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MARCELA TORRES HEREDIA

From Absences to the Ecologies of Knowledges: Colonial and Decolonial Aspirations in the Scholarly Communication System

ABSTRACT *The mechanisms of a scholarly communication system based on monocultural logics discourages plurality, reproduces epistemological absences, asymmetries, and hierarchical mechanisms of knowledge generation and dissemination. Considering the diversity of the fields of knowledge, practices, communities, research emphases, languages, infrastructures, and regional, local and disciplinary particularities, a monocultural publication system tends to promote homogenisation by marginalising or negating the existence of everything not conforming to the one logic. The Open Access field of discussion raises several these issues and impulses initiatives working on alternative approaches to them. Setting up plural and equitable conditions in the generation, dissemination and dialogue of diverse forms of knowledge is the central feature of a perspective based on generating and strengthening ecologies, involving diverse actors previously absent from these discussions while considering the conditions of inequality. Strengthening existing initiatives which are already working on the construction of more plural and equitable forms of scientific and academic communication is fundamental.*

KEYWORDS *Open Access, scholarly communication, coloniality of knowledge, sociology of absences, sociology of emergences*

1. Introduction

The analysis of the mechanisms of knowledge production and dissemination is essential in order to understand the ways epistemological inequalities are created and reproduced. In this article, I focus on analysing the

effects of a market-driven and monocultural scholarly communication¹ approach, and through this, the contents, dynamics and hegemonies of scholarly knowledge production. I focus on the analysis of scholar communication due to its important role in the construction of the notions of expertise or ignorance, of what is seen and what is ignored, of what is taken into account and what is not, of which subjects are capable of producing knowledge and which others are not.

The publication processes are central procedures for the validation and dissemination of knowledge recognised as scientific, that is, legitimised by a scientific community and its standards. Scholars read publications in journals and acknowledge relevant contributions by citing them in their own works. Therefore, the journals are essential for scholars to be aware of existing research and to disseminate their own findings. In addition, scientific journals and papers are currently also intertwined with the reward system of science (Shu et al. 2018). Thus, the system of scientific communication is fundamental for the generation and reproduction of knowledge.

In this article, I argue that the established research assessment system, by means entailing monocultural forms of scholarly publication and metrics of specific platforms, reproduces epistemological absences, as well as inequalities and hierarchical mechanisms of knowledge generation and dissemination. Considering the diversity of the fields of knowledge practices, communities, infrastructures, regional, local and disciplinary particularities, as well as aspects regarding languages, research emphasis, and forms of knowledge transmission, a monocultural publication system tends to promote homogenisation by marginalising or negating the existence of everything unsuitable to the one logic. This trend is reproduced at various levels by promoting standardised forms of science, which ultimately discourage plurality and reproduce hierarchies, prioritise specific research fields, particular curricula and agendas, centres of knowledge/power production and business models specialised in publishing.

These aspects have been intensively discussed in Open Access (OA) dialogue spaces. There, many of the mechanisms of conventional scholarly communication have been problematised. At the same time, OA communities' discussions shed light on possibilities to advance towards plural scientific communication systems capable of taking into consideration several specificities and promoting epistemological diversity. I would like to point out the importance of encouraging dialogue in the field of schol-

arly communication and its implications. Such a dialogue should acknowledge the social role of knowledge production, the historical and political conditions and implications of publishing practices and knowledge generation, while seeking a shift in the debate emphasis, one that is not exclusively focused on the technical and economic dimensions. They are undoubtedly important issues; however, they are not the only ones to be considered. The socio-political processes and the dynamics of participation are not sufficient reflected in decision-making procedures (*ibid.*). A shift would let to focus on consolidating efforts to build community-driven understandings and infrastructures for the different scholarly communication actors.

This article, as with any knowledge generation, is the result of a specific context and interests. In the following section, the personal and academic context that generated this text is presented. In the following part, some theoretical considerations on the coloniality of knowledge are addressed, particularly the logics producing the sociology of absences (De Sousa Santos, 2006), in order to analyse a scholarly communication driven by monocultural mechanisms, and its implications. As such issues are widely discussed in the fields of OA, an overview of historical perspectives and debates is presented at a later stage. Finally, this article will present initiatives promoting the dynamics of ecologies of knowledge, providing the foundation to think the scholarly communication system from the perspective of a sociology of emergence.

All knowledge generation responds to a particular context. Rather than simulating a kind of distance from the analysed phenomenon, the context should be taken into consideration. Hence, my personal positioning concerning this issue is exposed.

2. Self-positioning and methodological considerations

Experience constitutes the frameworks for understanding and articulating the world. In my particular case, the interest in the subject of the circumstances of knowledge generation and dissemination is due to three concrete experiences: 1). Personal experience as a social science teacher in the Colombian educational context, observing the Eurocentric orientation and limited relation of the curricula to the concrete contexts. 2). My experiences

as a student in Latin American Studies in the Global North. There, I noticed that Latin American social science content was largely accessible in Open Access, in contrast to restricted access to content produced in the Global North. 3). The experience of collective work at an Open Access journal, leading me to reflect on the implications of scholarly communication models.

As a result of these influences, I started, in 2018, a research process on scholarly communication models, comparing the strategies carried out in Latin America and Europe. In the qualitative research model, the following methods were used: literature analysis, experts' semi-structured interviews in both regions, and data analysis procedure from a Grounded Theory approach (Strauss/Corbin 1990).

Ten scholarly communication actors in Austria and various Latin American countries were interviewed. The interview partners are participating in a scholarly communication ecosystem at different levels; whether as a person taking part in decision-making processes, as a researcher in the area of scholarly communication, as an actor in publishing or repository processes, as a researcher in other knowledge areas, or simply as a user of the publication policies of the institutions they are working.

More specifically, the interview partners correspond to these areas: three experts in Austria associated with the Austria Transition to Open Access AT2oA project; three experts in OA strategies at Latin America regional level (these experts are following the development of OA in the region, actively contribute to shaping regional strategies, and are involved in different spaces of dialogue and cooperation); two actors in publishing or repository processes in Austria and Mexico; and, finally, two researchers from both regions.

The interviews were conducted throughout 2019. Due to my geographical location in Austria, the interview partners in Austria were interviewed personally, while the interviews in Latin America were conducted via Skype. These valuable dialogues were fundamental towards the comprehension and interrogation of aspects related to scholarly communication. An approach to this topic exclusively based on the bibliographical review would have been much more compelling, due to the extensive literature on the subject and its complexities. This article is the product of the joint reflections generated after these dialogues; the analytical limitations compressed here are, however, my personal responsibility.

The perspective provided by each of the interview partners allowed me to compare points of view, experiences, and strategies regarding OA. In the course of the interviews, the willingness by all interview partners to talk and exchange experiences and points of view about OA became evident. During the research process, mainly as a result of discussions, it became possible to confirm the topic's importance for all participants and stakeholders involved in the publication processes.

In this section, I would like to address one last aspect, namely a paradox that this text implies: the format I follow aspires to meet the requirements of scientific publications, while simultaneously positing a criticism of the inequalities that this model of scholarly communication involves.

This choice is based on two arguments. First, criticising widely spread mechanisms should also be made within them; even if such a critical position is an obvious disadvantage. This approach contrasts with other positions based on external criticism of the publication system, deciding, for instance, not to publish under the standard parameters. This valid exercise offers both advantages and disadvantages. An evident advantage is that they do not fall into the contradiction of reproducing the mechanisms they criticise. The subsequent disadvantage is that the critical positions within the structures are not strengthened and, with this, the processes enabling the discussion and generation of alternative mechanisms for communicating knowledge can lose a valuable impulse.

A second motivation is to point out the urgent need to generate horizontal spaces of dialogue between areas of thought, forms of communication of ideas, knowledge located in regions, and social groups with diverse characteristics. The discursive assumption to include all humankind on which the university as a modern institution is based, has no support in the concrete practices of knowledge exchange; on the contrary, several mechanisms reproduce asymmetries constituted through the colonial/modern capitalist system. Since more equitable structures for dialogue must be built.

