



Dossier Connections and Networks of the Rockefeller Foundation in Latin America

## “Those Promising Young Men and Women Upon Whom Will Fall the Scientific Leadership of the Future”: Building a Database for the International Fellows and Scholars of the Rockefeller Foundation Training Programs (1917-1970)

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### ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the characteristics and potential of RF-DirectoryDB, a database created to support prosopographical studies. The database is populated with information from the *Directory of Fellowships and Scholarships (1917-1970)*, a Rockefeller Foundation publication that compiled data on the academic training and careers of 9,057 scholarship recipients from various countries and fields of knowledge. The article begins with an overview of the Rockefeller Foundation scholarship programs, relevant historiographical discussion, and a description of the source material, the *Directory*. Next, it addresses the technical challenges involved in constructing the database and the resulting limitations. Finally, the text demonstrates the database's application with a preliminary analysis of a group of Latin American fellows specializing in agricultural research.

**Keywords:** The Rockefeller Foundation; Scholarship Program; Directory of Fellowships and Scholarships; Database; Prosopography

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## **“Aqueles promissores jovens homens e mulheres sobre os quais recairá a liderança científica do futuro”: construindo um banco de dados para os bolsistas internacionais dos programas de treinamento da Fundação Rockefeller (1917-1970)**

### RESUMO

Neste artigo, discutimos as características e analisamos as potencialidades do RF-DirectoryDB, um banco de dados criado com o propósito de servir a estudos de tipo prosopográfico. O banco é alimentado com informações disponíveis no *Directory of Fellowships and Scholarships (1917-1970)*, publicação da Fundação Rockefeller que reuniu dados de formação acadêmica e carreira de 9.057 bolsistas da instituição, oriundos de diferentes países e áreas de conhecimento. Inicialmente, discutimos o programa de bolsas da fundação; depois, realizamos uma breve discussão historiográfica e uma descrição da fonte utilizada, o *Directory*; em seguida, uma exposição dos desafios técnicos postos à construção do banco e as limitações deles decorrentes; por último, oferecemos uma demonstração do uso do banco com a análise preliminar de um grupo de bolsistas latino-americanos da área de pesquisa em agricultura.

**Palavras-chave:** Fundação Rockefeller; programa de bolsas; Directory of Fellowships and Scholarships; banco de dados; prosopografia

## **“Aquellos promissores jóvenes hombres y mujeres sobre los cuales recaerá el liderazgo científico del futuro”: construyendo un banco de datos para los becarios internacionales de los programas de entrenamiento de la Fundación Rockefeller (1917-1970)**

### RESUMEN

En este artículo discutimos las características y analizamos las potencialidades de RF-DirectoryDB, un banco de datos creado con el propósito de servir a estudios de tipo prosopográfico. El banco es alimentado con informaciones disponibles en el *Directory of Fellowships and Scholarships (1917-1970)*, publicación de la Fundación Rockefeller que reunió los datos de formación académica y carrera de 9.057 becarios de la institución, oriundos de diferentes países y áreas de conocimiento. Inicialmente, discutimos el programa de becas de la Fundación, después, realizamos una breve discusión historiográfica y una descripción de la fuente utilizada, el *Directory*; en seguida, una exposición de los desafíos técnicos puestos a la construcción del banco con las limitaciones surgidas; por último, ofrecemos una demostración del uso del banco con el análisis preliminar de un grupo de becarios latinoamericanos investigadores del área de agricultura.

**Palabras clave:** Fundación Rockefeller; programa de becas; Directory of Fellowships and Scholarships; banco de datos; prosopografía

The Rockefeller Foundation (RF), a North American philanthropic institution established in the early 20th century, has maintained a scholarship program since the 1910s aimed at training specialists from various countries and fields of knowledge, particularly in public health, medicine, and agriculture. According to the Foundation itself, the purpose of granting scholarships was “to select individuals of outstanding promise in the fields of interest defined by the general program of the Foundation, and to help to prepare individuals to make significant contributions to research and teaching or public service in the future”<sup>1</sup>.

Individuals trained through the RF scholarship program were expected to occupy strategic positions in teaching, research, and/or public service once returned to their home countries. Our objective is to discuss the possibilities and challenges of analyzing and problematizing the Rockefeller Foundation’s role in training specialists, using a database built from a source produced by the RF and published in 1972: the *Directory of Fellowships and Scholarships (1917-1970)*<sup>2</sup>. The database, named RF-DirectoryDB, was designed with prosopographical analysis as its guiding framework – a methodological perspective that we consider useful for examining the philanthropic institution’s role in awarding scholarships worldwide<sup>3</sup>. In fact, by systematically retrieving biographical data from the *Directory of Fellowships and Scholarships (1917-1970)*, we were able to create a database of global scope, covering all continents during a period marked by the reconfiguration of modern states, the collapse of colonial empires, the emergence of new states, and the reorganization of the international order following the Second World War<sup>4</sup>. The database includes a significant

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<sup>1</sup> ROCKEFELLER ARCHIVE CENTER, New York. *History of the Fellowship Program at the Rockefeller Foundation*. Rockefeller Foundation (RF), Record Group (RG) 10.2, Fellowship Recorder Cards.

<sup>2</sup> THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION. *Directory of Fellowships and Scholarships, 1917-1970*. New York: The Rockefeller Foundation, 1972.

<sup>3</sup> Lawrence Stone’s canonical definition of collective biography or prosopography states that it is “the investigation of the common background characteristics of a group of actors in history by means of a collective study of their lives. The method employed is to establish a universe to be studied, and then to ask a set of uniform questions – about birth and death, marriage and family, social origins and inherited economic position, place of residence, education, amount and source of personal wealth, occupation, religion, experience of office, and so on. The various types of information about the individuals in the universe are then juxtaposed and combined, and are examined for significant variables. They are tested both for internal correlations and for correlations with other forms of behavior or action” (Stone, 1971, p. 46). As Stone’s definition shows, prosopography is a research technique used to analyze collective biographies through a larger question, utilizing uniform information, such as that provided by the *Directory* and included in the database.

