

New Avenues for a Research Agenda on the Science of Public Administration in Brazil

Novas Vias para uma Agenda de Pesquisa sobre a Ciência da Administração Pública no Brasil

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ABSTRACT

This article addresses studies on the science of public administration in Brazil and seeks to explore the contributions of science studies to renew the research agenda about the scientific work in the field. This is a theoretical essay that begins with a systematic review of the Brazilian scientific production on the science of public administration, working with three approaches in this sense: 1) the teaching of public administration in Brazil; 2) scientific production and research in the field of public administration in the country; and 3) epistemological studies in the area. Concentrating on this third line and on the gaps identified in the studies, the most recent approaches to the sociology of science and, more particularly, the sociology of scientific practices are presented, seeking to highlight the possible contributions of these epistemological approaches to the study of the science of public administration. As contributions, in addition to presenting the contours of the debate, its scope and gaps, the text proposes research areas and themes that can be explored to advance the debate and broaden the research agenda on the science of public administration in the country.

Keywords: Science of public administration in Brazil. Sociology of science. Sociology of scientific practices. Epistemological approaches.

Submitted: 07/11/2022

Accepted: 07/09/2023

RESUMO

Este artigo aborda os estudos sobre a ciência da administração pública no Brasil e busca explorar as contribuições dos *science studies* (estudos sobre a ciência) para renovar a agenda de pesquisa sobre o fazer científico no campo. Trata-se de um ensaio teórico que inicia com uma revisão sistemática da produção científica brasileira sobre a ciência da administração pública, trabalhando com três enfoques nesse sentido: 1) o ensino de administração pública no Brasil; 2) a produção científica e a pesquisa no campo da administração pública no país; e 3) os estudos epistemológicos na área. Concentrando-se nesta terceira linha e nas lacunas identificadas nos estudos, são apresentadas as abordagens mais recentes da sociologia

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RESUMO

da ciência e, mais particularmente, da sociologia das práticas científicas, buscando evidenciar as possíveis contribuições dessas abordagens epistemológicas para o estudo da ciência da administração pública. Como contribuições, além de apresentar os contornos do debate, seus alcances e lacunas, o texto propõe áreas e temas de pesquisa que podem ser explorados para fazer avançar o debate e ampliar a agenda de pesquisa sobre a ciência da administração pública no país.

Palavras-chave: Ciência da administração pública no Brasil. Sociologia da ciência. Sociologia das práticas científicas. Abordagens epistemológicas.

Introduction¹

It is possible to consider that the Brazilian public administration began to be structured with the arrival of the Portuguese royal family to the country and the constitution of the national state at the beginning of the 19th century. However, its professionalization only occurred a hundred years later. Authors focusing on this history identify three significant milestones for its development in the 20th century – milestones that accompanied crucial reforms of the state apparatus and attempts to modernize the administration: 1) the beginning of the so-called Estado Novo (or New State) in 1937 and the bureaucratization of public administration; 2) the military dictatorship and the reforms resulting from Decree-Law 200 of 1967; and 3) the post-redemocratization period, culminating in the Master Plan for the Reform of the State Apparatus in 1995 and the so-called “managerial” public administration (BRESSER-PEREIRA, 2001; COELHO, 2019; COSTA, 2008; COSTA; COSTA, 2016).

Following the development of public administration and contributing strategically, undergraduate education in this area emerged in the country precisely when the government of President Getulio Vargas attempted to establish professional public administration in the 1930s. At that time, the main objective was training public servants through the Department of Public Sector Administration (DASP). In the 1940s, with the support of the United Nations (UN), the Fundação Getulio Vargas (FGV) was established in Brazil. The foundation was created as a center for studies

¹ Sections 1 and 2 are based on Rosa (2022). Part of Section 3 and Section 4 are based on Rosa and Andion (2021).

in public administration. In the early 1950s, FGV launched the Brazilian School of Public Administration (EBAP) in Rio de Janeiro as an institution for teaching, research, and technical assistance. It counted on the cooperation of professors and institutions from the US, later reinforced by an agreement between Brazil and that country, resulting in the creation of new programs (COELHO, 2019; FARAH, 2011; FISCHER, 1984).

Since then, the history of higher education in public administration in Brazil has followed the various transformations in the state's role in the economy and government priorities. It is important to highlight that administration education in the country emerged with the teaching of public administration, gradually shifting its focus to business administration over time. Currently, there is a concern about stressing the distinction between the two fields. This movement also occurred in the US, from where Brazil initially imported the teaching model for public (and later on, business) administration. However, the two fields became distinct in the US from the 1960s onward (COELHO, 2019; COELHO; NICOLINI, 2013; FARAH, 2011; KEINERT, 2014).

Throughout this development, undergraduate education in public administration lost part of its identity during the 1980s. It retreated as a professional training in the country, being relegated to a sub-area of administrative sciences due to the predominance of administration focused on business. This period witnessed a significant crisis in public administration, leading to the closure of programs and a decline in trust in the profession (GAETANI, 1999). This scenario was aligned with the international context. Structural reforms were taking place globally, and the neo-liberal agenda was dominating as a strategy to address the economic crisis of the 1970s, with repercussions in developing countries. In Brazil, it is worth stressing "the unprecedented fiscal and economic crisis faced by the country and the legitimacy crisis of the state after the end of the dictatorship." All these elements influenced the weakening of the field, but they also opened new "windows of opportunities" for the public administration in Brazil (ANDION, 2012, p. 6).

Thus, the field regained momentum in the late 1990s, coinciding with the efforts to redefine the role of the Brazilian state, particularly through the administrative reform proposed by then-Minister Bresser Pereira. The influence of New Public Management and managerialist logic on Brazilian public administration has, to a certain

extent, renewed interest in the discipline. Furthermore, this new dynamic is also connected to institutional and civil society changes stemming from the 1988 Constitution and its impact on public administration (ANDION, 2012; GAETANI, 1999).

The dialogue between public administration and other disciplines, as well as its distinction concerning business administration, expanded considerably in the 2000s, culminating in the movement called “*Campo de Públicas*” (or “public field”) (FADUL et al., 2014; KEINERT, 2014; PIRES et al., 2014; COELHO, 2019; COELHO et al., 2020). Today, this movement is represented by the National Association of Teaching, Research, and Extension of the Public Field (ANEPECP). The emergence and mobilization of actors from this field led to the approval of the national curricular guidelines for public administration programs. The guidelines promoted change in teaching in the country, expanding the curriculum to cover not only administration but also accounting sciences, political sciences, law, economics, and sociology (MEC, 2014).

