANTOS FILHO; GAMBOA, 1997).

Results and discussions

This work aims to locate and characterize the debate that has been presented regarding the Qualis Capes system in the RBPG. First, sociodemographic data will be presented, followed by the categories derived from the qualitative analysis of the articles.

An overview of the articles that analyze *Qualis* in the RBPG between 2004 and 2016

Table 1 presents the years, volumes, and numbers of the analyzed articles.

Table 1: Distribution of the number of articles by volume and issue of the RBPG

Year	Volume	Issue	Number of Articles
2004	1	1	1
		2	1
2006	3	5	1
2010	7	14	2
2012	9	18	2
2016	13	30	3
Total			10

Source: Author's own elaboration.

In Table 1, it can be observed that the analysis of *Qualis* and its impact on graduate education is not a recurring theme, as only 10 articles on this topic were published, compared to a total of 593 texts published in all sections (2004-2020), with an average of 38 ± 16.11 texts per year. The analysis

of Qualis accounts for 1.88% of the total, and despite being a pressing issue, the RBPG has not assimilated the critiques and analyses concerning it (FARIAS et al., 2017).

Of the total authors, 75% hold doctoral degrees. In addition, there is one graduate and one master's degree holder who co-authored articles with other doctors. In the text of the first issue, it was not possible to identify the authorship and title (CAPES, 2004). The largest concentration of works comes from the Southeast and South regions, with 70% of the published articles. These two regions have the highest number of graduate programs in the country. Another 20% come from the Central-West region, 10% from the Northeast region, and none from the North region. According to CAPES, there are 7,040 graduate programs in Brazil (Academic and Professional Master's; Academic and Professional Doctorate). Of these, 576 (8.18%) are in the Central-West region; 1,359 (19.30%) in the Northeast; 386 (5.48%) in the North; 3,181 (45.18%) in the Southeast; and 1,538 (21.85%) in the South (CAPES, 2021a).

Regarding the types of articles, the first issue of the RBPG (CAPES, 2004) published the document presenting the guidelines of the *Qualis* system. In the following issue, Bonini (2004) presented a theoretical paper proposing important reflections on this system of journal evaluation. Three other articles were characterized as essays, explicitly referring to the texts published in 2016 due to their form of exposition and analysis (BARRADAS BARATA, 2016; SOMA; ALVES; YANASSE, 2016; RODACKI, 2016). The remaining articles are original pieces in which empirical analyses were conducted through questionnaires (MACIEL; ROCHA NETO, 2012) and document analysis (LINARDI; PEREIRA; RAMIREZ, 2006; LINS; PESSÔA, 2010; CAMPOS, 2010; MACIEL; ROCHA NETO, 2012; MASSINI-CAGLIARI, 2012).

Qualis System as a Criterion for Evaluating Brazilian Postgraduate Programs: Analyses, Critiques, and Propositions

The analyses were then grouped into two main categories: 1) critiques and 2) propositions. Considering the differences in analysis regarding stratification, the analyses remain relevant.

Critiques of the *Qualis* System

All the texts (except for the CAPES text from 2004) offer critiques, both from the perspective of an in-depth analysis and in terms of highlighting the weaknesses and negative aspects of *Qualis*. The first critique was made by Bonini (2004) and Campos (2010) due to the subjective criteria and/or

the lack of discernment in the evaluations. According to these authors, *Qualis* tends to favor international journals over national ones in Web*Qualis.*

> The first of these is the circulation or distribution to be considered a central element, as the classification is based on the categories "local, national, and international." [...] There are two complicating aspects. First, although there is no intention to conceive each level as a stage of quality superior to the others, this is precisely how the academic community is understanding this classification. Second, distribution is one of the most complex items in the evaluation of journals, adding that the number of citations from graduate programs does not guarantee an assessment of either circulation or the quality of the journal (BONINI, 2004, p. 150).

