



Welcome to the 3rd Electronic Newsletter of the EULAKS Project!

We dedicate this issue of the newsletter to the nexus between social science research and Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) policy making. Recently, policy research has become a big enterprise worldwide and many social scientists have become active in studying economic and social processes and how policy interventions may impact them. EULAKS project tasks include a comparative analysis on the level and quality of policy responses in the area of STI with social science research findings in Europe and Latin America. The first results of the empirical study have been presented here. We also want to give an overview of the latest news and events in the EU-LAC cooperation, with special attention to the VI EU-LAC Summit in Madrid.

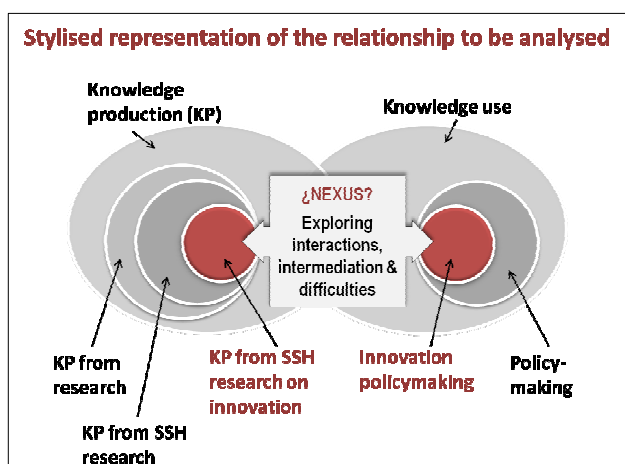
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1. The role of the Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) in Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) policy making

The University of the Republic of Uruguay (UdelaR) is leading a work task of the EULAKS project analysing the role and status of SSH in designing and implementing STI policies, considering the importance of the latter in contributing to the building of knowledge societies. The nexus between research and policymaking is admittedly complex and has been studied relatively little from a STI policy perspective. A better understanding of what is presently happening in this field, in LAC and in the EU, should result in some concrete lessons on how to foster this nexus. Therefore, in addition to identifying and characterizing SSH research groups on innovation in LAC and EU countries, UdelaR is carrying out a qualitative study based on semi-structured interviews with actors from both sides.



Three decades ago the seminal work of Weiss (e.g., Weiss, 1979) distinguished three main uses of research: a) **instrumental** or problem solving by providing direct input for policy design (quantitative and qualitative information); b) **symbolic** or legitimizing, by confirming existing notions or supporting policy decisions; and c) **conceptual** or enlightening, through improving people’s knowledge, understanding and attitudes, or by challenging assumptions, and thereby eventually changing the way of thinking and looking at issues. In the latter case, impacts are usually diffuse, subtle, diverse, long-term, and difficult to trace (Nutley et al., 2007). The following decades saw an upsurge of research for evidence-based policies while, at the same time, it became increasingly clear from empirical studies that using research is an interactive, iterative process, as well as a contextual and dynamic one. There is no such thing as new knowledge being transferred in a straightforward way from research to the policymaking field. As Davies *et al.* (2008) conclude in their long-term work on this subject: “Terms such as knowledge transfer and knowledge translation misrepresent the uncertainties, complexities and contextually contingent ways in which knowledge is created and applied. ... We suggest that 'knowledge interaction' might more appropriately describe the messy engagement of multiple players with diverse sources of knowledge. We also suggest that 'knowledge intermediation' begins to articulate some of the managed process by which knowledge interaction is promoted. Both of these terms, if combined with a suitably nuanced understanding of knowledge creation and use, could redress some of the misconceptions fostered by ideas of 'knowledge transfer'” (p. 190).



At this stage of the project – UdelaR is still carrying out interviews – it is premature to bring forward any significant findings. However, from the first twenty interviews in LAC that have been processed, it is possible to recognize and illustrate from an 'innovation perspective' some features related to the above-mentioned, abridged conceptual framework. Among others, it is interesting to observe the variety of comments concerning the main **obstacles and difficulties for stronger links** between SSH research on innovation and the definition of STI policy and instruments. We find the following criticisms particularly interesting:

- The decision making process is complex and political in nature (*"I think the main difficulty resides in the very nature of how political decisions are made. One thing is designing: researchers can do this. However moving from design to final approval entails the entire political lobby, the power struggle. We, as researchers, do not take part in this process, neither is it our responsibility to do so. ... We are convinced of the need to raise public awareness by promoting public debates and forums, otherwise projects and proposals wouldn't even reach a first round. But we don't know what can happen in the next stages, where the power game is what counts"*).
- There is a lack of effective public debate and social dialogue (*"Meeting and dialogue spaces emerge through mechanisms that are fundamentally inefficient in terms of information transmission"; "The big issue at stake is sitting other actors at the same table and building up collectively dynamic interrelations that generate actions towards innovation"*).
- A mismatch exists between supply and demand regarding SSH knowledge (*"STI decision takers show a low level of demand for knowledge created in the social sciences field, such as indicators, base studies, etc. The latter are not much used in the decision making process, they are classical products of a supply oriented system, information that was not demanded"*).
- Policy recommendations can only be applied in a limited fashion when they are abstracted from 'real life' conditions, affecting among other things institutional restrictions (*"A majority of academics dedicated to the study of innovation have a shortsighted vision of this phenomenon and lack perception of the restrictions faced by policymakers. These include from very general factors, such as the relation between macro and innovation policy, to operational issues. ... In short, this is linked to a vision that is consolidating through time, of innovation as a specific field of knowledge. I believe this is having adverse effects because it results in researchers neglecting the real restrictions to the innovation phenomenon and making recommendations that are either very generic or very exhortative...."*).
- There is a lack of systematic retrieval of research projects which have been already carried out; this would aid in identifying clues that could help in designing innovation policies or instruments (*"Nobody is really evaluating the scientific system to find out, for example, to what extent the ideas of some researchers can be a key to solve policy questions, to solve people's problems, to think about instruments that don't exist, etc."*).
- There is a lack of specialized staff in STI policy management (*"We don't have a staff of technical officers able to implement long term policies [in the country]. Those are the ones who should know about the local academic or technical production on STI, and propose different alternatives to the policymakers. There are a few of them, but they are usually badly trained"*).
- Innovation related research in Latin America tends to be focused on economic issues, and especially on the industrial sector.



- There is a need to translate the results of research projects into meaningful input for policymakers, a function that is often felt as being outside researchers' capacity. Explicit- or implicitly, interviewees expressed the idea that this function would be better performed by a type of broker specialized in decoding what researchers do and finding out, and translating policymakers' needs within the research sphere.
- Academic incentive regimes are almost exclusively oriented towards the production of papers, with no reward for 'problem solving'.
- The timing of policy makers and researchers does not coincide (*"Urgency on behalf of policy makers, who have limited time spans to produce results and develop policy documents, mean they have no time to take into account existing studies and go into greater depth with them. This is a fact; in our case it is absolutely real"*).
- Different 'language' is used by researchers and policymakers.

On the other hand, we asked interviewees to mark and rank, from a list of 13 options plus an open one, what they consider to be the main inputs, taking into account STI policymaking in their countries. The two most often mentioned inputs by researchers were "Personal knowledge and experience of the policy-makers" (75% of the interviewees) and "Working lines and financing of international organisations" (67%). In the first case, 56% of those who mentioned this input chose it as a first or second option and, in the second case 88% chose the statement. In contrast, this second input was never mentioned by policymakers. They preferred "Outcomes of deliberations between researchers and policy-makers" (83% of the interviewees, and always as the first or second

option), "Studies and diagnostics of economic sectors, and their policy lessons" and, like the researchers, "Personal knowledge and experience of the policy-makers". Only one researcher and two policymakers considered "Quantitative data obtained through surveys or similar" as an input worth mentioning. Since our sample is very limited indeed, it will be interesting to observe whether additional interviews confirm this difference in perception between researchers and policymakers concerning inputs presently used for STI policy design.

When asked if they intend to influence STI policy design, all researchers answered affirmatively. In general, they were able to identify a couple of studies from their group that had become at some point a reference in innovation related discussions, either in academic or policy spheres. Many of these groups have also carried out studies 'on demand' or answered consultations from government bodies. However, researchers' overall (spontaneous) comments on their possible ways of influencing policy usually referred (often implicitly) to the "conceptual or enlightenment" use of research rather than to the instrumental one. In fact, this would fit with their answers to the question of the previous paragraph.



2. Latest news on the EU-LAC cooperation

In recent years high-level, bi-regional sectoral policy dialogues between the EU and Latin America have intensified in a number of key areas that are closely related to global challenges, such as climate change (see EUroCLIMA Programme), migration, drugs and social cohesion (see EU-LAC Forum on Social Cohesion).

An intensified dialogue on science, research, higher education, technology and innovation was also proclaimed to be a main future challenge in bi-regional cooperation.

The VI EU-LAC Summit of Heads of State and Government:

A milestone in implementation of the EU-LAC Strategic Partnership was the VI EU-LAC Summit of Heads of State and Government on May 18 under the title "**Towards a new phase of bi-regional association: innovation and technology for sustainable development and social inclusion**".

The main outcome of the Summit was the formulation of the Madrid declaration, which is a joint agreement to address future global challenges in the strategic EU-LAC partnership, such as the financial crises, climate change, migration, technological innovation, organised crime and poverty.

Some important aspects of the Madrid declaration:

- The creation of a new **Latin America Investment Facility (LAIF)** by the EU, the main objective of which is to serve as

leverage to mobilize additional financing to support investment in Latin America, to aid progress in priority areas. The EC has dedicated LAIF €125 million in grants up to 2013. Seventeen projects have been identified for the first period, 2010-2011.