The public field currently involves professors, researchers, students, alumni practitioners, and directors of public administration, public policy management, public management, social management, and public policy programs. It constitutes an interdisciplinary domain encompassing teaching, research, and techno-political practices within the realm of applied social sciences and human sciences. Primarily, this field seeks to differentiate the objects and objectives of undergraduate programs focused on public management from those centered on business administration (PIRES et al., 2014).

At the graduate level, the consolidation movement took a slightly different path. In the 1960s, non-academic programs began in Brazil. By the 1970s, while bachelor's degrees in public administration were decreasing, academic programs started in the country. The first master's program in public administration was established by the then-EBAP, part of FGV in Rio de Janeiro, in 1971. In the same decade, both the School of Business Administration of São Paulo (EAESP), also part of FGV and the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) introduced master's degrees in administration with a focus on public administration within their graduate programs (COELHO; NICOLINI, 2013; FADUL et al., 2014).

In 1976, the programs of these universities joined forces to establish the Brazilian Academy of Management (ANPAD). This crucial entity unites academic graduate

programs in administration, fostering teaching, research, and knowledge production in the field of administrative sciences in Brazil (ANPAD, 2019). According to Coelho and Nicolini (2013), those master's programs – joined by a program of the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA) – improved in quality during the 1980s and moved beyond the paradigm of public administration as a simile of business administration.

However, the first PhD program in public administration only appeared in 2002 at FGV in São Paulo and remains the sole program of its kind in the country to date. During the 2000s, numerous master's and PhD programs with areas of concentration or research lines in the public sector emerged. These programs are housed within graduate programs in administration, political science, interdisciplinary studies, urban and regional planning, social work, economics, and sociology. Despite the growth, the availability of master's and PhD programs in public administration "is still not consistent with the breadth and diversity of the public sector in the country" (FADUL et al., 2014, p. 1341), and this situation influences the development of the science.

This is reflected in scientific publications in the field, a crucial indicator of the outcomes of scientific work, which is still considered below its potential (CORRÊA et al., 2019; FADUL; SILVA; CERQUEIRA, 2011; FADUL et al., 2014; SOUZA, 1998). Analyses of this production suggest that: a) it follows or is subject to movements occurring in government agendas; b) there is a preference for trendy themes; c) empirical results often contribute little to generating new knowledge for the field; d) discussions of a more in-depth theoretical and methodological nature are scarce; e) concepts not exclusive to public administration are frequently employed, drawing from theories in other fields; f) public organizations are primarily used as research loci; g) the field is not thoroughly portrayed; and h) the focus is mainly on themes related to public policies and the managerial aspects of government organizations.

Concerning the profile and practices of field scientists, the research conducted by Corrêa et al. (2019) indicates that, despite the growth in both the volume of scientific production and the size of the researcher network during the observed period (2000-2010), only a small percentage of authors (2%) consistently produce research. The authors conclude that the scientific community in public administration in the country lacks maturity in its research lines and engagement of researchers, a situation dependent on the incentives and resources allocated to graduate programs.

All these aspects become more complex and take on new contours given the current scenario in graduate studies at universities, both internationally and in Brazil. Several Brazilian scholars (ALCADIPANI, 2011a; ALCADIPANI, 2011b; MELO; SERVA, 2014; SANTANA, 2011; SILVA, 2019) have dedicated to the theme of academic “productivism,” a term that expresses a logic of unbridled production that Brazilian graduate programs have adopted, following the US model. Academic productivism is driven by the imperative of demonstrating the performance required by development and control agencies in order to access funding. This challenge is exacerbated during times of scarcity in science and technology funding and the decline of investment in public universities, as has occurred in Brazil in recent years.

Unlike the international model that serves as a benchmark and metric, in Brazil, professors and researchers engage in numerous activities beyond research. They are responsible for providing and coordinating teaching, extension, administrative, and management activities, resulting in limited time available for each task and generating conflicts of priorities. Academic productivism has led to precarious teaching work in Brazilian higher education institutions, and some studies have demonstrated its consequences for faculty members’ professional and personal lives (SILVA, 2019)

The dynamics of researchers’ work, mostly university professors, with their challenges and compensations, certainly influence the research results. Thus, the study of these researchers’ “scientific practice” considering their context can help to achieve greater understanding and contribute to advancing the debate on the particularities, challenges, and perspectives of the science of public administration in Brazil.

Discussions about science and its practices, along with the questions they raise, have become a prominent concern in the literature of the field, as discussed below. In recent decades, the epistemological debate on public administration has expanded beyond the mere analysis of scientific production in the field. Publications have questioned the quality and scope of research, presenting challenges for the field, including the imperative to explore new theoretical approaches, different methods, and diverse epistemologies. The Brazilian Academy of Management (ANPAD) highlights that the “discussion of ontological and epistemological matrices has been raised to emphasize the importance of understanding the field through a multifaceted view” (ANPAD, 2020).

Confronted with this problematization and aiming to advance the debate, this article explores studies that discuss the science of public administration in Brazil, emphasizing the contributions of recent discussions within the scope of science studies to rejuvenate the research agenda in the field. Specifically, we seek to examine new analytical paths that the sociology of scientific practices can offer to advance epistemological reflections in this regard.

The article is structured into four sections, including this introduction. The second section presents a systematic literature review aimed at comprehending the contours of the national debate on the science of public administration. The third section discusses the trajectory of the field of science studies, tracing the path from the sociology of science to the approach of the sociology of scientific practices. Finally, the fourth section suggests new avenues for a research agenda in the field of public administration in Brazil, supported by recent advances in the field of the sociology of science.

The Debate on the Science of Public Administration in Brazil

To gain a deeper understanding of the discussions about the science of public administration in Brazil, a systematic review was conducted on the subject to comprehend the direction of this debate and identify potential gaps. The research was carried out using the Scielo database, which contains Brazilian scientific journals from various thematic areas since 1998 (SCIELO, 2019). Another repository used was Spell, ANPAD's official database. Spell has been available since 2012 and gathers scientific articles classified in the Brazilian quality system Qualis as B5 or higher in the fields of public administration, business administration, accounting, and tourism, as well as articles from the fields of economics and engineering (SPELL, 2019).

In both databases, keywords were employed to represent existing programs in the field of public policy in Brazil, ensuring they comprehensively encompass the science of public administration. The chosen keywords included "*administração pública*" (public administration), "*gestão de políticas públicas*" (public policy management), "*gestão pública*" (public management), "*gestão social*" (social management), and "*políticas públicas*" (public policies). Each term was used in a separate

search, associated with two additional keywords: (and) “*ciência*” (science) (or) “*disciplina*” (discipline). The terms were searched in the abstracts, and the period was not determined – which means that the search encompassed material from all periods available in the databases before the time the review was conducted, at the end of November 2019.