3. Coloniality of knowledge and its monocultures

To analyse the conventional scholarly communication system and its mechanisms of unequal reproduction in knowledge generation and

dissemination, critical analytical frameworks of decolonial approaches are referred; particularly those which take into consideration the colonality of knowledge. The scrutiny of the colonality of knowledge has been derived from that of the colonality of power, suggested by Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano (2000) to understand the epistemological conditions and dispositions of knowledge/power legitimising domination of the *other* (Castro Gómez 2000).

The colonality of knowledge is constituted through the following logic: there are diverse mechanisms of epistemology that have been hegemonised, producing actively non-existent, non-credible, disposable, non-visible knowledges to the hegemonic discourses influencing dominant world realities (De Sousa Santos 2006). As a consequence of those mechanisms of the colonality of knowledge, alternative knowledges are diminished, thereby impacting on memories, languages, and possibilities of thinking alternative forms of social organisation and transformation (Lander 2000).

With the notion of *epistemic violence*, Gayatri Spivak (1988) points out the alteration, denial, and in extreme cases (such as the processes of colonisation) elimination of the meanings of the daily, juridical and symbolic life of individuals and groups. This implies that the construction of a imaginary of 'civilisation' necessarily requires the existence of a counterpart understood as 'barbarism'. These imaginaries are not only mental constructions, but are accompanied by forms of concrete material classification and segregation in the institutions formed by modernity: the law, the state, the educational system, the sciences, and the scholarly communication system.

The idea of the universal capacity of modern thought is related to what Castro-Gómez calls *Hubris of the Zero Point* (Castro Gómez 2000). This concept seeks to describe the fundamental aspiration of scientists to observe, analyse and make judgments on the observed realities, from a privileged position and without being observed (Point Zero). From here emerges the idea of producing true knowledge beyond all doubt. This position is also privileged because it is assumed to be subtracted from the reality surrounding the knowledge generation process. This notion seeks to hide the conditions of power, both epistemological and political-economic, allowing the establishment of categories and ways of thinking.

The active generation of non-existing knowledges non-credible alternatives, disposable possibilities, non-visible to the hegemonic construction of the world, is denominated by Boaventura de Sousa Santos as a *sociology*

of *absences* (De Sousa Santos 2006:23). As a result of this subtraction, we reduce our references to think on alternative social realities. This analytical approach permits us to consider the mechanisms of scholarly communication producing actively non-existing knowledges. The means of production these absences are five monocultures, they are described below:

- *The monoculture of knowledge and rigour*: this refers to the idea that only scientific knowledge is rigorous; as a consequence, other forms of knowledge have neither rigour nor validity. This first monoculture imposes a way of doing science and expands its logic by generating standards which undermine other forms of knowledge production (ibid:23).
- *The monoculture of linear time*: this idea refers to the fact that history has only one direction and that that is imposed by the so-called developed countries. This idea implies the notions of progress, modernisation, development and globalisation, always having as reference the countries of the Global North (ibid. 24).
- *The monoculture of the naturalisation of differences*: differences are presented as a process of classifications catalogued as natural; in this way it is attempted to normalise and hide hierarchies (ibid. 24).
- *The monoculture of the dominant scale*: refers to a way of measuring the phenomena in the world; this scale is dominant, universalising, and valid regardless of the context. In this monoculture, the global and universal are hegemonic while the individual and local are disposable (ibid. 25).
- *The monoculture of capitalist productivism*: this implies a specific understanding of growth and productivity. These factors determine all human labour and nature; whatever does not conform to this logic is unproductive and absent (ibid. 25).

Knowledge generation through monocultures refers to universalising unique logics, the extension of which imposes a way of seeing and being in the world, while negatively affecting the diversity of possibilities. Shiva refers to these through the notion of monocultures of the mind (Shiva 1993). Through this, she describes the homogenisation of publication formats by means of monolithic, monolingual and monetary logics, as well as the standardisation of a unique scholarly communication system, and all related structures of services, platforms, funding mechanisms and

assessment. Thereby, two types of knowledge are generated: one recognised as valid and legitimised by the several infrastructures, and another one not complying with the monocultural standards, driven to the margins, and constructed as absent.

The scientific communication system related to the previously introduced forms of monocultures, constituting the sociology of absence, will be elaborated on at a later stage. Before that, it is relevant to address the historical processes building the conventional communication systems dynamics and the Open Access discussions, as well as key definitions in scholarly communication debates.

4. Scholarly communication: conventional publishing and Open Access

Although knowledge generation is the result of the interaction between human and non-human actors, this capacity has primarily been attributed in modern societies to universities and research centres. This has been part of the process of sciences' construction, the classification of the world, and the constitution of hegemonic centres of knowledge. The communication strategies created to disseminate knowledge by such modern knowledge centres determine the achieving of institutional credibility, authority, prestige, and position (Sandoval/Aguado López 2002).

The communication strategies have changed throughout history. From face-to-face, oral knowledge transfer, postal exchange systems, to the emergence of print possibilities, so the group and networked dissemination of knowledge became much more manageable. The first scholarly journals were created by academic communities during the Victorian era. The first commercial publishers appeared and succeeded in generating widespread forms of dissemination (Shu et al. 2018). A shift in the history of scholarly publishing occurred after the Second World War. Due to increasing funding, the number of journals and articles demanded adaptation to the scholarly communication landscape. Commercial publishers established solid publication models in response to growing demand, and increased their market. The emergence of the Science Citation Index and its associated Journal Impact Factor (JIF), created in the 1970s by one of the

founders of bibliometrics and scientometrics, the US-American Eugene Eli Garfield, offered a bibliographical tool based on a citation's measurement, which supported mainly the major publishers, because it provided parameters of competitiveness.

In the following decades, scholarly publishing as a central means of disseminating scientific results entered into higher levels of competitiveness. The metric tools reorganised the incentive model in science. Thus, increased the number of journals and articles based on the logic of 'publish or perish'. The new journals not associated with the JIF began to be increasingly questioned regarding their scientific legitimacy. Since the 1980s, the prices of scholarly literature began to rise well beyond the inflation rates at the time; simultaneously, the growth of scholarly literature was considerably high (European Commission 2019: 14).

Thanks to the rapid development of information technology in parallel with the rise of the Internet, new means, pace, methods, and possibilities of communication emerged. In the mid-1990s, with the breakthrough of digitisation, the era of on-line publishing came into force, and with it, the requirements for scholarly papers began to change. That led to the renegotiation of access rights (licensing) and the emergence of 'Big Deals', which meant the negotiation of access and publication plans for journal collections, which constitute(d) the library catalogue. This business model acutely influenced the ecosystem of academic journals, with worldwide consequences; one of these has been the emergence of OA discussions (ibid.).

With the technological possibilities arising with internet access, scholarly communication obtained new possibilities regarding a borderless, efficient and free exchange of research output. Peter Suber calls it "the access revolution" (Suber 2012). Scholarly communities started to use electronic media for storage, publishing, and distributing scientific literature (Budapest Open Access Initiative 2012; Das 2015; Söllner/Mittermaier 2017). Some print journals started online versions, while other journals came to life in a virtual ecosystem. The constant increase of subscription costs for academic journals introduced by publishers, known as the serials crisis (Das 2015:17; Horstmann 2017: 62) or the pricing crisis (Suber 2012: 29), and the advantages opened by the internet, gave a boost to OA initiatives.

