Editor's Note

Ana María Iregui B.

The present issue of this journal contains six articles. In the first one, Juan José Echavarría, Diego Vásquez and Mauricio Villamizar evaluate the determinants of foreign exchange purchases and their impact on the level and volatility of the nominal exchange rate in Colombia over the 2000-2008 period. Using Tobit models, the authors show that the Central Bank bought foreign currency to offset day to day revaluations and to correct "excessive" trends when inflationary pressures were low and when the Central Bank was a net creditor. Also, by estimating an EGARCH model, the authors show that foreign exchange purchases devalued the exchange rate and reduced its volatility, both in the short term and the medium term. Potential macroeconomic contradictions were not strong enough to affect the reaction function of the authorities or the impact of interventions

Next, Yeinni Andrea Patiño, Gustavo Adolfo Gómez and Emma Osorio evaluate the technical efficiency of energy distribution companies in Colombia during the 2004-2007 period, using Stochastic Frontier Analysis. The authors find that during the period of analysis study there were neither technological change nor improvements in technical efficiency in the power distribution sector. They also find that environmental variables are determinants of production technology; therefore, the management performance of the companies is influenced by the environment in which they operate. The results indicate that the sector presents an average technical efficiency of 60.12%, which makes evident that energy distribution companies have much to do in terms of efficiency. It is worth mentioning that 16.6% of the companies analyzed have a technical efficiency above 90% and that 45.8% of companies have a technical efficiency below average.

In the third article, José Eduardo Gómez and Inés Paola Orozco present a statistical model of early warning to evaluate the current state and predict the future financial health of Colombian banks. To do this, they use duration models that allow them to incorporate microeconomic variables specific to credit institutions as well as macroeconomic variables as determinants of the quality of commercial loans issued by banks. The authors highlight the important role the level of leverage, the profitability of assets, the composition of debt, banking relationships, the real lending rate and the rate of GDP growth play as explanatory variables.

Then, Luisa Fernanda Gutiérrez examines the determinants of the maturity structure of short-term corporate debt in the real sector in Colombia during the 1998-2007 period. The author finds that firm size and debt levels positively affect the choice of short-term debt, while the variation of operating revenues, the probability of insolvency and the business cycle have a negative relationship with short-term debt.

In the fifth article, Giovanni Andrés Hernández and Ana María Olaya assess the impact of the Law 929 of 2004 on visits to the museums: Casa Museo Quinta de Bolívar, Museo Iglesia de Santa Clara, Museo de Arte Colonial, and Casa Museo del 20 de Julio and determine its effectiveness in increasing ticketing revenues and reducing the number of visitors during the Month of the Homeland (July 15 – August 15). The authors find that the law had a significant impact on ticketing revenues for all museums, but did not change the demand behavior of visitors. They also recommend the implementation of a policy of price differentials for each museum, taking into account not only the ability to pay of visitors but also the cost structure of each museum, given that ticketing revenues an important component of total costs.

Lastly, Luis Fernando Gamboa, Andrés García-Suaza and Jesús Otero estimate Gini coefficients and their corresponding standard errors using Colombian household survey data collected over the 1984-2005 period. The estimated standard errors were used to perform hypotheses tests on wage income distribution equality across cities and over time. The authors find a statistically significant wage income inequality increase during the early nineties as a result of the liberalization policies adopted and mixed evidence during the years that followed the recession of the late nineties. Also, they find that in several cases the observed differences in the Gini coefficients across cities have not been statistically significant.