In the first version of *Qualis*, journals were classified without clarity for the academic community, as the criteria for evaluating journals and scoring graduate programs were not explicitly stated. Therefore, if the discernments are subjective or unclear, it is possible to exercise certain political actions, presenting scientific fields as microcosms of society, with their tensions and interests (BOURDIEU, 2002). In this case, the criteria allowed for the promotion of some programs over others, since even if the areas specify their criteria in documents, it is not always clear what is being evaluated (FRIGERI; MONTEIRO, 2014).

Another criticism, in its negative aspect, was the exclusive use of the Impact Factor (IF), currently from Clarivate, to define the ranking of journals, which harmed the presence of national journals in the highest strata, an aspect that continues to hinder national scientific publishing.

> The intense debate surrounding the implementation of the new Qualis that governed the evaluation for the triennium 2008-2010 highlights the doubts and controversies generated within the scientific community [...] raised questions that seem to be widely agreed upon and that should perhaps be the subject of careful analysis in the upcoming triennium. The main points can be summarized as follow:
> a Half of the fields used the impact factor from the Journal of Citation Reports (JCR) as the sole criterion;
> b) Other evaluation metrics exist and can be taken into account; and
> c) Hundreds of Brazilian scientific journals may have been classified below the levels they deserve (MACIEL; ROCHA NETO, 2012, p. 645-646).

The evaluation of journals conducted through the impact factor (IF) presents, in principle, two problems. First, there is an overvaluation of the IF from JCR/Clarivate, which tends to better qualify journals published in English, leading some fields of knowledge towards a predominance of the harder sciences (exact and biological). Moreover, in the humanities and social sciences, language is not a neutral element, and the process of translating into English compromises the dissemination and indexing of Brazilian scientific journals in these databases (FIORIN, 2007; MASSINI-CAGLIARI, 2012). In this regard, translation can even render the text meaningless and lacking proper analysis, as

words carry specific meanings, even within their epistemological foundations. The lack of this understanding can make the research appear theoretically decontextualized.

Second, it concerns the evaluation of faculty and students. Professors are more experienced in researching and publishing, which disadvantages students in the evaluation process, as they find it more difficult to publish in higher-ranked journals. In a survey conducted with 179 coordinators of graduate programs (PPGs), 60.8% agreed that the criteria for these groups should be differentiated (MACIEL; ROCHA NETO, 2012, p. 655).

Furthermore, the challenges in analyzing journals in the humanities and social sciences (HSS) are noteworthy, given that many are not included in the JCR (Journal of Citation Reports) because some fields also publish in Spanish, French, and German, among others. Data presented by Baptista (2019) shows that in the field of Education, there are 121 journals classified as A-1 in the 2013-2016 evaluation. Beyond Brazilian publications, some such as *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, *Enseñanza de las Ciencias*, *Padagogische Rundschau*, and *Revista Lusófona de Educação* available on the Sucupira platform (CAPES, 2021b) are not published in English, which may compromise the evaluation of PPGs.

Additionally, the evaluation of books is still incipient, despite being an important form of production for these specific areas.

> [...] The number of journals evaluated by Capes within the context of *Qualis* in the Humanities varies significantly across different fields, ranging from just over 200 in areas like Arts and Music and Philosophy/Theology (Theology) to more than 1,500 in Language and Linguistics. This indicates that the production of articles in journals within the Humanities is more prominent in some areas than in others. Furthermore, in all fields, even those with substantial journal production, the output in other media, especially books, appears to be as important as, or even more important than, the production in journals (MASSINI-CAGLIARI, 2012, p. 758-759).

This understanding aligns with the views of other authors regarding the nature of production.

> Although Capes has always been aware of the specificities of production in the Humanities, the enormous difficulties inherent to the process have certainly delayed the proposal for evaluation methodologies for these vehicles [...]. It is important to emphasize that there are no previous examples of book classification in other countries on which we could base ourselves – which constitutes yet another obstacle, although it may signify, in its novelty, a positive innovation for the process. (MASSINI-CAGLIARI, 2012, p. 771).

