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Latin American Forum on Scientific Evaluation

Mexico City, November 26 and 27, 2019

Rapporteurship

On November 26 and 27, 2019, at the Dr. José María Luis Mora Institute of Mexico City, the Latin American Forum on Scientific Evaluation (*Foro Latinoamericano sobre Evaluación Científica*, in Spanish, or FOLEC) took place. It is a joint initiative of the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (*Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales*, in Spanish, or CLACSO) and Mexico's National Council of Science and Technology (*Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología*, in Spanish, or Conacyt) to bring about a discussion about the processes of evaluation of scientific work and to originate proposals from Latin America and the Caribbean, in dialogue with trends and best practices from others regions of the world. This Forum brought together, in two intense working sessions, experts from the region, representatives of National Organizations of Science and Technology (*Organismos Nacionales de Ciencia y Tecnología*, in Spanish, or ONCyT), as well as representatives and members of CLACSO associate centers in Mexico.

The sessions were divided into two panels, two roundtable discussions, three work commissions, plenary talks, and spaces for dialogue. The two panels presented issues and generated discussion points that were later addressed in the work commissions. The two roundtable discussions addressed topics from a wide and plural perspective that allowed to share experiences, studies, analysis, and reflections. The three work commissions were devoted to the creation of a statement of situation, to identify strategic work areas, and to foresight. Lastly, the dialogue space with the ONCyT sought to socialize experiences and find areas of agreement in order to build and strengthen regional evaluation instruments and to move towards an instance of exchange and discussion that involves the scientific systems of the different countries.

Next, we will highlight the central reflections and the main agreements reached in this Forum.

First, the importance of the event to fundamentally transform the evaluation practices of scientific work in the countries of the region was stressed, as well as the need for instances of articulation with government representatives in order to have an impact on policy development. The cooperation between CLACSO and Conacyt, as well as the participation of UNESCO and of ONCyTs such as COLCIENCIAS (Colombia) and CONICET (Argentina) is a milestone in the construction of new proposals with a real capacity for implementation and impact.

Secondly, throughout the different panels and discussion roundtables, the actors that influence the global, regional and national regulation of the scientific evaluation were critically analyzed, and their practices, rationalities, and interests were made evident. The tensions between the international publications circuit – dominated by a small group of publishing multinationals– and the Latin American and Caribbean regional circuit, which, although fragmented in different proposals, has room for autonomy, were also visibilized. Those tensions can be reduced to the commodification of science and privatization of knowledge, on the one hand, and the affirmation of knowledge as public or common goods, the importance of its democratization and the rights perspective (right to science, right to university, right to information), on the



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other. The national cases introduced the different instruments of government or institutional policies (from universities) and how those are linked to global and regional trends. In each case, the current discussions, proposals for modifications and locally developed instruments were presented in order to include discerning views during the evaluative instances. By way of illustration, the case of Argentina demonstrated the presence of mechanisms governed by differentiated logics, one linked to the internationalization of the scientific production and another that focuses more on regional circuits of research popularization and on a more comprehensive perspective of the substantive missions of the university. In the case of Uruguay's Universidad de la República, ongoing policies results were shared and the use of a comprehensive analysis of resumes or CVs to generate an analysis of professional path was introduced. The majority agreed to transcend the classic concept of academic quality and excellence in order to incorporate social value and the context of the production of knowledge.

Thirdly, elements and dynamics of knowledge production that have been made invisible by the standardization of evaluation practices were addressed. Three issues summarize the dialogues that were undertaken. First, the promotion of autonomous popular science formats and languages of communication. That is, to make Spanish and Portuguese visible as scientific and academic languages, as well as the vast editorial development of book publishing, both in Latin America and the Caribbean and in Ibero-America. Second, the active incorporation of non-academic actors in the research process: either as team members, contributing their diverse knowledge, as participants in the elaboration and monitoring of the process, or as assessors of the results. At this point, issues related to the social use of knowledge were discussed. Third, the contribution of the arts to evaluation in the social sciences, the humanities, and other sciences was considered, given the fact that the arts have developed their own evaluation mechanisms and criteria that include analysis of the praxis, outreach, transfer, and relationship with various communities.

