

The “public field” after the establishment of the national curriculum guidelines for the undergraduate teaching in public administration: trajectory and current challenges (2015-2020)

O campo de públicas após a instituição das diretrizes curriculares nacionais (DCNs) de administração pública: trajetória e desafios correntes (2015-2020)

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ABSTRACT

The year 2020 marks ten years since the term “Public Field” was introduced in Brazil. Professors and students of undergraduate programs in public administration, public management, and public policy were the first to adopt the term, which emerged at a public hearing of the National Education Council on April 5, 2010, held to discuss the preparation of the National Curriculum Guidelines (NCG) for public administration undergraduate programs. There are many books and articles about the history of public administration education in Brazil, discussing its various cycles since 1952 and the movement to redefine the identity of higher education in this field of knowledge, which resulted in the establishment of the NCG in 2014. During the period 2015-2020, the Public Field in Brazil witnessed the establishment of representative entities, the process of implementing the NCG, the creation of specific scientific events, the preparation of the National Student Performance Exam (Enade) for public administration students, the elaboration of publications with titles related to the Public Field, and the formation of a multidisciplinary academic community. However, there is no systematization of this period of institutionalization. This article addresses this gap, describing this recent history and analyzing the current challenges of the Public Field. First, we carried out a comparative analysis of

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literature and documents to reveal the milestones of the public field and its challenges after the implementation of the NCG. Then, we conducted a survey with 365 valid responses, where professors, researchers, students, and alumni related to the Public Field prioritized the challenges presented. The outcome of this research is an overview of the construction of the Public Field in Brazil.

Keywords: undergraduate teaching, scientific community, public Administration, public policy, Brazil.

RESUMO

Em 2020, o termo “Campo de Públicas” (CP) completou 10 anos no Brasil. A nomenclatura, utilizada originalmente por docentes e discentes dos cursos de graduação em Administração/Gestão/Políticas Pública(s), surgiu no ato de uma Audiência Pública realizada pelo Conselho Nacional de Educação, no dia 5 de abril de 2010, para se discutir a elaboração de DCNs de Administração Pública (AP). A história do ensino de AP no Brasil, com seus diversos ciclos desde 1952, incluindo o movimento de redefinição da identidade da educação superior nesse campo do saber que resultou na instituição das DCNs em 2014, é retratada por muitos livros e artigos. Todavia, a institucionalização do Campo de Públicas no período 2015-2020, com o estabelecimento de entidades representativas, o processo de implementação das DCNs nos cursos, a criação de eventos científicos próprios, a organização do Exame Nacional de Desempenho dos Estudantes (Enade) de AP, a publicação de manuscritos sob o título CP e a conformação de uma comunidade acadêmica multidisciplinar, faz jus a uma sistematização. Assim, o objetivo deste artigo é descrever essa trajetória recente e analisar os desafios correntes do CP. A metodologia baseou-se no cotejamento da literatura com documentos para denotar os marcos do CP pós-DCNs e desvelar seus reptos que, a partir das respostas de 365 membros – entre professores(as), pesquisadores(as), alunos(as) e egressos(as) – a uma survey, foram priorizados. Como resultado, o texto constitui um balanço sobre o processo de construção do CP no país.

Palavras-chave: ensino de graduação; comunidade científica; administração pública; políticas públicas; Brasil.

Introdução

In the article “Dossier – Campo de Públicas in Brazil: definition, historical development and current challenges,” published in the journal *Revista Administração Pública e Gestão Social* (APGS) in 2014, the authors define Campo de Públicas, here called “Public Field” as:

a group of university actors [...] from various parts of Brazil that a little over a decade ago had been carrying out common activities and addressing issues on science, organizations, regulation, and educational assessment. This group emerged with the establishment of new undergraduate programs in public administration, public management, and public policy in the country. These actors work based on different epistemological backgrounds and form a multifaceted space, considered **an embryonic multidisciplinary knowledge area** (Pires et al, 2014, p. 1, our translation, emphasis added).

The movement formed by these actors may be identified as part of an “emergent paradigm” in a Kuhnian sense (see Keinert, 2014). The movement is related to the public interest and the values of republicanism, which are elements characterizing a collective identity and leading to a growing scientific community in Brazil. One of this community’s first tasks was to reaffirm the differences between the undergraduate public management education and academic training for business management. The result of this first effort was the approval of the National Curriculum Guidelines (NCG) for undergraduate programs in public administration, on October 1, 2013. The NCG specific for public administration were formally established on January 13, 2014, by the Higher Education Chamber (CES), following the provisions of Resolution n. 1 of the Brazilian National Education Council (CNE). The first article of the NCG for public administration informed that such guidelines were designed to a “multidisciplinary field of research and professional practice directed to the state, government, public administration and public policy, public management, social management, and public policy management.”

This variety of terms used to designate undergraduate programs in this multidisciplinary field, each with a different history and links with areas of knowledge such as administration, political science, economics, law, urban planning, and sociology, shows the breadth of the Public Field. The scenario reveals how Brazilian higher education authorities have responded to transformations of the state and public administration after the 1988 Federal Constitution, the reform of the state apparatus of the 1990s, and the expansion of public policies in the 2000s. In addition, because of the complexification of roles of the public sector – in the three branches of government and their multiple agencies –, and the variety of arrangements of the ‘network state’ with civil society organizations (CSOs) and businesses, bachelor and technological degrees in the Public Field had to adapt to the reality of each territory (municipalities, regions, or states) and explore different curriculum designs.

Consequently, the Public Field was formed as “unity in diversity.” The unity is in the principles around the “public” locus and the notion of *res publica*. The diversity lies in the multidisciplinary theoretical foci and the plurality of political-pedagogical projects that redefined the teaching of undergraduate education in the country in the twenty-first century, after a history with several cycles since 1952, subordinated to the minimum curriculum of business administration programs (Coelho, 2019a).

The term *Campo de Públicas* or “Public Field” in Brazil was coined during a public hearing held at the National Education Council (CNE), on April 05, 2010, to discuss the National Curriculum Guidelines (NCG) for undergraduate programs in public administration that, as seen above, were formally established later, at the beginning of 2014. A decade after the first use of the term, its institutionalization is now a reality. In the second semester of 2019, the National Institute of Educational Studies and Research (Inep) registered 332 undergraduate bachelor and technological programs in face-to-face and distance education modalities, authorized by the Brazilian Ministry of Education (MEC), and offered by public and private institutions (universities, centers students and colleges) in all states except Espírito Santo (Santos, 2019).

In addition to reaching this number of undergraduate programs, between 2015-2020, the Public Field confirmed:

- The establishment of representative entities such as the National Association of Teaching and Research of the Public Field (Anepcp);
- The process of implementing the NCG in undergraduate programs of public administration, public management, public policy management, public policy, state sciences, and others in the whole country;
- The creation of scientific events gathering professors, and researchers such as the National Meeting of Teaching and Research in the Public Field (Enepcp) – inspired in the National Meeting of Students of Public Administration (Eneap), created years before, in 2002;
- The preparation of the National Student Performance Exam (Enade) for public administration students, with exams conducted in 2015 and 2018;
- The publication of several manuscripts with titles related to the Public Field, such as books, collections, reports, master thesis, doctoral dissertations, and articles; and

- The formation of a multidisciplinary academic community, recognized as part of the Public Field. The community gathers professors, students of undergraduate programs, and researchers participating in networks such as the ‘Network of Researchers in Social Management’ (RGS), and the Brazilian Network for Monitoring and Evaluation (RBMA). The group includes graduate membership associations – such as the National Association of Graduate Studies and Research in Administration (Anpad), the National Association of Graduate Studies and Research in Social Sciences (Anpocs), and the National Association of Graduate Studies and Research in Urban and Regional Planning (Anpur) – and scientific societies, such as the Brazilian Society of Public Administration (Sbap) and the Brazilian Association of Political Science (ABCP).

An example of the dissemination of the term “*Campo de Públicas*” in Brazil is the simple search for the term (in Portuguese) in Google search engines. A Google search using “*Campo de Públicas*” showed approximately 60,000 results in August 2020. The same search on Google Scholar, filtering for the year 2010, results in one single document, whereas filtering for the period from 2010 to 2020 results in 650 documents. The Public Field, therefore, reached another development stage after the establishment of the NCG for undergraduate programs in public administration in 2014. Different from what was observed for the period 2010-2014 (considered an “embryonic” period), the Public Field is currently in a stage of consolidating autonomy in undergraduate education, with organizational and scientific advances and challenges.

The implementation of the NCG since 2014 influenced the identity of academic training and the teaching-learning processes, requiring a particular reflection regarding the pedagogical aspects in the Public Field. As for academic management, the Public Field has its own educational assessment in Enade, but still faces difficulties concerning the job market and professional insertion of graduates. In addition, the community’s attention is still necessary to defend the distinction between business and public administration. During the first quarter of 2020, for example, members of the CES proposed to combine the guidelines for the two fields. Institutionally, it is important to follow the influence of the political situation in Brazil in public adminis-

tration, as well as to tackle the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic for higher education in the country.

