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Academic rankings and pluralism: The case of Brazil and the new version of Qualis

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Abstract

The paper approaches the theme of the relatively higher level of pluralism in Brazilian economics, when compared to other countries, from a bibliometric approach. Considering the *Qualis* as an instrument of great impact in the research of the Brazilian graduate education centers, mainly because of its impact in the CAPES evaluation of the centers, we analyze the abrupt change in the journal ranking that occurred in 2016. Before presenting it, we first focused in understanding the metrics that are part of the *Qualis*, and how relevant the biases from other indexes than the Impact Factor are. Afterwards, we present a review of the national literature concerning the academic production in economics, showing how some problems of incentives and structure still persist. We, then, present our results: we found out that the increase of journals in the higher strata of the *Qualis* without a research agenda bias, and with a great inclusion of specialized sub-fields of the discipline. Besides, the impact that this change will cause in the 2017 CAPES' evaluation cannot be seen as favoring centers by their division in mainstream and non-mainstream. Having this in mind, we argue that the modifications maintain incentives to pluralism, besides correcting many problems in the ranking.

JEL classifications: A23; A14; B00

Keywords: *Qualis*; Academic production; Pluralism; Bibliometrics; Mainstream economics; Heterodox economics

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1. Introduction

Ever since bishop Azeredo Coutinho and the Viscount of Cairu wrote their first economic treatises in the turn of the XVIIIth century, Brazilian scientific production in economics has been developing to the point of becoming a strong player in South America. Our paper studies how Brazilian scientific production developed and its current traits, from a historical and bibliometric point of view.

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A definitive trait of the Brazilian economics is its high degree of pluralism, with the presence of heterodox economists¹ in relevant positions. Dequech (2014) and Fernández and Suprinyak (2016) showed how the pluralism of economics in Brazil is a combination of (i) historical factors, related to the formation of the first Brazilian economists, from Law and Engineering, influenced by different approaches abroad and (ii) institutional factors, such as the construction of a standard curriculum that always favored history of economic thought (HET) and alternative macroeconomic approaches, the refusal of the National Association of Graduate Centers in Economics (ANPEC) to change its organizational directives in face of the protest of the Getulio Vargas Foundation of the Rio de Janeiro (FGV-RJ), the action of National Association of Undergraduate Courses of Economics (ANGE) in building undergraduate courses minimally pluralistic, and, lastly, the high ranking of heterodox journals in *Qualis*.

As a result, Brazilian heterodox economists have a greater prestige in academy when compared to other countries, and they are capable of occupying important positions in the best universities of the country, coexisting with mainstream researchers. Dequech (2014) emphasizes that economists outside the mainstream can receive grants from research agencies and even compete and win national prizes such as the “Haralambos Simeonides Prize”, the most prestigious award in Economics in the country. Some of them even managed to occupy command positions in the government (Codato et al., 2016).

Amongst the institutional factors that fuel pluralism in Brazil, the *Qualis* ranking is one of the most important highlights. We argue that the presence of heterodox journals in high positions in the *Qualis* ranking and the presence of heterodox economists in the revision meetings of the *Qualis* are important features for the maintenance of pluralism in economics in Brazil.

This text discusses these questions in four sections, besides this introduction. Section 2 exposes the *Qualis* metrics, i.e., how many different measures of academic production influenced its constructions, their strengths and weaknesses, and how the *Qualis* evolved through the years. Section 3 is a literature review of bibliometric research on the Brazilian academic production in economics, showing its relevant problems. Section 4 explains the methodology of our research. Section 5 shows how the new evaluation metrics change the environment of Brazilian graduate schools in economics, and also compares it with other evaluation rankings worldwide. In the end, we conclude that *Qualis* is an important instrument for the maintenance of pluralism in Brazil.

2. Evaluation metrics for scientific production

Currently there are many different forms to define *quasi*-objectively the qualitative performance of scientific journals. The most used measure is the *Impact Factor* (IF), created by Eugene Garfield in 1975, and published annually in the *Journal Citation Reports* (JCR). This index, as the other ones here discussed, is based on the number of citations that the papers in a journal receive. This index uses the *Web of Sciences* base (WoS) in its construction. Their major competitors are the *CiteScore* and the *SCImago Journal Rank* (SJR), using *Scopus* base – both created by Elsevier – and Google Scholar’s *h index*.

The questions that gravitate toward the use of publication metrics are legion, but what we intend to present in this section, specifically, are the different rankings of journals by quality, presenting their strong and weak points discussed in the literature. The focus remains on themes related to this paper, such as when the metrics in question can induce or difficult the plurality of scientific production and the change of the *Qualis* that occurred in 2016.

¹ There are controversies related to the definition of “heterodoxy”. Guimarães (2011, p. 4, 8) considered “heterodox” researchers whose research challenge or propose alternatives to the current research of the profession; they work in what Dobusch and Kapeller (2012) called “Colander’s edge”. As examples, he cited Daron Acemoglu and his research in political economy and institutional economics, John List and experimental economics, among others (and these are amongst the most productive economists in the United States). This definition clashes with the definition of heterodoxy as the one that includes researchers with completely alternative methodologies to the mainstream, proposed by Dequech (2007) and Dobusch and Kapeller (2012). In our paper, we use the second definition, upon saying that the Brazilian academy is receptive to heterodox researchers, we are saying that it allows economists from different approaches (be them post-Keynesian, Marxist, Austrian, among others) to conduct research without much institutional sanctions and to have certain prestige in academia. Dobusch and Kapeller (2012) made an important distinction between the terms “orthodoxy” (which Dequech refers to neoclassical economists) and “mainstream”, showing that there is a non-orthodox component in the mainstream, which is the one referenced by Guimarães (2011). Also, for the purposes of this paper, we consider the terms “orthodox” and “mainstream” as interchangeable, showing when caveats apply in the text. Thus, “heterodox” is defined negatively related to “mainstream” or “orthodox”.

2.1. Different methodologies for citation measurement

The IF is the most used metric by researchers, being calculated in the following way: the IF of a journal, in a specific year, will be the sum of all citations that it obtained in this year for the articles published in the previous two years, divided by the number of citable sources published in these same last two years. The referred citable sources include both original articles as well as reviews and editorial letters. Glänzel and Moed (2002) discussed alternatives to overcome the problems of the IF, such as *Consumption Factor*, *Adjusted Impact Factor* and *Influence Weight*. In general, these attempts focus in the “choice of publication period and citation window, the calculation of separate indicators for different document types, the development of ‘relative’, field-normalized measures, and the use of supplementary measures and the clarification of the technical correctness of the processed indicators” (p. 178).

The Elsevier’s alternative is the *CiteScore*, calculated similarly, but using the Scopus base and with the horizon of three years, instead of two. Another well-known index is the *SCImago Journal Rank* (SJR), that weighs the CiteScore according to the journals (organized in a relevance ranking) where the articles are cited (Elsevier, 2017). Lastly, the indexes developed by Google are the *H5-index* and the *H5-mean*, based in the *h index*. In the H5-index, the h index of a journal will be the h number of papers cited h times in the last five years. Using the example presented by Mering (2017), if, hypothetically, a journal published five articles in the last five years and its citations were, respectively, 15, 9, 6, 3 and 2, the h index of this journal will be 3. This happens because, even if there are 4 articles that were cited 3 times or more, the h index cannot be 4 because there are not more than 4 articles that were cited 4 or more times in the last 5 years.

All these metrics have biases which can be related to the database or the construction of the index, and literature seeks to correct them constantly. One of the main issues is with the databases, from which the citations are extracted and computed in the indexes (WoS, Scopus and GS). The WoS, for example, lacks journals in the areas of humanities, as well as a low count for citations in books, annals and journals not indexed in the base in general (Harzing and Wal, 2009). Besides, publications in English (especially from the United States) are favored (Mering, 2017). And yet, according to Mering, in spite of the GS overcoming these problems, it presents a much larger number of false citations or double counting than the WoS or the Scopus. The use of the h index, however, attenuates this problem in the GS, in addition of overcoming an intrinsic problem concerning the calculation method of the impact indexes (IF, CiteScore, etc.), where excessively cited articles in a volume can bias significantly these indexes (Harzing and Wal, 2009).

Other studies point the weaknesses of these three main indexes and their databases, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of each (e.g. Bar-Ilan, 2008; Glänzel and Moed, 2002; Hodge and Lacasse, 2011). Harzing and Alakangas (2016), for example, showed that, using the different indexes in each of the bases here discussed, both the bases and the indexes create some type of bias according to the knowledge area (social sciences, humanities, engineering, science and life sciences)² under analysis. The authors suggest that the best combination would be using the Scopus base or the GS with the annual *hI index* (a modification of the h index). Our interest, however, is concerning the possibility of bias in economic research, and/or whether a dominant theoretical approach in an area that implies in lower levels of pluralism inside economics and, beyond that, how it impacts the Brazilian case.