As an alternative to subscription-based systems, the Open Access (OA) movement has been emerging in different regions of the world². The term

“Open Access”³ was coined in 1993 after the Budapest Open Access Initiative⁴ (BOAI). Its definition became canonical and is frequently used in the context of Open Access policies, practices, and laws around the world. The most widely accepted definition of OA is likely the one given in the BOAI in 2002 (reaffirmed in 2012):

“By ‘Open Access’ to [peer-reviewed research literature], we mean its free availability on the public internet, permitting any users to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of these articles, crawl them for indexing, pass them as data to software, or use them for any other lawful purpose, without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. The only constraint on reproduction and distribution, and the only role for copyright in this domain, should be to give authors control over the integrity of their work and the right to be properly acknowledged and cited” (BOAI 2012).

The BOAI gathered together several projects working in the OA area and tried to find strategies to reach common goals. Since then, the benefits, impacts, costs, open software systems, implementations strategies and visions for scholarly communication have been widely researched⁵.

Leslie Chan points out the limitations of a non-critical notion of *Openness*, understood as preexisting and non-differentiated condition everywhere. The process of knowledge generation and its openness implies a historical, political and socioeconomic context (Chan 2018). That is why the concept of *situated openness* is raised, to address the question of inequalities: this concept “posits that “openness” needs to be contextualized in its particular history and environment to determine who benefits or who is at risk in an “open system”⁶ (Albornoz et al. 2020). Albornoz, Okune and Chan present experiences of the Open and Collaborative Science in Development Network (OCSDNet), a research network composed of scientists, development practitioners and community activists from Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia (Chan et al. 2019). Research processes report the diverse appropriations of the concept of openness according to the priorities and historical experiences of several communities. Thus, openness is a concept that needs to be contextualised, negotiated and analysed in the light of unequal levels of power relations (ibid). At the same time, it hints as the risk of the reproduction of inequalities by using an uncritical concept of openness.

Open does not mean free; in terms of costs, these are distributed in various ways at different moments of publication cycles (Pomerantz/Peek 2016). The question of who assumes these costs and what benefits they derive from it is not a minor issue, especially when considering the financing of research using public funds (Babini/Machin-Mastromatteo 2015: 478).

When article processing charges (APCs) are paid by the authors or their funder institution, to cover the publishing costs (Speicher et al. 2018), this is known as Toll Access (TO), Closed Access or conventional publication⁷ (Suber 2012: 6). This form of publication has various expressions, depending in part on the business models used (see Speicher et al. 2018).

OA has different mechanisms despite the common definition; i.e., there is no single model of OA. Since this point is a source of confusion among the academic community, some OA categories with a certain consensus among researchers are introduced here. There are three principal forms of OA: green OA, gold OA and Hybrid OA (European Commission 2019: 53).

The term Green OA describes the accessible storage of articles in an OA archive in the form of disciplinary repositories or institutional repositories (IRs; Speicher et al. 2018). The green articles refer to the practice of self-archiving of articles by researchers in order to make articles available for readers, even though they have been already published in a toll access journal. Gold OA is delivered by journals, regardless of the journal's business model (Suber 2012: 4), the articles are published in an 'OA journal', and are available directly on the journal website. OA journals are often defined by their inclusion in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) (Speicher et al. 2018).

Commercial publishers introduced other OA models in order to integrate Open Access components as access to read, although conditioned by costs or delays. In Hybrid Open Access, the publisher requires a publication fee in order to offer the article for reading. Depending on the perspective, one can mention different types of Hybrid Open Access or enumerate other types of OA. These categories share common principles: the publishers do not offer access to all contents, or access has certain conditions, and so the subscription -based principle is maintained (Das 2015: 22).

For instance, in 2004 Springer introduced a kind of hybrid Open Access, named the Delayed Open Access model. This refers to the subscription-based journals providing free online access upon the expiration of an embargo period, usually lasting between six months and two years, following the initial publication date (Laakso/Björk 2013). The operation of this model provides delayed access to all would-be users. At the same time, it requires payments in terms of subscriptions in order to cover the costs of publication for researchers demanding immediate access to the contents (Harnad 2013a). Numerous publishers in the following years implemented similar hybrid models (Björk 2012).

Even though these designations are supported by a wide sector, they are still being questioned. Concerning Hybrid Open Access, the BOAI states: “No. Open Access is barrier-free access, and embargo periods are barriers to access. Many of the benefits of Open Access are not achieved when embargoes are in place” (Budapest Open Access Initiative 2020). However, while delayed free access does not serve all the goals of the BOAI, it does serve some of them.

Publishers fulfil fundamental functions in the scholarly communication process: they are in charge of managing communication with the corresponding authors⁸; in many cases they undertake preliminary readings to determine whether the manuscript complies with the formal and scientific criteria before sending it to the peer-reviewers; they coordinate the peer review process; they inform the authors about (feedback, acceptance or rejection of an article, and manage the publication and advertising of editorial news. These functions vary depending on work-flow or on business model from editor to editor⁹. The collected experience and know-how of the editors (especially related to workflows) is a fundamental matter, also in terms of transition strategies to OA (Pinhasi et al. 2018).

However, conventional publishing driven by commercial publishers displays certain characteristics carrying their respective implications. Within this publication modality, commercial publishers grant the exclusive right to use a researcher’s work through copyright agreements. In case of Hybrid OA journal articles, this is usually a limited time period, called an embargo. This limits the circulation of scientific results and their reuse, while concentrating the information and knowledge services among just a

few publishers. In contrast, on the OA circuit, authors can share their work under Creative Commons licenses, among other licenses, to gain visibility and spread their research results (Söllner/Mittermaier 2017: 3).

Scholars accomplish several roles in the publication circuit. They not only provide their research results for publications, but also review the articles in the peer-review process, work on journals' editorial boards, and prepare the artwork according to the publisher's specifications (Hippler 2013). All this usually without being paid (Darnton 2010: 5). Moreover, in a commercial publishing process, they or their libraries have to buy back their work in the form of journal subscriptions. This situation affects academics in the Global South most strongly, since the prices suggested by the APCs are not affordable with universities' funding. This impacts research dynamics, knowledge dissemination and educational possibilities, as well as the treatment of relevant topics and emphases in various regions of the world.

Libraries and universities are directly affected by the commercial business models of scholarly communication in the context of a growing oligopoly created by some commercial publishers, the inelastic demand for high-impact academic journals, and rising prices (Shu et al. 2018). In a conventional publication system, libraries and research institutions effectuate a payment to obtain access to publications through subscriptions. Since the mid-1980s, commercial publishers have promoted a system of selling journals known as Big Deals. That is, access to journals is not purchased per individual journal but as part of a collection or bundle of journals. Therefore, libraries must adjust budget decisions, leading to a diminution in the number of monographs, while privileging the journals of specific fields (those most demanded) or high-impact journals (ibid) and omitting other disciplinary fields and regions outside the Global North publication circuit. That implies that the accessibility to literature, even in universities, is strongly influenced by market factors and not solely academic criteria of quality, accessibility or educational goals.

The historian Robert Darnton describes the increase of subscriptions prices in his article "The Library: Three Jeremiads" (2010). In this regard, he asserts that in 1974 the average cost of a subscription to a journal was \$54.86. In 2009 it came to \$2,031 for a US title and \$4,753 for a non-US title. An increase greater than 10 times the rate of inflation. Indeed, between 1986

and 2005, the prices for institutional subscriptions to journals rose 302 per cent (Darnton 2010: 3). “On a global scale, the prices for the licensing of conventional publishing journals rise up to 6 % per year on average” (Söllner/Mittermaier 2017: 6), making scientific publication one of the most profitable industries in the world (Shu et al. 2018).

The above mentioned actors (publishers, scholars and libraries) are the most widely addressed actors in the debates on scholarly publication; however, teachers, students at all levels, distance learning programmes, audiences interested in several topics, as well as all those actors who are not taken into account in formal education debates, and all those who are absent or silent in the making of knowledge, are impacted differently by logics regulating the circulation of knowledge.

