

Bio ethics: scientific communication and social reality

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What is the meaning of publishing indexed journals? This question has become more forceful and critical in Colombia, taking into account the policy established by Colciencias,¹ through Publindex, an agency in charge of establishing the criteria and policies of the national indexing system of scientific journals, which focuses the concern for visibility and impact of publications, giving priority to citation indexes received by magazines, as well as to academics and researchers involved in the editorial process, either as authors, evaluators, or members of editorial or scientific committees. The “new” demands for a scientific journal to be indexed in Colombia are another example of the lethargy of the scientific publishing processes in our nation, carried out for more than 20 years. Publish today brings with it a series of demands ranging from the artisan to the most technological, but in Colombia, we have stayed in the craft, in the era of Gutenberg printing. Despite the prolific scientific literary production that has existed in our country in the last 20 years, we have three problems: one concerning the scientific quality of what is published; two, the contribution to social reality, and three, the ethical sense of scientific publication.

What is scientific quality? Who determines that an article is scientific? What is the culture of scientific quality? To ask such questions, visible for some academic sectors, requires an analysis of what scientific communication means, an aspect that has

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¹ “Public entity that leads, guides and coordinates the national policy of science, technology and innovation, and the National System of Science, Technology and Innovation to generate and integrate knowledge into the social, economic, cultural and territorial development of the country” (taken from [Http://www.colciencias.gov.co/colciencias/sobre_colciencias/mision-vision](http://www.colciencias.gov.co/colciencias/sobre_colciencias/mision-vision)).

been poorly analyzed and debated in the Colombian context, since the concern has been focused on publishing, no matter what, the important thing is to publish. This ignorance of the scientific quality, replaced in the Colombian context—in some authors—by the eagerness to “publish”, does not allow to approach the value of publishing with scientific quality; meaning, that is published that brings to the knowledge, which also, by its nature, offers elements for transformation or social changes. In other words, the eagerness to publish in Colombia led us to consider that everything was scientific, but in reviewing its social relevance loses its value. It is curious that in analyzing the history of scientific publications in Colombia, it has been observed that the latter have been characterized by ignorance of the meaning of scientific communication; That is, it has been forgotten that an emitter, receiver, message, channel, code, context is required. Even more curious, when with these publications the state and public universities have recognized by law salary scales; but in evaluating these publications, the scientific backing of the country goes increasingly backwards. The rankings market is subjecting us to the fallacies of scientific publications: visibility and impact, characteristics of a savage society of the knowledge market, where empires of indexing are emerging and, at the same time, strengthening at the cost of a science disconnected from reality and its contexts.

This leads to the second problem: the contribution to social reality. In other times the scientific quality, supposing in the time of Galileo or of the Sage Caldas, it had sense to contribute to the quality of life of the human beings. Today one should speak of the bioethical meaning, that is, that scientific quality adds to life in all its complexity. But unfortunately, the scientific quality goes back to the reality of the country and life. We are from the south, and we want to make scientific publicity like the ones of the north; we speak, read and have an average communication in Spanish, and we want to read in English or any other language implanted by “failed globalization”. We investigate and make science from our context, but we do not read each other, because we consider that the foreigner is better than our regional. In some areas of knowledge, such as the social sciences and the humanities, more articles of reflection are published than of research, which generates a duality of worlds: the intellectual and the real, in the style of Platonic thinking. In other words, we believe that we communicate scientifically, but we remain as mere emitters without receivers; that is, it was possible to publish, but not to communicate, not every scientific publication is a scientific communication. In this sense, rather than a policy for indexing, we need a “culture of communicating scientifically”, since with a policy disconnected from the reality of the country’s science and the production of its researchers, the only thing that is achieved is to aggravate the Sense of scientific communication, and this limits its value to an impact and visibility in the global indexing empires. It would be interesting for us to be read in the world, to be quoted, but it would be more interesting if our codes of scientific communication are

accepted for their significant contribution to knowledge, science and life in general, i.e., their relevance in the context National and therefore global, but we can not bet on being shocking in the world without being in our nation.

The ethical sense of scientific communication is a third problem, among others that could be enumerated. Visibility and impact, along with scientific quality and socio-scientific relevance, lose all their meaning if they are unknown, or are not carried out based on the ethical principles of scientific communication. The country of the “Sacred Heart”, Catholic by tradition but not by Political Constitution, concerned with a formation in ethical values and moral conscience, has not been able to be coherent between its discourse and its action, before which scientific communication is not foreign. We were two decades consecrated under the principle “publish me that I publish”; Now the invitation of the policy is “take me as I quote you”. The perverse practices in scientific publication can be avoided as long as the emitter of the scientific message is aware of what he is communicating, for which he must keep in mind principles that can not be limited to originality or plagiarism, proper handling of Data and information, but must also cover principles concerning the social sense of scientific communication from the scientific point of view, which in the end is what makes a publication or journal scientific.

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Scientific communication and socio-scientific reality make sense when they are accepted in the academic communities of knowledge, and through them, changes and social transformation are achieved; In this, it is summarized the meaning of an indexed magazine, in such a way that its visibility and impact will be given by its nature. A national indexation policy cannot be limited to its desire to respond to international standards that, among other things, have been working in other countries since then. We globalize our scientific communication, without falling into the networks of the failure of globalization and the myth of indexation.