

Between the urgent and the important: Fundamental uncertainties from the territory

In closing the activities of the year 2015, we, the group of people dedicated to the editorial work of the Orinoco Journal, main mean of diffusion of scientific knowledge in the territories of the plains associated with the Orinoco River basin, have major concerns on matters supposedly local but undoubtedly linked to the universal development. We want to think from the territory with a broad view. Aware of this, we reaffirm local meanings, without disregarding the universal cumulative of humanity, of parallel cultures that populate the world.

The fundamental is synonymous with paramount. Our fundamental question as publishers could be articulated this way: How to produce a scientific journal with quality, credibility and autonomy, which be the interpreter of these territories, and additionally, dialogue sincerely with scientists and communities of other latitudes? And our question for the essential of the Orinoco region would be: How to get and trigger scientists' interest for research questions and issues that concern sustainable development and the appropriate use of our resources, without exhausting them, thinking on the communities and the public interest more than in any particular success?

For the editors of the Orinoquia, it's starting to be cause of concern the discriminatory and absolutist tendency of multinational corporations towards scientific publications produced in the regions. Such concern has been voiced in meetings of editors at the national level. The hegemonic proposals are burdened with an exclusive whiff that puts us to face unequal competition with similar thematic publications from other regions, tagging us as precarious comparing to other publications produced under other circumstances. Trend that apparently will be accepted by the authorities of the central command that deal with the regulation of scientific publications in Colombia, COLCIENCIAS in particular, which apparently has no doubt leaving us unarmed in the market of scientific transnational knowledge, its rules and corporate interests. We have tried to contribute to a debate, that we deem important and essential in the scientific field, especially in our region, about the influence of databases on the management of scientific journals, which are becoming supranational agencies for the evaluation of "editorial quality," replacing the "scientific quality" guaranteed by groups of editors and specialized peers referring anonymously.

We have agreed on the evident overvaluation of the impact indicators use and on a criticism with respect to a biased inclusion in databases, especially when these indicators are used by the scientific evaluation systems to qualify or disqualify publications of researchers under schemes of profit from sale of specialized information. For example, the discussed case of the impact factor that, as indicated by Borrego and Urbano (2006), is sometimes misused as it is equated to the quality of the publication, of its contents and/or of its relevance, when the meanings of the knowledge produced locally tend to change with the very context in which it is interpreted, and its "utility" tends to have different value depending on the type of users, especially if they don't belong to hegemonic economic circles. Disagreements and arguments raised in the international scientific community have brought to the proposal of designing alternative metrics to measure the impact beyond the citation, such as the online use, the visits to the document or the links in social networks, or its use as a source of information for new apprentices as the authors Torres-Salinas *et al.*, (2013), or Alperin (2014), have suggested. In that sense, the criticism to the excessive power that the information systems are taking in the evaluation of scientific production, has been exposed in various forums in which analysis has been questioned under the functionalist logic behind the principles of operation of the databases, concentrating in those of the Web of Science (WoS). Further demonstrating that being dubious its use in the sciences in general, in the case of Social Sciences is inapplicable. Some analysts of the subject have argued that scientometric principles, although used as indicators of visibility, are thus transformed in "scientific capital" on information broad market conditions,

opening gaps between countries producing science and those others that are just consumers of technology and of products made from scientific developments. Therefore, it will become increasingly difficult for journals produced in the regions to stand out, since being compared under unequal conditions, under different models of economic support and financial muscle, whether researchers, journals, or institutions, they are expected to occupy the last places in the listings, generating the vicious circle of segregation: they will not acknowledge you for your poor classification nor will you be given an incentive to improve, for the same reason. Something like feeding only the larger cubs of the herd leaving the others to take care of themselves.

In the same vein, it could not be questioned the role of regional scientific journals, like ours, that are in the eye of the hurricane of agricultural expansion and of the unbridled use of ecosystem services and perishable resources in general. Considering only the presence or absence of a journal in different national thematic, multidisciplinary, commercial or institutional web pages, unfortunately it has become a strategic issue: managers, editors and authors acknowledge that their inclusion and indexing in them is serving as an evaluation criterion in the research systems of the regions as part of the “visibility” and open market models of competitiveness indicator, creating the familiar tensions with the measurement model of “scientific quality” of the journals. The group of editors of Orinoquia does not oppose the use of universal rules of verification of science, such as those made through peer review, and the requirement of originality of published works which should be controlled by an anonymous independent group that has proven scientific authority; i.e., groups of specialists in a discipline that evaluate the scientific production and that, also, make contributions to the growth and sustainability of the journals that disseminate research results; but it draws our attention the fact that they uncritically assume models that weaken us and show us as children, because of the circumstance of belonging to a region or for having different interests associated with our context of development, ethnicity, and environmental conditions, as diverse as fragile, particular elements of the Orinoco territory that often deals our journal.

