

CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS: A SEPARATE CHAPTER IN THE 30 YEARS OF MOVIMENTO

TEMAS POLÊMICOS: UM CAPÍTULO À PARTE NOS 30 ANOS DA MOVIMENTO 

TEMAS CONTROVERSIALES: UN CAPÍTULO APARTE EN LOS 30 AÑOS DE MOVIMENTO 

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Abstract: This essay deals with the protagonism of Controversial Topics in the 30 years of the journal Movimento. The first part reviews all 25 articles that made up this section, published between 1994 and 2012, emphasizing the unique character of this editorial device in the projection of the journal on the national scene. In the second part, in addition to the presentation of the article “Practising Soft Science in the Field of Health”, by Denise Gastaldo and Joan Eakin, and the structure of the first international series of the section, three reasons are listed for the resumption of Controversial Topics with a focus on the academic marginalization of qualitative health research: (1) internationalization with its “feet” in Latin American territory and encouragement of multilingual publication; (2) broadening the commitment to the principles of Open Science; and (3) positioning the journal as a vehicle for disseminating production originating from qualitative research. In conclusion, there is a belief that the journal is taking another step toward the valorization of Social Sciences and Humanities.

Keywords: Scientific Domains. Scientific Communication and Diffusion. Health Sciences. Physical Education and Training. Qualitative Research.

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1 CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS: PROJECTION ON THE BRAZILIAN PHYSICAL EDUCATION SCENE

[...] we intend to contribute to the establishment of a relationship between thinkers in the field and between them and society, trying to constitute a vehicle for the socialization of the knowledge produced with a view to fulfilling the social role of the University (Stigger, 1994, p. 4).

Thirty years ago, in September 1994, at the School of Physical Education of the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (ESEF/UFRGS)¹, Movimento was launched. As Marco Paulo Stigger (1994), the journal's creator and first editor, recounts, it took two years of preparation to put together the eight articles that made up the first publication. At the time, there was no scientific culture of publishing production in journals because, in addition to the small number of doctors in the field, attention was more focused on structuring postgraduate teaching and producing master's dissertations (Stigger; Fraga; Molina Neto, 2014).

This inaugural issue was historic not only because it was the first, but also because it included the section Controversial Topics, which aimed to provoke academic debate based on a demand made by the editors and thus give the journal national visibility. For a field that was in the process of academic consolidation, the topic chosen to inaugurate the section couldn't have been more appropriate at the time: "What is Physical Education anyway?".

The target article, written by Adroaldo Gaya (1994), was seconded by Celi Taffarel and Micheli Escobar (1994). In the first article, originally conceived for an inaugural lecture at ESEF/UFRGS in September 1993, Gaya (1994) reviews the bibliography available at the time to counter the tendency to define Physical Education exclusively in terms of science or philosophy, since, for the author, Physical Education would be eminently a normative discipline with specific purposes within a pedagogical project. In the second article, Taffarel and Escobar (1994) make their objectives clear in their choice of title: "What is Physical Education anyway? An example of intellectual simplism." The authors radicalize their critique based on historical-dialectical materialism, demanding from the author a commitment to the philosophy of praxis and a rejection of what they call "idealistic scientific junk" produced in Europe and the United States. Due to both the nature of the issue raised by Gaya and the critical radicalization undertaken by Taffarel and Escobar, the topic became, in fact, controversial, which led the journal to invite other authors to participate in the discussion.

In the following issue, published in August 1995, the section Controversial Topics brought four articles that tried to analyze the controversy created by the pair of inaugural texts. In the text that opens the section, Valter Bracht (1995) states, inspired by Heidegger, that there is no way to define the essence of what Physical Education is outside of social practice, which in his view is eminently pedagogical. Silvino Santin (1995), on the other hand, based on Paul Ricoeur, chooses to make his arguments

¹ Since 2015 the name is School of Physical Education, Physiotherapy and Dance, with the acronym ESEFID/UFRGS.

about each text separately, devoting more time to the critical analysis of the target text than to the commentary article.