Questions closer to our discussion are raised by Bordon et al. (2002). The authors started from the problem of the low presence of Spanish journals in the WoS base to point how registering scientific production of peripheral countries can be problematic when using this base. From this perspective, trusting the measurement of production of a peripheral country to this type of index would bring a great distortion, harming works with focus in regional questions and areas that depend of local publications to disseminate their studies. Due to underevaluation of local journals, in some cases it would be a better strategy to not include these journals in the bases, keeping then outside the metrics. (p. 199).³

Related to the possibility that some metrics and rankings can “railroad” the research toward a particular area, Dobusch and Kapeller (2009) argue that the current metrics can create path dependence in economic research. For the authors, this could be one reason why there was no transformation in economic theory after the 2007–2008 crisis (*a la* post-1929 changes). This path dependence resulted from a strong institutionalization of the mainstream, powered by the measurement systems. Lee (2007) pointed towards a neoclassical bias in publication, teaching and hiring of new

² Mongeon and Paul-Hus (2016), for example, indicated a negative bias for humanities and social sciences both in the WoS and Scopus.

³ Journals from regional associations also suffer from rent-seeking problems. Faria et al. (2018) analyzed the presence of rent-seeking practices in journals from American regional associations and argued that these practices tend to occur more frequently than the optimal. However, even without rent-seeking practices, non-English journals still have the problems pointed by Bordon et al. (2002).

faculty in British universities. The author also proposed an alternative ranking for heterodox economics journals, since they would be undervalued using only the WoS base (Lee et al., 2010). Furthermore, Rafols et al. (2012) argued that using metrics can have a negative effect for interdisciplinary research and Lawrence (2008) showed that it might diminish the quality of scientific work, as well as to discourage scientific creativity in order to fit conventions.

Part of the questions raised is related to the degree of hierarchization of economics. As showed by Aistleitner et al. (2017), the main economic journals (*American Economic Review*, *Econometrica*, *Journal of Political Economy*, *Quarterly Journal of Economics* and *Review of Economic Studies*), besides being easily recognizable, have a high degree of self-citation, greater than other areas of social science (in their own journals and between the top five). They also resort less frequently to works from other areas. This can turn the concentration problem caused by the metrics even more sensitive. The authors show that the citation patterns of these top journals kept the same even after the 2007–2008 economic crisis. Meanwhile, heterodox journals (such as the *Cambridge Journal of Economics* and the *Journal of Post Keynesian Economics*) had a more diversified pattern before the crisis, and they reacted to it reducing citations to the mainstream journals.⁴ If we reconsider the assumption of Lee et al. (2010) that the heterodoxy can be considered as a subfield inside economics, we have a justification for the new index proposed by these authors.

The discussion up to this point intended to present some of the problems in the current metrics for the measurement of academic production in general and in economics, which have an increasingly relevant weight in the structure of this community. The evaluation system we analyzed, the *Qualis*, is based in studies that use different metrics with the intention of presenting a less distorted possible ranking. Some of the biases found in the economic academic environment were also taken in consideration. In the next section, we present the *Qualis*, trying to show, basically, how it was built, its limitations and how the great modification of 2016 happened, which motivated this work.

2.2. The *Qualis* of economics

The *Qualis* is an instrument of evaluation of the scientific production of Brazilian graduate schools. It became important when it became one of the seven criteria of evaluation for graduate programs in 1998 (Barata, 2016). Since it is an evaluative instrument and not a bibliographical base, the journal rankings where the publications occurred in each area are only known *a posteriori*, to allow the evaluation and comparison of programs (its objective is *not* to evaluate individual researchers). The strata, which correspond to a ranking system (A1 = 100; A2 = 80; B1 = 60; B2 = 40; B3 = 25; B4 = 15; B5 = 5 and C = 0), are filled by the area commissions⁵ with their own criteria, obeying some pre-established rules enforced by CAPES, such as a limit of 50% concentration in the highest three levels.

We will analyze in further detail how changes in these criteria for the *Qualis* economics ranking can represent greater or smaller incentives for economic pluralism. We shall focus on the change of factors of the *Qualis*, the questions related to the literature produced about the ranking will be in the next section.

As discussed before, whatever the method used to classify the quality of publications, it will create distortions, be it because of the reach of the bibliographical base or the index used. With this in mind, the very choice of criteria has the intention of avoiding distortions of others, such as using solely the IF.

The concern of the representatives of the economics area with distortions can also be noticed in earlier rankings. In the 2001–2003 triennium,⁶ when the competitors to the WoS had not been created, they used the JCR index and Barret et al. (2000), which allowed a better classification of subfields in economics. In addition, of course, of *ad hoc* indications of the members of the commission concerning specific journals. In the 2003–2006 triennium, there was a greater concern in separating the evaluation of the international articles (using Kalaitzidakis et al. (2003)) and national ones. For the 2007–2009 triennium, the commission used Kodrzycki and Yu (2006) in order to distinguish the impact of economic journals in its own area, in the social sciences as a whole, and in economic policy journals. It continued both the *ad hoc* modifications in the ranking and the harmonization with earlier years (CAPES, 2009). One of these adjustments is the inclusion of important journals for Brazilian researchers through “grafts” in the higher strata.

⁴ The call of Dobusch and Kapeller (2012) for an “interested pluralism” might have been an attempt to convince heterodox journals to not follow this tendency.

⁵ The area’s representative is selected by CAPES. S/he has to choose six other researchers, recognized by their peers, which are responsible for formulating the ranking. The same representative elects another commission that is responsible for evaluating the departments every three or four years (see note 7).

⁶ The evaluation happened in triennia until the quadrennium 2013–2016.

In this evaluation, the following journals were added to the A1 stratum: *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, *History of Political Economy*, *Journal of Economic Methodology*, and the *Journal of Post Keynesian Economics*; to the A2 stratum: *Economic Geography*, *Economic Inquiry*, *Industrial and Corporate Change*, *Journal of Health Economics*, and *National Tax Journal*.

In the 2010–2012 triennium, the commission adopted the method proposed by [Combes and Linnemer \(2010\)](#). Their study classified the 1202 journals (few Brazilians) in the *EconLit* list into the CL index, built on the combination of the JCR indexes and Google's h index. With the CL index in hand, the commission used procedures from other areas, always obeying the A2 ceiling, to rank journals from areas other than economics. For national journals, the commission decided case by case, obeying a ceiling of B1 (previously B2) for economic journals and B2 for other areas ([CAPES, 2013a](#)). In spite of this criteria, it is important to emphasize that the 2010–2012 evaluation preserved the classification of all journals that had been previously classified between A1 and B4. With this, the CL index was used only to rank journals that had not been previously listed, in other words, those in which the Brazilian researchers had published in the 2010–2012 triennium but not in the 2007–2009 one.

As we observed, in spite of constant modifications in the classification criteria of the journals, there has always been an attempt to maintain a stability in the ranking. However, in 2015, the commission signaled intentions of deeper modifications in the *Qualis*, in an attempt to approach it from the procedures of the other areas and allow more research diversity ([CAPES, 2015](#)). Even so, in 2016, the idea of perdurance and continuity of earlier evaluations returned to the highlight ([CAPES, 2016](#)). How these two questions are addressed in, we consider, such a significant modification?

The first great modification was the synthesis of the CL and the *Qualis*. This synthesis started to consider all journals that were in the same CL stratum from those which were previously “grafted” in the list, like the ones cited before, of the same *Qualis* stratum. The CL classification is composed by strata AAA, AA, A, B, C and D. Upon considering all journals at strata AAA (5 journals), AA (15), A (82) and B (156) as A1, the commission solves the distortion of grafting and also increases the number of those which can be considered A1.⁷ In this new format, only *History of Political Economy* had to be grafted. It should be reminded that it is not enough that a journal must be present in the CL list in order to appear in the *Qualis*, it is also necessary that Brazilian faculty have published in these journals during the triennium evaluated.

The C stratum (304 journals) of the CL became equivalent to A2, while D (606) to B1. This method solved another question: the place of Brazilian journals. Since there are some Brazilian journals in the CL index, such as *Nova Economia*, *Economia e Sociedade*, *Revista Brasileira de Economia* and *Economia Aplicada*, all in the D/B1 strata, the limit criteria of the national journals follow the evaluation of international journals.

What interests us, in this work, is the way this harmonization permitted an increase of journals in the highest strata, allowing better evaluations for centers and researchers that publish in a greater variety of journals. We will evaluate this in Section 4. Before, we must present the national literature on the bibliometrics of the economic academic production and its relation with *Qualis*.

3. National literature and the *Qualis*

When the organization of economic research started in Brazil, before *Qualis*, the existing journals always listed (in the end of the volume) thesis and articles, including from other journals, published in the country. This lasted until the 1990's and it was necessary to publicize the work of the economists in the pre-internet era and allow the researchers to know what each of them is researching, especially when the Brazilian production was relatively small.

Thus, bibliometric studies were realized to evaluate in a deeper way Brazilian scientific production in economics. These articles, which we discuss in following, investigated different dimensions of the Brazilian bibliographic production in economics and likely influenced the modifications mentioned in the previous section. There some patterns emerge, what help not only to explain the tendencies of the academic production, but also the evolution of economics in Brazil.

