



## BICAMERALISM, PROFILE OF ELITES AND POLITICAL TRAJECTORIES OF FEDERAL PARLIAMENTARIANS IN BRAZIL (1983-2019)

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**Abstract:** The article analyzes the political trajectory and the social profile of senators and deputies from an institutionalist perspective, with the objective of measuring and evaluating the profile of congressional elites, based on the bicameral representative institutions. The study covers the period from Legislature 47 to 55. The objective is to show the institutional effects of Brazilian bicameralism - symmetrical and incongruous - on the composition of federal parliamentary elites. In convergence with bicameral incongruity, the work shows that senators are more experienced in politics than deputies. This experience, however, compromises professionalization in the Senate itself. Senators' experiences in elective and non-elective positions undermine "loyalty" to the Senate and the increase in senatorial expertise.

**Keywords:** political trajectories, parliamentary profile, incongruent bicameralism, parliamentary elites, National Congress.

### 1 Introduction

Where do deputies and senators come from, and where do they go before they reach the National Congress? This paper seeks to address these issues. This is a longitudinal and comparative study on the profile of Brazilian senators and deputies from the 47<sup>th</sup> to the 55<sup>th</sup> Legislatures (1983-2019). The objectives are to analyze the differences between the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies regarding the legislatures' social and political profile and indicate the transformations that have occurred over time in the congressional representation.

Due to the structural and political changes in Brazilian society, an increasing plurality in the parliamentary composition is expected in both houses, indicating an increase of the popular classes within the legislative scope (RODRIGUES, 2002; MUCINHATO, 2014). A gradual professionalization of congressional representatives is also expected, indicated by the accumulated political experience and expressed in the political trajectories of those who held positions in the National Congress in the studied period.

Differences between the Houses are expected in terms of the members' profiles due to institutional features of bicameral incongruity in Brazil. By hypothesis, senators and deputies would differentiate between themselves, in the direction envisaged for bicameralisms incongruent in the Brazilian way. Typically, senators would be recruited from older, politically experienced, educated, and elite politicians. In other words, with professions and academic training of higher social prestige. Additionally, a more varied and prosperous career in terms of the experiences

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acquired in elective and non-elective positions is expected for senators before reaching the federal parliament due to the diversified incentives provided by the current federative arrangement.

This paper is divided into three topics in addition to this introduction. In the first topic, we mobilized a few notes from the literature on elites and political institutions to justify and theoretically support the empirical analysis. In the second, we analyze the data on the social origins and trajectories of senators and deputies. Finally, we assess the information on parliamentarians' political paths and the experiences they have obtained. Then it will be possible to conclude whether or not the research expectations are met.

We used descriptive statistics, the chi-square test, and Index *F* to demonstrate whether the differences observed between houses are causal or express statistically relevant trends. We will detail the data and methodological issues related to their analysis throughout the work.

## **2 On the study of parliamentary elites: a few notes from the literature**

Issues regarding the political trajectory and the profile of government elites in general and parliamentary elites, in particular, have increasingly been central objects of political sociology and political science. The relevance of studies in this field regards the impacts of the representatives' profile on the morphology, institutionality, and quality of political representation.

In addition to raising a complex normative debate on minorities in representative democratic systems (PITKIN, 1967; PHILLIPS, 2001; NORRIS, 1997; YOUNG, 2006), the literature currently renders a wide-ranging discussion of historical-sociological bias on the education of representative elites, arguing against the elitism of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century that the pluralization and structural complexification of societies led to the transformation of political systems towards the popularization of political representation, opening the paths of power to the previously excluded lower classes.

Paradoxically, some studies show more difficulties for the poor and other political minorities to access positions of power, especially in the high echelons, such as in parliaments and federal executives, due to the increase in professionalization and competitiveness in the political field (CODATO; COSTA; MASSIMO, 2015). A middle ground was pointed out by Best and Cota (2000), who analyzed the data from 150 years of evolution of representation in many European countries, reporting a flattening or homogenization of the European parliamentary elites. The space and power of the elites were limited, and the chances of access to the power of very low classes reduced due to the competitiveness, professionalization, and high cost of electoral campaigns (SIMONI JR; DADARQUE; MINARDI, 2016; BEST; COTTA, 2000; NORRIS, 1997).

Despite the importance of this discussion on normative appeals and the sociological foundations of the configuration of contemporary representative bodies, this study integrates the debate on the formation of parliamentary elites through the institutional route, seeking to

contribute to the knowledge of the profiles of senators and federal deputies.

The old discussion on the importance of institutions in the quality of democratic representation (MONTESQUIEU, 1979; HAMILTON; MADISON; JAY, 1979) has increased in recent decades by the so-called new institutionalism, which focuses on the micro-foundations of political action given the effect the rules of the game on the incentives and behaviors of political actors (TSEBELIS, 1998; LLANOS; NOLTE, 2003; SIAVELIS; MORGENSTERN, 2008). This paper intends to understand the formation of federal political elites in Brazil.

The survey covers 1983 to 2019, 36 years, and nine legislatures (from 47 to 55). The paper proposes to extend the length of the research conducted to date regarding the social profile and political trajectory of national congressional representatives and systematically compare senators and deputies concerning the institutional parameters of Brazilian bicameralism. The general question is, does bicameralism matter when it comes to the profile of the elites and the paths taken by their members? If so, how and how much? What are the effects of bicameral institutions on the composition of federal parliamentary elites?

Many authors highlight the effects of political institutions on the recruitment process and, consequently, parliamentary elites' composition (BEST; COTTA, 2000; NORRIS, 1997). Bicameralism consists of a set of institutions that highly influence the profile of elites since it is created with the primary purpose of promoting differences between the two houses concerning the pattern of parliamentary recruitment that affect the composition of each one of them to a higher or lower degree (LIJPHART, 1989, 2003; LLANOS; NOLTE, 2003).

Lijphart (1989; 2003) highlights bicameral institutions in seminal comparative studies on institutional aspects of various democracies. There are two institutional dimensions highlighted by the author: symmetry (or asymmetry) and congruence (or incongruity).

The incongruity concerns the method of constituting each Chamber's legislatures and is more closely related to the discussion in this article because it affects both houses' composition of political representation. Congruent bicameralisms are those in which the rules for capturing representatives are similar and therefore tend to promote convergence between the upper and lower chambers regarding their respective legislatures' social and political profile. In other words, it is impossible to observe large differences between one and the other Chamber regarding its members' social and political profiles in congruent bicameral systems.

In contrast, incongruent bicameralisms are marked by different norms for the composition of the Chamber, tending to differ one from the other regarding aspects such as minimum age of their members, the size of each Chamber, the electoral rules, the type of list, the size and magnitude of the districts, the electoral calendar, and the duration and renewal of the mandates. Institutional differences regarding these aspects tend (and aim) to generate legislatures with different social and political profiles.

A second important dimension of bicameralism is symmetry, which concerns the balance

of forces between the two chambers based on the distribution of political powers and prerogatives. Symmetrical bicameralisms imply equivalence between the Chambers regarding such powers and prerogatives. Asymmetric bicameralisms express the opposite: inequality between the houses in terms of their potential to affect national political decisions and their ability to control organs and political power instances.

