

# Biological Anthropology in Brazil: a preliminary overview

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## **Abstract**

The article reports the findings of a wide-ranging investigative study, designed to produce a ‘snapshot’ of Brazilian Biological Anthropology based on quantitative, qualitative, historical-documentary and bibliographic data. It includes excerpts from a series of interviews given by four Brazilian researchers who identify their area of work as Biological Anthropology, interspersed with other sources of information. These excerpts are organized into the following topics: (a) the peripheral status of Biological Anthropology within the wider field of anthropology in Brazil; (b) the relations between institutional affiliation and professional activity; and (c) the visibility of the area within the country and abroad. The aim is to provide a contribution, albeit preliminary, to a survey of the studies and discussions concerning the biological dimension of Anthropology in Brazil, in all its different aspects, especially the contemporary situation.

**Keywords:** Biological Anthropology; Brazilian Anthropology; Scientific Field; Brazil.

# Antropologia Biológica no Brasil: esboço para um retrato

## **Resumo**

O artigo traz a lume informações recolhidas a partir de um amplo estudo investigativo, o qual procurou delinear uma espécie de “instantâneo” da Antropologia Biológica brasileira a partir de dados quantitativos, qualitativos, histórico-documentais e bibliográficos. Nele estão dispostos excertos extraídos de uma série de quatro depoimentos concedidos por pesquisadores brasileiros, os quais consideram-se atuantes na área de Bioantropologia, entremeados por informações de outra natureza. Esses excertos encontram-se organizados em tópicos a saber: (a) o lugar periférico ocupado pela Bioantropologia no campo antropológico nacional; (b) as relações entre filiação institucional e exercício profissional; (c) a visibilidade da área dentro e fora do país. Espera-se, com isso, uma contribuição, ainda que inicial, para uma retomada dos estudos e discussões devotados à contraparte biológica da Antropologia no Brasil, nos seus mais diferentes aspectos, especialmente na contemporaneidade.

**Palavras-chave:** Antropologia Biológica; Antropologia Brasileira; Campo Científico; Brasil.

# Biological Anthropology in Brazil: a preliminary overview<sup>1</sup>

Verlan Valle Gaspar Neto

## Introduction

In 2004, The Brazilian Anthropology Association (ABA) published the results of a survey on the state of Brazilian Anthropology. Entitled *O Campo da Antropologia no Brasil* (The Field of Anthropology in Brazil: Trajano Filho & Ribeiro 2004), the compendium discussed the characteristics of Anthropology in the country over a period of a decade (1992-2001) based on a wide-ranging survey of data. Despite the importance of this endeavour, it is worth emphasizing that what was presented as “the field of Anthropology in Brazil” contains a precise equation. The word Anthropology, different to what can be observed elsewhere, appears to be a synonym of Sociocultural Anthropology. This association, common in the national anthropological setting, is not casuistic, since it stems from political, intellectual, theoretical and institutional factors related to the historical development of Brazilian Anthropology, as well as reflecting the specific configuration of the field today, where the sociocultural field maintains a hegemonic position at diverse levels, especially compared to the other major field of Anthropology, namely the biological.

Historically recognized as Physical Anthropology, Biological Anthropology and/or Bioanthropology, not only is this ‘other side’ of Anthropology not included in the compendium cited above, in Brazil there has been a distinct lack of studies concerning either its more recent historical development or its contemporary situation, especially institutional.<sup>2</sup> With the exception of a few more generalized initiatives (Salzano 1997 and 2013; Santos 1996), most of the studies (historical and meta-analyses) devoted to Brazilian Bioanthropology are limited to the passage from the nineteenth century to the twentieth, a moment when it played a key role in the discussions on Brazil’s viability as a nation, informed by the racialist theories then prevalent.<sup>3</sup> In terms of synchronic and diagnostic surveys, the most recent are those by Castro Faria, in the 1950s/1960s (Castro Faria 1998, 2000a and 2000b), but, even so, equally anchored in a historical perspective that traces back to the nineteenth century.

The present article seeks to mitigate this situation, bringing to light information collected through a wide-ranging four-year investigative study (2008-2012), which sought to produce a kind of ‘snapshot’ of Brazilian Biological Anthropology based on quantitative, qualitative, historical-documentary and bibliographical data. Since it is impossible to explore this huge amount of data in a single article, the article presents excerpts from a set of testimonies given by four Brazilian researchers who identify their

1 This paper is an updated and revised version of an excerpt taken from the PhD dissertation “A outra face do crânio: antropologia biológica no Brasil hoje” (The Other Face of the Skull: Brazilian Biological Anthropology Today) submitted and defended by the author at the Postgraduate Program in Anthropology at the Universidade Federal Fluminense (Fluminense Federal University – Brazil) in 2012.

2 A small explanatory note: the terms ‘Physical Anthropology,’ ‘Biological Anthropology’ and ‘Bioanthropology’ allude to the same area, but at distinct moments in the history of biological studies in Anthropology. Usually, the first term refers to (and was widely employed in) the period spanning from the nineteenth century to the middle of the last century, while the latter two terms became used more frequently from the 1950s. This change undoubtedly reflects a series of theoretical-methodological transformations that, for reasons of space and intent, cannot be analysed in-depth here, but can be assessed from a more general perspective in Little & Sussman (2010). It is worth emphasizing that, over the course of the article, the apparently dislocated uses of these terms by the interviewees allude more to a synchronic dimension (the designation of the same area) than diachronic.

3 On the history of Biological Anthropology in Brazil, covering the period between the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, aside from the indications made in the body of the text, see, among other works, the following: Gaspar Neto & Rodrigues-Carvalho (2017); Gonçalves (2011); Gonçalves et al. (2012); Keuller (2008, 2012 and 2017); Melatti (2007); Sá et al. (2008); Santos (2012); Schwarcz (1993); Souza, V. (2009, 2011).

area of work as Biological Anthropology, interspersed by other kinds of information. These excerpts are organized into the following topics: (a) the peripheral situation of Biological Anthropology in the national anthropological field; (b) the relations between institutional affiliation and professional activity; (c) the visibility of the area inside the country and abroad, taking as a parameter the quality of the scientific production of Biological Anthropology in Brazil as reflected in scientific periodicals.

Before proceeding with the exposition of these interviewees, it should be emphasized that all of them echo two interconnected planes, one more general, the other more local. General because these researchers give their impressions concerning Bioanthropology as a whole, or more precisely, offer replies to a question we could adapt from Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira (1988): “What is this we call Brazilian [biological] anthropology”? And local because the institutional inclusion and the personal and professional trajectories of each interviewee undoubtedly play a significant role in their particular stances. In sum, their positions (the ‘concerning’) are not dissociated from the contexts through which they are emitted (the ‘from where’). This takes us to Bourdieu (1975, 1976), who argued that the propositions defended by the actors from a scientific field are oriented by their respective positions within this structure. As a result, we are left with a diagnostic framework in which, despite agreements outweighing disagreements, the latter are just as revealing as the former when it comes to some aspects of the dynamics internal to Brazilian Bioanthropology and its place in relation to what has conventionally been called the field of Anthropology in Brazil.

## The data

As remarked earlier, this article is founded primarily on interviews given by four professionals who expressly identify their area of work as Biological Anthropology in Brazil. These are senior researchers in their respective specialities with careers spanning close to two decades or more. All of them possess a broad scientific production that circulates nationally and internationally, are responsible for supervising masters and doctoral students (having indeed supervised a significant proportion of the other professionals active today in the area), as well as, at the time of the interviews, being involved in a series of research projects, both as coordinators and as collaborators. They are:<sup>4</sup>

- Maria Cátira Bortolini, a member of the Department of Genetics of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (DG/UFRGS), whose academic output focuses on general and local aspects of the genetic variability of the Brazilian population (Genetics of Human Populations), as well as the populating of the American continent. Bortolini presents herself as a researcher working in Biological Anthropology insofar as her works focus on what she herself defines as an ‘Anthropological Genetics.’
- Ricardo Ventura Santos, a member of the Department of Anthropology at the National Museum of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (MN/UFRJ), and the Sérgio Arouca National School of Public Health of the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (ENSP/Fiocruz). Part of his academic output is dedicated to the Bioanthropology of contemporary populations (Biomedical Anthropology), more specifically to the health and demographics of indigenous populations. In parallel with this theme, other works produced by him address ethnic-racial questions in Brazilian society, interfacing with the Social Sciences more generally and also with the history of national Anthropology.