Regarding the evaluation of books, in fields such as Education, this is very relevant, as books are important vehicles for the production of knowledge. They can provide more complete and complex analyses, which is often limited in articles due to character, word, or page limits. Even in fields like Health Sciences, evaluating production based solely on articles presents difficulties and can be a problem for training.

> The aim is to continuously train more students and produce in abundance, without pausing the assembly line for even a moment to reflect on the quality of education and production. One of the consequences of this way of managing the university relates to the dominance of journal articles as the primary vehicle for intellectual production. The book, as a legitimate form of this production, has gradually lost its prestige, even being regarded as secondary and somewhat irrelevant for the construction of knowledge. This fact contrasts with the importance of this communication vehicle throughout the history of humanity and knowledge (CARVALHO; MANOEL, 2007, p. 62).

The book is an important formative element for students and has been submerged in the educational space, hindering the ability to become an intellectual and to develop expertise in more detailed topics and scientific models for data collection and analysis.

> [...] in the current "compressed format" (four and two years for [Doctorate and Master's programs] respectively) — which, in our view, is again inseparable from the institutional category of productivity — a doctor is not formed, but rather a specialist in a research line, usually that of the advisor, who neither knows nor has the desire to teach, that is, to give classes and supervise, being solely interested in their research career. (LUZ, 2005, p. 50).

Publishing only in journals can generate specialization rather than the formation of an intellectual in a broader sense. The mastery of techniques, research procedures, and objective writing for articles, which are as important for researcher training as their ability to reflect on data and its social context (FIORIN, 2007), seem to be an absent concern in some fields of knowledge and lines of research. Furthermore, other aspects regarding the citation processes in each field can also be considered. Thus, fields like the social sciences, which tend to cite more articles compared to other areas of the humanities, may hinder the migration of journals from one field to another (ARAUJO, 2020).

As pointed out by Araujo (2020), the processes of defining the *Qualis* can lead to errors in the evaluation of journals, which helps confirm previous arguments. These points may currently be under consideration, suggesting other analyses within the CTC-ES of each area. Another criticism is the

improper use of *Qualis* for evaluations for which it was not designed, noting that the purpose of *Qualis* is to stratify journals to compare postgraduate programs; it aims to present elements for a collective and comparative evaluation of programs, not the individual evaluation of researchers (SOMA; ALVES; YANASSE, 2016, p. 51).

However, the Web*Qualis* has been used for other types of evaluation, including analyzing the productivity of candidates in public competitions (LUZ, 2005). This fact changes behaviors, such as the intention of researchers to compete for and/or maintain positions in their fields (FRIGERI; MONTEIRO, 2014). "Once again, it is important to emphasize that *Qualis* was designed exclusively to evaluate the intellectual production of postgraduate programs. Therefore, its use for other purposes needs to be viewed with great caution" (RODACKI, 2016, p. 75).

The last criticism relates to the difficulty or impracticality of adopting a single *Qualis*. Although there is some need to define what constitutes quality production, the experience of engineering demonstrates the challenges of this proposal. Ultimately, each subfield (Engineering I, II, III, and IV) ended up defining its own Web*Qualis* (LINS; PESSÔA, 2010). There is also the risk of hierarchization among the fields, with the possibility that hard sciences, especially basic research, would have privileges over others.

A relevant point is that one of the established problems in this case is the competition for monopolies of authority in each field of knowledge, associated with technical capability and scientific competence, which ultimately grant legitimacy, authority, and social power to their holders. In other words, there are conflicts and disputes among the fields and within each of them, leading to the control of these spaces, thus attributing cultural capital to each of their agents (BOURDIEU, 1983).

Despite the criticisms highlighted here, which are considered legitimate, propositions were also made, presented in the following section.

