ARTICLE

Styles of academic production in the Argentine social sciences:

Heterogeneity and heterodoxy

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Abstract

Argentina is an appealing case for analyzing the social science system. In recent years (until 2015) there has been a robust increase in public funding, giving way to the expansion of research, the recruitment of hundreds of new full-time researchers and the consolidation of scholarships for PhD students. All this, in turn, has resulted in a remarkable increase in publications. Although these processes have occurred in the midst of professionalization (which implies higher levels of adherence to international academic standards), recent studies have shown that two contesting models within the social sciences continue to prevail in Argentina: one that conforms to international standards and practices, and another of a more endogenous nature, with its own logic for knowledge production, evaluation and circulation. In order to examine the impact of international standards in the Argentine social sciences, in this paper I analyze the styles of academic production. This implies the study of three closely related dimensions: research processes and models (theoretical foundations, methods, techniques, etc.); writing formats (structure and organization of academic texts); and publication logics (types of publications, profiles of the journals where the articles are published, etc.). The analysis is based on a large sample of publications selected by other researchers in order to carry out a comprehensive review of Argentine literature with regard to six key themes of the social sciences. These publications were also used to produce a dataset with several variables related to the three above-mentioned dimensions. In particular, this paper focuses on the publications grounded in empirical research, and compares qualitative with quantitative research and the various types of publications (journal articles, book chapters and conference papers). The results show that regardless of the recent process of professionalization, "heterodox models" of academic production are still largely pervasive within the Argentine social sciences.

Keywords

INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this article is to describe the styles of production within the social sciences in Argentina.[1] This involves analyzing three closely related dimensions: research models and processes (theoretical orientations, methodological strategies, research techniques, etc.); writing formats (structure and organization of academic texts); and logics of publication (types and profiles of the publications, etc.). The idea of looking at all these dimensions, instead of paying attention only to the theoretical and methodological aspects of research, is grounded in well-established studies. For example, Bazerman (1988) has advanced the importance of examining writing in science, and Collyer (2018: 59-60) has argued that "publication is a process that helps to structure knowledge production, both enabling and constraining specific knowledge practices."

In a broad sense, the concern about styles of production – as defined in this article – is connected to the growing professionalism of sociology worldwide, especially in the United States. Professional sociology "supplies true and tested methods, accumulated bodies of knowledge, orienting questions, and conceptual frameworks"; produces instrumental knowledge published in academic papers; and legitimizes knowledge by imposing scientific standards and control mechanisms, based on peer evaluation (Burawoy 2005: 10).

Regarding its historical development and consolidation as a hegemonic model of academic work, professional sociology – which can be extended to all empirical social sciences – cannot be dissociated from what Beigel (2014; 2017a) has termed the World Academic System. This system is characterized by an unequal structure of production and circulation of knowledge, with the so-called mainstream circuit as its dominant center. Within this system, the paper (or journal article) began to be prioritized over other forms of production and dissemination of knowledge from the mid-twentieth century onwards (Beigel and Salatino 2015). Although the impact of this process in the social sciences came later than in the natural sciences, the "culture of the paper" gradually gained dominance in the former fields during the 1990s. Furthermore, one of the main pillars of this system is the mainstream publication scheme composed of leading journals indexed in international databases (Beigel, 2017a), with a bias in favor of articles in English (Ortiz, 2009) and produced by scholars from the global North.

In the case of the social sciences, Heilbron (2014) has fostered the idea of an emerging global field with a core-periphery structure, in which the research capacity and output are concentrated in a Euro-American core. In fact, based on this hypothesis, Mosbah-Natanson and Gingras (2014) have shown that in the period 2000-2009, the Euro-American core accounted for 89.1% of the social science publications, according to the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), and for 88% of the mainstream journals included in the Web of Science (WoS). On the contrary, the multiple peripheries are scarcely represented: the whole of Latin America, for example, accounted for just 2.2% of the publications and 2.8% of the journals.

The reasons for this marginal representation have been the subject of research and debate. Vessuri (1995) and Guédon (2011) have argued that within the mainstream circuit scholars usually assume that the peripheral production lacks academic value. This statement is related to intraversion, "a

[1] This article stems from a research program called PISAC (Programa de Investigación sobre la Sociedad Argentina Contemporánea [Research Program on Contemporary Argentine Society]), which has been implemented since 2012 under the auspices of the National Council of the Schools of Social and Human Sciences (CODESOC). More precisely, the paper is related to one of the Program's research lines, focused on the institutions, actors, practices and products of what could be labeled as the "national social science system."

process whereby scholars are inwardly focused, suspicious of knowledge from sources external to their own country." For scientists from the global South, this translates into an obstacle for publishing in international journals (Collyer 2018: 64). The language barrier has also been highlighted (Danell 2013), whereby the increasing importance of English – already deep-rooted in the natural sciences for decades – has become the *lingua franca* of the social sciences (Danell 2013; Heilbron 2014; Mosbah-Natanson and Gingras 2014). Nonetheless, all these factors must be considered in the framework of an academic publishing system which, apart from intraversion, has been increasingly subject to processes of market concentration, commodification, monopolization and standardization (Collyer 2018).

The standardization of academic publishing is also linked to the emergence of a "universal" language and style of writing (Beigel and Salatino, 2015). This writing style is based on a highly codified and institutionalized genre that Bazerman (1988) calls "experimental report," and which materializes, to a large extent, in the Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion (IMRAD) model. According to Day (1989), the IMRAD format was consecrated as the standard model for the scientific article in 1972, after the approval and publication of the American National Standard for scientific papers. This 16-page document, prepared by the Committee on Standardization in the Field of Library Work, Documentation, and Related Publishing Practices of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), outlined the expectations for preparing scientific papers for written or oral presentation. This standard was subsequently adopted by dozens of scientific organizations and specialized journals.

Day's statement about the consecration of the IMRAD model from the 1970s onwards is consistent with the results of empirical research by Sollaci and Pereira (2004). By examining scientific articles published between 1935 and 1985 in four leading health science journals, the authors have shown that the use of the IMRAD format, in a broad sense, began in the 1940s. However, it only became widespread in the 1970s, when it was used in 80% of the articles. And by the 1980s, this became the sole writing pattern adopted by all original articles published in the four leading journals analyzed by these authors.