<sup>4</sup> The survey also involved a review of the main publications of each of the researchers, as indicated by themselves. For space reasons, these have not been reproduced here.

- Sheila Maria Ferraz Mendonça de Souza, researcher at ENSP/Fiocruz, and a constant collaborator with the Biological Anthropology Sector of the MN/UFRJ. Her scientific output is highly diverse, encompassing topics in the areas of Historical and Prehistorical Archaeology, Biological Anthropology and Zoological Osteology. In Biological Anthropology, her work focuses on the analysis of patterns of health and sickness in past populations through skeletal materials (Bioarchaeology and Paleopathology), which allows her to study on the interface between Bioanthropology and Archaeology, especially in the study of archaeological sites with funeral remains.
- Walter Alves Neves, founder and head of the Laboratory of Human Evolutionary Studies at the Department of Genetics of the University of São Paulo (LEEH/USP). Like the previous two researchers, his scientific output is diverse, encompassing works in the areas of Prehistorical Archaeology, Biological Anthropology and Ecological Anthropology. In Bioanthropology, his work is renowned for the approach to topics relating to the occupation of the American continent, based on the analysis of human material found at archaeological sites (Palaeoanthropology).

The interviews were recorded between 2011 and 2012. Each excerpt cited in this article is identified with the researcher concerned through use of their initials: MCB, RVS, SMS and WAN, respectively.<sup>5</sup>

Arranged in more synthetic form, the quantitative data interspersed between the testimonies was obtained via a directed search on the Lattes Platform run by the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq), more specifically the curricula vitae of the professionals who publicly declared, during the evolution of the research, that they work in Biological Anthropology in Brazil. Given the scarcity of information concerning Brazilian Bioanthropology, gaining “entry to the field” through academic CVs proved to be a strategic option for collecting the data needed to assemble a preliminary general framework. Additionally, it is worth adding that the Lattes Platform remains the main public database relating to scientific activity in the country, and contains information relating to the activities of each researcher/scientist (Lattes CV), research groups (Directory of Research Groups in Brazil) and institutions (Directory of Institutions) registered and/or affiliated with CNPq.

Although the CVs can be seen as important sources of data on national science, their quality ultimately depends on the researchers and students. Due to the difficulties experienced while filling in the CV online, the details required, as well as personal factors, it is not uncommon for the CVs to have some incomplete, duplicated or out-of-date information (CVs that have not been recently updated). Taking into account all these factors, the ‘reality’ presented in this article, extracted from the Lattes CV Platform, is merely approximate, though no less valid as a diagnosis of the more general aspects of national Bioanthropology in determined areas, and converges with the accounts of the interviewed researchers.

Still on the matter of the quantitative data, it is worth stressing that in Brazil – given the absence of specialized training in Biological Anthropology, at least until quite recently, and also the fact that, with the exception of the Federal University of Pará (UFPA) and MN/UFRJ, no biological anthropologists are found

<sup>5</sup> All the interviews were recorded using a Philips LFH0622 digital recorder, then transcribed and submitted to each of the four researchers to allow them to make any necessary corrections/modifications. During the initial contacts, each researcher was presented with a document explaining the main purposes of the research, and they were also asked to sign a term of consent for their testimonies to be recorded and subsequently used publicly for academic purposes.

in the courses, faculties and/or departments of Anthropology and/or Social Sciences – the items ‘academic training’ and ‘institutional affiliation’ included on the CV forms would prove unreliable when it comes to tracing these professionals.<sup>6</sup> Methodologically, therefore, the option was chosen to perform a search focused on the criteria ‘field of work’ and ‘lines of research,’ based on the key terms ‘physical anthropology,’ ‘biological anthropology’ and ‘bioanthropology.’

This search generated an initial result containing around 300 CVs. This proved to be a distortion since, at the time, the CNPq database search system identified records in which the terms ‘anthropology,’ ‘physical,’ ‘biological’ and ‘bioanthropology’ appeared in isolation or conjunction in fields aside from ‘field of work’ and ‘lines of research,’ such as scientific training and production, among others. In order to correct this distortion, the information contained in each CV from the initial batch was carefully checked, selecting just those in which the keywords were mentioned specifically in the fields ‘area of work’ and/or ‘line of research.’ This sorting was conducted between June and December 2010 and, after its execution, just 20 CVs remained. These were monitored until June 2012 as a form of tracking any updates.

Once again, although this universe of 20 CVs certainly does not include all the researchers who may be involved today on bioanthropological research in Brazil, as in the case of some geneticists, physicians, biologists and professionals from other training backgrounds, the ‘real’ contingent is possibly not very far from that obtained by the criteria employed by the survey.<sup>7</sup> This derives from the fact that – due to the absence of any clear boundaries to Brazilian Biological Anthropology, as some of the researchers remarked in their interviews – it can be accessed by different routes. The path taken here, namely a quantitative survey via professional CVs, while not covering all the dimensions, arrangements and minutiae of the object in question, at least highlights some of its specificities, which, again, converges with what appears in the interviews.

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6 In Brazil, the first master’s and doctoral courses in Anthropology, with Bioanthropology as one of their components, only began in 2010 on UFPA’s Postgraduate Program in Anthropology (PPGA/UFPA). For more information: <http://ppga.propesp.ufpa.br/index.php/br/>. The Department of Anthropology of MN/UF RJ is the only one in Brazil with a structure similar to what historically and internationally came to be called Four Fields Anthropology with the following sectors: Biological Anthropology, Social Anthropology, Archaeology, Linguistics and Ethnology. For more information, consult: <http://www.museunacional.ufrj.br/dir/pesquisa/antropologia.html>.

7 See, for example, the case of the geneticist Francisco Mauro Salzano, who did not identify himself as working in Bioanthropology. Salzano was president of the Latin American Association of Biological Anthropology (ALAB) between 1990 and 1992, and remains its honorary president today. He was also vice-president of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (IUAES) for ten years (1978-1988), and a member of ABA’s scientific council in four administrations between the 1960s and 1970s (Salzano 2006). A full member of the Brazilian Academy of Sciences (ABC) and recipient of the Great Cross of the Order of Scientific Merit, he has received diverse honours and awards over the course of his career, including anthropological entities: an honorary member of the Sociedad Venezolana de Antropología Biológica (1984); an honorary member of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland (1989); the Franz Boas High Achievement award from the Human Biology Association (1999); the award for the best interdisciplinary work from the General Anthropology Section of the American Anthropological Association (AAA) for the book *The Xavante in Transition*, in partnership with Carlos E. A. Coimbra Junior, Nancy M. Flowers and Ricardo V. Santos (2002); tribute from ABA (2005); tribute from UFPA during the symposium ‘Anthropology in Focus’ (2008); tribute from the American Association of Physical Anthropology (AAPA) (2010).