The initial search on Scielo yielded 455 studies. However, the majority of articles did not adequately meet the research criteria and spanned various other areas of knowledge. Subsequently, the following filters were applied: a) thematic area of applied social sciences; b) article format; and c) languages in Portuguese, Spanish, and English. After applying these filters, the search using the term “public administration” found 292 articles. The term “public policies” found only 3 articles. No articles were identified when using the other terms with these filters.

We then proceeded to read the titles and abstracts of the 295 articles found, resulting in a final selection of only 24 articles related to the theme (“public administration” and “science” or “discipline”). Following this final selection of articles in Scielo, they were exported from the database in RIS format to the EndNote X8 software. Subsequently, the articles were organized, redundancies were eliminated through comparison with materials found via Spell, and they were read in full. Finally, they were classified according to how they approached the theme.

In the Spell database, the search found 351 articles using the term “*gestão social*” (social management), 346 with the term “*políticas públicas*” (public policies), 341 using “*administração pública*” (public administration), 336 with “*gestão pública*” (public management), and 327 with “*gestão de políticas públicas*” (public policy management). The articles found were primarily from business administration and accounting, with many appearing in the results for two or more terms. Following this, the titles and abstracts were read, resulting in the selection of only 11 articles that adhered to the theme: 10 articles on public administration and science or discipline; and 1 article on public policy management and science or discipline. After the final selection of articles in Spell, they were also exported to the EndNote X8 software.

In this software, the articles selected from different databases were consolidated, and duplicates were removed. The final number of articles found was 32. However, after a comprehensive reading, works that deviated from the topics of in-

terest were excluded, resulting in 27 articles. Subsequently, the works were grouped by similarity, leading to three main lines of discussion: a) articles focusing on teaching in public administration in Brazil (9 articles); b) articles on public administration research in Brazil (9 articles); and finally, c) epistemological studies on the science of Brazilian public administration (9 articles), showcasing a certain balance in the national debate.

As for the general characteristics of these studies, they were published between 2003 and 2019. The majority were published in more recent years, with two-thirds of the articles being published between 2010 and 2019, indicating an expansion of the debate in the last decade. In the early 2000s, there were fewer publications, while the periods with the most research works were 2008 (4 articles) and 2016 (4 articles). The authorship of the works was quite dispersed, with most authors publishing only one work in the area. The journals with the most publications were *Cadernos EBAPE.BR* (9 articles) and the *Brazilian Journal of Public Administration (RAP)* (10 articles), both periodicals specific to the field and linked to FGV, an institution with an academic tradition in public administration. The remaining articles came from seven other journals. Below is an analysis of the works found, organized into the three main lines of discussion in which they were classified.

THE DEBATE ON TEACHING PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN BRAZIL

The first group of research works found in the systematic literature review focuses on teaching public administration in Brazil. In these studies, authors explore the interface between teaching, the science of public administration, and the cycles of state reform. They review the trajectory of public administration as a discipline and its development in different periods of the country's history (BERTERO; BARROS; ALCADIPANI, 2019; COELHO; NICOLINI, 2013; COELHO; NICOLINI, 2014; COELHO; OLENSCKI; CELSO, 2011; WANDERLEY, 2016). These studies highlight that public administration teaching in the country has evolved in tandem with transformations in the state's role over time. The cycles of the discipline appear to be directly correlated with those of the country's public administration in terms of importance (and number of programs), configuration (and content/divisions of the programs), and the profile of graduates. Currently, the discipline is trending toward demarcating its space in relation to business administration.

Other studies within this category focus on new directions in the field (GONÇALVES; OLIVEIRA, 2016), aiming to compare them with the reality of other countries (PECI; FREITAS; SOBRAL, 2008) and/or discuss the scope and limits of teaching public administration in Brazil. For instance, Oliveira and Sauerbronn (2007) reflect on the challenges of teaching in a new situation of institutional expansion of training, advocating for greater investment in teacher training, regulation of teaching, use of new technologies, a more significant focus on practitioners, and the reformulation of the programs' curricular structure based on a public logic that opposes the market logic predominant in business administration training.

The work by Coelho (2008) aligns with this perspective, discussing the gaps and prospects of teaching based on research on some bachelor's degrees in administration specializing in public administration. The author identified three groups of obstacles. The first group refers to difficulties in attracting students, arising from the deterioration of the state's image/demoralization and uncertainties regarding the job market. The second group involves challenges in academic training. Programs in public administration lack a solid identity, are unclear in terms of their role and format, and often mimic business administration programs. Other elements in this second group of obstacles include the shortage of specialized faculty, attributed to the absence of graduate programs in the field, and flaws in the theory-practice interface. The third group pertains to professional insertion, particularly the observation that graduates often end up working in the private sector since a career in public administration depends on circumstances such as passing competitive exams and having a network of professional relationships/social capital.

Another important characteristic of these studies is that they focus more on undergraduate education, its curriculum, and training without delving into graduate education issues and challenges.

RESEARCH AND SCIENTIFIC PRODUCTION IN ADMINISTRATION IN BRAZIL

The second set of studies focuses on research in public administration in Brazil. Most of these works concentrate on analyzing scientific production, highlighting questions about its quality and diversity in theoretical and methodological terms, as well as its scientific consistency (FADUL et al., 2014; HOCAYEN-DA-SILVA; ROSSONI; FERREIRA JÚNIOR, 2008; PAULA; KEINERT, 2016; ROSSONI; GUARIDA FIL-

HO, 2009; ROSSONI; HOCAYENDA-SILVA; FERREIRA JÚNIOR, 2008; PACHECO, 2003; PECI, 2018; SMOLSKI et al., 2017; SOUZA; ARAÚJO, 2000 3). Although the articles analyzed cover more than twenty years of research, some characteristics and concerns in the scientific field of public administration persist.

An important characteristic is that the research community in the area is relatively small, demonstrated by the small number of graduate programs focusing on public administration. This scenario leads to a concentration of scientific production on certain authors and institutions, risking this production becoming what Pacheco (2003) calls “self-reported.” According to a survey of different research periods, production in the area is concentrated in certain regions of Brazil – specifically, in the states of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Bahia, Distrito Federal, and Minas Gerais. These states host the most traditional graduate programs in the area regarding time of existence, volume of publications, and partnerships with programs in other states.

On the one hand, studies show a recurrent concern regarding certain themes, such as administrative reform and managerialism in public administration, following the movements of Brazilian public management. On the other hand, there is also concern about the lack of comparative studies and research covering a wide range of themes and objects of study, leading to the limited cumulative nature of these studies. In the latter case, another characteristic is presented: many authors produce few works in the area, mainly because they do not have public administration as the focus of their research. This means they only have one or two forays into topics in the area or carry out research in public organizations in isolation, using references from other disciplines for analysis, especially those from business administration.