Fourth, a dialogue was generated between the different repositories and platforms that make up the regional publications circuit (Redalyc, Scielo, LATINDEX, La Reference, AmeliCA), including DORA, which demonstrated their importance for the circulation of academic knowledge in Latin America and the Caribbean, in tension with business logic. As a result of the debate among the participants, a request was made to the different repositories in terms of articulating and fostering interoperability between them, to access information (metrics, etc.) in order to visualize the uniqueness, the quality and the production dynamics of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Conclusions and stocktaking

By way of conclusion and to take stock of the work carried out in the two days of the FOLEC, the committees presented in plenary the points of consensus around the specific topics discussed and CLACSO's Executive Secretariat presented a roadmap to follow collectively to arrive at the introduction of a Latin American and Caribbean proposal for evaluation by November 2021.

Agreements reached

Three commissions functioned in workshop format during FOLEC, with the intention to reach agreements on political consensus and the design of medium-term strategies to generate a regional evaluation proposal. Each commission had a document that triggered discussion. The first two commissions worked in parallel and, later, they came together to form the third commission since it implied a synthesis discussion.



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The agreed points are presented below.

The first commission carried out a general discussion on the meaning of research and evaluation policies. In this regard, they addressed topics such as:

- The inclusion of qualitative evaluation criteria in the evaluation of publications, projects, and professional careers.
- The multidimensionality of the evaluation.
- The incorporation of commissions of experts in each discipline in order to define criteria by the community of reference itself, and that the criteria should not be predefined. These commissions must be plural and take into consideration gender parity, diversity of career paths, representation of cultural, ethnic, and thematic diversity, etc.
- The search for proposals to unify platforms and/or reduce the time spent by researchers to load data and in administrative processes.

Next, three points of agreement were reached:

First,

- Create a profile that takes into account the trajectory of an individual and a multiplicity of indicators.
- Create a protocol in which the researcher selects which productions they consider most significant and explains their decision. Then this is supplemented with metrics and other information.
- Send a report on the above to the researcher so that the evaluation is not punitive or has the sole function of control, but is instead educational.
- Other elements that should be considered in career evaluation are teaching, artistic production, social impact, outreach, and contributions to public debate.
- Design an information system and a common Latin American infrastructure to collect information on career path and production. If that is not possible, see if they can be harmonized.
- Discuss the issue of incentives and stimuli that distorts the meaning of research by making researchers compete with each other or regarding certain standards, diverting them from focusing on knowledge production or conditioning them with productivity criteria.

Second,

- Put forward broader criteria for the evaluation of research projects, which consider other productions and not only prioritize publications. For example, artistic production, social impact, outreach, contributions to public debate, essays, books, public policy documents, work with social organizations or in the public sector, etc.



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- Think of ways to validate or recognize research projects that are not funded but are serious and rigorous.

Third,

- Evaluation of publications based on the article (content, relevance) and not on the journal where it is published (impact factor).
- Promote a Latin American and Caribbean system for the validation of journals, which particularly recognizes those of the region in parity with those of other geographies.
- To question the transfer of the economic rights that occurs when signing a contract with commercial publishers and that it means that the knowledge produced by public institutions and with public funds is effectively privatized, becoming the property of private companies, and also acknowledge the importance of developing a copyright retention policy.
- Promote DOI (Digital Object Identifier) policies for the region.
- Regarding non-commercial licenses, define if this road will be taken.
- Establish peer review with open and transparent systems.
- Demand public funds for those publications that are inscribed in or present public systems of publication and distribution management for their production. The funds are usually employed in paying access permits to private publications. It would be very significant if at least a substantial part of these resources was used to finance publications by public institutions and/or of non-commercial open access.

These three points, at the same time, are mediated by two intersecting issues.