Although this format has had greater impact in the natural sciences, it has also spread in the social sciences and been adopted even by some professionalized journals in the arts and humanities (Day 1989). This expansion can be explained by several convergent factors, such as the "imitation of the forms of argument developed within the natural sciences" (Bazerman 1988: 257) and the recommendations made by the editors of scientific journals (Sollaci and Pereira 2004). However, the influence of this model has been uneven across disciplines. Its impact has been particularly significant in psychology, in large part because the American Psychological Association (APA), in its world-famous *Publication Manual*, proposes the IMRAD structure for the section headings of an academic article. According to Bazerman (1988: 259) the "[m]anual symbolizes and instrumentally realizes the influence and power of the official style." As a consequence, social and humanistic empirical research in psychology and other social sciences frequently resort to a format *similar* to IMRAD, which also includes sections dedicated to the theoretical/conceptual framework of the research and/or to the literature review/state of the art.[2]

Within the framework of these global dynamics, it is worth analyzing the styles of production within the social sciences in peripheral contexts. This may help deepen the understanding of the core-

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[2] Before its standardization during the 1970s, the literature review section was a common practice in the papers of the natural sciences under the title "Previous Work" (Brain 1965).

periphery relations, which some authors have described as "academic dependency" (Alatas 2003), by shedding light on the influence of the Euro-American social science model, the degree of academic autonomy in the global South and the practices of resistance against the international regime of publications that, according to Beigel (2014), have grown in recent years.

It is important to first consider several dynamics that affect the core-periphery interplay. On one hand, the scientific policies of the governments of the peripheries and their specialized institutions tend to orient the publication strategies of scientists towards the mainstream circuit – often thanks to reward schemes–, assuming its greater prestige and impact. On the other hand, although universities or associations traditionally publish peripheral academic journals (Vessuri *et al.* 2014), there has been a process of transfer to commercial property in recent years, particularly in some countries of the South. This transfer has had important consequences for knowledge production, particularly through the standardization of journals and the development of publication practices linked to the "imposition" of the American model (Collyer 2018). It is also worth mentioning the ubiquitous evaluative practices in science, which have a clear performative effect (Piovani 2015b). Evaluations influence researchers' decisions about writing styles and, more fundamentally, about how and where to publish (and possibly also the definition of research objects, theories, approaches and methods).

The implications of these processes, however, tend to be multifaceted and nonlinear. Martín (2013), for example, has argued that academics in the periphery have adopted two different strategies in the face of the above-mentioned dynamics. The first is an imitative one, which assumes the need to publish internationally and establishes it as a privileged goal (and where scholars must follow the problems, theories and methodologies of hegemonic academies and imitate their legitimated writing styles). The second approach might be called hyper-localist by rejecting the requirement to publish internationally (and in English), either based on a sophisticated critique of the indexation and impact measurement systems, or as a merely defensive and culturalist reaction. Similarly, Beigel (2017a) has argued that the supposed "academic dependency" actually alters national evaluative cultures and deepens structural heterogeneity, resulting in segmented circuits of recognition and consecration within the periphery.[3]

Various regional academic circuits are also being developed in the global South (Beigel 2014) as part of a new and broader phenomenon of internationalization. This process is defined by Heilbron (2014) as transnational regionalization, characterized by emerging regional structures such as research councils, journals, professional associations and databases. Particularly significant are the alternative publication circuits established "in response to the inequalities of global publishing" (Collyer 2018: 66). In the case of Latin America, Vessuri *et al.* (2014: 656) have highlighted the more than 30 digital collections that have emerged since the end of the 1990s, which reflect "the desire to give greater visibility to the region's scientific production," as well as the regional alternative indexing systems and digital platforms such as Latindex, SciELO, Redalyc and, more recently, AmeliCA.

Therefore, although the periphery is significantly exposed to the influence of dominant models of scientific production developed in the Euro-American core, new evidence shows that "autonomous knowledge is produced outside the 'centers of excellence.'" Furthermore, the fact that "theories and

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[3] Hanafi's (2011) analysis of the production of social scientists from the Arab East shows somewhat similar results, insofar as Arab scientists who publish globally tend to "perish" locally, and those who work on locally relevant issues do not have access to the international mainstream circuit.

methods produced in the periphery have low possibilities for 'exports' to mainstream circuits [...] doesn't imply that this knowledge is the result of massive imports of central models" (Beigel 2014: 618).

The Argentine case is particularly interesting because following the economic crisis of 2001/2002,[4] and until the end of 2015,[5] its scientific system experienced a notable expansion. Immediately after the crisis, the then Secretary of State for Science and Technology began to elaborate a National Strategic Plan for Science, Technology and Innovation. Its main goals, among others, were to increase the public investment in R&D (up to 1% of the GDP) and to bring the number of researchers and technologists to 3 per thousand of the labor force (Unzué 2015). In 2007, the Presidency created the Ministry of Science, Technology and Productive Innovation (MINCYT),[6] which implied further recognition of the scientific agenda within the state's administration. This move also began the institutionalization of such an agenda through a specialized government body of the highest level (Ministry), responsible for planning and executing the scientific policies.

In this context, the National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET), Argentina's main scientific institution, saw a notable increase in the number of researchers in the social and human sciences (from 705 to 2,245) and in the number of doctoral students with full-time scholarships (from 493 to 2,896) between 2003 and 2016.[7] Equally relevant was the development of doctoral training programs, especially in public universities, and the growth of financial resources to support research projects. Particularly in the case of the social sciences, there was also a revitalization of the publishing market, as well as the creation of new specialized journals, most of them edited by scientific or higher education institutions.

This expansion was accompanied by an increasing process of professionalization of academic and scientific practices that, albeit with its own dynamics, followed some of the main international patterns. Among other things, professionalization in Argentina reinforced the institutionalization of evaluation – complying, in general, with the criteria of the peer review model – and publications in prestigious mainstream journals (labeled as Type 1 by CONICET).[8]

[4] Towards the end of 2001, a severe economic, social and political crisis broke out in Argentina. Both in the social sciences and in the media, this crisis is considered to mark the end of the neoliberal cycle that began in the 1990s. For this reason, 2001/2002 is used as a milestone for the periodization of the country's recent history. The crisis involved, among other things, an economic collapse and widespread distrust of state institutions, politics and politicians. In the following years, governments characterized by anti-neoliberal policies and discourses (although the anti-neoliberal nature of their policies has been the subject of debate) led a "re-foundational" process of recovery, with strong implications in all spheres, including scientific and higher education institutions.

[5] In December 2015, after three progressive governments (often also called "populists") a new neoliberal phase began in Argentina. Among other things, the new government applied sharp budget cuts that particularly affected the scientific system. In addition, many of its officials criticized the financing of social research with public funds and, more generally, favored speeches of suspicion in relation to the social sciences.

[6] In 2018, the Ministry was downgraded to a Secretary within the Ministry of Education. And in December 2019, a new government with a progressive profile transformed this Secretary into a Ministry again.

[7] These figures refer only to CONICET researchers and to doctoral students funded by CONICET: https://cifras.conicet.gov.ar/publica/. Note that there are thousands of researchers based at universities that do not belong to CONICET, as well as thousands of doctoral students who do not have scholarships or are funded by other organizations.

[8] In this regard, we might also mention the work commissioned by CONICET, which prepared the Resolution 2249/14 with the *Guidelines for the Categorization of Periodical Publications in Social sciences and the Humanities* (Peirano, Freibrun and Sleiman 2015: 11).