Although bicameral symmetry does not directly influence the social and political profile of parliamentarians, it is worth noting that it can make the dispute for the upper Chamber more attractive in symmetrical bicameral systems. The political-institutional strength of the upper Chamber in the symmetrical bicameralisms makes this Chamber an instance of greater strategic importance for national political elites, in theory tending to encourage the recruitment of parliamentarians with more prosperous and more expressive trajectories in terms of experiences accumulated throughout political life.

Despite the significant heterogeneity among bicameral systems, bicameralisms worldwide tend to be, to some degree, deliberately symmetrical and incongruent (TSEBELIS; MONEY, 1997; NEIVA, 2004; LLANOS; NOLTE, 2003). The usual asymmetry (generally in favor of the lower Chamber) is not total and cannot be summed up in a variable of 0 or 1. The same can be said about incongruity. Bicameralisms tend to oscillate between the opposite poles in the continuums of congruence-incongruence and symmetry-asymmetry, but without occupying the polar positions.

As a result, the Senate's typical image regarding its political powers, secularly constructed, evokes a chamber endowed with a remarkable power of control over authorities and instances of the political system and a specific influence in the bicameral legislative process. Furthermore, the Senate consists of a chamber marked by a more conservative bias since it is generally made up of older, experienced, "wise", and moderate legislators than its counterpart, the lower Chamber. As mentioned before, this divergence is intentional and results from the formal rules of recruitment that promote different profiles according to the target position (HAMILTON; MADISON; JAY, 1979; LLANOS; NOLTE, 2003, TSEBELIS; MONEY, 1997).

Given the variety of institutional formats of bicameralism, it is essential to compare houses in their various aspects, especially regarding their legislatures' composition. For obvious reasons, it is even more interesting to compare the profiles of senators and deputies in countries such as the United States, Chile, and Argentina, where the systems are markedly symmetrical and strongly incongruous (LLANOS; NOLTE, 2003). The question that arises is how does the symmetry and, mainly, the incongruity of bicameralisms affect the social and political profiles of all its members? Since Brazil is the focus of this article, a brief presentation on the Brazilian federal Legislature's characteristics follows.

## 2.1 Bicameralism in Brazil

Bicameralism in Brazil is strongly symmetrical and incongruous (LLANOS; NOLTE, 2003; Araújo, 2012). The attributions related to legislative production regarding symmetry are virtually the same for both houses, with a slight favoring for the Chamber of Deputies (INÁCIO, 2007)<sup>2</sup>. The Senate's balance tilts regarding the control activities over political authorities and institutions (ARAÚJO, 2012). Llanos and Nolte (2003) compared 12 countries in the Americas, giving a score of 22 to the symmetry of Brazilian bicameralism, on a scale of 24. As stated before, this symmetry's power makes the House attractive for national political elites' career strategies.

However, incongruity is the primary dimension to be considered in this work, as it strongly affects parliamentarians' profile as they are seated in the Federal Senate or the Chamber of Deputies. Llanos and Nolte assign a grade of 16 regarding this dimension, on a scale of 18. This is because, apart from the districts' size, all the rules in Brazil are incongruous, and the expected results on the profile of senators and deputies converge with "traditional" expectations concerning bicameral representation. While Deputy elections are proportional, increasing the chances of representing small parties and minority social segments, Senate elections mostly present one or two candidates depending on the election. Therefore, senator candidates tend to be more dependent on the party structure for a good performance in the campaign, which is more expensive due to its territorial expanse and many votes necessary to elect a senator (LLANOS; SANCHEZ 2008).

Although Brazil's electoral district is formally the same for both positions, senator and deputy, focusing efforts in a few municipalities is not a viable campaign strategy for senators. Furthermore, due to the relatively low number of senators, the position's visibility, and its importance in the Brazilian coalition presidentialism, the choice of candidates and the campaign strategies for senators' election tend to be prioritized in the electoral articulations of the parties (SANTOS, 2010). Given the structure of political competition, large parties with more resources are more likely to elect candidates than small parties. Therefore, it presents an elitizing factor that, good or bad, brings the Brazilian Senate closer to the canonical image of the upper, elite chambers.

In addition to the rules mentioned above, the minimum age required for the position, in theory, encourages the electoral rise of representatives with different profiles and legislatures with different "temperaments". According to the Constitution, the minimum age for running for a senator (35 years) is fourteen years higher than that required for a deputy (21). This gives the

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<sup>2</sup> The biggest advantage of the Chamber of Deputies over the Senate in the bicameral legislative process concerns the fact that all the proposals of ordinary and complementary law proposed by deputies and the constitutional amendments and provisional measures, begin in the Chamber of Deputies and return to them if senators change the text. When evaluating a proposal amended by the Senate - except in the case of a constitutional amendment - the deputies can restore the proposal to its original format. The Senate only gives the last word when it begins processing a proposal or when it vetoes entire proposals from other instances of the system. In the case of a constitutional amendment, the symmetry is perfect since both houses must agree with the content of the amendment for its approval.

Senate candidate opportunities to accumulate political life experience - senators are likely to be more politically experienced, more qualified for political representation than deputies. Furthermore, maturity also tends to come with time and is associated with common sense and temperance expected from Senate members. This Chamber has, among others, the function of opposing the eventual breakdowns of the Chamber of Deputies, considered more passionate and prone to untimely choices (HAMILTON; MADISON; JAY, 1979).

It is also worth mentioning the different renovation dynamics of both houses: restricted to senators and wide for deputies. The only partial availability of seats in the Brazilian Senate in each election is a factor that ensures a certain continuity in the profile of legislatures. At the same time, the opportunity for total renewal of the Chamber of Deputies makes its body of representatives more vulnerable to the instability of electoral preferences and more subject to political "waves" that may affect parliamentary elections. This trait, coupled with the reduced size of the Senate and the long duration of its mandates, also reinforces the elite image of the House, of which members have more time for closer personal relationships, are more subject to the corporate spirit, and more likely than deputies to defend the *status quo*.

Reiterating the argument that institutions affect the political game and its results, it can be said that the combination of symmetry and incongruity foreshadow certain typical differences between the profiles of senators and deputies. In this regard, this study aims to analyze the extent to which the results of bicameral elections in Brazil reflect the incongruity of the system and correspond to the expectations supported by the theory concerning the nine mentioned legislatures (47<sup>th</sup>-55<sup>th</sup>).

### **3 Brazilian senators and federal deputies: the social configuration of the legislatures from 1983 to 2015.**

The data analyzed in this and the next topic were collected in the Senate and Chamber websites' biographical repertoires. Other sources were consulted, such as the Brazilian Biographical Historical Dictionary, the Superior Electoral Court website, or official websites of parliamentarians and their parties. The information is organized in a database with 5299 cases related to the mandates of the members who took office (alternates are not considered).