Amongst the main traits are the concentration of the production in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. [Gonçalves and David \(1982\)](#) reported that the great part of the authors published from institutions based in the Rio de Janeiro. [Issler](#)

⁷ It is also common knowledge that the economics area does not completely fill the highest strata quota of *Qualis*, contrary to other areas. Only 5% of the journals are A1, and 10% if we sum A1 and A2 ([CAPES, 2015](#)).

and Pillar (2002) mentioned only the FGV-RJ and the PUC-RJ as having publication ranking comparable to American and European departments. Faria (2000) also had reached the same conclusion, showing that only the FGV-RJ attained the highest degree of productivity, followed by PUC-RJ, UnB and USP. Faria et al. (2007a) included, measuring the productivity as the number publications/faculty, FGV-RJ, PUC-RJ, UCB, UnB, USP, IBMEC-RJ and IBMEC-SP as centers of excellence, two of them in the Distrito Federal. Still, according to Faria et al. (2007b), there was a diminution of the concentration in the RJ-SP axis. Guimarães (2011, Table 2) related the presence of three researchers of the Distrito Federal among the 20 most productive researchers in the country. The collaboration networks also expanded beyond the RJ-SP axis, according to Haddad et al. (2017, Fig. 6).

In spite that comparisons with American departments might be little complimentary, Novaes (2008) found out that the researchers with productivity grants from the National Council of Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) have a publication average greater than the American ones, for the 1999–2004 period. Brazilian orthodox researchers published 5.2 articles, and Brazilian heterodox, 5.1; meanwhile American orthodox researchers published 4.6 and American heterodox, 1.8. Novaes (2008, p. 470) uses this result to argue that “the incentives for economic research in Brazil induce a quantity bias against quality.” In other words, “there are signs the evaluation mechanisms of CNPq and CAPES are inducing a sacrifice of quality to increase the quantity of publications” (p. 484). On the other hand, Faria (2004) argued that a greater absolute number of articles is fundamental to form a critical mass of human capital when the research is incipient. Even so, Faria (2004) recognized that the Brazilian academia must take a qualitative leap, in the sense of seeking more relevant journals.

The publication incentives are a recurring theme in almost the entire literature. Issler and Pillar (2002) argued that there is academic protectionism in Brazilian journals. In fact, Loureiro and Lima (1994) wrote that many leftist economists resisted the internationalization because they saw in it a subordination to a research method alien to Brazilian problems. The major part of the literature is very critical towards it. Issler and Ferreira (2004) blamed academic protectionism and lack of contact with international literature for the crises in the 1980s and 1990s, because it deprived economists from important foreign criticism that could have avoided greater problems. Faria et al. (2007a) criticized Unicamp for its lack of internationalization, which means that the production of the center does not correspond to its national prestige, classifying it as “overrated” (p. 392). However, the thesis of national bubble loses some of its effect when Loureiro and Lima (1994, p. 47) wrote that “two thirds of the works cited in [Brazilian] economic journals were written abroad.”

The question of the incentives is considered, by great part of the literature, a reason why the Brazilian production does not take off. Azzoni (2000, p. 788–9) wrote that “at the same time the foreign production became impressively more available to our researchers, it was clear that even the publication in Portuguese in national journals condemned our works to the almost international anonymity.” The international anonymity thesis is corroborated by Faria (2009) by showing that few international authors cite articles published in Brazilian journals (in an apparently idiosyncratic result, the most internationally cited Brazilian article is not cited by any other Brazilian one). Lastly, for the 1977–1997 period, in the top 15 journals, Brazilian authors corresponded to only 0.03% of the published articles (Issler and Ferreira, 2004, p. 502).

The question of the incentives is also related to question of how the weight of the journals is distributed throughout the *Qualis*. Faria (2000, 2004), Issler and Pillar (2002), Faria et al. (2007b), Silva (2009) and Guimarães (2011) considered that the weight and number of national journals are excessive. Since the majority of articles in national journals are published in Portuguese, they invoke little interest to a non-Brazilian audience and, for this reason, their IF is near zero. According to Silva (2009), if the *Qualis* reflected with more precision international measures of impact factor, the maximum ranking of a national journal should be B3 and not B1. However, as we showed in the last section, the gap between the international and national ones is lessened by the modifications done for the *Qualis* 2015.

Both Issler and Pillar (2002, p. 371) and Novaes (2008, p. 484) were concerned with the incentives of the *Qualis* for the “boldness” of the Brazilian research. In other words, for the authors, the *Qualis* does not capture the risk of trying a journal from the diamond list. The publication process in a diamond list journal, such as the *Econometrica*, for example, is longer due to the time of the peer-review and the high level of rejection (that Conley (2012) considers harmful to the development of economics), and *Qualis* fails to take this in consideration. Otherwise, the publication pressures incentivize the researchers to publish in less prestigious journals and with a smaller impact factor, but that have the same weight in the *Qualis* system.

For Silva (2009), ultimately, with impact factors available, the *Qualis* system is redundant. However, he defended that the *Qualis* should be kept due to the extreme difficulty in publishing in diamond list journals, and that the *Qualis*

should converge to international impact factors. According to him, there are four biases in the *Qualis*: (1) leftist bias, due to the practice of grafting heterodox journals in higher strata,⁸ (2) anti-British bias (inherited from the IF), (3) anti-transdisciplinary bias, which is corroborated by Guimarães (2011), but it is a bias of economic journals in general (see Aistleitner et al., 2017), and (4) national journals bias (discussed above).

Silva can be criticized for doing a naïve aggregation surround the IF. The presence of grafts in the *Qualis* was a way to overcome the extreme difficulty of publishing in a diamond list journal. Not putting these grafts would be a disincentive to the quality of economic academic production itself. Besides, it must be considered that a historian of thought, Mauro Boianovsky, is among the most productive in the country, according to Guimarães (2011). Upon not offering an equivalent gain (only the dubious achievement of imitating another academic culture), the economic research as a whole in Brazil could be harmed. Ultimately, the current modifications to the *Qualis* solved most of the alleged leftist bias.

Concerning the national journal bias, the last modification of *Qualis*, with the adaptation of the CL index, solved this issue, so the only remaining question is how it competes with international publications. It should be noted that most of the comparative literature is comparing Brazil with the United States. Although the simplification is necessary, it should be reminded that Brazilian researchers are competing not only with American researchers, but with researchers from over 190 countries. The difficulty of a researcher with English as second language has to face when trying to publish in a high impact factor journal is beyond the scope of this paper, but it should be a suggestion for future research.

Lastly, it is necessary to improve the national journals. Rent-seeking was a problem pointed in the earliest literature. Gonçalves and David (1982, p. 295) described that there was a “predominance – in the view of many, excessive – of articles whose authors were linked to the institution responsible by the journal”. Faria (2001, 2004) verified the same problem, due to effects of domestic networks, club effect and low competition, making Brazilian economists focus on publishing in national journals. Faria (2009) suggested inviting well-known authors to write papers, the publication of articles that create ample discussion with many points of view and to publish articles only in English, and the international diversification of the editorial boards. The journal *EconomiA* uses these last two criteria. However, it is more common for Brazilian journals to give preference for articles in English in the submission line.

However, it must be reminded that, in spite of the continuity of many themes and problems, many of these empirical analyzes are outdated. Since 2010, the publication of Brazilian authors in international journals has grown exponentially and game-changing centers were established, as it is the case of the FGV-SP. Future research, conducted with better data, must update the bibliometric literature and make studies based on applied areas. For example, Haddad et al. (2017) showed the potential of analysis of networks and scientific clusters in graduate centers; Chagas (2017) proposed a ranking for Regional and Urban Economics journals, that is an additional resource for researchers that are connected through the Brazilian Association of Regional and Urban Studies (ABER).

Furthermore, FGV-SP, as well as other graduate centers, can be analyzed within the question of Business School approach. Besancenot et al. (2009), for example, presented a model that shows how those types of school may have incentives to invest (or over-invest) in research (sometimes in detriment of investments in teaching quality) as a way of signalize general quality and attract more students and charge higher fees. There are other possible negatives outcomes, such as incentive to decrease research quality, which would be jeopardized by the focus on research volume.

4. Methodology

In order to conduct our analysis, we evaluated the new journals included after the 2016 modification of *Qualis*, and the publication of the members of permanent faculty from each center during the period 2013–2016, which are two separate datasets. We collected the first dataset from the *Qualis* webpage at the *Sucupira Plataforma*, the data portal of Brazilian higher education. It is important to have in mind that the meeting where the change was enacted happened in 2016, during a quadrennium. Therefore, we had the years 2013 and 2014 evaluated in what we call the 2014 rule, and 2015 in the new rule, which we call the 2015 rule. Currently, the website has changed, and it is not possible to directly access the data in this state. The ranking is now separated between the 2010–12 and 2013–2016 evaluations.

⁸ On the other hand, there are some historians of the thought and post-Keynesian economists that would be offended if they were called “leftists”. Labeling entire research lines as leftist is inaccurate and biased.