## Bioanthropology as a peripheral area in Brazil

One first aspect to emerge from the recorded interviews is that, in Brazil, Biological Anthropology finds itself in a peripheral condition, since it is almost never recognized as an integral part of the national anthropological field, as observed in the compendium organized by ABA (Trajano Filho & Ribeiro 2004), mentioned earlier. Equally it is omitted from the combined table of areas of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES) and CNPq.<sup>8</sup>

For at least three of these researchers, talking about the peripheral condition of Bioanthropology in the country goes beyond merely observing and ‘denouncing’ the contemporary situation of the area. It involves identifying its potential causes by adapting an approach which is at once synchronic and diachronic, in which endogenous and exogenous elements merge. From this approach, while Sociocultural Anthropology indeed appears to be ‘hegemonic’ – as though in Brazil, as Dornelles (2010: 57) observes in response to a question put to Maria Cátira Bortolini, only sociocultural anthropologists were legitimized to do what is recognized as ‘Anthropology’ – this same hegemony is not explained solely by a gratuitous stance against Biological Anthropology, or biological studies in general, on the part of the ‘officially’ recognized Brazilian anthropological community. Although this occurs at some level, as one of the interviewees pointed out, it too is revealed in light of the dynamics that contributed to the structuring of the field throughout the entire history of Anthropology in the country, but which peaked during the period spanning from the 1950s/1960s to the 1980s.<sup>9</sup> Bioanthropology itself contributed to this process, indeed to the point of instilling a kind of ‘biophobia’ in Brazilian Sociocultural Anthropology, as we shall see below.

At any rate, according to some of the interviewees, it would indeed be possible to speak of a marginal position of Bioanthropology in the context of a community composed mostly by sociocultural anthropologists. And in a scenario like this, the Department of Anthropology of MN/UFRJ appears as a relevant example of this situation.

Now, I’m not a person who transits... frequents ABA. I do not take part in the everyday world of Anthropology in Brazil and, perhaps, I’m speaking somewhat rashly, but our area of Biological Anthropology, just like Linguistics, for example, is fairly limited and isolated. There is very little space. It is not conceived within the field of Anthropology. I also think Linguistics faces this same problem, judging by what I’ve discussed with a few colleagues. It isn’t included within the frame of Anthropology. Thus separations exist that are historically dated (SMS).

Trained in Anthropology in the United States, on returning to Brazil, Ricardo Santos would feel ‘a shock’ on discovering what, in his words, was the “marginality of Bioanthropology in the country,” something that he had not glimpsed while abroad, and which would lead him to a series of reflections.

8 This table serves as a reference point for, among other aspects, the evaluation of undergraduate and postgraduate courses, and the funding of research projects. It was last updated in 2014. In this version, Anthropology (area 70300003) and Archaeology (area 70400008) appear combined, meaning that they are included in the same representative document. For Anthropology, only the following subareas are recognized: ‘Anthropological theory,’ ‘Indigenous ethnology,’ ‘Urban anthropology,’ ‘Rural anthropology’ and ‘Anthropology of Afro-Brazilian populations.’ All are associated with Sociocultural Anthropology. During the development of the research, some of the contacted researchers mentioned that there had already been an attempt to reformulate this distribution, a subject also mentioned in the “Document of the Area of Anthropology for the Fourth National Conference of Science and Technology – CNCTI” in 2005 (ABA, 2010). As observed in the document, it was suggested the creation of two subareas, Social/Cultural Anthropology and Specialized Anthropologies (Biological Anthropology, Linguistic Anthropology and Material Culture), as well as 37 specialities. Also according to the researchers, the debates were heated and no agreement was reached on the subject, meaning that the table was unaltered. In its more recent version (2013), the ‘Area Document’ of CAPES for Anthropology/Archaeology mentions Bioanthropology, albeit timidly. The table of knowledge areas can be found at <http://www.capes.gov.br/avaliacao/instrumentos-de-apoio/tabela-de-areas-do-conhecimento-avaliacao>, and the area document for Anthropology/Archaeology at <http://www.avaliacaotrienal2013.capes.gov.br/documento-de-area-e-comissao>. (Both consulted on 20/12/2016).

9 For reasons of space and intent, it is not possible to discuss here, even in a general way, the most recent historical development of Bioanthropology in Brazil, a subject discussed in another work (Gaspar Neto 2017). In any case, the articles by Santos (1996) and Salzano (2013), mentioned earlier, offer some elucidative elements.

When I took up the post of Professor of Biological Anthropology here at the Department of Anthropology of the National Museum, in 1993, I immediately felt a ‘shock of marginality.’ At the time I wondered, and not infrequently: why is what I do (and represent) from an academic-scientific viewpoint seen like this? Without doubt things have changed a lot, since then, in the department. But at the time my attention was drawn, for example, to physical separation. On one hand, a small office for the Department secretary; on the other, a much larger office, with more staff, for the Postgraduate Program in Social Anthropology. It is fairly strong, but my perception is that there was during this period almost a second class intellectual citizenship, in which Biological Anthropology was included. Many things have changed over these two decades, or thereabouts, but it seems to me that the arrangements, including physical, of Anthropology at the National Museum, provide an insight into the wider trajectory of the discipline in the country (RVS).<sup>10</sup>

On the specific situation of MN/UFRJ, Sheila Mendonça recalls some aspects of the personal and interdisciplinary relations that were already in course within the institution’s Department of Anthropology even before the arrival of Ricardo Santos in the 1990s. In her recollection, she mentions the roles of two important figures, Marília de Melo e Alvim, her master’s degree supervisor, and Luiz de Castro Faria.

She [Marília Alvim], to a certain extent, trained herself in this field, although, of course, supported by those mentors from the more traditional morphological, anatomical and osteometric wing. She migrated from the Social Sciences to this area, and experienced a little of this frustration of the areas not dialoguing with each other. She lived during the period of hypertrophic growth in the field of Social Anthropology within [the Museum] at the cost of Biological Anthropology, Archaeology and Linguistics. It was an enormous pressure: under her administration (because she was head of department), in the everyday interaction with colleagues, in the growth of a postgraduate program that became hegemonic and that did not make room for anything else, in the dispute for each centimetre of office space (SMS).

Also according to Sheila Mendonça, Castro Faria, initially an advocate for a broader approach to Anthropology, would later abandon this stance, dedicating himself exclusively to Sociocultural Anthropology (see Castro Faria 1998 and 2000b). For her part, having experienced first-hand the ‘growing marginalization’ of Biological Anthropology within MN/UFRJ, Marília Alvim would end up expressing a certain pessimism concerning the future of the area in the country.

She spent a long time there (thirty years or so, which is hardly a short while) feeling increasingly less space in an institution that, although headed by the person responsible for proposing the possibility of four fields [anthropology], later retreated and focused entirely on Social Anthropology, abandoning Physical Anthropology. Castro Faria was brilliant, he was a great anthropologist, but in a way he surrendered to this reality. This is my reading, it may be very one-sided, but it is the reading I have, the impression given by seeing what I saw. And Marília naturally bore the mark of this experience. So it would be unlikely for her to feel positive about the field (SMS).

At another level, as mentioned at the start of this section, Brazilian Bioanthropology, at least in its more morphological version, had contributed to what Walter Neves calls a “biophobia of the Social Sciences” and to its disfavour in the national anthropological setting, due to the maintenance until the end of the 1970s, in Brazil, of the theoretical and methodological schemas that had marked its emergence in the nineteenth century, something already discussed by him in a prior publication (Neves & Atui 2004).

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<sup>10</sup> These impressions are reviewed, with additional information, in the memorial address presented by the researcher for attainment of the title of Full Professor of the Department of Anthropology of MN/UFRJ (Santos 2016).

When I began to work with this at the end of the 1970s, the Physical Anthropology being done in the country was the same produced in the nineteenth century, one of the reasons for this biophobia among Sociocultural Anthropology, because what the anthropologists had been doing until then really was terrible, it was something absolutely from the nineteenth century. I also think that Physical Anthropology contributed something to this situation. Just to give you an idea: the only place where Physical Anthropology was studied in Brazil was at the National Museum, in Rio de Janeiro, where you have a top level postgraduate program in Social Anthropology, and people occupy offices that face each other, but there was never the slightest interlocution, because, truly, the Physical Anthropology being done there still belonged to the nineteenth century (WAN).