Paulo Ghiraldelli Jr. (1995), in the shortest and most informal of the four texts, relies on John Dewey to align himself with the central premise of Gaya (1994). Without commenting on the text by Taffarel and Escobar (1994), he ventures a definition: “Physical Education is essentially a pedagogical project and, as such, is nourished by science and philosophy, without, however, ceasing to be, in fact, a practice, an educational intervention in social reality” (Ghiraldelli Jr., 1995, p. XV).

In the closing text of that year’s Controversial Topics, Hugo Lovisolo (1995) chose to analyze Taffarel and Escobar’s (1994) text in more detail. After briefly summarizing Gaya’s (1994) proposal, Lovisolo presents a set of critical considerations about the “dogmatism” of the authors’ analysis of the target text. He says: “Given the aim of the article and its development, the demands made by Professors Taffarel and Escobar seem disproportionate and excessive” (p. XX), precisely because they demanded a position from the criticized author on issues that did not correspond to Gaya’s content and objectives in that text.

In volume 3, number 4, published in August 1996, two more texts were added to the debate. The section opened with an article by Lamartine Pereira da Costa (1996), who tried to contextualize the discussion by reviewing the four articles published in the immediately preceding Controversial Topics section and then commenting on the inaugural pair of articles published in the 1994 issue. Like Lovisolo (1995), Costa is more critical of the “self-sufficient theoretical” tone, demarcated by the “culture of should-be,” used by Taffarel and Escobar (1994) when confronting the work of Gaya (1994).

The article that closes the 1996 Controversial Topics section was written by Gabriel Palafox (1996). Unlike Costa (1996), the author makes general comments on each of the previous articles to emphasize his alignment with the criticisms of Taffarel and Escobar (1994). Also inspired by Marxist theorizing, Palafox (1996) takes a panoramic look at the issue from the point of view of discussions on curriculum planning. In the end, positions himself against Lovisolo’s (1995) criticism of the idealistic nature of Taffarel and Escobar’s (1994) article.

After a brief pause announced in the editorial of issue 5, published at the end of 1996 (Souza, 1996), the Controversial Topics section was resumed in the first issue of 1997 (vol. 4, n. 7). This time, only the target article appeared: “Growth and motor performance in schoolchildren aged 7 to 15 from low-income families”, written by Adroaldo Gaya and three other colleagues (1997). The commentary article, entitled “Data, interpretations, and implications,” written by Hugo Lovisolo, was published in the immediately following issue (Lovisolo, 1997). The author informs us that he would not have dedicated himself to writing a commentary on the target article “if it hadn’t been for a request from the Journal’s management, conveyed in a frank and open style by Gaya himself” (Lovisolo, 1997, p. I).

Unlike the previous series, the Controversial Topics section of the following two editions (v. 4, n. 8, 1998 and v. 5, n. 9, 1998) opened space for the first time

for a reply from the authors of the target article. The first part of the reply, entitled “Data, interpretations, and implications: agreements and disagreements (1st part: the methodology in question), is a response to Lovisolo’s (1997) questioning of the methodology used (Gaya; Torres; Cardoso, 1998a). The second part, entitled “Data, interpretations, and implications: agreements and disagreements (2nd part: the conceptual issues), is dedicated to discussing the conceptual repertoire used, with special emphasis on the relationship between the concepts of physical fitness and health promotion (Gaya; Torres; Cardoso, 1998b).

In 1999, the Controversial Topics section was only published in the first issue of that year, containing a single article: “Is verticality synonymous with good posture?”, written by Adriane Vieira and Jorge Luiz de Souza (1999). The expectation, expressed in the editorial article (Souza, 1999), was that researchers would spontaneously submit commentary texts. Most likely due to the small number of researchers in the field dedicated to the study of body posture at the time, the topic did not flourish.

At the beginning of the 2000s, the section Controversial Topics once again featured a series of texts with a similar structure to the inaugural series. The first issue of the 2000s (v. 6, n. 12) focused on the relationship between performance sport and sport as school content. The texts published were “Sport: a phenomenological approach,” by Elenor Kunz (2000), and “Sport at school and performance sport”, by Valter Bracht (2000). This time, there was no definition of a target article and no commentary.

