



Editorial

## What We Want to Publish in RAC - the Journal of Contemporary Administration



### O Que Queremos Publicar na Revista de Administração Contemporânea

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#### ■ ABSTRACT

This editorial's primary aim is to provide an overview of the initiatives carried out within the *Journal of Contemporary Administration* (RAC) during my tenure from May 2021 to May 2024. Secondly, this piece offers guidance on submitting articles to RAC, elucidating the journal's focus and scope while delving into the main reasons for desk rejection.

**Keywords:** Marcelo de Souza Bispo, contemporary administration, publication, editor-in-chief, scientific journals.

#### ■ RESUMO

O primeiro objetivo deste editorial é apresentar um balanço das ações empreendidas na *Revista de Administração Contemporânea* (RAC) no período de maio de 2021 a maio de 2024. O segundo objetivo é apresentar informações sobre como publicar artigos na RAC reforçando o foco e escopo da revista e trazendo reflexões sobre as principais causas de *desk reject*.

**Palavras-chave:** Marcelo de Souza Bispo; administração contemporânea; publicação; editor-chefe; periódicos científicos.

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## REFLECTING ON MY TENURE AS RAC'S EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

This marks my final editorial as RAC's editor-in-chief. After three years at the helm of the journal, I will take this opportunity to reflect on the endeavors undertaken and reassess the guiding principles of RAC's editorial process, emphasizing its publishing objectives. Throughout this period, RAC has engaged in a collaborative effort that signifies a seamless progression in editorial endeavors, propelled by the contributions of successive editors-in-chief, associate editors, reviewers, authors, readers, administrative staff, and the Brazilian Academy of Management's (ANPAD) board of directors.

Shortly after assuming the position of editor-in-chief in May 2021, RAC achieved a significant milestone by being listed in the Academic Journal Guide (AJG) for the first time. The AJG, widely recognized as the ABS list, is among the most respected rankings for administration journals globally. The initiative to submit RAC for evaluation by the AJG originated from my predecessor, Professor Wesley Mendes da Silva. Together, we devoted extensive efforts toward indexing RAC in Scopus, a goal we successfully accomplished in 2022. We also prioritized advancing diversity within the journal. Notably, we are advancing in achieving gender parity among associate editors, reviewers, and authors, with both men and women equally represented. In 2021, female authors comprised 35% of contributors. Presently, this figure stands at 48%. Additionally, under the leadership of Professor Ludmila Guimarães, we curated RAC's inaugural women's issue titled 'The Exhaustion of Contemporary Women' in volume 27, number 5 of 2023. This issue was meticulously crafted, reviewed, and authored exclusively by women.

We have made significant strides in enhancing regional diversity among our associate editors, reviewers, and authors, welcoming contributors from diverse regions of Brazil and other countries. Another pivotal achievement has been the broadening of diversity in content within RAC, encompassing various domains of administration through a spectrum of themes, epistemes, theories, and methodologies (Andion, 2023). Collaborating closely with our associate editors, we have developed descriptive guidelines for each manuscript category accepted. These descriptors aid authors in selecting the most suitable section for their submissions.

We have developed a new search engine for the journal, facilitating quick identification of manuscripts, authors, and topics. This tool mainly benefits those seeking teaching cases, which can now be easily located, even by region. Additionally, we have introduced two new manuscript categories: theoretical essays and provocative thoughts. These additions aim to provide a platform for theoretical exploration in the case of essays and to foster discussions on contemporary

themes through thought-provoking articles. Furthermore, we have expanded the scope of tutorial articles, now called 'methodological articles.' This expansion includes tutorials and texts proposing new methods or offering reflections on existing ones. This initiative broadens the journal's offerings and encourages innovative contributions to methodology.

In 2021, at the request of the ANPAD's board, adjustments were made to the focus and scope of the journal to differentiate RAC from BAR (*Brazilian Administration Review*), the other journal sponsored by the ANPAD. A working group comprising professors Alketa Peci, Rafael Porto, Thomás de Aquino, Maria José Tonelli, Eduardo Diniz, Ivan Garrido, and myself collaborated under the organization's management to delineate the distinct profiles of the two journals.

Refining RAC's focus involved the associate editors in a collaborative effort. Through a series of meetings and online conversations, we collectively established 'contemporary administration' as the cornerstone for publications within the journal. Subsequently, we began conceptualizing what 'contemporary administration' entails and effectively communicating these definitions. This endeavor was achieved through various channels, including a webinar (accessible on the ANPAD's YouTube channel), email communications, an article in the ANPAD Newsletter (September 2021 edition), the editorial of volume 26, issue 1 ('Reflecting on Contemporary Administration'), and numerous presentations conducted over the past three years. To sustain this ongoing dialogue regarding the journal's focus and scope and to elucidate what RAC endeavors to publish, I offer further insights and updates below.

## RETURNING TO THE IDEA OF CONTEMPORARY ADMINISTRATION AND WHAT RAC WANTS TO PUBLISH

"Contemporary" is perceived as encompassing "a set of issues that remain pertinent for a comprehensive understanding of individuals and the socio-aesthetic-political milieu in which they operate, innovate, conceive, and effect change" (Almeida, 2012, p. 73). Hence, the notion of contemporary in RAC transcends mere temporal proximity; it delves into how the current time has been shaped and its repercussions for the present and future. This implies that the texts featured in RAC go beyond concerns solely about organizations' operational and financial outcomes. They also explore the broader ramifications of managerial practices on society, addressing pressing issues such as climate change, inequality, peace, decent working conditions, violence reduction, and equitable economic development. These themes often align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined by the United Nations. As discussed in

my inaugural editorial (Bispo, 2022a, p. 2), “Contemporary administration needs to engage in how to promote a more balanced relationship between the business world and society” (Fleming & Oswick, 2014; Rhodes & Fleming, 2020; Zanoni et al., 2017).”