On the one hand, one of a political nature

- A broad and continuous debate about research is relevant for countries like ours is necessary.
- In the same vein, it is also important to discuss and agree on what quality research is for countries like ours.
- Based on the above, think about what indicators and procedures would allow us to have information or evaluate that research.
- All of the above should be discussed in the framework of broader definitions of what public policies for knowledge production we consider necessary for the development of our societies and, according to that, what evaluation policies are relevant as tools to that end.
- It is very important to create public spaces for plural debate, with the participation of various actors from the academic community and other social actors, in order to define public policies and guidance for the sector.

On the other, one of methodological order:



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- This should not be confined to a sort of a commission of notable individuals. Therefore, it is necessary to think of a space that allows for continuous work, but also with instances of wider discussion and inquiry.

The basis of any evaluation device must be the social right to knowledge and it must be built on a political ethics of solidarity and communality.

The second commission focused on the evaluation and accreditation of undergraduate and graduate degrees, and reached the following general agreements, as a starting point:

- The current evaluation strategies, standards, and indicators have a political bias. It is essential to unveil this and make it clear that those that will be proposed will respond to a transformative political position.
- The evaluation must correspond with the mission and objectives of the institutions and programs, and in no case be transformed into an end in itself. If what we propose are university and research institutions committed to social and political transformation, justice and equity, the evaluation must be at the service of that mission.
- The evaluation should contribute to the improvement of the institutions and not limit their possibilities with effects that are punitive.
- Generate guidelines for good evaluation practices at three interrelated levels: public policies, institutions, and scholars.

On that basis, the following proposals were developed:

1. Deploy strategies to build a system of associative, integrative (in its two senses, as integral and in terms of regional conformation), pluralist, and transdisciplinary evaluation that builds trust and is based on the principles of open science.
2. To favor the democratic and plural conformation of the evaluation commissions with an ecosystem of transparent actors, who must be mediators of public policy.
3. Create situated evaluation criteria, which take into account local realities and knowledge areas, that allow for adequate minimum common elements for the production of knowledge and education in the region. They should allow for global evaluations without losing sight of local differences and the plurality of epistemological, theoretical, and methodological perspectives. Those criteria must also foster both collaborative work in working groups (for example, acknowledgment of teams rather than individual careers) and also the integration of practices such as research, teaching, extension, and internationalization, avoiding the hierarchization of functions.
4. Acknowledge and value institutional self-evaluation practices.
5. Make visible that the production of knowledge is plural, and incorporates sciences, humanities, and arts; as well as a plurality of actors.



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Commission 3 brought together the participants of the other two commissions, who began an initial dialogue on the impact/incidence /social utility of knowledge. The difficulties in observing and weighing those science-society interactions that result in knowledge “put into use” that are not always formalized in traditional linkage and transfer mechanisms (agreements, contracts, patents, etc.) were discussed. Regarding the axes of discussion, the following were highlighted:

1. To build an appropriate conceptual framework:

- There are numerous concepts that have been used and their meaning should be reviewed: Impact / incidence / social utility of knowledge
- It was proposed to use the notion of relevance, but with “a surname”.
- The allusion to relevance was recovered from UNESCO, in terms of social responsibility and commitment. It was agreed that quality per se makes no sense if it has no social impact. In addition, in the region this body incorporates the issues of solidarity and autonomy.
- Define from our public interests the relevance. And frame it in social right to knowledge. Review the concept of responsible research.
- a) Concept of situated Science: it is not knowledge for others, but for all. Interculturality
- b) Social utility of knowledge. Incidence

2. To make an effort to operationalize the concepts:

- What problems are relevant and what methodology are used to define them: are they centralized or participatory?;
- Ways in which non-academic actors are involved: in the process or as users of products?. What kind of links and link density.
- Problem of cognitive distance.
- There are social approaches to determine social relevance in advance. The impacts are ex post. In this exercise we would talk about social relevance. Also, how to code those relevant signals. Topic of priorities: there are methodologies to define them.

3. The normative part would consist in generating that the evaluation systems encourage the production of knowledge with social relevance, and with capacity for dialogue with non-academic actors.