It is also evident that the volume of scientific production has been expanding in the country. Thus, the primary concern at the current stage has shifted to the quality of the studies, their systematization, analytical density, and the need for greater internationalization of scientific production. Regarding the authorship profile, similar to what has occurred in studies on teaching in public administration, co-authorships have increased over time, with an average of two authors per article.

EPISTEMOLOGICAL ANALYSES IN THE FIELD OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Finally, a third group of studies delves into a more detailed discussion of the epistemology of science in public administration (ABREU, 2010; ABREU; HELOU;

FIALHO, 2013; ANDION, 2012; CAPELARI; AFONSO; GONÇALVES, 2014; GUERRA et al., 2011; FADUL; SILVA, 2009; FADUL; SILVA; SILVA, 2012; SILVA; MATIA, 2016; SILVA; PEREIRA; ALCÂNTARA, 2012), the focal point of this article. It is noteworthy that, among these, few use an approach supported by the sociology of science (GUERRA et al., 2011; FADUL; SILVA; SILVA, 2012), with the majority focusing on discussions about currents, paradigms, ontological lenses, and epistemological aspects used in studies in the area.

The epistemological studies analyzed, in general, aim to comprehend the theoretical approaches through which the phenomena of public administration in Brazil are treated: whether there is continuity in certain lines of thought or a rupture in these patterns. Some works also propose using different epistemological perspectives to analyze the theories that make up public administration and the field of knowledge as a whole, seeking to understand its limits, challenges, and possibilities.

Criticism of the predominant model of public administration is recurrent in studies that follow an instrumental reason, focused on the market and disregarding the dimension of social participation, whose foundations influence practice and research in the area. Thus, some works suggest new approaches to address current challenges in public administration. Greater autonomy is also claimed for this field of studies in the sense of greater independence concerning the predominant phenomena in the national political and economic spheres, about which much is described, and little is theorized.

Few studies adopting the sociology of science perspective were found. They were especially related to the approaches of Thomas Kuhn and Pierre Bourdieu, which are discussed below. On the other hand, no works were found that dealt in more detail with the practices of scientists in the field of public administration.

This study advocates that the dynamics and challenges of the scientists' work influence science and its outcomes. Thus, studying the phenomenon of "scientific practice" of public administration scientists in their context can help to better understand it and contribute to the debate on the particularities of this science in Brazil.

In this sense, this article seeks to explore the possibilities of analyses based on more recent approaches to the sociology of science or science studies, an expression that refers to the field of science studies at the international level since the second half of the 20th century (BLOOR, 2009; BOURDIEU, 2013; LATOUR, 2012;

MERTON, 2013; PICKERING, 1992). Such approaches aim to understand scientific practice, its developments, and discoveries, treating the subject or object of investigation as isolated, separate phenomena and as elements that feed each other, considering what is produced from these interactions.

The sociology of science explores the behind-the-scenes of science and scientists' work, helping to understand issues relating to structure, principles, and power in this environment (BLOOR, 2009; BOURDIEU, 2013). The sociology of scientific practices, in particular, focuses on the practices of researchers in their daily work and how they influence science (BARTHE et al., 2016; LATOUR, 2012; PICKERING, 1992). These approaches have different units of analysis but share the same principle of intimately relating the social and scientific worlds, seeking to analyze the relationship between scientists and between them and the outside world in the practice of science (HOCHMAN, 1994).

From this perspective, science is viewed as a social institution, a product of human endeavor, imbued with the various challenges and structures present in society. It is not seen as a neutral system governed solely by meritocracy but rather as an activity influenced by the social and material circumstances that surround it, as well as the subjectivity of the scientists themselves. This discussion is further explored below. Subsequently, a research agenda is proposed, grounded in these perspectives, to foster a more critical and reflective understanding of public administration science in Brazil.

From the Sociology of Knowledge to the Sociology of Scientific Practices

As Bourdieu (2001) observes, the emergence of the sociology of knowledge can be seen as a response from sociologists of that era to the philosophers who dominated the discourse on knowledge. It is crucial to revisit the contributions of three seminal authors: American Robert Merton, Englishman David Bloor, and Frenchman Pierre Bourdieu. All three approach the realm of science from a sociological perspective, focusing on the dynamics of scientific discoveries, the interactions among scientists in their work, and the examination of aspects of social structure, power, and legiti-

mation related to the knowledge produced. However, these authors employ markedly different lenses in conducting this analysis.

Merton (2013) is the first to investigate science from a predominantly sociological perspective, illustrating the relationship between the institutional environment (values, behaviors, cultural frameworks, etc.) and the evolution of science. Merton is a pioneer in studying the sociology of scientific culture – its ethos. However, while he shows that the institutional environment influences the emergence of modern science, Merton still asserts the autonomy of science and its essentiality, advocating for an ideal of modern science based on the principles of neutrality and objectivity. In his classic study, “Science and Democratic Social Structure,” where he proposes a normative analysis of science, Merton (2013b) explains that no social influence on the formulation of scientific knowledge can withstand empirical evidence. Adhering to a positivist stance, the author argues for the supremacy of laws external to the individuals. Consequently, he posits that the sociologist would have nothing to contribute to producing scientific knowledge but only to understanding the nature of science institutions (CAMINHA; ANDION, 2017).

Later, room is made for a critique of the classical science project. The main proponent of this debate, which primarily takes place in the philosophical realm, is the work of Thomas Kuhn. In his work “The Structure of Scientific Revolutions,” originally published in 1962, the author proposes a sociological interpretation of the history of scientific ideas. He introduces both cognitive and social elements in the development of sciences through the notion of “paradigm,” challenging the concept of progress purely based on rational choices (KUHN, 2001). With Thomas Kuhn, the possibility of considering external influences on the development of science comes into play. Thus, his work served as a reference, as Dubois (2001) states, for a series of authors after the 1970s to study the social dimensions of science. This paves the way for a clear break between what was done in the field of the sociology of knowledge up to Merton and what emerged with the work of the sociology of science. We can then observe a movement towards the “denaturalization” of science, giving rise to new questions and a new research agenda. In this context, the “strong program” in the sociology of scientific knowledge was developed, one of the founding lines of research of a new sociology of science, with David Bloor (2009) as the main representative. We observe a transition from a sociology of scientists, dominated by Mer-

ton's North American structural-functionalism, to a sociology of scientific knowledge (CAMINHA; ANDION, 2017).