The undergraduate programs’ agenda of strengthening the Public Field mobilizes the entities representing the programs (Anepcp), students (the National Federation of Students of the Public Field – Fenecap), and alumni (such as *Pro-Pública Brasil*). It is an agenda that also gathers research and graduate programs, which have worked to consolidate the field of knowledge and to connect the Public Field within applied social sciences and human sciences. This work implies in emphasizing scientific issues regarding public interest and collective well-being that encompass government management, public policy analysis, and public governance between state and society. For Farah (2016), management, and public policy in Brazil have been moving academically, from “an unnamed practice” in the twentieth century to the term “Public Field” in the 2000s, combining the expansion of undergraduate programs with the increase in scientific production on approaches to the “public” study object.

Thus, this article sheds light on the period post-NGC for undergraduate programs in public administration. It focuses on pedagogical, academic, and institutional issues, describes the field’s recent history, and analyzes current challenges. The study compares national literature and official documents as a method to establish the Public Field’s milestones between 2015 and 2020 and unveil the difficulties yet to overcome. In addition, we prepared a list of 10 challenges for the field in Brazil, based on our history as actors participating in the field’s construction since the mid-2000s, and our professional experience as professors of undergraduate programs of public administration and public policy management in private and public (federal and state) higher education institutions in four of the five Brazilian regions (South, Southeast, Central-West, and Northeast). The challenges were then submitted in the form of a survey, from June to July 2020, to 365 members of the field – professors, researchers, students, and alumni – who were asked to organize them according to priority.

This study registers and problematizes the process of building the Public Field in Brazil. The article is organized into five sections, including this introduction. Section 2 provides an overview of the national literature on the Public Field and the international references on the teaching of public administration, public

management, and public policy. Section 3 presents a chronology of achievements and obstacles of the Public Field from 2015-2020, showing its institutionalization after the NCG. The following section highlights the ten challenges we developed, discussing them based on the inputs from the survey. The fifth and final section offers a synthesis of the article, exposing its contributions and limitations, presenting implications of the challenges for the Public Field and ideas for future research on this topic.

The national literature on the Public Field and the international references on the teaching of public administration and public management

The Public Field in Brazil has developed since the mid-2000s, gaining momentum after the disputes involving a movement of students and undergraduate programs, and the Federal Administration Council (CFA). The disputes resulted in the establishment of National Curriculum Guidelines (NCG) for undergraduate programs in public administration in 2014, which marks the expansion, diversification, and autonomy of undergraduate teaching in public administration, public management, and public policy as a cycle of academic education in “Public Administration” in the country. These events are present developments of a process started in 1952 with the implementation of a bachelor’s degree at the Brazilian School of Public Administration (Ebac), from Fundação Getulio Vargas (FGV), in Rio de Janeiro.

The book by Coelho (2019) entitled “*História do Ensino de Administração Pública no Brasil (1854-2006): antecedentes, ciclos e a emergência do Campo de Públicas*” (History of public administration education in Brazil (1854-2006): antecedents, cycles, and the emergence of the Public Field) offers a separation of the developments of the undergraduate teaching of public administration in Brazil into periods. Between 1966 and 2005, public administration was subordinated to what was called the “minimum curriculum of administration.” The curriculum was grounded on a ‘business school’ logic, which distorted the identity of public administration since it resembled practices of private management. In addition,

the bachelor's degree in public administration was juxtaposed with undergraduate programs in business administration. In the context of graduate programs, Fischer's doctoral dissertation (1984) showed how public administration programs (or lines of research) in Brazil lost space in the face of the advances of technical rationality, the growth of the state based on indirect administration, and the phenomenon called “economic miracle” during the military period, which prioritized the academic training of business managers.

The end of the 1990s to the beginning of the 2000s witnessed the binomial democratization-decentralization and the modernization of the government due to a) the adoption of principles from the new public management approach, b) the establishment of public policy systems, and c) the growth in the number of private organizations operating in matters of public interest. During those years, the academic education in public administration – which was restricted to a few undergraduate programs such as the one at Fundação Getulio Vargas in São Paulo (Santos; Teixeira, 2019) – gradually reappeared in universities and colleges but with multidisciplinary curriculum guidelines and a technopolitical approach.

This stage of (re)construction of undergraduate education in Public Administration, teaching elements beyond those covered in business administration programs and including issues from Political Science, is the backdrop for the emergence of the movement originating the Brazilian “Campo de Públicas” or “Public Field.” The movement disregarded the terms “Administration,” “Management,” and “Politics” and widely agreed on using “Públicas” (Public) for an identity in academic education. As for the period when this movement emerged, Pires et al. (2014) situate it between 2002 and 2014, a 12-years period in which professors and students coordinated in networks to advocate the independence of undergraduate programs in the Public Field from the scope of the business administration in the national higher education system. The authors separate this period into four moments (Table 1).

Table 1 Periods of the Movement for the Public Field in Brazil (2002-2017)

2002-2006	Pre-conditions for acknowledging a collective identity in undergraduate programs
<p>During this period, the coordinators of the undergraduate programs at FGV-SP, Unesp, and Fundação João Pinheiro (FJP) – main Brazilian institutions teaching these programs in the 1990s – struggled to maintain the name “public administration” as one of the options in the NCG for undergraduate programs in administration. This happened because, before the NCG, the “Minimum Curriculum” created in 1993 allowed institutions to offer specialized undergraduate programs, and they used this mechanism to offer, within the curriculum for administration, specialized undergraduate programs in public administration. In 2005, the NCG replaced the Minimum Curriculum, and the institutions had difficulties in offering such specialized education while following the new guidelines. At the same time, other undergraduate programs were launched, some with innovative courses, such as the Undergraduate Program in Public Administration of the Santa Catarina State University (Udesc Esag) (Salm et al., 2011), and programs using terms different from ‘public administration,’ such as the Undergraduate Program in Public Policies Management of the University of São Paulo (USP), in 2005. It is noteworthy that since 2002, the Student Governments of the Undergraduate Programs in Public Administration of FGV-SP, Unesp, and Fundação João Pinheiro have organized an annual National Meeting of Students of Public Administration (Eneap), separated from the National Meeting of Students of Administration (Enead).</p>	
2007-2009	The birth of the Public Field movement
<p>In 2007, during the 11th edition of the Eneap held in Florianópolis and hosted by students of the Undergraduate Program in Public Administration of the Santa Catarina State University the students of the field left the representation of the National Federation of Business Students (Fenead) and launched the National Federation of Public Administration Students (Feneap). During the event, the Forum of Coordinators of Undergraduate Programs of Public Administration and Public Management was also launched. The Forums continued in the subsequent national meetings, in the 2008 Eneap (held in Ouro Preto, State of Minas Gerais, organized by FJP students), and in the 2009 Eneap (held in Águas de Lindóia, State of São Paulo, organized by USP students). These events fostered the creation of a movement, integrating coordinators, professors, and students from different undergraduate programs related to what would be coined the “Public Field.”</p>	
2010-2013	The growth of the Public Field movement and the development of the NCG

During the public hearing conducted at the CNE to elaborate the NCG for undergraduate programs in public administration, counting on the participation of 14 program coordinators, the movement was named “Campo de Públicas” (Public Field). The appeal filed by the CFA (together with the National Association of Undergraduate Programs in Administration – Angrad) opposing to the NCG for programs in public administration triggered a set of measures that helped to strengthen the movement, such as intense communication through email lists, blogs, social media; and more meetings and forums gathering professors, program coordinators. The field came up with documents such as the 2010 Charter of Balneário Camboriú and the 2013 Charter of Brasília, advocating an independent field of knowledge and a specific NCG. Symbolically, during the XII Eneap, held in 2013 in Caeté (State of Minas Gerais) and hosted by FJP and UFMG students, the name of the event was changed to National Meeting of Students of the Public Field (Enecap). On October 1, 2013, the CNE plenary voted against the CFA’s appeal and, therefore, approved the NCG for undergraduate programs in public administration. The coordination among professors and students of the Public Field movement reached the purpose of obtaining, officially, the recognition of their identity as undergraduate programs of public administration, public management, and public policy.

2014

The recognition of the Public Field by the Ministry of Education through the NCG

The NCG was established in January 2014, which was the green light to start the dialogue of an interinstitutional working group of program coordinators with the Ministry of Education, discussing the processes of educational evaluation and regulation. These conversations led to the institutionalization of the Public Field as of 2015.

Source: elaborated by the authors, based on Pires et al (2014).

The NCG for public administration marked the beginning of the Public Field’s institutionalization, a process with several milestones in the period from 2015-2020, which we will describe below. Before that, it is important to observe how the term – and the movement – “*Campo de Públicas*” (Public Field) became visible through the academic production in the national literature, with the publication of several articles and books during the period.

In the 2015-2017 triennium, there was an increase in the number of articles discussing the identity of the Public Field in undergraduate education. The articles by Filgueiras and Lobato (2015), Tinoco (2016), and Gonçalves and Oliveira (2016)

share the view on the heterogeneity of the undergraduate programs in the Public Field. The authors point out that the Public Field movement produces dialectically, connections, and tensions. On the one hand, the field is united around values such as republicanism and democracy, and challenge the prevalence of business administration in the history of administration teaching in Brazil. On the other hand, it faces conflicts of connection/complementarity in academic education, having to balance political-social and administrative-managerial dimensions with theoretical-scientific and technical-professional guidelines. The work by Vendramini and Almeida (2017) “*Pioneirismo, Renovação e Desafios: experiências do Campo de Públicas no Brasil*” (Pioneering, renewal, and challenges: experiences of the Public Field in Brazil) highlights the plurality of the Public Field throughout history, its epistemological foundations, and the pedagogical organization of 18 bachelor and technological degrees in public administration, public management, public policy management, and public policy.