Given the low level of institutional inclusion implied by this account, what does it mean to work in Biological Anthropology in Brazil? For Ricardo Santos, beyond engaging in biological studies for their own sake, it was also an attempt to show the Brazilian anthropological community that Bioanthropology “is much more complex and less determinist than the stereotypes created about it” asserted, without even knowing anything about it.

I think that working in Biological Anthropology contains, perhaps, an element of attempting to show the rest of Anthropology that Biological Anthropology is something much more complex than the stereotypes surrounding it. I think that there exists some very strong stereotypes about Biological Anthropology without people necessarily knowing what Biological Anthropology is. I think this is part of the issue. I think that myself, as well as Walter [Neves] and [Francisco Mauro] Salzano and so on, in various ways, are concerned and interested in this, I mean, in increasing the visibility of Biological Anthropology’s conceptions at different historical moments (RVS).

From this perspective, it could be said that dealing with these stereotypes equally means dealing with various postures that pervade relations in the scientific field, and that seep into institutional policies. Relations marked by disputes for the power to exercise a particular activity and answer for the field, with a given orientation, and endorsed by a symbolic capital recognized primarily by peers/rivals (Bourdieu 1975, 1997) – in the case in question, the anthropological community in general. For this reason, according to Sheila Mendonça, Bioanthropology had found a home in some spaces, and not in others, notably those clearly associated with training in Anthropology in Brazil.

Now, there are some institutional stances that also pose difficulties. In some places, it is the question of hegemonic power itself. But is also part of the playing field. I think that Fiocruz is an exception, in terms of giving ample space for an area like this, Paleopathology. But it also stems from the initiative of a person who had the opportunity and the advantage to create the area, to launch it here, namely Luiz Fernando Ferreira. An institution is the people, and if the person is the right one, in the right place at the right time, they can succeed. That’s our case (SMS).<sup>11</sup>

For Walter Neves, while “Bioanthropology has contributed” to the form in which Anthropology is institutionalized today in Brazil, that is, structured exclusively around Sociocultural Anthropology, which for him is problematic, this situation also reflects the ‘biophobia’ already mentioned by him on the part of social scientists in relation to biological studies related to the human species.

<sup>11</sup> A parallel to the remarks of Sheila Mendonça, but with the aim of disqualify Bioanthropology and other areas in Brazil’s training spaces in Anthropology, can be found in Antonio Arantes’s account of the origins of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Campinas (UNICAMP) (Arantes 2006). Describing his experiences as an anthropologist in the 1960s at USP, the former president of ABA mentions that, at the time, he was engaged in an attempt to renew anthropological teaching and practice in Brazil, alongside other figures. In this enterprise, he proposed, among other things, breaking with the integrated conception of Anthropology (the four fields model) prevailing in the United States, a defence of which can be found in the essay by Ralph Linton (1969), included in the book edited by Gioconda Mussolini, *Evolução Raça e Cultura*. According to him, the four fields model was still being taught on introductory courses to Anthropology at USP in the 1960s.

I think that the Anthropology that I recognize as such is that which in the United States is called Four Fields Anthropology, containing Biological Anthropology, Archaeology, Sociocultural Anthropology and Linguistics. In Brazil, unfortunately, this Anthropology simply does not exist. And I think that's a pity, because anthropologists end up studying an object of research about whose evolutionary genesis they have not the remotest idea. So I think the teaching of Anthropology in Brazil is highly precarious, because it concentrates exclusively on Sociocultural Anthropology. And in relation to Biological Anthropology specifically, there exists a prejudice, a biophobia. Brazilian Sociocultural Anthropology is completely biophobic, such that I too faced a lot of difficulties in my career, because I was never able to join a Department of Anthropology. What makes most sense is that the laboratory here is located within a Department of Anthropology. But unfortunately due to the biophobia of the Brazilian Social Sciences, I always had to find refuge either in Archaeology or here, in Biology (WAN).

For Ricardo Santos and Sheila Mendonça, on the other hand, rather than outline a satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the current institutional situation of Biological Anthropology, it is more interesting to perceive how this scenario is actually the result of its very specific historical development within the trajectory of Anthropology in the country. Although Bioanthropology has not attained “the same parameters of institutionalization of Sociocultural Anthropology,” therefore, at least it has not been entirely annihilated. In other words, it has also developed, but in a particular way when compared to other national contexts, despite frequently not being recognized by sociocultural anthropologists as an “integral part of Brazilian Anthropology.”

I do not think that the word is ‘satisfactory.’ I think that, to use a Boasian concept, we have to adopt a historical particularism. How did these different disciplines develop in different localities? In the United States it occurred in one way; in France, another way; in Mexico, another; in Argentina, another; in Brazil, another. I think that this is what happened. The configuration of Anthropology today, in Brazil, is clearly very closely associated with the emergence of postgraduate studies in the 1960s, with an entire tradition of networks etc. The National Museum itself with Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira.... In sum, it has its own tradition. This is what happened. Biological Anthropology, in Brazil, developed in a different manner. And I think that there is actually a lot of Biological Anthropology in Brazil, a Biological Anthropology that, in fact, is highly recognized internationally. It exists, but located in other institutional contexts. Here at the National Museum it is part of Anthropology, but as a rule, I think, this is not what normally happens (RVS).

Well, what exists now is a consequence of this historical trajectory that lasted more than a century, but in which there was no possibility of accumulation. We always had this limited field, in institutional terms, in terms of the number of professionals. In sum, contributions made by a tiny number of people. This is not a feature unique to ourselves, but, in our case, this is what happens. How many people were working, in the middle of the century, in Biological Anthropologies in general? In some areas that we can assume today to be related to it, such as the case of Genetics? For example, there was a boom in the area, at a determined moment, as an outcome of other interests, not those of anthropology. So if you take Genetics today, the Genetics of microevolution, populations, human occupation etc., it arrived as a result of other interests, and ended up growing more strongly within what we could call a Biological Anthropology in Brazil (SMS).

These latter remarks concerning the institutional allocation of professionals dedicated to Bioanthropology in Brazil match the data obtained from the Lattes CVs. Table 1 summarizes the institutional distribution of the 20 professionals identified in the survey undertaken up to 2012. Despite the years that have passed to the present, and irrespective of any potential rise or decline in the number of professionals who identify themselves as working in the area of Bioanthropology, it is plausible to imagine

that the pattern of its institutional distribution has remained unchanged. As for the topic of the relations between academic training, institutional affiliation and scientific practice, as well as the international visibility of the area's academic production, these will be examined later.

**Table 1:** Institutional distribution of the professionals working in Bioanthropology in Brazil (2008-2012)

Areas	Institutions	Nucleuses	Professionals	Totals
Anthropology and Social Sciences	UERJ <sup>2</sup>	Dep. CSO	1	8
	UFPA	Dep. Anthropology	1	
	UFRJ	Biological Anthropology Sector	6	
		Other	Universities	
Other	Universities	Genetics	3	12
		Archaeology	2	
		Geology	1	
		Health	1	
	Research Centres	Archaeology	2	
		Health	1	
	Other		2	

### Relations between institutional affiliation and scientific practice

Another aspect related to this situation where, according to some interviewees, Bioanthropology is practically excluded from the institutional circuit of Brazilian Anthropology is its lack of clear definition as an area. Who produces research in Biological Anthropology in the country? If specific training in the area is unavailable in Brazil, what paths are open to those wanting to enter it, in terms of both academic training and a professional career? How, in fact, do we specify what does and does not count as research in Biological Anthropology, and how is this related to the visibility of the area in the country and abroad? In this and the next section, the views of the four interviewed researchers concerning these questions will be examined.

For Ricardo Santos, for example, being a biological anthropologist in Brazil implies “working in a discipline whose institutional boundaries are not very clearly defined,” which leads to a series of operational complications.

I think that being a biological anthropologist in Brazil means being in a community with a fairly unclear sense of identity or borders, and this generates certain difficulties and complications in some contexts. Certain operational difficulties that need to be faced in day-to-day life. For example, if you wish to train a student in Biological Anthropology, what do you do? It is somewhat different to what unfolds in other areas of knowledge, where the boundaries are much clearer (RVS).