However, recent research has shown that the diffusion of the dominant model of scientific production – centered on English-language papers published in mainstream journals – presents some peculiarities in Argentina. For example, Gibert Galassi (2013), in a comparative bibliometric analysis of the production of the social sciences in various Latin American countries, has affirmed that there has been a recent increase in the number of articles published in the international mainstream circuit. However, he shows that in Argentina this tendency has been weaker than in other countries like Chile and Brazil. All in all, he concludes that it is not clear whether local traditions will always lead towards increased participation in the international publication system. Galassi illustrates this with the Argentine case, by saying that the quality and strength of its traditions in the social sciences do not seem to be reflected in the international bibliometric indicators.

Beigel (2017a, 2017b) has shed light on this issue by highlighting the persistence of two models within the social sciences in Argentina. The first is represented by a minority of scientists (usually affiliated to CONICET) familiar with the dominant production styles of the World Academic System. The second is characterized by a more endogenous agenda, with scholars mostly from universities who tend to remain restricted to local circuits nourished by numerous non-indexed journals published in Spanish and often only in printed format. According to Beigel, the growth of the scientific system in recent years has deepened the polarization between these two models (CONICET vs. universities). Baranger and Niño (forthcoming) have added complexity to Beigel's analysis by introducing other variables. They propose a typology of five styles of publication: the standard (which conforms to the predominant profile of the natural sciences, hence the IMRAD model and the use of English as *lingua franca*), the proto-standard, two versions of a localist style, and finally the universalist (which implies a strong orientation towards international publications, not only in English and in mainstream journals, but also in other languages such as French, Portuguese, German and Italian). Baranger and Niño show that the field of the social sciences in Argentina is heterogeneous, with a strong influence of the standard style in disciplines such as economics and psychology, and a prevalence of the localist and/or universalist styles in sociology and other disciplines.

Gantman (2011) has scrutinized the CVs of 414 Argentinian CONICET researchers in the fields of economics, sociology, psychology and political science in order to examine their publication patterns. His assumption is that there is an idiosyncratic character in the social sciences according to national or regional origin. He shows that even though there is a general prevalence of local journals among the publications of these researchers, different PhD training trajectories are linked to diverse publication patterns. In this sense, he notes that having a PhD from the US or the UK has a positive effect in the number of publications in English and in mainstream journals, whereas having an Argentine PhD has a negative effect on this.

More recently, Calvo *et al.* (2019) have carried out an empirical analysis of the styles of research in Argentine sociology and political science, focusing on the three most cited publications of CONICET researchers – that is to say, those who are better integrated into the international scientific system and, therefore, more exposed to its influence. These authors have found that the field of social sciences in Argentina is more heterogeneous than expected, yet with a clear predominance of qualitative studies. The probability of using quantitative methods is higher among those who have received PhD training in the US, and quantitative papers are more likely to be published in international mainstream journals and to have more impact in terms of citations. In short, they have shown that the attachment to the IMRAD model has not been a uniform or an evolutionary tendency, and that it has not influenced the number of publications or the recognition by peers at the local

level. In this sense, they maintain that the Argentine social science circuit differs from other peripheral academic contexts that seem to be more polarized, like the Arab one (see Hanafi 2011).

Considering this set of problems and discussions as a general background, in a previous article (Piovani 2018) I had described a *corpus* of recent Argentine journal articles based on empirical social research, under the assumption that they better represent the knowledge production model fostered within the World Academic System. In order to deepen this line of research, this article extends the analysis to *all* the publications of the *corpus*[9] based on empirical research (not only journal articles). In short, I address the following questions: what are the main characteristics of these publications in terms of methodological strategies, writing formats, citations, publishing patterns and impact? To what extent do they comply with the international models and standards of writing and publication? Are there any differences between journal articles, book chapters and conference papers, and between qualitative and quantitative studies? In other words, I focus on key methodological and technical aspects of the research in which the publications are based, their formal structure (organization and sections of the written report), the citations and bibliographic references included in them, the characteristics of the journals in which they were published (in the case of journal articles) and, although in a relatively limited way, their impact.

METHODOLOGY

This analysis is based on a *corpus* of 493 items published since the start of the expansion of the Argentine scientific system following the 2001/2002 crisis, and approximately until 2014. It includes all the publications selected by researchers participating in the PISAC program who carried out a comprehensive literature review of local social research.[10] Their goal was to portray and systematize recent contributions according to six thematic nuclei defined within PISAC: a) social structure; b) life conditions and welfare; c) state, government and public administration; d) citizenship, social conflict and social movements; e) social and cultural diversity; f) cultural production and consumption.

This thorough literature review was one of the three main research lines of PISAC. Six research teams with experts from different institutions and regions of the country worked collaboratively, each focusing on one of the above-mentioned thematic nuclei (Piovani 2015a). To carry out the project, the researchers first needed to identify the production of the Argentine social sciences during the period under study, in order to select a *corpus* of specific texts for the literature reviews. To achieve this, they used a series of complementary strategies and sources:

- Databases and repositories, using filters, keywords and descriptors.
- References provided by key informants (experts in each field).
- Journals' lists → article lists / author lists (in the case of non-indexed journals).
- Publisher lists → book collections → book titles → book indexes.
- Congress directories → lists of sessions → session directories/author lists.

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[9] Note that the *corpus* analyzed for this article is not exactly the same as the one used in 2018 because 72 publications were added due to ongoing research on the topic.

[10] The review of the recent literature in the Argentine social sciences was one of the three lines of research of the PISAC Program. As director of the Program, I supervised the methodological design of this line of research, but I was not part of the teams of researchers that selected and analyzed the texts. For a detailed account of PISAC see Piovani (2015a; 2017).

- Directories of research centers and institutes → research groups → research lines → projects → productions framed in the projects.
- A "snowball" strategy, exploring the references of other works that had already been identified and selected.

Given the limited representation of local production in international databases and indexes, the research teams had to construct *ad hoc* databases of national social science journals, domestic publishers (or international publishing houses based in Argentina) that edit social science books, and local or international academic conferences that were held in Argentina during the period studied. In total, the teams identified over 400 journals; 129 publishers with 497 different book series or collections; and 382 academic conferences.

In the first phase, each team identified around 1,000 relevant publications that were classified using a *condensed survey form* (which included variables such as title, authorship, keywords, main thematic nucleus, type of publication, type of work, etc.). In the second phase, they selected around 10% of these publications in order to form the *corpus* of texts to be used in the literature reviews. Although this *corpus* is not the result of a probabilistic sampling procedure, it is highly representative because it includes publications selected by peers from different institutions and regions of the country. These publications were considered relevant for creating an integral account of the investigations conducted recently in Argentina on the above-mentioned thematic nuclei and their results. The *corpus* was constructed on the basis of a purposive sample, after organizing the contributions into four matrices:

1. Matrix of THEMES/DIMENSIONS/PERSPECTIVES (theoretical and methodological)/PROBLEMS/HYPOTHESIS (in relation to each of the thematic nuclei).

