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EDITOR'S NOTE

The history of science and Qualis

The new criteria for ranking Brazilian journals (known as Qualis Periódicos) are very troubling, particularly for areas such as the history of science. Some of this journal's other sister areas are also in danger, such as public health, an area in which Brazil serves as both an example and an inspiration for all of Latin America (Dias, 22 ago. 2019). The Brazilian Ministry of Education's Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (the Brazilian Coordination for Improvement of Higher Education Personnel, CAPES), which dictates these criteria, will assess publications according to the institutional affiliations of the authors, and will only consider a single knowledge area called the "mother area." In other words, if an author writes an article on history but is part of a history program in a medical college, his/her work will automatically be considered as being in medicine (unlike previous, less rigid criteria which allowed a single article to pertain to several knowledge areas). It is as if we lived in an academic world of airtight categories where researchers from different disciplines did not communicate and where professionals could decide where to go to find work. This is the disastrous result of a persistent lack of willingness on the part of the government to democratically discuss evaluation criteria for scientific publications.

In implementing the Sucupira platform as a basis for evaluating scientific journals, the federal funding agency insists on ignoring the foreigners who publish in them, considering only Brazilian authors to define the mother area. The result harms the supposed goal of internationalizing Brazilian science. Because of these criteria, many Brazilian journals will drop in the Qualis rankings and have fewer options for obtaining resources to continue their work. There is nothing about content or circulation of articles, and no mention of new indicators like altmetrics, which measure the presence and use of scientific articles on digital media. Even worse, this assessment does not consider important indexers such as Scielo, which has been essential for the visibility of scientific production from Latin America and the Caribbean.

As a result of this situation, an absurd possibility looms on the horizon: in the future, *História, Ciências, Saúde – Manguinhos* may no longer be considered to be within the field of history. This incoherency ignores the fact that the history of science has been, and continues to be, an area developed since the early twentieth century by researchers trained in one of the biological or physical sciences who sought to build bridges between the humanities and sciences throughout history. It also ignores the fact that even today, international journals in the history of science publish articles by historians, scientists, physicians, and

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other professionals. This contradicts the decision by the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPQ) several years ago that incorporated the history of science (including the history of medicine and health) into the field of history. It also disregards the multitude of scientists who have received international awards for their innovative work, specifically because it is interdisciplinary and transnational. Finally, it is a shocking move that completely disrespects the dedicated local efforts that brought the International Congress on the History of Science, the world's most important academic event in this area, to Brazil for its twenty-fifth edition in 2017.

CAPES's misguided intentions with the new Qualis criteria reveal ignorance and a lack of vision in relation to Brazilian scientific development. Even worse, they suggest that the goal is actually to minimize Brazilian science and devalue its journals. These goals are compatible with authoritarian rulers who openly endeavor for the country's development to involve fewer public universities, fewer teachers and students, and less scientific communication. And they erroneously assume that developing countries such as Brazil do not need scientific research (when exactly the opposite is true).

All of this makes us expect the worst from this model. The achievements of Brazilian scientific communities in recent decades are seriously at risk. As Kenneth Camargo Jr. warns us, "Qualis único" (as this destructive proposal for journal classification is being called) is a clear setback (Dias, 16 set. 2019).[1] We ask our readers and collaborators to stay alert, to defend our journal's identity and various forums, and to help us to resist these evil intentions.

NOTE

[1] For additional critiques, see the editorial published in *Cadernos de Saúde de Pública* signed by this publication, as well as *História, Ciências, Saúde – Manguinhos*; *Memórias do Instituto Oswaldo Cruz; Revista Eletrônica de Comunicação, Informação e Inovação em Saúde*; *Revista Fitos*; *Trabalho, Educação e Saúde*; and *Vigilância Sanitária em Debate: Sociedade, Ciência & Tecnologia* (Cadernos de Saúde Pública et al., 7 out. 2019).

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