

Situated Scientific Cooperation in Latin America: the JRP Experience

Cooperación Científica Situada desde América Latina: La Experiencia del JRP

Cooperação científica situada na América Latina: a experiência do JRP

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Abstract: This article reflects on some contemporary challenges facing academic and scientific cooperation in Latin America (LATAM) through the experience of the international project *Journalism Role Performance* (JRP), particularly from the Colombian node. The text emerges from the reflections developed during Panel 2, “*Actions carried out and underway in LATAM: Latin American efforts in communication and cooperation*”, held within the framework of the Latin American Seminar on Communication and Academic and Scientific Cooperation organized by ALAIC in 2025. Drawing on this experience, the article examines inequalities shaping knowledge production, the limitations of competitive models of academic productivity, and the difficulties involved in sustaining long-term collaborative projects. Finally, it argues for the need to strengthen situated forms of cooperation capable of articulating methodological deliberation, research training, social appropriation of knowledge, and commitment to territorial realities.

Keywords:

Academic and scientific cooperation; Latin America; Journalism Role Performance; knowledge production; collaborative research; social appropriation of knowledge

Resumen: Este artículo reflexiona sobre algunos desafíos contemporáneos de la cooperación académica y científica en América Latina (LATAM) a partir de la experiencia del proyecto internacional *Journalism Role Performance* (JRP), particularmente desde el nodo colombiano. El texto surge de las reflexiones desarrolladas durante el Panel 2 “*Acciones realizadas y en curso, en LATAM: esfuerzos latinoamericanos en la comunicación y la cooperación*”, realizado en el

marco del Seminario Latinoamericano de Comunicación y Cooperación Académica y Científica organizado por ALAIC en 2025. A partir de esta experiencia, el artículo analiza las desigualdades que atraviesan la producción de conocimiento, las limitaciones de ciertos modelos competitivos de productividad académica y las dificultades para sostener proyectos colaborativos de largo plazo. Finalmente, se plantea la necesidad de fortalecer formas situadas de cooperación capaces de articular deliberación metodológica, formación investigativa, apropiación social del conocimiento y compromiso con las realidades de los territorios.

Palabras clave:

Cooperación académica y científica; América Latina; Journalism Role Performance; producción de conocimiento; investigación colaborativa; apropiación social del conocimiento

Resumo: Este artigo reflete sobre alguns desafios contemporâneos da cooperação acadêmica e científica na América Latina (LATAM) a partir da experiência do projeto internacional *Journalism Role Performance* (JRP), particularmente do nodo colombiano. O texto surge das reflexões desenvolvidas durante o Painel 2, “Ações realizadas e em curso na LATAM: esforços latino-americanos em comunicação e cooperação”, realizado no âmbito do Seminário Latino-Americano de Comunicação e Cooperação Acadêmica e Científica organizado pela ALAIC em 2025. A partir dessa experiência, o artigo analisa as desigualdades que atravessam a produção do conhecimento, as limitações de certos modelos competitivos de produtividade acadêmica e as dificuldades para sustentar projetos colaborativos de longo prazo. Por fim, propõe-se a necessidade de fortalecer formas situadas de cooperação capazes de articular deliberação metodológica, formação investigativa, apropriação social do conhecimento e compromisso com as realidades dos territórios.

Palavras-chave:

Cooperação acadêmica e científica; América Latina; Journalism Role Performance; produção do conhecimento; pesquisa colaborativa; apropriação social do conhecimento

1. Introduction

Thinking today about academic and scientific cooperation in Latin America requires us to examine something deeper than institutional agreements, academic mobility, or scientific production developed among institutions. The discussion cuts across the ways in which research agendas are defined, the places from which knowledge is legitimized, and the power relations that continue to organize international scientific exchanges. In the field of communication, these tensions have historically accompanied the consolidation of a Latin American critical tradition interested in building interpretive frameworks connected to the social, cultural, and political realities of the region.

Even so, many contemporary dynamics of cooperation continue to reproduce unequal forms of academic participation. International projects still persist in which theoretical and methodological decisions remain concentrated in a few centers of scientific production, while researchers and students from peripheral countries often occupy more operational than deliberative positions within the decision-making processes that guide global research agendas. This is compounded by the presence of university models increasingly shaped by productivity indicators, individual competition, and forms of validation that do not always engage with the concrete needs of the territories where research seeks to have an impact.