Propositions Regarding the *Qualis* System

In the published articles, it was possible to identify at least two types of propositions presented, namely:

a) those that present proposals related to the different actors of postgraduate education, such as faculty and students, regarding the production of knowledge and journals and/or books, but do not discuss the *Qualis* system itself; and

b) those that present direct propositions to the system on how to define evaluation metrics and other criteria.

The first criterion identified is the review of knowledge areas. The changes from some subareas to others would, in a certain way, be linked to aspects related to the knowledge produced and, at the same time, to the evaluation process of the programs by *Qualis*, conceiving the perspective of interdisciplinarity (CAPES, 2018a).

A second point, which does not pertain to *Qualis*, is the attention that needs to be given to certain concepts, such as what constitutes a scientific journal.

> The scientific journal is a serial publication with a defined frequency [...]. In the academic field, there is a preference for the term scientific magazine. In developing countries, the scientific magazine serves the function, in addition to certifying science, of establishing and implementing quality criteria for conducting and disseminating research, helping to consolidate research areas, serving as a repository of information of international, national, or regional interest, training reviewers and authors in analysis and critique, thereby improving the quality of science (ERDMANN *et al.*, 2009, p. 2).

It is important to highlight, in the commentary by Erdmann et al. (2009), the meanings and significance of a journal. Its function is not only to disseminate scientific thought and research results more swiftly and objectively; it is also a means of certifying the quality of research by considering peer review criteria. Another point that often goes unnoticed in this process is the fact that journals serve as a form of training, not only in writing but also in developing the analysis and evaluation skills of master's and doctoral candidates regarding the material produced. According to these authors, the processes mentioned also contribute to the improvement and advancement of science.

The scientific journal can and should have criteria such as quality, editorial governance, availability of the journal, and content, with the latter potentially contributing to the analysis of quality (VARELA; ROESLER, 2012). The attempt to define theoretical models for the distribution of journals in Web*Qualis* and explain them to the scientific community yielded good results in Engineering I. Two models were developed:

> The first model, called the quality hierarchy model, was shaped based on the practices of Engineering I. [...] The second model was conceived from premises induced by the recommendations of the CTC and the frequency constraints of the strata, combined with the pursuit of a nearly Gaussian model (CAMPOS, 2010, p. 493-494).

The intention of presenting the model was to demonstrate the rationale behind the definition of criteria, establishing the necessary objectivity parameters considered in scientific models. For this reason, some areas utilized the impact factor (IF). By verifying the impact factor of the journals, it becomes possible to establish a certain hierarchy, and by adopting evaluation percentiles, a "normal" distribution of journals can be created, aiming to align them with the appropriate criteria in their respective fields.

Other concerns relate to the evaluation of faculty and students, especially in the individual context, as there should be a focus on general education rather than merely creating specialists. Luz's (2005) warning is quite pertinent, as it calls for reflection on the demand for graduate programs to train university professors and researchers with independent thinking, not just specialists in data collection, analysis, and dissemination of results in articles.

However, there is also a question about who the potential readership of the text would be. When a faculty member submits a text for publication to a high-impact journal, it is not always the best option, as another journal with a lower ranking in Web*Qualis*, aimed at researchers in the field, may generate greater engagement, dissemination, and use of information (Rodacki, 2016). However, it is important to note:

> An analysis that attempts to isolate a purely "political" dimension in the conflicts for domination within the scientific field would be as false as the opposite bias, which is more common, of only considering the "pure" and purely intellectual determinations of scientific conflicts. For example, the struggle for the acquisition of credits and research tools that currently opposes specialists is never reduced to a simple struggle for "political" power itself. (BOURDIEU, 1983, p. 124, author's emphasis).

