



Making Data Rights-Aware: the Progressive Realization of a Human Rights Approach in the Brazilian National Statistical System

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Measuring the realization of human rights in a decentralized federation of continental proportions and substantial regional differences is a sustained pursuit involving various technical, statistical, logistic and even political challenges. Nevertheless, Brazil – composed of a central government, a Federal District, 26 states and 5.569 municipalities, all of them constitutionally autonomous and with varying legal competencies and responsibilities – has secured over the past 20 years numerous advances by both improving data collection and sampling practices in surveys and censuses and by perfecting its administrative records. Besides providing more reliable and precise statistics, these advances have allowed the production of more disaggregated data which, for its part, has made possible the identification of vulnerable population segments and the measurement of inequality in various fields – from political representation, to victimization by violence or slave labor, passing by access to Education and Health. After summarizing the challenges to the production and analysis of data generated by the federative design consolidated by Brazil's 1988 Constitution, the paper will summarize how these advances have reconfigured the country's National Statistical System according to foundational principles of human rights such as non-discrimination, equality, participation, accountability, and transparency – in what can be described as the progressive realization of a rights-based approach to statistics production. A third section will exemplify how these advances have allowed the elaboration and redesign of public policies in order to address hitherto unidentified vulnerabilities – being, in and of themselves, a fundamental instrument for the reduction of numerous forms of inequality. Finally, a brief conclusion will summarize future challenges in social inclusion, emphasizing the reciprocal importance of human rights and statistics.