These concerns emerged during the Latin American Seminar on Communication and Academic and Scientific Cooperation, organized by the Latin American Association of Communication Researchers (ALAIC) on November 3, 2025. In particular, Panel 2, entitled “Actions Carried Out and Underway in LATAM: Latin American Efforts in Communication and Cooperation,” brought together institutional and academic experiences traversed by common concerns around the construction of regional networks, research training, the collaborative production of knowledge, and the need to strengthen more horizontal forms of cooperation.

The discussions developed in that space made it possible to identify problems that, although they appear in different settings, maintain deep connections. Among them are the fragmentation of Latin American academic networks, language barriers, the difficulties of sustaining collaborative projects over time, and the growing distance between certain dynamics of scientific production and the social realities of the region. Alongside these issues, a concern emerged regarding the way in which many contemporary discussions of cooperation become trapped in rigid dichotomies between North and South, theory and practice, methodology and

epistemology, while the concrete needs of territories and communities lose centrality within the debate.

The interventions presented during the panel converged on the need to build forms of cooperation capable of articulating epistemological plurality, methodological deliberation, and territorial commitment through concrete experiences of collaborative work and real problems affecting the communities and contexts in which research seeks to produce meaning. This article emerges from those discussions and proposes to reflect on the possibilities of building situated forms of scientific cooperation, understood as processes of collective knowledge production articulated with the needs of territories, academic communities, and the formative processes that participate in them.

From this perspective, scientific cooperation exceeds institutional exchange or the international circulation of research results. What is at stake is the shared construction of research capacities, the opening of deliberative spaces around methodological and theoretical decisions in projects, and the possibility of producing knowledge through less hierarchical and more collaborative relations. It therefore becomes relevant to think about scientific cooperation beyond the traditional logics of academic competition.

The experiences discussed during the panel coincided in noting that collaborative processes acquire meaning when they strengthen ecosystems of shared work, where research, training, and knowledge production cease to be understood as individual trajectories and come to be conceived as long-term collective commitments. The sustainability of many projects does not depend solely on available resources or productivity indicators. Their continuity rests on the capacity to build lasting academic ties, meaningful formative processes, and relations of cooperation connected to the real needs of communities and territories.

To develop this discussion, the article takes as a reference the experience of the international Journalism Role Performance (JRP) project, a comparative study of journalistic cultures and professional performance in different media systems around the world. The project brings together researchers from more than fifty countries and constitutes an experience of scientific cooperation promoted from Latin America toward global research arenas. Today, the JRP has consolidated itself as one of the broadest international initiatives for the comparative analysis of journalistic roles, professional cultures, and contemporary news practices.

The JRP is particularly relevant to this debate because of the forms of academic cooperation it has been building. Its methodological and conceptual discussions unfold through deliberative processes among researchers from different national contexts, in which analytical decisions, instruments, and comparative strategies are permanently discussed, adjusted, and problematized collectively. The project also represents an experience of theoretical and methodological production built through dialogue among diverse contexts, where Latin American researchers participate alongside colleagues from other regions of the world in substantive discussions about ways of interpreting and understanding contemporary journalistic practices.

The reflections presented below draw on the experience developed by the Colombian node of the JRP in order to discuss several contemporary tensions in Latin American scientific cooperation. The article addresses, in particular, the construction of more horizontal research networks, methodological deliberation in international projects, the research training of young scholars, and the need to strengthen forms of knowledge production more closely connected to territories and to the social realities of the region.

2. Academic and scientific cooperation: between methodological deliberation, training, and territorial commitment

Scientific cooperation in Latin America remains traversed by inequalities in the definition of research agendas, methodological decision-making, and the processes through which knowledge is legitimized within international scientific circuits. Processes of university internationalization have strengthened networks and joint projects among institutions from different countries. Even so, a significant portion of international research continues to be organized from academic centers with greater funding capacities and scientific recognition, while researchers from peripheral contexts often occupy more operational than deliberative positions within collaborative projects.

Sousa Santos (2009) warns that contemporary scientific production continues to be organized around mechanisms of legitimation that privilege certain academic centers and reduce the visibility of knowledge produced in peripheral contexts. UNESCO (2021) likewise notes that global research agendas remain marked by institutional and financial asymmetries that limit more balanced forms of cooperation among regions and scientific communities. These conditions

restrict the real possibilities of participation in many of the theoretical, methodological, and analytical decisions that guide international collaborative projects.