The field of discussion on OA is not a homogeneous terrain. One could think of a designation to name the diversity of positions by using the term Open Accesses (OAs) to refer to this discussion. Although there is some consensus on certain definitions and implementation strategies, there are other areas where ambivalence or divergence are highly contested¹⁰. Some of these discussions are referred to below.

5. Discussions of Open Access

A widespread misunderstanding in certain scholarly circles is the sharp distinction between OA and prestigious publication venues. On the one hand, OA is frequently associated with non-prestigious, low-quality journals, or journals without high impact. On the other hand, OA advocates point out two reasons to link OA with qualitative scholarly publishing, reasons which are also in line with the researcher’s interests: one is based on the Gold OA publishing model, which is becoming more popular. Gold OA publishing has produced prestigious and highly cited journals. The numbers of Gold OA publication outputs are steadily growing. Green OA is also constantly increasing circulation because conventional journals allow self-archiving. That means, even after publishing in a conventional non-OA journal, the authors can deposit (specific versions of) their works, increasing the dissemination of research results¹¹ (Suber 2012: 55). Moreover, the addition of OA journals to the Directory of Open Access Journals

(DOAJ) is a sign of transparency regarding editorial workflow and quality assurance (Söllner/Mittermaier 2017:8).

A considerable proportion of researchers and editors link OA directly with APCs (Suber 2012: 138), due to the dissemination of Hybrid OA business models by several kinds of publishers. This non-distinction between the different OA business models leads, on the one hand, to question the viability of OA as an alternative to the conventional ways of communicating research results, since it is not differentiated from other commercial models of scholarly communication. On the other hand, it turns aside the discussion around the alternative communication model to the model based on APCs.

Referring to these misunderstandings, Peter Suber argues: “There are three mistakes here. The first is to assume that there is only one business model for OA journals, when there are many. The second is to assume that charging an upfront fee means authors are the ones expected to pay it. The third is to assume that all or even most OA journals charge upfront fees. In fact, most OA journals (70 percent) charge no upfront or author-side fees at all.” (Suber 2012:138).

As previously discussed, there are several OA businesses models: both full and hybrid (Speicher et al. 2018). The hybrid models respond to the demand for a more open scholarly communication culture, while continuing to preserve revenues. The hybrid OA publication model is driven largely, not exclusively, by commercial publishers, promoting widespread confusion regarding the differences between existing approaches.

The process of seeking different communication models should not only consider the discussion on the publishing business models, but also the discipline-specific differences (Shearer et al. 2020). In the social sciences, for instance, monographs, edited volumes and contributions to anthologies have a long tradition. The publication frequency is more gradual than in the natural sciences. Furthermore, there are specific document formats, such as social group statements, debates, essays and public policies, requested for these fields of research, even if they do not comply with peer-review principles (Giménez Toledo 2018). In certain Science, Technology and Medicine (STM) disciplines, such as physics, the pre-print culture is traditionally linked to the disciplinary history. The physics pre-print tradition is archived mainly in institutional repositories¹².

In addition to disciplinary differences, other aspects play a role in thinking about models of scholarly communication: for example, the preference, or not, of digital publication, the publication's frequency, the extensions of the articles or other publication formats as research diaries, essays, interviews, etc. The language issue is no less irrelevant, English as a lingua franca in current academic communication is a "hidden wall of payment" that limits the participation of academics from many parts of the world (MoChridhe 2019). All of these differences suppose limits for the standardisation processes of scientific evaluation, since they suggest that promoting a single system of dissemination and access to scientific knowledge may have adverse effects on some disciplinary, geographical and cultural areas, and imply flexibility and contextualisation by recommendations regarding the openness of scholarly communication (Romary/Tóth-Czifra 2019; Söllner/Mittermaier 2017).

In the debates about OA perspectives related to commercial publishers, two approaches prevail: on the one hand, those who define scholarly communication in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. In this perspective, the commercial publishers are considered as appropriate for coordinating and regulating the publishing and distributing process, since the publishing houses have the proper infrastructure and know-how to manage it (Willinsky/Poynder 2015).

On the other hand, a significant number of participants in this discussion are sceptical about the commercial publisher's central role in scholarly and scientific dynamics (Brand 2020). The commercial publishers strongly influence scholarly communication aspects such as assessment requirements, cost of fees, a journal's circulation, prioritisation of topics, languages, regions, and scholarly careers. Publishers fortify their positions through the standardisation of evaluation forms in all disciplines, as well as the absolute centrality of publication, as a measure of knowledge production.

As seen, discussions about OA have different angles, suggest different positions, and reflect differences resulting from the disciplinary particularities, academic traditions, regional contexts, publication formats, financial capacity and particular interests of the authors regarding their scientific works. OA is thus the subject of several controversies and a contested field.

These perspectives are not exclusive, either in the Global North or the Global South; in both regions both positions have their supporters

and some of these even propose mixed publication models. In the Global South, the commercial publishers and their indicators are still being used and are highly appreciated in some academic circles, while in the Global North steps have been taken to expand understandings, research environments and more equitable scholarly communication systems (Harris 2019). However, these attempts must be examined in detail, since an uncritical perspective of openness, accompanied by unequal power mechanisms, can replicate and reproduce the ambivalences and disparities it initially attempts to challenge (Albornoz et al. 2020). In the following section I go more deeply into aspects that reproduce such inequalities.

6. Beyond Open Access: deep structures of coloniality

Open Access discussions point out important challenges of scholarly communication and try to create new ways to overcome them. Such challenges are not the same in the Global North as in the Global South. The discussion of access to and participation in scientific knowledge exchange extends the limits of the OA debate and needs to be explored with a historical perspective. John Willinsky, one of the pioneers in OA central debates, summarises the historical question of science constitution as follows:

“Europe created what was, in effect, an intellectual mercantile economy by which the colonial periphery supplied the flora and fauna, as well as the gold and wealth, to the center, and out of which knowledge was produced and epistemic regimes created (in Foucault’s formulation of knowledge and power). This knowledge was then sent out to the periphery, ensuring an educational subordination to the center.” (Willinsky/Poynder 2015)

The history of European colonialism and the power relations created since then influence the challenges facing science, and limit the participation of knowledge producers located in regions outside the Global North. According to the monocultures proposed by De Sousa Santos (2006:23), the creation of hierarchies occurs through the active generation of absences; how they are generated in scholarly communication will be analysed here.

The monoculture of knowledge and rigour generation can be considered by means of various mechanisms. At this point, the discussion of Predatory Journals becomes relevant. Predatory Journals is a designation given to journals which use the publishing system as a way of obtaining economic benefit without maintaining the quality standards by conducting peer-review processes. This term gained importance and sparked a broad discussion.

Jeffrey Beall coined the term ‘predatory journals’ in 2008. During that year he started the Beall’s list on the Scholarly Open Access blog¹³. He gathered in a list journals using criteria such as: “The Article processing/publication charge is very low” or “description of the manuscript handling process is lacking” (Beall’s list). The list was maintained by the University of Colorado library until 2017. Its growing influence in academic spheres prompted protests, especially from list-included journals, who claimed to meet Open Access and peer-review standards. In particular, voices from the Global South criticised the Beall’s list, as they considered it as a frontal attack on dissemination efforts in these regions (Raju 2018).

Certain names contained in the list are significant promoters of the OA model and contribute to the dissemination of research in different regions and academic fields. Such is the case of SciELO¹⁴ and Redalyc¹⁵, one of the most influential OA initiatives in Latin America. Beall refers to it as a “Publication Favela” in a Blog entry (Beall 2015). There, Beall openly criticises SciELO and Redalyc for their “poor job of distributing it (scholar production) or increasing its visibility” (ibid.). The main reason for this judgment was the fact that both initiatives were unknown in North American academies and were not indexed in, besides Google Scholar, other rankings. Such claims triggered reactions from several OA actors.