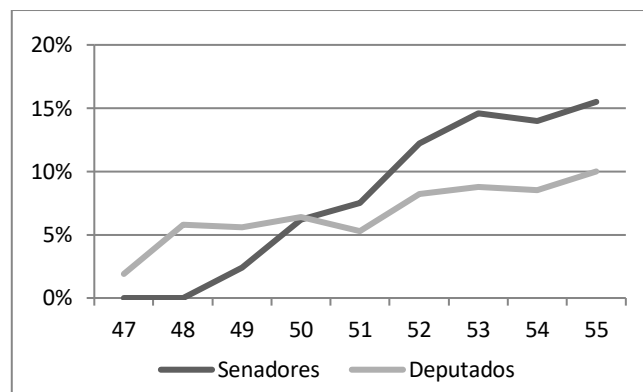
Since this paper aims to analyze the composition of the legislatures in terms of social profile and trajectories of its members, many parliamentarians appear more than once in the bank, in the same House, or both, depending on their political course during the 36 years in focus. When this happens, the parliamentarian data is updated, according to the experiences acquired between one term and the other (the occupation of an administrative position, for example). Thus, strictly speaking, the cases that make up the bank do not refer to individual parliamentarians but their mandates.

Graph 1 shows the evolution of female seats in Congress from the 47<sup>th</sup> to the 55<sup>th</sup>

Legislature. The relationship between representation and gender is a common and controversial point in works on recruitment and parliamentary profile and generally reveals the difficulty of women to ascend to elective positions. The well-known masculinization of politics in many countries, including Brazil (SIMÕES; MATOS, 2010)<sup>3</sup>, places political institutions and their operation logic as one of the primary causes (NORRIS, 1997, 2005; BOHN, 2008). It is a vicious circle in which women are seen as uncompetitive and underestimated in party electoral strategies, which undermines the development of their political careers and, consequently, their electoral competitiveness.

By this logic, the Brazilian Senate would tend to be less accessible to women than the Chamber since positions are scarcer and their achievement involves greater involvement of the parties in the electoral process and greater candidate competitiveness (DESPOSATO, 2006), to the detriment of women candidates. On the other hand, proportional elections for the Chamber are more favorable for politically minority segments, including women (NICOLAU, 2004).

**Graph 1 – Women (%) in the legislatures, per House**



**Source:** the author, 2019; Senators; Deputies.

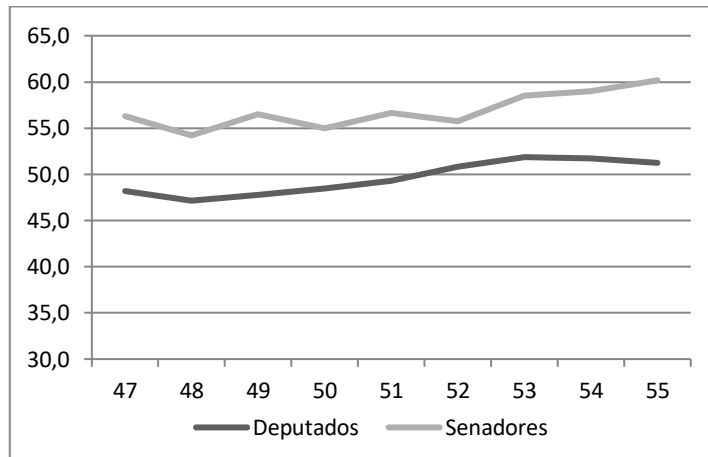
In general, women's presence is very low in both houses, as reported in other papers (ARAÚJO, 2005; SIMÕES; MATOS, 2010). There is an evolution in women's representation in the Senate, which surpassed the Chamber after the 51<sup>st</sup> Legislature. The Chamber also shows an upward curve. However, there is only a slight tendency to increase female representation in both houses, suggesting a more significant, but slow, opening to women in the National Congress. In any case, at the beginning of the period, the Senate proved to be a house more strongly restrictive to the entry of women, with the first term of incumbent senator women occurring only in the 49<sup>th</sup>

<sup>3</sup> According to the *Inter-Parliamentary Union*, only 23.4% of parliamentary seats worldwide are occupied by women. Brazil occupies the 153 position, with 10.7% of women in the Chamber of Deputies and 14.8% in the Senate. Available at <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/arc/classif010817.htm>. Accessed on October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020. These data go up to the 55<sup>th</sup> Legislature, which is the scope of this work. The number of women increased in the Chamber in the 2018 elections. Therefore, the 56<sup>th</sup> Legislature presented 77 women, 15%, while the number remained the same in the Senate, 12 women or 14.8% of the total senators.

Legislature. In this period, there were 60 senatorial terms in the House. In the Chamber, 369 terms were fulfilled by women as officeholders. In any case, the chi-square test does not indicate significant differences between houses regarding the representation of women in the analyzed period ( $X^2$  2.525; sig. 112)<sup>4</sup>.

Differences also occur between senators and deputies regarding the average age of entry into Congress due to the Constitution's limits: 21 years for deputies and 35 for senators. This difference is common among the upper chambers worldwide. Neiva (2004, p. 77) evaluated 49 countries and reported an average required age of 33 years to enter the Senate and 25 years for the Chamber. It is reasonable to assume that the age restriction reflects the concern to ensure attributes that generally require time to be acquired, such as qualification, experience, and temperance, in short, "wisdom". This will help to interpret the data below.

**Graph 2** – Average age of parliamentarians per position and legislature



**Source:** the author, based on the data obtained from the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, 2019; Senators; Deputies.

The graph confirms the expectation and allows additional considerations on the longitudinal evolution of the picture. The average age difference between senators and deputies for legislatures is seven years, although the distance between the minimum legal ages is 14. The average observed in the Senate is 56.4 years and 49.4 in the Chamber. The *F* index of the averages test, by Legislature, was high, with a sig. of 0.000 for all legislatures.

The line referring to the Senate shows that the average age is growing. However, access to the youngest is more common when there are elections for two-thirds of the seats, except for the 54<sup>th</sup> Legislature. This oscillation converges with the expected effect of the interim elections, which indicate that they fulfill the expected function of preventing the renewal - literally, in this

<sup>4</sup> The chi-square test performed in this paper is based on 2x2 tables equivalent to the entire period, with no subdivisions per legislature. Therefore, all tests have 1 degree of freedom.

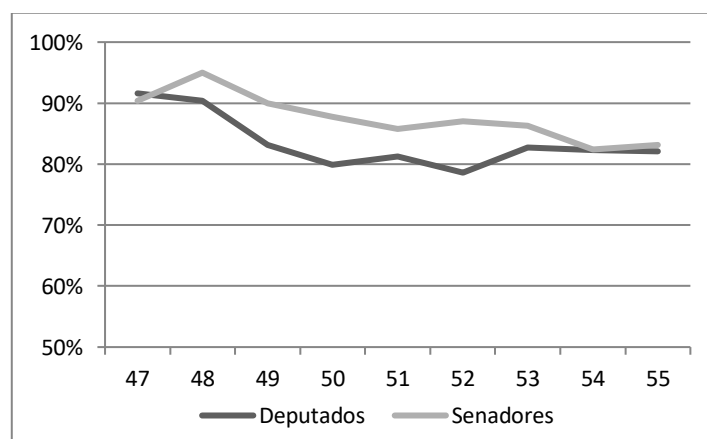


case - of the legislatures. It is assumed that, in elections with only one seat, older politicians are privileged in the intra-party processes for nominating senatorial candidates, in theory, because they are more experienced and have greater chances of victory and possibly have more skills and resources to influence party decisions regarding the elections. Newbies and outsiders tend to have lower chances in elections when there is only one seat in contention.