Over the last three years (2018-2020), in addition to identity in undergraduate education, Public Field researchers have discussed the formation of a multidisciplinary scientific community that has historically come from public administration and public policy. In the special edition of the journal *NAU Social on the Public Field*, published in 2018 and focused on the developments of the resulting from the II National Meeting of Teaching and Research in the Public Field (Enepcp) held in Brasilia in 2017, Farah (2018) states:

A reconfiguration of identity accompanied the recent (re)institutionalization of the public administration. Today, it is not about public administration as it first emerged in the 1930s. It is not about that public administration that began to emerge as ‘public policy analysis’ in the 1960s and 1970s, under the American influence. **It is also not about the public policy studies created under the leadership of political scientists in the 1980s. It is something new and plural, called “*Campo de Públicas*” [Public Field] by the actors themselves - professors, coordinators, and program coordinators, students.**” (Farah, 2018, p. 88, our translation, emphasis added).

Corroborating the author’s argument, Robiatti (2019), in a book chapter on the growth of public policies as a subject in post-democratization Brazil, considers that state reform and the process of social participation contributed to the Public Policy Field’s independence in Brazilian academia 50 years after its emergence in the late 1960s.

These studies discuss, directly or indirectly, the binomial ‘identity-multidisciplinarity’ regarding the notion of “public” as an object of teaching and research in the Public Field in Brazil. When establishing a parallel with other countries, Professor Peter Spink considers that the Brazilian Public Field deals with similar issues as the field of public affairs, i.e., academic training and research on topics such as common goods, the public sphere, and collective action.

In this sense, the Public Field has international counterparts. It is not an autochthonous phenomenon, even though its history shows no doubt of its national roots and development. In the words of Spink (2020) in the recently published collection “*Contribuições do Campo de Públicas: um olhar sobre democracia no século XXI e os desafios para gestão pública*” (Contributions from the Public Field: a look at democracy in the twenty-first century and the challenges for public management):

The expression “public field” evokes the same political and emotional sense as the English expression “public affairs.” I am aware this is not a literal translation, and my experience more or less bilingual in our field has already taught me that translation – even when the word has a similar root – is a literary art and not a science. [...] But in what emotional sense? Allow me an empirical answer. [...] We are here racking our brains about ‘democracy in the twenty-first century and the challenges for public management,’ because we think that the obligation to care for this small planet in the solar system cannot be left in the hands of the businesses ideas, principles, and theories of administrative coexistence. We advocate a very recent idea in human history – the idea that public means “the public” and not someone who speaks for the public. At the same time, we use the plural: “*públicas*” [referring to *Campo de Públicas*]. We know that the relationships between the different institutional parts of this hybrid arena are not always harmonious (and that is a good thing). So, I love the idea of the ‘*Campo de Públicas*.’ It evokes different images of movements, different academic and professional guidelines. It evokes the struggles one goes through to be able to say: this is a public matter. (Spink, 2020, afterword, our translation, emphasis added).

Taking advantage of this connection with the international context, it is worth briefly mentioning some works on teaching public administration, public management, and public policy, published in international journals. In the article “Teaching public administration: key themes 1996-2016,” published in 2018 in the journal *Teaching Public Administration (TPA)* – a Sage journal published since 1977 – Professor John Fenwick analyzes the studies published in TPA since the mid-1990s, showing the status of the scientific production on teaching and learning in management and

public policies. The author discusses the journal’s contributions as a forum for debate on a range of issues related to the topic of academic education and training and development (T&D) for the public sector. The author highlights five of the key themes published in the journal:

- The pedagogy and teaching methods of undergraduate and graduate programs;
- Capacity building for public service and government school systems;
- The organization of public administration and the redefinition of bureaucracy competences;
- The ethical perspective in the training of politicians and public managers and officials; and
- Discussions about the concept of public management from the resignification of the term “public” due to the imbrications among the state, the market, and civil society in the governance environment.

Our analysis of the period revealed that the key themes Professor Fenwick identified were used as tracks in international congresses on Public Administration Education – such as the conferences held by the American Society for Public Administration (Aspa). We also verified that The Journal of Public Affairs Education (JPAAE), published by the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (Naspa) in the United States presented articles addressing the same themes as observed by Professor Fenwick in the TPA, adding the topic ‘accreditation,’ which is traditional in North American higher education in several areas of knowledge.

In addition, the studies published in the main Public Administration Education journals, which have been historically concentrated on analyses of management education and public policies in North America and Western Europe, became more diverse in the period from 2011-2020. It was possible to find case studies of experiences in countries in Asia, Central/Eastern Europe, Australia, and Latin America. We observed that the first issues of the journals TPA and JPAAE in 2020 featured, respectively, a special issue on teaching public policy in Australia and an article on public administration education in the Philippines. Searching the publications about Brazil in the journal TPA in the last five years, we found that the Brazilian Public Field

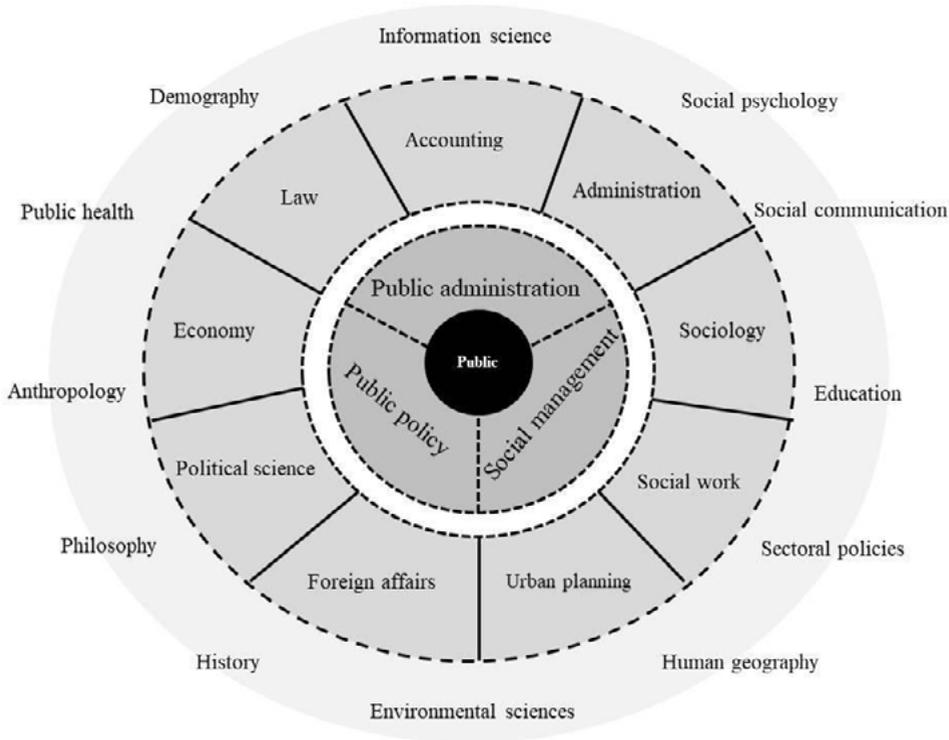
appeared in two articles, “A new agenda for teaching public administration and public policy in Brazil: institutional opportunities and educational reasons,” by Gomes, Almeida, and Lucio (2015), and “The Public Field in Brazil: toward a multidisciplinary educational approach for the professional with multiple roles,” written by Lucio, Almeida, and Silveira (2017).

Several undergraduate and graduate programs considered part of the Public Field in Brazil are aligned, in terms of names and approaches adopted, with the field of knowledge and public ethos of what is called internationally public affairs. The scenario in Brazil, as observed in the US and the UK, witnesses a gradual influx of researchers from different areas of knowledge such as administration, anthropology, political science, information science, environmental sciences, social communication, accounting, demography, law, economics, education, philosophy, human geography, history, urban and regional planning, social psychology, international relations, collective health, social work, and sociology. These areas integrate the collective (such as a sense of belonging) and multidisciplinary (with the contribution of different areas of knowledge of the Human Sciences and Applied Social Sciences) identity of teaching and research around the “public” locus and based on the subfields of public administration, public policy, and social management. Figure 1 outlines the Public Field as an amplified conception of the visual representation portrayed by Pires et al. (2014) and expressed in the 2010 Charter of Balneário Camboriu.

The center of Figure 1 presents the ‘public’ locus and the subfields of public administration (Fadul et al., 2014), public policy (Marques and Faria, 2013), and social management (Menon and Coelho, 2019) that make up the Public Field in Brazil. Around this core, there are two layers of disciplinary interfaces. The first, closer and, therefore, with stronger links, shows areas of knowledge that have shaped the paradigms of the subfields public administration, public management, and public policy in the country, such as administration, political science, law, and economics (Keinert, 1994). Nowadays, an indication of the links of the academic community of the Public Field with these subjects in the first layer is the predominant offer of Master and Ph.D. degrees in public administration, public management, and public policy by graduate programs in the following areas of evaluation, as designated by the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Capes): public and business administration, accounting and tourism; political science and foreign

affairs; and urban and regional planning and demography, as well as some graduate programs in economics, interdisciplinary studies, social work, and sociology.

Figure 1 Public Field in Brazil: Public locus, sub-fields, and interfaces with disciplines



Source: elaborated by the authors.