As it was a “burning” issue (Editorial, 2000), the debate gained traction and became a series. The second issue of the 2000s (v. 6, n. 13) published two texts, one written by Adroaldo Gaya (2000), entitled “On sport for children and young people”, and the other by Celi Taffarel (2000), entitled “Educational sport: the reality and possibilities of government policies and pedagogical practices in public schools”. As with the previous issue, there is no target text and no commentary. Taffarel (2000) restricted herself to analyzing the phenomenon from the point of view of historical-dialectical materialism, without explicitly mentioning any of the texts in the series. Gaya (2000), on the other hand, tried to align his understanding of sport with that of Portuguese researcher Jorge Bento, for whom “sport is polysemic and polymorphous” (p. 2), but, unlike Taffarel (2000), he pointed out his disagreements with some of the arguments presented by Bracht (2000) and Kunz (2000).

The theme of the relationship between performance sport and school sport continued with the publication of two more articles in the following issue. In the first, entitled “Relations between performance sport and school sport,” Marco Paulo Stigger (2001) approaches the subject from the perspective of the contemporary sociology of sport and his research into the practice of leisure in urban spaces. In the second, entitled “Technique, sport, performance,” Alexandre Vaz (2001) addresses the importance of technique in mediating the sporting experience, based on Theodor W. Adorno’s formulations.

The series dedicated to performance sport and school sport ended in issue 15, volume 7, 2001. This time, as expressed in the corresponding editorial article

(Editorial, 2001), Hugo Lovisolo was invited to write a summary of the debate that had taken place so far. As the author states, “colleagues Bracht, Kunz (2000, 12); Gaya, Taffarel (2000/2, 13); Stigger and Vaz (2001/1, 14) wrote articles aware that they were participating in the discussion of a controversial topic, although without a structure that would allow the polemic to be organized” (Lovisolo, 2001, p. 107).

It is interesting to note that the journal’s decision to include a summary article at the end of the series for the first time meant that the six texts as a whole became the main target of the debates. And, by contrast, the summary text ended up becoming the only commentary article in the performance sport/school sport series.

In the first issue of the following year (v. 8, n. 1, 2002), when the journal became a four-monthly publication, the Editorial Board decided to focus on the issue of professional training in Physical Education in the Controversial Topics section (Editorial, 2002). The text chosen as the target was “Capacity for listening: questions for teacher training in physical education”, by Vicente Molina Neto and Rosane Molina (2002), in which the authors examine the scientific production dedicated to the subject, which at the time they considered to be relatively low compared to the overall production in the area, in order to critically analyze the discussion on teacher professionalization that was underway at the time.

Even though the issue was a hot topic, just like the article by Vieira and Souza (1999) in the Controversial Topics section in 1999, the journal did not publish any commentary articles directly related to the article by Molina Neto and Molina (2002). Most likely, as the authors themselves point out in the text, this was due to the fact that scientific production at the time was very incipient² “considering the tradition and productivity of researchers in the area” (Molina Neto; Molina, 2002, p. 58).

After a break of nine years, Controversial Topics was published again in the third issue of 2011 with the theme “Sports Mega-events”. The Editorial Board’s decision to resume the section was justified by the fact that Brazil was beginning preparations to host two major events: the 2014 Men’s Football World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro (Editorial, 2011). The article that opened the series was written by Otávio Tavares (2011). In it, the author reviews “the definition of ‘mega-event’ and the conclusions that have been drawn so far in the literature about its legacies” (Tavares, 2011, p. 11).

Given the relevance of the topic and the mobilization around the organization, the series was extended. In volume 18, number 1, 2012, two more texts were published. In “Sports mega-events and Physical Education: tsunami alert,” Fernando Mascarenhas deals with the relationship between the state, sports organizations, and the market in order to emphasize, based on the concept of neo-developmentalism, “the relations of hegemony and accumulation strategies inherent in the Rio 2016 agenda.” He also considers the impact of the games on the direction of School

² According to Schneider et al. (2009, p. 69), “although there was no response to the issue within the journal, it was debated in other spaces. For example, in the *Revista Brasileira de Ciência do Esporte*, by Andrade Filho (2001), and in the second volume of the collection *Educação Física: política, investigação e intervenção*, by Andrade Filho and Figueiredo (2004)”.

Physical Education. Heloísa Helena Baldy dos Reis (2011), in her article “General World Cup Law, alcohol and the process of creating legislation on violence”, adds to the debate by discussing violence based on the General World Cup Law and the contradictions surrounding the release of alcoholic beverages.