<sup>4</sup> It is also important to mention a database created in 2017 by researchers from the universities of Geneva and Lausanne, and the Institut de hautes études internationales et du développement de Genève (IHEID), within the scope of the research project *Rockefeller Fellows as Heralds of Globalization: The Circulation of*

number of individuals from North, Central, and South America, Asia, and Europe, but a smaller number from African countries.

The USA has the highest number of scholarship holders among the 9,057 individuals, with 1,273, making up almost 1/7 of the total (with the majority receiving scholarships between 1920 and 1940). Other countries also had substantial numbers of nationals awarded scholarships from the Rockefeller Foundation. These include the UK (642), Japan (507), Brazil (496), India (463), Mexico (369), Colombia (347), Chile (264), France (283), the Philippines (241), Argentina (141), Peru (130), Turkey (127), Thailand (92), Indonesia (82), Sudan (19), Egypt (18), and Ethiopia (14), just to name a few.

It is interesting to note that Latin American countries saw a significant increase in the number of scholarships awarded after the end of the Second World War and the beginning of the Cold War, a “golden age” of scholarship programs according to Ludovic Tournès and Giles Scott-Smith (2018). As for China, which had specific RF training programs (and may not be listed under general scholarship programs), it appears underrepresented, with only 42 individuals in the *Directory* (all of whom received scholarships before the 1949 Revolution).

To achieve the objectives outlined in this paper, the content is organized into six sections. First, we analyze the scholarship program of The Rockefeller Foundation. Next, we developed a brief historiographical discussion and described the source used to populate the database: the biographical notes from the *Directory of Fellowships and Scholarships (1917-1970)*. This last section is followed by an overview of the structure of the RF-DirectoryDB database and a discussion of the technical and methodological challenges encountered during its creation and use. Finally, we present a brief prosopographical analysis utilizing the database, focusing on Latin American scholarship recipients in the field of agriculture, and conclude with final remarks.

## The Rockefeller Foundation scholarship programs and the training of transnational professionals

The Rockefeller Foundation’s scholarship programs are part of a broader context. According to Tournès and Scott-Smith (2018), the United States had already been receiving and sending students abroad in the nineteenth century but became a major player in the academic market from the 1920s onward. After the First World War, a significant number of scholarship programs were established by universities and foundations such as Rockefeller and Carnegie, which played a crucial role:

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*Elites, Knowledge, and Practices of Modernization (1920s-1970s)*. The Rockefeller Fellows Database gathers an impressive set of information on Rockefeller Foundation scholarships, scholarship holders and their circulation, offering a vast digitized historical sources collection made available by the Rockefeller Archive Center. More information on the database at <https://rockfellows.hypotheses.org/about>.

US scholarship programs were both global in scope and run on a massive scale. Already by 1923, the United States was the second most popular destination in the world for foreign students, with 8,357 at American universities, second only in number to France (Tournès; Scott-Smith, 2018, p. 12).

According to the authors, regarding the RF, its officers were “ardent promoters” of internationalism, a rhetoric that defined the 1910s and 1920s:

from the 1910s onward, scholarship programs started to be used not only as instruments of national politics, but were also considered as a means for developing international cooperation and understanding. Internationalists considered the mobility of people and ideas as a way to promote peace through the emergence of an “international mind” resulting from repeated contacts between people from different countries and cultures (Tournès; Scott-Smith, 2018, p. 12-13).

The Rockefeller Foundation began awarding its first grants in 1914 (Tournès; Scott-Smith, 2018). According to Darwin Stapleton (2021), discussions about a Rockefeller scholarship program began in 1915, initially focusing on public health. Two years later, in 1917, the program was formally launched. In the Annual Report for that year, George E. Vincent, then president of the RF, stated that “a substantial beginning in the encouragement of student migration on a worldwide basis has been made”<sup>5</sup>. Still according to Stapleton, by 1923, the RF scholarship program was fully operational. From that point onward, and with the creation of the International Education Board, investments in scholarships expanded with the goal of “promoting the international diffusion of science” (Stapleton, 2021, p. 5).

The general objectives of the institution’s scholarship program can be found in various documents produced by the RF, such as the 1937 Annual Report. In this report, then-president of the Foundation, Raymond Fosdick, stated that although the institution had often invested in the construction of laboratories and the acquisition of equipment and materials, its primary focus was on people – on the training of personnel. Through its scholarship program, which began, as we have seen, in the 1910s, Fosdick emphasized that the RF was undertaking an initiative “to select and train those promising young men and women upon whom will fall the scientific leadership of the future”<sup>6</sup>. The number of scholarships awarded by the RF between 1917 and 1951 to Latin Americans through one

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<sup>5</sup> THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION. *Annual Report, 1917*. New York: The Rockefeller Foundation, 1917. p. 47. Available at: <https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/Annual-Report-1917-1.pdf>. Accessed: 15 jan. 2025.

<sup>6</sup> THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION. *Annual Report, 1937*. New York: The Rockefeller Foundation, 1938. p. 59. Available at: <https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/Annual-Report-1937-1.pdf>. Accessed: 15 jan. 2025.

of its programs – the International Health Board/Division – totaled 473. This figure helps quantify the institution’s investment in training professionals (Cueto; Palmer, 2015, p. 118).