In the second layer, more distant, with weaker (less frequent) interactions, there is a list of subjects that are cross-cutting the Public Field through the sharing of topics of study, and which also circumscribe the origin of part of the faculty of undergraduate programs in terms of academic training. It is a more open and inclusive image of the Public Field, consistent with its multidisciplinary nature and the expansion of the scientific and practice community identified as part of the Public Field or the community that recognizes itself within the scope of the institutionalization process under development after the NCG.

The Recent History of the Public Field (2015-2020)

The creation of the Public Administration NCG in 2014 is a landmark of the Public Field that characterizes its institutionalization in undergraduate education, without, however, losing its development that brought diverse actors together in a network. As a result of the NCG, a Technical Committee was created (Ordinance 503, Inep, published on October 13, 2014) to monitor on-site the undergraduate programs of the Public Field. The Technical Committee was a demand from a group of coordinators and professors who met with Inep’s Higher Education Evaluation Board (Daes) in March 2014. The group expressed concerns with the criteria adopted to evaluate the programs and with the content of the National Student Performance Exam (Enade) that would be applied to undergraduate students in the Public Field for the first time that year.

The Technical Committee was formed by four members of Daes/Inep and twelve professors from the Public Field¹. The field’s representatives were chosen during the XIII FP3CP, which took place on the campus of the Federal University of Paraná (UFPR), in Matinhos, on May 8 and 9, 2014. The committee held four one-day work meetings in September, October, and November 2014 and February 2015. The minutes of these meetings were prepared and discussed among the members of the committee, resulting in a final document with guidelines to carry out the on-site assessment of undergraduate programs in the Public Field, including the instruction to train professors of the field to conduct such assessments. The document was released in May 2016 and publicized for a few months on Inep’s website until the end of 2016. However, with the change of the presidency of Inep after Michael Temer

1 The Technical Committee was formed with representatives of higher education institutions: Augusto de Oliveira Tavares, from the Federal University of Cariri (UFC); Carlos Raul Etulain, from the State University of Campinas (Unicamp); Fernando Abrúcio, from Fundação Getúlio Vargas in São Paulo (FGV-SP); Jaime Cruzatti, University of São Paulo (USP); Júlio Cesar Andrade de Abreu, Fluminense Federal University (UFF); Lindijane de Souza Bento Almeida, Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN); Luciana Leite Lima, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS); Maria Isabel Rodrigues, from the School of Government of the Fundação João Pinheiro (EG-FJP); Patrícia Vendramini, from the Santa Catarina State University (Udesc); Rodrigo Rossi Horochovski, from the Federal University of Paraná (UFPR); Sérgio Azevedo Fonseca, from the São Paulo State University (Unesp); and Suylan de Almeida Midlej e Silva, from the University of Brasília (UnB). The committee also counted on representatives from the Higher Education Evaluation Board of Inep: Claudia Maffini Griboski, Raphael Tiago Lenzi, Sueli Macedo Silveira, and Suzana Scherz Funghetto.

temporarily took office as President of Brazil (due to the impeachment of President Rousseff), this process was stopped. In 2017, Inep presented another instrument designed to assess undergraduate programs in all areas of knowledge, both regular and distance learning programs, disregarding the guidelines the technical committee had prepared for the programs in the Public Field.²

Although the Technical Committee was created to deal exclusively with the on-site assessment, the Enade was always a topic of discussion. In the last meeting of the committee, in February 2015, the coordinator of the panel of evaluators working in Enade was present. The coordinator confirmed that the exam for students of programs offering bachelor and technological degrees in the Public Field was scheduled to happen in November 2015. According to the coordinator, the content would follow the NCG. Therefore, the members of the committee used part of that meeting to discuss – with the person in charge at the time – criteria to form the panel of evaluators (BASIS) responsible for preparing the exams applied to students in the Public Field. The committee sent two requests to Inep: (a) the selection of evaluators should consider the applicants’ teaching experience, not only their academic training in public administration; and (b) the inclusion of “Public Field” as an item for applicants to select when completing the registration form. Concerning undergraduate programs’ on-site assessment, which was the main objective of the technical committee, we were unable to ascertain whether the guidelines created were followed as the process in Inep was partially discontinued. As for the inputs of the committee in Enade, the panel of evaluators selected by Inep met the criteria the technical committee proposed only for the exam held in 2018. For the 2015 edition of the exam, Inep claimed it did not have time to make the operational adjustments between the date of recommendation and the application of the exam in November of that year.

In March 2015, in order to move forward with the connections between the Public Field and the different official teaching and research agencies, as well as to organize undergraduate programs around a teaching, research, and extension agenda based on the implementation of the NCG, the actors of the field founded, during the 15th FP3CP held at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN), the

2 Inep’s instrument to evaluate undergraduate programs has been operational since 2017. It is available at: <http://portal.inep.gov.br/web/guest/instrumentos>.

National Association of Teaching and Research in the Public Field (Anepcp), with the mission of coordinating “the generation, expansion, deepening, and dissemination of knowledge specific to the Public Field [...] to contribute to the field’s consolidation and materialization as a scientific community.”³ In the second half of 2015, Anepcp created its scientific event: the National Meeting of Teaching and Research in the Public Field (Enepcp). Its first edition was in Brasília at the campus of the University of Brasília (UnB) and the School of Business Administration (Esaf), between November 30 and December 3, 2015.

Therefore, the recent history of the Public Field after the establishment of the NSG begins in 2015. In the subsequent period, the institutionalization process of the Public Field continued with some milestones year by year, summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 Milestones of the Institutionalization of the Public Field after the NCG

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Foundation of the National Association of Teaching and Research of the Public Field (Anepcp), in March (Natal / RN);• First application of Enade specific for public administration (with different tests for bachelor and technological degrees), in November. 113 undergraduate programs in the Public Field participated, 50 programs granting bachelor degrees and 63 granting technological degrees;
2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First National Meeting of Teaching and Research in the Public Field (Enepcp), in December (Brasília / DF), at the UnB and Esaf facilities;• In addition to the traditional Enecap, the organization students’ meetings started. There were regional (Erecaps Sul and Nordeste) and state meetings (Epecap/SP, Em Público/MG, and Efecap/RJ). In addition, the students created the Revista dos Estudantes de Públicas (REP) (Journal of Students of the Public Field) and the collective “Oxente.”

3 Excerpt of the text retrieved from the Anepcp website: <https://anepcp.org.br/acp/sobre>

2016

- Foundation of Pro *Pública Brasil* – Brazilian Association of Professionals and Alumni of Academic Programs in the Public Field. The foundation occurred during Enecap, held in August (Natal/RN); it was the first Enecap held in the Northeast region, organized by the Undergraduate Program in Public Policy Management of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN);
- Technical Note 136/2016 from the Ministry of Education’s Secretariat for Regulation of Higher Education (SERES), providing that the NCG for undergraduate programs in public administration apply to all undergraduate programs of the Public Field (public administration, public policy, public management, public policies management, social management, and others – such as the bachelor’s degree in sciences of the state);
- Inclusion of the term “public administration” in the evaluation area 27 of Capes, based on the Ordinance 234/2016. The evaluation area 27 changes its name to “public and business administration, accounting, and tourism.” This was a demand from the academic community of public administration to obtain recognition for graduate programs. The measure was carried out under the coordination of the Brazilian Society of Public Administration (Sbap) with the officials responsible for the area in Capes for the triennium 2014-2016.

2017

- Feneap’s name changed to Fenecap – National Federation of Students of Programs in the Public Field – during the celebration of Feneap’s 10th anniversary;
- Publication of the collection “Campo de Públicas em Ação” (Public Field in action), organized by professors Luciana Lima (UFRGS) and Maria Isabel Rodrigues (FJP). This was the first book with “*Campo de Públicas*” in the title and counted on the participation of professors and researchers from several undergraduate programs;
- Publication of CFA Normative Resolutions, 507 and 505 of 2017, which deal with the professional registration of professionals who obtained a degree from programs related to public administration, recognizing, respectively, the bachelor’s degree in public management and public policy management, and the technological degree in public management. However, the resolutions did not consider the bachelor’s degree in public policy and sciences of the state;
- II National Meeting of Teaching and Research in the Public Field (Enepcp), in December (Brasília/DF), at Fiocruz headquarters. The event was held together with the Sbap’s III Forum of Graduate Programs in Public Administration and Public Management.

2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Second edition of the Enade for public administration students, with different tests for bachelor and technological degrees. A total of 141 undergraduate programs in the Public Field participated in the exam, 61 granting bachelor and 80 technological degrees;• End of the Support Program for the Restructuring and Expansion Plans of Federal Universities (Reuni), impacting the conditions of many undergraduate programs in the Public Field to offer their services – or to consolidate the implementation of the programs themselves. Added to this is the panorama of the political crisis of the Brazilian State and its effects on public higher education in general and in the Public Field in particular, as demonstrated by Etulain et al. (2018).
2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Five years of the NCG for undergraduate programs in public administration, completed in January.• III Enepcp, in August (Natal/RN), returning to the city where Anepcp was founded. The event was a milestone both quantitatively and qualitatively for the Public Field, with 721 participants and held the 1st Exhibition of Technological Development and Innovative Extension. Several works presented in the sessions were published as articles in journals and book chapters.
2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The CFA appealed to the CNE with the objective of unifying the NCG of business and public administration, during the process of updating NCG in the first quarter of the year;• Anepcp's opinion opposing such unification was expressed in a manifesto with 10 signatory entities, advocating the maintenance of the NCG for undergraduate programs in public administration. As a result, the NCG was preserved, serving the interests of the actors that signed the manifesto: scientific associations (ABCP, Anpad, Anpocs, Anpur, RGS, and Sbp) and student and alumni organizations (Fenecap, Oxente, and Pro Pública Brasil). The coordination expressed the pluri-institutionality of the Public Field in the country.

