

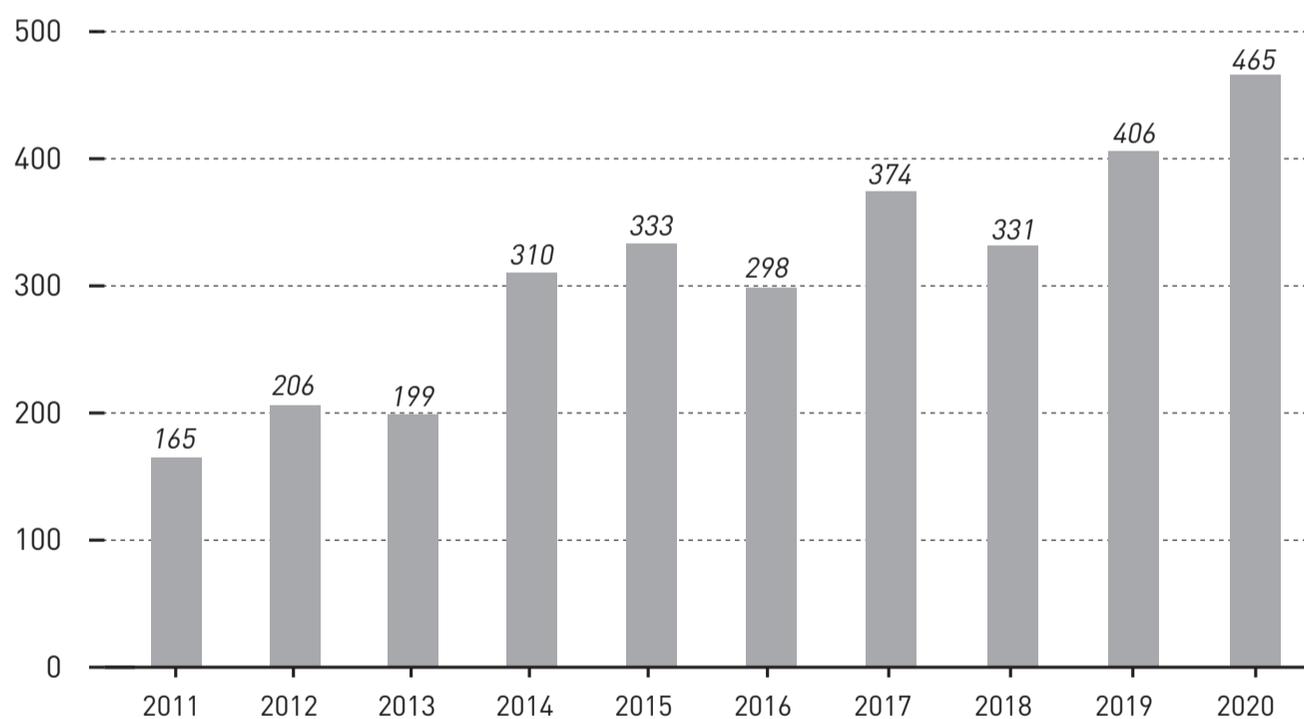
DIREITO GV LAW REVIEW IN NUMBERS: 2020 BALANCE SHEET AND PROSPECTS FOR 2021

<https://doi.org/10.1590/2317-6172202100>

It is with great pleasure that we present this first issue of the 2021 *Direito GV Law Review* (v. 17, n. 1, January/April 2021). Similar to previous years, this editorial will highlight the 2020 data balance and our 2021 targets. Let's get to the data.

In 2020, we observed a significant increase in the total number of annual submissions compared to previous years (Chart 1), and an increase in the number of monthly submissions compared to 2019 (Chart 2). In 2020, there were no calls for papers for special dossiers, which tend to increase the number of submissions for a few months, as seen in January and February 2019 (BARBIERI, IZIDORO and CANHEO, 2020). Still, there was an increase of 14.5% in the total number of submissions, which went from 406 in 2019 to 465 in 2020.