The line referring to the Chamber shows steady growth in the average age of the deputies. Despite the zigzag in the legislatures, there is also an upward trend in the Senate. This may be due to the "aging" of the candidates (for which there is no data here), but there may also be an increase in parliamentarians' persistence in their positions. In this case, the gradual increase in the average age is influenced by the renewal of parliamentary terms - and not just by the rise in the age of candidates in general. It is worth noting that the data analyzed concerns the *elected* and not the candidates.

Schooling is a classic indicator of academic qualification and suggests, although it does not determine, a higher or lower competence of representatives to address the complexity of legislative action. Moreover, given its correlation with class positions, schooling indicates opening or closing the Legislature to the popular classes. Judging by this indicator, both houses in Brazil are strongly elitist. The Senate has a higher average level of schooling than the Chamber when considering the entire period studied. Neither high schooling nor differences between houses are new, as reported in several papers (MUCINHATO, 2014; LLANOS; SÁNCHEZ, 2008). However, the downward trend perceived in both Houses, in the time interval considered here, indicates that the schooling level of the Houses is homogenizing, reinforcing the argument that federal elites are becoming popular (RODRIGUES, 2002; SIMONI JR., 2016 ).

**Graph 3** – Complete higher education per position and legislature



**Source:** the author, based on the data obtained from the Chamber of Deputies and Senate, 2019; Senators; Deputies.

The occupational profile is an important indicator of the representatives' social origins,

especially when combined with other background data generally considered in this type of study. Occupations give clues to the social origin of parliamentarians - whether in the elites or the popular classes, for example - suggesting networks of social interaction in which they have been or are involved and the resources they have mastered to support their political life. Furthermore, the occupations indicate possibilities of action in the parliamentary sphere, whether concerning the preferred political themes or the most targeted internal organization positions. For example, there are works that show significant associations between the professional field and the jurisdiction of the permanent committees on which parliamentarians serve (SANTOS; 2002; LEMOS; RICCI, 2004; LEMOS; RANINCHESKI, 2008; ARAÚJO, 2019).

However, it is necessary to highlight the methodological difficulties in addressing this variable. This information consists of self-declaration in most of the databases available. The answer is often multiple. In other words, the parliamentarian indicates several professions without pointing out the time of dedication to them or order of importance of each one in their life experiences. Additionally, academic training is often reported as a profession, inflating rates in professional fields confused with areas of academic training, such as law, engineering, economics, etc.

The fact is that the problems with the quality standard of the available data, combined with the researchers' variety of solutions, make it difficult to compare precisely with other works. However, this does not negate the importance of considering the professional variable in studying the social profile of political elites. The text by Perissinotto and Codato (2015) is suggested for a detailed approach to this issue.

**Table 1** – Professions per position and Legislature (%)

		Legislatures								
		47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55
<b>Legal professions</b>	<b>Deputies</b>	52.3	41.8	32.3	30.9	28.0	29.0	26.1	21.3	20.1
	<b>Senators</b>	40.0	34.2	36.9	35.8	31.3	20.7	16.0	22.4	23.8
<b>Entrepreneurs</b>	<b>Deputies</b>	27.4	31.0	33.5	28.8	26.9	24.3	27.1	25.6	16.2
	<b>Senators</b>	32.3	30.1	31.0	30.9	31.3	24.4	25.9	29.4	25.0
<b>Liberal professions</b>	<b>Deputies</b>	33.5	38.4	40.5	45.6	41.2	39.9	41.8	39.8	37.5
	<b>Senators</b>	40.0	41.1	36.9	30.9	35.0	34.1	32.1	36.5	38.1
<b>Workers</b>	<b>Deputies</b>	9.3	8.2	9.3	7.2	6.7	12.6	11.8	11.1	4.3
	<b>Senators</b>	3.1	2.7	3.6	6.2	7.5	7.3	6.2	9.4	10.7

Source: the author, based on the data obtained from the Chamber of Deputies and Senate websites, 2016.

Other surveys have shown that legal professionals are the most representative in Congress but have a long tendency to drop in percentages. The houses alternate in terms of the contingent of lawyers throughout the period, but both go through the cooling of the historical "bachelorism"

in the Brazilian Legislature (CARVALHO, 2003), a decline already identified by other authors, such as Neiva and Izumi (2014), regarding the Senate, and Simoni, Dardaue, and Mingardi (2015), who compare both houses.

Fluctuations in the percentages over time change the position of the houses in terms of their contingent of lawyers. However, they are also frequented by professionals in the category throughout the period. The chi-square test (with *sig.* ,178) shows that the occasional differences between them cancel each other and are statistically irrelevant in the period as a whole. If the "bachelorism" identified by Carvalho (2003) indicates elitism, the Senate is not considered a more elitist house than the Chamber of Deputies in the analyzed period. Therefore, considering this variable, the data are counterintuitive, contradicting the Senate's hypothesis is a more select house.

Entrepreneurs and professionals - here composed of doctors, economists, engineers, architects, etc. - make up a large portion of the legislatures. Entrepreneurs controlled slightly less than 30% of seats in both the Senate and House. The average for the period was 28.9% in the first and 26.8% in the second, with slight fluctuations. The chi-square test indicates no significant association between entrepreneurship and the Senate and Chamber of Deputies (*sig.* ,243).

Liberal professionals are more common in the Chamber from the 49<sup>th</sup> Legislature, falling to second place in the 55<sup>th</sup> Legislature. The statistical test ( $X^2$  3.95, *sig.* ,047) shows a significant difference between houses at conventional levels.

The data show that the houses do not differ from each other regarding the distribution of entrepreneurs but are distinguished concerning the presence of liberal professionals. In any case, there is no logical reason to expect differences in the light of bicameral incentives, mostly because they are internally heterogeneous categories, composed of professions that are not necessarily positioned in the same social stratum - entrepreneurs, for example, involve small and large landowners and do not allow the presumption of economic elitism or parliamentary popularization.

Urban and rural workers include bank workers and taxi drivers to farmers and agricultural technicians. It is also an internally heterogeneous variable but composed of professions of lesser social prestige than lawyers, entrepreneurs, and liberal professionals. First, there are few workers in all legislatures. However, there has always been a higher percentage in the Chamber, except in the 51<sup>st</sup> Legislature. There is a "technical tie", and in the 55<sup>th</sup> Legislature, where the difference is more significant. The general average of the period shows 6.3% of the Senate's mandates occupied by workers, while in the Chamber, the rate was 8.9%. The chi-square test shows that the difference is statistically consistent ( $X^2$  4.93, *sig.* 0.026).

