



A dignified science that produces technologies that address the problems of our peoples

By Leonardo Melgarejo. Source: *Biodiversidad, Sustento y Culturas* magazine.

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In this 120th issue of the magazine *Biodiversidad Sustento y Culturas*, our effort to examine these 30 years of struggles for the construction of peoples' consciousness and autonomy requires us to look at colonisation which oppresses us.

Despite the accumulated lessons from the experiences derived from our most relevant victories (and defeats), what in the past were our main problems and challenges not only remain, but are worsening.

We need to understand the subtle process that advances the collective unconscious from the validation of concepts that hold us captive.

This includes not only the approaches prioritised in our universities and research centres, but also what happens in all training environments. In these spaces, a perverse articulation is advancing that establishes a strong connection between



training processes and marketing campaigns, in what Vandana Shiva categorised as the colonisation of minds [1], and was later pointed out by Boaventura de Souza Santos as instruments to block the necessary "affirmation of the epistemologies of the South" [2]. As a result, a real substitution of values and social goals is consolidated. The imaginaries of success and socio-professional fulfillment of individuals privileged by access to higher education spaces begin to be driven by the desire for social recognition, which is achieved by joining the chains of remuneration constructed from the domination of external interests over our markets, territories, and ways of life.

Consolidating individual metrics of success that reward agents co-opted by transnational interests, while discriminating against those who oppose them, creates hordes of defenders of discriminatory spaces that restrict the possibilities for Indigenous knowledge, scientific production, and activism that demands the articulation of scientific and popular knowledge as the basis for building sovereign nations.

In other words, these mechanisms impede our development because they are essentially oriented toward producing labour that guarantees the irradiation, among us, of technologies that subject us to the power of transnational corporations.

It is not a question of denying the importance and validity of knowledge generated abroad, but of demanding the autonomy of our agencies focused on producing science, technology, and training, pointing out that today they seem to limit themselves to producing technologists specialised in the adaptation of goods with transnational patents.

We see the emergence, among us, of a so-called middle class guided by the false idea of a "knowledge-based meritocracy", which acts as a veritable fundamentalist caste, refractory to the critical spirit and obsessed with the social validation of the "truths" defended in the name of their jobs. These circumstances, which result from the diversion of our universities from their original purposes (such as documenting and understanding the problems experienced by our peoples), stifle our possibilities for effective development and are sponsored by our governments.

We seem to be led by leaders who accept the hypothesis that the human sciences can shed the historical accumulation of territorially adapted innovations and knowledge, replacing the results of global epigenetics, consolidated over millennia, with their experience of transgenics with patented seeds.

In food, this hypothesis is advancing and is expressed in new weaknesses and diseases associated with the consumption of ultra-processed products, real animal feed obtained mainly from genetically modified maize and soya.



At the same time, we can note the widespread disregard of our research and training organisations for the former development of popular options capable of guaranteeing food sovereignty in ecosystems as diverse as Patagonia, the Amazon, the Cerrado, the Pantanal, and the Caatinga.

This, which occurs in all Latin American countries, is well illustrated by the advance of transgenic crops and associated agro-toxins, by the degradation that this imposes on our biomes with the poisoning of water and the weakening of the immune system of our populations.

The unacceptable link between these events and our spaces of scientific-educational production, training, and dissemination is evident in the efforts to justify them - as announced daily by renowned academics and authorities in the executive, legislative, and judicial powers.

Corruption, the erosion of representative democracy, the advance of fascist experiments, the persecution of popular leaders, and the delegitimisation of knowledge based on decent science are among the consequences of this phenomenon.

Consequently, if we stand aside, the control of our peoples' intelligence by the neocolonialists and their local vassals will tend to extend over time the domination they already exercise over our territories, advancing, let us not deceive ourselves, on what we are, seeking to erase our identities.

We need our production of knowledge and technologies to undergo ethical adjustments and turn to our civilisational accumulations, incorporating the collective wisdom of our peoples, rather than rejecting it.

Efforts to raise awareness and strengthen popular initiatives aimed at building and valuing traditional knowledge, with the support of academic science in the constructivism developed along the lines advocated by Paulo Freire, are essential.

The progress achieved without state support in the fields of agroecology, gender equality and coordination between peoples, among many others that stand as our common perspective, with a view to collective emancipation, is truly exciting.

Strengthening these processes is included among the objectives of this issue of the journal and we hope to be contributing to the broadening of actions and debates related to them.

References:



[1]<https://www.ihu.unisinos.br/categorias/594334-vandana-shiva-temos-de-destruir-o-mito-de-que-a-tecnologia-e-uma-religiao-que-nao-pode-ser-questionada>

[2] Santos, Boaventura de Sousa. The End of the Cognitive Empire: Asserting Southern Epistemologies. Belo Horizonte: Autêntica Editora, 2019. 478 p.

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