CHART 1 – NUMBER OF SUBMISSIONS PER YEAR FROM 2011 TO 2020

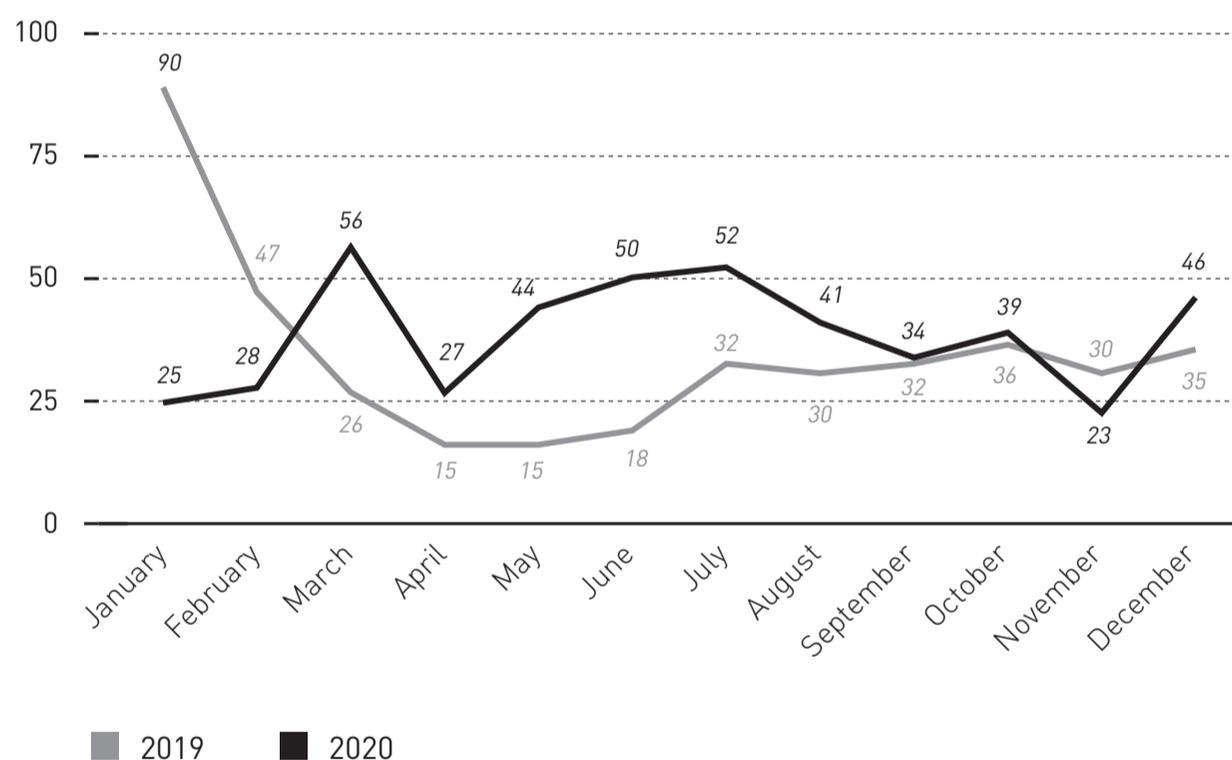


Source: *Direito GV Law Review* Archives and ScholarOne Manuscripts/*Direito GV Law Review*.

This total could have been even higher, but it does not include manuscripts that were returned to the authors for adjustments, since upon analysis they did not meet the minimum formal requirements, and the authors never resubmitted them. If the articles submitted did include those that needed adjustments, the total number of submissions would jump from 465 to 567.

Here a comment is noteworthy. It is worrying that the number of articles that do not meet basic requirements – such as following the correct citation system or bringing a cover letter with complete data – is so high. Among all the articles returned for adjustments, 102 manuscripts (18%) were never corrected. The authors expect that their articles will be evaluated quickly, but it is necessary to raise awareness in the community that academic journals have scarce human resources. Analyzing compliance with formal requirements requires considerable initial time from the editorial team and many exchanges of e-mails with the authors. This time ends up wasted when the manuscript does not even return. A careful reading of the Editorial Policy and attention to detail in the preparation of submissions are fundamental for the proper function of the journal's evaluation system and saves time and effort that could be applied in other phases of the editorial process.

CHART 2 – NUMBER OF SUBMISSIONS PER MONTH IN 2020 AND 2019



Source: ScholarOne Manuscripts/*Direito GV Law Review*.

