

A view towards sustainable environmental management the Orinoquian region

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The Colombian Orinoquia region can be seen today as an area which the country has begun to reconsider as an economic area of interest and provider of these-called “engines of development” proposed by the current government. Such economic concept applied to Orinoquia has brought a series of positive and negative changes in its wake concerning its economic, social and environmental sectors; this has meant that regional academic thinking must begin to outline a route map to true regional development in which humankind, nature and society become integrated within models framed by sustainability.

The transformations inherent in such change have not only affected the rural sector but also the region’s town and population centres which are undergoing accelerated and disorderly change in their hurry to adapt themselves to the type of development so proposed. It has been forgotten that Orinoquia only has one city but many towns and small villages; some may have been more thought-out than others, possibly all dreamt of and constructed as replicas of the biblical Babel, at the whim of someone simultaneously appropriating a particular place both physically and symbolically from the store of his/her accumulated life experience and ideological burden, to dwell in such space and also to give a home to their world, their universe. However, faced with such change, it is essential that this region does not succumb to fashion, become mired in superfluous designs or embroiled in the accelerated activity of “restless capital” needing fresh investment in ostentatious urbanisms without rethinking the city, so that the grid which might be imagined and which could be constructed does effectively respond to its inhabitants’ dreams, interests and wishes.

Due to the foregoing, and in view of the fresh looks at regional cities which are now appearing (i.e. Villavicencio, in view of their thinking of its land-use regulations), it must be stressed that urban development plans must be conceived as the compass through which city/town government must assume the challenge of recognising urban space in all its dimensions (e.g. ecosystem management, socioeconomic, political and cultural aspects) in such a way that living in the place induces feelings of calmness and joy. The foregoing poses the need for an integral, non-sectorial view embracing sustainability, equity and complementarity.

This means that cutting-edge technologies must facilitate imposing a new cartography accounting for all the acting and determinant constituents of the social tissue in the region. The view from a flat (2D) map is *ipso facto* a flat view; a city must be viewed three-dimensionally, as dynamic spatiality; only then can the geography of inequality be overcome. None the less, together with such technical view, new epistemologies for urban development and city construction must be tackled, as must communities’ appropriation of local management’s technical and political elements, thereby ensuring citizens’ participation in designing public policy covering a city’s fate, regarding its satisfactory implementation and execution.