Source: elaborated by the authors.

In this chronology of events between 2015 and 2020, many achievements and some obstacles in the process of institutionalization of the Public Field are noticeable. The establishment of the NCG for undergraduate programs in public administration and the creation of Enade, formed an “ID card.” The formalization of the Public Field materialized with the foundation of Anepcp and the congregation of researchers in Enepcp. Students of undergraduate programs in public adminis-

tration, public management, public policy management, and social management who obtained their degrees during the 2010s and who experienced the movement to create the public field, launched the *Pro Pública Brasil*. Students who are still pursuing their degrees have expanded the student’s movement by hosting regional events, structuring collectives such as “Oxente,” and initiatives such as the *Fundo Campo de Públicas* of FJP (Public Field Fund).

Among the obstacles during this period are a) issues with Ende, b) discontinuity of Reuni in undergraduate programs offered by federal higher education institutions (HEIs), and c) the imbroglio of professional registration with the CFA, which involved the non-recognition of the degrees obtained in programs related to the Public Field in selection processes for public positions.

As for Enade applied specifically to public administration students, the first edition (2015) did not reflect the reality of the undergraduate programs of the field. Despite the efforts of the technical committee to ensure a plural panel of evaluators, the professionals that INEP selected were trained with a focus on management and public organizations. Therefore, the content requested from students in the exam was far from the content of the programs in the Public Field, failing to address issues related to public policies and the state-society relationship. In the 2018 edition, this flaw was corrected by ordinance 151, of March 5, 2018, from Inep; so much so that the two undergraduate programs that obtained grade 5 (five) were from programs diametrically opposed, from public administration and public policy programs. However, the average performance of students from all undergraduate programs was lower, especially that of distance learning undergraduate programs offered by Capes’ National Public Administration Training Program (PNAP) through the *Universidade Aberta do Brasil (UAB)* – which counts on teaching centers in federal universities. This result caught the national press attention, generating news articles such as the one published by *Jornal O Globo* on October 4, 2019, entitled: “Enade: undergraduate programs in the area of public administration had the worst result among those analyzed in 2018”.⁴ In addition, it is worth noting that some traditional undergraduate programs in the Public Field refused to participate in Enade, such as the Public Policies Management Undergraduate

4 The news article is available at: <https://oglobo.globo.com/sociedade/enade-cursos-de-graduacao-na-area-de-administracao-publica-tiveram-pior-resultado-entre-os-analisados-em-2018-23994916>

Program of USP and the Public Policy Undergraduate Program of URGs, which influence the overall low performance.

As for the case of the government’s program “Reuni,” the initiative was crucial for the creation of a significant portion of the new undergraduate programs in the Public Field after the mid-2000s, contributing to the interiorization of the offer of higher education in Brazil. From the 61 programs offering a bachelor’s degree and that completed Enade 2018, 48 were offered by federal HEIs, ten by state HEIs and three by private HEIs. With the end of Reuni, the country’s fiscal crisis, and the policy of devaluing the public higher education put forward by President Bolsonaro’s administration, several bachelor degrees and some technological degrees that have emerged in recent years may face obstacles in completing their implementation process.

Regarding the imbroglio of professional registration with the CFA, there are two problems. The first is the fact that the CFA does not recognize the undergraduate programs in public policy and sciences of the state, and being registered with the CFA is a requirement in many selection processes – in different levels of government – for positions in the public service or stated-owned enterprises. The second is the reaction of the Public Field, particularly the reaction of representative entities such as Anepcp, Pro Pública Brasil, and Fenecap) to PLS nº 439/2015 that CFA advocates. The Brazilian Senate Bill “establishes that positions and functions with attributions aimed at the fields of administration, in private, non-governmental, and public organizations, can only be provided by technologists and regular professional administrators in accordance with the law, who are obliged to prove, annually, before the employing organization, the regularity with the Regional Administration Council (CRA).”⁵ For the past five years, Public Field actors have participated in public hearings and meetings with senators, federal deputies, and commissions in the National Congress to prevent the approval of this ‘corporatist’ bill; the matter is currently in the Senate’s Committee on Regional Development and Tourism.

Finally, we highlight the appeal of the CFA to CNE in the first quarter of 2020, mentioned in Table 2, which resumed the dispute over the existence of different NCG for undergraduate programs in Public and Business Administration – CFA wan-

5 The Brazilian Senate Bill (PLS) is available at: <https://www25.senado.leg.br/web/atividade/materias/-/materia/122183>

ts to unify the NCG. Although the CFA coordination with members of the CES managed to take the issue to the agenda, the appeal did not prosper in the face of the collective and forceful reaction of the Public Field. The event, however, is a warning to remind the academic community of public administration, public management, and public policy to be in constant surveillance to guarantee the NCG is being followed.

Immanent to these achievements and obstacles in the recent history of the Public Field are challenges, which are exposed and analyzed in the next section.

Current Challenges in the Public Field

This section, the core of this article, unveils ten current challenges of the Public Field and analyzes how actors in the Public Field – professors, researchers, students, and alumni – prioritize them. The results of this endeavor are presented here in four subsections.

THE IDENTIFICATION OF CHALLENGES AND LISTENING TO MEMBERS OF THE FIELD

To identify the current challenges of the Public Field in the country, the literature and documents in sections 2 and 3 were analyzed based on our experience as professors and researchers related to undergraduate and graduate programs in the Public Field, and as managers of some of the institutions that have contributed to create and consolidate the Public Field (Anepcp, Sbp, RGS, and Anpad). Table 3 lists the ten challenges presented to the sample during the survey.

Table 3 Current challenges in the Public Field

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Implementation (or adaptation) of the pedagogical projects of undergraduate programs based on the NCG established in 2014. |
| 2 | Improvement of the evaluation process of undergraduate programs in the Public Field within the National Higher Education Evaluation System (SINAES/Enade). |

3	Continuity of the development process (quantitative and qualitative) of undergraduate programs, considering the movement of expansion and strengthening of the Public Field in the last 10 years.
4	Perfecting curriculum guidelines, teaching-learning processes, and teaching activities within undergraduate programs
5	Consolidation of the NCG approved in 2013 by the National Education Council and established in 2014 by the Ministry of Education
6	Increasing the systemic performance of undergraduate programs in favor of an interdisciplinary academic education (in addition to a multidisciplinary arrangement), based on the link between teaching, research, and extension and on the continuous dialogue between students, professors, graduates, partners, and potential employers
7	Following Alumni, the relationship with the public sector, and alignment of undergraduate education with the demands of the world of work
8	Ongoing training for professors for effective and responsive performance in undergraduate programs
9	Social and job market valorization for actors qualified in the Public Field and regulation of the profession.
10	Extend the identity of being part of the Public Field to actors in graduate programs, with the creation of an evaluation area in Capes.

Source: elaborated by the authors.

These challenges were used in the survey (with estimated response time of 3 minutes), which was posted on social media and emailed to those working in the Public Field, between June 29 and July 6, 2020. After the questions designed to characterize the sample, the respondents had to put in order of importance (considering 1 as highest priority) a list of 10 challenges, designated in the survey “10 challenges for the consolidation of the Public Field in Brazil as an area of teaching and research.” The survey contained a final open-ended question: “Please state any other challenges that you consider fundamental for the consolidation of the Public

Field in Brazil in the coming years.” In total, 365 responses were received; all of them considered valid.

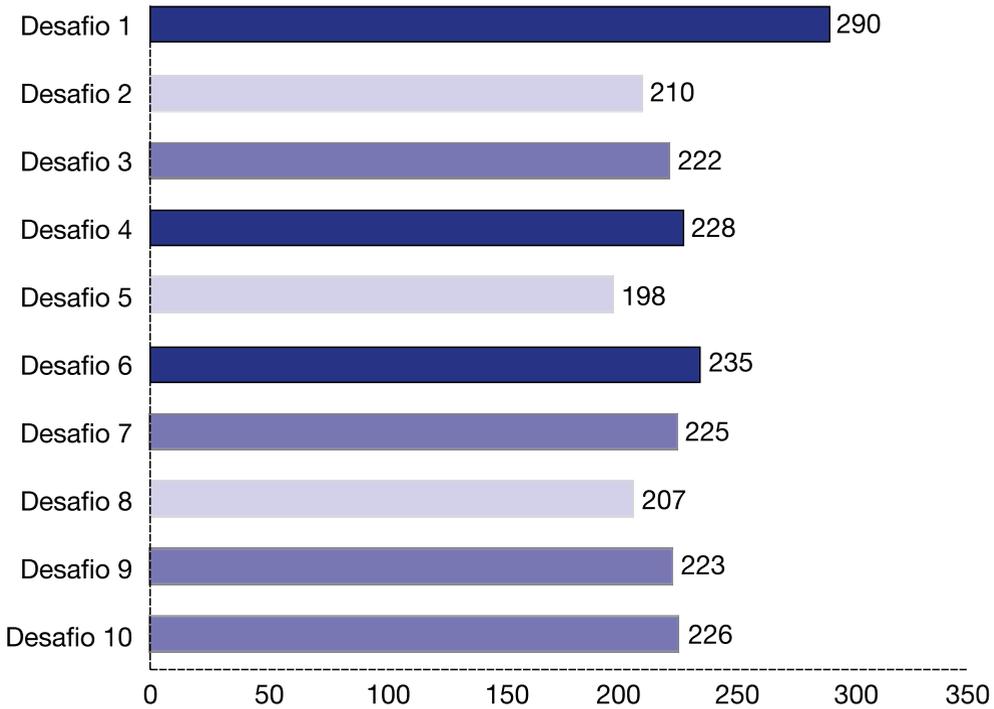
Of the 365 respondents, 138 were professors, 114 researchers, 145 students, and 81 alumni. The Brazilian states where the respondents’ higher education institution (where they study, work, or had a connection) is located were: SP (67), MG (55), RJ (54), RN (51), SC (31), DF (24), RS (23), PR (18) and CE (14). Of the sample, 76% were connected with programs located in capital cities and 24% from rural cities, and 95% from programs offered predominantly in face-to-face and 5% from predominantly distance taught programs.