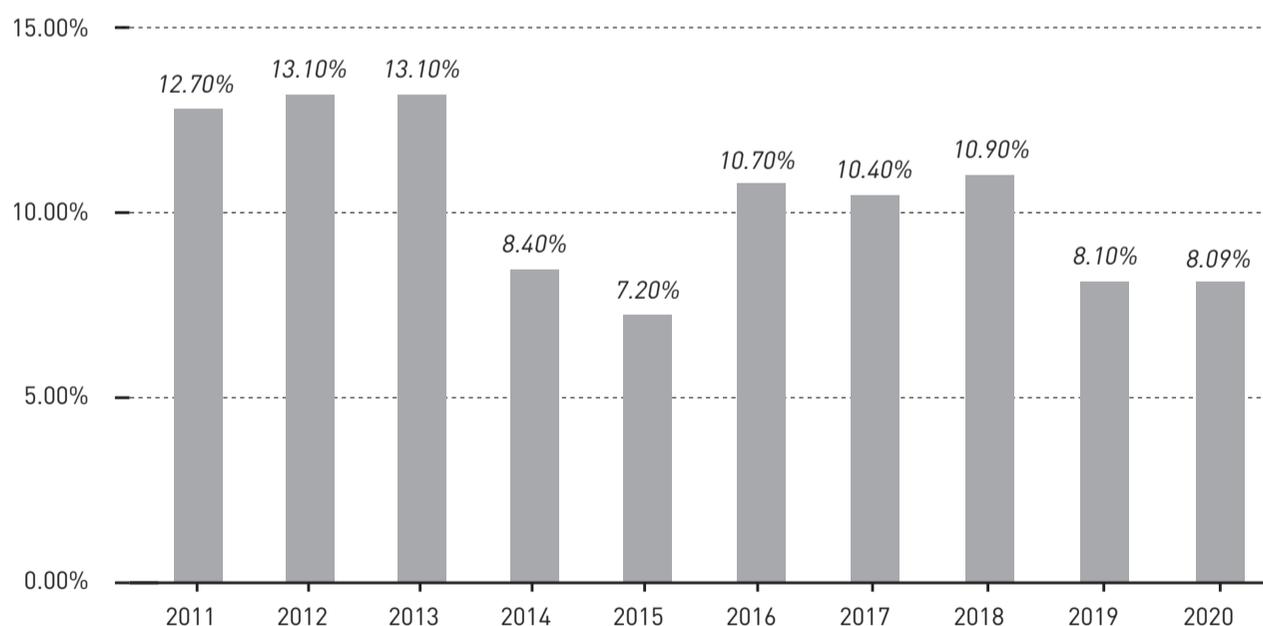
As for the 14.5% jump in total submissions from 2019 to 2020, although it is not possible to isolate the variables that led to this increase, there are two factors that may have contributed to it: the fact that 2020 was the last year of the Capes evaluation quadrennium and the Covid-19 pandemic. It is curious to note that there is a peak of submissions in March, when many scholars started to work regularly from their home. Submissions remained high for the first few months of social isolation (Chart 2).

Regarding the origin of Brazilian authors in 2020, we have the following scenario: São Paulo remained the state with the largest number of articles submitted – with 22.78% of the total number of submissions –, followed by Minas Gerais (10.92%), the Federal District (9.52%), Rio Grande do Sul (8.74%) and Paraná (7.33%). Adding to these Espírito Santo, Rio de Janeiro and Santa Catarina, the South and Southeast regions represent 73.34% of the total number of articles submitted during the analysis period. In contrast, the states in the Northeast region account for 20.13% of submissions, those in the North region account for 4.22% and those in the Midwest region account for only 2.34%. It seems to us that the regional concentration – which has not changed from year to year – is a reflection of the still very uneven geographical distribution of postgraduate courses in Law in Brazil.

Regarding foreign articles, there was an increase in the number of submissions from 4.07% in 2019 to 7.53% in 2020. The origin of the articles was also more varied, going from 10 countries in 2019 to 13 countries in 2020.¹

The relationship between the number of manuscripts received and published articles has remained the same in recent years, approximately 8% (Chart 3).