Some adjustments had to be done in the data. We consulted the CL index table to adjust any article that could have been published in a journal not present in the *Qualis* 2015 (which accounts for publications up to the third quarter of 2016 at best), since many of them were present in the curricula analyzed. In the case of the *Qualis* 2014, another problem emerged: in [Table 2](#), we show the journals ranked A1, A2 and B1 in both estimations, in order to see how they changed. However, in case of a journal appearing as A1, A2 or B1 in 2015, but not accounted for in 2014 (where nobody had published before), it does not mean to say that the change in the rules promoted it. In order to better evaluate these questions, we decided to use the 2010–2012 *Qualis* evaluation to fill the previous ranking of journals that did not have publications of Brazilian faculty until the *Qualis* 2014. This procedure follows the CAPES guidelines, since *Qualis* has interest in keeping stable the evaluations already given. Lastly, some journals still had no equivalent evaluation for the 2014 rule. In these cases, we filled with the same stratum as in the 2015 evaluation, given that there was no other safe rule to classify them. For some non-economic journals that had not been classified, we used the committee's reference: the statistical mode of the strata that the other evaluation areas of CAPES established (e.g. the *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*), with the ceiling of A2. In this way, we nulled the overestimation effect for the change of rule that could happen.

Afterwards, we compare both *Qualis* 2014 and 2015 with other rankings made by private and governmental associations in the area of Business and Economics. With the intention of understanding how close or not *Qualis* is from other quality evaluation mechanisms, we use the several rankings compiled by [Harzing \(2018\)](#) as comparison.

The last step is to analyze publications from researchers of graduate centers. The graduate centers of our sample are the ones classified as 5, 6 and 7 according to the evaluation of the 2010–2012 triennium: EESP/FGV-SP (São Paulo School of Economics/Getulio Vargas Foundation), EPGE/FGV-RJ (Graduate School of Economics) and FEA/USP (University of São Paulo) are graded 7; Cedeplar/UFMG (Federal University of Minas Gerais), PPGDE/UFPR (Federal University of Paraná), PPGE/Unicamp (University of Campinas), PUC-RJ (Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro) and UnB (University of Brasília), are graded 6; and, lastly, PPGE/UFRJ (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro), PPGE/UFSC (Federal University of Santa Catarina), PPGEA-UFV (Federal University of Viçosa), UCB (Catholic University of Brasília), UFC (Federal University of Ceará), UFF (Fluminense Federal University), UFPB (Federal University of Paraíba), UFPE (Federal University of Pernambuco), UFRGS (Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul) and USP-ESALQ (Luiz de Queiroz College of Agriculture — USP) are graded 5.

We used the Sucupira Platform for the “permanent faculty” enrolled for each year of the quadrennium, given that only their publications count for the calculation of the CAPES grade. Their publications were accounted through the ISSN of each journal in which the published articles were registered in their respective *lattes* curricula. However, given that the score of each article is accounted in function of the center and not of the author, articles that have co-authorship with professionals from the same center could be accounted more than once. We avoided this through a Python code with two filters: (1) same center, year, title and ISSN; and (2) same center, year, ISSN, volume, series, initial page and final page. This procedure also seeks to avoid possible filling mistakes in the *lattes* (such as incorrect filling by one of the authors). Manual checking was used as well, in order to avoid interference from filling errors.⁹

Our focus in this paper is the A1 and A2 strata. They are fundamental to reach the grades 6 and 7. These grades are reserved to centers with a high degree of “internationalization” and follow a different process stipulated by CAPES. For this (based in the 2010–2012 evaluation, with possibility of changing rules), all faculty of the programs must have a minimal score, there must be a minimal percentage of faculty with A1 and A2 publications, besides an evaluation by the members of the commission on the impact of the publications of the center. Lastly, factors not related to publication, such as participation in international institutions and interchange of faculty and students abroad are also evaluated ([CAPES, 2013b](#)).

5. Measurement of impact of the new *Qualis* and pluralism

In this section, we first intend to verify if the inclusion of new journals in the higher strata of *Qualis* has any impact in pluralism. The list of journals that changed positions in each evaluation is presented in the [Appendix A](#).

⁹ The manual checking also served to correct errors from CAPES itself. The Sucupira Platform for the year of 2014 wrongly informed the ranking of a journal and put other in two different strata. This happened, respectively, with the *Análise Econômica*, that was B2 but it was listed as B5 in the site, and the *Revista Brasileira de Estudos Populacionais*, that was in both in the A2 and the B2 strata (due to the limit for the area of economics, its correct stratum was B2).

We analyze the journals that have been potentially chosen by researchers for publication which strata was modified until the closure of the quadrennium. Besides the question whether it belongs in the mainstream, we also verified the inclusion of specialized areas of economics.

After this, we evaluate the real impact of said modifications in the *Qualis* of economics in the short run, that is, the evaluation of the centers. We focused on how modifications of *Qualis* rules in the higher strata impacts each center of our sample, seeking to understand if there are more significant modifications for centers considered mainstream, non-mainstream or hybrid. Each modification corresponds to an accidental benefit or demerit to the publication volume of each center, given that none has complete knowledge of the list before the closure of the quadrennium. Then, we compare the *Qualis* with other lists.

5.1. Traits of the new journals included in the strata A1 and A2

The inclusion of new journals in the strata A1 and A2 encompassed both orthodox and mainstream journals as well as heterodox ones. From the 83 that were once classified in some B or C stratum and were promoted to the highest strata (in other words, not considering those which were already A1 and A2), a little less than a fourth can be considered heterodox or that heterodox articles have fewer less barriers to be published (according to the criteria in note 1). Almost all the international journals that were underestimated in Silva (2009), with exception of some physics journals, were promoted to superior strata of the *Qualis*.

An emblematic promotion example is the *Review of Keynesian Economics* (ROKE). The ROKE was established in October 2012, to publish papers based on the Keynes's and the Post-Keynesian methodology, thus outside the mainstream. It was listed as B5 in the 2012 and the 2014 *Qualis*, but it was promoted to A2 in the last one. This journal, however, was not listed in CL, since it only listed journals present on *EconLit* in 2010.

In spite of heterodox journals growing in absolute number, they still remain a small portion of the A1 and A2 journals, roughly 15%. Even so, the *Qualis* allows heterodox approaches to have a real space of growth and discussion. The comparison made by Novaes (2008) showed that American heterodox researchers produce 1.8 articles per year, while the Brazilian ones produce 5.1 — even though Novaes uses the result to corroborate the thesis that the structure of Brazilian scientific publishing privileges quantity over quality, it is also possible to say that Brazilian heterodoxy suffers less institutional pressure against its research. Besides, even if it is small, this participation allows the possibility of real influence of the heterodoxy in post-graduate centers.

Another analysis we present here is whether specialized areas had greater changes. This fragmentation of the discipline, with strong specialization in areas such as “Regional Economics”, “Ecological Economics”, etc., is a current central discussion, for example, concerning a possible new format of the mainstream (e.g. Cedrini and Fontana, 2018; see also note 1). Here we use CL's criteria to determinate areas and subareas inside economics. The ones not listed in CL we, in most cases,¹⁰ consider them to be from areas outside economics.

CL used the JEL 2-digit codes to classify each journal. The authors built a diversity index for each journal based on these codes. This allowed them to be grouped in areas and subareas. It is considerably difficult to determine an area for each journal, so biases are expected. Here, for example, some journals that would normally be considered as general or macroeconomics journals are listed as Thought/Methodology, because the JEL code used in the papers published there distorted their classification. We maintained this classification because correcting it would imply in creating a new criterion to rank all the journals as well.

Fig. 1 shows the previous *Qualis* ranking of the newly promoted A1 and A2 journals. The new rule promoted 83 journals, from which 13 can be said to be generic, accepting a wide range of subjects.

We can observe that there has been significant inclusion of different areas in the A1 and A2 strata, and that Development/Growth and Systems, Macroeconomics, Microeconomics and General were the ones that received most additions. This implies that they received (more) involuntary benefits in the last evaluation, due to the changes in strata.

¹⁰ Some journals are not in CL because they were either established after 2010 or not indexed in *EconLit* or other unknown reason. We propose the following classification for the following journals: *American Economic Journal – Applied Economics* (Micro/Game Theory – Microeconomics); *American Economic Journal – Macroeconomics* (Macro/Monetary – Macroeconomics); *Review of Keynesian Economics* (Macro/Monetary – Macroeconomics); *International Journal of Financial Markets and Derivatives* (Finance – Business School); *Bio-based and Applied Economics* (Environmental – Nature); *Journal of Demographic Economics* (Demography – Mankind). Another modification is the condensation of all topics from *B.E.* journals in one (considered general journals) since they are all published under the same ISSN.