<sup>12</sup> State University of Rio de Janeiro.

Due to the lack of specific training or clearer institutional boundaries, Maria Cátira Bortolini suggested, things were ‘confused’ in Brazil when it comes to what Bioanthropology is and who practices it. This, she adds, implies a recognition that “any research study or activity in Biological Anthropology in the country takes place much more as a result of the practice of the professionals themselves than an institutional framework,” because, as far as the latter is concerned, the area is, she says, a ‘black hole.’

I think that, due to the absence of institutional definitions, the lack of Anthropology courses that include Biological Anthropology, there is considerable confusion. It’s like I told you. We geneticists working with human populations, we’re doing Biological Anthropology. “Ah! We’re doing Biological Anthropology.” Who else does [Biological] Anthropology? I don’t come from an academic institution that teaches these differences. I don’t know how far the semantics stretch: I mean, what is Physical Anthropology, what is Biological Anthropology? I’m not familiar with the academic context, I’m not familiar with the theorists who speak about this matter. I don’t know about the history of this. I simply know that I do Human Genetics and work in areas on the interface of what can be called Biological Anthropology. Now I don’t have the background to say why and how. Why, I think, institutionally, this simply doesn’t exist in Brazil. There are no courses, there is no discipline, there is no material where you can learn about this subject. From the institutional point of view, Biological Anthropology in Brazil seems to be a black hole (MCB).

Maria Cátira Bortolini’s remarks resonate with those of Ricardo Santos, when the latter observes the absence of any necessary relation in the country between institutional affiliation, specific training and scientific practice. The entry into this ‘black hole’ labelled Brazilian Biological Anthropology – contrary to what happens, for instance, in the United States, in Europe or in other countries in Latin America – takes different routes, or even occurs by accident.

I think that many people who enter Biological Anthropology, perhaps excluding a little the United States and other countries, enter by accident. You stumble across a very interesting area, become involved in its questions, and so on it goes... And depending on the person’s interests, it becomes highly attractive. Now, it is not easy to arrive at this point, because you can become involved via a variety of routes. See the geneticists, for example. People join a Genetics Program and, suddenly, they are sometimes undertaking research in Biological Anthropology and publishing in its journals. There are other paths for arriving at Biological Anthropology. Or in other words, in Brazil there doesn’t exist this overlap between the discipline and the institutional dimension, the periodicals, the scientific societies, and so forth. Biological Anthropology is an area with very blurred and ill-defined borders. The points of entry may be diverse, and people may say that they do Biological Anthropology, but conceive Biological Anthropology in a very distinct ways (RVS).

This impression is shared by Sheila Mendonça, for whom training in Biological Anthropology in Brazil involves ‘hitching a ride’ in other areas, given that the area is absent from Brazil’s postgraduate system.

We have no representation, for example, within the postgraduate area. We still don’t have a formal structure to create and train people, to multiply the potential. Training continues to involve hitching a ride. You train in Public Health, you train in Epidemiology, you train in Archaeology, and what we hear is: “more people are needed, a critical mass so that, tomorrow, Biological Anthropology can be a postgraduate area,” or perhaps possess an undergraduate course. The forms of inclusion, for now, are all like this. But the area has expanded compared to what I encountered in the 1970s (SMS).

These remarks problematize a situation also verified by analysing the information obtained from the Lattes CVs. Just one of the 20 professionals identified up to 2012 had graduated in Social Sciences.<sup>13</sup> The remainder had initiated their training in other areas of knowledge (Table 2).

**Table 2:** Academic training of 20 professionals working in Bioanthropology in Brazil: graduation

Area	Professionals	Institutions	Total
Social Sciences	1	UFF <sup>14</sup>	1
Archaeology	5	UNESA <sup>15</sup>	
Biomedicine	2	UFPA, UNICAMP	
Biological Sciences	10	UFPA, UFRGS, UFRJ, UNB <sup>16</sup> , UNESP <sup>17</sup> , USP	19
History	1	Pedro II Faculty of Humanities	
Medicine	1	UERJ	

When postgraduate titles are considered, the idea of an area with ‘blurred boundaries’ becomes even more evident: of this group, just two professionals possessed the title of Master of Anthropology, and just three had the title of Doctor of Anthropology, all degrees obtained abroad (Tables 3 and 4, respectively). In quantitative terms, therefore, we can observe what some of the interviewees call ‘situational training’ or ‘hitching a ride.’<sup>18</sup>

13 It is important to emphasize that undergraduate courses in Anthropology (bachelor degrees) are a recent phenomenon in the country and number less than a dozen. Traditionally, initial training in Anthropology took place on courses in Social Sciences (bachelor and licentiate degrees). At any rate, at the time of the research, an attempt was made to map the offer of Bioanthropology as a subject on undergraduate courses in Anthropology existing at the time in the country. The courses were initially identified by consulting the Higher Education Census (Statistical Synopses of Higher Education, base year 2009), supplied by the Anísio Teixeira National Institute of Educational Studies and Research (INEP), and also the Higher Education Register (E-MEC system: <http://emec.mec.gov.br/>) of the Ministry of Education (MEC). Subsequently, the web pages of some of these courses were visited and, where these were non-existent, or the information insufficient, their departmental offices or coordination teams were contacted, which enabled access to documents like curriculum guides and pedagogical projects. At that time, just two of the six courses for which it was possible to obtain information included Biological Anthropology on their curricular, one as a compulsory and optional course, the other as just an optional course. This option was available precisely on those courses providing qualification in Social/Cultural Anthropology in operation at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG) and the Federal University of Pelotas (UFPEL). For further information, see, respectively, <https://www2.ufmg.br/antropologia/antropologia/Home/O-Curso/Matriz-Curricular-e-Ementas> (consulted 2/05/2017) and Rieth et al. (2011).

14 Fluminense Federal University.

15 Estácio de Sá University.

16 University of Brasília.

17 Paulista State University.

18 For an update of this situation, a new survey would be needed (not undertaken here), which would show, perhaps, that PPGA/UFPA has contributed via the awarding of postgraduate degrees to new professionals working in Bioanthropology in Brazil, with the title of Master of Anthropology (since 2012) and Doctor (since 2014) of Anthropology.

**Table 3:** Academic training of 20 professionals working in Bioanthropology in Brazil: Master

Area	Professionals	Institutions	Total <sup>19</sup>
Anthropology	2	Pennsylvania State University (EUA); Indiana University (EUA)	2
Anatomy	1	UFRJ	
Archaeology	1	MAE/USP <sup>20</sup>	
Biological Sciences	4	UFPA, USP	
Morphological Sciences	1	UFRJ	
Genetics	1	UFRGS	15
History	2	UFRJ, USP	
Public/Collective Health	5	Fiocruz	

**Table 4:** Academic training of 20 professionals working in Bioanthropology in Brazil: Doctor

Area	Professionals	Institutions <sup>21</sup>	Total <sup>22</sup>
Anthropology	3	Ohio State University (USA), Université de Genève (Switzerland), Indiana University (USA)	3
Archaeology	2	MAE/USP, MN/UFRJ	
Biological Sciences	5	UFPA, USP	
Genetics	1	UFRGS	
Geology	1	UNB	13
History	1	UNICAMP	
Public/Collective Health	3	Fiocruz	

This aspect of a situational institutional entry, anticipated in the actual process of academic-scientific training, with the goal of pursuing a career in Biological Anthropology in Brazil, is evident in Walter Neves's account of his own trajectory. In this narrative, he mentions that he had been obliged to enable his own training at the same time as later working to create openings to institutionalize the area.

<sup>19</sup> Up to 2012, three of the 20 professionals identified did not have a Master's degree indicated in their respective curricula.

<sup>20</sup> Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology of the University of São Paulo.

<sup>21</sup> University of Campinas (UNICAMP).

