

What role do repositories play in democratizing access to academic and scientific knowledge¹

Dominique Babini, CLACSO

[16th International Conference on Open Repositories](#), June 7-10, 2021

Panel: [Speaking up and speaking out - who will shape the narrative for OA repositories](#)

Thank you for inviting CLACSO -network of 806 SSH research centers in 55 countries, mainly in Latin America- to present a few words at this 16th. International Conference on Open Repositories.

CLACSO's social sciences and humanities repository has been growing in the past 20 years with diversity of contents, not only journal articles. We advocate for bibliodiverse and multilingual scholar-led non-profit open access. We do it together with other regional initiatives in Latin America, as is the case of La Referencia, the Latin American network of repositories, and with the regional journal portals Latindex, Redalyc-AmeliCA and SciELO that help journals in the transition to open access.

Today, Latin America is the region of the world with the highest percentage of its journals available in open access, journals published by universities and other scholarly institutions, and funded as part of the cost of research, with no charge to read and no charge to publish. In a study about the use of these open access contents, 75% of use comes from university students and professors for learning and teaching and from researchers, and to a lesser extent by practitioners and citizens looking for information in the Web.

This conference takes place in these particular pandemic times that are challenging our science and science communication systems worldwide, so as to speed-up co-production, sharing and analysis of new knowledge about this new virus and its variants. Requiring collaboration between scientists and other societal actors beyond the scientific community: we see health practitioners, government epidemiologists, and even patients reporting symptoms and other data in their cellular phone applications and in computer networks. And part of this knowledge at some point is also shared in preprints, journals and repositories.

And we also see great activity gathering data from community and government sources, trade unions, business organizations and ngo's, to better understand the devastating socio-economic consequences of the extended lockdowns, and inform policy makers at national and local levels to support their daily decisions about direct economic help to families, and to businesses during this emergency.

This intense production and sharing of data among diverse societal actors facing this pandemic, is also a needed methodology when facing other emergencies as is the climate change. It is difficult to imagine any of the 17 sustainable development goals that does not require as much local knowledge, published in local languages in diversity of formats, as well as contents available in the so-called mainstream journals.

This is why the decentralized global network of repositories is so important in this transition to open science that promotes bibliodiversity and multilingualism in scholarly communications, and co-production of knowledge of researchers with other societal actors. In our region, Latin

¹ Text in Spanish <https://www.clacso.org/que-rol-tienen-los-repositorios-en-la-democratizacion-del-acceso-al-conocimiento-academico-y-cientifico/>

America, where research and research communications are publicly-funded, with universities having a leading role in research publishing and ownership of open access infrastructure and services, repositories are the preferred venue for open access policies and legislations.

We need more national and international funding to strengthen these community-governed open access publishing infrastructures before commercial interests move in further in our developing regions. The consolidation of power and market by few corporations in the world is not an efficiency or market issue, it is an equity issue with strong implications for social justice.

From our experience we express the need for more international and national funding to address priorities in repositories, of which we mention here only three that support what is called in COAR the next generation repositories with value-added services, as is the case of,

- Organizing peer-review for contents for repositories contents so they can be identified in research and research assessment.
- Add to repositories functionalities and metadata to manage also preprints, FAIR research data, and CRIS information about researchers, projects and funders
- And accelerate review of research assessment procedures and career evaluation systems, in order to align them with the principles of open science, where repositories can play a more important role.

If in the research assessment systems we put all publication venues that certify quality on the same footing, it will remove some of the pressure to publish in the prestige journals, and it will make DORA and Leiden recommendations easier to implement

We strongly believe in the leading role of public funding and community-led repositories and platforms to strengthen open access and open science scholarly communications, we do not believe in APCs and commercial outsourcing for a better future of scholarly communications in our developing region.