

# The Incentives in Academic Journal Publishing in Colombia

New Approaches from the Theory of Academic Capitalism

**Isabel Montes**

School of Management  
Universidad EAFIT  
Colombia

Centre for Global Higher Education  
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# Motivation

- ❑ The motivation of this work is based on the transition of the production, dissemination (**research**), and transmission (**education**) of knowledge as they shift from being seen as public goods to private ones.
- ❑ The vision of research and education as private goods is reflected in changes to higher education systems across the globe such as
  - ✓ Budget cuts in public funding
  - ✓ Increased tuition and fees, and
  - ✓ **Privatization and commercialization of research outcomes.**
- ❑ Global South contexts, such as Latin America, in comparison to Global North have been less explored. Specifically, Colombia is an interesting place to study because it has both **resistance** to **education** as private good and **responsiveness** to **research** as private good.

# Policies as agents of transformation

- **Policies** are seen as **1)** instruments for transforming higher education systems, and university practices, and **2)** larger social structures that are embedded in discourses and ideologies (such as **research** - findings and **dissemination** - as private good).

*(Ball et al., 2012; Coburn, 2016; Metcalfe, 2008; Musselin & Teixeira, 2013; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997)*

# Knowledge gap

## □ **Theoretical.**

- ✓ Publishing has been categorized as a **public good** dissemination activity, without consider the for-profit model.

*(Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004)*

## □ **Empirical.**

- ✓ The political economy of academic publishing has received **less attention.**

*(e.g., Beverungen, Böhm, and Land, 2012; Bauwens, Reike and Calisto-Friant, 2023)*

- ✓ There is a lack of educational policy analysis related to **research policy** in higher education, in particular publishing. Publishing has primarily been addressed by science policy scholars.

*(Metcalfe, 2008)*

# Research aim

- This study examines the introduction of the academic journal publishing market within Colombia's national research policy known as the *Quality of National Publications Policy*. Specifically, the aim is to analyze how this policy **justifies, promotes, and normalizes** research dissemination as a private good in the Colombian context.
  - ✓ **Justification** - Rationale
  - ✓ **Promotion** - Actions
  - ✓ **Normalization** - Assumptions

# Methodology

- ❑ Research design and data analysis. **Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)**.
- ❑ Explanatory critique of features of social reality based on dialectical relations: discourse (way of representing), social practices and structure, consequences and assumptions.

*(Fairclough, 2013, 2015, 2018)*

# The Quality of National Publications Policy

- ❑ **Data collection.** The analysis was based on **the resolution 790 of 2016 (still in force)**, which was supported by the official **policy document 1601 of 2016** and implemented through **two** models of classification of academic journals and **four** calls for Colombian journals classification between 2016-2022.

*(Colciencias, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c, 2016d, 2018, Minciencias, 2018, 2020a, 2020b)*

12  
Policy, policy  
documents and calls

# Findings

- ❑ **Policy goals.** To improve the quality of national scientific publications in order to
  - ✓ Increase the number of **national researchers' publications** that were included in high impact citation indexes.
  - ✓ Increase the presence of **national scientific journals** into **high impact databases and citation indexes.**

## The Academic Journal Publishing For-Profit Model

Subscription based-articles | profit taking activity  
Bibliometrics – created by Clarivate and Elsevier



## Justification - Diagnostic

- ❑ The National System of Indexation of Specialized Scientific Publications (**Publindex**), the first local scientific database, was considered behind the international bibliometrics.
- ❑ For instance, only **70 journals (out of 551)** were included in the most important bibliometrics: Journal Impact Factor (**JIF**) or SCImago Journal Rank indicator (**SJR**).
- ❑ The primary rationale to accomplish the policy goal was based on the **low quality of national journals**.

86%

Lack of abstracts in English and Spanish

26%

High level of inbreeding

37%

Editors without Ph.D.

10%

Delay in the frequency and regularity of publications

*(Elsevier, 2015)*

## Justification - Rationale

- ❑ Colombia should **increase** the participation of journals in the global market and cannot escape global trends in the creation of the academic knowledge.
- ❑ This policy document concluded that Publindex must be redesigned based on “**existing and commonly accepted criteria**” (Colciencias, 2016b, p. 10). In other words, This rationale sought to introduce the high impact databases and citation indexes as well as the bibliometrics.