In Latin America, several recent debates on scientific cooperation have begun to focus less on rigid oppositions between North and South or on abstract disputes over epistemological paradigms, and more on the concrete conditions from which collaborative processes of research, training, and knowledge production are constructed. Scientific cooperation becomes more meaningful when it is able to articulate methodological deliberation, collective capacity-building, and research agendas connected to real problems in territories and communities.

Gibbons et al. (1997) argue that an important part of contemporary research is beginning to develop in spaces where knowledge is constructed in interaction with multiple actors, institutions, and concrete problems, partially exceeding closed and strictly disciplinary models of scientific production. Research acquires meaning in dialogue with the needs, conflicts, and processes that traverse the contexts in which it seeks to intervene. From this perspective, scientific cooperation involves shared forms of knowledge production and not only institutional exchange or the circulation of results.

The experience of the international Journalism Role Performance (JRP) project makes it possible to observe forms of scientific cooperation built through collective processes of methodological deliberation among researchers from different countries and academic contexts. Analytical categories, comparative strategies, and instruments of analysis are developed through processes of negotiation, adjustment, and shared problematization among national teams with diverse trajectories and institutional conditions, rather than responding exclusively to decisions defined from a single academic center.

The value of the JRP lies in its capacity to sustain methodological and theoretical dialogues among countries and distinct academic traditions without diluting the historical, cultural, and media-specific particularities of each national context. The project also constitutes an experience of scientific cooperation promoted from Latin America toward global research arenas, a relatively uncommon situation within the traditional dynamics of the international circulation of scientific knowledge.

The experience developed by the Colombian node of the JRP made it possible to build scientific capacities under limited institutional conditions. The second wave of the project was implemented from a university without graduate programs in communication and without

consolidated research groups in journalism studies, a situation that led to the articulation of research and training at the undergraduate level. Rather than becoming an obstacle, these conditions opened the possibility of integrating students into real processes of international research through collaborative work, methodological guidance, and participation in analysis and coding tasks.

Building with the available resources did not operate as an improvised response to structural limitations, but rather as a deliberate way of producing scientific capacities from peripheral conditions. Student participation in real processes of international research made it possible to articulate training, analysis, and methodological deliberation within a concrete experience of collective knowledge production. The process sought to strengthen analytical capacities and critical understanding of the ways in which journalism constructs meaning and represents social reality.

The incorporation of students into real research processes made it possible to understand research training beyond the technical teaching of methodological procedures. As Freire (1970) argued, the production of knowledge requires subjects capable of critically problematizing their reality and participating actively in the collective construction of meaning. In this sense, formative research entails developing capacities for analysis, deliberation, and critical reflection in relation to the contexts in which research is conducted.

The JRP experience in Colombia showed that the sustainability of many collaborative projects does not depend solely on financial resources or academic productivity indicators. The continuity of research processes is often built through academic ties sustained over time, relations of trust among work teams, and forms of accompaniment that make it possible to articulate methodological rigor, training, and collective commitment.

In contexts marked by high institutional precarity, these ties are fundamental for sustaining long-term networks of scientific cooperation. Situated scientific cooperation exceeds the traditional logics of academic internationalization and requires forms of collective work in which methodological deliberation, research training, and knowledge production remain articulated with the realities of territories.

3. Scientific cooperation, social appropriation, and territorial construction

One of the limits that various recent studies have identified in relation to certain contemporary models of scientific cooperation appears when knowledge production remains concentrated in specialized academic circuits and maintains weak links with the social realities in which research seeks to have an impact. In several processes of university internationalization, indicators of productivity, indexation, and academic visibility continue to occupy a central place, while the possibilities for dialogue with communities, territories, and social actors are not always integrated in a sustained manner into research agendas (Paulino, 2023).

Different Latin American experiences have begun to insist on the need to build forms of cooperation capable of articulating research, training, and the social appropriation of knowledge from concrete problems in the territories. Several of these concerns crossed the discussions developed in Panel 2 of the Latin American Seminar on Communication and Academic and Scientific Cooperation, particularly around the need to strengthen research processes connected with territories, training, and the social impact of knowledge.