The series on mega-events ends in volume 18, number 2, 2012, with the text “Desire, right, and duty: the plot that brought the World Cup to Brazil”, by Arlei Sander Damo (2012). Over the course of almost 40 pages, Damo tries to denaturalize the choice of Brazil to host the 2014 World Cup by stating that this decision was not because FIFA has a rotation system that “includes different continents and member countries, nor because there was a collusion between Blatter [FIFA President at the time] and Lula [President of Brazil at the time], or between them and the contractors” (Damo, 2012, p. 48), but rather because FIFA is a private agency that has held the patent on the event by mobilizing two systems of dispute for many years: partisanship and nationalism.

It is interesting to note that even though the Controversial Topics section was not published frequently, and did not have a standard structure, it ended up fulfilling the function projected for it in the inaugural editorial: to become “an environment open to reflection that contributes to the movement of knowledge in the area” (Stigger, 1994, p. 4).

The intensity of the repercussions of the Controversial Topics among Physical Education researchers can be seen in different productions published in other spaces. For example, a master’s dissertation was developed based on the series “What is Physical Education anyway?” (Malina, 2011) and a book was launched to revisit the debate on “Performance Sport and Sport at School” (Stigger; Lovisolo, 2009). According to Schneider and colleagues (2009), by reflecting the journal’s discursive identity, this unique “editorial device” was responsible for projecting Movimento onto the Brazilian Physical Education scene.

2 CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS: INSERTION IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

We also believe that although the journals have in common the fact that they are being driven by a logic — national and international — that places them in a certain “place” on the academic scene, their editors, within a “relative autonomy”, steer each of them in a possible direction (Stigger; Fraga; Molina Neto, 2014, p. 791).

Twelve years after the publication of Damo’s article (2012), the Editorial Board decided to resume publication of the Controversial Topics section in celebration of the 30th anniversary of the journal Movimento. The target article for the new series is “Practising Soft Science in the Field of Health,” by Denise Gastaldo and Joan Eakin (2024), both founders of the Centre for Critical Qualitative Health Research (CQ) at the University of Toronto.

Based on 25 years of experience as professors in graduate programs in the field of health, Gastaldo and Eakin (2024) reflect in this article on the low scientific

literacy in qualitative research practices in health. They seek to redefine the label “soft science,” a pejorative way of positioning qualitative research in a world dominated by randomized clinical trials, in order to highlight the power of the “lightness” and “marginality” of the methodological approach in qualitative research when confronting ignorance and epistemic prejudice.

The text, originally written in English and accompanied by a Portuguese version, was conceived for the opening conference of the “International Seminar on Training in Qualitative Health Research: the challenge of scientific literacy,”³ which was to be held at the UFRGS Cultural Center in Porto Alegre on May 27, 28 and 29, 2024. Due to the floods that devastated the state of Rio Grande do Sul, especially the city of Porto Alegre,⁴ the event was moved to March 12, 13 and 14, 2025.

Initially, the text by Gastaldo and Eakin (2024), together with those by Fernando Peñaranda Correa and Maria Lúcia Bosi (2024), Lilian Magalhães (2024) and Maria del Consuelo Chapela (2024), all written for the other conferences at the same seminar, were to be included in the In Focus section, which dealt with qualitative health research. However, given the provocative nature of Gastaldo and Eakin’s work, coupled with the Editorial Board’s interest in celebrating the journal’s 30th anniversary by resuming its Controversial Topics on this subject, this manuscript became the target article for the first international edition of the section that gave Movimento notoriety in Brazil.

In order to mobilize the debate around the theme “Practising Soft Science in the Field of Health” (Gastaldo; Eakin, 2024), three commentary articles were commissioned by the Editorial Board according to the following requirements: (1) examine the topic from the perspective of Physical Education within the context of Brazilian postgraduate studies; (2) analyze the implications of the production of critical qualitative health research in Latin America, taking into account the contemporary context in the universities of that continent; (3) address the scenario of the production of qualitative health research in Africa, from a South African perspective, considering the contemporary context in the universities of that continent.