- How to evaluate ex ante what is relevant and ex post what incidence was taken, being careful not to generate simulations, it is already happening in the UK that took a turn of its evaluations towards social incidence and all argue that they have it.

4. Proposals of some indicators to recognize processes and other products:

- To recognize dialogues with other disciplines. Highlight the Role of Social Sciences as a bridge with other disciplines, because the others alone do not solve the problems. The problems are complex and require an interdisciplinary look.
- To recognize thematic networks or research networks.
- To recognize intercultural dialogues: recovery of knowledge, which from the Social Sciences we have an obligation to understand. We have to approach the Social Sciences. Exercise responsibility to make those voices visible.
- To put content to the word quality that by itself means nothing. You have to put content. For example, Consider the institutional project based on which quality would be defined. In other words, quality must have a last name.



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- To recognize the role of Social Sciences in social change, by assessing the commitment to social transformation: the social utility of knowledge built from the academic or in interaction with non-academic actors.
- To recognize relevant and socially responsible projects.
- To recognize how social sciences contribute to social rights to knowledge.

5. In the long term: recommendations to the national and institutional evaluation systems of the region in particular in the Social Sciences: Fundamentals, Methodologies, Processes and Tools

The synthesis reflections achieved are as follows:

1. The link between science and society is based on the right to knowledge. Therefore, the transfer of scientific knowledge and the construction of knowledge through the dialogue of knowledge with the most diverse cultural communities is part of the scientific work.
2. During neoliberalism, the link between science and society has been mediated by economic objectives and power: to a large extent, scientific research has favored the needs and interests of large companies and the State. The exclusion of the problems of vast social sectors from scientific agendas (in particular, from natural and technological sciences) slows down the construction of fairer and more equitable societies and makes it difficult to solve the great challenges that current societies face in the near future. Following climate change, migratory flows. That is why it is necessary for science to be linked to all sectors of society, which means, specifically to give voice to those sectors, communities and social groups that have been silenced in the past. This implies that the link is guided by a political ethic: solidarity, social commitment and the recognition of the rights to knowledge and welfare of societies. The foregoing will occur only to the extent that the scientific community opens spaces for political debate about the societies to be built and their contributions and responsibilities to the future of society.
3. The relationship with various social actors can occur in multiple ways: for example, taking into account the specific demands of certain social actors (through consultancies, consultancies), situated research or action research. Due to their own characteristics, social sciences historically have an infinite number of ways of linking, which must be considered in their diversity and plurality. It is important to underline that the call to the incidence of science in society does not weigh empirical research on theoretical ones. Both are devices aimed at solving the problems that societies face.
4. The articulation of science with society must be framed by openness and respect for the diversity of existing knowledge. Science should not displace other systems of knowledge but engage in dialogue with them. This requires a self-critical analysis of the claims of unique knowledge that science has traditionally sustained. In the same way, it is necessary that the relationship does not reify the participating social actors and intends to impose the scientific vision on them.
5. The transfer of knowledge and the positive impact on societies is not achieved with traditional scientific products (articles, books and book chapters) but requires mechanisms that facilitate the appropriation of scientific knowledge to social communities. These include art (art workshops, works of art, etc.) and various forms of social intervention as well as mechanisms for dissemination and dissemination of knowledge known and practiced by scientific communities. The manner in which the transfer is made depends on the particular characteristics of each specific project and cannot follow a prescribed guide.
6. To evaluate the social utility and incidence of research, it is necessary to build a new rationality that considers the learning and limitations of current conceptions and designs flexible mechanisms and



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criteria taking into account the numerous academic practices that coexist in our region. Taking into account that current evaluation practices have stimulated - involuntarily - acts of improvisation and simulation, it is necessary to place emphasis on future forms of evaluation on impacts and incidents.