Weber's (2015) arguments about the affinity of certain professions with the development of a political career are well known. Among them, those related to law stand out, either because of the knowledge they provide or the autonomy regarding the use of time to dedicate to professional inclinations. The longitudinal drop in these professionals' presence can reduce

lawyers' interest in politics and, more likely, the increase in competition between professions due to socio-occupational pluralization. This pluralization may be hidden in the constancy of *entrepreneurs* and *liberal professionals* during the studied period. As mentioned above, these variables aggregate heterogeneous professions and hide the real plurality of representation in legislative houses.

The slight increase in workers in Congress reinforces the argument that there are more competition and greater openness of the elites to the popular and middle classes. The significant difference in favor of the Chamber category reinforces the institutionalist hypothesis that the proportional system adopted for this House favors segments in lower positions of the social structure, favors a popular representation.

The data below reflect the composition of the legislatures in terms of the university degrees obtained. This information is more accurate and objective than referring to the professions because of their formal status, attested by the diploma. Furthermore, they can be better aggregated (in large areas of knowledge, for example) than professions.

Law graduates were the most significant throughout the period. However, the same declining trend noted in the data on legal professions is revealed among them. The graphs show that all legislatures present more graduates than professionals in the field. This means that several law graduates did not confuse the diploma with the profession. Unfortunately, not all show this same insight. Regarding the distribution of law graduates between houses, as occurs with legal professions, the differences are irrelevant in statistical terms (*sig.*, 168), indicating that, apart from occasional fluctuations, the houses' potential to recruit lawyers is virtually the same.

**Table 2** – University formation per position and Legislature (%)

		Legislatures								
		47	48	49	50	52	52	53	54	55
<b>Law</b>	<b>Deputies</b>	58.7	45.0	38.2	33.2	30.6	34.1	30.8	27.9	29.8
	<b>Senators</b>	49.2	45.7	48.1	48.1	41.0	30.9	30.5	30.2	31.3
<b>Health Sciences</b>	<b>Deputies</b>	10.3	9.9	12.0	15.4	14.5	14.5	16.7	13.3	13.2
	<b>Senators</b>	15.9	15.7	13.6	7.4	10.3	8.6	11.0	14.0	10.8
<b>Engineering</b>	<b>Deputies</b>	11.6	14.6	14.7	14.8	14.7	13.3	13.7	14.3	12.4
	<b>Senators</b>	22.2	15.7	12.3	16.0	17.9	19.8	15.9	15.1	18.1
<b>Economic Sciences</b>	<b>Deputies</b>	13.1	17.8	15.7	18.4	17.1	14.6	16.5	18.5	17.6
	<b>Senators</b>	6.3	17.1	18.5	21.0	24.4	21.0	15.9	23.3	18.1
<b>Arts and Humanities</b>	<b>Deputies</b>	13.1	14.2	9.6	10.0	12.4	11.7	13.9	14.7	11.6
	<b>Senators</b>	9.5	21.4	17.3	12.3	11.5	19.8	17.1	15.1	15.7

Source: the author, based on the data obtained from the Chamber of Deputies and Senate websites, 2016.

Those bearing a degree in health sciences mainly include doctors and, marginally,

psychologists, nurses, and pharmacists. They remained in the range of 10% to 20% between deputies and senators, altering between houses in the studied period. The statistical test was not significant (*sig.* ,246), indicating no significant differences between the upper and lower chambers. There were also no statistically significant inter-chamber differences regarding degrees in economic sciences - economics, accounting, administration, etc. The chi-square test was not significant (*sig.* ,165).

In contrast, there were significant statistical differences between the houses in terms of engineering ( $X^2$  4.72, *sig.* ,030) and arts and humanities degrees, including social sciences, history, communications, and arts ( $X^2$ : 5.84, *sig.* ,016). In both cases, the contingents in the Senate were statistically significant.

In summary, the social background data analyzed in this topic allows some important conclusions given this study's objective. First, both Congress houses are elitized, confirming other studies on the theme, with members with a social profile distant from the average Brazilian citizen: mostly male legislatures and very high averages of parliamentarians with university degrees. Age also indicates a certain elitism since the average in each House is much higher (and growing) than the minimum required to enter the federal parliament. This suggests obstacles for younger politicians and that Congress is not for beginners.

These data corroborate the expectation that the Senate is more elitist and restrictive to minorities than the Chamber regarding young people and people with low education, thus limiting the representation's plurality. However, considering the trends revealed over the studied period, both houses are moving towards openness, at least concerning women's entry and less educated people. The elders remain privileged, and the Senate is a home for "elders", living up to the upper Chamber's historical origins.

A reasonable variety of academic occupations and diplomas was noticed, indicating plural trajectories of professional and intellectual training. However, in the professional field, lawyers and entrepreneurs do not differentiate between houses. These professions are balanced in both. The academic degrees of law, health education, and economic sciences are also balanced within the Houses.

Some differences were revealed in terms of professions. The Senate and Chamber showed differences regarding the working classes and entrepreneurs present in a higher number among the deputies. There was also a higher representation of engineering and the arts and humanities degrees in the Senate.

Knowing in which aspects the houses differ or are equal is important to understand Brazilian bicameralism's morphology. Nevertheless, such differences cannot be explained by the institutional elements of bicameral incongruity.

#### 4 Parliamentarians and their political experiences: the paths to the National Congress

The previous passage through elective and non-elective positions is a fundamental point of comparison between senators and deputies. They can reveal the qualitative and quantitative differences between them regarding the political experience accumulated in their trajectory. Such experience indicates the relationships of parliamentarians with institutional policy and the parliament, allowing the assessment of the levels and standards of political professionalization and their potential impacts on parliamentary institutionalization. Polsby (1968) reports that professionalization and institutionalization are "Siamese" processes in the House of Representatives in the United States. The development of the Legislature (autonomy in the face of the environment, internal complexification, and predominance of universal and formalized procedures) occurs in connection with an increase in parliamentarians' dedication to the political profession, especially to the parliamentary position that is maintained through reelections.

Much has been said about the inadequacy of evaluating any specific case based on the American case (DI MARTINO, 2010; BORCHET, 2011). One cannot expect equal procedures and standards from systems that offer different political and institutional incentives for elites' trajectories. Although studies such Pergurier (2009) and Santos (2010) indicate the consolidation of careers in the Chamber of Deputies, with the increase of successful reelection attempts, one must be recognized that the Brazilian institutional arrangement encourages trajectories of diversified experiences in the most diverse elective and non-elective positions. Thus, the parliamentarians' political courses would not necessarily point to the lack of professionalization, but their own type of professionalization - if not exclusively parliamentary, at least political professionalization.

The data below allow a better assessment of this point, considering the different career incentives offered to senators and deputies in the context of Brazilian bicameralism. Table 3 presents an overview of the representation in the houses considering their party composition at the time of their inauguration in each Legislature.