The task was readily accepted by the following colleagues: (1) Edison Jesus Manoel, full professor at the School of Physical Education and Sport at the Universidade de São Paulo; (2) Carolina Martinez-Salgado, professor at the Department of Health Care at the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana in Mexico; (3) Roshan Galvaan, professor at the University of Cape Town, Division of Occupational Therapy, in South Africa. Like the target article, the three commentaries will be published in each author’s first language, Portuguese, Spanish, and English respectively, and simultaneously in English (Manoel and Martinez-Salgado) and Portuguese (Galvaan).

3 The event is funded by CAPES through the Support Program for Events in Brazil - PAEP (Brasil, 2023).

4 In the Special Edition of the Revista de Extensão da UFRGS (Sept 2024, no. 29) you can find out about ten actions that were carried out by the University in the face of the calamity triggered by the floods that hit the state in May 2024. The article by Paiva, Voser, Gonçalves and Silveira (2024) describes the experience of transforming ESEFID-UFRGS (Movimento’s headquarters) into a Humanitarian Shelter, which took in more than 650 people and 80 pets over 55 days.

The three commentary articles and their respective versions are expected to be published at the beginning of March 2025, before the opening conference of the “International Seminar on Education in Qualitative Health Research: the challenge of scientific literacy”, in which Gastaldo and Eakin (2024) will debate the text “Practising Soft Science in the Field of Health” with the event’s audience. Based on the comments from Manoel, Martinez-Salgado and Galvaan, and the contributions from the seminar audience, Gastaldo and Eakin will produce a follow-up article to be published in 2025, with a date to be set, as the closing text of the first international edition of the Controversial Topics section.

The decision to internationalize Controversial Topics, focusing on the academic marginalization of qualitative health research, was made for three main reasons. The first is directly linked to Movimento’s position on the contemporary publishing scene, as stated in the introductory essay for the journal’s 20th anniversary special issue: “to follow a process of internationalization with our ‘feet’ in Latin American territory and our ‘eyes’ on the dissemination of engaged and socially relevant research for the continent” (Donnelly; Fraga; Aisenstein, 2014, p. 12). Since 2014, the journal has been committed to an editorial policy that seeks to include, whenever possible, the simultaneous publication of articles in at least two of the four main languages of the American continent. This interest is not only restricted to increasing the citation rate of the articles published by the journal, which is indeed the case (Packer, 2014), but also to valuing linguistic diversity in the process of scientific communication between researchers in the region.

The second is related to expanding the journal’s commitment to the principles of Open Science. Since 2020, when it joined the SciELO Collection, the journal has implemented three pillars as a form of alignment: (1) updating editorial policies and manuscript management, (2) using a license for the unrestricted use of published articles, (3) disseminating publications on social networks. It is interesting to note that, even before the launch of the Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI)⁵, in December 2001, Movimento had already published three series in the Controversial Topics section. Even without an explicit editorial policy, at the time the journal already adopted what is now considered to be one of the recommendations of open scientific dissemination: the practice of publishing post-publication comments, replies, and rejoinders. The resumption of Controversial Topics is therefore a further indication of the journal’s commitment in this regard.

The third reason is associated with the process of affirming Movimento as a journal that, since its first issue in 2003, has been dedicated to publishing articles on topics related to Physical Education that are based on the theoretical, methodological, analytical, and interpretative foundations of the Social and Human Sciences. According to Stigger, Fraga and Molina Neto (2014), this decision was fundamental to the process of preparing the journal for indexing in the main databases, especially Scopus and WoS, since journals with a very broad scope, as was the case with Movimento until the last issue in 2002, were not considered a priority for these databases.

5 BOAI, 2001. Available at: <https://www.budapestopenaccessinitiative.org/read/>. Access on: Oct. 28, 2024.

The indexing in 2010 in Scopus and SSCI-WoS, with the attribution of Impact Factor, demonstrated the correctness of the decision since it made *Movimento* the only Brazilian journal to be regularly included in the Journal Citation Reports (JCR). Despite having reached unimaginable heights when it was launched 30 years ago, the journal is still dealing with the continuous process of devaluation of national journals in the Brazilian postgraduate evaluation system, especially those specialized in conveying research from the “soft sciences”, written mostly in Portuguese.