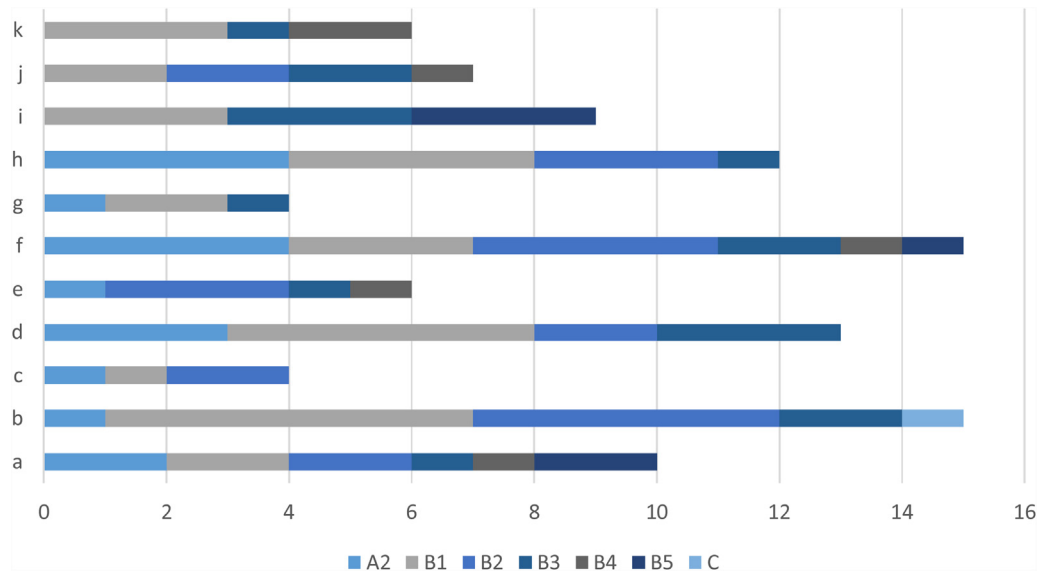


Fig. 1. Journals promoted to A1 and A2 in Qualis 2015.

Source: Elaborated by the authors, based on [Combes and Linnemer \(2010\)](#)'s classification.

CL areas: (a) Business School, (b) Development/Growth and Systems, (c) Econometrics, (d) General, (e) History and Thought/Methodology, (f) Macroeconomics (g) Mankind, (h) Microeconomics, (i) Nature, (j) other areas (outside Economics), (k) Space.

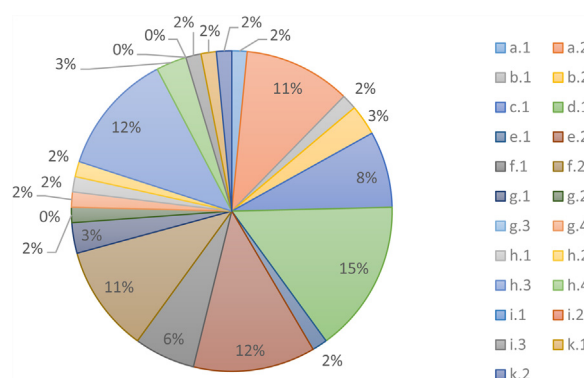


Fig. 2. Distribution of journals classified as A1 and A2 by subareas (2014 rule).

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

CL Subareas: (a.1) Business/Marketing, (a.2) Finance, (b.1) Development/Growth, (b.2) Systems, (c.1) Econometrics, (d.1) General, (e.1) History, (e.2) Thought/Methodology, (f.1) International, (f.2) Macro/Monetary, (g.1) Demography, (g.2) Education, (g.3) Health, (g.4) Labour, (h.1) Industrial Organization, (h.2) Law and Economics, (h.3) Micro/Game Theory, (h.4) Public/Political Science, (i.1) Energy, (i.2) Agricultural, (i.3) Environmental, (k.1) Transport, (k.2) Urban/Regional.

The point system will be treated in the following section, on the status of obtaining rankings 6 and 7 from CAPES. In this case, we can point some areas that were involuntarily “benefited”. We can evaluate that the new journal classification seems to follow the tendency of specialization of the discipline, as well as the possibility of interdisciplinary research, which is one of the deficiencies of the metrics pointed before.

Figs. 2 and 3 show the distribution of the subfields that were classified as A1 and A2 in the last evaluation according to both rules (2014 and 2015). We excluded journals outside economics to simplify this analysis. In **Fig. 1**, it is possible to see how significant journals outside economics are in the evaluation, something that indicates a possibility for interdisciplinarity. If they were accounted for, they would represent, respectively, 34% and 20% of A1 and A2 publications in 2014 and 2015 rules.

The subarea that gained most was Development/Growth, from 2% to 9% of total journals in the A1 and A2 strata. The subareas of Agricultural, Energy and Health Economics were not previously present in those strata, but they are

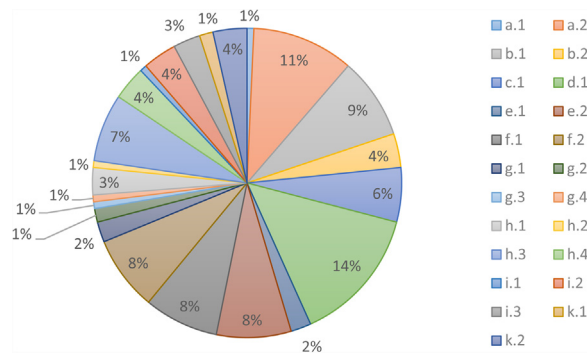


Fig. 3. Distribution of journals classified as A1 and A2 by subareas (2015 rule).

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

CL Subareas: (a.1) Business/Marketing, (a.2) Finance, (b.1) Development/Growth, (b.2) Systems, (c.1) Econometrics, (d.1) General, (e.1) History, (e.2) Thought/Methodology, (f.1) International, (f.2) Macro/Monetary, (g.1) Demography, (g.2) Education, (g.3) Health, (g.4) Labour, (h.1) Industrial Organization, (h.2) Law and Economics, (h.3) Micro/Game Theory, (h.4) Public/Political Science, (i.1) Energy, (i.2) Agricultural, (i.3) Environmental, (k.1) Transport, (k.2) Urban/Regional.

now. The increase of subareas in “high level” strata is important to keep incentives for plurality. However, the changes in the structure of A1 and A2 strata create problems, such as problems of differentiation. We will discuss this shortly.

5.2. Comparing the Qualis rankings with other lists

Before measuring the impact of the changes to the graduate centers, we attempt to assess how close the *Qualis* evaluation system is to other rankings. Although this procedure is not intended or suffices to evaluate *Qualis*, we understand that it can compare CAPES to other similar evaluation efforts. In order to do that, we use the collation of journal rankings made available by professor Anne-Wil Harzing, (Harzing, 2018). Harzing’s List is not an evaluation mechanism, as she makes it clear, but a mechanism to assist professional scholars in choosing the best option to submit their research. Thus, this coupling of 13 different ranks can be useful to our purposes.

Harzing’s list (HL) started to be published in 2000, and its 61th (most recent) edition includes: the *Haut conseil de l’évaluation de la recherche et de l’enseignement supérieur* 2018 (HCRES), the *Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique* 2017 (CNRS), the Danish Ministry ranking 2017 (Den), the *Foundation National pour l’Enseignement de la Gestion des Entreprises* 2016 (Fnege), the Financial Times 50 Ranking 2016, the Erasmus Research Institute of Management Journals Listing 2016 (EJL), the Australian Business Deans Council 2016 (ABDC), the *Verband der Hochschullehrer für Betriebswirtschaft* 2015 (VHB), British Association of Business Schools Ranking 2015 (ABS), University of Queensland 2011 combined with Excellence in Research Australia Ranking (UQ), *Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien* 2008 (WIE), and the Mingers and Harzing (2007) integrated ranking with (EJIS07-CI) and without (EJIS07) data from the 2004 Journal Impact Factor.¹¹

As it becomes clear in HL, the number of journals included is considerably smaller than those present in CL ranking, since this last one aimed to encompass every journal included in *EconLit*. HL brings data on circa 900 journals from Economics-Business area, not necessarily evaluated by all ranks compiled. Due to this, several of the journals in our sample (mostly journals present in Table A1) had no correspondent in HL. Therefore, in Table A2 (Appendix A) we do not use four rankings present in HL: the ones that presented information for only 7 (EJL), 10 (Fnege), 17 (UQ) and 24 (VHB) journals from the 76 we compared. The Financial Times was also not considered because it gives no parameter (division by strata) that would allow comparing each journal.

The sample we analyzed contained journals that changed from the B to A strata (and within A strata) or from A to B strata, depicted in Table A1, along with those journals which we listed as grafts of previous CAPES rankings. Thus, we can analyze how the other lists evaluate those journals that previously were not regarded as “leading” or “influential”. Nevertheless, a total of 35 journals from our sample are not included in HL and were also excluded from the analysis.

¹¹ Previous versions of the list also included scores from the Journal Impact Factor. However Thomson Scientific Inc. requested its removal, since the company does not allow the republication or re-use of its products.

Table 1
Comparison between the highly regarded journals (except ABS's 4* strata).

		ABDC		ABS		CNRS		Qualis 2014		Qualis 2015	
		A*	A	4	3	1	2	A1	A2	A1	A2
ABDC	A*										
	A										
ABS	4	4	2								
	3	12	21								
CNRS	1	9	10	5	12						
	2	7	17	1	13						
Qualis 2014	A1	0	2	0	1	1	3				
	A2	11	10	3	11	6	9				
Qualis 2015	A1	15	33	4	28	15	23	4	17		
	A2	0	7	4	0	1	5	0	0		

Source: Elaborated by the author.