The possibility of receiving training abroad through scholarships was, as we can see, a key aspect of the Rockefeller Foundation’s activities. Ludovic Tournès and Giles Scott-Smith, in the introduction to *Global Exchanges: Scholarships and Transnational Circulations in the Modern World* (2018), define scholarships as “official initiatives by individuals and/or institutions for organizing and structuring regular transnational circulations over a period of time, with some form of learning as the main goal” (Tournès; Scott-Smith, 2018, p. 2). György Péteri, when defining the objectives of scholarships (fellowships and grants) in general terms in the *Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History: From the Mid-19th Century to the Present Day*, states that

The general objective of international fellowships and funding programmes has been to secure, for citizens and/or foreign nationals, access to and the appropriation of new knowledge, new technologies, and new ideas not readily available where the need seems to be greatest. Throughout the modern era, an increasing number of institutions encouraged the mobility of scholars and professionals in order to bring about the dissemination of knowledge and “best practices” across national boundaries. Such ambitions have characterized the activities of major philanthropies such as the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations, as well as a number of modern, publicly funded scholarship and exchange programmes in the fields of education, research, and culture (Péteri, 2009, p. 387).

Péteri (2009) highlights the Rockefeller Foundation as one of the major philanthropic institutions with the ambition of promoting professional mobility to disseminate knowledge and “good practices” across national borders.

When discussing the state of the art in scholarship studies, Tournès and Scott-Smith (2018) argue that scholarships and their historical development have been little problematized by historians. Until recently, historical analyses were generally superficial, hagiographic, and Western-centric. According to the authors, a broader and deeper perspective is needed – one that considers scholarship programs as a distinct object of study, interconnected with technological, political, social, cultural, and economic aspects. In this sense, both program administrators and participants should be examined.

The authors identify four key dimensions in scholarship studies: (1) the technical and administrative dimension – understanding how programs function, given their diversity; (2) the political dimension of scholarship programs; (3) the analysis of grantees – examining who the grantees were and what they did before, during, and after the scholarship; (4) the economic aspects related to scholarship programs (Tournès; Scott-Smith, 2018, p. 6-10).

Our study aligns most closely with the third dimension highlighted by Tournès and Scott-Smith (2018). Also, according to the authors,

there is valuable scope for rethinking the history of scholarships as a unique subject area that opens up access to dense networks of knowledge and cultural transfer between regions over many decades, some of which have never been brought into focus before (Tournès; Scott-Smith, 2018, p. 4).

It is our understanding that the discussion presented here contributes to this direction. Transnational and global analyses have significantly impacted the historiographic field, and the Rockefeller Foundation fellows have been examined as transnational professionals (Birn, 2006; Péteri, 2009; Tournès; Scott-Smith, 2018; Stapleton, 2021). Anne-Emanuelle Birn (2006), for example, states that fellows “would move ideas and practices across borders”. Similarly, Darwin Stapleton (2021, p. 4) argues that the Rockefeller scholarship program was a significant vehicle for the transnational diffusion of knowledge and an important driver of cultural change in the twentieth century, increasing the international flow of people and ideas that characterized the period.

György Péteri (2009, p. 388) highlights the creation of networks and connections as one of the key consequences of scholarship programs, reinforcing the transnationalism inherent in the *modus operandi* of various fields. Upon returning to their home countries, fellows would introduce new standards and perspectives in their disciplines while remaining open and receptive to “foreign” ways of conducting science. According to Péteri, international scholarships and collaborations fostered, if not a true “universalism”, at least the transnationalization of multiple professions.

## The Rockefeller Foundation’s actions: interpretations

Before we move on to the presentation of the source, the Directory, we consider it important to highlight some aspects, albeit briefly, related to the historiography that has been produced regarding the Rockefeller Foundation’s activities and, consequently, its fellowship program. In the literature discussing the objectives and interests of institutions such as the RF, three lines of interpretation have been identified (Korndörfer, 2013, p. 27).

In summary, there is the view that sees the Foundation primarily as a scientific representative of American imperialism. A second current focuses on the philanthropic role of the RF’s actions not related to economic or political interests. Although the effects of this second current appear to be of little significance in current academic production, the perspective guiding the first continues to shape discussions when it comes to thinking

about the global actions of philanthropic organizations, and among them, especially the Rockefeller Foundation.

Thus, for example, Inderjeet Parmar (2012) suggests, when analyzing the “Big 3” foundations (Ford, Rockefeller, and Carnegie), that

despite their image of scientific impartiality, ideological-political neutrality, and being above the market and independent of the state, [they] have been extremely influential in America’s rise to global hegemony over the past century (Parmar, 2012, p. 2).

For the author, who focuses his analysis on the role of the foundations in consolidating fields of study such as International Relations and Foreign Policy in South Asian and Latin American countries, the actions of the foundations were “intensely political and ideological”. Parmar highlights the relevance of the establishment of academic networks to the success of the foundations’ strategy:

Through the mobilization of academics (...) foundations built elite academic institutions overseas, networks of scholars focused around “centers of excellence”, academic hubs radiating intellectual influence well beyond the levels of financial investment by the foundations (Parmar, 2012, p. 7).

If we emphasize this perspective here, which is not that of the authors of this article, it is because we believe that it continues to inform a considerable part of the opinion of various public and academic actors about the nature of the Rockefeller Foundation’s actions. This is not to deny the political and ideological dimensions underlying the actions of foundations, particularly the Rockefeller Foundation. An analysis that considers the State, its policymakers, its institutional and class partners, in the construction of a successful strategy for forming international intellectual or academic networks associated with expansionist or hegemonistic interests, cannot be considered intrinsically “wrong”. However, from our perspective, this approach tends to downplay the importance of the agency of different actors, as well as underestimate the local processes that transform political designs and intentions into much more complex realities. As Cueto and Palmer aptly noted when analyzing the changes in the fields of medicine and public health associated with RF’s actions in Latin America:

it is no longer possible to argue, as historians once did, that the United States imposed a public health or biomedical model on Latin America as part of an imperial project, or simply to argue that, though this happened, Latin Americans were able to resist, adapt to, or to incorporate certain elements of the model. Instead, the history of national and international public health in Latin America and the Caribbean in the first half of the twentieth century

must be understood as a reciprocally defining and creative engagement between a variety of US imperial and local national actors, both state and non-state (Cueto; Palmer, 2015, p. 108).