The term ‘predatory journal’ is widely used to prevent researchers from publishing in questionable journals. Certainly, it is important to take into consideration standards that ensure the compliance of the academic and publication procedures; however, this case raises questions of how the criteria for scholar authority are established, who is in a position to define the criteria, and whether the actors placed in such standards are engaged in the discussion or not.

Moreover, this situation raises a further issue. Scholarly knowledge that is not generated in the knowledge centres –encompassing everything

that is not known there, not produced in English is considered underdeveloped, and of low-quality. These are the ideas behind the ‘favela’ label (Mounier 2018). The list is presented as neutral and as applying universalising criteria which are applicable to all contexts. This is the logic of the Hubris of the Zero Point applied to academic rankings, consequently hiding positionalities and, ultimately, specific biases (Olivarez et al. 2018). On the contrary however, the criteria set in the list are related to particular forms of publication and influenced by a specific geopolitical position and power relations.

Although the debate around Beall’s list is a specific discussion, the logics expressed there can also be analysed in other forms of indexes, counts, lists and rankings where ‘excellence’ and the lack thereof are defined by means of universalising criteria. Thus, epistemological hierarchies are generated: setting specific standards and disqualifying everything that does not fit into them.

These standards have a following function linked to the second form of monoculture: *the monoculture of the naturalisation of differences*. This framework of thought means that differences are not understood as heterogeneous, but rather are categorised from hierarchical schemes. In the binary logics of coloniality/modernity, dichotomies are generated: some knowledge is thus visible/invisible, scientific/non-scientific, universal/specific. These dichotomies have an implicit hierarchy and asymmetries, generating the idea of superiority and inferiority in the production of knowledge.

The language issue is central to this monoculture. The forms of naming in Western scientific terminology come from a specific historical tradition (Greco-Latin), which at the same time made others naming forms invisible. Currently, the publication language, or ‘lingua franca’, is English. The usage of this language in the publication is part of a certain “rhetoric of excellence” (Fiormonte/Priego 2016). Publications in English are more likely to be considered in international discussions than those that are written in other languages. Although this lingua franca principle contributes to the generation of a broad dialogue between different actors at the international level, it has subsequent consequences: it presents a limitation for many interlocutors (Willinsky/Poynder 2015) and a diminution in social impact in the contexts in which it is generated. The naturalisation of a one-language form of communication in a world offering diverse possi-

bilities of making knowledge accessible in different languages is a disadvantage for all those who do not live, write and interact in English. It is also a significant loss for scientific communities that only read and write in English, as they lose the opportunity for interaction with knowledges and experiences expressed in other languages.

Research emphases should also be considered. The Global North's most requested publications have certain research emphases, depending on the geographical location of researchers, founders and publishers. Important issues in the Global South are not received, in all cases, with the same level of interest in Global North academies. Local experiences or local issues are not always considered relevant in global conversations; this in turn means the loss of valuable experience offered by social groups, and restrictions on scientists to participate in international discussions. So, the researcher's task in certain regions and fields, within a monocultural scholarly publication system becomes more challenging (Chan 2018). In order to publish in this circuit, participate in international dialogues or meet the requirements of research centres, scholars in the Global South adapt the thematic emphases and approaches to Global North interests; additionally, they have to assume charges in order to translate their articles into the standard language of diffusion and prestige.

A widespread notion associates research with economic development (Alperin 2015). This economic and monetary approach promotes a scientific perspective which is focused on the relevant issues of the market; the central goal of this perspective is making financial profit from research results. Such scientific perspective may influence the value conferred to research and the funding of specific disciplines. Just as some regions are particularly affected by this prioritisation, so certain fields can become underfunded due to this logic, especially those that not only do not produce immediate financial revenue, but even manifest critical positions regarding market dynamics.

All of these factors lead to inequities, expressed in the low representation of Global South intellectual production in the rankings based on citations, quantitative instruments, and standardised measurement, as recommended by online subscription-based scientific citation indexing services such as Scopus and the Web of Science (WoS). They offer a personalised metric service for every user in order to track, analyse and visualise the

affiliations, number of publications, bibliographic data, references, and citation statistics. The following map is scaled based on the number of articles of all types by at least one author with a country affiliation published on Web of Science with a 2016 publishing date (Alperín 2018).

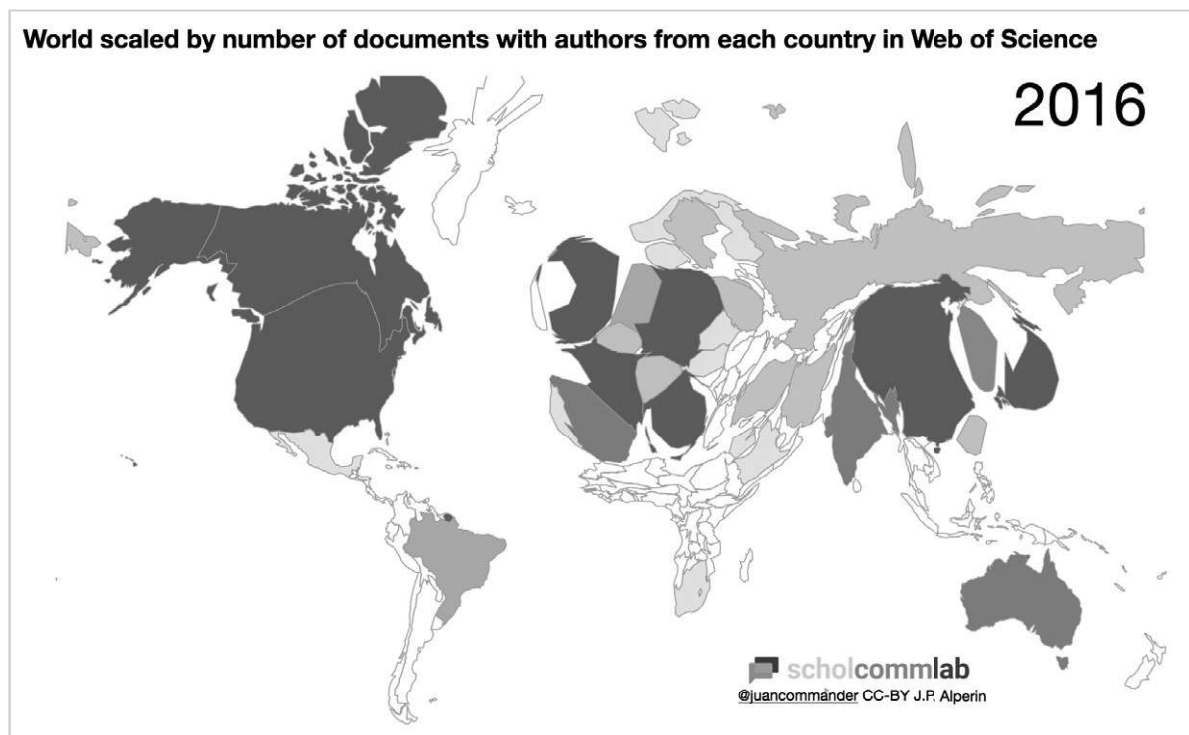


Figure 1: World scaled by the number of documents with authors from each country in Web of Science, 2016

Source: Alperín 2018

The map graphically expresses the distribution of scientific publishing in the Global South in terms of its appearance on citation-based platforms such as Web of Science. The active construction of absent knowledge through the use of metrics, and their naturalisation as the only way to measure it, can be seen here.

The university as a privileged place for the enunciation of knowledge, the written form as the manner of academic expression, English as lingua franca, thematic and political emphasis, the citation platforms and rankings as bases of incentives and assessment, are some examples of such scales. These are the ones that generate the *monoculture of the dominant scale*.