The first question that we notice is the lack of non-English language journals in the HL (in general, not only among those depicted in Table A2). None of the Spanish-language journals present in Table A1 is included in Table A2. That shows one of the limitations of this comparisons in an evaluative sense, given the discussed above. Regarding CL's areas, only 52% of the Development/Growth and Systems area are present, as well as 44% of the Nature area, 42% of the areas other than Economics and 33% of the History and Thought/Methodology area. Those were the ones with smaller representation.

Since there are many lists to compare, we chose the Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC). This choice was made due to the good number of different strata present in this ranking, its recentness (last update is from 2016) and because all the journals in our sample have an equivalent ranking in ABDC. The ABDC lists journals that are relevant to Australian business academics. They are organized in four different strata: A*, A, B and C. Where A* stands for the leading (or best) journal in its field. From the journals present in Table A2, seventeen are classified as A*, and from those none were A1 in Qualis 2014, and only two were not A1 in Qualis 2015. This shows an increase in similarity between both rankings, with less journals being under-valeted. Naturally, this equivalence is not complete, and, as it can be observed, most A1 (Qualis 2015) journals are classified as A (highly regarded journal), and even six as B (well-regarded journal) in the ABDC.

Table 1 above summarizes the comparison between some of the rankings. It is possible to see how many journals are considered "highly regarded" or "leading" in each ranking.¹² Further information can be accessed in Table A2.

These ranking specificities can be understood as a result based in the intentions of those who built it. Is there a focus in a field? Is there intention to avoid any sort of bias? Is one kind of bias preferable to others? Is the field plural? Do authors want to expand this plurality? We can further observe these differences comparing the A* journals to a third ranking, which also encompass our entire sample: the ABS ranking. Its strata are 4*, 4, 3, 2 and 1, where journals marked as 4* are considered world elite journals.¹³ We can observe that only one A* is also a 4* journal, the *Annals of Statistics* (which is one of the journals from an area outside Economics that was downgraded from A2 to B1). Furthermore, four A* journals are 4 in ABC ranking, and all the other twelve are 2.

From this analysis, we can see how different associations and agencies responsible for evaluating journals have a different understanding of which factors are the most important. This is certainly more noticeable in journals outside mainstream (or *Diamond List*) or from a specific area, as the low equivalence in some areas between *Qualis* and HL suggests.

5.3. Impact of the modifications on the graduate centers

We start our initial parameter with the distinction of whether the center can be considered mainstream or not, following Codato et al. (2016). We can classify as unambiguously *mainstream* FGV-RJ, PUC-RJ, FGV-SP, UCB and UFPE. All the others are considered *non-mainstream*. In the non-mainstream category, there are both centers that have a

¹² ABS's 4* (world elite journal) strata was excluded, since it was compatible with only one journal from our sample. This is not a major question, since "4" stands for "top journal", and 3 for "highly regarded journal". (See Harzing, 2018).

¹³ Furthermore, 4 is a top journal, 3 a highly regarded journal, 2 a well-regarded journal and 1 a recognized journal (Harzing, 2018).

Table 2
Permanent faculty publications in A1, A2, B1 strata according to 2014 and 2015 rules.

Department	A1		A2		B1	
	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014
CEDEPLAR	12	9	6	2	55	45
FGV-RJ	46	24	2	17	17	19
FGV-SP	56	19	21	21	46	46
PUC-RIO	22	7	0	8	16	17
UCB	13	1	17	15	27	22
UFC	5	0	4	6	39	33
UFF	16	3	15	9	42	37
UFPB	13	1	1	2	31	26
UFPE	10	2	8	10	36	37
UFPR	11	2	6	8	48	41
UFRGS	11	3	10	6	74	62
UFRJ	21	9	13	8	50	50
UFSC	17	2	9	11	35	28
UFV	5	0	6	7	35	35
UNB	21	11	15	10	28	27
UNICAMP	9	5	12	12	47	34
USP	23	10	25	18	46	46
USP-ESALQ	10	0	6	6	47	46

Source: Sucupira Platform — Elaborated by the authors.

majorly heterodox production (UFRJ and Unicamp) and the ones that do not have their production highly concentrated either in the mainstream or in the heterodoxy. We considered the homogeneity of the permanent faculty (taking in consideration mainly if their *alma mater* can be considered mainstream) and research lines (again, considering its proximity with the previous distinctions). Those departments, no matter how close they are from any approach, are considered *hybrid*.

As we can observe in Table 2, all centers had increment of articles in higher strata. The center that was less positively affected was Unicamp, with 4 additional A1 and the same number of A2. Then, UFC and Cedeplar, with 5 and 7 new A1, respectively, and 2 new A2 each. In spite of them being considered non-mainstream, the UFC is much closer to the mainstream than the others. On the other hand, PUC-RJ increased to 22 the number of A1 articles, at the cost of 8 A2 publications. Three of these new A1 came from *Econometric Reviews*, previously considered B2. The case of this journal would be a good example of a significant change for the grades 6 and 7.

The centers that had greater increase of A1 and A2 publications were both the FGVs, being that the growth of the FGV-SP was even more significant given that it kept the number of A2s (FGV-RJ diminished in 15) and increased in 37 the A1s (against 22 of the FGV-RJ). In the case of the FGV-RJ, of the 18 new A1 and A2 only 9 were previously classified in B strata in *Qualis* 2014. Concerning the FGV-SP, it was 25 that were previously in some B strata. None of them published in a journal that emerged from B4 and, and FGV-SP published one paper in a previously B5 (now A2) journal. USP, UCB, UFRJ and UFF also had a large number of papers published in journals that were B in 2014 and are A in the 2015: 20, 14, 14 and 19, respectively.

The other centers that were not nominally cited also had a significant increase in their publications in superior strata, independently of being considered mainstream, closer to the heterodoxy or any other classification. A more detailed analysis can be observed in Table 3, where we show that the per capita average each year. This is a closer measure to the one used in the excellence grades.

We can observe by analyzing the “Average” column (the one linked to the ranking we presented) of the table for the *Qualis* before and after the change, that only the UFF (a hybrid center) had a significant position improvement, going from 13th to 5th. It published nineteen papers in journals that were not previously considered A1 or A2. From those, three papers were in *Applied Economic Letters* and three in *Economic Modelling*. And, from the 31 papers published in those strata, 15 had professor Helder Ferreira de Mendonça as the first author. The most negative change belongs to Unicamp, one of the two fully heterodox graduate centers, which falls from the 8th position to the 14th one. Unicamp, which, as said before, was known for a high concentration in its international publishing, had a considerable

Table 3

Permanent faculty *per capita* publication score (year to year and average) in A1 and A2 strata according to 2014 and 2015 rules.

Qualis 2015						Average's ranking	Qualis 2014					
2013	2014	2015	2016	Average			Average	2016	2015	2014	2013	
80.000	96.000	120.000	100.000	99.000	FGV-SP	1	FGV-RJ	60.737	70.588	54.667	70.000	47.692
69.231	68.750	72.000	98.824	77.201	FGV-RJ	2	FGV-SP	55.963	44.444	70.588	82.667	26.154
94.000	26.000	78.000	68.000	66.500	UCB	3	USP	36.007	27.778	40.000	50.000	26.250
66.250	85.000	47.778	56.667	63.924	USP	4	UCB	32.500	32.000	32.000	16.000	50.000
65.455	56.364	68.333	53.333	60.871	UFF	5	PUC-RIO	28.651	51.667	9.091	40.000	13.846
69.412	26.667	64.706	33.750	48.634	UNB	6	UNB	27.813	11.250	37.647	20.000	42.353
23.077	63.636	18.182	83.333	47.057	PUC-RIO	7	UFPE	21.780	6.667	35.000	14.545	30.909
65.333	18.889	49.524	39.000	43.187	UFRJ	8	UNICAMP	21.212	12.000	31.000	4.706	37.143
57.333	30.667	49.333	27.692	41.256	UFSC	9	UFRJ	21.179	15.000	25.714	13.333	30.667
43.636	16.364	50.000	31.667	35.417	UFPE	10	UFSC	18.205	6.154	21.333	22.667	22.667
32.727	16.667	36.667	48.333	33.598	UFPR	11	UFPR	17.841	20.000	20.000	15.000	16.364
17.333	38.571	28.750	45.714	32.592	UFRGS	12	CEDEPLAR	17.167	6.250	23.750	13.333	25.333
42.667	18.667	30.000	17.500	27.208	CEDEPLAR	13	UFF	15.754	14.444	20.000	17.143	11.429
40.000	10.588	40.000	16.000	26.647	UNICAMP	14	UFRGS	13.396	11.429	6.250	18.571	17.333
0.000	23.077	28.571	48.571	25.055	UFPB	15	UFV	12.121	6.667	20.000	14.545	7.273
21.429	24.286	16.250	36.250	24.554	USP-ESALQ	16	UFC	8.901	17.143	12.308	6.154	0.000
7.273	25.455	45.000	6.667	21.098	UFV	17	USP-ESALQ	7.679	10.000	15.000	5.714	0.000
0.000	13.846	21.538	25.714	15.275	UFC	18	UFPB	4.780	5.714	5.714	7.692	0.000

Source: Sucupira Platform — Elaborated by the authors.

well-distributed publication pattern. David Dequech, who published the most in A1 and A2, had four (from 21) papers in those strata during the evaluated period. The other heterodox department, UFRJ, had an improvement in one position. This analysis, compared to the positions in the *Qualis* 2015, can differ a little from the one made by CAPES. This happens because we had to correct many filling errors and double counting that existed in the *lattes* of the faculty, something that is not completely possible during an evaluation, especially because of the short period of time that the CAPES makes available to the commission.