This third line of interpretation of the RF's actions does not fully endorse either of the two previous hypotheses – imperialist instrument or disinterested philanthropic action – as it considers both versions simplistic representations of the Foundation's operations. Authors within this third line seek to analyze the Foundation's interaction with the contexts and specificities of the countries where it operated.

At the beginning of this paper, we highlight the objectives pursued through staff training, as stated by the Foundation itself – goals that will be reiterated in the source discussed here. In recent years, however, several studies have analyzed the awarding of scholarships by the American philanthropic institution and the trajectories of its recipients<sup>7</sup>, raising questions about possible disagreements, conflicts, and tensions between the Foundation and the beneficiaries. Drawing again on Marcos Cueto and Steven Palmer (2015), the authors note, when discussing the awarding of scholarships by the Rockefeller Foundation's International Health Division to Latin Americans, that

One presumption that came with the awards was that the fellows, once back home, would reproduce the U.S. model of medical education, public health, and scientific research (often taking as the prototype Johns Hopkins University, not only a model on which many U.S. schools refashioned themselves but also the institution where many of the Latin American RF fellows trained) (Cueto; Palmer, 2015, p. 118-119).

The relationship between the Rockefeller Foundation (RF) and its fellows has proven to be significantly more complex, given that the Foundation operated across diverse and specific international, national, and local contexts. In the case of Latin American medicine in the early 20th century, for instance, it actively participated in the international circulation of people, ideas, and products – an essential process for legitimizing modern Western medicine<sup>8</sup>. Moreover, the Foundation itself cannot be understood as a monolithic entity or a singular actor (Cueto; Palmer, 2015).

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<sup>7</sup> An indication of this phenomenon can be found in the Research Reports available on the Rockefeller Archive Center website. A total of 573 reports are available on the site. A search for the terms “fellowship”, “fellow”, “scholarship” and “scholar” yields 93 reports. Of these, 77 were published from 2010 onwards. Available at: <https://rockarch.org/>. Accessed: 11 jan. 2025

<sup>8</sup> Examples of the complexity of the Latin American landscape regarding medicine and health in the context of the Cold War, for instance, can be found in the texts that make up the collection organized by Anne-Emanuelle Birn and Raúl Necochea López (2020). Birn (2020, p. 3) states, in her Introduction, that the set of case studies “show how Latin American actors used, rejected, and reshaped U.S. preferences and interventions, it also reveals a range of ties between Latin American actors and Soviet/Eastern Bloc counterparts, as well as with other Third World countries within and beyond the region, that served as an important part of national and regional health policy and medical developments”.

Focusing solely on the historiography produced in Brazil in recent years, several works have analyzed, directly or indirectly, the RF's fellowship program and the trajectories of its fellows, illustrating various approaches and critical perspectives. Examples of this historiography include studies by Ricardo dos Santos Batista and Luiz Otávio Ferreira (2021) on the training and careers of physicians Olympio da Fonseca Filho and Antônio Luis Cavalcanti de Albuquerque de Barros Barreto through RF scholarships; by Ricardo Batista (2023) on the nurse Maria Palmira Macedo Tito de Moraes; by Gilberto Hochman and Carlos Henrique Assunção Paiva (2020) on the career and ideas of parasitologist Samuel Barnsley Pessoa; by Ana Paula Korndörfer (2023) on Fernando de Freitas e Castro and the introduction of the health center model in southern Brazil; and by Rita de Cássia Marques (2021) on physician José Baeta Vianna and his work in Minas Gerais.

### About the source: the *Directory of Fellowships and Scholarships* (1917-1970)

The *Directory of Fellowships and Scholarships* (1917-1970) was compiled and published by the Rockefeller Foundation in 1972<sup>9</sup>. The 412-page *Directory* is organized into five sections: "Introduction", "Explanatory notes", "Fellowships and Scholarships 1917-1970" (largest section, with more than 350 pages), "Roster of Fellows" and "Scholars and Expenditures for fellowships and scholarships by year". We will approach more closely the first three parts, that is, "Introduction", "Explanatory notes" and "Fellowships and Scholarships 1917-1970".

In the introduction, written by Jacob George Harrar, president of the Rockefeller Foundation since 1961, he states that the institution's scholarship program was "probably the oldest continuing activity of The Rockefeller Foundation"<sup>10</sup>. At the time of the publication of the *Directory*, the program was nearly 60 years old and, according to Harrar, was the result of the "trustees and officials" conviction that supporting the training of intellectual leaders was fundamental to achieving the institution's mission – "promoting the well-being of mankind throughout the world".

Maintained without interruption, the scholarship program was always, according to Harrar, aligned with the Foundation's broader initiatives. Initially, grants were awarded

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<sup>9</sup> Although not mentioned in the *Directory*, it is likely that an important source of the publication is the Fellowship Cards produced by RF. These cards, available for consultation at the Rockefeller Archive Center (RAC), provide information about the institution's scholarship holders, such as their name, country of origin, the foundation program that awarded the scholarship, area and institution where they conducted their work, positions held after the scholarship, among other details. For more information about the Fellowship Cards, please consult the texts of Pierre-Yves Saunier in [www.rockfellows.hypotheses.org](http://www.rockfellows.hypotheses.org) (*5x7 inches: Biography of a Source, Source for Prosopography. The Permanent Recorder Cards of Rockefeller-Endowed Organizations 1914-1970*) and Korndörfer (2016).

<sup>10</sup> THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION. *Directory of Fellowships and Scholarships, 1917-1970*. New York: The Rockefeller Foundation, 1972. p. VII.

for training in public health and medical education. Later, as the Foundation expanded into other scientific and cultural fields, scholarships were also extended to disciplines such as agriculture, biological sciences, and social sciences. Harrar further notes that among the recipients were individuals who became leaders of major universities, medical schools, research departments, and academic centers. Some were awarded Nobel Prizes, while others built distinguished careers in government or international organizations<sup>11</sup>. Harrar acknowledges that, while it was not possible to directly link the careers of all individuals listed in the *Directory* to their status as Rockefeller fellows, the institution took great pride in its contributions. According to him, the cooperation of former fellows with the Foundation's objectives was "immeasurable": "After the completion of their studies, they will return to their native countries to provide the leadership so essential to the improvement of national economies and the training of new generations of scientists and scholars"<sup>12</sup>.