7. To move forward in the design of new forms and evaluation mechanisms, it is necessary to open a broader discussion of a series of concepts (for example, social impact, social relevance, social impact, social relevance, social responsibility, social applicability, quality) , those who have guided the evaluation of scientific knowledge and its impact on society today. For this purpose, the scientific communities and government authorities in charge of science policies must have sufficient time to initiate such discussions in a democratic and inclusive manner without perceiving pressure to redefine and operationalize the processes within a short time. The reflection on the evaluation of the impact of a scientific project must take into account that its social incidence often does not occur quickly and not immediately and that sometimes many years pass until a palpable effect occurs.
8. The development of a science committed to the future of societies and the willingness of the scientific community to be linked can be stimulated through incentives and the evaluation systems themselves. The evaluation aims to stimulate the social incidence of science instead of forcing it or sanctioning scientific groups.
9. The evaluation of the linkage should not be left to private organizations (NGOs or companies).

Roadmap 2019-2021

Karina Batthyány, Executive Secretary of CLACSO, spoke at the event's closing round table and presented the following work agenda:

1. Generate an institutional **dialogic workspace (in the form of forums or seminars)** to reach a regional proposal by November 2021. CLACSO assumes the responsibility of articulating and promoting this space of reflection and work in coordination with ONCyTs and other institutions.

Tentatively, to continue this work in 2020, the following events were suggested:

- ✓ LASA Guadalajara, Mexico (May)
- ✓ ESOCITE-LALICS Montevideo, Uruguay (July)
- ✓ CLACSO's Extraordinary General Meeting in Colombia (September)

The next meetings will focus on the discussion of concrete proposals in terms of dimensions, processes, and evaluation indicators.

2. Create a **follow-up group** to monitor the work of the meeting spaces and elaborate on the evaluation proposal. This group will nurture the process, both from the content perspective as well as the work methodologies perspective.
3. Promote the creation of a **joint evaluation network**, with participation from ONCyTs, universities, and other relevant actors. The goal of the network is to share experiences,



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socialize discussions, and strengthen the impact on the generation of public policy instruments that can be applied in countries and institutions.

4. Develop a **digital platform for CLACSO** that includes documents, information, videos, etc., to democratize, expand, and energize the discussion. This platform will serve as an institutional repository for the work of the meeting and discussion spaces.

Media impact

We share here some media coverage of the Forum:

- *Evaluation, Knowledge Production, and Scientific Field: A Legitimacy Crisis?* by Sylvie Didou Aupetit: <http://www.educacionfutura.org/evaluacion-produccion-de-conocimiento-y-campo-cientifico-unacrisis-de-legitimidad/>
- *Recovering the Production of Critical and Transformative Knowledge*, by CLACSO's communications team: <https://www.clacso.org/recuperar-la-produccion-de-conocimiento-critico-y-transformador/>
- *Conacyt and Clacso Will Propose New Systems for Evaluating Scientific Activity in Latin America*, by CLACSO's communications team: <https://www.clacso.org/conacyt-y-clacso-propondran-nuevosistemas-de-evaluacion-de-la-actividad-cientifica-para-america-latina>



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Annex 1. Final program

Day 1: November 26

8.30 **Registration**

9.00 **Opening ceremony**

Dra. Diana Guillén Rodríguez (Instituto Mora)

Dra. Nada Al-Nashif (UNESCO)

Dra. Karina Batthyány (CLACSO)

Dra. Carmen de la Peza Casares (CONACYT)

9.30 **Panel 1: Towards a comprehensive evaluation of scientific activity: global challenges and regional proposals.**

Keynote speaker:

Fernanda Beigel (Universidad Nacional de Cuyo – CONICET, Argentina/América)

Participants:

Diana Guillén Rodríguez (Instituto Mora, México)

Renato Dagnino (UNICAMP, Brasil)

Ismael Rafols (CSIC, España)

Pablo Kreimer (UNQ – CONICET, Argentina)

Moderator: Daniela Perrotta (CLACSO)

Commentator: Sylvie Didou Aupetit (CINVESTAV, México)

11.30 **Coffee break**

12.00 **National experiences of scientific evaluation: talks with representatives of national organizations and institutional references of science and technology**

Space to engage in dialogue with representatives of public policies in science and technology in Latin America and the Caribbean, both from organizations and institutional referents, to share strategies on new evaluation criteria.