According to Bourdieu's analysis (1983), although Rodacki's proposal is coherent, the recommendation not to publish in high-impact journals may also create difficulties for researchers trying to maintain their positions in graduate programs, especially when looking at quantitative analyses and productivity criteria in graduate education. Regarding productivity, the analysis by Severiano Junior et al. (2021) can be referenced. For these authors, academic productivity is categorized into four parts: a) first-type productivity, related to scientific publications; b) second-type productivity, corresponding to awards and academic status; c) third-type productivity, manifested in external relationships and consultations; and d) fourth-type productivity, linked to teaching or educational productivity (TORSI, 2013 *apud* SEVERIANO JUNIOR *et al.*, 2021).

> Among these four types of productivity, the most valued by academia is first-type productivity, as it emphasizes the quantity of scientific material produced by a given author. Thus, the number of scientific artifacts produced within a certain period also defines how resources for scholarships in graduate programs and investments to fund conducted research will be managed. In this sense, this external and internal pressure for productivity affects both faculty/researchers and students in graduate programs [...]. (SEVERIANO JUNIOR *et al*., 2021, p. 347).

Thus, first-type productivity has been the main factor for analyzing and showcasing researchers. However, it should also be considered that the possibility of publishing in high-tier Brazilian journals is low for many fields. Therefore, even if production is directed toward specific niches, it may be deemed insufficient or even evaluate the researcher as lacking the ability to engage internationally. This concern is particularly relevant for the field of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHS), given the idealization of articles published internationally.

> In addition to the possible bias in choosing topics of "*Qualis* quality," excluding others, the idealization of international articles (in the sense of those published abroad) can lead to the devaluation of significant works on local subjects when the best research on the topic is conducted in Brazil. (MASSINI-CAGLIARI, 2012, p. 769, emphasis added).

The submission of articles to high-impact factor (IF) journals depends on the field to which they are submitted. The IF tends to be lower in the Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS), especially in countries where the native language is not English.

> Most databases exhibit a bias favoring journals over other forms of publication, causing the science of peripheral countries, in general, and particularly the Humanities and Social Sciences of those countries, to remain doubly underrepresented. Journals from non-English-speaking countries indexed in ISI databases tend to have significantly lower impact factors (around 1.0) (GARFIELD, 1983c). However, these numbers have nothing to do with the academic quality of the journals, as a similar phenomenon occurs with journals from "First World" countries like France (CARVALHO; MANOEL, 2006, p. 208).

In this way, it is important to note that internationalization may not be as significant for some fields, particularly the soft sciences, considering that social and educational aspects may pertain to only one country. An additional element of this process relates to scientific colonialism, as international evaluators tend to prioritize only Anglo-Saxon theories:

> From this perspective, publishing in Portuguese in Brazilian journals meets the production demands placed on researchers, as there are also journals that have a high CAPES *Qualis* rating, providing valuable returns for researchers in terms of their scoring (SEVERIANO JUNIOR *et al.*, 2021, p. 360).

Finally, there is the discussion of evaluation criteria for areas that have a culture of books, as well as the transition to a culture of journals, considering two important aspects (BARRADAS BARATA, 2016). The first, empirically recognized, is academic production in the form of books or chapters.

> Therefore, books and book chapters hold equal or greater significance than articles published in specialized journals. For example, consider the role played by works like *Raízes do Brasil by Sérgio Buarque de Holanda;* [...]. In this case, it is essential to note that while there are institutionalized channels for appearing in international journals, there are no official processes for the "submission" of books for publication (FIORIN, 2007, p. 272).

All these analyses highlight the needs and potentialities of Brazilian science, for which *Qualis* is merely one form of evaluation. Finally, the specific propositions regarding the analysis of *Qualis* will be presented. Among the proposals are: to indicate the best journals for publication; to periodically review the evaluation criteria; and to heed the criticisms and suggestions from the academic community (CAPES, 2004).

> [...] Given the importance of the academic community's participation in improving the evaluation system, the meetings between the representative and members of the area committee with program coordinators, as well as the statements presented by them at Coleta Capes, should be considered important sources of criticism and suggestions to be taken into account in the processes of reclassification and updating of Qualis (CAPES, 2004, p. 151).