Despite the long existence of the scholarship program, its essence, according to Harrar, would have remained the same: "to provide the fellow or scholar with an experience in his field of competence at the location where the experience will be most beneficial to him and to his scholarly results"<sup>13</sup>.

Specifically, regarding the task of building the *Directory*, Harrar assessed it as difficult, given that there were fellows from nearly one hundred countries, representing a wide range of fields of expertise. However, he considered the *Directory* to be a historical document, "since the awards listed herein cover many years and a number of substantial changes in program emphasis"<sup>14</sup>.

In the explanatory notes, the second section of the *Directory*, important information about the organization of the material is provided. According to the notes, the publication presents biographical entries for approximately 9,500 individuals who received fellowships or scholarships (or both), funded and administered by the Rockefeller Foundation between 1917 and 1968, with additional information on the careers of fellows up to 1970. This *Directory*, published in 1972, is a second edition, the first being published in 1951<sup>15</sup>. There is, according to the notes, an important difference between the directories of 1951 and 1972:

Until 1950 the traditional individual Foundation aid was a fellowship for training and/or research, most often at the post-doctoral level and rarely for the purpose of obtaining

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p. VII-VIII.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. VIII.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p. VII.

<sup>15</sup> THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION. *Directory of Fellowships Awards for the Years 1917-1950*. New York: The Rockefeller Foundation, 1951. According to the researchers linked to the project *Rockefeller fellows as heralds of globalization: the circulation of elites, knowledge, and practices of modernization (1920s-1970s)*, the RF have published a *Directory* in 1958, but this was not located by us or mentioned in the volume published in 1972. Available at: <https://rockfellows.hypotheses.org/whats-in-whats-out>. Accessed: 15 jan. 2025.

an advanced degree. In 1947 the Foundation expanded its program of individual aid by initiating a scholarship program that provided financial assistance through the Master's and/or Ph.D degrees<sup>16</sup>.

From a series of criteria discussed in the explanatory notes, it was established that the *Directory* would cover grants awarded by certain organizations and programs. Among the organizations not related to the Foundation, were included in the *Directory* the scholarships awarded by *British Medical Research Council – BMRC*<sup>17</sup> (1923-1963), *Notgemeinschaft der Deutschen Wissenschaft – NDW*<sup>18</sup> (1927-1934) and *National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia – NHMRCA*<sup>19</sup> (1946-1948). Among the organizations related to the Foundation, were included the grants awarded by *International Education Board – IEB*<sup>20</sup> and *Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial – LSRM*<sup>21</sup>.

Among the programs of The Rockefeller Foundation itself, the *Directory* editors considered the grants awarded in the following areas/programs:

**Table 1:** Foundation Program Designations

<b>Public Health</b>
IHB – International Health Board, 1917-1927
IHD – International Health Division, 1927-1951
DMPH – Medicine and Public Health, 1951-1955
MEPH – Medical Education and Public Health, 1955-1959
MNS – Medical and Natural Sciences, 1959-1970

<sup>16</sup> THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION. *Directory of Fellowships and Scholarships, 1917-1970*. New York: The Rockefeller Foundation, 1972. p. X.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p. XI. “Fellowships for post-doctoral study in medicine were awarded by the Medical Research Council of Great Britain between 1923 e 1964 with the exception of the war years. These awards were financed by The Rockefeller Foundation, and Foundation staff provided the fellows with supervisory services and guidance. Recipients of these awards are included in the directory”.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*. “This association of German universities and scientific organizations, founded in 1920 to build up German science, awarded fellowships between 1927 and 1934 with the aid of the Foundation funds. Recipients of these awards are included in the directory because the Foundation fellowship advisers supervised their study programs”.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*. “Fellowship awards, made by the Council during the years 1946, 1947 and 1948 with funds granted to it by the Foundation, were supervised by Foundation staff. They are included in the directory”.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*. “John D. Rockefeller Jr. founded this organization in 1923 for the promotion of education throughout the world. Its fellowship program at the Board's termination in 1928 was taken over by the Natural Sciences Program of the Rockefeller Foundation”.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*. “John D. Rockefeller Sr. endowed the Memorial in 1918 in memory of his wife. Its fellowship program in the social sciences was continued by the Foundation, after the consolidation of the two organizations in 1929”.

<b>Medical Research and Medical Education</b>
DME – Division of Medical Education, 1919-1929
DS – Division of Studies, 1923-1927
MS – Medical Sciences, 1929-1951
DMPH – Medicine and Public Health, 1951-1955
MEPH – Medical Education and Public Health, 1955-1959
BMR – Biological and Medical Research, 1955-1959
MNS – Medical and Natural Sciences, 1959-1970
<b>Natural Sciences</b>
NS – Natural Sciences, 1929-1951
NSA – Natural Sciences and Agriculture, 1951-1955
BMR – Biological and Medical Research, 1955-1959
MNS – Medical and Natural Sciences, 1959-1970
<b>Agricultural Sciences</b>
NSA – Natural Sciences and Agriculture, 1951-1955
A – Agriculture, 1955-1959
A – Agricultural Sciences, 1959-1970
<b>Social Sciences</b>
SS – Social Sciences, 1929-1962
HSS – Humanities and Social Sciences, 1962-1970
<b>Humanities</b>
H – Humanities, 1929-1962
HSS – Humanities and Social Sciences, 1962-1970
PWF – Post-War Fellows

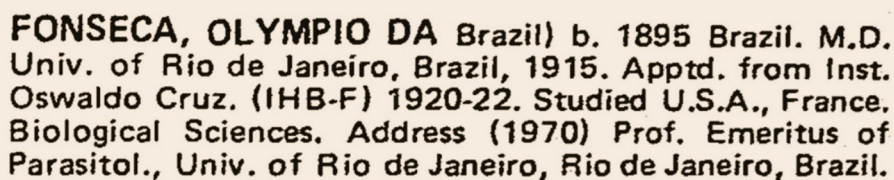
Source: THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION. *Directory of Fellowships and Scholarships, 1917-1970*. New York: The Rockefeller Foundation, 1972. p. XI.