CHART 3 – NUMBER OF ARTICLES RECEIVED *VERSUS* NUMBER OF ARTICLES PUBLISHED PER YEAR, FROM 2011 TO 2020, IN %



Source: *Direito GV Law Review Archives and ScholarOne Manuscripts/Direito GV Law Review.*

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1 In descending order, based on the number of articles received from each country, the origin of the manuscripts is as follows: Brazil, Portugal, Iran, Canada, Argentina, Germany, Chile, Colombia, the United States, Holland, Italy, Norway, and Russia.

The data reflects the volume and importance of the editorial selection made during the desk review phase. During this stage, in addition to meeting formal requirements, articles are analyzed based on the journal's editorial and thematic priorities, as well as in relation to their originality (BARBIERI and PASQUA, 2018). With the significant increase in the volume of submissions, the question of originality has become a fundamental requirement. The articles, resulting from theoretical or empirical research, need to bring a clear new element to the debate. Literature reviews, manuals or teaching style essays, and opinion articles tend not to pass this initial screening. In 2020, among all articles that had their evaluation in the desk review finalized, about 19% were sent to peer reviewers.

Despite the challenges of 2020, we managed to achieve two important goals: reducing the average total time between submissions and the approval of articles and between submission and publication. Between submission and approval, there was a reduction from 11.5 months in 2019 to 8 months in 2020. Thus, in general, we found a significant reduction in the total average time between submission and publication of about 15 months for articles published in 2019 to 13 months for those published in 2020, which is approaching the ideal period of 12 (twelve) months between submission and publication as suggested by the Scientific Electronic Library Online (SCIELO, 2017). Our goal is to reach that rate by the end of 2021.

Two other goals for 2021 include reducing the average time of articles under evaluation before their final decision of approval or rejection and reducing the average time between approval and publication. Regarding the first, in 2020, the process of evaluating these articles from submission to the final positive or negative decision took an average of 141 days, considering the submission date of the last modified version of the articles, and 288 days, considering the original date of submission. In 2019, these averages were 131 days and 281 days, respectively. We realized that our bottleneck was in the articles that, in the end, are rejected. We are restructuring our internal process so that all articles, regardless of the outcome, receive fast and quality feedback.

Regarding the second goal, considering all articles published in 2020, including articles submitted in previous years, the average time between approval and publication of the articles was 5 and a half months in 2020 (compared to 4 and a half months in 2019).

As stated, human resources are limited and the significant increase in the number of submissions affected other phases of the journal's production process, and it was not possible to reduce the average time of all stages, even though the overall average has dropped.

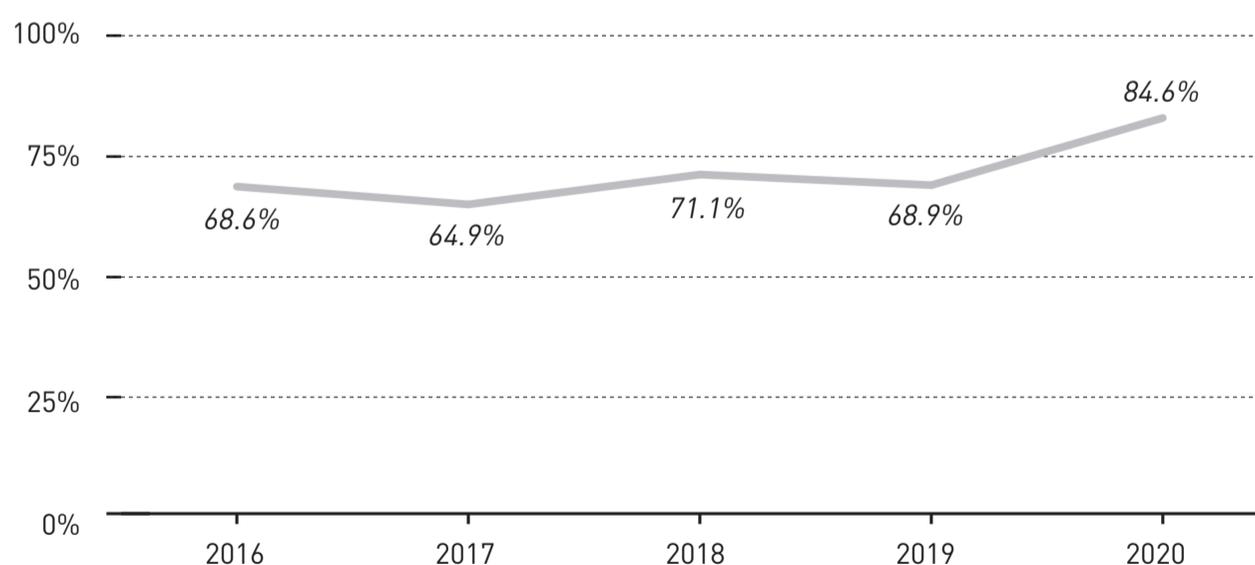
It is also worth mentioning a perennial bottleneck in the peer review system: the availability of peer reviewers. In 2020, 372 invitations were sent in the double-blind peer review stage (47