<sup>22</sup> Up to 2012, four of the 20 professionals identified did not have a Doctoral degree indicated in their respective curricula. Also for the same period, three specified that they had undertaken a postdoctoral placement in Biological Anthropology abroad.

Now, institutional entry is highly opportunist, since, given we have no space in Social Sciences departments or Anthropology departments, we have to wangle other niches to occupy. So, I always joke that, as well as having to make my own training possible, I had to construct the niches to institutionalize my work. So it is very difficult for me to separate what was training and what was institutional building, you know? Because I had no space. I had no space and no supervision. So at the same time that I had to possess, in all kinds of ways, a minimally acceptable training in Evolutionary Anthropology, I had to create an institutional space for my work (WAN).

He continues:

That's what I'm telling you. As well as having to sort out my training for myself, I had to find my own niche too. I went about creating niches. First at the Institute of Prehistory; later at the Goeldi Museum; later here at the Laboratory of Human Evolutionary Studies. So each time I swap institution, I have to build a niche in the new place, because in the niches that already exist, either in Archaeology or Sociocultural Anthropology, we are unwelcome. That's why you have to keep on building niches. And in this sense, this department here is extremely generous. First because, as I told you, I would have been unable to pursue my own career without the help of Otávio Frota-Pessoa, among others, who was here at the department. In 1979 I wanted to work in Biological Anthropology and there was nobody to supervise me. The two people who worked in Biological Anthropology at the time, I had already realized were doing a Biological Anthropology of the nineteenth century, which meant I couldn't tie myself to them (WAN).

Still on the topic of his academic trajectory, the researcher speaks of a 'lack of welcome' on the part of Brazilian Departments of Anthropology and Social Sciences vis-à-vis Bioanthropology.

Frota-Pessoa more or less adopted me, and it was this adoption by Frota-Pessoa that made my career possible. And, interestingly, today, in the department, there are already three of us working with Biological and Ecological Anthropology. So the department is highly generous. You must agree with me that there is no reason why a department of Genetics and Evolutionary Biology should have biological anthropologists and ecological anthropologists among its staff. So it's very generous, isn't it? It's a generosity that I haven't seen in the Human Sciences. I'm a product of this generosity, you know? (WAN).

Trajectories similar to that of Walter Neves have been repeated in more recent years, now shown to be the rule rather than the exception, because, in Brazil, the contours of Biological Anthropology are still defined by personal initiatives: "So, I think that these stories within the more recent history of Biological Anthropology still possess this very strong personal component, of circumstances and opportunities, and this makes a big difference" (SMS).

Lacking specialized training and without clearer institutional spaces, Biological Anthropology is being practiced in Brazil by professionals who do not necessarily recognize themselves as (biological) anthropologists, but who publish in periodicals and participate in congresses dedicated to the area. And moreover with international recognition.

There is a lot of research in Biological Anthropology in Brazil, and there are studies recognized internationally that circulate widely abroad, published in foreign periodicals. But these [authors] are working outside the Departments of Anthropology in general and don't identify themselves or train people who identify themselves as biological anthropologists, though they conduct research in this area, publish in these journals and attend congresses (RVS).

Discussing this point, Maria Cátira Bortolini describes what she has observed at ALAB congresses, where, she says, Brazil is basically represented by geneticists, contrary to the delegations of other countries, which tend to be made up of diverse specialities of Biological Anthropology.

I belong to the Latin American Association of Biological Anthropology, which meets every two years. This year it will be held in Costa Rica, and we already have a symposium accepted on the dynamics of genes and culture. And every time I go to ALAB's congresses, I notice that other countries have lots of works on Nutrition, Primatology... There are many other areas that are not covered by Brazilian Biological Anthropology. So, essentially, at the ALAB congresses Brazil is represented by the geneticists. Now, I don't know if we occupied an 'ecological' niche that was open (MCB).<sup>23</sup>

It can be seen, therefore, that while specialized training and institutional inclusion are not good indicators of a relation between professional identity and scientific practice in the case of Brazilian Bioanthropology, one form of identifying this universe of irregular boundaries, or this 'black hole,' would be to trace how particular ideas are accepted as pertaining or relating to the area in specialized forums of discussion, such as periodicals and congresses, symposiums, meetings of associations and societies, and so on. Setting out from this premise, in which "what is produced in periodicals reflects a degree of collective awareness of how the area perceives itself," Ricardo Santos considers himself, as well as other researchers, to be a practitioner of anthropological research.

What is the definition of Physical Anthropology, what is the definition of what an anthropologist is? What is this about? I think that we have to consider the channels through which works are published and presented: I mean, events, periodicals and lines of funding are good ways of seeing, at any given moment, what is understood as what. Agreements are generated in which some things are accepted, others are not, and are then classified in a particular way. So I believe that I am seen, abroad, as someone producing Anthropology, just like Walter, Salzano and Sheila, depending on what we understand as Anthropology, of course (RVS).

In any event, the following section reveals the interviewees' perceptions concerning the quality and visibility of the scientific production of Brazilian Bioanthropology, principally abroad, and despite its institutional situation in the country.

### **The visibility of Bioanthropology inside and outside the country and the quality of its academic production**

The theme of the visibility of Brazilian Biological Anthropology can assume two forms, depending on the point of reference. It involves, in fact, almost a paradox. If the reference point is the country, the studies undertaken by these 'bioanthropologists' are practically omitted from the so-called "field of anthropology in Brazil." For Sheila Mendonça, this situation is partly explained by the fact that Biological Anthropology in general, and Bioarchaeology in particular, had not yet obtained 'expressivity' within the national anthropological community. An internal visibility exists more in relation to Human Population Genetics, or, more generally, in relation to major areas other than Anthropology.

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<sup>23</sup> Brazil's participation at ALAB would merit a study by itself. Its first meeting was held in 1990, in Montevideo, Uruguay. Since then, it should be pointed out, Brazil has already hosted two congresses (1994 and 2006) and has twice occupied one of the four positions of the board of directors (presidency, vice-presidency, secretary and treasurer). Since its foundation, its honorary president has been Francisco Mauro Salzano. It is also worth emphasizing that, apart from two, all the Brazilian researchers who have appeared on ALAB's boards of directors since its foundation have been geneticists, which matches Maria Cátira Bortolini's observations. From the total, at least up to 2012, just two have stated in their curricula that they work in the area of Biological Anthropology: Maria Cátira Bortolini herself and Walter Neves. For more information, consult Salzano (2013).

I wouldn't say that we have any visibility in national Anthropology. What I am saying is that we are in a small corner, practically on the outside of Anthropology. Our significance is much more visible in health, for example, in terms of a historical and epidemiological comprehension of particular points, and for Archaeology, as a form of answering [questions], understanding what happens. Or even for forensics, helping explain processes, gestures, actions and so on. But I don't see any broader visibility in national terms, in terms of Anthropology itself here in Brazil. I think there are elements of Biological Anthropology, perhaps given by Genetics, that are more visible, if we add everything together and say "this is the Biological Anthropology that we have." (SMS).

Although he conceives the extensive news coverage given to his paleoanthropological studies on the human occupation of the American continent to be "an important element in removing Bioanthropology from its anonymity among the Brazilian public," Walter Neves adds that, even so, it remains little known in the country.

I think that Luzia removed Biological Anthropology from anonymity. And it wasn't something planned. It was something over which I lost any control, you know? Indeed, Ricardo Ventura Santos, wrote an article about this, how Luzia was appropriated by Brazilian society. So I think that, unfortunately, Brazilian Biological Anthropology is still very little known by the Brazilian population in general (WAN).

And even in Human Population Genetics, which could be identified as a specialized or associated area of Biological Anthropology with more prominence within the country, it may not be recognized as such within the Brazilian anthropological community itself.

[Bioanthropology] has a high international profile due to Human Genetics. Yet, in Brazil, not everyone immediately associates Human Genetics, or the Genetics that we do, for example, which is a historical and anthropological Genetics, with Anthropology. So although we usually speak of historical and anthropological Genetics, I don't know how far this is seen as part of Anthropology as a whole or as a Biological Anthropology in Brazil (MCB).