The challenge that obtained the highest number (158 responses) of highest priority was Challenge 6 “Increasing the systemic performance of undergraduate programs,” followed by Challenge 9, which deals with professional and work enhancement (148 responses), and Challenge 4, which mentions perfecting curriculum guidelines, teaching-learning processes, and teaching activities (137 responses).

For a more comprehensive analysis, however, we considered the sum of the challenges classified as one of the three highest priorities. Thus, the challenges indicated among the three highest priorities by most respondents were: Challenge 1, which addresses the implementation of pedagogical projects based on the NCG (290 mentions among the three highest priorities); Challenge 6, on systemic performance (235 mentions among the three highest priorities); and Challenge 4, which mentions perfecting curriculum guidelines, teaching-learning processes, and teaching activities (228 responses among the three highest priorities). Chart 1 shows the result, indicating the challenges when nominated as one of the three highest priorities.

In general, except for the extremes – challenge 1 and challenge 5 –, the chart shows a balance among the other challenges. Subsections 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4 contextualize, respectively, each of the blocks of three challenges, formed by the number of mentions - from highest to lowest (Table 1).

Chart 1 Current challenges in the Public Field: Number of times mentioned as one of the top three priorities



Source: Elaborated by the authors based on research data.

THE THREE HIGHEST PRIORITY CHALLENGES

Challenge 1: Implementation (or adaptation) of the pedagogical projects of undergraduate programs based on the NCG established in 2014

As mentioned above and shown in Chart 1, this challenge was considered one of the three priorities by 290 respondents. This is certainly due to its centrality after the establishment of the NCG, given that Article 12 determines that higher education institutions offering bachelor degrees in the Public Field must, obligatorily, carry out the undergraduate program approved within a maximum period of two years.

For the sake of a sense of belonging, there is an urgent need to rename the NCG from “*Administração Pública*” (Public Administration), when politically and institutionally viable, to “*Campo de Públicas*” (Public Field), or another term that reflects

the idea of public affairs and the multidisciplinary nature of this area of teaching and research, where undergraduate programs cross-cut several areas of knowledge (Figure 1). This occurred in the area of Social Communication and its specializations such as Journalism, Advertising, and Public Relations – even though the Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education (LDB) establishes (Art. 9th § 2nd) that the NCG must be formulated for the programs and not for areas or fields of knowledge.

In the Public Field, the fact that the NCG refers to “undergraduate programs in public administration” still causes resistance to the norms (and Enade) among some students and professors, even though Inep reaffirmed its technical application to all undergraduate programs. As the plurality of names and approaches (public administration, public management, public policy, public policies management, social management, and sciences of state) is intrinsically the set of ideas around “public” “field,” one of the respondents pointed out – in the survey’s open question – the importance of reducing the primacy of the public administration subfield. In the same direction, another respondent asserts:

It is essential to recognize the field’s internal diversity, which is part of the identity connecting the programs, in addition to the appreciation of multi and interdisciplinarity that is characteristic of pedagogical projects. Some programs may not consider themselves represented in the NCG because the guidelines may seem too close to ‘administration.’ We need to move forward in discussing the field’s diversity.

From another perspective, one respondent emphasized the challenge of building an interdisciplinary arrangement of the Public Field, escaping the “shadows” of the founding subjects:

One element that I consider fundamental involves the **identity** of the field and, beyond that, the programs themselves. I remember something I heard in one of the meetings of the Public Field: “unity in diversity,” considering the plurality of programs, training of researchers, multidisciplinary, etc. In my opinion, the struggle that united us in April 2010, at the NCG’s “kickoff” during the public hearing in Brasilia at CNE/CSE, is lost. There is still some mobilization, especially when we have a corporatist movement from CFA/CRA, but we are not moving forward. Anepcp was a great achievement, but at certain times, due to the discussions and developments that I follow, I have the perception that we took the programs in public administration and the Public Field from the “shadow” of the business administration and allocated it under the “shadow” of the political science/sociology. In fact, it seems that this is the eternal “dilemma” for constructing the identity

of the field [the old political-administration dichotomy]. It is an area that is always (apparently) protected (either by the business bias of the Administration or by the more fluid bias of political science/sociology). This is the great challenge in my viewpoint. Without an identity, we follow “aimlessly” to the flavors of groups/areas of knowledge, which claim us for themselves.

The nature and multiplicity of the Public Field are alluded to, similarly, in challenge 6.

Challenge 6 – Increasing the systemic performance of undergraduate programs in favor of an interdisciplinary academic education (in addition to a multidisciplinary arrangement), based on the link between teaching, research, and extension and on the continuous dialogue between students, professors, graduates, partners, and potential employers

Challenge 6 was considered by 235 respondents to be one of the three highest priority challenges to the Public Field. In institutional and organizational terms, the Public Field has been gaining material density and political strength, as described in sections 2 and 3. The link between professors, students, and alumni with agencies of the public administration, civil society organizations, and companies has contributed to its recognition. However, it is crucial to move forward.

The Public Field is instigated to innovate in teaching (interdisciplinarity, flexibility, innovative training practices), in research and in assisting processes to find the solution of national, regional, and local problems, coordinating efforts with graduate programs. This requires dialogue among academia, governments, and society with a view to synergy, in actions that qualify training activities and the provision of public policies and services.

The respondents emphasized: a) the relevance of “research focused on common problems identified in public administration, especially those in the institutions’ internal and sectoral spheres”; b) the “development of applied research”; c) the “more active role of the academia in the research and development of public policies”; d) the “closer relationship between the public policy programs and the public authorities, as a possibility to live the public policy implementation and management processes in practice”; and e) “encouraging the involvement of students in research and extension activities that combine teaching with practices in the public service.”

According to one respondent:

Students' political engagement based on social agendas is something very important. I think the program should provide the undergraduate student with practical classes with a social purpose, primarily in deprived areas of the city. This would help them to understand the difficulties they will face within the public sector, as well as present the program to the general public, showing a competent, responsible, and innovative professional who will work to improve society.

Another respondent points out that the biggest challenge of the Public Field is to demonstrate its contribution to improving the quality of services and public policies:

The Public Field, as a science, has a complex, but well-known battlefield. The Public Field as a tool for promoting the efficient public sector, with quality public services, rational, and with ethics supported by republicanism still has a very little explored battlefield. Therefore, in my view, the biggest challenge is to understand how, and where, the Public Field can **effectively** contribute to improving the quality of services and public policies. What skills and knowledge are effectively needed in the public sector's daily life to promote a radical transformation in the quality of public administration? This is the biggest challenge.

One respondent highlights the need to know the reality and everyday processes of public management, especially in the municipalities, contributing to changes “inside” bureaucracy and management, avoiding idealized visions:

Leaving the [strictly] ideological field that delays and limits the debate of the Public Field and entering into a discussion based on reality, especially in Brazilian municipalities. [...] If the Public Field does not occupy this space of transformation within the real bureaucracy (and not the imaginary bureaucracy, sometimes romanticized by the political debate), we run the risk of seeing other areas occupying this space - such as economics, accounting, and law (and even engineering!).

This view is complemented by respondents' comments that point out the need to “approach municipalities, their associations, and representatives, diagnosing and contributing to the improvement of their management”; “Being connected with public sector innovations, training professionals prepared for new ways of acting as public managers,” as well as encouraging “integration between different communities: undergraduate students, professionals, graduate students, professors, research-

chers, and elected political actors.” One of the respondents emphasized the role of program coordinators in “forming partnerships with other government agencies.”

Challenge 4 – Perfecting curriculum guidelines, teaching-learning processes, and teaching activities within undergraduate programs

Challenge 4 was considered as one of the three highest priority challenges by 228 respondents, who highlighted the possibility of more connection of theoretical and conceptual elements with instrumental and practical aspects of public performance. One of the respondents commented:

As long as professors do not understand that we need them to have experience in public management, training will always be unbalanced – the training [...] that exists in the classroom will prevail (**always!**) over the state’s technical and legal demands.