In "Knowledge and Social Imagery" (2009), David Bloor established the "strong program," which aimed to equip the discipline to analyze scientific knowledge. Bloor proposed to liberate himself from sociologists' inhibitions regarding sacred philosophy and grounded his studies on scientific knowledge on an empirical basis (against philosophical speculation). Sociology is interested in the fact that scientific knowledge is a form of belief taken for granted and invested with strong authority, much like religion was in pre-modern times. Thus, a "strong" sociology of scientific knowledge must necessarily adhere to four epistemological principles: 1) It must be a causal sociology and search for the conditions that produce states of knowledge. In this conception, a variety of causes produce beliefs in addition to sociological ones. Psychological causes are of a different nature but equally determining. Sociology is explained only from its point of view and its limits of contribution; 2) It must be impartial and not judge knowledge in terms of truth or falsehood, rational or irrational. Judgments of this type are relative; 3) It must be symmetric, which applies to the mode of explanation. The same types of causes explain true and false beliefs. Sociology should not just point out what led to the error; 4) It must have reflexivity, where its explanatory model must be applied to sociology itself and, specifically, the sociology of knowledge. Otherwise, sociology would be a space for refuting its own theories. If it seeks general sociological laws, it, as a science, must be subject to social laws, just like the hard sciences (CAMINHA; ANDION, 2017).

In addition to the strong program, another fundamental pillar in the institutionalization of the "sociology of science discipline" was the work of Pierre Bourdieu. With a vast body of studies covering various empirical spaces, Bourdieu formulated his sociology of science based on his notion of the social field, addressed in three main works: "The Scientific Field" (2013), "The Social Uses of Science" (2004), and "Towards a Sociology of Science" (2001). To understand his view of science, it is necessary to comprehend the notion of "field," in general, before delving into the concept of the scientific field. Broadly speaking, field theory aims to understand an element of a total situation of which it is a part. The elements are related to each other but in constant tension. Therefore, this field of relationship is a field of struggles in such a way that a conflicting vision of the social world is imposed, where arenas

in which competition, domination, and lack of knowledge prevail over cooperation and disinterest. The field has a structure that configures the singular events within it. Capital distribution determines this structure, the space of social positions where places are determined by inequalities between different capitals (socially valued resources). In every field, there are dominant and subordinate positions, such that these positions are spatially distributed depending on the volume and structure of capital possessed and temporally depending on the social trajectory of the agents (CAMINHA; ANDION, 2017).

Based on these general concepts, Bourdieu (2004) suggests that fields vary according to their degree of autonomy. More autonomous fields, such as the “scientific field,” follow the logic of true or false. More heteronomous fields, such as politics, follow the logic of friend or enemy. Therefore, in the scientific field, the rule is that producers create for their peers and not for the mass audience, as in some cultural sectors, which are more closely linked to economic and political powers. Thus, it begins with the notion that the production and reception of scientific knowledge are socially and historically determined. If the production of knowledge is a function of social positions distributed in a social structure, the forms of reception of mental and cognitive structures also vary depending on the position.

The dynamics of this field, like every field, revolve around competition. In the case of science, Bourdieu (2013) views it in a politicized manner, with the level of politicization being a direct function of autonomy. Every theoretical conflict is a social conflict, given that there is no perfect and definitive autonomy in reality. All points of view in science are based on desires for power and recognition, where groups aim to make their particular interpretations of reality universal. Thus, the scientific field is an arena of competition that strives for the monopoly of scientific authority. Even though, in some instances, scientists are averse to the accumulation of money and political power, they direct their practices toward the accumulation of scientific capital. Therefore, the scientific field is an arena of competition that aims to fight for the monopoly of scientific authority (CAMINHA; ANDION, 2017).

Building on the legacy left by the other authors mentioned, Bourdieu (2013) views scientific discovery as a product of social production conditions. The field of science “is a social field like any other, with its power relations and monopolies, struggles and strategies, interests and profits” (BOURDIEU, 2013, p. 112). The supposed

competition in this field contradicts the idea of “communism” in science defended by Merton (2013). The game of interests that Bourdieu (2013) describes is in no way similar to the disinterested profile of the scientist. His behind-the-scenes descriptions of science present a world of humans, power struggles, pride, and very strong hierarchies and traditions that lead to the reproduction of these practices. Definitions of scientific priorities, objects of study, methods, and publication of results are permeated by politics and interest. There is no “pure science” for Bourdieu (2013).

Bourdieu (2013) transposes concepts from political economy related to the valorization of capital and Marxist inspiration (MARX, 2008) to analyze the social structure of science. In this sense, the scientist makes his “investment” in those options that generate the greatest “return.” In the context of science, scientific priorities are given to work that brings greater prestige, reputation, and status, translated into the scientist’s resumé.

There is no scientific “choice” – regarding the field of research, methods used, place of publication; or between an immediate publication of partially verified results and a late publication of fully controlled results – which is not a political investment strategy objectively oriented toward maximizing scientific profit, obtaining recognition from peer competitors (BOURDIEU, 2013, p. 116).

Bourdieu (2013) posits that the social structure, where material conditions (economy, education, and language) explain human consciousness, determines the scientist’s behavior and, consequently, the direction of science. There is a tendency to reproduce these practices, but subversion, disruption, and change are also possible. The author then begins a transition to new analytical perspectives in science studies. The sociology of science has expanded and diversified since the 1980s, opening space for other perspectives, such as the sociology of scientific practices, whose contributions are explored below. This perspective provides a nuanced understanding of the motivations and dynamics within the scientific community.

THE SOCIOLOGY OF SCIENTIFIC PRACTICES AND ITS CONTRIBUTIONS

The sociology of scientific practices is a more recent field within science studies. It seeks to understand the scientific practice, not just its structure (field) or results (scientific production). As the name suggests, it deals with the study of

scientific practices, where the researcher immerses themselves in the field to understand the reality of science through these practices. It differs from the sociology of scientific knowledge in its belief that science is eminently a “social product.” However, it maintains some of its assumptions, such as the principles of impartiality, symmetry, and reflexivity of Bloor’s strong program (2009). In the sociology of practices, pre-judgments about knowledge and science are avoided, placing value on empirical investigation over scientific practice.

An important figure in this field is the American Andrew Pickering, author of the book “Science as Practice and Culture” (1992). In the first chapter, the author provides a historical review of this shift in focus in the sociology of science: “from science as knowledge to science as practice.” He revisits the emergence of the Sociology of Scientific Knowledge – SSK in the early 1970s, with its main centers in Edinburgh and Bath. With a macrosocial approach, the former sought to trace “causal” connections between sociological variables, such as the interests of relevant groups and the content of knowledge held by these groups. With a micro-social approach, the latter investigated the production of consensual knowledge as a result of “negotiations” between actors (PICKERING, 1992).