To those who think that way, we notify them that in the Orinoco territory transcendent global battles occur, both for the country and for the world in general, on which scientists and academics must speak up and elaborate; I will briefly mention as an example, just two from particular to global cases: the ones known as Zidres (Areas of Interest for Rural and Economic Development) and the 2015 Paris agreement on global warming, which have, and will have to do with the science that is done in the region, only to arouse provocation to scholars and general readers:

The senate of Colombia recently approved the Zidres, in the second week of December, under intense controversy in which the overwhelming hegemony of the ruling coalition was exercised, without going into reasonable discussions, such as those that posed a doubtful legal jugglery: the legalization of tenure of agricultural land is bypassed by delivering them in concession; there is no talk about titling land to entrepreneurs, but to give it in lease; the government does not title the land, but grant it in 30, 40 or 60 year concessions and, nevertheless, argues that this does not change the regime of vacant land. But, according to Law 160 of 1994, vacant land of the Nation should be directed to the poor and landless farmers. The new law states that large, medium, and small producers may propose and participate in productive projects in the Zidres, but the type of partnership is precisely what has raised doubts. We don't see clearly how the big men will partner with the poor for these to be their employees; many have said it in this discussion. The Zidres had been contemplated since Bill 133, withdrawn by the government about a year ago and that was described by the opposition as an “agrarian counter-reform”. As an aggravating factor, the voices of indigenous territories were not heard, not even the concepts of the Attorney General's Office that had also conceptualized on the need for prior consultation with the indigenous communities. In the opinion of the Public Ministry, *“the constitution of ZIDRES in the states of Meta and Vichada directly affect indigenous villages settled there for two reasons: First, because these people have been victims of violence, to the point that the Constitutional Court included them in the list of people at risk of cultural extermination, and second, because the government has not been diligent in managing the processes of formation and expansion of reservations, totaling 54 processes in those two states with no paperwork at all, but, on the contrary, the titles of these allegedly vacant lands have been given to individuals without any rights, since those lands were ancestral territories of indigenous communities and have been requested for the creation and expansion of reservations, in files now conveniently shelved and misplaced in the INCODER offices, without bringing forward the respective proceedings.”*

Other important matter, beyond any conjuncture linked to our scientific work and to the territory, is the conclusion of the International Conference on Climate Change (COP21), where the 195 attending delegations managed to sign a historic agreement that also has to do with the forests, rivers and wetlands in our region. The 2015 Paris Agreement is directed to combat the effects of climate change caused by human development. The original document of the Agreement, which is written in Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, French, English, and Russian, was deposited with the Secretary General of the United Nations. The Framework Convention on Climate Change signed on December 12, 2015, a pact aimed at limiting global temperatures rising to less than 2°C by the end of the century, but with the aspiration that it will not rise more than 1.5°C. The text is legally binding, although not entirely: the actionable objectives pointing to the greenhouse gases emissions reduction presented by the different countries are not. The pact begins to take effect in 2020 and every five years countries should review their emission commitments. In total, the final text has 31 pages. This is the first agreement in which both developed and developing countries agree to manage the transition to a low carbon economy.

Aware that climate change represents an urgent threat and has potentially irreversible effects on human societies and the planet, and, therefore, requires the greatest possible cooperation and participation by all countries in an effective and appropriate international response, to accelerate the reduction of global emissions of greenhouse gases, the text proposes that entities, in adopting measures to address climate change, should respect, promote and take into account their respective obligations regarding human rights, the right to health, rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, people with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations, the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity. The Agreement aims to strengthen the world's response to the threat of climate change, in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty, and so it proposes the following:

- a) Maintaining the increase in average global temperature well below 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels, and continue efforts to limit temperature increase relative to pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and effects of climate change.
- b) Increase the capacity of adaptation to the adverse effects of climate change and promote climate resilience and a development with low greenhouse gases emission in a way that does not compromise food production;
- c) Raise financial flows to a level compatible with a pathway that leads to a climate resilient development and with low emissions of the greenhouse effect gases. (See: Document 2015 Paris Agreement, un.org).

There is an air of optimism at the beginning of the road, with cautious expectation, we add, and knowing that everything is interconnected, we present themes as those included in this issue of the Orinoco Journal, that get the meeting point between the urgent and the important, with universal significance we emphasize among others the following:

- Approximation of the sociocultural Importance of the Moriche palm (*Mauritia fleuquosa* LF) in the Sikuani-Indian community of Wacoyo in the municipality of Puerto Gaitan, Colombia.
- State of knowledge of ecosystems of the floodable savannas in the Colombian Orinoquia: Ecosystem services review as support for the management of social-ecological systems: application in agro-ecosystems (Doctorate Separate).

The orinoquians today, more than ever, must defend the territorial autonomy, building regional networks of thought and intelligence that allow us to dialogue with the world, without complexes, constituted in valid interlocutors, respecting science and its principles, but discussing the models that are imposed uncritically on the use of our resources and how to recognize them.

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