Situated scientific cooperation involves research training, public interlocation, and the collective construction of knowledge with different social actors. Social appropriation therefore ceases to be understood as a stage subsequent to research and begins to be assumed as a constitutive dimension of the research process itself. In Latin America, recent discussions on academic cooperation have underscored the importance of strengthening institutional capacities and collaborative networks capable of sustaining research, academic exchange, and long-term cooperation initiatives despite persistent structural and resource constraints (Rodero-Acosta et al., 2024).

Various academic initiatives oriented toward territorial work have emphasized the need to decentralize scientific production and to build research processes connected to local contexts that are frequently excluded from major university circuits. In the field of communication, this concern acquires particular relevance, since research entails building mediations capable of expanding the public interlocation of knowledge and strengthening forms of critical reflection in different sectors of society. From this perspective, territories are not merely geographical delimitations, but social constructions traversed by cultural, institutional, and political relations (Llanos-Hernández, 2010).

Communication occupies a decisive place in that relational space because it makes it possible to connect research, public discussion, and territorial experiences through processes of the social circulation of knowledge (Freire, 1970). Several of these reflections emerged during the development of the Colombian node of the Journalism Role Performance (JRP) project. In addition to the processes of methodological deliberation and research training developed within the project, the experience made it possible to discuss the ways in which research results can circulate beyond traditional spaces of academic publication.

The scientific production derived from the JRP sought to build different levels of transfer and social appropriation of the findings obtained in the Colombian context. One of the most significant outcomes of this process was the publication of a scientific article jointly authored by the research team and students linked to the project, an uncommon experience within academic dynamics where high-impact publications tend to be concentrated exclusively in the individual trajectories of established researchers.

The collective construction of this article involved accompanying processes of academic writing, analysis of results, and methodological discussion with students who were actively participating in the development of the project, thereby strengthening research capacities through real experiences of scientific production. Incorporating students into real experiences of research and publication helps strengthen formative research processes linked to scientific production and the social appropriation of knowledge, aspects that recent studies have identified as relevant dimensions within research incubators and formative research spaces (Martinez-Daza et al., 2024).

This experience led to the publication of the article “Professional Performance and Journalistic Roles in Colombia: Perceptions of Journalists and Audiences,” jointly authored by the research team and the students linked to the project and published in the journal *Disertaciones*, one of the reference academic venues for communication and journalism studies in Latin America.

The process made it possible to broaden the social circulation of the results through transfer exercises aimed at non-specialized audiences. Indeed, the findings of the study on journalistic performance in Colombia were also shared through regional media and dissemination spaces directed toward citizens, with the aim of promoting public discussions on

journalistic practices, information verification, and the relationship between media and audiences.

Experiences of this nature allow us to recognize that the social appropriation of knowledge is not a complementary phase of research, but rather a dimension that traverses the very meaning of situated scientific cooperation. In contexts marked by profound inequalities in access to knowledge, restricting the circulation of scientific results exclusively to indexed journals can limit the possibilities of public interlocution and social appropriation of research. Some recent studies on open knowledge and open science in Colombia have drawn attention to the need to broaden the forms of access, circulation, and social use of scientific results (Vallejo Sierra, 2023).

Here another discussion emerges, related to contemporary forms of academic legitimization. In numerous university settings, dynamics of individual productivity continue to privilege trajectories centered on the accumulation of publications and academic recognition, leaving in a secondary place collaborative processes of training and collective construction of scientific capacities. Recent debates on academic internationalization have warned of the tensions between competitive models of scientific production and more horizontal forms of cooperation (Paulino, 2023).

Situated scientific cooperation requires the construction of research processes connected to the social realities of territories, the strengthening of scientific capacities through concrete formative experiences, and the broadening of public circulation of knowledge toward wider spaces of interlocution. Academic research thus acquires greater relevance when it is able to maintain critical links with the contemporary problems and challenges of Latin America.

4. Challenges and possibilities of situated scientific cooperation

Scientific cooperation in Latin America continues to face tensions related to inequalities in knowledge production, dependence on limited resources, and the difficulties of sustaining long-term collaborative projects. Although different regional networks and university internationalization initiatives have been strengthened over the last decades, asymmetries persist that restrict balanced participation within international research experiences.