According to Pickering (1992), new approaches emerged in Europe and the United States in the late 1970s. The first ethnographic study, published in the book “Laboratory Life” by Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar, appeared in France. In the United States, Harold Garfinkel, Michael Lynch, and Eric Livingston began to present their ethnomethodological perspectives to study what happens in the laboratory. Philosophers of science began to develop a new empirical approach to the sociology of science, and pragmatic perspectives for the study of science and technology also emerged, among which the Actor-Network Theory (LATOUR, 1999) stands out. Thus, in the 1980s, there were various new approaches to understanding science, united by a refusal of philosophical apriorism and sensitivity to the social dimensions of science, but also differing on some points (PICKERING, 1992).

Pickering (1992) sought to highlight what emerged from all this: the shift towards the study of scientific practices, about what scientists actually do, and the associated movement towards the study of scientific culture or the field of resources in which that practice operates. For him, the vision of traditional currents in the sociology of knowledge, from Merton through Bloor to Bourdieu, did not offer the

necessary conceptual apparatus to capture the richness of doing science, the dense work of building instruments, planning, executing and interpreting experiments, devising theories, negotiating for the management of laboratories, journals, grantmaking agencies, and so on. All of this is part of the process of doing science, of discoveries, but which until then was not considered by science studies.

The different elements are interactively stabilized against each other. They are “co-produced” without any element or set of elements having priority. As the author assesses, the essays show that the central topic is practice and not knowledge, and there seems to be no guarantee for attributing causal priority to the social in understanding scientific and cultural practice (PICKERING, 1992).

Pickering (1992) dialogues with the work of Latour (2012), which also follows this perspective of reintegration of theory and practice, subjects and objects, nature and culture. In his book “Reassembling the Social,” Latour (2012) redefines the notion of “social,” returning to its primitive meaning and enabling it to retrace connections. For the author, the social cannot be constituted as a material or domain, an adjective, and assume the task of providing a “social explanation” of some state of affairs or even of science.

The sociology of associations proposed by Latour (2012) stands as a means of understanding the networks in society and science formed by humans and non-humans (LATOURE, 1994) and whose connections will continually transform them. Likewise, these nature-society interactions are present in scientific experiences and discoveries without the traditional separation of these poles, as did the natural sciences and the sociology of knowledge. “Practice is where nature and society and the space between them are continually made, un-made, and remade” (PICKERING, 1992, p. 21).

In his book, “We Have Never Been Modern,” Latour (1994) mentions the crisis of modern science, presenting a series of questions about the assumptions or rigid divisions regarding types of knowledge. He comments on how the different areas of knowledge are intertwined despite being considered separate from science and how much a scientific fact impacts or is impacted by all other areas. “Hybrid articles that sketch out imbroglios of science, politics, economy, law, religion, technology, fiction” are multiplying (LATOURE, 1994, p. 8), despite constant attempts to separate them, not to mix knowledge, interest, justice, and power.

Thus, Latour's (2012) Actor-Network Theory (ANT) is an approach that aims to investigate many contemporary complex phenomena, including science and technology, based on practices. As the author reminds us, "in situations where innovations proliferate, where group boundaries are uncertain, when the range of entities to be taken into account fluctuates, the sociology of the social is no longer able to trace actor's new associations" (LATOUR, 2012, p. 31). This is where ANT offers its contributions. In ANT,

you have "to follow the actors themselves", that is try to catch up with their often wild innovations in order to learn from them what the collective existence has become in their hands, which methods they have elaborated to make it fit together, which accounts could best define the new associations that they have been forced to establish (LATOUR, 2012, p. 31)

Given the above, one can ask: "What are the contributions of a reading of the sociology of scientific practices to the study of the science of public administration?" The next section seeks to answer this question.

Contributions of the Sociology of Scientific Practices to the Study of Public Administration: Recommendations for a Research Agenda

A sociological approach to public administration and its practices implies embracing the challenges inherent in science, enabling us to distance ourselves from official discourses. This perspective allows us to perceive the scope of this science as extending beyond the confines of university walls and graduate programs. A pragmatic view of science entails "following the scientists" – whoever they may be and whatever they achieve – while upholding the principle of symmetry, refraining from preconceived judgments. This involves treating arguments and viewpoints with "methodological indifference" and valuing pluralism. Consequently, unexplored realms of scientific practice and epistemic communities, such as public administration experts, technocrats and street bureaucrats, politicians, public and private research institutes, civil society managers, and affected communities, can be unveiled. Despite often remaining invisible in the construction of scientific knowledge, these institutions and actors are close-

ly connected to public problems or experiences. They engage in scientific research and wield influence in resolving public issues, deserving to be considered.

Moreover, the science of public administration significantly impacts the lives, work, and well-being of the population, making it crucial to analyze its consequences. The unfortunate case of the federal government coordinating actions to combat COVID-19 (ABRUCIO et al., 2020) illustrates the pressing need for progress in this field. Notably, the production, testing, and global application of vaccines outpaced their availability to the population of a country equipped with sufficient financial, human, and logistical resources. If the science of public administration cannot contribute to such advancements, then who can?

This situation underscores the necessity to break down the walls of universities, making public administration a science accessible to society at large and fostering processes of “public investigation” (SHELDS, 2014). Public administration scientists must also explore science as an institution, delving into its objectives, resources, methods, materials, networks, scope, and limitations.

In a reflexive exercise, other questions emerge: What contributions does the science of Brazilian public administration make to addressing increasingly robust and complex public problems? How do scientists navigate their daily work, and how is it influenced by issues of gender, race, class, and other societal inequalities? How is knowledge produced, and what opportunities exist for discussion and dissemination among peers and society? Moreover, issues like the widespread denial of science (ESCOBAR, 2021) and constraints on financing studies are critical factors influencing scientific practice and results, although they might not be evident in future records or studies on science, complicating our understanding.

The lens provided by the sociology of science, particularly the sociology of scientific practices, can contribute to advancing this science by identifying macrosocial factors that impact scientific work. Understanding how the actions of scientists in their microsocial sphere can influence the development of science and society as a whole is crucial. Macro and micro positions are not hermetically sealed; they unfold in everyday situations and result from the interplay of networks of actors rather than being isolated data from reality (REVEL, 1996; ALCADIPANI; TURETA, 2009)².

² In this sense, the research by Staniscuaski et al. (2020) in various areas of knowledge pointed out that the COVID-19 pandemic impacted differently the work of male and female scientists.

A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE FIELD'S CONFIGURATION, DELIMITATION, AND CONSEQUENCES FOR SCIENTIFIC PRACTICE

Both historical and structural analyses of the scientific field of public administration are encompassed here. These analyses offer a clearer presentation of the configuration patterns of this field, including universities, graduate programs, and beyond, as previously discussed. Such studies enable a comprehensive understanding of the structures of positions in the field, institutions, spokespersons, their networks of influence, strategies, and power relations that permeate scientific practice.