In sum, this modification did not cause greater impact in the centers considered outside or inside the mainstream. This implies that it did not alter significantly the comparative evaluation of heterodox and more pluralistic centers, at first. One of the reasons why is that, in previous evaluations, the main heterodox/general journals in which Brazilians published were “grafted”, such as *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, *Journal of Post-Keynesian Economics* and *Review of Radical Political Economics*. Again, a good part of the changes comes, actually, from the inclusion of specialized journals in the superior strata, such as from ecological economics, health economics, or history of economic thought, and that dilutes the effect of this change in the orthodox/heterodox relation without minimizing the pluralist significance. Besides, the inclusion of heterodox journals was significant enough to reaffirm this type of pluralism.

This increase in diversification has the potential to allow an even greater pluralism in Brazilian departments, since more research lines are able to publish in highly ranked journals. From that, departments with different theoretical focus or specialization can access more research funds. Obviously all the *Qualis*' problems are not solved, and a new one may emerge: the lack of differentiation between the journals considered A1 and A2. Since the strata are fixed, there are too many journals considered as equal, and, as said previously, even journals that accept unfinished research or have no peer-review process. This may have been solved with a new rule created in the last meeting to rank departments (CAPES, 2017). It was established that a report should be given regarding the impact of the publications. This actually means that the departments will select their eight main publications, in the main journals of each field (regional economics, macroeconomics, social economics, etc.), and they will be used in a more specific consideration.

A further major question is the weight of the *Qualis* on the evaluation process of Brazilian graduate centers, which some consider excessive. Although there are other rules that should be followed, they are not as relevant when it comes to the evaluation for grades 6 and 7. These questions and how the evaluation interferes in the academic culture, encouraging “salami science” for example. Those questions may be approached in a future study.

6. Conclusion

As we showed, the available metrics for the quantitative evaluation of academic production, be it from WoS, Scopus or GS, present biases that the related literature has been seeking to correct ever since. The *Qualis* of economics, in turn, was always based on works that had the objective of ranking graduate programs in Brazil, something that influences directly not only the academic prestige, but also the availability of resources. For this reason, it has been criticized, especially because of the subjectivity of allocation of journals inside its strata.

With the modifications of 2016 (the *Qualis* 2015), *ad hoc* changes in the classification of journals were kept to a minimum, and the quantity of journals in the superior strata was significantly increased. These strata not only score higher, but also are the base to assign grades 6 and 7 to the centers. Having this in mind, we evaluate here how these included journals can be understood: mainstream, non-mainstream or hybrid. This allowed us to evaluate that the modification kept the pluralism of economics in the country, something constantly pointed by the literature (e.g. Fernández and Suprinyak, 2016). Besides, we divided these journals in specialized subareas, with the intention to observe pluralism, coming from an increased weight of the specialization in economics. We concluded that not only this modification contemplated a good number of subareas, but also kept interdisciplinary journals. These two characteristics are important, because metrics have pointed out the lack of both.

Lastly, we compared the average publication of faculty in centers graded 5, 6 and 7 by CAPES with what it could be if the 2014 classification was kept. Here, only two centers changed their position significantly and we did not observe negative or positive bias towards mainstream or heterodoxy. This excludes bias towards a research agenda in the modifications.

From what has been discussed, we can say that *Qualis* is an interesting resource for evaluating academic production. From a peripheral perspective, where most of the journals are not included amongst the most important in the world, and that important research lines have little space in top journals, *Qualis* brings an important contribution. The bias it creates seems less harmful than it would be if only the IF was used, for example.

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Appendix A.

Table A1
Journals that changed classification between 2014 and 2015 Qualis, regarding the A1 and A2 strata.

Journal	Qualis 2014	Qualis 2015	Subarea CL	Area CL	Journal	Qualis 2014	Qualis 2015	Subarea CL	Area CL
Annals Of Finance (Print)*	B5	A1	a.2	a	Computational Economics*	B1	A1	c.1	c
Emerging Markets Review	B2	A2	a.2	a	Econometric Reviews	B2	A1	c.1	c
Insurance. Mathematics & Economics	B5	A1	a.2	a	International Journal Of Forecasting	B2	A1	c.1	c
International Review of Financial Analysis	B4	A2	a.2	a	Journal of Applied Econometrics	A2	A1	c.1	c
Journal of Banking & Finance	A2	A1	a.2	a	Applied Economics	B1	A1	d.1	d
Journal of Empirical Finance	B1	A1	a.2	a	Applied Economics Letters	B2	A1	d.1	d
Journal of Financial Econometrics	B1	A1	a.2	a	Canadian Journal of Economics	A2	A1	d.1	d
Journal of Financial Intermediation	A2	A1	a.2	a	Economic Inquiry	A2	A1	d.1	d
Journal of Financial Stability	B2	A2	a.2	a	Economics Bulletin*	B2	A1	d.1	d
The Quarterly Review of Econ. And Finance	B3	A2	a.2	a	Economics Letters	A2	A1	d.1	d
Desarrollo Económico (Buenos Aires)*	B1	A1	b.1	b	Empirical Economics	B3	A1	d.1	d
Economía (J. of The LA and Carib. Ass.)*	B3	A2	b.1	b	Int. J. of Social Economics	B1	A2	d.1	d
Economic Develop. & Cultural Change	B2	A1	b.1	b	Metroeconomica*	B1	A2	d.1	d
Economics f Inn. and New Tech.	B1	A1	b.1	b	Oxford Economic Papers	B1	A1	d.1	d
Investigación Económica*	B2	A2	b.1	b	Oxford Review of Economic Policy	B1	A1	d.1	d
Journal of Development Economics	A2	A1	b.1	b	Revue D'économie Politique*	B3	A2	d.1	d
Journal of International Development	C	A2	b.1	b	The B.E. Journal of Macroecon.	B3	A2	d.1	d
Oxford Development Studies*	B2	A2	b.1	b	Economic History Review	B2	A1	e.1	e
Review of Development Economics*	B1	A1	b.1	b	Financial History Review*	B2	A2	e.1	e
Structural Change and Economic Dynamics*	B1	A1	b.1	b	Journal of Economic Issues*	A2	A1	e.2	e
The Journal of Developing Areas	B3	A2	b.1	b	Journal of Institutional Economics*	B2	A2	e.2	e
World Bank Economic Review	B1	A1	b.1	b	J. of the History of Econ. Thought	B3	A2	e.2	e
Economic Systems*	B1	A2	b.2	b	Revue de la Regulation*	B4	A1	e.2	e
Emerging Markets Finance & Trade*	B2	A2	b.2	b	International J. of Fin. & Economics	B2	A2	f.1	f
Journal of Comparative Economics	B2	A1	b.2	b	Int. Review of Econ. and Finance	B1	A1	f.1	f
Journal of International Economics	B2	A1	f.2	f	The Review of Income And Wealth*	B1	A1	h.4	h
Journal of Int. Money and Finance	A2	A1	f.2	f	Energy Economics	B3	A1	i.1	i
Journal of Policy Modeling	B3	A1	f.2	f	Agribusiness (New York, N.Y. Print)*	B5	A2	i.2	i
Open Economies Review*	B4	A1	f.2	f	Agricultural Economics	B5	A1	i.2	i
Review of International Economics	B1	A1	f.2	f	American Journal of Agricultural Economics	B1	A1	i.2	i
The N. Amer. J. of Econ. and Finance*	B1	A1	f.2	f	Journal of Int. Agri. Trade And Developments*	B5	A2	i.2	i
Economic Modelling	B3	A1	f.3	f	Rivista Di Economia Agraria*	B3	A1	i.2	i
Int. R. of Applied Economics	B2	A2	f.3	f	Ecological Economics (Amsterdam)	B1	A1	i.3	i
Journal of Applied Economics	B2	A2	f.3	f	Environment and Development Economics*	B1	A1	i.3	i
J. of Economic Dynamics & Control	A2	A1	f.3	f	Resources Policy*	B3	A2	i.3	i
Macroeconomic Dynamics	A2	A1	f.3	f	Annals Inst. of Statistical Mathematics*	A1	A2	j.1	j

