

Editorial

Regional identity in science: toward a diverse and representative scientific production in Brazil

Ciência com identidade regional: por uma produção científica diversa e representativa no Brasil

Ciencia con identidad regional: por una producción científica diversa y representativa en Brasil

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Abstract

Regional asymmetries in Brazil are marked by historical inequalities present in both social and economic fields, in addition to the absence of development policies capable of bridging the chasm between regions. In the scientific field, other asymmetries such as gender, race/color, and disability also become apparent. Highlighting the importance of regional diversity in the production of studies and research in the area of health law, the periodical *Cadernos Ibero-Americanos de Direito Sanitário* dedicated this issue to publishing, exclusively, articles produced by authors from institutions in the Northeast and Center-West Regions, either as sole authors or in collaboration. This concrete action represents a step toward greater representation and articulation of the discussion on the right to health in Brazil's different regions.

Keywords: Diversity; Equity; Inclusion; Social Inequality; Health Law.

Resumo

As assimetrias regionais no Brasil são marcadas por desigualdades históricas presentes nos campos sociais e econômicos, além da ausência de políticas de desenvolvimento capazes de transpor o abismo existente entre as regiões. No campo científico, outras assimetrias como gênero, raça/cor, deficiência também se fazem notar. Destacando a importância da diversidade regional na produção de estudos e pesquisas na área do direito sanitário, o *Cadernos Ibero-Americanos de Direito Sanitário* dedicou o

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presente fascículo para veicular, exclusivamente, artigos produzidos por autores oriundos de instituições das Regiões Nordeste e Centro-Oeste, em autoria única ou em rede. Essa ação concreta representa um passo em direção a uma maior representatividade e vocalização da discussão do direito à saúde nas diferentes regiões brasileiras.

Palavras-chave: Diversidade; Equidade; Inclusão; Desigualdade Social; Direito Sanitário.

Resumen

Las asimetrías regionales en Brasil están marcadas por desigualdades históricas presentes en los ámbitos social y económico, además de la ausencia de políticas de desarrollo capaces de superar el abismo existente entre las regiones. En el campo científico, también se hacen patentes otras asimetrías como las de género, raza/color y discapacidad. Destacando la importancia de la diversidad regional en la producción de estudios e investigaciones en el área del derecho sanitario, el periódico *Cadernos Ibero-Americanos de Direito Sanitário* dedicó este fascículo a difundir, exclusivamente, artículos elaborados por autores provenientes de instituciones de las regiones Nordeste y Centro-Oeste, ya sea en autoría única o en red. Esta acción concreta representa un paso hacia una mayor representatividad y visibilización de la discusión sobre el derecho a la salud en las diferentes regiones brasileñas

Palabras clave: Diversidad; Equidad; Inclusión; Desigualdad Social; Derecho Sanitario.

Regional asymmetries in Brazil are marked by historical inequalities in the social and economic fields, as well as the lack of development policies capable of bridging the gap between regions. Data from the National Household Sample Survey (PNAD)⁴, carried out in 2024, reveals that the North and Northeast regions lead the way in illiteracy rates among people aged 15 and over, with percentages of 11.1% and 6.0%, respectively, as well as having the lowest percentage of young people who have completed a degree⁽¹⁾.

Estimates from the 2022 Census show that the proportion of people aged 25 and over who have completed higher education in Brazil grew 2.7 times between 2000 and 2022, reaching 18.4% of the population. However, when looking at the figures by federation unit, it can be seen that the highest proportion of people with completed higher education was in the Federal District (37.0%), well ahead of second-placed São Paulo (23.3%). The lowest proportion was in Maranhão (11.1%), which has not made much progress since the 2000 census^(2,3).

On the other hand, there is a concentration of postgraduate programs (PPG) in the South and Southeast. The South has the highest proportion of municipalities with PPGs, with 20.5%, followed by the Southeast, with programs in 106 municipalities. The Midwest has coverage in only 7.5% of its municipalities, totaling 35 locations. The Northeast and North represent just 4% and 6%, respectively, of the municipalities with postgraduate programs⁽⁴⁾.

