



# EDITORIAL

## DO ACADEMIC JOURNALS BUILD COMMUNITIES OF KNOWLEDGE?

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Receiving the invitation to write the editorial of this issue of the Colombian Journal of Social Sciences, implied, in my case, asking myself about the contents that this type of writing should have. Obviously, I had read many editorials, but I had never asked myself such question. I decided, then, revised the editorials of the journal that rest in my library. The first result was obvious: publishers do not have either a particular logic or inescapable contents. It was information that was implicitly in my memory, but faced with the responsibility the invitation implied, I didn't want to take false steps and I preferred to be governed by the rigor. The other result was to realized that in the midst of the books that rest in my library, I had many scientific journals in the field of literary critics, history, sociology and political sciences, among others. Reviewing the indexes, authors and subjects of articles made me think that academic production in the country is much broader than we imagined and that there are many sectors of academia interested in producing knowledge. But what contradicted me most was realizing that among those seventy and eighty journals of my membership, I had only read a few articles and had done that in particular cases with the aim of developing my own research. This led me to wonder about the role of journals in the Colombian academic and educational environment. The question is associated with a topic that has been of interest to me and that has had in the journals one of its privileged objects of studies. I refer to the intellectual history. Studying journals, –whether scientific, artistic, or cultural – allows us to understand the historical processes of shaping the intellectual, scientific, artistic, or political communities that defined the direction and legitimacy of knowledge, ideas, or aesthetics in different spaces. Journals are a privileged object of study to understand the processes of production, reception, circulation and legitimation of knowledge. Plus, if you consider that knowledge moves in time and space, but it is also preserved for posterity because it has a material conduit that conveys it, the journal.

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In Colombia, we are in an era where social and human sciences journals proliferate. Journals of anthropology, politology, literature (or rather literary criticism), sociology and history, have been constituted, in recent years, as a fundamental element of educational institutions. All faculties in the area of the humanities seek to meet quality standards to be well positioned in the academic environment or in the international rankings. According to Colciencias, for the 230 call of the year 2018, there were (including those of exact or experimental sciences), 3 journals of category A1, 10 category A2, 108 category B and 156 category C in the country. This seems to be a positive fact. Twenty years ago, the spaces of outreach and academic circulation were scarcely thought of, and many university professors spent their professional lives without writing a line. Today, each of the disciplines of the social sciences and professors and researchers seem to have a space of legitimacy in scientific production, not only for recognition in salary points or professional staggering, which varies according to the university, but also because of the legitimacy that means that his article is registered in the specialized measurement indices, which consequence is being legitimized by the academic peers, experts in each field. Everything indicates that the journal is a material or electronic device through which the scientific ideas of an academic “elite” circulate.

Now, does this mean that the academic and scientific communities of the country are consolidated and that each journal has a wide network of readers at the national or local level? Do Colombian journals classified in Colciencias help to position a broad academic community at the international or national level? Is there a dialogue between academic communities of each region developed through periodic publication means?

We ask these questions thinking, of course, of the duty of journals. And the duty of journals is linked to their origins. Since they were consolidated as printed matter, they had a central role in society as a means of dissemination, reception and circulation of scientific, artistic, literary or philosophical knowledge for the emerging illustrated middle classes. Journals are associated to the processes of what Karl Mannheim has called the “democratization of culture”, that is, “a loss of homogeneity in the ruling minority” (Mannheim, 1963, p. 245). This means that control and mastery of information, of “truth,” is taken away from political minorities or cultural elites when the illustrated middle classes control information through publications that circulate in a more economical format.

Since the 18th century, journals were consolidated in the European world, and they became a space for the dissemination of knowledge; they were the most effective means of establishing communication between academies or literary rooms with a wider audience of the middle classes. All scientific institutions (agricultural societies, societies of public and economic utility) wanted to overcome the barriers of isolation and give recognition in the social world (inside and outside national borders) to new discoveries resulting from the experimentation and the use of the scientific method. The journals were a space to create public opinion and express tensions

and discussions in the field of science and politics. The journals were the space of transnational circulation of ideas and means of dialogue between the scientific-academic elite and the public (Im Hof, 1993, pp. 130-135).

In Latin America, a journal movement is consolidated in the first three decades of the 20th century. It does not mean that there were no journals before, but in this period, there are more varied intellectual manifestations and a consolidation of the middle classes that consumed these symbolic goods. Journals were a contributing factor in the process of democratization of culture as a means of expression, not only of elites, but also of subaltern social groups or literary or political avant-gardes. Journals were the possibility for communists, socialists or anarchists to have control over the printed matter and, in turn, for peripheral groups to have access to information. In addition, they were a means of building intellectual networks of a continental nature and a communication between Peruvian, Mexican, Argentine, Colombian intellectuals, among others. Journals allowed Latin American intellectual production to circulate between the cultural centers of the continent (Buenos Aires or México) and more peripheral cities (Bogotá or Lima) and that there were spaces for receiving intellectual production in different social groups. Emblematic Latin American journals of the 20th century were: *Amauta* (Peru), *Sur* (Argentina), *Universidad* (Colombia), *Repertorio Americano* (Costa Rica) and the journal *Claridad* (with versions in Chile and Peru), among many others. These publications developed intellectual conflicts and disputes over the recognition of ideas and knowledge; it was the space to put new trends on the public stage.

