

## Editorial

### Academic appropriation and Impact Indicators

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The role of appropriation of scientific knowledge and the indicators designed to measure its impact is being hotly debated in Iberoamerica right now. I will separate what I call academic appropriation of knowledge from what many authors have called social appropriation of knowledge. The former is related to knowledge communication and transference practices in scientific communities, and the latter has to do with the multiple ways in which knowledge goes to society. This editorial will address academic appropriation.

Academic appropriations are found in many levels: the first is that performed by colleagues (peers) who use this knowledge, and citations are the indicators of usage. This is a sensitive indicator, and thus vulnerable to citation dynamics in academic communities. For example, communities with low levels of knowledge use are generally endogamic and have low international collaboration. They are also characterised by not easily modifying their citation habits.

In this sense, a part of these citations generally make themselves invisible, this is, they do not acknowledge neither their own efforts, not those made by local peer groups (regional), and are negatively paradoxical, even when proclaimed in an anti-mainstream science discourse. At the same time, they downplay their own production or the regional production, and ground their work on the production that they claim to go beyond.

On the other hand, research groups with an important output can improve or decrease the visibility of other groups and journals, since the

amount of work ends up concentrating citations in particular works or journals, which affects the measures derived from citation-expressed impacts.

In this sense, and as a response with additional elements for assessing academic production, it is suggested that: 1. The quartile of the journal be used, since it gives a more accurate idea of its dynamics and shows the journal in relation to other journals with its variability margin in that range. 2. Use and contrast diverse indicators provided by the different information systems (ISI-SCOPUS, for example). In this sense, an indicator that normalises citations with regards to area and citation sources is a more informative indicator of the impact dynamics for that knowledge. 3. Every reading of the indicators must take into account the journal's history, the amount of contents, and specially the amount of contents included in databases; the journal's place of origin; whether the journal is edited by a transnational company or a university; the journal's region of the world; and whether or not it is open access, amongst others.

It is clear that a simplistic reading of indicators is not enough to account for a journal's content incidence dynamics; nevertheless, the complexity of information systems and the indicators available to us today can account for things we could not account for previously.

Evidently, most knowledge-producing communities aim to, and not naively, have an influence on the communication and appropriation of other researchers. But this appropriation is not the only way, and communication pieces allow us today to

develop different channels in order to have an influence on these communities, in many ways. A very interesting impact would be, for example, the one that results from the use of academic communities in training, both undergraduate and postgraduate, or professional communities that operate in the applied settings. These influences are surely not translated into citation indicators, but,

for example, in the uses made by curricula, or the uses made by professionals of academic contents in their daily practices. Hence, these indicators are harder to find, assess and gather, despite being important in order to account for other academic appropriations.

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