Comprehending the essence of contemporary administration is paramount to ensure that manuscript submissions align with RAC’s focus and scope. Over the past three years, approximately 50% of the desk rejections I issued were attributed to manuscripts not resonating with RAC’s focus and scope. It is a common misconception that merely referencing keywords such as sustainability, social responsibility, customer focus, quality of work life, or even citing one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) suffices to align a manuscript with RAC’s objectives. In reality, all manuscripts submitted to RAC must explore the broader implications of administrative practices beyond the confines of individual organizations, examining how these practices intersect with broader societal contexts and challenges. This requires transcending conventional managerial perspectives that solely emphasize organizational performance metrics. In this context, I reiterate some critical questions (refer to Bispo, 2022a, p. 3) that aid authors in assessing the suitability of their manuscripts for publication in RAC:

- . Does my work cater to specific interests that fail to advance or potentially impede the common good?
- . Does my work endorse precarious labor dynamics, environmental degradation, neglect of diversity, or prioritize profit at the expense of safety, fairness, and social equity?

It is crucial to note that these guidelines apply to all accepted manuscript types, including executive letters, theoretical-empirical articles, theoretical essays, provocative thoughts, methodological articles, technological articles, and teaching cases.

Another noteworthy aspect of contemporary administration is its capacity to inspire researchers to adopt a more discerning perspective on the potential impact of their research (Alpersted & Andion, 2017; Bispo, 2021a; 2022a; Bispo & Davel, 2021; Martins, 2023). Contemporary administration demands researchers adopt a distinct approach in their research methodology. Unlike the conventional method of identifying gaps in existing literature, contemporary management necessitates researchers to be deeply intertwined with societal realities. This implies that research problems should not solely arise from systematic or integrative literature reviews (refer to Bispo, 2023), often creating a disconnect between theory and practice (Bispo, 2021b; Faria, 2023). Instead, research inquiries should stem from concrete, real-life situations. Authors may encounter challenges in grasping how their work intersects with significant societal issues (George

et al., 2016), mainly due to the conventional knowledge production process that endeavors to bridge theory and practice. Conducting research to positively impact society at large (not just elite circles) requires initiating the research process within society itself and subsequently engaging in dialogues with existing theories.

Furthermore, the generation of theory emerges as another aspect that underscores a gap in knowledge production within the Brazilian administration. Theoretical-empirical articles published in RAC are expected to offer some form of theoretical contribution, whether in theorization processes, theoretical frameworks, concepts, or even the critical examination and refinement of existing theories. However, a significant portion of submissions in this category fails to meet this criterion, resulting in approximately 25% of desk rejections. Moreover, the scarcity of submissions in the theoretical essay category further underscores the dearth of theoretical production within the Brazilian administration. Over three years, only 29 submissions were received, of which 22 did not meet the criteria for theoretical essays, 2 were rejected during desk review, and only 5 were eventually published. As Professor José Henrique de Faria aptly highlights, there appears to be a gradual erosion of original theoretical contributions (Faria, 2023).

Finally, I aim to elucidate the primary distinctions between theoretical-empirical and technological articles, as these two manuscript types are frequently conflated.

As previously emphasized, theoretical-empirical articles featured in RAC are expected to provide an original theoretical contribution. These submissions must transcend mere data description; they should comprehensively discuss results, albeit not necessarily under a designated subheading. Authors are tasked with contextualizing their findings within existing literature, elucidating how their work advances theoretically surrounding the covered topic. This advancement can take various forms, including theorization with reflections on how empirical evidence and established theories articulate to propose new perspectives, theories, concepts, expansions, or even refutations of existing theories. This expectation holds true for both qualitative and quantitative articles, particularly those employing structural equation models. Alongside presenting models with requisite statistical validation, authors must expound on the relationships posited and illustrate how they contribute to novel theoretical insights. When articles present what is commonly known as a practical contribution, they are likely better suited to the technological article category. In such manuscripts, a theoretical contribution is not mandated; rather, the focus lies on providing a practical solution supported by theory and empirical research that substantiates and underpins the proposed technology.

Technological articles should furnish a technological solution (in its broadest interpretation) to complex

problems, facilitating reproducibility by other individuals or organizations. Within the journal's parameters, the mere application of existing, well-known technologies in different contexts does not constitute a practical contribution. Instead, authors must innovate by devising technology capable of effectively addressing intricate challenges. By delineating the disparity between theoretical-empirical and technological articles, one can better grasp RAC's dual commitment to theoretical and practical contributions (for further insights, refer to [Bispo, 2022b](#)).

## FINAL WORDS

To conclude this editorial, I extend my heartfelt gratitude for the opportunity to have led such an important journal within Brazil's scientific community in administration. It has been an enriching journey filled with invaluable lessons learned. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the Brazilian Academy of Management's

(ANPAD) board of directors (2021-2023) for their unwavering trust in me, the dedicated associate editors whose contributions have been instrumental in advancing the journal, the diligent reviewers, esteemed authors, and loyal readers who form the cornerstone of RAC. Special recognition is owed to the tireless efforts of the editorial secretariat: Kler Godoy, Simone Rafael, and Eduarda Anastácio. Your dedication is truly commendable.

Lastly, I extend my best wishes to Professor Paula Chimenti, who has been selected to succeed me as the Editor-in-Chief of RAC. With an impressive background and the distinction of being the journal's longest-serving active editor, Paula will also become the first woman to assume the position of editor-in-chief for ANPAD's journals. I am confident that Paula's leadership will propel RAC to even greater heights.

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