## Promotion - Actions

Policy goals	Concrete actions
Increase the national researchers' number of publications that were included in high impact citation indexes	a) Support <b>paper submission</b> to journals that were included in high impact citation indexes or high impact journals. b) Foster the <b>interaction between national researchers and international peers</b> , the results of which can be published in high impact journals.
Increase the presence of national scientific journals into <b>high impact databases and citation indexes</b>	The creation of the latest <b>model of classification of national academic journals</b> (integrating Colombian journals into the academic journal publishing for-profit model).

# Promotion - Actions

- The National System of Indexation of Specialized Scientific Publications (**Publindex**) classified national journals into four categories, from the highest to the lowest:



Local system

Quartilee rankings  
JIF and/or SJR | h-index (H5) ≥ 3

# Promotion - Results

Year	Classified journals	A1	A2	B	C
2008	262	15	39	68	140
2009	309	19	50	75	165
2010	373	23	74	66	210
2011	453	22	108	116	207
2012	513	27	113	110	263
2013	515	26	127	129	233
2015	526	29	148	124	225
2017	244	1	14	104	125
2019	275	3	10	119	143
2020	277	4	19	120	134
2022	286	7	17	113	149

Source: (Colciencias, 2017b, 2019; Minciencias, 2020c, 2022, 2024)

# Normalization - the process of naturalization

- ❑ Peer citation as the only acceptable standard of excellence.
- ❑ The excellence in research is outside of the country.
- ❑ SJR and JIF are the most important measurements.
- ❑ English is the dominant language of publishing.
- ❑ Copyrights and barriers to accessing knowledge are the cost of prestige.

# Discussion and Implications

- ❑ The findings show the academic journal publishing for-profit model embedded in the policy is a **social structure** that shapes and is shaped by social practices in research. (see CDA, Fairclough, 2015)
- ❑ This social structure is controlled by **private international commercial publishers** and defined where and how to publish to be “the ideal professor.”

# Discussion and Implications

## □ **Theoretical.**

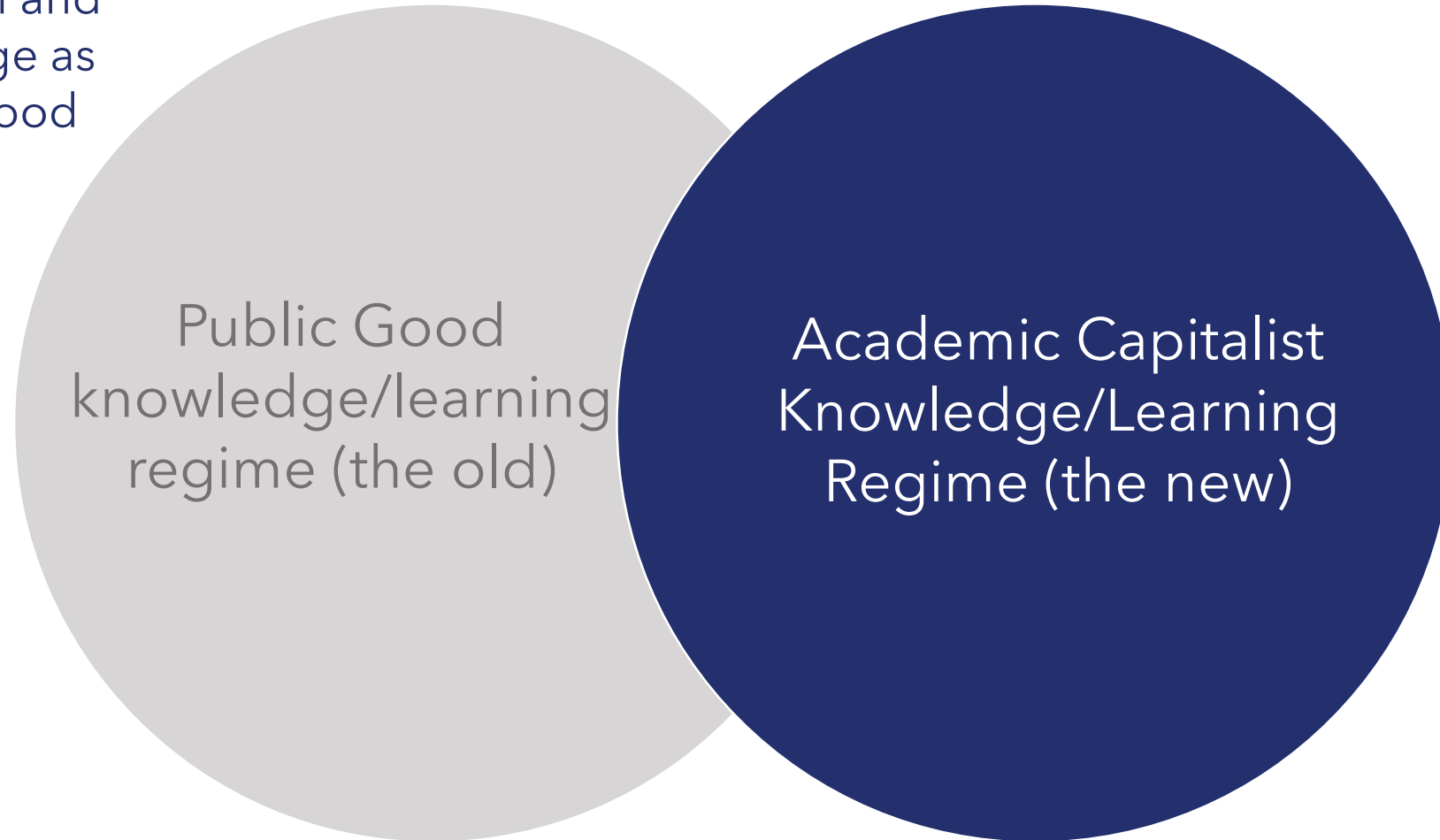
- ✓ Theoretically, publishing has been categorized as a **public good** dissemination activity, without consider the for-profit model.
- ✓ In the Theory of Academic Capitalism, this study underscores the importance of the commercial for-profit model of academic publishing as part of the Academic Capitalist Regime (ACR), and bibliometrics (JIF/SJR) as social technologies.