**Table 3** – Party representation structure per position and Legislature.

	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55
<b>Nominal number of parties</b>	7	17	22	22	19	21	24	27	32
<b>NEP</b>	2.4	3.0	8.5	8.3	7.2	8.5	9.2	10.8	15.1
<b>Chamber of Deputies</b> <b>Fractionation (F)</b>	0.59	0.67	0.88	0.88	0.86	0.88	0.89	0.91	0.93
<b>% elected by small parties</b>	9.0	23.0	47.1	39.2	32.3	38.0	41.0	50.0	38.7
<b>% elected by center parties</b>	40.3	52.6	29.0	32.5	35.0	28.4	29.9	25.3	22.8

	<b>Nominal number of parties</b>	5	7	10	13	9	10	11	17	22
<b>Senate</b>	<b>NEP</b>	2.2	4.0	5.4	5.7	4.5	5.8	6.5	8.6	9.8
	<b>Fractionation (F)</b>	0.54	0.75	0.82	0.82	0.78	0.83	0.85	0.88	0.90
	<b>% elected by small parties</b>	9.0	26.0	33.7	24.8	20.8	20.4	26.6	43.0	28.8
	<b>% elected by center parties</b>	30.8	57.5	44.2	43.0	52.6	39.7	34.7	35.8	34.7

**Source:** the author, based on the data obtained from the Chamber of Deputies and Senate websites, 2016.

In convergence with what was expected, there is more significant party fragmentation in the Chamber, proved by the number of nominal parties, effective parties, or fractionation by the F index. Another indicator of the greater openness of the Chamber to different trajectories in terms of the party origin is the size of the small party bench, which is more significant in the last six legislatures of the studied period. Compared to senators, deputies are selected through a more plural number of parties, with a higher percentage of those elected by small parties (occupying 5% of seats or less). Along the lines of the analysis developed here, the Senate is more restrictive to the entry of minority segments (organized into parties), less prone to party airing, that is, to the renewal of its ranks in favor of non-hegemonic legends.

The size of the central benches, if taken as a proxy for political moderation, also converges with bicameralism, which advocates more significant moderation and "temperance" of the Senate before the Chamber (HAMILTON, MADISON, JAY, 1979). It cannot be said that this composition stems directly from bicameral institutions in Brazil since the parties considered to be at the center (PMDB/MDB and PSDB) are also great legends, favored in most senate elections. Moreover, it is essential to point to senatorial moderation, but necessary to understand that they result from historical specificities and political contexts and not from institutional mechanisms designed for this purpose - unless it is claimed that most elections for the Senate favor parties of masses, which tend to be moderate to capture the average voter.

Table 4<sup>5</sup> summarizes the congressional representatives' experience according to the level of government of the position held. The current House's previous experience is not considered here (it will be evaluated later, as an indicator of seniority).

<sup>5</sup> The 47<sup>th</sup> legislature elected 479 deputies, the 48<sup>th</sup> elected 487, the 49<sup>th</sup> elected 503, and the others, 513. There are many reasons why the number of incumbents elected by legislature does not coincide with the number of elected members. Death before the inauguration, withdrawal, or the judicial challenge of the elected are some of them. In the first two cases, the number of incumbents taking office is less than the number of elected incumbents; in the latter case, the number is greater, because incumbents are removed and give way to other parliamentarians who are considered incumbents.

**Table 4** – Previous experience per position and Legislature in elective and non-elective posts outside the House (%).

		47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55
<b>Federal</b>	<b>Deputies</b>	3.3	6.0	5.2	5.2	3.9	7.2	5.9	4.8	4.2
	<b>Senators</b>	72.3	68.5	65.5	64.2	61.3	56.1	61.0	68.6	71.4
<b>State</b>	<b>Deputies</b>	57.4	52.4	51.8	51.1	49.2	50.8	52.1	50.8	48.9
	<b>Senators</b>	63.1	64.4	69.0	80.2	77.5	73.2	73.2	72.1	61.9
<b>Municipal</b>	<b>Deputies</b>	42.8	42.2	38.1	44.5	47.1	49.2	54.5	50.0	48.6
	<b>Senators</b>	35.4	37.0	42.9	46.9	46.3	43.9	47.6	57.0	50.0
<b>N (deputies)</b>		<b>486</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>517</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>518</b>	<b>519</b>
<b>N (senators)</b>		<b>65</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>84</b>

**Source:** the author, based on the data obtained from the Chamber of Deputies and Senate websites, 2016.

The data highlight the interest of senators at the federal level, those who before reaching the senatorial Legislature when through the positions of a federal deputy, minister, and even the presidency or vice-presidency of the Republic - these are the cases of Fernando Collor, José Sarney, Itamar Franco, and Marco Maciel, from the studied period. The percentage of deputies with federal experiences outside the Chamber is very low and concentrates in senator and minister positions. Considering the average for the period, 65.4% of senatorial mandates were held by senators who had already experienced federal positions in other arenas.

The presence of senators in Brazilian politics is consolidated with their trajectories by positions in the federation states. They have heavily dominated the state level. The percentage of those who held a position in state policy - deputy, governor, or government secretary - exceeds 60% in four legislatures of the period and 70% in the others, reaching 80% in the 50<sup>th</sup> Legislature. They are "federation barons", dominating the trails of national power and moving with apparent ease from the state to the federal level. However, there is a significant percentage of deputies with previous experience in the states. On average for the period, 52% held a position in the states, which confirm state policy as an important arena for forming parliamentary elites in Brazil.

The panorama changes slightly at the municipal level, where there is greater expressiveness of federal deputies, but with no dominance between both houses. The chi-square test was not significant (*sig.* ,700), indicating a balance between senators and deputies regarding the accumulation of experiences at the municipal level.

This variety of experiences by senators and deputies expresses the opportunities structure of the Brazilian political system. There are few costs and many incentives to search for new political experiences, given that you can occupy administrative positions or plead for other positions in intermediate elections without losing your parliamentary mandate. Furthermore, there are many positions available in the legislative, executive, and government levels, in all three levels of the federation, allowing policy-makers to build their networks, expanding them according to



their interests and possibilities.

Table 4 suggests that a significant part of the congressional representatives begin with the municipalities and expand their ambitions and resources until they reach the national political class. Although the nature of the data does not allow us to consider the chronology of such trajectories - it is known that many politicians rise and fall in position rank, going from the federal to the state level, to the municipal level, jumping between elective and non-elective positions, without a specific or definitive stop (MIGUEL, 2003; SANTANA, 2008). However, this does not necessarily imply low degrees of political professionalization, but it can be a strategic and specific form of dedicating oneself to the political vocation given the incentives that emerge in each trajectory (DI MARTINO, 2010).

Table 5 differentiates the positions at each level and allows more acute considerations on the different paths followed by deputies and senators towards the National Congress. The first block of the table presents data on the passage through legislative positions and highlights past experiences of senators in the Chamber of Deputies, showing that this House is a common step for access to the Senate. On average for the period, 55.2% of the incumbent senators had experience as federal deputies, while only 2.5% of the deputies had experienced the Senate, which suggests a higher frequency of progressive rather than regressive ambition.