The devaluation materializes in different instances, but especially in the constant changes to the metrics and criteria adopted in CAPES' Qualis journals. In the latest version (2017-2020), for example, the evaluation downgraded *Movimento* in the area's ranking from A2 to B1, even though the journal achieved its highest JCR score in the same period (Fraga, 2023).

Throughout its 30-year history, “the journal's editors have always been aware that ‘the game is played within the rules of the game’, which has meant that they have always been willing to take part in disputes in the field” (Stigger, Fraga and Molina Neto, 2014, p. 798). In the name of this tradition, and inspired by the text by Gastaldo and Eakin (2024), the Editorial Board should make a further adjustment to the scope of *Movimento*, more explicitly assuming its responsibility for publishing manuscripts that are the result of qualitative research. This will be another step for the journal in the international context of combating academic ignorance and epistemic prejudice towards the Social Sciences and Humanities.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude and pay tribute *in memoriam* to four people who made significant contributions to Brazilian Physical Education, and who bequeathed part of their work to the Controversial Topics section of *Movimento*: Rosane Maria Kreuzburg Molina (died March 2014), Micheli Ortega Escobar (died February 2020), Silvino Santin (died October 2024) and Adroaldo César Araújo Gaya (died October 2024).

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Resumo: Este ensaio trata do protagonismo dos Temas Polêmicos nos 30 anos da revista Movimento. Na primeira parte traz uma revisão de todos os 25 artigos que compuseram a referida seção, publicados entre 1994 e 2012, enfatizando o caráter singular desse dispositivo editorial na projeção da revista no cenário nacional. Na segunda parte, além da apresentação do artigo “Practising Soft Science in the Field of Health/Praticando Ciências Moles no Campo da Saúde”, de Denise Gastaldo e Joan Eakin, e da estrutura da primeira série internacional da seção, são arroladas três razões para a retomada dos Temas Polêmicos com foco na marginalização acadêmica das pesquisas qualitativas em saúde: (1) internacionalização com os “pés” no território latino-americano e incentivo à publicação multilíngue; (2) ampliação do compromisso com os princípios da Ciência Aberta; e (3) posicionamento da revista como um veículo de divulgação da produção oriunda da pesquisa qualitativa. Em conclusão, há a aposta de que a revista dá mais um passo em direção à valorização das Ciências Sociais e Humanas.

Palavras-chave: Domínios Científicos. Comunicação e Divulgação Científica. Ciências da Saúde. Educação Física e Treinamento. Pesquisa Qualitativa.

Resumen: Este ensayo aborda el protagonismo de Temas Controversiales en los 30 años de la revista Movimento. La primera parte repasa los 25 artículos que componen esta sección, publicados entre 1994 y 2012, destacando el carácter único de este dispositivo editorial en la proyección de la revista en el escenario nacional. En la segunda parte, además de la presentación del artículo «Practising Soft Science in the Field of Health (La práctica de las ciencias blandas en el ámbito de la salud)», de Denise Gastaldo y Joan Eakin, y de la estructura de la primera serie internacional de la mencionada sección, se enumeran tres razones para la reanudación de Temas Controversiales con el foco puesto en la marginación académica de la investigación cualitativa en salud: (1) la internacionalización con los «pies» en territorio latinoamericano y el fomento de la publicación multilingüe; (2) la ampliación del compromiso con los principios de la Ciencia Abierta; y (3) el posicionamiento de la revista como vehículo de difusión de los resultados de la investigación cualitativa. En conclusión, la revista da un paso más hacia la valorización de las Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades.

Palabras clave: Dominios Científicos. Comunicación y Divulgación Científica. Ciencias de la Salud. Educación y Entrenamiento Físico. Investigación Cualitativa.

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CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The manuscript's authors are the journal's editor-in-chief and deputy editors. Since this manuscript is an editorial essay, it did not undergo peer review. Due to their roles in the journal, the editorial responsibilities rest with the authors themselves.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Alex Branco Fraga: Planning, Foundation, Conceptualization, Literature Review, and Writing (Revision and Editing).

Raquel da Silveira: Planning, Literature Review, and Writing (Revision and Editing).

Elisandro Schultz Wittizorecki: Planning and Writing (Revision and Editing).

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