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Comment on hess-2021-106

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Community comment on "Bright and blind spots of water research in Latin America and the Caribbean" by Alyssa J. DeVincentis et al., Hydrol. Earth Syst. Sci. Discuss., <https://doi.org/10.5194/hess-2021-106-CC1>, 2021

This paper was a very pleasant read. The literature review is quite impressive and reveals important issues on water related research in LAC countries. We see it as an important step for building a common research agenda for LAC and fostering collaboration as highlighted in the paper results.

Our brief commentary is motivated by some of the similarities we found in a synthesis exercise with the Brazilian water resources community (i.e., Paiva et al., 2020). Paiva et al. (2020) is mainly based on grey literature – i.e., the proceedings of the XXIV Brazilian Water Resources Symposium 2019 – which complements a limitation pointed out in this paper.

DeVincentis et al. (2021) is right that many of the innovations in the water resources community may appear only in grey literature. We believe that relevant experience-based innovations – coming mostly from practitioners outside of academia and dealing with pressing issues (such as in the case of reservoirs and risk assessment) – are usually reported in symposium proceedings, and may not be rigorously documented in peer reviewed scientific papers. Moreover, Paiva et al. (2020) points out that most of research in Brazil focused on water resources practice, with more emphasis on methods and estimation, quantification, and prediction of water-related phenomena, while there is a clear opportunity for more research on processes and phenomena comprehension. It would be very interesting to understand if the same pattern is seen throughout LAC.

In a way, many of the same problems observed in the LAC context are also expressed at the Brazilian national scale. Regarding the issues of collaboration, or the lack thereof, it is a common theme even inside the same country. In Paiva et al. (2020), we found that there is an intense network of collaboration mainly between academic institutions. However, there is regional fragmentation, possibly due to geographical convenience, legacy, or common interest on regional scale water resources issues. Brazilians that study abroad tend to maintain these collaborations, so a lot of the co-authorship with American and European researchers found in this paper might be due to legacy from graduate level training. Moreover, Brazil is a destination for several graduate students from South American countries, which might explain its high frequency in collaborations within LAC even being the only Portuguese speaking country. In order to foster collaboration among LAC countries, we think there could be a common South and/or Central American association and events which could congregate researchers working on water issues in the region. In Brazil, for example, most water researchers are associated with the Brazilian

Water Resources Association (ABRhidro), and gather bi-annually for the Association Symposium.

As the paper eloquently points out, an opportunity exists to form a strong community of researchers and strengthen research impact through knowledge sharing. We also believe that we should enhance two-way sharing of knowledge and efforts on water sciences development, especially with other LAC countries with shared water issues. We should combine our experiences to actively contribute to the tackling of global water issues.

We congratulate the authors for this interesting contribution and hope that our comments can be useful for enhancing the discussions of this paper.

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