

Health policies and services in Latin America. In-equalities in coverage and quality.

Cristina Gomes

Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Mexico



This study analyzes the fragmented health policies and services in Latin America, comparing the cases of Brazil, Colombia and Mexico. It describes the historical social, economic and political contexts and pressures that frame the process of building fragmented health policies and services: the creation of corporative health plans and the public basic services. It also describes the evolution of public expenses and coverage in health along with the contradictions, disadvantages and limited achievements of these fragmented systems in terms of coverage, generosity and quality of the health plans and services; as well as their difficulties in institutional building, funding sources and scope. Results show that, in spite of a recent process of expansion in coverage, differences in quality and scope persist and even increase social inequalities, discrimination and conflicts. The methodology integrates bibliographic review, statistical analysis and results of case studies. Different forms and degrees of limited access, coverage, quality and scope in basic health reinforce the persistence of inequalities and discrimination of the poorest and more vulnerable groups; and it is necessary to reorient health policies in order to overcome the challenges of a globalized world, discrimination and market resistances.

Biography: Cristina Gomes is a graduate in Medicine from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro; she

studied specialties in public health, worker health and human ecology at the National School of Public Health of Fundação Oswaldo Cruz. She also studied the Master's degree in Population and Development at Flacso Mexico and the Doctorate in Population from the Colegio de México, and graduated in Executive management, negotiation and strategic thinking from Cornell University. In 2011, she was nominated for the Marquis Who's Who in the World Award and was elected to the International Committee of the Conference on Family Research (CFR) of the International Association of Sociology (ISA) for the period 2006-2010. Her experience is concentrated in the area of population and development, particularly in public policies aimed at young people, women, indigenous people and the elderly, in the areas of poverty, inequality, family, protection and social security. In the last 18 years she has worked in various international organizations. From 2006 to 2010 she worked at the United Nations as regional advisor on Population and Development for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); from 1998 to 2008 at Flacso-Mexico, for the Ford Foundation and the Population Council.

cristinagomesmx@gmail.com