more than in 2019), resulting in a total of 171 reviews issued (11 less than in 2019) with the collaboration of 166 reviewers. The average time for issuing reviews remained the same in relation to 2019, around 18 days. However, the challenge of obtaining good reviews to accomplish this stage has been intensifying. The figures do not add up: if on the one hand the number of articles submitted increased, on the other hand, the availability of specialists to make *ad hoc* reviews decreased dramatically in 2020.

In a recent editorial, reporting on her experience as Deputy Editor-in-Chief of *Direito GV Law Review*, Clarissa Gross (2020) clarifies the difficulty in obtaining quality and timely reviews. She identifies three reasons responsible for the need for extra invitations. They are: “(i) lack of answer from the reviewer in relation to the invitation; (ii) rejection of the invitation by the reviewer; or (iii) lack of delivery of review after the invitation was accepted”, these exclude the cases in which the extra invitations are made due to insufficient reviews to support the editorial decision.

Gross (2020) already identified in the first three months of 2020 that the percentage of extra invitations was 86% considering the three situations highlighted above. This trend continued throughout the year, as submissions continued to increase, and reached 84.6% for the entire year, as shown in Chart 4, below.

CHART 4 – PERCENTAGE OF MANUSCRIPTS WITH SURPLUS INVITATIONS PER YEAR (MAR./2016 – DEC./2020)

