

# WHAT MAKES THE REVISTA CUBANA DE FÍSICA RELEVANT TO OUR GEOGRAPHIC REGION?

## ¿QUÉ HACE A LA REVISTA CUBANA DE FÍSICA RELEVANTE PARA NUESTRA REGIÓN GEOGRÁFICA?

E. ALTSHULER

Editor in Chief, Revista Cubana de Física

It is fair to say that the Revista Cubana de Física has established a presence in the context of Latin America and the Caribbean<sup>1</sup>. Its “regional relevance” –a central requisite to enter the Web of Science for a publication which is not 100% written in English– shapes itself in many ways. For example, our section “Momentos de la Física en Cuba” typically deals with historical analysis of Physics in our island<sup>2</sup>, but also serves, for instance, call the attention of policy-makers to the “critical shrinking” of our discipline<sup>3</sup>. Other sections like “Física para Físicos y No-Físicos”, “Nuestra Física en Noticias”, “Obituarios” and “Coordenadas” deal with subjects related not only to Cuban, but also to Latin American physics<sup>4</sup>. These sections are commonly –but not always– written in Spanish.

However, our *pièce de résistance* continues to be the original contributions –either full papers or original communications. Those also add up to the “regional relevance” of our journal, but perhaps in a subtler way: while a large percentage of those papers are written in English, a significant proportion is authored by Latin American physicists –Cubans, of course, heavily represented. Those facts have contributed to the steady increase in our bibliometric indices over the last few years.

Let us briefly analyze the original contributions to the Revista Cubana de Física from 2015 to 2019 (the present issue is not included in the statistics, neither special numbers). 46% of the original papers are written by all-Cuban teams, while 30% are produced by Cubans in collaboration with foreign partners, especially from México. The reminding 24% of the papers is totally written by non-Cuban researchers, roughly half of them from Latin American countries: México, Colombia, Venezuela and Ecuador. I might speculate that the relatively large contribution of México can be linked to the many Cuban physicists that have emigrated to that country over the last decades, while the also significant contribution from Colombia can be explained by the lack of a local journal analogous to the Revista Cubana de Física. Interestingly, the origin of the other 12% of papers written by non-Cuban

scientists is quite diverse: the authors work in India, Jordan, Germany, Norway, Spain, France, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the US.



Figure 1. *The paradox of the tailor and the client*. This illustration is taken from the editorial “La paradoja del sastre y el cliente” (O. de Melo, Rev. Cubana Fis. 32, 71 (2015)), containing a critical analysis of the decision to cut off to 4 years many undergrad programs by the Cuban Ministry of Higher Education.

The subject statistics of the papers published since 2015 (using the names of the Cuban Physical Society commissions) is: Condensed Matter: 25%, Theoretical Physics: 24%, Instrumentation and Metrology: 17%, Biological and Medical Physics: 11%, Physics teaching: 11%, Nuclear, Atomic and Molecular physics: 7%, and Optics and Spectroscopy: 5%. So, following a long tradition in Cuban Physics, Theory and Condensed matter dominate the scenario, although the limited possibilities of classification may have increased their

<sup>1</sup>E. E. Ramírez-Miquet and E. Altshuler “Where is our journal right now? Up-to-date bibliometrics and progress of Revista Cubana de Física”. Rev. Cubana Fis. 36, 2 (2019)

<sup>2</sup>L. M. Méndez-Pérez, P. Muné-Bandera y E. J. Roca-Oria “Celebrando el cuadragesimo quinto aniversario de la Primera graduación de físicos en la universidad de Oriente”. Rev. Cubana Fis. 32, 124 (2015)

<sup>3</sup>C. Cabal-Mirabal: “SOS Física: ocho desafíos para la Física cubana contemporánea”. Rev. Cubana Fis. 36, 87 (2019)

<sup>4</sup>M. Sánchez-Colina “Olimpiadas universitarias de Física: De Cuba hacia Latinoamérica”. Rev. Cubana Fis. 34, 2 (2017)

<sup>5</sup>Papers on granular matter, for example, have been either classified as “Condensed Matter” or “Instrumentation”, to put one example.

numbers in detriment of what might be called “Statistical Physics” or “Complex Systems”<sup>5</sup>, for example.

It can be said that the Revista Cubana de Física has become a “double-edged” Physics journal. On the one hand, half of the original papers come from totally Cuban teams, and the rest are quite eclectic regarding their origin, with a substantial Latin-American contribution. In spite of that, 64% of those papers are written in English. On the other hand, most contributions written in Spanish deal with hot topics of

Cuban physics and physicists, including their relation with other Latin American physics communities.

In summary, the Revista Cubana de Física has tried to maintain a delicate balance between “universal” Physics and relevance to our region. I do hope that our long-standing effort will finally be noticed, opening our way to become a “full member” of the Web of Science. Whatever the output is, we will continue doing our best to keep improving: Cuban and Latin American physicists deserve it.