Recent studies on cooperation and university internationalization in Latin America show that numerous institutions still face structural and financial difficulties in consolidating sustained

policies of scientific cooperation (Neves & Barbosa, 2020; Roderio-Acosta et al., 2024). In many university settings, academic cooperation continues to be organized around models in which individual productivity, impact indicators, and competitive dynamics end up displacing collective processes of scientific construction.

The demands of publication, funding, and international visibility now occupy a central place in numerous processes of academic research. In several cases, these dynamics end up reducing the possibilities of building sustained links with territories and with the social problems in which research seeks to intervene. Schorr et al. (2021) warn that many international cooperation networks continue to be traversed by geographical, disciplinary, and institutional fragmentations associated with persistent inequalities in the global production of knowledge.

The experience developed around the Journalism Role Performance (JRP) project makes it possible to observe how numerous collaborative processes are sustained through academic ties built collectively, even under adverse institutional conditions. The sustainability of many projects depends less on solid institutional structures than on the capacity to build relations of trust, shared forms of work, and common horizons among researchers, students, and research teams.

In Latin American contexts marked by institutional and budgetary limitations, the continuity of many scientific networks is often sustained through collective efforts built over the long term, where research, training, and the social circulation of knowledge form part of a single horizon of academic work. The JRP experience during the pandemic made it possible to recognize that the continuity of these processes often depends on forms of academic accompaniment capable of sustaining collective work in moments of uncertainty, exhaustion, and fragmentation of teams.

Under these conditions, methodological deliberation acquires central importance within international research projects. Situated scientific cooperation requires the capacity to influence the conceptual, methodological, and analytical discussions that guide knowledge production. De Soete et al. (2024) have emphasized the importance of building more balanced and participatory forms of academic collaboration within transnational research experiences. In the case of the JRP, methodological and comparative discussions unfold through collective processes of negotiation and adjustment among national teams with different trajectories and institutional contexts, a situation that broadens the margins of participation within international research.

Strengthening regional research networks requires recognizing the different institutional conditions, academic trajectories, and capacities from which Latin American universities conduct research. The experience developed in the Colombian node of the JRP made it possible to understand that scientific cooperation acquires greater solidity when it is able to integrate methodological deliberation, research training, and the social appropriation of knowledge within sustained processes of collective work. In contexts marked by structural inequalities and limited resources, the continuity of many collaborative experiences depends less on traditional productivity indicators than on the capacity to build lasting academic ties, shared research horizons, and commitment to the concrete problems of territories.

The experience developed in the Colombian node of the JRP made it possible to consolidate forms of academic work sustained by methodological deliberation, formative accompaniment, and collective knowledge production among researchers and students linked from diverse institutional contexts. More than an experience focused exclusively on research results, the project made visible the importance of building lasting academic ties capable of sustaining collaborative processes even under adverse institutional and budgetary conditions.

One of the main challenges of Latin American scientific cooperation consists of building forms of academic work less traversed by individualized logics of recognition and more sustained by collective experiences of research, training, and accompaniment. The JRP experience showed that many collaborative networks can be sustained through long-term academic ties, even in contexts marked by institutional limitations and scarce resources. The possibility of strengthening more stable scientific cooperation connected to the realities of the region depends, to a large extent, on the capacity to consolidate academic communities capable of researching, deliberating, and producing knowledge collectively.

5. Final considerations

The experience developed around the Journalism Role Performance (JRP) project made it possible to recognize that scientific cooperation acquires meaning when research becomes a shared space for training, deliberation, and the collective construction of knowledge. The project consolidated academic ties sustained by trust, collaborative work, and accompaniment among researchers and students from diverse institutional contexts. The experience also showed the importance of training new generations of researchers through real experiences of academic

participation and collective knowledge production, especially in contexts where the sustainability of research processes depends on academic ties built over the long term.

Scientific cooperation in Latin America continues to face the challenge of broadening participation in the decisions that guide international projects and of building academic relations less subordinated to individualized logics of recognition. Communication acquires relevance because of its capacity to connect research, social experience, and public discussion through concrete problems of the region. Sustaining more collaborative forms of research linked to Latin American realities requires consolidating academic communities in which producing knowledge is not reduced solely to publishing results, but also involves accompanying, deliberating, and training collectively.

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