**Table 5** – Previous political experience per government level, position, and Legislature (%)

		Legislatures								
		47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55
<b>Experience in the legislative power per government level</b>										
<b>Municipal</b>	<b>Deputies</b>	25.3	24.2	21.0	20.3	27.3	27.0	31.1	29.0	28.9
	<b>Senators</b>	18.5	16.4	15.5	17.3	22.5	20.7	18.3	25.6	21.4
<b>State</b>	<b>Deputies</b>	44.9	37.6	37.9	36.8	34.4	34.6	38.1	38.8	36.6
	<b>Senators</b>	38.5	34.2	29.8	38.3	43.8	41.5	41.5	40.7	40.5
<b>Federal</b>	<b>Deputies</b>	2.3	4.4	2.0	2.1	1.6	1.9	2.9	3.5	2.1
	<b>Senators</b>	66.2	57.5	53.6	51.9	50.0	43.9	50.0	60.5	63.1
<b>Experience in the executive power per government level</b>										
<b>Municipal</b>	<b>Deputies</b>	23.3	20.2	17.5	23.0	19.5	17.5	24.6	21.2	20.0
	<b>Senators</b>	20.0	23.3	29.8	30.9	26.3	28.0	34.1	36.0	29.8
<b>State</b>	<b>Deputies</b>	3.5	4.8	4.0	3.9	4.1	4.7	4.3	3.3	3.5
	<b>Senators</b>	35.4	35.6	41.7	50.6	41.3	34.1	40.2	41.9	38.1
<b>Federal</b>	<b>Deputies</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	<b>Senators</b>	0.0	2.7	2.4	1.2	1.3	2.4	3.7	3.5	1.2
<b>Experience in high-level government position per government level</b>										
<b>Municipal</b>	<b>Deputies</b>	7.4	7.2	8.9	12.6	14.1	20.0	15.4	16.8	17.7
	<b>Senators</b>	1.50	4.10	8.30	2.50	2.50	3.70	6.10	8.10	4.80

<b>State</b>	<b>Deputies</b>	23.3	23,0	22.0	23.4	24.2	26.1	24.4	21.4	21.4
	<b>Senators</b>	12.3	19.2	23.8	28.4	31.3	32.9	34.1	29.1	20.2
<b>Federal</b>	<b>Deputies</b>	1.2	1.8	3.6	3.5	2.5	5.6	3.3	1.7	3.1
	<b>Senators</b>	13.8	19.2	17.9	23.5	22.5	18.3	19.5	18.6	22.6

Source: the author, based on the data obtained from the Chamber of Deputies and Senate websites, 2016.

The configuration is more balanced in state legislatures than the federal Legislature, indicating that senators and deputies mobilize the state legislative arena to the same extent in their trajectories for power. The statistical test (*sig.* ,579) shows no significant difference between them at this point.

Deputies are more present in municipalities. The percentage differences between the legislatures of one House and another are small but consistent. The  $X^2$  test was high and statistically significant ( $X^2$  13.36, *sig.* ,000).

The second block of the table depicts the Executive Branch experiences at the three federal levels and reveals the superiority of senators in terms of the accumulated political experiences. The high and growing number of senatorial mandates held by former mayors is highlighted and resulted in a high index of statistical significance ( $X^2$  24.72, *sig.* ,000). The data shows strikingly that there is an increased predilection for members of the Upper Chamber for the governorships, which was occupied by 39.9% of senators, on average, compared to 4% of deputies<sup>6</sup>. Four senators occupied the Presidency or vice-presidency of the Republic before serving in any of the studied legislatures. There are no deputies with this information in the curriculum.

The last block of Table 5 contains information on passages for administrative positions at the three levels of the federation. The deputies show more significant experience in municipal government departments ( $X^2$ : 43.46, *sig.* ,000). Combined with the experience in the local legislatures, for which they also stand out, the deputies indicate having an important arena of political initiation in the municipalities, from which they seek to leverage their careers, which result in access to the Chamber. In the state arena, the graph shows an increase in secretaries' occupation by senators since the 49<sup>th</sup> Legislature. However, this is not enough to differentiate houses in a consistent and meaningful form (*sig.* ,099).

Senators have occupied ministries more often. This is to be expected since ministerial portfolios are used to consolidate parliamentary support for the federal Executive. Senators are central actors in the formation of coalitions and are specific figures on the nomination list of

<sup>6</sup> In the 2010 state government elections, according to the *Congresso em Foco* website, 23 senators, including incumbents, licentiates, and alternates, articulated to run for office. Of these, 17 were in a comfortable situation, with the option of remaining in the Senate if they lost at the polls, because their mandates would only end in 2015. The other six admitted to going for "all or nothing" in the state dispute, giving up the attempt for reelection. In 2010, 54 (two thirds) of the House's 81 chairs were at stake. (Access: <https://congressoemfoco.uol.com.br/eleicoes/um-quarto-dos-senadores-quer-concorrer-a-governador>. Available on 09/09/2020).

presidents of the Republic due to their prestige and political experience.

The broader and more varied senators' experience is evident when adding experience by type of position, regardless of levels. Table 6 distinguishes parliamentarians on these bases, measuring their previous experiences in positions in the Legislative Branch, Executive Branch, and high-level government.

**Table 6** – Previous experience in each power (aggregate)

Position		Legislatures								
		47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55
Legislative	Deputy	57.2	51.8	47.6	48.5	51.0	51.9	56.3	56.2	51.4
	Senator	80.0	69.9	69.0	75.3	76.3	70.7	70.7	68.6	73.8
Executive	Deputy	24.9	23.8	20.6	25.1	22.9	21.8	27.0	23.0	22.0
	Senator	46.2	45.2	56.0	59.3	51.2	48.8	53.7	51.2	50.0
Administrative	Deputy	30.0	29.2	31.3	34.4	35.4	43.2	36.5	34.9	35.3
	Senator	26.2	39.7	44.0	49.4	48.8	50.0	52.4	45.3	38.1
N (senators)		65	73	77	79	76	78	75	81	84
N (deputies)		486	500	504	517	512	514	512	518	517

Source: the author, based on the data obtained from the Chamber of Deputies and Senate websites, 2016.

Given the clarity of the trends and the forcefulness of the data - which are just an aggregation of data discussed above - there is no need to unfold comments, to affirm that, by far, those occupying the Senate's mandates are the ones who accumulate the most experience, whichever the type of position considered.

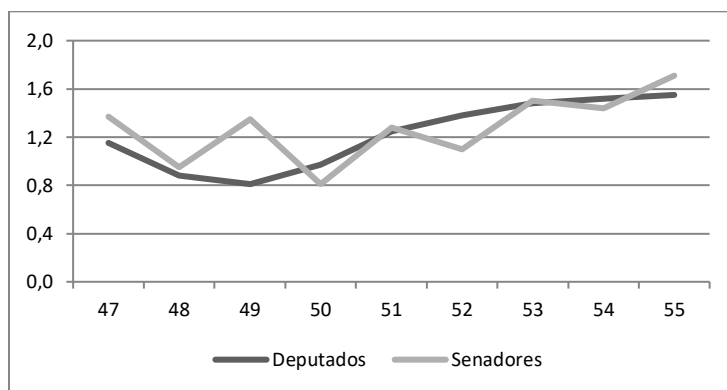
Graph 4 enables the comparison between houses using the seniority average by the Legislature to conclude the analysis of data on political trajectories and experiences. At first, it is essential to highlight the congressional representatives' low general level of experience in their position. In both houses, legislatures presented time averages over one term (deputies, 1.22 term; senators, 1.27 term). Nevertheless, while the line for deputies shows a growing and regular accumulation of experience, indicating a general tendency to persist in office, the line of senators has a zigzag shape, indicating ups and downs in the levels of aggregate parliamentary experience.