- Cecilia Tomassini (UDELAR, Uruguay)
- María Isabel Domínguez (CIPS y asesora CITMA, Cuba)
- Cynthia Jeppesen (CONICET, Argentina)
- Yadira Casas (COLCIENCIAS, Colombia)

Moderator: Luz María Calvo Irabién (CONACYT)

14.00 **Lunch break**

15:00 **Commissions (two commissions in parallel)**



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1. Evaluation of scientific production and academic careers
2. Evaluation of institutions, university education, and postgraduate courses

17.00 ***Coffee break***

17.30 **Roundtable 1: Debates, challenges, and alternatives to consider other languages, formats, and products. The dialogue between different types of knowledge.**

Presented by:

Elea Giménez Toledo (CSIC, España)

Imanol Ordorika (UNAM, México)

María Isabel Domínguez (CIPS and adviser CITMA, Cuba)

Sandra Torlucci (UNA, Argentina)

Sara Victoria Alvarado (Universidad de Manizales and CINDE, adviser COLCIENCIAS, Colombia)

Moderator: Mario de Leo Winkler (CONACYT)

Commentator: Verónica Sieglin (Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León, México)

19.30 ***Welcome dinner hosted by Instituto Mora***

Day 2: November 27

8.30 ***Registration***

9.00 ***Panel 2: Towards a comprehensive evaluation of scientific activity: global challenges and regional proposals. The evaluation of the publications.***

Presented by:

Eduardo Aguado (REDALYC/América)

José Octavio Alonso-Gamboa (LATINDEX)

Bianca Amaro (LA Referencia)

Solange Santos (SciELO/FAPESP)

Saray Córdoba González (Universidad de Costa Rica and Latindex)

Erin McKiernan (DORA, UNAM, México)

Moderator: Fernanda Saforcada (CLACSO)

Commentator: Jean Claude Guédon (Universidad de Montreal, Canadá)

11.00 ***Coffee break***

11.30 ***Commissions***

14.00 ***Lunch break***

15.00 ***Roundtable 2: International experiences of scientific evaluation***



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Presented by:

Andrés Morales (UNESCO, Social Sciences and Humanities Specialist from the Latin American Regional Office)

Almas Taj Awan (Global Young Academy)

Karina Batthyány (CLACSO)

Axel Didriksson (UNESCO Chair on Regional Integration and University)

Moderator: Pablo Vommaro (CLACSO)

Commentator: Ana María Cetto (LATINDEX)

16.30 ***Coffee break***

17.00 Commissions

18.30 ***Plenary/ Conclusions/ Institutional closing ceremony***

Dra. Carmen de la Peza Casares (CONACYT)

Dra. Karina Batthyány (CLACSO)

Dra. Diana Guillén Rodríguez (Instituto Mora)

19.00 Farewell ceremony

Commissions

Commission 1: Evaluation of scientific production and academic careers

Facilitators: Darío Salinas Figueredo (Universidad Iberoamericana, México) and Yamile Socolovsky (CONADU, Argentina)

Rapporteurs: Fernanda Saforcada (CLACSO) and Saray Córdoba González (Universidad de Costa Rica and Latindex)

Commission 2: Evaluation of institutions, university education, and postgraduate degrees

Facilitator: Isabel Piper (Universidad de Chile, Chile)

Rapporteurs: Antonio Sánchez Pereyra (UNAM, México) and Guillermo Chávez Sánchez (UNAM, México)

Commission 3: Evaluation of the social impact of research

Facilitators: Damián Del Valle (UNA, Argentina) and Rosalba Casas (UNAM, México)

Rapporteur: Verónica Sieglin (Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León, México)

ANNEX 2. List of participants

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Tecnología

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Annex 3. Conceptual documents.