Review of Economic Dynamics	A2	A1	f.3	f	Biofuels Bioproducts & Biorefining-Biofpr*	B1	A2	j.1	j
Review of Keynesian Economics*	B5	A2	f.3	f	Energy Policy	B3	A2	j.1	j
The R. of Black Political Economy*	B3	A2	g.1	g	Innovation: Organization & Management*	B4	A2	j.1	j
Economics of Education Review	B1	A1	g.2	g	Journal of Forecasting	B2	A1	j.1	j
Health Economics	B1	A1	g.3	g	Journal of Optimiz. Theory and Applications	B2	A2	j.1	j
Journal of Labor Economics	A2	A1	g.4	g	Land Use Policy*	B1	A2	j.1	j
Journal of Cultural Economics*	B2	A2	h.1	h	Telecommunications Policy*	B4	A2	k.1	k
Journal of Econ. & Manag. Strategy	B1	A1	h.1	h	Journal of Regional Science	B3	A1	k.2	k
Tourism Economics	B3	A2	h.1	h	Papers in Regional Science	B4	A2	k.2	k
The Journal of Law and Economics	A2	A1	h.2	h	Regional Science & Urban Economics	B1	A1	k.2	k
International Journal of Game Theory	A2	A1	h.3	h	Regional Studies	B1	A1	k.2	k
Journal of Economic Behavior & Org.	A2	A1	h.3	h	Annals of Regional Science	B1	A2	k.2	k
Journal of Math. Economics	A2	A1	h.3	h	Was A1 or A2 in 2014 but not in 2015				
Journal of Productivity Analysis	B2	A1	h.3	h	Annals of Statistics	A2	B1	j.1	j
Theoretical Economics	B1	A1	h.3	h	European Journal of Operational Research	A2	B1	j.1	j
Finanzarchiv	B2	A2	h.4	h	Scientometrics	A2	B1	j.1	j
Journal of Public Economic Theory	B1	A1	h.4	h	The Int. Food and Agribusin. Manag. Review*	A2	B1	j.1	j

Source: Sucupira Platform — Elaborated by the authors

CL areas: (a) Business School, (b) Development/Growth and Systems, (c) Econometrics, (d) General, (e) History and Thought/Methodology, (f) Macroeconomics (g) Mankind, (h) Microeconomics, (i) Nature, (j) Areas other than Economics, (k) Space/**CL Subareas:** (a.1) Business/Marketing, (a.2) Finance, (b.1) Development/Growth, (b.2) Systems, (c.1) Econometrics, (d.1) General, (e.1) History, (e.2) Thought/Methodology, (f.1) International, (f.2) Macro/Monetary, (g.1) Demography, (g.2) Education, (g.3) Health, (g.4) Labour, (h.1) Industrial Organization, (h.2) Law and Economics, (h.3) Micro/Game Theory, (h.4) Public/Political Science, (i.1) Energy, (i.2) Agricultural, (i.3) Environmental, (j.1) other area, (k.1) Transport, (k.2) Urban/Regional. * Journals not present in the Harzing's list.

Table A2
Comparison between Harzing's list and Qualis 2014 and 2015 rankings.

Journals	Rankings present in Harzing's list [Range highest to lowest]								Qualis	
	Ejis [4-1]	EjisCI [4-1]	Wie [A+-A]	ABS [4*-1]	Abdc [A*-C]	Cnrs [1*-4]	Den [2-1]	Hceres [A-C]	Qualis 2014	Qualis 2015
J. of Int. Economics	4	3	A	4	A*	1	2	A	B2	A1
J. of Labor Economics	4	3	A	4	A*	1	2	A	A2	A1
J. of Financial Intermediation	3	3	A	4	A*	2	2	A	A2	A1
J. of Applied Econometrics	4	3	A	3	A*	2	2	A	A2	A1
J. of Law and Economics	4	4	A	3	A*	1	1	A	A2	A1
J. of Banking & Finance	3	3	A	3	A*	2	2	A	A2	A1
J. of Development Economics	3	3	A	3	A*	1	2	A	A2	A1
J. of Economic Behavior & Org.	3	3	A	3	A*	2	2	A	A2	A1
American J. of Agric. Economics	3	3		3	A*	1	1	A	B1	A1
Regional Studies	3	3	A	3	A*	2	2	A	B1	A1
J. of Econ. Dynamics & Control	2	2	A	3	A*	1	2	A	A2	A1
Health Economics	2	2		3	A*	1	2	A	B1	A1
Energy Economics	2	2	A	3	A*	2	2	A	B3	A1
Review of Economic Dynamics				3	A*	2	2	A	A2	A1
Theoretical Economics				3	A*	1	2	A	B1	A1
Annals of Statistics	4	4	A	4*	A*		2		A2	B1
European J. of Operational Res.	3	3	A	4	A*	1	1	A	A2	B1
History of Political Economy	3	3	A	2	A	1	2	A	A1	A1
Economic History Review	4	3	A	4	A	1	2	A	B2	A1
Insurance, Math. & Economics	4	3	A	3	A	3	2	A	B5	A1
World Bank Economic Review	4	3	A	3	A	1	1	A	B1	A1
J. of Math. Economics	4	3	A	3	A	1	1	A	A2	A1
J. of Regional Science	4	3	A	3	A	2	1	A	B3	A1
J. of Empirical Finance	3	3	A	3	A	3	2	A	B1	A1
Econ. Develop. & Cult. Change	3	3	A	3	A	1	2	A	B2	A1
Econometric Reviews	3	3	A	3	A	2	1	A	B2	A1
Int. J. of Forecasting	3	3		3	A	3	2	B	B2	A1
Economic Inquiry	3	3	A	3	A	2	1	A	A2	A1
Economic Letters	3	3	A	3	A	3	1	B	A2	A1
Oxford Economic Papers	3	3	A	3	A	2	1	A	B1	A1
J. of Int. Money and Finance	3	3	A	3	A	2	1	A	A2	A1
Ecological Economics	3	3	A	3	A	1	1	A	B1	A1
Cambridge J. of Economics	3	3	A	3	A	2	2	A	A1	A1
Int. Review of Financial Analysis	1	1		3	A	3	1	B	B5	A1
J. of Financial Econometrics				3	A	3	2	B	B1	A1
Int. J. of Game Theory	3	3	A	2	A	2	1	A	A2	A1
J. of Productivity Analysis	3	3		2	A	3	1	B	B2	A1
J. of Forecasting	3	3	A	2	A	3	1	B	B2	A1
Applied Economics	2	2	A	2	A	2	1	A	B1	A1

Empirical Economics	2	2	A	2	A	4	1	C	B3	A1
Oxford R. of Economic Policy	2	2	A	2	A	3	1	B	B1	A1
J. of Policy Modeling	2	2	A	2	A	4	1	C	B3	A1
J. of Econ. & Manag. Strategy	2	1	A	2	A	1	2	A	B1	A1
Economic Modelling	1	1	A	2	A	2	1	A	B3	A1
Int. R. of Econ. and Finance				2	A		1		B1	A1
Review of Int. Economics			A	2	A	2	1	A	B1	A1
Macroeconomic Dynamics				2	A	2	1	A	A2	A1
Economics of Education.				2	A	2	2	A	B1	A1
J. of Public Econ. Theory			A	2	A	2	1	A	B1	A1
Agric. Economics				2	A	3	1	B	B5	A1
J. of Comparative Economics	3	2	A	3	A	1	1	A	B2	A2
J. of Optimiz. Theory & Appl.	3	3	A	3	A		1		B2	A2
Regional Sci. & Urban Econ.	3	3	A	3	A	2	1	A	B4	A2
Tourism Economics	2	1		2	A		1		B3	A2
Emerging Markets Review				2	A	3	1	B	B2	A2
The B.E. J. of Macroecon.				2	A	2	1	A	B3	A2
Energy Policy				2	A	2	2	A	B3	A2
Scientometrics				2	A		2		A2	B1
Economic Geography	3	4	A	4	A	1	2	A	A2 [§]	
Indust. and Corporate Change	2	2		3	A	1	2	A	A2 [§]	
National Tax J.	3	3	A	2	A	2	1		A2 [§]	
J. of Post Keynesian Economics	3	3	A	2	B	2	1	A	A1	A1
Econ. of Inn. and New Tech.	2	2		2	B	2	1	A	B1	A1
J. of Economic Issues	2	2	A	2	B	3	1	B	A2	A1
Canadian J. of Adm. Sciences	1	1		2	B	3	1	B	A2	A1
J. of Economic Methodology				2	B	2	1	A	A1	A1
Applied Economics Letters	1	1	A	1	B	4	1	C	B2	A1
Int. J. of Fin. & Economics	3	3		3	B	3	1	B	B2	A2
Quart. R. of Econ. and Finance	2	2		2	B	3	1	B	B3	A2
Annals of Regional Science	2	2	A	2	B	2	1	A	B1	A2
J. of the History of Econ.Thought				2	B	2	1	A	B3	A2
Int. R. of Applied Economics	3	3		1	B	4	1	C	B2	A2
J. of Applied Economics	3	3	A	1	B		1		B2	A2
J. of Developing Areas	2	2		1	B		1		B3	A2
FinanzArchiv	2	2	A	1	B	4	1	C	B2	A2
Int. J. of Social Economics	1	1		1	B		1		B1	A2

Source: Harzing (2018). Elaborated by the authors

[§]Journals which are not present in neither Qualis' 2014 or 2015 ranking. We used here the information of previous rankings

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