The respondents express the breadth and variety of proposals to be interpreted in the light of the “unity in diversity” in view of the territoriality of each program in the Public Field, and the plurality of its faculty. According to one respondent, it is important to include teaching languages, including Brazilian indigenous languages:

The requirement of at least two language courses, at least one of which is a Brazilian indigenous language. From the basics of a Brazilian indigenous language in the training of professionals in the Public Field, we will be reducing the distance of understanding about the formation of the Brazilian state.

Suggestions put forward by the respondents included “introducing businesses’ tools into public administration without privatizing the state” and “leading the public service digitalization movement,” and “not becoming an area of management, but of reflection on state action,” “advancement in the public field in relation to the traditional and social innovation,” along with “continued emphases on (1) fundamentals of science/political philosophy, (2) leadership as the main service of the manager [and] (3) civic engagement as a culture to be cultivated.”

According to some respondents, appreciating technological tools and their use in undergraduate programs is important. This is done by “evaluating the most adaptable tools for programs in the Public Field to the new demands of remote teaching activities, including internships, research, and extension” and with “debates

about the potential of technological tools, but also of their limits and how the field can meet such limits.”

THE SECOND BLOCK OF PRIORITY CHALLENGES

This section focuses on challenges 10, 9, 7 and 2 which, according to graph 1, were considered to be one of the three highest priority challenges 226, 225, 223 and 222 times, respectively.

Challenge 10 – Extend the identity of being part of the Public Field to actors in graduate programs, with the creation of an evaluation area in Capes

Challenge 10 refers to the universe of graduate studies and research to strengthen the status of the Public Field as a multidisciplinary area of knowledge, in the connection among the field and applied social sciences and human sciences. The challenge calls the graduate programs to strengthen the Public Field as the area of scientific issues related to the public interest and to the collective well-being that involves government management, public policy analysis, and public governance between the state and society. The development of undergraduate programs in the Public Field to graduate programs offering master or doctoral degrees, as well as the increase in scientific production on “public” as the study object, naturally tend to push Capes to open a specific evaluation area (Farah, 2018).

The conflicts, in this case, are academic, between the areas of knowledge within the scope of the country’s graduate and research system, represented by Capes and the National Council of Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) at the federal level. In the case of Capes, the struggles of 2010s occurred in some of its evaluation areas, where the actors advocated the acknowledgement of the notion of “public” in scientific production. An example was the initiative led by Sbpap to include the term “public administration” in the evaluation area 27 (as presented in Table 2). Until 2015, the name designating the area did not include ‘public administration,’ even though there were 20 graduate programs in the country working with public administration and public management, granting master’s, professional master’s, and doctoral degrees. In political science and foreign affairs, the growth of graduate programs in public policy was significant in the past ten years, corresponding – in 2020 – to a quarter of the masters and doctoral programs approved by Capes in its evaluation area 39.

The respondents suggest ways for the Public Field to link undergraduate and graduate programs, such as the creation of specific graduate programs within their subfields that consider regional differences, expanding the offer of academic masters and doctoral programs in regions such as the North and Northeast of Brazil. The respondents also put forward the following suggestions: “when opening a process to hire professors in programs of public administration and public management, make sure to include that the applicants have a background in the Public Field.” “More research funding in the area and more qualified journals for the field.” “Support for graduates to pursue postgraduate studies.” “A solid and integrated scientific community in the Public Field.”

Challenge 7 – Following Alumni, the relationship with the public sector and alignment of undergraduate education with the demands of the world of work

Some undergraduate programs systematically follow their alumni, but it is clear that there is not yet a systematic and nationwide mechanism. Among the recent initiatives promoted by alumni, *Pró Pública Brasil* stands out, which, since 2016, conducts activities to strengthen the relationship between the Public Field and professional practice.

One respondent understands the challenge of alumni entering the job market as crucial: “I think that the most challenging thing is increasing the insertion of our students in the world of work, in the Public sector.” Other respondents envision possibilities for this: “I believe that the definitive entry point for the field in municipal and state governments can be through alumni, who mostly lose their ties after graduation”; “Alumni can be the gateway to new internship programs and specific projects between academic programs in the Public Field and public authorities.”

One respondent mentions the obstacles, saying there is a “gigantic gap” between the possible spaces to work as a manager in the public sector and the places where the alumni actually work. Another, says: “Undoubtedly, incorporating into the job market as a public policy analyst is one of the biggest challenges. Currently, the opportunities are limited in the pursuit of a master’s degree.” In the words of one respondent, a process of “continuing education for graduates, offering opportunities for updating after completing the academic programs” is perhaps welcome.

Several respondents pointed out how important support is to newly graduated students. The “support and investment of knowledge in Junior Enterprises” is one way to achieve this, as well as more internships in city halls, city councils, and state-level legislative bodies. Trainee programs were mentioned, such as the work carried out by the non-profit *Vetor Brasil*, and residency practices in management and public policies. “I believe that the quality improvement and expansion of professional opportunities happened thanks to initiatives such as the residencies offered in nationwide projects.” It is worth mentioning the previous experiences of internship in the Public Field. One regional experience is the “*Mais Gestores*,” project, conceived by Feneap and implemented as an intern program in small municipalities in Santa Catarina since 2016, carried out by the Santa Catarina School of Government (ENA) together with Udesc Esag. At the local level, the initiatives residency in undergraduate programs in the Public Field, as a teaching-learning process, such as the Internship in Public Policies of UnB (Midlej and Silva et al., 2015) and the Social Internship of UFBA (Schommer and França Filho, 2010).

One respondent stressed that the intern activities and the alumni work are central to valuing professionals in the Public Field:

The student in the internship needs to demonstrate to be useful to public organizations, respect the civil servants, and contribute, incrementally, to something new. We are recognized for our ability to contribute. We need to stop being a promise for new management; we need to contribute with consistent projects, going beyond the discourse. In this way, we will be recognized.

Another respondent suggests that events of the Public Field are spaces to celebrate and announce technical cooperation agreements with the public sector, bringing education and research into line with intervention projects in governments and public organizations. Finally, the entrance in the job market is linked to the penultimate challenge of this second block, which deals with the social and job market valorization for actors qualified in the field and the regulation of the profession.

Challenge 9 – Social and job market valorization for actors qualified in the Public Field and regulation of the profession

One respondent noted that there is no professional identity among the alumni. Another stressed the need to “recognize and legitimize the professional skills of

graduates from programs in the Public Field,” which was corroborated commenting “the absence of requisites that applicants for some positions in the government should have academic qualifications in the Public Field,” and that “students feel insecure regarding the job market.” In this perspective, one respondent said: “We still have to explain what the Public Field is in different situations.”

One way to face the corporatist barriers (such as that of the CFA/CRA system), the relative ignorance about the field, and the difficulties of professional insertion is to develop a set of strategies for social and job market valorization for actors who went through academic education in the Public Field. This calls for consultation and communication with potential employers and society as a whole. The field “must be in relationship with agencies and entities where graduates can work professionally so that [the public sector] knows what training the alumni have received.” As well as helping to deconstruct common understanding and the “[pejorative] image of public service in society [...] and the views of certain government officials who contribute to blaming, demoralizing, and criminalizing civil servants, science, and research”.

Regarding public jobs, respondents would like to see more “connection with local governments, hiring processes that value the background in the Public Field, recognizing the professional from the field when hiring for appointed positions.” For them, the public field should “influence the creation, maintenance, and development of specific management careers in the public sector, in the three levels of government, requiring more professionalization.” Under this logic, some advocate for the legal regulation of the profession to remove barriers in hiring processes and avoid becoming “hostages” of the professional registration at CRA (which is sometimes required in hiring processes). One respondent considers future legislation providing for the background of professionals to be considered for public jobs, including jobs where professionals need to have an academic education in programs of the Public Field. The respondent argues that this measure would guarantee:

Legal legitimacy to compete in hiring processes for positions in administrative areas, especially those designed exclusively for business administrators. It is odd that [some of the] graduates from programs in the Public Field are unable to go through a hiring process in the public administration because the positions are aimed only at (business) administrators.

Some respondents also proclaimed the need to create a Professional Council (such as a class body) that regulates the profession, supervises its performance and is able to fight for the rights of alumni, so that they are “recognized as a profession, with a salary floor and all the rights of a registered professional.”

Concluding this challenge on the Public Field job market, it is worth remembering that, in addition to the government, there are many opportunities for alumni in civil society organizations and various functions in businesses. The Government Management Laboratory of EACH-USP and the Junior Enterprise Vertuno developed, during 2017-2019, a guide, consisting of videos and texts, which presents a landscape of professional opportunities in 20 occupational segments (see, <http://www.cartilha.vertuno.com.br>).

Challenge 3 – Continuity of the development process (quantitative and qualitative) of undergraduate programs, considering the movement of expansion and strengthening of the Public Field in the last 10 years

The growth in the number of undergraduate programs in the Public Field, especially bachelor degrees, was a result of both the “Reuni” program in federal public universities and the process of expansion of higher education in states. Therefore, the shortage of funding for public higher education planned for the coming years due to legal budgetary limits; the current economic scenario; the country’s political landscape; and the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, tends to jeopardize the maintenance and the imperative constant improvement of a massive number of programs. Many respondents were emphatic about the need for financial, technological, and human resources to consolidate the programs implemented in the past ten years.