## □ **Empirical.**

- ✓ Consequences for **national journals**
- ✓ Consequences for **Colombian researchers**



Education and  
knowledge as  
public good



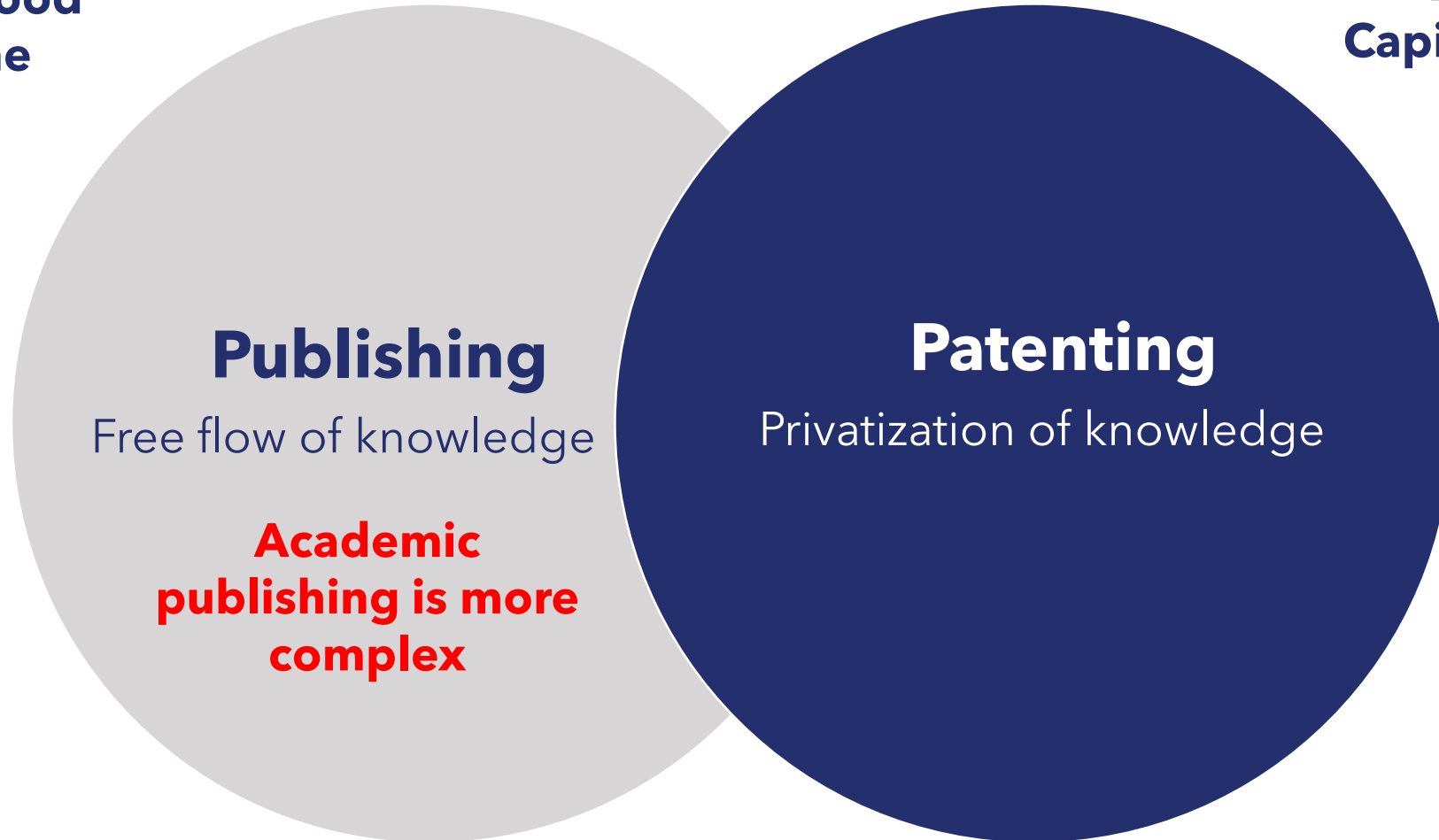
Education and  
Knowledge (raw  
material) as  
private good  
that can be  
commercialized