Another enlightening and counterintuitive finding is that deputies outnumber senators when comparing the maximum seniority time in each Legislature. As the indicator measures seniority, that is, previous experience, newcomers obtain a zero score. However, senators in some legislatures reached their ninth Legislature, and deputies reached their 11<sup>th</sup>. According to the data evaluated, deputies are more insistent on remaining in the Chamber than senators in the Senate.

<sup>7</sup> It is important to highlight the difference between legislature and mandate. A legislature lasts four years and a senator's mandate lasts eight years, while that of a deputy lasts four years.

This argument makes sense if one considers that senators, whose power is ensured for long terms and tempted by experiences outside the House in elective or non-elective positions, can take more risks in new positions, decreasing their persistence in terms of office. The fact is that the Brazilian system's federative structure reverses the expected weight of the eight-year terms in senatorial seniority evolution.

**Graph 4** – Seniority: average number of legislatures in which the parliamentarians previously acted in each House



**Source:** the author, based on the data obtained from the Chamber of Deputies and Senate websites, 2016; Senators; Deputies.

The fluctuation in the averages suggests a relationship with the percentage of newcomers who enter each Legislature. This phenomenon was more accentuated in the Senate, in legislatures susceptible to two-thirds of renewal, which allow the entry of a higher number of newcomers and pulls down the average of seniority. The Chamber presents a consistent downward trend in the number of newcomer deputies, a similar, inverted curve, in the increase of previous experience in the Chamber (seniority), shown in Graph 4. The increase in seniority, logically, corresponds to the lower probability of newcomers.

The data set induce paradoxical conclusions in certain aspects and, to a certain extent, counterintuitive, regarding the Senate. If, on the one hand, they demonstrate a wide range of experience in the various positions and at the different levels of the federation, on the other hand, this profile seems to be consolidated at the expense of the accumulation of experience and professionalization in the Senate legislatures. Senate mandates last eight years, cover two legislatures and result in more senators' experience in the Senate than expected from deputies in the Chamber. As stated before, the federative structure of political offices - with federal and state elections interspersed with municipal elections, combined with a coalition system - seems to encourage the opposite.

Altogether, the data on the political curriculum of congressional representatives show important differences in parliamentarians' profile according to the House in which they work. In the expected direction, senators are more experienced, at all levels, with special involvement with

state and federal levels - a profile compatible with actors whose primary function is the zeal for the balance of the federative pact. The deputies showed considerable experience in the most diverse positions but were especially notable in the local legislatures and the municipal administrations.

## **5 Final considerations**

This study analyzed congress members' social and political profile through the institutional route, given the incongruity of Brazilian bicameralism, considered high in many studies (LLANOS, 2003; LLANOS; NOLTE, 2003; ARAÚJO, 2009). According to the theory, incongruent bicameralisms promote differentiation between houses and are expected to result in different parliamentary profiles. In general, the differences confirmed expectations, although some effects were at odds with what could be considered positive for the consolidation of political careers in the federal legislation.

The social profile showed male hegemony in both houses. However, a slight tendency towards the inclusion of women was indicated, especially in the Senate - which is paradoxical given that most elections, which elect senators, tend to be disadvantageous to women and other minorities (Nicolau, 2004). The data obtained for the studied period contradict the argument that women tend to have less access to the Senate, of which elections are a majority, being considered as less competitive than men (BOHN, 2008). To win a senatorial seat, women would also face other obstacles, such as stronger competitiveness within the parties to nominate candidacies. However, women were better represented in the Senate than in the Chamber during the studied period.

According to the Constitution, the hypothesis of the age of parliamentarians was confirmed, but the differences are relatively small since the initial entry into office is formally separated by 14 years. The data show that senators are, on average, only 7.3 years older than deputies, which may be due to the gradual institutionalization of the career of federal deputy in Brazil, indicated by the increasing rates of successful reelection attempts (PEGURIER, 2009; SANTOS, 2010). As seniority increases in the Lower House, its members' average age will likely approach that of the Upper House, which was revealed when observing the sequence of the legislatures analyzed.

The level of education was another variable of which values corresponded to expectations and previous research results (ARAÚJO, 2011; LLANOS; SANCHES, 2008). Education levels in the Senate remained higher than in the Chamber for the entire period analyzed, confirming that senators are drawn from an intellectual elite, with academic training as one of the indicators.

The analysis of professions and university education revealed interesting longitudinal changes, such as the significant drop in the percentage of law-trained or entrepreneur parliamentarians. Apart from the fact that the Chamber of Deputies showed greater openness to

representatives from working classes, as expected for a people's House, the occupational profile did little to distinguish the two houses from each other due to the logical impossibility of association between profession, diplomas, and the institutional incentives of bicameral incongruity.

Regarding the political (aggregate) profile of the legislatures, all the indicators regarding the party composition of the houses (except those of the 48<sup>th</sup> Legislature) proved that the deputies are distributed in a higher number of parties, including the small ones, which are less competitive in the Senate elections.

The study also compared the previous experience of the parliamentarians of both houses. The senators were generally more experienced, with significant advantages - consolidating their image as lords of the federation. Different patterns of experience were noticed between the groups considering the positions by subtypes. Concerning the legislative positions, senators were more inclined to accumulate experience in state assemblies and the Chamber. In turn, the deputies stood out for their performance in city councils, although the percentage of those who went through the assemblies were also expressive.

The experience in the governor and mayor positions greatly differentiated both positions since senators have a large advantage in the experience as heads of the Executive in the states and municipalities. In administrative positions, the phenomenon observed in legislative positions was repeated with senators and deputies balanced in terms of experiences at the state level. However, senators acted more often in federal administrative positions, while deputies were concentrated in municipal secretariats.

The accumulation of experience in both houses was low in terms of the average number of previous mandates fulfilled by parliamentarians in each Legislature (1.22 in the Chamber, 1.27 in the Senate). All the information analyzed showed that the deputies presented a stable increase in experience in the Chamber, indicating a process of parliamentary professionalization. The Senate showed a zigzag coinciding with the possibility of renewing legislatures (whether 54 or 27 seats), which affects senators' profile in terms of their previous experience in the House, as more or fewer newcomers enter.

The expectation was that senators should develop more seniority than deputies due to their more advanced age and duplicate terms. However, the accumulation of more varied experiences in other positions reveals that senators distribute their efforts according to the institutional (especially electoral) incentives of Brazilian federalism, showing a strong interest in the state and municipal executive branch.

In short, in a partial convergence with the function of bicameral incongruity indicated by the theory, bicameralism in Brazil incentivizes the recruitment of parliamentarians whose social profiles are adjusted to the presumed characteristics for each position - despite the paradoxical effects to the profile of senators, who, on the one hand, accumulate important political experiences

and, on the other, do not persist in office for a time consistent with the length of their eight-year terms.

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