According to the notes, an effort was made to contact former scholarship holders in order to collect updated information about their careers. It is also known that difficult communication conditions during and after the two world wars significantly hindered efforts to locate many scholarship recipients by 1950. As a result, many former Rockefeller Foundation fellows were not listed in the *Directory* published in 1951. It was decided not to retrieve this information for the *Directory* published in 1972<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION. *Directory of Fellowships and Scholarships, 1917-1970*. New York: The Rockefeller Foundation, 1972. p. X.

The individual biographical entries of the scholarship holders in the *Directory* present the following standardized information: 1) *name*<sup>23</sup>; 2) *country of residence at time of award*<sup>24</sup>; 3) *date and country of birth*; 4) *academic degree held at time of award with name of granting institution and date*; 5) *institution where employed or studying at time of award*; 6) *Foundation program designation and dates of award*; 7) *country of study*; 8) *degree received during award with name of granting institution and date*<sup>25</sup>; 9) *field of study*; and 10) *present post and institutional address*<sup>26</sup>.

**Figure 1:** Example of a *Directory* entry



**FONSECA, OLYMPIO DA** Brazil) b. 1895 Brazil. M.D. Univ. of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1915. Apptd. from Inst. Oswaldo Cruz. (IHB-F) 1920-22. Studied U.S.A., France. Biological Sciences. Address (1970) Prof. Emeritus of Parasitol., Univ. of Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Source: THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION. *Directory of Fellowships and Scholarships, 1917-1970*. New York: The Rockefeller Foundation, 1972. p. 99.

## The characteristics of the RF-DirectoryDB

The database compiled from the *Directory*, more specifically from the section *Fellowships and Scholarships 1917-1970*, was built in the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet editor. In order to analyze the variables provided by the *Directory* and cross-reference them from the database, it was necessary to decompose the information, which was defined as follows: name, country

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*. “It can be generally assumed that the spelling of a name has been approved by the fellow or scholar. Women who married following their fellowships or scholarships have been listed under their married names and cross-referenced to their maiden names. Surnames changed after the award have also been cross-referenced”.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*. “The country indicated in parenthesis following the name of the scholar or fellow is the country under which the name appears in the Foundation’s records, and is generally the country used for the preparation of the roster following the alphabetical directory. On occasion when an awardee has emigrated from the country of appointment and carried on his career elsewhere he is listed in the roster under the country in which he is currently employed”.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, p. XI. “In recent years, and more importantly, with the advent of the scholarship awards, many men and women have used their periods of study to undertake programs leading to graduate degrees. When the degree was received either during the period of the award or shortly thereafter, it has been included in the directory. Diplomas and titles so conferred have been omitted”.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*. “The designation of an individual’s present post with his most recent available address has been listed with the date on which it was in effect. If a fellow or scholar had retired by the time the preparation of the directory started, his retirement is indicated with a reference to his most recent post. Deceased fellows and scholars are so listed and their names are not included in the roster that follows the biographical entries”.

of residence at time of award, date of birth, country of birth, academic degree held at time of award, name of granting institution, country of granting institution, date, institution where employed or studying at time of award, Foundation program designation, dates of award (beginning), dates of award (ending), country of study, degree received during award, name of granting institution (award), date (award/degree), field of study, address (year), position, department, institution, city/state, country, deceased, and year.

**Figure 2:** RF-DirectoryDB (partial)

#	Name	Country of residence at time of award	Date of birth	Country of birth	Academic degree held at time of award	Name of granting institution	Country of granting institution	Date
0001	Aaron, Caroline Amy Vasantharani	India	1931	India	B.Sc. (N.)	Univ. of Madras	India	1952
0002	Aartun, Einar	Norway	1918	Norway	Dr. med.	Univ. of Oslo	Norway	1948
0003	Aas, Arvid	Norway	1925	Norway	M.A.	Univ. of Oslo	Norway	1948
0004	Aas, Dagfinn	Norway	1927	Norway	Mag. Art.	Univ. of Oslo	Norway	1955
0005	Abad Lopez, Guillermo A.	Peru	1926	Peru	s.i.	Natl. Univ. of San Marcos	Peru	1950
0006	Abaelu, John Nduka	Nigeria	1935	s.i.	M.Sc.	Univ. of London	England	1962
0007	Abana, Charlotte Isaac	India	1909	India	s.i.	Missionary Med. Coll. Hosp.	India	1942
0008	Abarca Bertetti, Francisco A.	Chile	1928	Chile	s.i.	Univ. of Concepción	Chile	1952
0009	Abbas Acup, Nja	Indonesia	1927	s.i.	s.i.	Univ. of Indonesia	s.i.	1960
0010	Abbas, Yasien Abdulkareem Al	Iraq	1915	Iraq	Ph.D.	Univ. of Minnesota	U.S.A.	1956
0011	Abghan, Phra	Siam	1893	Siam	M.B.B.S.	Univ. of London	England	1915
0012	Abdal-Ati, Hammudah	United Arab Rep.	1928	Egypt	M.A.	McGill Univ.	Canada	1957
0013	Abdel Kader, Mohamed	Egypt	1911	Egypt	M.B.B.Ch.	Fuad I Univ.	Egypt	1936
0014	Abdel Rahim, Abdel Wahab	Sudan	1934	iglo-Egyptian Sud	M.A.	Victoria Univ. of Manchester	England	1963
0015	Abdin Mohamed, Hassan	Sudan	1939	iglo-Egyptian Sud	B.A.	Univ. of Khartoum	Sudan	1965
0016	Abdulaziz, Mohamed Hassan	Tanzania	1932	Kenya	B.A.	Univ. of London	England	1962
0017	Abe, Masao	Japan	1915	Japan	B.A.	Kyoto Univ.	Japan	1944
0018	Abe, Mihoko	Japan	1924	Japan	Ph.D.	Toho Med. and Pharm. Coll.	Japan	1959

Source: Authors.