Context

In a global context of neoliberal hegemony, the development of science –both in its modes of production, dissemination, and evaluation of knowledge, as well as the training of new researchers– has been permeated by the principles and logic of that said model. Although there are differences between local contexts, it is possible to observe, in the last decades, the creation of an architecture of regulation of the scientific activity that possesses common elements. The installation of the principle of productivity at the core of the evaluation of the construction of knowledge has been developed through tools that measure and regulate research paths and/or careers, classify and rank the type of publications according to standardized criteria, and categorize study programs and universities according to global rankings. Those tools constitute an evaluation device that has been firmly placed within scientific policies in the world in general and in Latin America in particular, permeating the universities' existence, defining legitimate ways of doing scientific research, and regulating the daily work of teachers and researchers.

The presence and strengthening of that rationality, which threatens to become common sense among new generations of researchers, has established clear limits to the work of Social Sciences and Humanities, narrowing the possible paths and homogenizing research methods, strategies of publication, and dissemination of knowledge, ways of teaching-learning, and even the content that is prioritized. This has meant, among other things, a growing individualization of research practices in detriment of teamwork and the development of collaborative work, extreme competition for ever-diminishing resources, the homogenization of training programs, and the weakening of the social and political responsibility of universities.

In spite of the force with which this knowledge management and production logic associated with productivity and performance has taken hold, various critical voices have been raised to point out its adverse effects and to propose other ways. This first Latin American Forum of Scientific Evaluation seeks to become a meeting place for those critical voices, promoting reflection and debate around the issue, and jointly thinking of rigorous alternative scientific policies based on public responsibility, pluralism, and solidarity.

Commission 1: Evaluation of scientific production and academic careers

Goal

The goal of this Commission is to develop a critical perspective of the processes of evaluation of scientific work and academic production in the countries of the region, especially concerning the distortions produced by the use of bibliometric indicators and university rankings.

Based on a review of the needs and characteristics of the university systems and academic communities of the Latin American and Caribbean region, this commission proposes, as a long-term goal, to contribute to the development of fundamentals, methodologies, processes, and tools that can be recommended as to the national and institutional evaluation systems of the region. Special emphasis is placed on the creation of appropriate tools for the evaluation of production in Social and Human Sciences (SHS).

The expectation is that the outcome of this commission may nurture a long-term process.

Functioning

This commission will have two moderators who will moderate the debates, ensuring equitable and dynamic speaking time for the assistants, notable researchers, and operators. Likewise, two rapporteurs will record what happens during the three working spaces, distributed in two days.

This document is intended to spark debate and dialogue between participants.

Arguments

In recent decades, scientific publications have become the communication vehicle of science par excellence, and in particular, mainstream journals have become guarantors of excellence. The "academic globalization" was responsible for reifying that "international prestige" for a select group of universities that would soon enter the top ten of the world rankings. To a large extent, the concept of mainstream science was consolidated because publications became the main axis of institutional and individual evaluation, not only in the centers of knowledge production but also on the periphery.

The use of bibliometrics contributed to reinforce the conviction that English functions as *lingua franca*. The "universalization" of those trends was also driven by the growing interest of scholars from all over the world to enter the complex ISI-Web of Science (today Clarivate) and Scopus (Elsevier). This led many journals in peripheral communities that were eager to "belong" to switch their language of publication to English. As a corollary of those processes, the vicious circle of the commodification of the publication system ended up enclosing the professors themselves, when institutions and governments began to reorient evaluative cultures to adapt them to production in the terms of the mainstream.

Criticism of the distortions generated by the mainstream circuit and, in particular, of the Impact Factor (IF) has a long tradition in the Latin American open access movement, where non-commercial initiatives and cooperative models managed by the academic sector itself have emerged. Consequently, actors and experts from regional repositories and academic networks have developed an in-depth analysis of the relationship between "excellence" and "quality".¹

In the case of the SHS, research is still being communicated, in a high percentage, in the local language, in books and in journals that are distributed locally/regionally². Formats vary depending on whether the production is aimed at academic/scientific audiences (article in journal with arbitration, book or book chapter, conference paper, research reports, thesis, preprints, data sets in process) or to another type of productions, with a variety of formats, whose recipients are associated with public policies, social movements, productive sectors, and even the general public (article in non-arbitrated academic journals, popular science books, opinion articles, educational resources, reports, policy synthesis, blogs, outreach activities, interviews and articles in the media, multimedia productions, databases).