2. Matrix of REGIONS/INSTITUTIONS/AUTHOR PROFILES.

3. Matrix of TYPE OF PUBLICATION (book/book chapter/journal article/conference paper)/TYPE OF WORK (essay/theoretical research/empirical research, etc.).

4. Matrix of TEMPORALITIES (temporal delimitation as OBJECT OF ANALYSIS and as DATE OF PUBLICATION).

Each matrix had a variable number of cells. The subsequent juxtaposition of the different matrices multiplied the number of cells, with an increasing complexity that permitted reconstructing the heterogeneity of academic production. The idea was to produce a comprehensive frame of reference that would allow for a more complete coverage (thematic, regional, etc.) of the academic production. In short, the rationale was to deliberately control the bias that would emerge had the analysis focused exclusively on a single type of production, on a few authors from the same region or institution, on the same subject (or dimension) or on closely related perspectives (Piovani 2015a).

As already indicated, the publications included in the *corpus* were selected with the main purpose of producing literature reviews. But they were also used to generate inputs – primary data – for PISAC´s second line of research, which focuses on the institutions, actors, practices and products of the Argentine social science system and provides the framework for this article. In order to categorize the styles of academic production, a *standardized coding frame* was designed under my supervision and applied to every publication. This instrument included 28 items and dozens of sub-items, some

of which were general (like title, authorship, institutional affiliation, etc.) and others were specific with regards to each type of publication and work.[11]

The coding frame covered a wide range of issues related to the texts (structure, bibliography, impact, etc.), the research on which they were based (funding, collaboration, theoretical foundations, methodological strategies, research techniques, etc.), the authors (institutional affiliation, profile, etc.) and the publication formats (as well as the characteristics of the journals, in the case of articles). The data collection resulted in the development of a database containing 97 variables. Another 15 (complex, combined or summary) variables constructed from the processing of the data were then added. The statistical analysis was performed with the SPSS package and included mainly frequency distributions, descriptive measures (central tendency and deviation) and contingency tables.

RESULTS

We begin with a general overview of the *corpus*, without differentiating by type of publication or type of work. This is relevant because the *corpus* does not include only journal articles or works of an empirical nature. As shown in Figure 1, 10.7% of the publications are books; 19.4% are book chapters; 51.2% are scientific journal articles; and 18.4% are conference papers. As for the types of work, taking into account the definitions used in this research (see footnote 11), 17.5% are essays; 4.8% are propositional-normative studies; 11% are theoretical investigations; 5% are literature reviews; and 61.7% are empirical studies.

Figure 1: The *corpus*
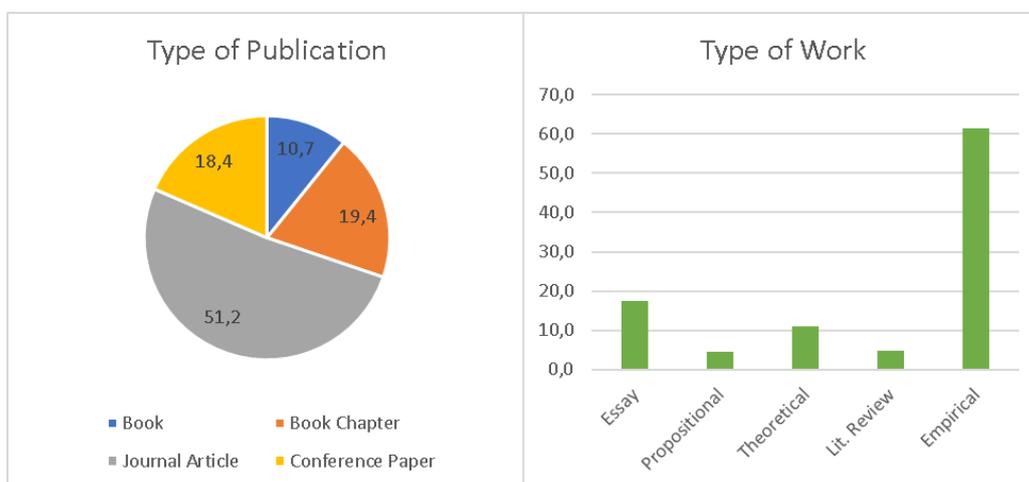
Source: PISAC's database on Argentinian social science publications, 2002–2014

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[11] Types of work: Essay (argumentation / reflection / personal opinion on a topic / problem, even if it contains theoretical and / or empirical references); Propositional - normative study (work whose main objective is to propose a determined social intervention, a specific social policy or a guide of action or practice, even if it contains theoretical and / or empirical references); Theoretical research (work that focuses on the systematic discussion of a perspective or concept, or on the conceptual construction of a theme / problem, perhaps containing references to empirical cases); State of the art - literature review (work that accounts, systematically, for the set of publications on an issue / problem); Empirical research (work that is based on the production and analysis of primary data applying any type of scientific methodology, or in the systematic analysis of secondary data, regardless of the inclusion of theoretical references).

Focusing exclusively on journal articles, book chapters and conference papers based on empirical research, the results show that 41.8% were produced within a formal (usually group) research project and 29.3% received funding. The main sources of funding were national universities, particularly in the cases of chapters, conference papers, and qualitative research. Although to a lesser extent, grants from the National Agency for the Promotion of Science and Technology (through FONCYT) and from the National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET) were also important. The latter's funding was more significant for research published in the format of a journal article.

According to the information collected, 16% of the analyzed publications are the result of collaborative work (between research groups / institutions / countries), with a slightly higher percentage of national collaboration, as compared with international partnerships. Collaborative research is less frequent in journal articles (14.4%) and in qualitative research (10%), whereas international cooperation is far more significant in quantitative research, accounting for 9.5% of all quantitative studies (as compared with 2.3% of all qualitative ones).

As indicated by the data, 76% of the publications have what could be considered a theoretical or conceptual framework, while 56.7% include a state of the art / literature review and 38% contain a section dedicated to methods. Moreover, 39.5% have an explicit hypothesis. However, these figures varied significantly according to the type of publication and the methodological strategy (whether quantitative or qualitative). As shown in Table 1, the percentage of journal articles that include theoretical frameworks, literature reviews, sections on methods and explicitly stated hypotheses, is higher than those of book chapters and conference papers. The differences between publications based on quantitative and qualitative research, as shown in Table 2, are even more pronounced: the proportion of quantitative studies that include these four items is higher, and the gap is particularly noticeable in the case of the methodological section. On the whole, the highest level of compliance with the inclusion of all four items is found in journal articles based on quantitative methods: 81.3% have a conceptual framework; 64.6% include a literature review; 66.7% have a section dedicated to methods; and 52.5% present an explicit hypothesis.