In the scientific field, other asymmetries such as gender, race/color and disability are also noticeable. The presence of women in Brazilian scientific production has increased over the years and, in 2022, 20.7% of women had completed higher education, while among men this percentage was 15.8%⁽²⁾. However, there is the 'scissors effect', an expression used to designate the reduction in this representation when it comes to advancing in academic careers and leadership positions⁽⁵⁾. Motherhood has a direct effect in this context, since the overload of domestic tasks and childcare has repercussions on the production and availability of the mother scientist⁽⁶⁾.

Preliminary data from a survey that mapped the demographics, workplace climate and perceptions experienced by the LGBTQIA+ population in academic spaces in Brazil revealed that only 10% of Brazilian scientists, students and researchers in this group are trans people⁽⁷⁾. The data draws attention to the urgent need to include these people in the academic and scientific environment.

⁴ Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílio (PNAD)

A study entitled “Racial Diversity in Science”, coordinated by professors Luiz Augusto Campos and Marcia Rangel Candido, from the Institute of Social and Political Studies of the State University of Rio de Janeiro, published in 2023, showed an under-representation of black and indigenous people, considering the universe of patients in postgraduate courses in the areas of knowledge analyzed. The research included data from the areas of astronomy/physics, biodiversity, computer science, biological sciences, exact and earth sciences, geosciences, mathematics/probability and statistics and chemistry⁽⁸⁾.

The presence of people with disabilities in higher education teaching in Brazil, considering the period 2010-2018, was only 1%, with a higher male representation⁽⁹⁾. This reflects social markers of exclusion based on the intersection between disability and being a woman, which produces identities and movements of oppression and vulnerability, fostering the precarious conditions of existence of people with disabilities and the stigmas and social constructions of the normalization of bodies⁽¹⁰⁾.

The Brazilian Association of Collective Health (Abrasco)⁵, through its Editors’ Forum, held the Seminar “Strengthening Collective Health journals: editorial sustainability and promoting diversity in scientific publishing” on June 12 and 13, at the School of Public Health of the Universidade de São Paulo (FSP/USP)⁽¹¹⁾.

The event, which brought together around 50 publishers and editors, including part of the editorial team of *Cadernos Ibero-Americanos de Direito Sanitário - CIADS*, debated, among other topics, ways of increasing the diversity and representativeness of the actors present in the different phases of the editorial process, involving authors, reviewers and the editorial team⁽¹¹⁾ since each group contributes to broadening the scope of scientific production, not only through their presence, but also through the unique perspectives they introduce, including in terms of epistemological diversity, which, in this sense, is no longer an accessory value but becomes a constitutive value of scientific quality⁽¹²⁾.

The meeting was evaluated as a milestone for the collective construction of fairer editorial guidelines, which are collaborative and attentive to the plurality that marks Collective Health, and the ethical commitment to promote inclusion, accessibility and diversity in the scientific production of the area⁽¹¹⁾. Incorporating multiple forms of knowledge does not compromise the rigor of scientific production; on the contrary, it enriches it, broadening the frontiers of what is thinkable and researchable.

The Abrasco Editors’ Forum, created in 2014, currently includes 21 active journals in the area of Collective Health, covering all regions of the country, highlighting the importance of regional diversity in the editorial debate and the forum's perspective as an academic and political space that contributes to strengthening open, non-commercial journals that disseminate the science produced in the global South⁽¹³⁾.

Health law, as a field founded on the principles of social justice, equity and universality, cannot do without the plurality of voices that experience, including on their own skin, the failings and potential of the health system. Scientific production that ignores these voices reproduces exclusionary and limited knowledge.

Imbued with this spirit of working with diversity in scientific production and reaffirming its democratic commitment, CIADS has dedicated this issue (v.14 no.2) exclusively to articles produced by authors from institutions in the Northeast and Midwest regions, either as sole authors or in a network with other researchers, as a concrete action, albeit modest, towards greater representation of this group

⁵ Associação Brasileira de Saúde Coletiva (Abrasco)

in vocalizing the discussion of the right to health, demonstrating the power of scientific knowledge produced in these regions.

It is hoped that this edition will spur new representative actions and that pluralism and the promotion of equity in the scientific field will not just be an agenda, but an ongoing and transformative practice.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Authors' contribution

Alves SCM contributed to the conception/design of the article, writing, critical revision of the content and approval of the final version. Viana GT contributed to the conception/design of the article, writing, critical revision of the content and approval of the final version. DSGJ contributed to the writing, critical revision of the content and approval of the final version.

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