This understanding of the field sheds light on the institutional constraints that shape the characteristics observed in public administration studies in Brazil. These characteristics include the restricted scientific community, which is small and has low internationalization (CORRÊA et al., 2019; PACHECO, 2003); the concentration of scientific production in specific geographic regions and institutions (HOCAY-EN-DA-SILVA; ROSSONI; FERREIRA JÚNIOR, 2008; PECI, 2018; ROSSONI; HOCAYEN-DA-SILVA; FERREIRA JÚNIOR, 2008; SMOLSKI et al., 2017); and the recursivity in terms of research themes (FADUL; SILVA; CERQUEIRA, 2011; PACHECO, 2003; PECI, 2018), among others.

A characteristic frequently emphasized in studies is that the multidisciplinary nature of public administration creates obstacles to the field's autonomy (CORRÊA et al., 2019). Research concepts not exclusive to the area are utilized, incorporating theories from other disciplines (FADUL; SILVA; CERQUEIRA, 2011), resulting in a certain lack of identity in this field of knowledge. An example of an analysis in this regard, conducted from the sociology of science and specifically drawing on the work of Pierre Bourdieu, was undertaken in the recent study by Caminha, Feuerschütte, and Amboni (2020).

Building on Bourdieu's foundations, which positioned administration in the heteronomous sector of the French academic field, the authors debated the historical construction of autonomy and heteronomy of the field in Brazil. They highlighted theoretical and empirical elements to elucidate the relationship between the formation of its ruling elites (ANPAD) and the conflicts surrounding its constitution. The study concluded that the formation of this elite influenced the reproduction of the heteronomous condition of the field of administration in the country. Therefore, an analysis from the perspective of the sociology of science can also aid in understand-

ing this characteristic in relation to the science of public administration. Furthermore, through the sociology of practices approach, it is possible to comprehend how and why the actions of this institution (ANPAD) contribute to reinforcing or modifying this condition of heteronomy in the field.

The essay by Fadul, Silva, and Silva (2012) reflects on public administration as a field of knowledge, drawing inspiration from Bourdieu's thinking. From this discussion, they assert that: a) a strong link exists between scientific production in the area and government agendas, hindering the development of public administration's independent research agenda; b) the absence of specific public administration programs at undergraduate and graduate levels diminishes growth opportunities in the field, as these programs lack appeal to the market or the government; and c) there are few specific research groups in public administration in the country, with few researchers concentrated in this field (although there is a large volume of research in the area, many are not continued)

The authors posit the following as necessary for the field's emancipation: freeing oneself from the routine analysis of movements in the national public panorama and their consequences; understanding theoretically what justifies these movements and explaining them in the light of existing theories or developing theories that explain them; rethinking research and its condition of submission or slavery to these movements; and establishing disciplinary limits more clearly, determining the object and themes, as well as the theoretical and methodological coherence of its approach.

Contrary to this perspective, Andion et al. (2023) provide a counterpoint. They analyzed content from Pedagogical Programs (PPCs) of fifty-one face-to-face programs in the "Campo de Públicas" (public field) (most of them in public administration), revealing that autonomy and interdisciplinarity have allowed the expansion of the field's formation and scientific practice. Far from being hindrances, the authors argue that the recognition of interdisciplinarity expressed in PPCs differentiates field courses, considering the interactions between social, cultural, technical, and political dynamics that permeate management and public actions.

Following Andion (2023), who finds support in recent debates of science studies to reflect on contemporaneous administration, this study challenges the preconceived idea that devalues administration and public administration because they are heteronomous fields less demarcated from other social sciences disciplines, similar

to politics, ideology, and common knowledge. This interpretation prompts a reevaluation of the notion of field autonomy initially proposed by Bourdieu as a synonym for “independence,” emphasizing the importance of interdependence and cooperation for the autonomy of public administration, as vividly discussed in the public field.

Along the same lines, Rossoni and Guarida Filho (2009) investigated cooperation structures among graduate programs in administration (including the focus on public administration) through network analysis. The authors concluded that the most productive programs demonstrate a high degree of collaboration among themselves and are also closer to others not directly linked. This result led the authors to believe that what is considered valid in academic terms does not comply with the classical formal criteria for constructing “good science.” Social aspects, such as identification, familiarity, and proximity between researchers, on the one hand, and prestige, capabilities, and access to resources, on the other, can also condition what is considered scientifically relevant. In another study with network analysis in the field of public administration and social management, Rossoni, Hocayen, and Ferreira Júnior (2008) found that the relationship structure between researchers and institutions strongly influences the construction of scientific knowledge in the area.

The studies above provided a broader analysis linking graduate programs based on authors’ publications in thematic events in the area. They offered important insights into the relationship between social aspects and scientific development. Investigating how these relationships occur in practice and why they are crucial for scientific production exemplifies research based on the sociology of scientific practices.

In this context, Alcadipani and Tureta (2009) present the Actor-Network Theory as an alternative to reflect on the “center-periphery” theme and its effects on research in organizational studies. According to the authors, ANT can contribute to this problematization, discussing how establishing centers and peripheries is a relational process permeated by numerous specificities and must be analyzed empirically. They emphasize that speeches denouncing the subordination of the national academy to the foreign academy contribute to constructing the center by enunciating it as such. ANT highlights the need to investigate how these center-periphery relationships manifest daily instead of producing and reproducing ready-made discourses based on “self-answered questions.”

Considering the human and non-human elements within the network of relationships that build center-periphery relationships, we realize that, more than an a priori definition, this label (periphery) is the effect of parts and portions of the social and technical realms. Furthermore, if forms of colonialism persist to this day, this process is fluid and dynamic, requiring explanation rather than being assumed to exist in a clear, precise, and unproblematic way (ALCADIPANI; TURETA, 2009, p. 659).

Studies exploring north-south relations, decoloniality, and epistemic justice, considering interactions and experiences, can offer reflections on the universe of research in public administration. They can shed light on how center-periphery relationships and other power dynamics manifest in this area and their effects on scientific practice.

MONITORING SCIENTISTS' PRACTICES AND EXPERIENCES

Studies grounded in the sociology of practices often emphasize the interplay of analytical scales and the interconnectedness between the macro and micro dimensions of social reality (REVEL, 1996; BARTHE et al., 2016). Utilizing ethnographic, ethnomethodological, or phenomenological methods, these studies facilitate a close examination of the evidence and daily challenges confronted by scientists. This approach provides a comprehensive understanding of how these challenges are navigated, along with the justifications, logic, and modes of action employed in practice. Such analyses can reconstruct situations and bridge various dimensions of scientific practice – social, institutional, cultural, political, etc. – that may not be fully considered in existing literature.