Table 1: Percentage of publications that include the 4 selected items, according to type of publication

	Journal article	Chapter / conf. paper
Theoretical Framework	79.7	70.9
Literature Review	58.2	54.5
Methods	40.5	34.5
Hypothesis	43.1	34.5

Source: PISAC's database on Argentinian social science publications, 2002–2014

Table 2: Percentage of publications that include the 4 selected items, according to the methodological strategy

	Quantitative	Qualitative
Theoretical Framework	78.4%	75.4%
Literature Review	60.8%	48.5%
Methods	60.8%	26.9%
Hypothesis	45.9%	31.5%

Source: PISAC's database on Argentinian social science publications, 2002–2014

Apart from determining the percentage of publications that include a section dedicated to methods, the reporting of decisions regarding sampling, data collection and analysis was scrutinized. The results, presented in Tables 3, 4 and 5, show that data collection techniques are usually stated. In fact, they are identified in 78.6% of the publications. In contrast, in over 66% of the publications there are no concrete references to sampling procedures. The methodological decisions concerning these three aspects of the research are less often reported in book chapters and conference papers than in journal articles, but the differences are not considerable. When comparing quantitative and qualitative studies, it is evident that references to sampling and data analysis are more common among the former, whereas the reports of data collection techniques are more frequent in the latter. As expected, probabilistic sampling, standardized questionnaires and statistical analysis are overwhelmingly prevalent in quantitative research, at least in those that state the methodological techniques. In contrast, in qualitative studies the most common references are to purposive sampling, in-depth interviews, and content and discourse analysis.

Table 3: Sampling

Sampling	
Not stated	66.6%
Probabilistic	8.0%
Purposive	13.6%
Other	11.8%

Source: PISAC's database on Argentinian social science publications, 2002–2014

Table 4: Data collection techniques

Data Collection	
Not stated	21.4%
Questionnaire	18.9%
In depth Interview	35.5%
Other	24.2%

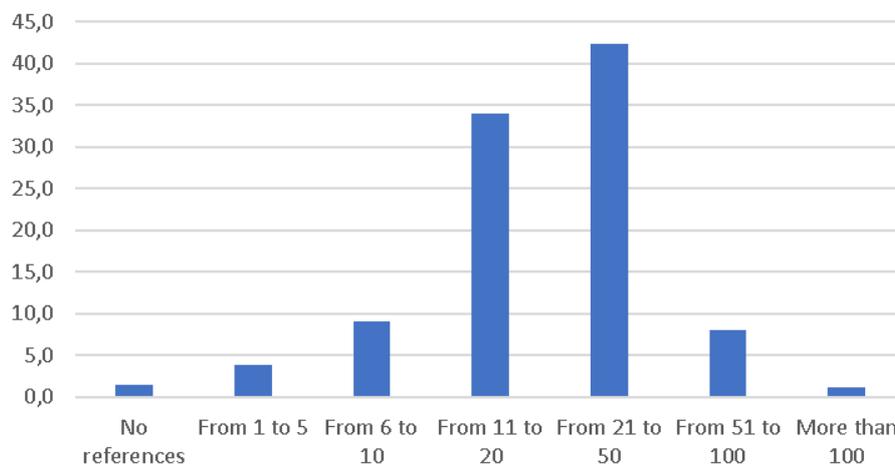Source: PISAC's database on Argentinian social science publications, 2002–2014

Table 5: Data analysis techniques

	Data Analysis
Not stated	36.1%
Statistical analysis	28.2%
Content analysis	18.5%
Other	17.2%

Source: PISAC's database on Argentinian social science publications, 2002–2014

Another thoroughly examined aspect was the bibliography provided in the publications. The first observation is that 1.5% do not include any references, and 3.8% contain between 1 and 5. The number of references in each publication, grouped in intervals, can be seen in Figure 2. Journal articles have a higher mean of references (26.1) and a lower standard deviation (15.1) compared with chapters and conference papers (mean: 24.7; standard deviation: 28.1). The differences in the mean of references are very slight between quantitative and qualitative studies, but the former have a much lower standard deviation (15.7 vs. 25.8).

Figure 2: Number of references

Source: PISAC's database on Argentinian social science publications, 2002–2014

The bibliographies also reveal that in 0.4% of the publications the most recent reference was published before the 1990s, while 5.4% had their latest reference from the 1990s, 69.8% from the 2000s, and 24.4% from the 2010s. The number of recent references (those published up to 10 years prior to the date of the analyzed work) was also considered. In this respect, it was determined that 3.8% of the publications had no such references; 16.5% had 1 to 5; 22.3% had 6 to 10; 27.7% had 11 to 20; 19.6% had 21 to 50; 9.6% had 51 to 100; and 0.4% had more than 100. As to its relative weight, these recent references accounted for 50% to 75% of the total bibliography in 36.2% of the publications, while in 35.8% there were over 75%.

The number of journal articles cited, grouped in intervals, is shown in Table 6. Over 10% of the publications do not include journal articles among their references, while 42.1% include up to 5.

Table 6: Number of journal articles cited

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None	10.7%
From 1 to 5	42.1%
From 6 to 10	21.8%
From 11 to 20	10.3%
From 21 to 50	11.5%
From 51 to 100	3.4%

Source: PISAC's database on Argentinian social science publications, 2002–2014

In relative terms, journal articles account for up to 10% of the total reference list in 8.9% of the publications; between 10% and 25% in 30.2% of them, between 25% and 50% in 35.7%, and over 50% in 15.5%. Both the total number and the proportion of journal articles cited are higher in other journal articles and in quantitative research. In short, the citation of journal articles is particularly significant in other journal articles based on quantitative research, in which they represent, on average, 99.2% of the references.

Given that English is overwhelmingly regarded as the *lingua franca* in current scientific production, it seemed relevant to examine the inclusion of texts published in this language. Over 46% of the analyzed items do not reference any texts written in English, while 24.9% include up to 5 references in this language, and 10.3% contain between 6 and 10. Among those publications in which English texts are cited or referenced, their relative weight in the total bibliography is up to 10% in 16.7% of the cases; from 10% to 25% in 10.9%; from 25% to 50% in another 10.9%; and of more than 50% in 15.9% of the cases. The literature published in English appears to be more frequent in journal articles and quantitative studies, with both higher means and higher proportions in the reference lists. The mean of referenced English texts was 7.7 considering all types of publications, and it was 16.1 in the case of quantitative journal articles.