The monoculture of capitalist productivism is another adjacent mechanism, influencing the monocultures mentioned above. The fees charged

by the conventional publishing system are an economic barrier for institutions and scholars. Even some prestigious universities such as Harvard have expressed their inability to afford such fees. In 2012, the university wrote a memo claiming that commercial publishers' charges make the situation of the university untenable, by making scholarly interaction fiscally unsustainable and academically restrictive (Sample 2012). This economic factor is even more crucial for universities and other research institutions in the Global South, as they must assume payments in stronger currencies than their own (Willinsky/Poynder 2015). This is a problem for both researchers, when they have to pay by themselves, and for the institutions that subsidise them. This monetary factor, exacerbated in many cases by a neoliberal model of cutting public universities' budgets, makes access to, as well as dissemination of, scientific research highly unequal. Economic constraints also hinder stakeholders in regions of the Global South from considering an OA transition perspective, based on Hybrid OA models. This is not a viable alternative for the Global South regions, as it does not fit the institutional budgets and perspectives of research environments (Babini/Machin-Mastromatteo 2015).

Scientific articles and journals gained importance in recent decades and became the main means of spreading the results of academic research; they also contributed to the acquisition of points in the scholar metrics and rankings. These rankings are based on the yearly average number of citations for published articles, or the last two years in the case of journals. The more articles one has published in high-ranked journals in the Journal Citation Rankings and Quartile Scores (measured on a scale from Q1 to Q3), the higher the probability one has of becoming a successful scholar. Many countries' research funds and research institutes promote the adoption of these assessment systems or parameters, and actively stimulate the researcher's participation in scientific publishing circuits which use this logic. The frequency of publication by authors is then a crucial element to be mentioned in this monoculture. There exists a pressure to continuously publish papers – which leads to a constant acceleration of knowledge production – or to resubmit and rewrite papers already published, and all of this in order to give oneself a competitive edge regarding research assessment and promotion procedures. These practices increase the number of articles, but not necessarily the research quality or social impact of research (Lorite 2019).

The logic of increasing production by implementing techniques designed to increase productivity is a consequence of this system, as a consequence production times are also accelerating. The articles become commodities destined to increase the prestige of researchers and their institutions before benefiting the communities with whom he/she interacts. Added to this measurement circuit is the fact that the most of these so-called high impact journals belong to a handful of commercial publishers – Reed-Elsevier, Springer-Nature, Wiley-Blackwell, Taylor & Francis, and Sage – constituting a publishing oligopoly through which a large proportion of the scholarly production circulates (Larivière et al. 2015), and with an enormous influence overscholarly dynamic.

The fifth *monoculture of linear* time is related to the others mentioned above. This can be seen in the standardisation of knowledge measurement, carried out exclusively using a numerical scale related to citation metrics. This logic became the parameter capable of determining what is ranked as progressive, modern, developed, and global. That is how these parameters become the frames of reference, the standards to follow, the horizons to imitate, even when conditions for published are not equal for everyone. Thus, producers of certain knowledge centres become legitimised according to these scales, while their voices and interpretations become hegemonic and are authorised to speak about social phenomenon. Those who do not subscribe to this logic because they do not comply with the standards are considered ineffective, unproductive, not oriented to the ‘current requirements’, and unable to compete; in the end, their knowledge and procedures will not have the same recognition as those of other centres that comply with the standards. In this manner, this monoculture produces an asymmetry between regions, countries, and local forms of knowledge generation. Not complying with these standards means being classified as residual and backward. The monoculture related to the scale, of the model to follow, of the determined path to progress and advancement, seen then in terms of a number of publications and citations, imposes a clear, unique and linear route.

Those who cannot subscribe to the monocultures have disadvantages by entering into scholarly dialogue, or are simply excluded thereof. Many scholars try to adapt to the established standards with the promise of participating in the publication circuits and achieving academic pres-

tige, despite asymmetrical conditions. These expectations promote the expansion of monocultures, thereby generating the undermining of existing diversity. However, the shaping of the scientific communication model is the result of historical and social circumstances. It should not be understood as unique or linear, but rather as one that is permanently contested. Hence, all the actors involved in this process can generate alternatives, and, in effect, several actors in different contexts have been doing so. The responses may vary depending on the specific circumstances. In the following section, some initiatives that have identified the limitations of a single scholarly communication system and which propose different scenarios are addressed.

7. Scholarly publishing: current dynamics of searching for alternatives

After having gone through some of the central discussions of OA and the mechanisms by which the absences of knowledge forms that escape the determinations of monocultures are actively generated, it is convenient to present some initiatives questioning these tendencies, raising debates about them, and proposing possible scenarios. Otherwise, the incorrect perception of an uncontested universal scenario could be generated, with no actors trying to generate change, which is not the case. In the field of scholarly communication, there are also proposals and alternatives that need to be presented and discussed, as the active involvement of actors in this dialogue and the strengthening of such proposals is a fundamental issue.

Previously, the sociology of absences proposed by De Sousa Santos was discussed, explaining the mechanisms of monocultures. These are contrasted with the sociology of emergencies, which highlights the alternatives that are emerging, those that “are possible and already exist as an emergence”¹⁶ (De Sousa Santos, 2006:31). The *sociology of emergence* proposes replacing monocultures with ecologies in which it is possible to reverse the situation of social experiences’ invisibility and generate the conditions to make visible and disseminate forms of knowledge production, those that provide latent alternatives to the attempt to set up an absolute and universalising reason.

The first is the *ecology of knowledge* (ibid. 26), which goes against a hierarchisation of knowledge and seeks to generate a dialogue between different ways of interpreting social experience. By these means, the different questions and possibilities of the various forms of knowledge allow us to understand the complex social worlds. The *ecology of the temporalities* (ibid. 27) raises the question of expanding contemporaneity, in which the duality of a linear logic of the 'present' is not considered to be synonymous with the advanced, the better, while all that does not fit there does not appear as backward, inferior and incapable of generating other possible worlds. The ecology of temporalities includes diverse forms of relating to time, does not limit the forms and actors that define the contemporary, and allows the interaction of diverse conceptions. The *third ecology is that of recognition* (ibid. 28), which raises the question of interpretative schemes in which differences can be distinguished, recognising which are the product of hierarchies and which are not. Once these are identified, then the differences will be understood differently. The fourth is the '*trans-scale*' ecology (ibid. 29); here, the ability to articulate and interact local, national and global levels is addressed. The last ecology refers to the *ecology of productivities* (ibid. 29), which refers to the recovery and valorisation of alternative production systems outside the logic based on corporate productivity.

The ecologies approach of the sociology of emergencies aims to draw attention to the necessity for the diversification of scholarly communication structures. The notion of Bibliodiversity (Declaration of Independent Publishers 2014; Jussieu Call for Open science and bibliodiversity 2017) promoted by independent publishing communities also focuses on this goal. It refers to the diversity of knowledge production and its forms. It also implies dialogue and coordination spaces, enabling the exchange of multiple voices (Shearer et al. 2020), thus avoiding other possible forms of fragmentation, hierarchisation or segregation in these spaces. These alternatives aim to further cognitive justice (De Sousa Santos 2006:33), namely the generation of conditions that allow for the horizontal interaction of various forms of knowledge.

Discussing, thinking about and promoting alternative scholarly communication models is a task that different initiatives in various regions have begun, thereby promoting alternatives involving the ecologies proposed above. A common feature in the regional strategies is

gathering the voices of different actors involved in academic publishing. AmeliCA from Latin America and Plan S in Europe, for instance, are seeking the creation of a coordinated strategy at a national and international level to promote a more open scholarly communication system. Each of these pursues different goals and follows different strategies according to regional conditions, historical developments, learning processes and the actors involved in decision processes (Becerril-García 2019).

