

Development of an Iberoamerican informational thinking

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The current issue published in the Iberoamerican Journal of Science Measurement and Communication (IJSMC) is the second edition of an initiative dedicated to describing and mapping the Library and Information Science (LIS) research in Ibero-America through the presentation of a state of the art of some countries of the region. The first issue was published in the *Bibliotecas. Anales de Investigación* (BAI) journal (vol. 15, no. 2), in which the realities of Colombia, Peru, Uruguay, Cuba, Brazil, and Portugal were presented. On this occasion, we count on studies that referred to the reality of Mexico and Argentina, including a complimentary analysis of the Cuban context.

In the aforementioned edition of BAI, it was emphasized the need to consolidate an “Ibero-American informational thinking” (Araújo & González-Valiente, 2019). This means more than just the desire to map themes and research output of the Ibero-American countries, training courses, and main institutions behind the LIS research and education. It is about the construction and solidification of a “thought”, that is, a unique, original way of thinking about information phenomena, regardless of the categories of thought established and/or consolidated in other regions, especially in the United States and Europe.

Across the six articles published in BAI, we evidenced the long research and teaching LIS tradition; the different phases by which these traditions have gone through; the relationship with Anglo-Saxon research traditions and their critics; and the interaction and cooperation actions between the countries of the region. All these traits are also visible in the articles published in the current issue.

This special issue opens with the article “Research on Information Sciences in Cuba: Flows

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of knowledge during the period 2005-2019”, by Rosa Lidia Vega-Almeida and Ricardo Arencibia-Jorge. In it, the authors present the result of the Cuban scientific output in Information Science, using a bibliometric analysis of articles indexed in Web of Science from 2005 to 2009. Vega-Almeida and Arencibia-Jorge found a high presence of topics related to information technologies, bibliometric studies, information literacy, and open access. The authors highlight the correspondence between research and social needs in the information field, as well as its integration into global currents of thought. In the end, the authors consider that “the intention in the construction of an identity informational thought in the Iberoamerican region entails the assumption of a concept that is defined in its own geographic and disciplinary context”.

The second article is “Research trends in Library and Information Science in Argentina during the first decades of the 21st century,” by Maria Cecilia Corda and Gustavo Liberatore. The authors present a description of the institutional reality in Argentina and, later, a study on the scientific production of professors and researchers by analyzing document typologies, distribution over time, and institutional output. The theme structure of the field is also analyzed by which it was evidenced that the “theoretical and methodological” dimension stood out first with 31%, followed by “resources of information services”, “information management” and “information organization”. Regarding the future of the field, Corda and Liberatore state the need for “a critical balance between interdisciplinarity and the strengthening of the field, a more belligerent stance for obtaining institutional recognition and support that favors the growth of the discipline”.

The last article is “Information Sciences research trends in Mexico (2002-2021): Historical and bibliometric analysis of doctoral theses of the National Autonomous University of Mexico”, by Ariel Antonio Morán Reyes. In this study, the author examined 89 doctoral theses defended at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) between the years 2002-2021. Moran Reyes presented a historical overview of the LIS courses in the UNAM since its creation, the formation of the teaching team, and the characteristics of the training model. Derived from the bibliometric analysis, the author evidenced a thematic and theoretical diversity in the theses, highlighting the research area on "information, knowledge, and society" (51.6%), followed by "information users" (15,7%). Morán Reyes concluded that: “The relationship between Library and Information Studies in other latitudes refers to topics that are very different from what is intuitively conceived in Mexico”.

This special issue initiative aimed to increase the visibility of the Ibero-American research on LIS; however, it is worth mentioning that, worldwide, the United States LIS perspective, -expressed in the iSchools movement-, maintains the same perspective as in the 60s decade: a positivist and operational one in pursuit of efficacy, which mostly follows a commercial logic instead of a scientific one. This perspective prioritizes the study of technologies, but from an apologetic, promotional, marketing perspective. In the Ibero-American context, there is a desire to build a different perspective of study, and to legitimize these perspectives. The vitality of the Ibero-America research comes from a deep ‘immersion’ in the social and human sciences, exploring all the consequences of this ‘immersion’. The critical perspective stands out as an intellectual movement towards the informational reality, emphasizing issues related to memory, identity, heritage, and emancipation. Technologies are studied, but from an equally critical perspective, centered on the diagnosis of their contradictions, geopolitical dimensions, and ideological uses. There is a harmony between this production and contemporary movements such as decolonization, multiculturalism, southern epistemologies, and cognitive justice.

It is necessary to give this approach wider visibility and to consolidate it, as it is sometimes

found in a fragmented, dispersed, and invisible way. Legitimacy must be given to it and make it to dialogue on the international scene at the same level of scientificity as other perspectives. Frequently, it is seen in the Ibero-American context some attempts to copy and implement the US model to receive the iSchool stamped certification. There is a high desire to build an authentic, autonomous, and creative information science – hence the expression “Ibero-American informational thinking”.

References

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