The "Qualis" system has characteristics of an open, dynamic system, considering that the intention is for its criteria, as well as the Web*Qualis*, to act as inducements for publications, although the focus is on the collective evaluation of the program (BARRADAS BARATA, 2016).

Despite the dynamic nature of the proposal presented by the system, as established in the initial document (CAPES, 2004), in 2010, there was a series of complaints, leading to various editorials, particularly from those in the broad health field (ANDRIOLO et al., 2010), expressing indignation with the adopted criteria. Bonini (2004) suggested prioritizing the quality of journals, inducing some journals to rise in Web*Qualis*, improving quality and revising their evaluation, even though it is

understood that journals are already undergoing evaluations to be indexed (FIORIN, 2007). In the case of ISI (International Scientific Indexing), the policy

> [...] is not to index a large number of journals in each field of knowledge, but to evaluate and select the best in each area for indexing. The prerequisites for a journal to be analyzed are: a) regularity of publication; b) international diversity of authors publishing and cited; c) editorial quality (presentation of bibliographic information, complete bibliographic references, author affiliations, descriptive title and abstract); d) presence of title, abstract, and keywords in English; and e) peer review for publication decisions of articles [...]. (FIORIN, 2007, p. 269).

In the cases presented above, the authors discuss the difficulties of evaluating journals when there are multiple thematic areas and/or journals that have a broad scope. In these situations, there is a predominance of one area over another, leading to the establishment of privileges.

> Thus, the definition of what is at stake in the scientific struggle is part of the scientific game: the dominant are those who manage to impose a definition of science according to which the most perfect achievement consists of having, being, and doing what they have, are, and do (BOURDIEU, 1983, p. 128).

The hierarchization of areas is part of the process of privileges and interests, as each area tends to want to determine its methodology, criteria, and references, thereby delineating the priority journals. This aspect is linked to the metrics and indexing databases that determine the strata of journals in the *Qualis* system. Currently, at Capes, there is a very strong trend to use the Impact Factor (IF), Relative IF, or Percentile of IF to evaluate journals and compare areas of knowledge.

> These could serve as the cutoff points for the strata, so that in any area of evaluation, journals classified in the B5 stratum would be those with an impact factor equal to zero or without a measured impact factor; in the B4 stratum, there would be journals with an impact factor greater than zero and less than or equal to the 25th percentile value; the B3 stratum would include journals with an impact factor between the 25th percentile and the median (P50); in the B2 stratum, those with an impact factor between the median and the 75th percentile; in the B1 stratum, journals with an impact factor between the 75th percentile and the 90th percentile; in the A2 stratum, journals with an impact factor between the 90th and 95th percentiles; and finally, in the A1 stratum, those above the 95th percentile (BARRADAS BARATA, 2016, p. 34).

The definition of *Qualis* by the impact factor (IF) for comparing areas of knowledge and sub-areas is understood as the ideal parameter (RODACKI, 2016). This procedure was adopted by Capes starting in 2018, resulting in some transformations.

> In 2019, a new evaluation methodology for *Qualis* Periódicos was introduced, based on four principles: a unique classification for each journal; classification conducted by parent areas; bibliometric indicators - considering the number of citations of the journal within three databases: Scopus (CiteScore), Web of Science (Impact Factor), and Google Scholar (h5 index); and a *Qualis* Reference - classification performed by the Capes Evaluation Directorate using a combined approach of bibliometric indicators and a mathematical model (CAPES, 2019 *apud* CARVALHO; REAL, 2021, p. 598).

Despite the advances (although they have not been officially confirmed to date), there are already rumors about potential criticisms, as some areas still resist the use of the Impact Factor (IF), CiteScore, and the h5 index. On the other hand, the proposal to use the IF as the sole element was criticized by Garfield himself (2005). The use of the Relative IF could also devalue national production, as pointed out by Teixeira et al. (2012).