The database contains 9,057 nominal entries (counted before the final revision), offering several possibilities for cross-referencing and analyses that can contribute to a better understanding of the role played by The Rockefeller Foundation in the training of professionals across different fields and time-space contexts. In the development of the database, the manual entry of all relevant information introduced vulnerability to data entry errors. Thousands of biographical entries, each one containing ten distinct pieces of information, significantly increased the risk of inaccuracies. Additionally, discrepancies in the total numbers were observed, with repeated names and variations in the spelling of individuals' names being among the most common issues.

Standardizing the information from the source was also necessary, particularly in defining academic degrees and professional titles among scholarship recipients. The *Directory* included multiple designations for the same role or profile. For example, agronomists were listed under various titles such as “Agron.,” “Ing. Agron.,” “Eng. Agr.,” “Ing. Agric.,” “Expert Agronomist,” and “Practical Agronomist.”

For example, in a survey of 713 Latin American scholarship recipients in agriculture studies [see the next section], “agronomists” account for 423 cases, representing 59.32% of the total. Veterinarians face similar classification challenges, with terms such as “Med.

Vet.,” “Med. Vet. Zoo,” or “DVM” encompassing 77 individuals, or 10.79% of the total. For 87 cases (12.2%), no information is available about the recipient’s diploma or academic degree at the time the scholarship was awarded. Furthermore, the reported academic degree often lacks specificity regarding the field of study and may generically refer to “doctor” or “doctorate”. This highlights a notable underreporting of specific professions or training.

Similar challenges arise in standardizing the descriptions of institutions in the *Directory*. While consensus is more easily reached for destination institutions – particularly North American universities – there is less clarity regarding the government and semi-government institutional structures in Latin American countries. These are not adequately represented in the information provided by the Rockefeller Foundation (RF), despite its commendable – though not always achievable – efforts to monitor the careers of former scholarship recipients. Ultimately, the individualized nature of data collection and recording can result in a kind of informational cacophony. The lack of a clear standard or typology for institutions makes it extremely challenging to assess the career profiles of former scholarship recipients. For instance, it would be highly beneficial to develop a typological classification of the post-fellowship professional institutions in the fellows’ countries of origin. This could include categories such as “national public research institute”, “private research institute”, “university”, “regional research center”, “research agency office”, “position of regional responsibility”, and “position of national responsibility” among others<sup>27</sup>.

## Latin American fellows in agriculture: a database use experiment

During the 1940s, first in Mexico – where the foundations for the large-scale expansion of the institution’s agricultural research efforts were laid – and from the 1950s in other Latin American countries, as well as in South Asia, RF played a crucial role in advancing technological development in agriculture. It was also at the center of what came to be known as the Green Revolution (Perkins, 1990). In fact, over two decades, from its foundation until the mid-1960s, more than 550 former students of Mexican agricultural schools participated as interns or apprentices in the structures of the Mexican Agriculture Program (MAP), established in 1943. This program left a significant mark on the advancement of agricultural research and dissemination, particularly in consolidating RF’s international position in Latin America (Cotter, 2003; Méndez Rojas, 2019; Shubinski, 2022). By ensuring its substantial

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<sup>27</sup> The weaknesses of the *Directory* as a source for analysis of the granting of scholarships by the RF have already been indicated by researchers linked to the project *Rockefeller fellows as heralds of globalization: the circulation of elites, knowledge, and practices of modernization (1920s-1970s)*. The absence of some information as well as incorrect records are some of the problems signaled. However, the source is also pointed out as “highly useful as a complementary source”. Available at: <https://rockfellows.hypotheses.org/whats-in-whats-out>. Accessed: 15 jan. 2025.

influence on the transformation of Mexican agronomy, RF recognized that MAP had become “an excellent model for agricultural programs in the developing nations” (Cotter, 2003, p. 179).

Between 1950 and 1970, 713 fellows from Latin American countries participated in various the Rockefeller Foundation programs related to agriculture. These individuals received scholarships or fellowships in fields such as agriculture, plant science, animal science, soil science, and food engineering. A significant number of these fellows later became part of the staff at leading universities and national research agencies in agriculture upon returning to their home countries.

It is important to emphasize that our primary source is the biographical entries in the *Directory of Fellowships and Scholarships, 1917-1970*. This source does not encompass all the information available on the fellowship cards. This clarification is essential to understand that the foundational structure of our prosopographical research – our metainformation (Roy; Saint-Pierre, 2006, p. 206-207) – is based solely on these entries. To expand this foundation, we aim to incorporate additional information from the fellowship cards, which was excluded from the *Directory*, and to gather supplementary details about individuals’ careers from other sources.

Defining the population to be studied in prosopographical research requires clear and precise criteria. As Méndez-Rojas rightly noted in her work on the RF Fellowship Program in Mexico, “establishing the number of fellowship recipients has been a complex task, as there is no definitive register and there are discrepancies between the documents” (Méndez Rojas, 2019, p. 14, fn.12).

In our case, the primary criteria for categorizing Latin American researchers in agricultural or veterinary research were their association with one of the four the Rockefeller Foundation programs listed on page XI of the *Directory* [listed below]. To be included in our dataset, individuals must have been residing in a Latin American country at the time of the award and must have been linked to one of the RF agriculture programs.

**Table 2:** Latin American Scholars in RF agricultural sciences programs

<b>Programs</b>	<b>N.</b>	<b>%</b>
Natural Sciences and Agriculture (1951-1955)	91	12.76
Agriculture (1955-1959)	96	13.46
Agricultural Sciences (1959-1970)	261	36.61
Latin American Scholarship Program in Agriculture	226	31.70
Other Agriculture scholarships < 1951 <sup>28</sup>	39	5.47
Total	713	100

Source: Authors.

