

# **Feelings and Reasons**

## **Research and Academic Publications in the New Local and International Contexts**

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Revista En-Contexto, the journal of the Faculty of Administrative and Economic Sciences of Tecnológico de Antioquia, has had countless moments of joy, satisfaction, encouragement from friends and support from those who have believed in a serious editorial project. We have been surrounded by beautiful people that have walked with us along the way, and have filled the way with hope. Such has been the case, I assume, of most journals in this country. However, we have also had moments of concern, trouble and despair because of organizational predicaments, the lack of thoroughness of some texts, difficulties in getting judges, but above all, the logic of publications in the international contexts that have colonized our way of conceiving and viewing research in Colombia.

I want to begin this editorial by paying heed to the beautiful words of my colleague Fredy León Paime (2015), and so, bring to light the stages through which editors of most economic journals have to go through. The joint development of an editorial project that provides an account of the concerns of the academic communities for which it is edited and published involves countless variables that only someone who is or has been an editor can contemplate with dismay.

However, this beautiful task, which honors me, also involves pointing out the concerns of institutions, research groups, researchers, and of course, editors in light of the new assessment models for international and local journals, since there is a sort of ignorance about our context. This is not to disparage the effort

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made through Colciencias and Publindex to improve the academic quality of our publications, which undoubtedly benefits our institutions.

Notwithstanding, this tormenting question still remains: What to do to be one of the great world journals? Or at least, how to be included in Publindex's local index considering its new challenges? It is precisely in this issue of Revista En-Contexto that, as director and editor, I want to discuss the comments and elucidations made by Professor Hugo Macías (2016), a friend and member of REDITORES (Colombian Network of Accounting Editors and Journals). He points to the need to turn to the harmless policies –as far as I'm concerned– of the new systems for academic publications in Colombia.

En-Contexto bears in mind that it was created as “(...) an alternative to feel, discuss and disagree with regard to the most varied subjects of our field of social knowledge” (Sarmiento, 2014, p.21), and it is still concerned about contributing elements of academic debate to the discussions perceived in the thinking communities to which it belongs. The above has constituted a great joy, since even though our institution is new to publishing, it has decided to bet on the production of this journal and the support to our crazy academic dreams zealously.

While it is true that academic and scientific journals that belong to these fields of knowledge need to be increasingly conceived in terms of the international guidelines that such publications define, our context compels us to create possibilities to give new meanings to the needs and potentials of our publications. To work exclusively to comply with the big companies Web of Science and Scopus results in a deep lack of knowledge about the meaning of our academia.

The brave letter written by important universities of this country<sup>1</sup> proves this, as well as the many troubles and concerns that plague us as editors. This letter reads:

The universities, their presidents, academic vice-presidents, research vice-presidents and editorial directions and teams understand the need to improve the circulation and impact of knowledge produced and published by local and external media. Notwithstanding, due to the underlying problems identified in Publindex's new model for indexing specialized scientific journals in Colombia, enacted in Call for Proposals 768, the constant malfunctions of Publindex's platform, the demand for data out of touch with the publishing reality, and

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<sup>1</sup> Letter to Yaneth Giha Tovar, Director of Colciencias, signed on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October, 2016 by Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Universidad de los Andes, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Universidad del Rosario, Universidad de Antioquia and Universidad del Valle.

indicators that should not be included in Publindex's analysis and evaluation process (not the responsibility of editors), we have decided that none of our journals, including those that are in IBC, IB and BBCS, will participate in the call for proposals.

This act of truth, but also of institutional concern, must be part of our constant reflections as university students and participants in academic communities. The concerns expressed by the signatories are not alien to the concerns of a significant number of journals, editors and institutions of the academic outskirts. They try their best to carry out significant editorial projects (not necessarily as indicated by the *h*-index) that have an impact on writing and reading (Gómez, 2013).

I agree with my colleague Macías (2016) when he mentions that universities and researchers want to achieve the goal of being published in journals in Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4 quartiles of Web of Science and Scopus, but the quality of our publications cannot be dictated only by this condition. At this point, I want to bring forth an example from my discipline. I apologize to the readers, but it is from this angle that I can talk. I am thinking about a journal that has been in our field for years, has been part of the academic discussions of many universities, teachers and students, and has contributed to the way we conceive accounting. I am talking about Revista Contaduría Universidad de Antioquia, which since 1982, has attended the class-rooms where accounting is taught in Colombia, and is still not included in Publindex. However, no one can doubt its value and academic recognition.

I evidently find commendable that accounting academics publish in the 80 journals that Professor Macías talks about in his text, those included in Scopus, in which "(...) there is no article from any of the 62 accounting research groups classified by Colciencias as of the 20<sup>th</sup> of May, 2016" (2016, p.40). I insist that, while I find that the healthy and sensitive discussion being held in Colombia caused by the new Colciencias and Publindex guidelines is important, the participation of our academics in the most referenced international journals does not entirely indicate the quality or impact of our academic production.

However, I completely agree with Professor Macías (2016) when he alludes to the posture of professors Machado, Patiño and Cadavid (2016). They point out that "it is important not to value only final results, which turn JCR and SJR into fetish quantitative indicators, but to make sure that each product is supported by a robust structure, solid research processes and important disciplinary breakthroughs." (pp.56-57).

It is undeniable that Publindex's new model changes the situation for many academic and scientific journals in Colombia, puts them in check, so to speak. It creates a disarray that is unpleasant for institutions, researchers and editors that, such as myself, are troubled over the lack of touch with reality that shapes the criteria for assessing the quality of our publications, since they give precedence to form over substance.

Editors should be concerned about the quality of texts, the relevance of their editorial, scientific and judging committees and the representativeness of the journal in the scientific community for which it is designed and structured. Editors should not be concerned about complying with indexing requirements, whatever they may be. Our journal has, of its own accord, applied to diverse indexes and databases –in which cases our virtue has been greater than our luck<sup>2</sup> – and it definitely wants to keep participating in such matters. However, we also want to declare our inalienable ethical commitment to, first and foremost, bringing to light the problems of our context.

The point of view provided by my friend Hugo Macías (2016) makes us realize how far we are from the Western world, in which academics have long published in JCR and SJR, their articles are in English, and research groups are internationally renowned. This view lets us see clearly that authors and editors need training to create better articles, foster the participation of peers in our research projects, review our editorial teams constantly, but above all, get these teams to function properly.

However, I do not agree with Macías (2016) so much because I believe that our main goal is not to understand the dynamics of the English-speaking academia. Our main challenge is to understand our own dynamics, sense of identity and concerns. Becoming incorporated into the dynamics and indexes of JCR and SJR is the result of an academic opening as long as our Latin-American needs become evident in our academic projects because this means that we are thinking from the perspective of our own reality.

I finish this editorial by thanking our REDITORES colleague, Professor Hugo Macías, who has always been supportive and willing to help us through times of concern and trouble at Revista En-Contexto. Thanks to his disinterested support, we have been able to talk to academics of other fields, people interested

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<sup>2</sup> I have to point out that this phrase is not mine. It belongs to the partner of my life and dreams.

in our process and friends who understand the huge value of academic debate even if they differ from our academic and political views.

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