Both coexist, but the newer is displacing the older and  
gaining prominence

*(Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004)*

**Public Good  
Regime**

**Academic  
Capitalist Regime**



The theory of academic capitalism establishes a dichotomy and a point of conflict between patenting and publishing.

*(Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004)*

**Public Good  
Regime**

**Academic  
Capitalist Regime**



## Profit motive into the professors' work

Professors receive prestige



Companies keep the monetary profits

**Quartile rankings**  
Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4  
Clarivate and Elsevier

- ✓ Springer
- ✓ Elsevier
- ✓ Wiley-Blackwell,
- ✓ Thomson Reuters Corporation Taylor & Francis

*(Fyfe et al., 2017; Mirowski, 2011)*



**Publishing**

**Subscription-based articles and journals**

## Academic Capitalist Regime

Knowledge (raw material) as private good that can be commercialized

# Discussion and Implications

- ❑ This study argues that the commercial for-profit model of academic publishing is a **new layer and an essential component of the ACR** that generates profits for international companies and prestige among professors and HEIs. Even more, “universities pay high prices for publishers’ publications and subscriptions”

(Maldonado-Maldonado, 2014, p. 192).

- ❑ This new layer of ACR applies to all contexts (Global North and Global South). However, as it was shown, it represents **a higher cost for peripheric contexts** (e.g., local journals, language, and access barriers).

# Discussion and Implications

National Journals	Colombian Researchers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ <b>Students</b> were the users of ~50% of two largest scholarly journal portals in Latin America, overlooking forms of impact beyond citations.</li><li>✓ Latin America is a world leader in an <b>open access</b> model of journals.</li><li>✓ The reduction of national journals creates <b>vicious cycle</b> for classification.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ <b>English language</b> is tied to the hegemony of Global North academic publishing, punishing Southern publishing circuits. For example, those who do not have ESL.</li><li>✓ <b>Competition</b> for prestige with limited resources and access, creating a <b>vicious cycle</b> for research</li></ul>

(Alperín, 2015; Alperín & Fischman, 2015; Alperin & Rozemblum, 2017).

(Fitzgerald & Jiang, 2020; Valencia Grajales et al., 2017).

# Thank you!

## **Isabel Montes**

Assistant Professor, School of Management  
Universidad EAFIT  
Colombia

[imontesg@eafit.edu.co](mailto:imontesg@eafit.edu.co)