For the respondents, the Public Field movement as a whole will be affected by the context. Some of them propose strengthening relationships between the entities of the field and associations related to the government (such as membership organizations gathering civil servants). For the respondents, “the connection [between the field and these institutions] is incipient.” Another respondent considers that there is a lack of integration between organizations such as Fenecap, *Pró Pública Brasil*, and Anepcp, which would not be close enough to the reality of the programs. Particularly concerning Anepcp, it would be “an elite stronghold of professors and researchers.”

In this sense, it is urgent to foster closer relationships with the academic communities around the bachelor degrees offered in the distance modality (PNAP/UAB) and the technological undergraduate programs offered by the Federal Institutes of Education, Science, and Technology and private universities and colleges.

Another respondent considers it necessary to “continue strengthening the links among the various programs to promote institutional closeness and exchange experiences, through the resumption of the Forum of Professors and Coordinators of the Public Field.”

THE THIRD BLOCK OF PRIORITY CHALLENGES

The last part of this section discusses challenges 2, 8, and 5, which were least considered as the three priority challenges. Details of these challenges have been discussed earlier (in sections 2 and 3) and will be summarized below. Also, the respondents’ comments in the survey’s open-question rarely tapped on these challenges.

Challenge 2 – Improvement of the evaluation process of undergraduate programs in the Public Field within the National Higher Education Evaluation System (SINAES/Enade)

The improvement of the evaluation process of undergraduate programs in the Public Field was indicated among the three priorities by 210 respondents, one of whom suggested the elaboration of “indicators for evaluating the programs’ effectiveness.”

As previously discussed in section 3, in the first edition of Enade in 2015, some undergraduate programs were unable to participate in the exam due to not meeting the NCG established in the previous year. However, the absence of traditional undergraduate programs in the second edition, in 2018, must be discussed. Also to be addressed is the below-average performance (concept 2) of many programs offered by public HEIs in the distance modality.

Self-assessment processes in undergraduate programs in the Public Field, emphasizing aspects of each reality, is a topic that can (and should) be explored to complement the evaluation instruments of SINAES/Enade. This kind of assessment should aim to detect the weaknesses and potential of each program (bachelor’s or

technological degree), identifying its capacity to deliver the academic education expected (faculty and students’ profiles, for instance) and local impacts.

Challenge 8 – Ongoing training for professors for effective and responsive performance in undergraduate programs

Challenge 8 was considered one of the three priorities by 207 respondents. Notes on the open question included: the need for “need for professors to have better methodological knowledge”; the importance of having “professors trained in public management teaching the classes”; and an observation about the “absence of professors, masters, and doctors in public policy.”

The debates occurring in student events (Enecap and Erecaps) point out two types of problems related to the faculty of undergraduate programs, a) insufficient didactic capacity and low commitment to undergraduate teaching activities (due to the greater incentive they have to work in graduate programs and research in public universities); and the lack of professors with a background in the Public Field, holding degrees obtained in the same programs they teach – or obtained in programs related to the subfields public administration, public management, public policy. The students indicate that professors rarely show a more holistic view and contemplate possible connections of their subject with other disciplines. However, there is a “generational” gap that must gradually be closed over the next decade, as suggested by Pires et al (2014):

[...] in the next 5 to 15 years, the first generation of graduates from the Public Field, will be transformed into professors and researchers with this [interdisciplinary] perspective. In other words, just as the current professors had academic training and built multidisciplinary undergraduate programs in the Public Field, in the future, professors that enjoyed this new background and, therefore, more used to grouping knowledge, will be able to connect the multi-disciplines (in the meaning of juxtaposition of disciplinary matters) in inter-disciplines (in the sense of real and reciprocal cooperation between disciplinary knowledge).

Challenge 5 – Consolidation of the NCG approved in 2013 by the National Education Council and established in 2014 by the Ministry of Education

Among the ten current challenges of the Public Field, challenge 5 was least considered one of the three highest priorities (198). CFA’s advances in the CNE in

the first quarter of 2020, proposing the unification of the NCG for undergraduate programs in business and public administration, shows that Public Field entities should always avoid setbacks in the identity of their undergraduate programs. Considering that the NCG in public administration are new and have been disputed and that the “deregulating wind” that has been blowing in the Ministry of Education and CNE in recent years, the uninterrupted process of monitoring the norms and dialogue with regulatory bodies is crucial.

Final Considerations

This article described the history of the Public Field since 2015, adopting as a starting point the establishment of the National Curriculum Guidelines (NCG) for undergraduate programs in public administration. It analyzed the field’s current challenges regarding its institutional, pedagogical-scientific, and professional dimensions. Much has been done, is being done, and still needs to be done in favor of the development of a field that is essentially, multidisciplinary. The field embodies the “unity in diversity” around the “public” locus and the notion of *res publica*, connecting a plurality of actors, political and pedagogical projects, and relationships within the academia and society.

This study unveiled how the Public Field has built a collective identity and formed a scientific community in Brazil, pointing out advances and setbacks, specifically for building a new field of knowledge and specifying recent historical landmarks and data, which has helped to (re)interpret its route. The recognition and expansion of the field as an academic area is seen through the literature produced in the last five years, and as an area of relevant professional training, attentive to major issues in the public sector and Brazilian society.

Through the literature review and document analysis on teaching and research in public administration, public management, and public policy in Brazil, together with our personal experience as participants in the construction of this field, we presented ten challenges that we believe encompass structural and connective elements. These challenges were examined by 365 professors, researchers, students, and alumni of the Public Field, who participated in a survey that asked them

to prioritize the list of challenges and contribute with ideas and perceptions of the ways to come.

The most mentioned challenges among the three priorities refer to the implementation or adaptation of the undergraduate programs’ pedagogical projects according to the NCG established in 2014, including the improvement of curriculum guidelines, teaching-learning processes, and teaching activities within undergraduate programs. The results indicate the need and the possibility of advancing toward an interdisciplinary academic education – i.e., going beyond the notion of multidisciplinary – based on the coordination among teaching, research, and extension, as well as the continuous dialogue between students, professors, alumni, partners, and employers. The contribution of the Public Field presenting solutions to local and national public problems involves the connection between academic training and the insertion of graduates in the world of work, i.e., the social and job market valorization of the professional’s background in the Public Field, and attention to the regulation of the profession.

Testimonies and concerns expressed by the participants demonstrate the links and tensions inherent to the identity-multidisciplinarity binomial in the formation of a field that includes heterogeneous undergraduate programs. These programs are associated with a multidisciplinary, new, and plural scientific community. They are permeated by multiple areas of knowledge, that historically comes from public administration and public policy – which have also been transformed in recent decades. Although united by values such as republicanism and democracy, and gathered around “public” as an object of teaching and research, the Public Field faces communication and complementarity conflicts in academic education, among its political-social and administrative-managerial dimensions and the theoretical-scientific and technical-professional guidelines.

The fact that we are all active actors in the Public Field brings undeniable advantages, but may also represent a limitation for the study since we lack distance from the analyzed object. However, because we work in a variety of institutions, public and private, state and federal, in four out of Brazil’s five regions, in different undergraduate programs and participate in several associations related to the Public Field, we believe we found a balance in our analyses as authors/researchers. In addition, the comments of colleagues who participated in the survey were wi-

dely considered, establishing a dialogue with their views, in the context of each challenge. Notwithstanding, the data collected is rich and can be further analyzed based on other perspectives. In a first analysis, there were no significant differences when considering responses from individuals who work in, or are related to, programs headquartered in capitals or rural cities, offered in-person or distance. These differences, however, have yet to be explored. Future studies could investigate the representativeness of responses to the type and number of programs and potential respondents per state. The wording and grouping of the challenges may be reviewed in the future, as they are interconnected, and this study may offer new insights regarding their nature and relationships.

Among the possible implications of the study for the academic management and teaching-learning processes, it is clear that the implementation of the NCG for undergraduate programs in the Public Field required great dedication and reflection, within each HEI, in the academic-scientific institutional spaces, and the relationship with the professional and political environments. Members and organizations of the Public Field should pay special attention to a) the approximations between professors and students, between undergraduate and graduate programs, and among research, teaching, and extension during the path toward academic education; b) the continuous training of professors, which is necessary given the interdisciplinary nature of the field, the dynamics of scientific knowledge, and the demands in the face of the scenario after the pandemic; c) monitoring the performance of programs and the causes of student dropout; d) monitoring graduates and their professional status, as well as their capacity to bridging academia and public problems in the context in which they work; e) vigilance and permanent dialogue with official agencies of educational assessment, research support agencies, professional regulatory bodies, political agents, and public servants responsible for recruiting and hiring staff and for budget decisions.

Future research could aim to analyze in-depth the findings presented, or explore other features of teaching and research in the Public Field, considering the following suggestions: examining the implementation of the NCG observing regional and local contexts where graduation programs are headquartered; researching the profile of professors in undergraduate programs of the field; and comprehensive mapping the alumni professional activities (and their impacts) in the world of work.

In conclusion, the Public Field is in full motion, and actions must continue, even while considering the natural disputes within the field. There will not always be consensus and harmony, which is expected in a field that evolves based on diversity; at the same time that the motivating elements unite, the force fields are activated continuously. Amid conflicts, the current decade presents the macro challenge of advancing in the construction of a common language that, despite epistemic or political-ideological differences, potentiates and integrates the Public Field as a discursive community in academic education, a community of practices in the state and society, and a scientific and essentially interdisciplinary community.

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