As can be observed in Maria Cátira Bortolini's comments, when Brazil ceases to be the only reference point, such 'invisibility' disappears. For the four interviewees, the biological counterpart of the Anthropology practiced in the country, even outside the institutional structure of Anthropology, enjoys a degree of international recognition, due in part to the quality of its scientific production. For this reason, according to them, the "invisibility of Brazilian Bioanthropology is, first and foremost, a relative invisibility," or more precisely a "contextual" one.

I would say that the research that I and others think of as studies of Biological Anthropology, undertaken in Brazil, have achieved significant prominence. The groups that work in Human Genetics, all the discussions on the human occupation of the American continent, on the biological constitution of the Brazilian population, publish as much in the *American Journal of Human Genetics* as in the *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*. They publish a lot, in fact. The *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, *Human Biology*, *Annals of Human Biology*... They are all journals identified as the area of Biological Anthropology or Human Biology. The research is heavily channelled through these publications, which are from the area of Anthropology, although in Brazil these groups are not within the departments, do not gain funding from the committees, and do not receive productivity grants from within Brazilian Anthropology (RVS).

He continues by emphasizing that the "concentration on national matters" – a Bioanthropology, as well as a Sociocultural Anthropology, in a certain sense, at home (Peirano 1999) – would not be an impediment to this internationalization.

If we think, for example, about the groups that focus on studying the genetics of indigenous populations, or that work with the settlement of the Americas on the basis of skeletal material from the South American lowlands, or that focus on working with the Biological Anthropology of indigenous populations in Brazil, and so on, I would say that the Brazilian groups are among the most prominent on these topics from the international viewpoint. They are highly competitive and have a very important output in the study of these materials (RVS).

Hence from near ‘extinction’ in the 1970s, Brazilian Biological Anthropology has undergone something of a ‘rebirth’ over recent years (as indicated by the data obtained from the Lattes CVs, shown in Table 5), achieving a strong international profile. This does not necessarily imply, however, the delimitation of a community properly speaking, given the low professional demography and irregular institutional boundaries of the discipline in the country.

In the 1960s and 70s, Biological Anthropology almost vanished here in Brazil. To the point that the only place where it was still being studied in the country was at the National Museum in Rio de Janeiro, but with this nineteenth-century outlook. [...] And it was facing extinction precisely because it was pursuing a nineteenth-century Biological Anthropology, you know? So much so that today, although we may not have a large contingent doing Biological Anthropology, there is a Brazilian scientific production in the best journals in our area. Though small, it has attained a level competitive with the work done abroad. I think that we are being reborn, but it will still be a long time before we can say that we have, for real, a community of Biological Anthropology. And Evolutionary Anthropology, zero (WAN).

**Table 5:** Postgraduate degrees obtained by professionals working in Bioanthropology in Brazil (1981-2012)

Period	Master’s	Doctorate
1981-1990	2	1
1991-2000	9	4
2001-2010	6	9
2011	-	1
2012 (under way)	-	1
Total	17	16

According to the researchers, this ‘international visibility’ is expressed in the range of works published in foreign periodicals or even national periodicals aimed primarily at an overseas readership with texts mainly in English. The data obtained from the Lattes CVs provides an overview of this situation and confirms it. Between 2008 and 2012, the 20 identified researchers had published 166 articles in national and foreign periodicals, the distribution of which is summarized in Table 6:

**Table 6:** Distribution and language of publications by researchers working in Bioanthropology in Brazil (2008-2012)

Articles	Periodicals		Language		
	National	Foreign	Port.	Eng.	Spa.
166	77	89	60	104	2

Note that although the discrepancy between the number of articles published in national and foreign periodicals is slight, when the languages in which the texts are published is compared, those in English are almost double those in Portuguese. This indicates a search for readers outside of Brazil.<sup>24</sup>

But while, according to some interviewees, it is possible to speak of an ‘internationalized Bioanthropology,’ this internationalization needs to be carefully evaluated in order to detect, depending on the specialized areas considered and their relations to institutional affiliations and personal trajectories, the disparities internal to the area. As in the case of ALAB mentioned earlier, for instance, where almost all the works presented by Brazilian teams were related to genetic studies, the strength of Human Population Genetics cannot be ignored when it comes to publications. In the survey made by Larsen and Williams (2012) on the participation of countries other than the United States in the *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* between 2001 and 2007, this speciality accounts for 30% of all the works submitted and published. Among these works, Brazil stands out as the periodical’s fourth biggest collaborator, including in relation to lead author, behind only the United States, the United Kingdom and Italy.

In the specific case of studies in Paleopathology and Paleoepidemiology, Sheila Mendonça argues that these areas have benefitted since the 1980s from the structure of Fiocruz. There, generally speaking, its researchers have always been pushed to publish works internationally – a pressure that, according to her, only took place more recently in the universities.

Here at Fiocruz, at least in Biological Anthropology as a subarea of Archaeology, we can see that this internationalization happens in a more significant and precocious form. And this involves the influence of the biomedical area. Once inside Fiocruz, within this logic of academic production, you already have people referring to the international scientific production, forming international partnerships, producing and publishing abroad. So, if you take the literature, you will see an enormous difference, because even in the 1980s, the scientific production of the Paleo group [Paleopathology and Paleoepidemiology] was already very different from what was being done at the National Museum and other institutions. But this has to do with this demand, this pressure, this logic of the hard sciences that were pulling people up to another dimension. It’s the *Journal of Parasitology*, the *Paleopathology News Letter* and so on. So, in our area this gradually became concrete. My own production before coming to Fiocruz and after I entered here changed drastically. It not only intensified, it also became internationalized. So I think that this question of institutional difference really exists. The pressure that is exerted today to achieve a scientific output at a particular level began here earlier than at the federal universities (SMS).

When it comes to the quality of Brazilian Bioanthropology’s academic production, Ricardo Santos suggests that its level can be assessed by its inclusion in the leading international periodicals from the area, even when taking into account, as per Sheila Mendonça’s observation, certain internal specificities.

<sup>24</sup> Though not undertaken for this study, it would be interesting to analyse the citation indices for this scientific production.

It is difficult to discuss quality. But if we think about the periodical editors as “gatekeepers” – i.e. that inclusion in periodicals involves a gate through which everyone has to pass – I would say that the Brazilian groups are being approved by these “gatekeepers”, divulging their production in the most important periodicals, with a highly internationalized scientific production, in English and widely recognized, as well as cited in their respective specialities. I think that the area of Genetics of indigenous populations, without doubt, involves Salzano at a global level. The populating of the Americas, without doubt, involves Walter Neves at an international level. The discussions on epidemiological transmission among indigenous peoples in Brazil, without doubt, involves the works made by people from our own group and also by other groups. I think that these are groups that are in deep dialogue with international communities. And the pattern of production, in all senses, is very similar to what we perceive at a more international scale. I think that in the area of Bioarchaeology, things are a little different, for a series of reasons. And here we’re not talking about the area of Primatology. Primatology is a speciality that, in Brazil, in fact, isn’t included in Biological Anthropology. It possesses few people trained in the subject and its own development in the area of Psychology and Ecology. So I think that it isn’t so closely identified with Anthropology as it is in the specific North American tradition. This area, to be honest, I don’t know very well (RVS).

This account is echoed in the remarks of Sheila Mendonça, as a general appraisal, and Maria Cátira Bortolini, the latter specifically when discussing Human Population Genetics working with anthropological themes.

I think the quality of the production is indisputable. Are there less important works? Yes, but also the quantity of good international publications that we have produced is clear. We have this, undoubtedly, and not just my group. I think that this applies to Walter’s group and to other groups that are becoming established. The production is original and is achieving a high profile internationally, whether in terms of methodology or in terms of the knowledge produced, changing conceptions, changing interpretations in regional and continental contexts (SMS).