Figure 3 depicts the general pattern regarding the geographic origins of references in the bibliography. The percentage of publications that do not reference other Argentine texts is around 4.8%, clearly low if compared with the absence of references to US / European (10.3%) and Latin American (28.7%) texts. In the cases of the US / European and Latin American bibliography, the mode of distributions is the interval representing from 1 to 5 references, this being the situation in 36% and nearly 45% of the publications, respectively. The works of Argentine origin are the most referenced: more than 25% of the publications included between 11 and 20 texts of this origin.
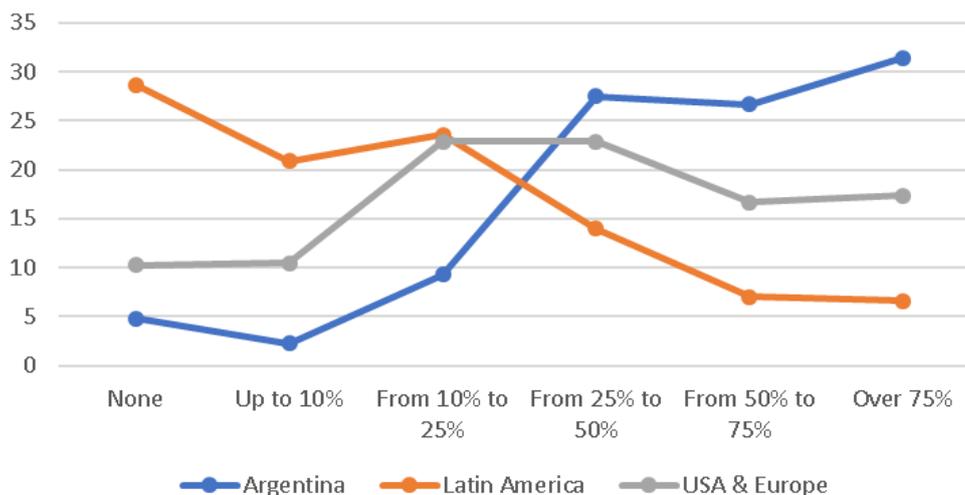
Figure 3: Number of references, according to its origin
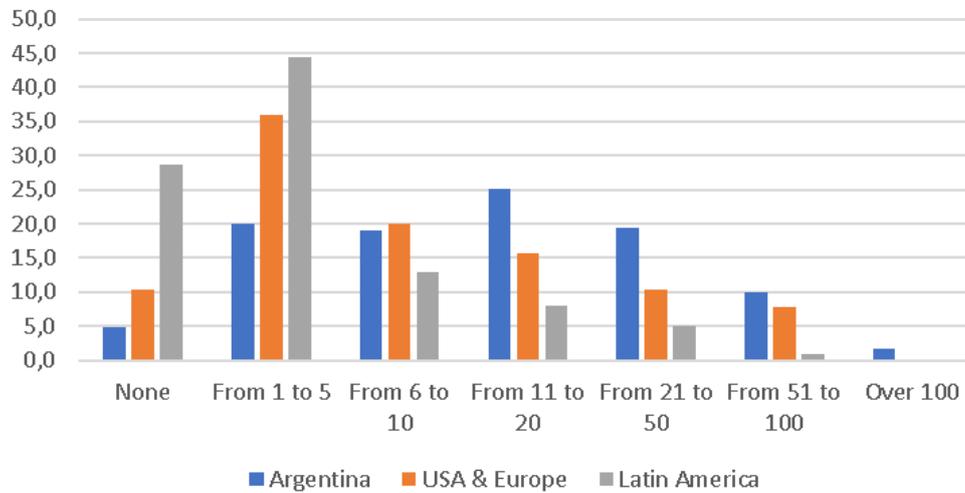
Source: PISAC's database on Argentinian social science publications, 2002–2014

Figure 4 portrays the relative weight of the references based on geographic origin within the full bibliography of each publication. In more than 30% of the publications, Argentine literature accounts for over 75% of the total references. In the case of Latin American literature, it represents up to 25% of the references in 44.5% of the publications, and for more than 75% in only 6.6% of them. US / European texts are between 25% and 50% of the total references in 22.9% of the cases, and over 75% in 17.4%.

Figure 4: Percentage of references according to origin

Source: PISAC's database on Argentinian social science publications, 2002–2014

The number and relative weight of the literature of different origins vary according to the type of publication and the quantitative/qualitative methodological approach. The means of the references to Argentine, Latin American and US/European literature are higher in the cases of journal articles

and quantitative studies, and are particularly lower in chapters and conference papers (See Table 5). Quantitative journal articles have the highest means, especially in the case of the US/European literature. But the higher means in journal articles and quantitative studies were calculated in the context of very heterogeneous distributions, since some publications include many references while others have none or just a few. Therefore, these means also have to be considered in tandem with high standard deviations. With regard to the referenced Latin American literature, even though its mean is lower in qualitative studies, its proportion within the total list of references tends to be higher than in the case of quantitative studies. In addition, while only 25% of the qualitative studies contain no references to Latin American texts, this same situation is observed in 34.7% of the quantitative studies.

Table 7: Mean of references per publication, according to the origin of the references

	All publications	Journal articles	Chapters / conf. papers	Quantitative studies	Qualitative studies	Quant. journal articles
Argentine Literature	16.4	18.2	13.9	18.4	14.4	20.4
Latin American Literature	5.2	6.4	3.5	6.3	4.5	7.6
American & European Literature	13.2	17.0	7.8	16.8	12.1	20.2

Source: PISAC's database on Argentinian social science publications, 2002–2014

In the case of journal articles, which represent 58.2% of all the texts analyzed in this paper, it was also possible to examine certain publication patterns. These articles were published in 101 different journals, most of them edited in Argentina by national universities. Six articles is the maximum published in a single journal, and the average per journal is less than 2. Some of the best-known and more prestigious local journals, such as *Cuadernos de Antropología Social*, *Trabajo y Sociedad* and *Desarrollo Económico,* are among those with the highest frequency of articles. Of the total, 77.8% of articles are peer-reviewed and 81.7% are included in indexed journals, with an overwhelming predominance in Latindex. Indeed, about 85.6% of the articles are included in journals registered in this database, although in many cases they only appear in the Directory, which is a mere list of periodicals and does not imply evaluation or indexation. The percentages of journals included in the regional databases SciELO and Redalyc (approximately 25%), as well as in the Directory of Open Access Journals DOAJ (20.8%), are also quite significant. The participation in the international mainstream circuit is rather exceptional: 4% are in SCOPUS and about 2.4% in WoS. Furthermore, 9.8% of the articles are published in printed journals, while 30.6% appear only in digital formats and 58.8% in journals that have both printed and digital versions. In the case of the quantitative journal articles, the proportion of peer-reviewed publications is slightly higher, as well as the percentage included in indexed journals (87.5%) and in the mainstream commercial circuit.