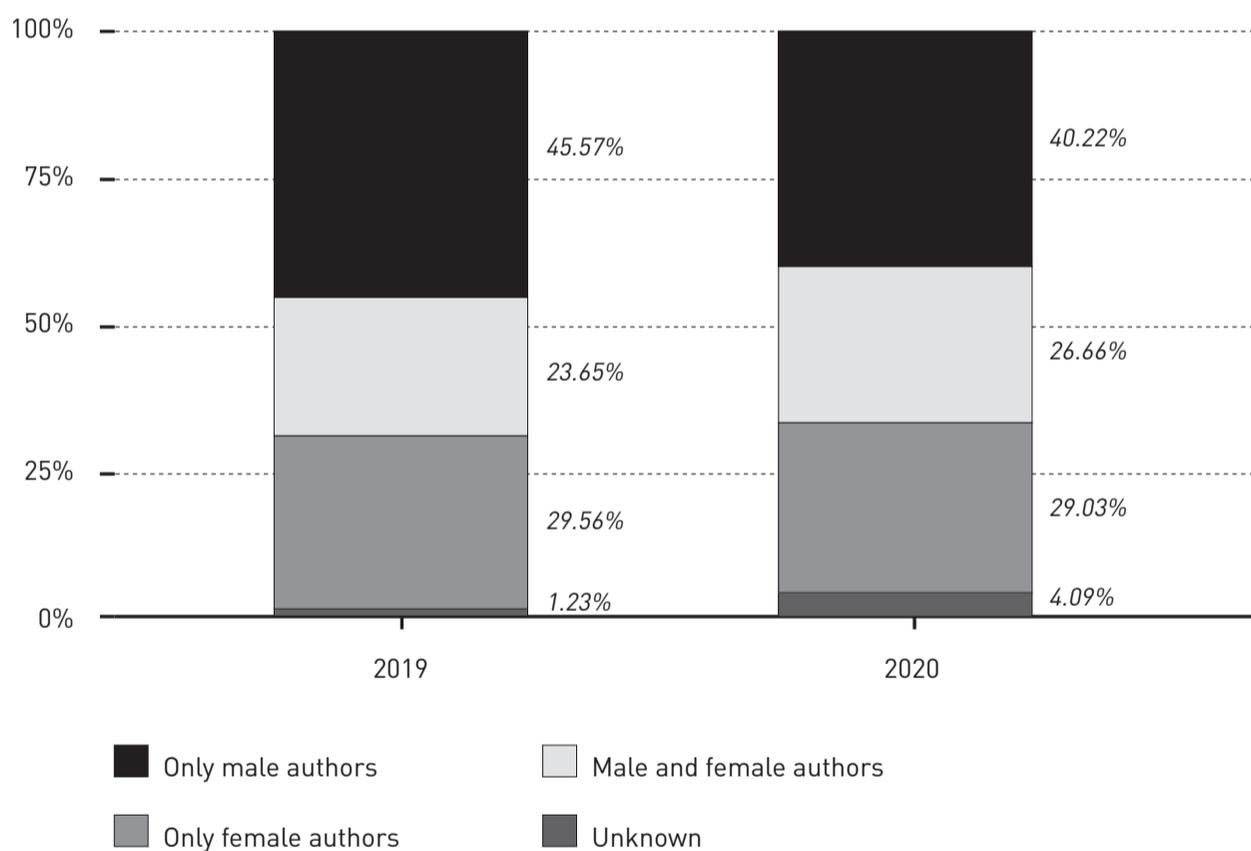


Source: ScholarOne Manuscripts/*Direito GV Law Review*.

In other words, 84.6% of all articles that passed to the peer review phase had a need for more than two invitations, and it was common that articles needed five or more invitations to get two reviewers.

Finally, this year we bring for the first time the data related to the authors' gender (Chart 5). Our initial hypothesis was that the pandemic could cause an increase in gender inequality, as pointed out by some studies (CANDIDO and CAMPOS, 2020; STANISCUASKI *et al.*, 2020). However, the data collected for the year 2019 and 2020 indicate distribution stability between the genders, which was already uneven. There was a decrease in the percentage of articles authored exclusively by men (from 45.5% to 40.2%) and the percentage of articles with mixed² authorship increased (from 23.6% to 26.6%), while the percentage of articles authored exclusively by women remained stable at 29%.

CHART 5 – PERCENTAGE OF SUBMISSIONS BY GENDER OF AUTHORS AND YEAR



Source: ScholarOne Manuscripts/*Direito GV Law Review*.

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- 2 We consider mixed authorship to be an article that has at least one author of each gender, in any combination or proportion. Unfortunately, the way this data is collected does not allow us to identify gender preponderances within this group, and therefore it is not possible to say that the increase in mixed co-authorship is leading to a decrease in gender inequality.

After an atypical and difficult year, we entered 2021 aware that the challenges experienced will not disappear. Even so, *Direito GV Law Review* continues to seek to improve each step of the editorial process. In Brazil, the important contribution that SciELO has made to professionalize, disseminate, and increase the visibility and impact of Brazilian science is undeniable, and in line with the best international practices. For this reason, *Direito GV Law Review* has predominantly followed SciELO guidelines while maintaining some specificities in regard to the area of Law. One of the goals already noted for 2021 is to reduce the time between the submission and publication of approved articles to 12 months (SCIELO, 2017).

Furthermore, the editorial staff of *Direito GV Law Review*, with the approval of its Editorial Board, throughout 2021 will undertake the reevaluation of its editorial policy in the light of the new criteria for indexing and permanence of journals in the SciELO database (SCIELO, 2020).

Finally, we would like to thank once again the community of authors, reviewers, and the Editorial Board, with whom we shared the turbulent year of 2020.

May 2021 be a good year and one full of good reading!

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How to quote this editorial:

BARBIERI, Catarina Helena Cortada; CANHEO, Roberta Olivato. Direito GV Law Review in numbers: balance sheet for 2020 and prospects for 2021. *Revista Direito GV*, v. 17, n. 1, Jan./Apr. 2021, e2100. <https://doi.org/10.1590/2317-6172202100>

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