Another aspect presented in the articles proposing criteria for *Qualis* is the need to correct and define Web*Qualis* based on the parent or leading area of each journal, which has been attempted since 2019 (CARVALHO; REAL, 2019). This reflects a tension in characterizing production without underestimating the most important journals in each field (SOMA; ALVES; YANASSE, 2016).

It is also advocated that areas induce national journals to enhance the visibility of Brazilian science, at least those that can be considered the most significant (LINARDI; PEREIRA; RAMÍREZ, 2006). These initiatives have had an effect, as demonstrated in the study by Lins and Pessôa (2010), considering that the visibility of journals has been increased and the capture of articles from abroad facilitated. Moreover, publishing good work in national journals strengthens national research and ensures our sovereignty (TEIXEIRA et al., 2012). Lastly, the final proposition identified throughout this study was to utilize metrics other than just the ISI IF, as well as to review the criteria (MACIEL; ROCHA NETO, 2012; SOMA; ALVES; YANASSE, 2016).

In addition to using the IF from JCR, it would be possible to adopt other criteria for defining *Qualis*, although there is support for the isolated use of this index (RODACKI, 2016). However, it would be feasible to consider other metrics, such as the IF from Scopus, Ulrich, or even adopting a certain number of databases, as is done, for example, in the field of Education (SOMA; ALVES; YANASSE, 2016). Some of these procedures were adopted in 2019; however, it will take some time to assess the impact of this on the evaluation of *Qualis* and Brazilian graduate education itself.

Final Considerations

Upon concluding this study, it is possible to make several analyses. Firstly, it can be inferred that the *Qualis* system, since its inception in 1998, has generated significant advancements for Brazilian graduate education, as well as for the organization of the format and content of scientific journals. Thus, it provides conditions for indexing in important international databases, thereby increasing the visibility of Brazilian science on a global level.

The study identified challenges, such as defining the main forms of evaluation to establish objective criteria, but above all, ensuring that these criteria are fair and clear for the Brazilian scientific community. Among the demands to be developed are the criteria and advancements concerning *Qualis* for books, considering that these are a significant type of intellectual production for some fields.

Throughout the study, it was possible to perceive not only the difficulties but also the suggestions for improving the evaluation system for journals and books, enabling the consolidation and visibility of Brazilian production. It was also noted that there are currently misuses of the system, perhaps due to an expanded understanding for which there are still no alternative evaluations, or that these possibilities have not yet been considered, such as individual evaluation based on the number of articles or the h-index. Of all these, the most concerning seems to be the use of Web*Qualis* to define an individual researcher's competence and insertion, influencing their ability to obtain productivity grants, career progression, among other factors. This is another aspect that still needs to be developed and enhanced in Brazilian science, taking into account that all the factors that interfere with this outcome demand new studies and debates.

It should also be highlighted that the analyses presented, both by the evaluated texts from RBPG and the literature consulted on the subject, demonstrate that beyond the disputes regarding the evaluation of graduate education in its various fields, there is a struggle for scientific hegemony, as pointed out by Pierre Bourdieu. Although this competition may be naturalized in the academic world, it is important to evaluate the degree of distress it has caused among faculty and students.

This analysis, concerning the mental health process of the individuals involved, tends to generate, in some situations, clashes of egos that can even lead to tragic outcomes. Recently, a graduate student committed suicide during the defense of their thesis due to excessive criticism from a member of the committee (ARATU ON, 2022).

Finally, as the *Qualis* is an open and constantly evolving system, this text demonstrates that a change in the process has already occurred, to some extent presented through the critiques and

suggestions provided in the analyzed texts from the RBPG. However, even though these suggestions have come from the academic community itself, some analyses of the "Single *Qualis*" have already been identified, including those by Costa, Canto, and Pinto (2020), Jafé (2020), Martínez-Ávila, Muriel-Torrado, and Bisset-Álvarez (2020), and Perez (2020). The results are on the horizon.

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