Finally, in relation to the impact of the publications, it was established that 68.4% are registered in Google Scholar (GS). However, the level of citations is generally low: 11.4% of the publications included in GS are not cited in other texts; 62.7% are cited between 1 and 5 times; 8.1% between 6 and 10 times; 8.6% between 11 and 20 times; 5.4% between 21 and 50 times and 3.8% more than 50 times. The proportion of journal articles included in GS (78.4%) is higher than that of chapters and

conference papers (54.5%). Moreover, among the former only 10% are not cited (compared to 13.8% in the case of the latter), and 4.2% are cited more than 50 times (vs. 3.1% of the chapters and conference papers). Likewise, quantitative studies are both proportionally more likely to be registered in GS and more cited than qualitative studies: among the former only 5.8% are not mentioned in GS (vs. 13.3% of the latter), and 30.8% are cited more than 5 times, compared to 22.2% in the case of the qualitative studies.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This article focuses on publications based on empirical research and, amongst them, on a comparison between articles, chapters and conference papers, as well as between quantitative and qualitative research. Yet the first paragraph of the results section dealt with the general characteristics of the *corpus* from which the analyzed publications were extracted. This was intended to show that Argentine social scientists acknowledge a wide variety of types of publications and styles of research. To a certain extent, it can be affirmed that even though the *corpus* contains a majority of empirical works (more than 60%) and journal articles (more than 50%), the recognition of the latter as the sole valid format for academic texts is, at least, under dispute. This result is consistent with the many forms of resistance and collective action within the Argentine social science system, against the assessment policies that regard the scientific paper (in English) as the only legitimate scientific product, to the detriment of other types of publications, especially books and, more generally, texts in Spanish.[12] These actions, which can be framed within the growing practices of resistance against the international regime of publications in the global South (Beigel 2014), are based on a mixture of well-founded criticisms of this regime and defensive or culturalist reactions, as described by Martín (2013).

Turning specifically to the publications stemming from empirical research, it was found that most are based on qualitative studies. The predominance of this methodological orientation in recent Argentine social research has already been highlighted by Piovani (2015a) and Calvo *et al.* (2019), and it reaches much higher proportions in the case of doctoral dissertations – with the exception of disciplines such as economics and demography. This fact cannot be overlooked when analyzing the low proportion of publications that conform to the IMRAD model, since it is not widely used in texts that portray the results of case studies or field studies, as pointed out by the Writing Center of the University of Wisconsin-Madison.[13] This statement about the lesser diffusion of the IMRAD format in qualitative reports is in line with one of the findings of this study: the central components of this format – particularly the section dedicated to methods — appear more frequently in quantitative research, mainly in quantitative journal articles.

Beyond this traditional, dual classification of methods, the results reveal the heterogeneity of the Argentine academic field of social sciences in terms of scientific production. Unlike what Beigel

[12] Since 2012, for example, the Inter-institutional Commission for the Development of Evaluation Criteria for the Humanities and Social Sciences (CIECEHCS) has been formulating specific criteria for the evaluation of the production of the social sciences and humanities. This Commission was set up independently by a group of institutions and researchers, and has been a consistent advocate for the recognition of books and publications in Spanish, more generally. The National Council of the Schools of Social and Human Sciences (CODESOC) has also proposed an integral revision of the academic evaluation criteria used by universities and other scientific institutions, and different groups of researchers often publish open calls for greater local autonomy in the definition of such criteria.

[13] https://writing.wisc.edu/

(2017b) has shown with regard to the evaluative cultures, which are organized around a binary scheme (CONICET vs. universities), the panorama of the styles of production appear to be more complex. Indeed, in the case of research, writing and publishing, the CONICET/university cleavage, even if significant, does not fully explain the differences. Although the evidence confirms that the publications that best conform to international standards stem, in a higher proportion, from studies funded by CONICET, the researchers of this institution follow various research orientations and publication strategies (Gantman 2011; Baranger and Niño forthcoming).

Therefore, when it comes to the styles of production, there are other variables that are at play. In this paper, as in Calvo *et al.* (2019), the findings show that the methodological strategy is associated with the propensity to produce articles in the standard format: irrespective of the author's affiliation (CONICET or university), quantitative papers tend to adjust more to the IMRAD model or, at least, include some of its key sections. In addition, these quantitative papers are more likely to be published in mainstream journals. In turn, these journals, as key components of what Danell (2013: 179) defines as communication regimes, are "central in enforcing unifying standards for knowledge productions."

Calvo *et al.* (2019), as well as Gantman (2011), have found significance also in the country from which the researchers obtained their PhD. Academics with a PhD from English-speaking countries, and mainly from US and UK universities, tend to publish more in English and in mainstream journals, in which the writing formats are generally more standardized. Several factors may contribute to explain this, but all are somewhat related to the very characteristics of the core–periphery structure of the international social science field, as described by Heilbron (2014). Researchers who are trained in the US and the UK enjoy various advantages within this structure: a) familiarity with the criteria and logics of knowledge production and publication fostered within the mainstream circuit; b) less difficulties with the (English) language barrier, regarded as increasingly challenging to overcome (Danell 2013); and c) higher chances of developing networks with colleagues from the core countries, which may result in increased international collaborations. A study currently underway that focuses on linguistic skills and the use of foreign languages in scientific production puts these findings in perspective, particularly for the Argentine context. Based on a large sample of researchers from Argentina, Brazil and Chile,[14] the study reveals that only 3.6% of the Argentines completed their PhD in the US, compared to 8.5% among Brazilians (in addition to 7.9% who did it in the UK), and 21.2% in the case of the Chileans (in addition to 6.7% who did it in the UK). The total percentages of researchers with PhDs from Anglophone countries are 5.3% in Argentina, 17.4% in Brazil and 31.2% in Chile. Given the statistical relationship between having a doctorate from an English-speaking country and the propensity to publish in English in the mainstream circuit, these data shed light on Gibert Galassi's (2013) findings about the lower proportion of Argentine papers in the main international indexes, compared to Chilean and Brazilian articles.

Baranger and Niño (forthcoming), as well as Calvo *et al.* (2019), have also shown the importance of disciplinary adscription. The former authors have revealed that what they call *standard* and *proto standard* styles of publication, which imply adherence to the models of the natural sciences, are prevalent in biological anthropology, economics and psychology (presumably in its experimental and psychometric variants). In other disciplines such as social anthropology and sociology, the *localist* and *universalist* styles predominate. The case of political science is quite peculiar, given the influence of American academia in this field, which results in a more intense diffusion of the standard paper

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[14] Project NEIES Mercosur # 3/2015: Academic internationalization in the Southern Cone. Comparative study of language skills of academics from selected universities in Chile, Brazil and Argentina.

model, as shown by Calvo *et al.* (2019).[15] Finally, the age of the researchers also has a significant impact. In this sense, Beigel (2017b) has analyzed what CONICET researchers regard as their best publications,[16] observing that the younger generations tend to select more articles published in mainstream journals. Indeed, out of their top five publications, social scientists under 45 choose, on average, 4.4 journal articles. For Beigel (2017b), this is evidence that the scientific paper is becoming increasingly hegemonic in all fields.

