

EDITORS' NOTE

Health, zika and politics

Dear readers,

In this last issue of 2017, we are pleased to offer you a varied selection of articles from different areas of knowledge, thematic fields, approaches, temporalities and geographies, always seeking to focus on the historical perspective, which confers an identity upon this transdisciplinary vehicle that is *História, Ciências, Saúde – Manguinhos*. The diversity, which is not exclusive to this issue, was recognized in Capes' recent four-yearly review of journals. The journal retained its A1 status in the areas of History; Interdisciplinarity; Sociology; and Education. It was classified as A2 in Architecture; Urbanism and Design; Political Science and International Relations; Teaching; Urban and Regional Planning/Demography; and Social Service. Our journal has also been ranked in new areas: Arts (A2); Communication and Information (A2); and Law (B2).

Undoubtedly, this is especially gratifying, since the ability to dialogue with such varied disciplinary fields represents a virtue, but also poses challenges in terms of editorial policy, which imply dealing with the paradox of maintaining this interface with several areas of knowledge without compromising the journal's identity, which, to a certain extent, is constrained by disciplinary parameters. Choices in this respect are strategic, as they are an indicator of the journal we wish to have in the complex early twentieth-first century scenario and to the potential to remain relevant and long-lived. For the time being, it seems to us that coping with the complexity involved in the various contemporary dilemmas requires precisely the articulation of knowledge to overcome disciplinary barriers. Without as yet clear answers, we have acted pragmatically in favor of quality, which is not a clearly delimited parameter, since it involves subjectivities, but it is the compass that guides us, as well as the support of our editorial board, and, above all else, of the appraisers. We cannot fail to send the latter, in the closing edition of 2017, our deepest and most sincere thanks for finding time, amid pressing and increasingly bureaucratic academic routines, to carefully examine the manuscripts that are sent to us in increasing numbers and with an increasingly varied selection of subjects.

The final assessment of this complex criterion called "quality" is always conferred by you readers, to whom we also express our gratitude for having remained faithful this year, whether by reading our printed and digital editions or by monitoring our blogs and social media. Our appreciation is also extended to the authors, published or otherwise, who have seen in our pages an attractive vehicle for the dissemination of their research, comments and points of view.

The Latin American perspective, which is decidedly prevalent in the articles of this issue, is reinforced and has acquired Caribbean nuances in the "Public Health Policy in Latin America

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and the Caribbean” dossier, coordinated by historian Henrice Altink, of the University of York (England), the researcher Magali Romero Sá, of Casa de Oswaldo Cruz/Fiocruz (Brazil), and Professor Debbie McCollin, of the University of the West Indies (Trinidad and Tobago). The articles are the outcome of the presentations of three meetings staged by the cooperation between Casa de Oswaldo Cruz and the University of York funded by the British Academy. The meetings took place in 2014, 2015 and 2016 in York, Rio de Janeiro and Port of Spain, respectively. The five papers that make up the dossier present a sweeping panorama of the dynamics of public health, politics and culture in countries such as Haiti, Cuba, Jamaica, Brazil, Peru and Bolivia, and the knowledge circulation networks with Europe and the United States.

This issue also features a debate about the zika epidemic, which came to the fore when the disease raised a series of concerns, due to the enigmas that still surrounded its transmission, pathophysiology and correlation with microcephaly that affected the babies of women infected with the virus during pregnancy. Although the virus has to a certain extent dropped out of the limelight, it remains a concrete threat, all the more so with the imminent arrival of summer, when the zika vector, *Aedes aegypti*, spreads through urban centers, giving rise to a serious health scare. The debate represents an excellent record of the perceptions of specialists dedicated to thinking about the disease with all its social, economic and cultural determinants.

We cannot fail to highlight our concern in this editorial over the recent attacks on freedom and the autonomy of academic thought in Brazil. These are attacks veiled in nebulous authoritarianism seeking to censor what runs contrary to the proposed agenda for the country of fundamentalist segments. We have already seen the curtailment of expression in art, with arguments of a pseudo moralist order, mobilized to defend the family – always this abstract and flexible entity, which, together with God and freedom, drew thousands of people onto the streets, calling for authoritarian intervention on the eve of the coup of 1964. In the field of education, the “School without Party” movement has been gaining momentum for some time. There has been no lack of attacks on teachers and students who are attuned to the contemporary debate on gender and sexuality and other progressive issues. At the Universidade Federal da Bahia, teachers and students who research questions related to gender have even received death threats. Very recent news (November 22, 2017) published in the *Folha de S.Paulo* reveals that an article on education, duly reviewed by peers, was grudgingly withdrawn from the page of the Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais [National Institute of Educational Studies and Research], against the wishes of the editor responsible, sparking off a crisis among researchers in the field. We extend our solidarity to our colleagues and fellow institutions.

Fascism has a broad and heterogeneous definition, but it becomes abundantly clear when, before our very eyes, it moves steadfastly forward. Let us remain vigilant, in the hope that, next year, Brazilian society will be able to express its aspirations at the polls in fully free and democratic elections.

To all, a good read and a more auspicious 2018!

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