

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

It is with immense satisfaction that we present the first issue of the *Brazilian Journal of Empirical Legal Studies*. An initiative of the *Brazilian Network of Empirical Legal Research*, the aim of the periodical is to fill a gap in the law publication area in Brazil. This is due to the fact that there currently is no other journal that specifically focuses on empirical research in law.

The underlying belief of the network and the journal is that studying the legal phenomenon through the lens of the doctrine of law, although a fundamental task that has been responsible for great theoretical advancements, is far from exhausting all the possibilities of understanding law in a complex society. We therefore believe that research of law as a social phenomenon, encompassing systematic observations of its empirical manifestations, is fundamental. Furthermore, it is a form of research that is still rarely carried out in law schools. However, there have been signs in recent years that this scenario is changing, both in Brazil and in other countries.

The objective of the *Brazilian Journal of Empirical Legal Studies* is to bring together and strengthen the legal research community who carries out research on tangible manifestations of the law. It is a matter of creating a forum for dialogue and debate, very much in line with what the *Brazilian Network of Empirical Legal Research* have been developing since 2011.

We would like to highlight two key issues in this first edition. Firstly, the journal devotes special attention to the methodological rigor of the selected articles. This is irrespective of whether qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods research is used. The emphasis is very much on a persuasive description of the techniques and strategies adopted in the research that led to the article.

Secondly, thematic and interdisciplinary diversity will be a key feature of the journal. Indeed, the selection of articles of this first issue ranges from a reflection on ethnography in a prison to an epistemological piece

on empirical research. Our belief is that the empirical research field can only be defined by recognizing a great plurality of themes. Both the perspective of the anthropologist who is conducting ethnographic research of informal rules in a prison and the economist who is interested in the efficiency of the courts, are of interest to us. Despite these differences in theoretical frameworks and research techniques, they all share a quest to develop an understanding of an aspect of law through observing reality.

We would also like to emphasize the fact that we are committed to producing a high quality journal. All of the published articles are subjected to a rigorous process of double-blind peer review in which the great majority of reviewers come from different parts of the country than the author of the article. The only exceptions to this process of peer review are articles that are suggested and selected by the editorial committee of the journal for their importance to the empirical legal research field. The last piece in this issue, signed by David M. Trubek and John Esser falls into this category.

Finally, it is important to express our gratitude. First, we would like to thank the generous and voluntary participation of our body of referees who were essential in making this journal a reality. We must also thank our Editorial board with representatives from prestigious institutions from diverse countries and states in Brazil who were extremely important in their advisory role. We thank all of those who contributed greatly to ensuring that this journal can be a productive forum for research and legal knowledge.

Happy Reading!

THE EDITORS.