- The creation of the **EU-LAC Foundation**, which will contribute to strengthening the EU-LAC bi-regional partnership process involving participation and input from civil society and other social actors. The EC is contributing €3 million to the Foundation up to 2013.
- The development and Implementation of the EU-LAC Joint **Initiative for Research and Innovation** (the 'Initiative') to accelerate achievements from the "EU-LAC Knowledge Area". The Initiative frames Science and Technology cooperation within the scope of higher education and innovation action. This is expected to create conditions for strengthening the interface between research and innovation and to facilitate technology transfer and adaptation.
- The creation of a joint **Action Plan** that foresees a number of initiatives in six priority areas of the bi-regional partnership: science, research, innovation and technology; sustainable development (environment, climate change, biodiversity, energy); regional integration and interconnectivity; migration; education and employment; and drugs.



The initiative for science, research, innovation and technology is mainly devoted to development of the "EU-LAC Knowledge Area" through: i) improving cooperation in research and innovation; ii) strengthening scientific and technological capacities, and infrastructures; iii) enabling sustainable research, innovation and knowledge sharing taking into account the contribution of ancestral and traditional knowledge; iv) boosting the use of new technologies and technology transfer underpinning sustainable socio-economic development and v) fostering cooperation between both regions regarding the digital economy and reduction of the digital divide to improve competitiveness while making social inclusion a cross-cutting issue.

Within the margins of the Summit, a series of bilateral mini-summits were held with specific LAC countries and sub-regions:

- EU-Andean Community (CAN), May 19
- EU-Central America, May 19 (conclusion of negotiations for an Association Agreement)
- EU- CARIFORUM Summit, May 17 (renewed regional political dialogue and progress towards establishing a new Joint EU-Caribbean Strategy)
- EU-Chile Summit, May 17 (establishment of the EU-Chile Association for Development and Innovation, ADI)
- EU-Mexico Summit, May 16 (adoption of a joint Executive Plan, within the framework of the EU-Mexico Strategic Partnership)
- EU-MERCOSUR, May 17

The VII LAC-EU Summit will be held in Chile in 2012.

3. Other news and events

3.1 ESOCITE 2010

Fifteen years after the first Latin American Meeting of Social Studies of Science and Technology, Buenos Aires will again host the VIII ESOCITE Meeting (Buenos Aires, July 20-23). This time the title of the gathering is "Science and Technology for Social Inclusion in Latin America". This ESOCITE meeting faces two important challenges: to further strengthen the field of Social Studies of Science and Technology in Latin America, and to push for a public discussion on the role of scientific and technological knowledge in the region and its uses in societies requiring the mobilization of S&T in order to find solutions for long-standing problems.

For details please check out the ESOCITE website under:

<http://www.esocite2010.escyt.org/index.php>

3.2 2nd Latin American and Caribbean Congress on the Social Science

The 2nd Latin American and Caribbean Congress on the Social Sciences was hosted May 26-28 by FLACSO Mexico where researchers, graduates, public officials and students from the whole region came together to discuss topics of interest in the Social Sciences for Latin America. Around 800 presentations and 24 conferences were held, accompanied by book presentations and cultural events, divided in seven thematic blocks:

- Inequality, exclusion, poverty and social welfare
- Democracy, institutions, political processes and governability
- Human rights
- International relations, integration and security
- Economy and development
- Cultural processes, identities and citizenship
- Population dynamics and environment

In a round table of block IV on “Experiences of successful international cooperation Mexico, Latin America and the European Union” hitherto results of alliances between private and public organs, universities and research centers of both regions were presented, including progress and achieved goals of participants from Europe and Latin America in the EULAKS project.

For more information please visit:

<http://www.congresoflaco2010.org/>

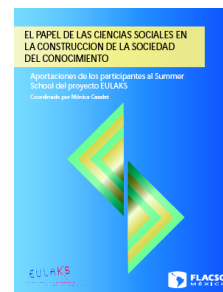
Announcements:

Release of the eBook on “The role of the Social Sciences in the construction of the knowledge-based society”:

The EULAKS project and FLACSO Mexico recently released an eBook on “The role of Social Sciences in the construction of a knowledge-based society”, a joint publication by young researchers who participated in the corresponding EULAKS summer school, which was held at the FLACSO Mexico campus in 2009. In the eBook articles, young

researchers processed their fresh reflections on the various dimensions of impacts that new knowledge has had on societies in Europe and Latin America, reflecting on their specific research focuses.

You may download the eBook at the EULAKS website: <http://www.eulaks.eu/attach/ebook.pdf>



EULAKS policy workshop in London:

On September 23-24 the EULAKS project will hold a **policy workshop** at the London School of Economics (LSE) in London. The workshop will provide a platform for presentation of major EULAKS project research results to policy makers. Policy recommendations will be built on these social science research results, which cover different facets of the EU-LAC scientific collaboration, and be brought to policy makers in order to strengthen bi-regional cooperation in SSH between the EU and LAC.