<sup>28</sup> It is worth noting that, particularly in the pre-1951 period (and to some extent afterward), these scholarship recipients were often associated with Mexico, even though the Mexican Agriculture Program (MAP) was

As noted in Heinz, Korndörfer and Brum (2022), research should explore the careers of individuals pursued after receiving their scholarships, including the fields they were recruited into and whether they predominantly held positions in public or private institutions. Unfortunately, the *Directory* provides limited information in this regard. For example, the “address” data reflect only the positions held by former scholarship recipients at a specific stage of their careers, typically during an RF consultation, offering little insight into their full professional trajectory.

## First results

Our examination of Latin American fellows and scholars from the Rockefeller Foundation’s agriculture programs identified 713 individuals across various fields related to agricultural and veterinary research. The largest groups include Mexicans (184 or 25.81%), Brazilians (147 or 20.62%), and Colombians (100 or 14.03%).

These 713 scholarship recipients were awarded a total of 838 scholarships in agricultural research. A noteworthy finding is that more than 70% of them – specifically 593 individuals – received a single scholarship. Additionally, 115 individuals were awarded two scholarships, totaling 230, while five individuals received three scholarships, amounting to 15 in total.

Breaking down the distribution by country, Mexico stands out as the leading recipient, with 247 scholarships, followed by Brazil (151), Colombia (116), Peru (77), and Chile (73). Mexico accounts for just under one-third of all grants in the Rockefeller Foundation’s agriculture programs listed in the *Directory*, while Brazil represents just under one-fifth of them.

**Table 3:** Distribution of scholarships per country (N = 838)

Country	1st	2nd	3rd	Total country	%
Argentina	37	1		38	4.53
Bolivia	18	6	2	26	3.1
Brazil	147	4		151	18.01
Chile	66	7		73	8.71
Colombia	100	16		116	13.85
Costa Rica	22	5		27	3.22

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not specifically a scholarship program. The importance of Mexico for the history of the early development of agricultural scholarship programs in Latin America is tremendous, as highlighted by Cotter (2003) and Méndez Rojas (2019), and our dataset includes Mexico, as any other Latin American countries, both as a place of origin and as a destination for scholarship recipients, whether they are Mexican nationals or from other Latin American countries.

Ecuador	22	4		26	3.11
Guatemala	15			15	1.78
Honduras	10	1		11	1.31
Mexico	184	63		247	29.47
Nicaragua	11	1	1	13	1.55
Panama	4			4	0.47
Paraguay	2			2	0.23
Peru	63	12	2	77	9.18
Uruguay	10			10	1.19
Venezuela	2			2	0.23
Total	713	120	5	838	100

Source: Authors.

Regarding the field of study (measured by the number of scholarships, not individuals), Plant Science constitutes the majority, with 468 scholarships across Latin America, representing 55.84% of the total in this area. Mexicans lead in this category, with 165 scholarships, accounting for 35.25% of the field (19.68% of the total). Brazilians have 68 scholarships, or 8.11% of the total, while Colombians have 65, making up 7.75% of the total.

**Table 4:** Field of Study / all Scholarships (N = 838)

Field of Study	Scholarships	%
Plant Science	468	55.84
Animal Science	138	16.46
Soil Science	99	11.81
Biological Sciences	26	3.10
Rural Development	22	2.62
Agricultural Engineering	12	1.43
Library Sciences	12	1.43
Food Technology	7	0.83
Chemistry	6	0.71
Forestry	6	0.71
Other	42	5.01
Total	838	100

Source: Authors.

In Animal Science, there are 138 scholarships, constituting 16.46% of the total, while Soil Science accounts for 99 scholarships, or about 11.8%. Within Animal Science, Colombia has 30 grants, Mexico has 28, and Brazil and Peru each have 24.

The United States is the primary destination for Rockefeller Foundation fellows and scholars, with 551 individuals. Among these, 279 are in Plant Science, 110 in Animal Science (out of a total of 123 fellows in this field, accounting for 89.4% of the total), and 65 in Soil Science. Mexico is the destination for 111 scholarship holders (72% of them in Plant Science), and Colombia hosts nine.

Among the 147 Brazilian scholarship holders, the USA is the most frequent destination, with 104 scholars, representing seven out of every ten. The majority of these researchers specialize in Plant Science (35 or 23.5% of the total), followed by Animal Science (20 or 13.6%) and Biological Sciences (16 or 10.9%). Notably, 32 Brazilians received scholarships for studies in Mexico, comprising 21.7% of the total. Of these, more than two-thirds (22) are focused on Plant Science.

## Final comments

The creation and use of the RF-DirectoryDB presented a series of methodological challenges, as we attempted to demonstrate in Section 4. Nevertheless, we believe that the positive outcomes outweigh the difficulties encountered.

The analysis of the database could offer valuable insights into Rockefeller's long-term influence in Latin America and has the potential to provide similar insights for other countries and continents. It allows for an assessment of continuities and disruptions in the Foundation's strategic approach to professional training in the region, aligning these with the social and political context of the time. Additionally, from the perspective of the social history of technical and scientific professions, it serves as a focal point for observing the evolution of scientific careers and it underscores the role of the scholarship awarded in advancing their professional trajectories, particularly within public administration and their role as designers or managers of area-specific policies in their home countries.

Looking ahead, the database also provides indicators of the "success" of a "generation" of scholarship recipients, enabling comparative analyses across different generations. Area-based analysis can be particularly useful for evaluating the growth or decline of the Foundation's focus on specific types of training, linking these trends to national political contexts, global forces affecting countries, and comparing training strategies and outcomes with those of other agencies.

In this comparative dimension, future research could explore the dynamics of the training and career paths of Latin American scholarship recipients in comparison to those from other countries. This would involve a global comparison of national groups during the specified period.

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