

Manifesto of Geography for Ethics in Scientific Publishing: Why is it urgent to debate, defend, and shape editorial policy?

The issue 2 (Vol. 28) of *Revista NERA* was edited during a singular and turbulent moment in the landscape of scientific publishing in Brazil. During this period, the Brazilian Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES)¹ released the [“Common Guidelines for the Evaluation of Continuity of Graduate Programs \(Stricto Sensu\)”²](#) for the 2025-2028 evaluation cycle. In addition to establishing new criteria for assessing graduate programs across the country, the document signaled the end of the *Qualis* system for ranking academic journals, shifting the focus of evaluation from journals to individual scientific articles. This directive reaffirmed the provisions already outlined in [Circular Letter No. 46/2024-DAV/CAPES](#), published on October 3, 2024. The Geography Area Coordination — under which *Revista NERA* is categorized — also aligned with CAPES' general guidelines and published specific documents [to provide an overview of graduate education in Geography in Brazil](#), along with a [new evaluation](#) rubric for the 2025-2028 period.

In this context of uncertainty and confusion — fueled, among other things, by the circulation of misleading information regarding the new evaluation criteria — the [Brazilian Geographers Association \(AGB\)](#)³ has advanced the debate by proposing a necessary "step back." A "step back" not in the sense of regression or an outdated stance, but rather as a call to revisit a discussion that many academic journals consider resolved or obsolete, yet which proves to be essential, especially in a context such as the present one: the debate on editorial policy and ethics in scientific publishing.

In April 2025, the AGB published the [Manifesto of Geography for Ethics in Scientific Publishing](#)⁴, a document comprising 40 political guidelines directed at various stakeholders: authors (10), journals/editors (11), reviewers (4), readers (4), graduate programs (6), and funding agencies (5). The manifesto is open for endorsement by journals, academic associations, departments, and graduate programs in Geography throughout Brazil. The document is grounded in the technical note [Guidelines for the Promotion of Ethics in](#)

¹ Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Nível Superior (CAPES).

² Diretrizes comuns da avaliação de permanência dos programas de pós-graduação stricto sensu.

³ Associação dos Geógrafos Brasileiros (AGB).

⁴ Manifesto da Geografia pela Ética na Publicação Científica.



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[Scientific Production in Geography](#)⁵, also prepared and published by the AGB during the same period.

Within academic circles, the defense of best practices in scientific publishing and of Open Science may seem self-evident — reaffirming our role as actors committed to building science in service of society. However, the drafting of these documents — which revisits and reinforces such principles — is deeply rooted in the historical moment we are currently experiencing. The AGB's documents represent a milestone for Geography journals in Brazil, not only for synthesizing international debates — such as those led by the [Committee on Publication Ethics \(COPE\)](#) — but especially for promoting political unity around a collective agenda. The aim is not only to valorize, maintain, and defend scientific journals in the country but also to reclaim their fundamental axis: editorial policy.

Editorial work goes beyond the technical operation of platforms like Open Journal Systems (OJS), widely used by journals in the field. Above all, editing is a political act. On May 28, 2025, *Revista NERA* participated in the Forum of Editors convened by the [National Association of Graduate Studies and Research in Geography \(ANPEGE\)](#)⁶. From this space of collective dialogue emerged the central concern that gives this editorial its title: *Why is it urgent to debate, defend, and shape editorial policy?*

The first issue that mobilized us was the impact of quantitative metrics — whether through the number of published articles or citation counts — on scientific integrity. In a context where academic production is often judged by such bibliometric indicators, unethical practices in research and publishing have evolved and proliferated. A revealing example is the work by [Pesquisa FAPESP](#)⁷, which regularly reports cases of scientific misconduct worldwide as well as initiatives to promote scientific ethics. These occurrences not only compromise the reputations of authors and editors but, more critically, call into question the credibility of scientific knowledge — a particularly serious risk in times marked by disinformation, denialism, and the rapid circulation of content on social media.

The second point collectively discussed concerns the defense of Open Science, a topic thoroughly addressed in the AGB's manifesto, which recognizes it as a movement aimed at the democratization of knowledge — far beyond merely ensuring free access to articles. The increasing concentration of editorial activities in the hands of large international publishers, which have transformed scientific publishing into a profitable business, imposes barriers to knowledge access and reinforces structural inequalities.

The third point of reflection, developed within *Revista NERA*, emphasizes the importance of a well-defined editorial policy that remains a permanent topic of internal

⁵ Orientações para a Promoção da Ética na Produção Científica em Geografia.

⁶ Associação Nacional de Pós-graduação e Pesquisa em Geografia (ANPEGE).

⁷ São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP).

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discussion. Editorial policy shapes the identity of a journal, guides its actions, and ensures its coherence. When grounded in a clear scope and consistent political foundations, it prevents journals from becoming hostages to the ever-changing CAPES evaluation criteria, adapting to each cycle in pursuit of better rankings — often at the expense of their own identity. While editorial policies must indeed be updated in response to a dynamic reality, their political identity must remain anchored in ethics, in the defense of science, and in a commitment to the dissemination of knowledge.

For all these reasons, we reaffirm: debating, constructing, and defending editorial policies is urgent. May this debate become a permanent agenda item for all Geography journals in Brazil!

Presidente Prudente/Brazil, in the autumn of 2025.

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