I think that the quality of Genetics is very good because we publish at a high level. There’s our group here, and our group always included Professor Salzano, evidently... There’s the Minas group, with Fabrício Santos and Professor Sérgio Pena, which is a very strong group too, publishing at a high level. In fact, if we look and stop to think, we can see that there aren’t many people who do what we do. I told you before, there’s us here, Fabrício and Sérgio’s people, Norte’s people with Sydney Santos and Andrea [Kelly dos Santos] (MCB).

Meanwhile for Walter Neves, talking about a ‘competitive Bioanthropology’ is perhaps an ‘exaggeration,’ although he is in no doubt that the current scenario is very different from the situation encountered at the end of the 1970s.

Perhaps I’ve exaggerated. We have already managed to publish abroad in renowned periodicals, but this does not mean that Brazilian Physical Anthropology is already internationally competitive. I think it will be a few years still before we get there. But when you think that this was zero until the start of the 1980s, the fact that today we have succeeded in publishing at least half a dozen papers in international journals in the area of Biological Anthropology is already a huge step forward. But we are far from being competitive (WAN).

Finally, Ricardo Santos argues, in any case, that the quality of Biological Anthropology can be conceived in terms of its participation in an ever more globalized context, but without any question of the Brazilian ambit being abandoned.

For me, perhaps the mark of quality would be the inclusion of these debates in Biological Anthropology in an increasingly globalized setting. If this happens, at the same time with the social responsibility for us to think about Brazilian questions in terms of its collections, inequalities between its populations and protecting its heritage, I think that the area is going very well without necessarily having this specific identity in Biological Anthropology, which we don't have (RVS).

## Final considerations

In this final part are ventured some second and third-hand interpretations (Geertz 1973) concerning the talk of the 'natives.' The first aspect to be considered concerns the ways in which Brazilian Bioanthropology is localized, depending on the points of reference and the scales adopted by the interviewees. At one level, it is situated as a 'marginalized' or even 'non-situated' area (the 'black hole' mentioned by Maria Cátira Bortolini) within a wider field – namely that of Brazilian Anthropology. A condition that, depending on the interviewee, is caused by specific historical trajectories (as in the accounts of Sheila Mendonça and Ricardo Santos) and/or the impossibility of entry of bioanthropologists in the departments of Anthropology, given that the latter are populated by sociocultural anthropologists oriented by a 'biophobia' (as Walter Neves puts it).

Associated with this condition, there seems another way of localizing Brazilian Bioanthropology. This involves situating it at a wider level, informed by a distinction between its condition within the country and the relative visibility experienced at an international level. It should be noted that, in the latter case, it is not just a question of describing the visibility of national bioanthropological studies in terms of their scientific quality. Also in play is the recognition and nomination of these research studies as just as 'anthropological' as the sociocultural investigations. It is not for nothing that the publication in foreign Biological Anthropology periodicals appears, in some accounts, as a defining element of what research in Anthropology may be in general. This being the case, the localization of Brazilian Bioanthropology through, in relation to, or within Anthropology seems to be combined with an exposition of its various specificities – including as a way of legitimizing the area as part of this same exercise in localization, especially with respect to Sociocultural Anthropology, precisely because the latter answers 'officially' for the 'field of Anthropology' in Brazil. In sum: "doing Biological Anthropology" is also "trying to show the rest of Anthropology that Biological Anthropology is much more complex than the stereotypes surrounding it might suggest," as Ricardo Santos put it.

Among the characteristics of Brazilian Biological Anthropology mentioned by some of the interlocutors is its 'fluidity.' Here resides a second aspect. Lacking a clear and specific path to be followed by those interested in entering the area (it is possible to arrive at Bioanthropology by 'different entry points'), it becomes necessary to use circumstantial strategies. As occurs in the cases of training (the training of the 'bioanthropologist' in Brazil is made by 'hitching a lift' on diverse courses) and the occupation of institutional niches ('opportunist' entry). Again, here it is apposite to evoke Pierre Bourdieu (1975, 1976 and 1997) who argued that the conditions needed for the maintenance and operation or transformation of the field are given by its own structure. Hence once conclusion that can be drawn is that the 'fluidity' characteristic of Brazilian Bioanthropology corresponds, to some extent, to the way in which the field of Anthropology in Brazil is institutionalized today with little or no space for the reproduction of bioanthropological studies and professionals within its borders.

Likewise, this fluidity is materialized in the lack of a necessary overlap between academic training, the occupation of institutional niches and scientific practice (the production of bioanthropological studies, or those considered as such). A fair number of bioanthropological studies are being undertaken

in Brazil, but most of them in localities outside the teaching and research environments in Anthropology by professionals trained in diverse areas. The latter, for their part, do not always identify themselves as 'bioanthropologists' or as authors of bioanthropological studies. This itself is a complicating factor were this tiny community someday to plead for greater institutional inclusion and, by extension, more recognition within the national anthropological field.

The theme of recognition, in fact, is recurrent in the narratives of various interviewees. On one hand, it is clear that, to some extent, Brazilian Bioanthropology 'is going well.' Even outside the departments and postgraduate programs in Anthropology, with the exception of MN/UFRJ and UFPA, the professionals who identify themselves as working in the area are institutionalized, publishing works, participating in congresses and raising funds for the development of research. Yet this non-recognition or 'marginality' within the field of Brazilian Anthropology still emerges as an issue for these professionals. What seems to be in play, beyond the practical dimension of professional activity, is the extending of the term 'Anthropology' (as symbolic capital) to biological studies in a context in which Sociocultural Anthropology claims and is recognized to hold its ownership. It is worth recalling that, again for Bourdieu (1975 and 1976), a symbolic (scientific) capital can be associated with an institutionalized capital, which allows its holders to define a given field of activities, as well as its institutional frameworks, reflecting their prominent position in it. This means that the definitions operating at symbolic level may have impacts on the practical dimension, something related in several of the testimonies.

Like every scientific area, Brazilian Biological Anthropology finds itself immersed in a series of competitive intra and interdisciplinary relations. In the case of the latter, the emphasis falls on Sociocultural Anthropology, in part as a result of the factors set out in the preceding paragraphs. However, for the purpose of making as cautious an interpretation as possible, it also seems reasonable to take the accounts in which the relations between these two fronts are cited as descriptions – positioned, it is true – of the asymmetry that defines the status of each within the "field of Brazilian Anthropology." And it is here that we can locate the importance of the ethnographic nature of the work, informed by periodic analytic incursions without appeal to totalizing abstractions. Both for a Sociology of science interested in the disputes that mobilize the scientific field (Bourdieu 1975, 1976, 1997) and for an Anthropology of science interested, *sensu stricto*, in controversies (Latour 1987), all the parties involved need to be heard. In order to expound specifically on the relations, or the absence of relations, between Brazilian Sociocultural and Biological Anthropologies, we would need to take into account what the sociocultural anthropologists have to say about Biological Anthropology, and what the 'biological anthropologists' have to say about Sociocultural Anthropology – something that was not done, given, indeed, that this was not the objective of the present work.

In summary, over its course, the article has looked to present the considerations of four senior researchers working in Biological Anthropology on the situation of the area in the country. Various points related to this situation were covered in their accounts, telling of a discipline that developed outside the locations where the Brazilian anthropological field is reproduced, especially from the middle of the last century, possessing low visibility among the national anthropological community, but, paradoxically in the view of some of its representatives, enjoying a relative international visibility.

As stated in the opening paragraphs, the data discussed here was obtained from a wider investigative project, rendering it impossible to present the results in full. There is also information on other themes, especially based on the four recorded interviews, that can be presented to a wider public, something that will be effected in due course. For now, the hope is reiterated that at the very least this work has contributed, albeit initially, to a reappraisal of the studies and discussions devoted to the biological counterpart of Anthropology in Brazil, in its most different aspects, especially in its contemporary guise.

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