Plan S and the cOAlition present 10 principles designed to reach the following objective: “By 2020 scientific publications that result from research funded by public grants provided by participating national and European research councils and funding bodies, must be published in compliant Open Access Journals or on compliant Open Access Platforms” (European Commission 2019: 20). For now, Plan S and their supporters consider the hybrid model of journal publishing acceptable only to the extent that it is conceived as a transformative transition to Open Access within a three-year time limit (ibid.). This model was launched by Science Europe on September 4, 2018. This initiative has generated a broad discussion in the diverse scientific communities, triggering several reactions (Royal Society of Chemistry 2019). As a result, critiques keep being raised by different actors. On the one hand, due to its communication strategy, Plan S was understood by various communities as an OA mandate, to which specific communities are opposed. On the other hand, for many OA proponents, Plan S is not fundamentally changing the communication model; rather, it is accepting APCs as the primary model and could be detrimental to the initiatives of the Global South (Debat/Babini 2020).

In the case of Latin America, the effort to express a collective voice has been established through AmeliCA¹⁷. Launched in 2018, it seeks to expand efforts to build an open communication infrastructure for scholarly publishing and open science through the strengthening of global dialogue, gaining followers, and creating synergies. AmeliCA is a response to the financial sustainability crisis of nonprofit Open Access platforms; it is an attempt to “join forces as commercial pressures began to expand in the Global South. Nearly 1,000 journals are in need of support, and the coalition is working in a variety of ways to build a network to ensure their survival” (SPARC 2019), affirms Arianna Becerril-García, Executive Director of Redalyc - and President of AmeliCA, in relation to the prize

received by AmeliCA, granted by the SPARC organisation in June 2019. AmeliCA sets a precedent in the construction of an OA environment. A central component of AmeliCA is the development of a non-hierarchical framework that takes into account local impact and community well-being (Chan 2018). A project to join partners from different regions of the world, strengthening a movement that promotes the Diamond Open Access model, characterised by understanding scholarly and scientific knowledge as a common good, and promoting among other things open publication and non-profit models, sustainability, and responsible metrics¹⁸.

Awareness building on all the mechanisms that allow scientific publishing is a central goal of these efforts; especially regarding aspects such as the nature of financing (for instance, public sources), the social role of research, the conditions allowing the generation of knowledge, the positions that are defended from the various centres of knowledge, and the inequalities in terms of conditions of academic labour. All of these are issues that can be addressed more transparently in the places where researchers are educated or where they work. Therefore, the universities are central players in this regard.

Another key issue in the discussion about OA is that of impact. Impact in science is commonly associated with the Journal Impact Factor (JIF), referring to the dissemination of scientific literature, as measured by citation statistics. Still, there are other broader conceptions of the term: “Impact is assessed through evidence of the research literature being saved, discussed, forwarded, recommended, mentioned, or cited, both within and beyond the academic community” (Alperin 2015). Alperin complements the notion of impact with the category of reach. Reach refers to the tracking of research literature viewed or downloaded by members of various audiences within and beyond the scientific community. Such a combination of Impact and Reach allows for, following Alperin, a better understanding of the “potential value of the scientific work”. Traditionally, impact is measured by bibliometrics; Alperin proposes an interconnected analysis using alternative metrics such as social media mentions as tweets, Facebook likes, among others. These measures have been in use for only a short period of time, with only a handful of studies reflecting on their significance (ibid.).

Proposals, such as the one formulated by Alperin, seek to expand the concept of impact, which was traditionally based exclusively on the measurement of citations. This measurement represents a method, open to being complemented by other indexes, to determine the influence of scientific production. Even more, whether the scientific incentives model is predominantly based on citation metrics, this can lead to a science production oriented to reach quotes without considering an impact and influence in the social circles outside academia (Tennant et al. 2016). Reconsidering the criteria used to analyse impact and the reward mechanism is central in order to promote other logics of dissemination and reception of research results within scholarly communication.

In terms of language, the Helsinki Initiative on Multilingualism in Scholarly Communication (Helsinki Initiative on Multilingualism in Scholarly Communication 2019) is an important reference. This initiative draws attention to aspects associated with making research accessible in different languages, as well as outside academic spaces. It appeals to a wide range of actors, such as policy-makers, universities, research institutions and funders, libraries and researchers to commit the generating of the conditions of possibility for the infrastructure of scholarly communication, so that publications are multilingual and have an impact on several social sectors.

Other projects such as those mentioned above in the framework of the Open and Collaborative Science in Development Network (OCSDNet) call attention to the need to take into account the specific conditions by which projects are generated. They are promoting mechanisms for opening up knowledge, including dialogue with various actors, voices and epistemologies, historically excluded from the monocultural perspective of scholarly communication and considering the historical, political and economic particularities in which they are conducted. Based on this perspective, Albornoz, Okune and Chan (2020) suggest three ways to strengthen paths towards epistemic justice: 1). Consider the implementation of projects from a perspective of ‘responsible agency’ in which the conditions of privilege and oppression inherent to conventional knowledge exchange are considered, thereby identifying absences, silences, or individuals not involved in decision-making processes 2). Challenge the structures and standards that perpetuate forms of epistemological inequality and instead try possibilities

of promoting polyphonies in the perspectives on scholarly communication and 3). Strengthen, and learn from, the infrastructures that actively work to promote other forms of communication. Examples of this are the Platform for Experimental Collaborative Ethnography (PECE) and the digital platform Mukurtu, which promote forms of dialogue and understanding of social realities from different knowledge perspectives.

The consideration of epistemological inequalities aims to promote strategies to avoid reproducing old and new forms of the coloniality of knowledge through the imposition of monocultures. Instead, it seeks to generate structures of scientific communication capable of promoting ecologies and establishing more equitable epistemological conditions. Such considerations require not only further research, but also more experiences. Therefore, it is essential to strengthen research in this area and promote and support initiatives which generate forms of ecologies.

8. Conclusions

In this text, different mechanisms actively producing absences through monocultures in the field of conventional scholarly communication have been pointed out. These refer to specific standards operating as a canon to be followed. Thus, hierarchical and binary differences are generated, in which two types of knowledge are produced: those that adhere to such standards, and which have been thereby labeled as legitimate, excellent, advanced, efficient and global; and those that do not meet these standards and are marked as backward, unimportant, unnecessary and which are taken to the margins of invisibility.

The analysis of these dynamics takes up a decolonial perspective, regarding the coloniality of knowledge, identifying the unequal conditions of knowledge generation and dissemination, and of producing and reproducing exclusion and invisibility. Boaventura de Sousa Santos' proposals from the sociology of absences based on five monocultures (the monoculture of knowledge and rigour, the monoculture of linear time, the monoculture of the naturalisation of differences, the monoculture of the dominant scale and the monoculture of capitalist productivism) stress the scholarly communication mechanism of the production of hierarchies.

In the OA discussion field, there have been, for decades, intense discussions on these issues. They have stressed the difficulties and limitations inherent to a scholarly communication model which is based on citation rankings and payment walls for access to academic results. These elements are the expression of a market-oriented perspective of publication with business models controlled by few publishers influencing the mechanisms of promotion, evaluation and incentives in academic work, while at the same time obtaining extensive profits from knowledge transfer. Furthermore, the application of such standards is questioned in the light of unequal conditions, while ignoring several specificities, be they disciplinary, regional or linguistic, as well as differences in the very conditions of research and knowledge generation.

The continuation of a model of scholarly communication with such characteristics promotes inequalities and reproduces the structures of coloniality, now adapted to a context of globalisation and digitalisation. This generates an epistemological subordination of the Global Southern regions regarding to Global North knowledge centres, producing actively non-visible knowledge. The omission of knowledge of other social experiences, different from the hegemonic ones, is the consequence. This leads to an impoverishment of scientific dialogue, reducing the capacity to imagine social alternatives in order to face global challenges.

From the debates generated in the field of Open Access, alternatives of various types are proposed, contrasting the sociology of absences with the sociology of emergencies. Starting from an approach of alternatives under construction, those emerging scenarios of transformation are considered, thereby strengthening ecologies. They propose frameworks for dialogue where different actors and epistemologies can think together in more equitable conditions.