One aspect that characterizes contemporary science is the emphasis on “productivity,” measured by the volume of publications generated by research conducted by academic faculty. Some Brazilian scholars in the field of administration (ALCADIPANI, 2011a; ALCADIPANI, 2011b; MELO; SERVA, 2014; SANTANA, 2011; SILVA, 2019) have delved into the theme of academic “productivism.” This term encapsulates a logic of unrestrained production, akin to the American model, which graduate programs in the country have pursued to achieve requisite performance benchmarks under the purview of official scientific funding and regulatory bodies.

Applying the sociology of science approach, Melo and Serva (2014) explored the agenda of professor-researchers in administration, aiming to comprehend the

content, objectives, and activities of their work. The findings revealed that these professionals work over 50 hours per week, and research activities, which were intended to be predominant, often spill into weekends, blurring the boundaries between professional and personal life. This situation became even more pronounced during the pandemic, when the separation between home and work disappeared, impacting women and men differently (STANISCUASKI et al., 2020).²

Similar studies can be conducted in the field of public administration to comprehend the work reality of researchers. Analyzing their routines, agendas, and local and material science production methods and examining factors such as academic productivity and responses to institutional control – while also considering variables like gender, race, and origin – can provide valuable insights.

In her analysis of the role of the Brazilian Journal of Public Administration (RAP) in the context of public administration research in Brazil, Peci (2018, p. 507) emphasized, “We do not need more articles published; today, Brazil has more than 100 academic journals, a number that, in itself, says a lot about the unbridled search for publications.” Other studies also indicate increasing production in the field of public administration, yet this does not necessarily translate to an improvement in the quality of research. Despite this consensus, there is an unexplored gap in understanding why this is the case and how this science has been conducted to yield these results, a topic that could be investigated by studying the practices of researchers in the area.

In the broader debate, the quest for a deeper understanding of the influence of gender dynamics in scientific activity becomes prominent. Numerous studies showcase inequalities between men and women in the global scientific field, a pattern that persists in Brazil (ALBORNOZ et al., 2018; LIMA, 2018). The gender perspective, along with diverse viewpoints in investigations, can shape scientific practice and its outcomes, potentially altering research results (QUEIROZ, 2020). In the realm of public administration science, studies addressing gender dynamics are scarce, both in Brazil and internationally. Although gender issues in science have gained recent attention in the country, the focus has mainly been on exact sciences, technology, and health, with limited studies related to administration science or public administration science (ROSA, 2022).

Significant strides have recently been taken to advance the gender and diversity agenda, contributing not only to understanding scientific practices in the field

but also to broader discussions in administration and politics. Notably, Rosa's original thesis (2022), honored with the Augusto Tavares Prize 2023, titled "Knowing and Recognizing the Contributions and Experiences of Women Scientists in Brazilian Public Administration," has inspired this article. Grounded in the sociology of scientific practices and pragmatist critical feminism, the author undertakes a) a historical review of the contributions of three generations of women scientists to the constitution, legitimization, and continuity of public administration in Brazil; b) an analysis of the scientific field of graduate studies in public administration and the positioning of women scientists within it; and c) a retrieval of the life experiences of researchers in the field, examining how gender inequalities intersect with these experiences.

It is also worth mentioning the commendable work of the research group on State, Gender, and Diversity at Fundação João Pinheiro (FJP), established in 2014. This group has undertaken initiatives such as developing information and statistics with gender and race details, conducting applied research and technical work supporting the institutionalization of public policies for women and the Black population, engaging in academic research within the realms of feminist and anti-racist studies, and providing training for public servants through teaching or extension programs. At the most recent Annual Meeting of ANPAD (ENANPAD), a study by members of this research group titled "Female and Black Occupation of Parliament: Evaluation of a Peripheral Parliamentary Mandate" (SOUZA et al., 2023) was honored with the award for the article making the highest contribution to the Brazilian context, underscoring the significance of the topic for the field.

Final Considerations

As discussed, the sociologies of science and scientific practices have much to contribute to developing a new perspective on the science of public administration. This is particularly relevant due to the inherent complexity of scientific phenomena in the field and the numerous associations and connections between different actors and the dimensions that compose them. These approaches offer rich alternatives for science studies, emphasizing critical, reflective, and innovative approaches that can advance the research agenda of the field.

A systematic literature review demonstrates that studies focusing on the science of public administration in Brazil predominantly center on discussions regarding teaching and research in the area. Rarely do these works delve into the science itself from an epistemological perspective, and even rarer are those focusing on scientific practices. To advance studies on this science, it is crucial to move beyond analyzing the scope and limits of its scientific production and the theories proposed or adopted. Empirical studies on scientific practice and its consequences in the field and academic production are needed. This involves observing this phenomenon from different perspectives, considering its various dimensions as it unfolds in daily practice – a dynamic interplay of association, dissociation, and re-association between human and non-human actors, influencing and being influenced by macro and microsocial factors.

The aim is to get as close as possible to the “science being produced,” understanding its dynamics and lived experiences, considering the multiple scales of this process. This approach enables the reconstruction, analysis, and provisional understanding of the complex scientific reality, with the goal of continuous improvement. In the words of Pickering and Guzik (2008, p. 7), science is a “mangling,” an “open and infinite, reciprocally structured interaction of human and non-human agencies,” composed not only of produced knowledge but also of a nexus of practices – both integrated and dispersed – that have the power to (re)organize and (re)structure reality. Therefore, these practices increasingly need to be the subject of study by science itself.

The last section demonstrated how this perspective applies to public administration, paving the way for new avenues in the research agenda that: a) “denaturalize” and question the science of public administration, extending beyond university walls to explore co-produced science and its consequences in other spaces, be it in public administration, the state, or the market; b) provides opportunities to better understand the configuration of the field of public administration, its inequalities, and their respective consequences for scientific practice, researchers, and society; and c) enables a deeper understanding of the experiences lived by scientists, exploring aspects that have been little discussed and visible in studies on the field in Brazil until now.

Para tanto, na última sessão foi proposto como isso se aplica à administração pública, abrindo novas vias na agenda de pesquisa que: a) “desnaturalizem” e ques-

tionem a ciência da administração pública, indo além dos muros universidade e interessando-se também pela ciência coproduzida e suas consequências em outros espaços, seja na administração pública, no Estado ou no mercado; b) criem oportunidades para melhor compreender a configuração do campo da administração pública, as suas desigualdades e respectivas consequências para o fazer científico, para os próprios pesquisadores e para a sociedade; e c) permitam compreender melhor as experiências, aquilo que é vivido pelos cientistas, explorando aspectos pouco discutidos e visíveis nos estudos sobre o campo no Brasil até então.

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