Both in quantitative and qualitative written reports – and irrespective of the criticisms of the IMRAD format or its uneven impact in the various social sciences – the high proportion of publications without an explicit account of the methodological decisions is striking. As indicated in the results, the references to sampling are virtually absent in the case of qualitative studies, even if a chapter or section dedicated to "qualitative sampling" is already standard in the specialized methodological literature. These results are relevant when thinking about research training and, more precisely, about the teaching of social research methods and techniques. Beyond possible deficits of technical training in specific issues such as qualitative sampling, previous research has shown that, in general, the teaching of methodology in Argentina tends to ignore the problem of scientific writing. Instead, it focuses almost exclusively on general epistemological and methodological debates, on research design and on data collection and analysis (Piovani 2014).

The findings related to the bibliography can also give way to some relevant remarks. First, it could be argued that the low relative presence of journal articles and texts in English in the reference lists is consistent with the scarce inclusion of literature reviews, as they are usually based on recent research and published in the form of journal articles in English. This hypothesis finds additional support in the usage statistics of the MINCYT's electronic library, which provides access to international databases to all public research and higher education institutions of the country. In the period between January 2008 and December 2017, social science researchers downloaded 2,263,192 articles, compared to the more than 30 million downloaded by their colleagues in the natural sciences. Furthermore, the average download per researcher per year was of 141 items in the natural sciences, compared with only 12 in the case of the social sciences.[17] All these statements do not fully apply to journal articles based on quantitative research, whose lists of references included a significant number of other journal articles, publications in English and international literature at large.

Regarding the origins of the works in the bibliography, the results indicate the high weight of local production and the relatively low presence of Latin American literature, despite the similarities of many socio-historical processes in the region. Although more in-depth studies are required, in the case of the Argentine social sciences, intraversion (Collyer 2018) does not seem to be the most adequate explanation for this finding. It is true that the Argentine academy has had a certain tendency towards self-referencing, but it is also true that local literature will be prevalent in any sizable academe, particularly when addressing issues of local interest. On the other hand, Latin American scholarship – particularly Mexican, Brazilian and Chilean – has always been highly regarded in Argentina, and the universities of the first two countries have been a classic destination for postgraduate training among Argentine social scientists. In any case, these results about the patterns of

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[15] Unfortunately, the dataset used for this paper does not include detailed information about disciplinary adscription. However, most of the publications of the *corpus* can be linked to the four disciplines of CODESOC: sociology, political science, communication studies and social work.

[16] This information is included in the researchers' CV, produced with a standardized platform called SIGEVA.

[17] http://www.biblioteca.mincyt.gob.ar/estadisticas/disciplinas.

the bibliography indicate the impact of the emerging transnational regionalization (Heilbron 2014). This intraregional circulation of knowledge still seems rather incipient in this country despite the existence of well-established regional indexing systems and databases. In addition, international collaboration seems quite marginal, and its percentage in the sample is lower than the one found by Mosbah-Natanson and Gingras (2014) during the years 2008-2009 in peripheral regions such as Latin America.[18]

The much greater impact of American and European literature – yet lower than that of the local literature – is a clear indicator that the main centers of knowledge production still carry importance in the periphery, especially in relation to theoretical and methodological issues. This can be considered a typical example of extraversion, which "refers to the processes through which scholars of the South tend to be oriented toward Northern scholarship, finding theoretical frameworks and methodologies for their local studies" (Collyer 2018: 64). However, the limited proportion of journal articles and texts in English and in other European languages (French, German, Italian) suggests that the referenced American and European publications are mainly translated books. This preeminence of Euro-American literature in the Argentine social sciences has been previously considered by Baranger (2011) in his analysis of 3,618 papers presented at 4 national and regional academic conferences – in the fields of Sociology and Anthropology – held in Argentina between 2008 and 2009. The most cited scholars were, in this order, Bourdieu, Foucault, Marx and Weber. Other highly cited authors were Wacquant, Gramsci, Durkheim, Giddens, and Goffman. Interestingly, while the most cited theoretical authors were overwhelmingly Europeans (and mainly classics), in the case of methodological literature the citation of American and Argentine scholars was also relevant.

Turning now to the journal articles of the *corpus*, it is worth mentioning that most were published within the local circuit described by Beigel (2017b). This circuit is composed of non-indexed periodicals – or at least, not indexed in international commercial databases – typically edited by universities, and only tentatively attached to the international standards of the World Academic System.[19] The very limited percentages of journal articles included in the mainstream circuit – 4% in SCOPUS and approximately 2.4% in WoS – is consistent with the finding presented by Mosbah-Natanson and Gingras (2014). Instead, the much higher proportion of articles published in journals included in Latindex, SciELO and Redalyc provides empirical evidence of the development and strengthening of the regional alternative indexing systems and digital platforms (Beigel 2014; Heilbron 2014; Vessuri *et al.* 2014; Collyer 2018). The proportion of articles published in open access is also remarkable, a trend that has gained increasing institutional and legal support in Argentina in recent years.

Despite the high percentage of articles published in open access and/or in journals indexed in regional circuits, their impact, defined in terms of citations, is generally low. This may be due to several factors: First, with regard to international impact, intraversion may play a role (i.e. Southern publications are hardly cited by either Northern or Southern scholars). Second, international indexes – in which these articles are not included – are the main and legitimate means used by academics to locate references (Collyer 2018). Third, Argentine social science scholars have a tendency not to

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[18] However, we must remember that this study and the one by Mosbah-Natanson and Gingras are based on incomparable samples due to their characteristics and the sources used for their construction.

[19] In fact, a survey initiated by PISAC and later completed by Beigel and Salatino (2015) showed the existence of more than 450 Argentine social and human sciences journals, most of them with limited circulation and visibility, and with non-professionalized editorial teams (Piovani 2015).

include literature reviews in the articles. Fourth, there is a low contribution of journal articles to the reference lists.

Analyzing the empirical evidence comprehensively, it is possible to put forward the hypothesis that the styles of production in the Argentine social sciences follow heterogeneous and heterodox patterns. A minority of texts conform to the standardized models (in terms of methods, writing styles and publication logics) and are legitimized in the core countries of the global social science field. There are also publications in the local or regional circuits, even if a few, that portray very standardized and "professional" formats. Another set of publications – more significant in proportion – is not only restricted to the local circuit, but also exhibits low attachment to the standards of professional social sciences (in the sense of Burawoy 2005). In addition, there are hybrid styles of production, with varying degrees of adherence to those standards as far as methods, writing formats and publication profiles are concerned. In short, the results show that regardless of the recent process of professionalization, "heterodox models" of academic production are still largely pervasive within the Argentine social sciences.

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