That is why Aimer Granados has called the journals “nodes-spaces” that allow the establishment of cultural and intellectual links and networks. For this author, journals are the seed of the “intellectual communities” of which editors, authors, academic committees and readers can take part (Granados, 2012, pp. 9-20). Alexandra Pita González, for her part, defines journals as “practical supports” of intellectual networks. For the author, the publication of a writing in a given journal is a step towards establishing an intellectual dialogue and a series of social interactions that allow the construction of “sociability structures” since there is exchange of symbols and cultural capitals (Pita-González, 2014).

Did the journals lose their *raison d'être* or was the pedagogical work of the journals in the formation of a reading audience lost? What is the interest of Colombia undergraduate students in different areas given the expectation of the new issue of the journal of anthropology or history? Of course, we do not have the answer and quite possibly a lot of journals do not have this information, but they do have information extracted from Scopus citation rates that measures the number of downloads (by country and region) and the number of times an article is cited. Journals or authors can make quantitative assessment and it is possible to think about the international significance of an article in academic spaces. But it does not go beyond the number because the type of valuation that is made in the citation cannot be known. That is, in those data, the academic

dialogue that occurs, for example, in other journals where there are letters to the reader is lost. Added to this is the fact that the Scopus index only measures the impact on journals within its level, which makes it an excluding system. In this index, there is information that is limited to journals that are in a high category, that is, C quality journals, do not add up to the impact that A2 category journals is being measured. More importantly, the journals that are inserted in this dynamic will have no time or interest to wonder about the circulation of that article in the academic unit or in a more specific immediate audience. What is the interaction between academics and their “most immediate audience”? How many of the university professors know the academic production of the professor who is in the office next door? What is the role that journals play in the Colombian social environment? How to identify the “sociability structures” of the journals classified in the different categories? The above does not imply that there is no audience for recent academic production. Academic networks have been redirected, which will possibly have a supra-institutional, supralocal and supranational character. Specialized research groups have their academic peers in other cities or countries and, most likely, have meeting points at conferences and academic events. But in this sense, journals can become spaces for consolidation of an academic elite increasingly distanced from the broad layers of readers.

Perhaps this is due to the hyper-specialization of knowledge and the fact that each branch of knowledge has lines of research that must be represented with the respective journal. Central academic figures have disappeared and with this the common focus of attention have been dispersed to specialized spotlights. The academic committees of the journals do not meet to discuss the contents of the publications and, quite possibly, they do not know each other. In many cases, they are an academic support from the distance that seeks to give a reputation for the publication. It is also difficult for academic links to be built when authors publish here and there (wherever they find the space, in Colombia or in any other country on the continent), and there is no regularity that allows an author to build their own audience in X or Y magazine. The author becomes, in most cases, an abstract entity that offers information or a type of analysis that is easily identifiable to us with a movement or academic school.

This does not mean that academic production should be thought in a negative way or that academic production should reach all sectors of society. We simply want to make a call on the imperative task that journal directors must have to use the means to build academic communication channels beyond Scopus and find a way to impact the immediate audience of faculty students. Rather, we are thinking about the social utility of knowledge and the pedagogical task of academic journals. Students should not be expected to become specialists to arouse their interest in the academic production of their teachers; the wide gap between the world of knowledge and the social world must be overcome.

There are exceptional cases of students who follow and develop their explorations based on the latest research, but, as stated above, there are compelling reasons to consider that the indexing system of the journal goes against thinking about knowledge as a result of what Randall Collins has called “Rituals of Intellectual Interaction” (Collins, 2005, pp. 19-54), a fundamental element to legitimize the intellectual or academic movements that depend on the reader audiences that can ultimately become “networks of transmission of ideas” (Collins, 2005 p. 60).

Obviously, this is an unfinished debate. It is understandable that there is a difference between the journals mentioned above, with a cultural or political character, and academic journals. Admittedly, they have different goals. Academic journals have an interest in disseminating academic research and the others are not. Quite possibly, academic networks are built through specialized or hyper-specialized journals; however, they have a more impersonal character and seem more remote from the reader public. Then, the question remains open: should we be concerned about a duty of academic journals in line with what is proposed here?

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# ARTÍCULOS DE INVESTIGACIÓN

RESEARCH ARTICLE



# DISEÑO DE UN INSTRUMENTO PARA LA EVALUACIÓN DE LA ALFABETIZACIÓN MEDIÁTICA EN ADOLESCENTES<sup>1</sup>

## DESIGN OF AN INSTRUMENT TO ASSESS ADOLESCENTS' MEDIA LITERACY

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### Resumen

La presente investigación ilustra el proceso de realización e implementación de un cuestionario de 42 preguntas que permite conocer el nivel de alfabetización mediática en adolescentes. Fue diseñado a partir de la categorización de los indicadores pertenecientes a cada una de las seis dimensiones de la competencia mediática propuestos por Ferrés y Piscitelli (2012) a través del uso de referentes audiovisuales contemporáneos. La implementación de esta herramienta evidenció un déficit en el dominio de las habilidades funcionales y analíticas que supone esta formación en los 63 sujetos que conformaron la muestra de investigación, además existió una brecha de género al ser las mujeres quienes mayor puntaje obtuvieron. Así mismo, se

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