

THE SCIENCE AMONG US

It is of interest to explore which are the fields that are privileged by our researchers and the changes that take place in time. Among the different ways to do it, the most obvious one is to carry out bibliometric analyses of the publications, which indeed exist. The marked preponderance of biomedical disciplines in the times when scientific research began as a formal activity in our region, in the middle of last century, has progressively given way to other disciplines, basic and applied such as agro-sciences and more recently agro-ecology, ecology and environmental sciences, socio-anthropological studies, science policy studies and scientometrics.

The analysis of the contents of a multidisciplinary journal, as is the case of *Interciencia*, also serves to illustrate the tendencies and the changes. The current issue, for instance, includes papers that correspond to relatively novel areas, albeit of an important presence and growth, at the same time that it contains papers in disciplines that have traditionally filled our pages, such as are studies on food technology and conservation, ecology and environment, agriculture and plague control, manufacture of wood industry derivatives, and science policy.

Among the papers that reflect the steadily increasing tendency towards formal studies of matters related to social services is one that presents a methodology for the detection of fraud in water consumption, a very frequent problem of great reach in our cities, which affects the capacity to distribute water to the population as well as the profitability of the enterprises that perform it. The problem dealt with equally extends to institutions and enterprises that offer the distribution of other services, of a similar relevance for the population, such as electricity, gas, and garbage collection.

Another couple of papers correspond to a rather distant field, but also one of growing interest amongst our

researchers, judging from the number of manuscripts that are submitted to us, and which belong to the area of management and enterprise organization. One of them analyzes the perception and receptivity by advanced university students of the information sharing that takes place in the enterprises, their future employers, as a contribution to the decision-making process by the managerial staff. The other paper examines, in workers of small and medium size enterprises from Chile and Peru, the existing relationships between the conflicts, both regarding tasks and relations, and the perception of different modalities of institutional justice, and how this affects the needed adequacy in the decision-making process, in order to achieve a better management of conflicts.

The presence on our pages, in significant proportions, of papers in these disciplines reveals a change in the interests of the researchers of the region. Nowadays, scientific research, as a tool to reach a deeper knowledge of the world surrounding us, a better utilization of the available resources, and larger benefits to mankind, focuses with increasing emphasis in the direction of man in his urban social context.

Notwithstanding, the situation that can be appreciated in *Interciencia* can also be the result of the shortage of appropriate media for the dissemination of the results of studies that are carried out in the region in diverse disciplines. This in turn points to the need to have available quality multidisciplinary journals that, by publishing in our languages as well as in English, could offer to the community of researchers the opportunity to make their findings known in appropriately refereed and recognized media.

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