These frameworks include platforms that attempt to bring together actors at various scales to generate joint strategies and open communication ecosystems. Such alternatives are not necessarily the same; they are influenced by the historical contexts that generate them and raise divergent perspectives and views towards a transition to Open Access. Furthermore, there are initiatives trying to generate other ways of thinking about the impact of academic knowledge on society, dealing with language issues, measurement tools, process or knowledge generation, and reflecting on the

asymmetrical conditions for the implementation of projects seeking the openness of scholarly communication.

The generation of a broad dialogue on this central theme is one of the greatest challenges in the search to generate more equitable conditions for the generation and dissemination of knowledge. This task is, however, a central question that involves us, society in general, in various ways, since the conditions for dialogue about social challenges are derived from this debate.

- 1 The scholarly communication perspective of this article shares the principles raised by Working Group “Open Access and Scholarly Communication” of the Open Access Network Austria (OANA): “By scholarly communication we mean the processes of producing, reviewing, organizing, disseminating and preserving scholarly knowledge. Scholarly communication does not only concern researchers, but also society at large, especially students, educators, policy makers, public administrators, funders, librarians, journalists, practitioners, publishers, public and private organizations, and interested citizens.” (Kraker, P. et al. 2016). This definition, on the one hand, gives reference to the concrete processes of publishing and the dissemination of research results; on the other hand, it draws attention to the actors involved in these processes – those who should not only be seen as users, but also as agents capable of influencing the scholarly communication system.
- 2 Before the term Open Access was coined, there were initiatives that had built accessible and reusable publishing ecosystems, such as initiatives in Latin America, see reference 15.
- 3 Jeffrey Pomerantz and Robin Peek trace a line through the ramifications and use of the term *Open*. They highlight a long tradition linked to the idea of “shared resource to which all have access” (Pomerantz, J., & Peek, R., 2016). In recent times, the software developer community started debates in response to U.S. copyright law as inapplicable to software dynamics. Discussions about the terms “Open”, “Free” and “Libre” were widely spread, tending to use the word “open”, as the others two could potentially be laden with other implications. However, the condition for being able to use material is to have access to it. Such direct relationship is expressed in the term *Open Access*, spread to the world by the Budapest Open Access declaration. Here the term Open was linked to debates on knowledge, scholarly publication and cultural heritage generally. From here, the term Open expanded to other areas and acquired “political, legal, and cultural impacts” (Ibid) However, the authors warn, the broadening of the term and its application in combination with new and different areas can lead to the confusing use of it, so clarity on what is meant by “open” is always required.
- 4 On December 1-2, 2001, the Open Society Institute (OSI) called a meeting in Budapest of leading proponents of Open Access for scientific and scholarly lit-

erature. The denomination Budapest obeys to the tradition of naming initiatives, public statements, and principles after the cities in which they were formulated and announced, even though it has global objectives (Budapest Open Access Initiative, FAQ". (Retrieved 09 December 2020). This gathering is recognized as one of the major defining events of the Open Access movement.

- 5 In this regard, some projects working on OA alternatives are: AmeliCA, as representing an effort to strengthen the non-profit publishing model to preserve the scholarly and open nature of scientific communication (<http://amelica.org/>); working groups such as Working Group "Open Access and Scholarly Communication" of the Open Access Network Austria (OANA), formulating concrete visions for thinking about academic communication (<https://viennaprinciples.org/>); and the scholarly commons working group of Force 11, exploring the possibilities of shaping a scholarly communication ecosystem based on the notion of Commons. (www.force11.org/group/scholarly-commons-working-group) among others.
- 6 As referred by Danisse Albornoz, Angela Okune and Leslie Chan (2020) Situated openness was developed by researchers Laura Foster, Cath Traynor, and the Natural Justice team as part of their research with OCSDNet.
- 7 Regarding this definition Peter Suber argues: "I've asked publishers for a neutral, non-pejorative and non-honorific term for Toll Access publishers, and conventional publishers is the suggestion I hear most often." (Suber 2012: 6)
- 8 Here are other denominations, but the most common is Corresponding Author. That is the name for the person responsible for communication between the author or authors and the publisher. It is particularly helpful when several authors are writing an article. Thus, fewer communication errors occur. This communication takes place in various cases, the most common is in the processing of feedback loops.
- 9 A possible variation in costs occurs, for instance, when universities have agreed with commercial publishers OA contracts. That is, prices are determined, depending on the institution.
- 10 As Open Access policies differ on many issues, support such as that offered by Sherpa Romeo (<https://v2.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo/search.html>) provide information about publisher and journal OA policies from around the world.
- 11 For the different OA policies of publishers/journals and in order to find out which version of the publication can be archived see: SHERPA/RoMEO (<https://v2.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo/>).
- 12 See <https://open-access.net/en/open-access-in-individual-disciplines/law>
- 13 Access to the list: [https://web.archive.org/web/20170112125427 https://scholarly-oa.com/publishers/](https://web.archive.org/web/20170112125427/https://scholarly-oa.com/publishers/)
- 14 Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO), started in 1997, based in Brazil, it established a cooperative system of national nodes.
- 15 The Network of Scientific Journals from Latin America, the Caribbean, Spain, and Portugal (Redalyc) is an online library that allows reading, downloading, and sharing of full text scientific papers for free (Aguado-López/Becerril-García 2014: 101). Redalyc started in 2002 as a research project from the Autonomous Uni-

- versity of Mexico State (Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México-UAEM) (UNESCO). It is a response to the growing production of knowledge in the fields of social sciences, arts and humanities (SC-A&H) in the most widely spoken languages in the Latin American and Caribbean region: Spanish and Portuguese (Alperin/Fischman 2015: 30). Parallel to this growth, the limited visibility and sub-representation of the region at an international level became evident.
- 16 Translation by the author, original quote: “son posibles y ya existen como emergencia”.
- 17 Latin American Open Access initiatives started in the 1970s, before the concept of OA was internationally coined (Alperin 2015: 7). OA has been the norm in Latin America since it became possible to put journals online during the 1990s (Ibid), laying the foundations for regional cooperative information networks, databases and indexes (Babini/Machin-Mastromatteo 2015). In contrast with other regions of the world, Latin America started very early to consider strategies to implement an extensive OA system in the region, building an already existing robust open editorial ecosystem (Becerril-García 2019a). The result of these efforts is that over 70% of the academic output of Latin America is OA, while no other region of the world exceeds 20% (Alperin 2015: 2).
- 18 More details on the Open Access Diamond model can be found on the AmeliCA website: <http://amelica.org/index.php/en/home/#modeloD>

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ABSTRACT *Die Mechanismen eines auf monokulturellen Logiken basierenden wissenschaftlichen Kommunikationssystems verhindern Pluralität bzw. reproduzieren epistemologische Abwesenheiten sowie Asymmetrien und hierarchische Prozesse der Wissensproduktion und Wissensdissemination. Angesichts der Diversität der Wissensfelder, Praktiken, Gemeinschaften, Forschungsschwerpunkte, Sprachen, Infrastrukturen sowie regionalen und lokalen bzw. disziplinären Partikularitäten tendiert ein monokulturelles Publikationssystem dazu, zu homogenisieren und die Existenz all dessen, das nicht zu der einen Logik passt, zu marginalisieren und auszuschließen. Auf dem Terrain der Open Access-Debatte werden diese Probleme angesprochen und verschiedene Initiativen, diesbezüglich zu intervenieren, angestoßen. Die Herstellung pluraler und gleicher Bedingungen in der Erzeugung, Verbreitung und im Dialog unterschiedlicher Wissensformen ist das zentrale Anliegen einer Perspektive, die auf der Produktion und Stärkung von Wissensökologien und der Berücksichtigung von Gleichheitsbedingungen diverser Akteure aufbaut, die zuvor in diesen Diskussionen abwesend waren. Fundamental ist eine Stärkung der bereits existierenden Initiativen, die an zunehmend pluralen und gleichen Formen der wissenschaftlichen und akademischen Kommunikation arbeiten.*

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