¹ <http://eprints.rclis.org/23682/>

² In the case of articles and books published by Social Sciences researchers from CONICET Argentina, a high percentage is published in the region (Gantman, 2011, <https://bit.ly/2kUQ6nL>)



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In contrast to that diversity and richness of formats with which SHS share and communicate new knowledge, the production evaluation systems of individual researchers and researchers, groups, projects, and SHS research institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean are faced with models based, mainly, on assessing the production published in arbitrated international journals, preferably in English, and with a high impact factor. That methodology is recognized as limited and not recommended in the international declarations DORA³ and Leiden⁴. Likewise, in the evaluation processes of SHS in the region, little value or none is given to articles published in peer-review journals from the region that meet international quality standards⁵, and also little or no use in evaluation processes is made of complementary indicators from open access⁶. Also, there are no indicators available to assess books, which occupy an important place in the SHS. The fact of not having any proposals of a different format than published "text" in various media as the outcome of the production of researchers in SHS further complexes the panorama.

Lines of discussion of the Commission

1. Academic Careers

- a. indicators for quality evaluation of individual and/or group projects
- b. types of academic careers (disciplinary, institutional, and regional differences, as well as in production styles and knowledge circulation)

2. Scientific Production

- a. types of scientific production: basic research, applied research, use-oriented basic research, technology transfers and transfers/bonding / social outreach;
- b. indicators of the social relevance of the research
- c. national indexes of quality scientific and academic journals, evaluation system and indicators employed by them;
- d. indicators of regional platforms of quality journals;
- e. identification of indicators and recommendations to make visible the academic/scientific quality of books;
- f. indicators of the regional system of repositories, thematic regional repositories, and repositories of research data;
- g. alternative metrics;
- h. proposals of other indicators to be developed collaboratively for the diversity of production and popularization formats identified

3. Peer review: evolution, crisis, and current perspectives of this type of academic evaluation

³ <https://sfdora.org/read/es/>

⁴ <http://www.ingenio.upv.es/es/manifiesto#.XYOyFyhKg2w>

⁵ An exception is CONICET in Argentina, located in the first two levels, together with WoS and Scopus, a SciELO, Redalyc and Primary Unit of Journals for Production Evaluation in SHS <https://bit.ly/2mkz3vH>

⁶ An exception is CONICET in Argentina, located in the first two levels, together with WoS and Scopus, a SciELO, Redalyc and Primary Unit of Journals for Production Evaluation in SHS <https://bit.ly/2mkz3vH>



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4. Artistic production

Synthesis and work continuity

At the end, the Commission must produce a document which lays the foundation for a regional debate agenda and that should include the first consensus reached around the planned lines of discussion. It is also expected that different initiatives (existing or potential) will be listed, to continue with the discussion, and the best means to achieve that. Finally, the expectation is to discuss possible modalities for consultation and debate of the progress and draft proposals of the Commission with the interested parties in the evaluation systems, and between specialists in academic events in the region and other regions as well, in addition to strategies for transferring the proposals towards evaluation policies and practices in the region.

Commission 2: Evaluation of institutions, university education, and postgraduate degrees

Goal

The goal of this Commission is to develop a critical look at the evaluation processes of higher education institutions, undergraduate (university) and postgraduate training –mostly addressed as accreditation processes– in the countries of the region, especially in relation with the distortions produced by the use of bibliometrics-based metrics and quantitative indicators of achievement, decontextualized from the insertion contexts of those institutions and training proposals; and the consequences that those metrics generate.

In that regard, the dissemination of a criterion of excellence based on a select club of publications stands out, fed by the fact that a few experts are in charge of defining how professionals or researchers should be trained in an area, creating versions (almost always hegemonic) about the "right way" of doing social sciences and humanities that tend towards the homogenization of programs to the detriment of pluralism (epistemological, theoretical and methodological) and the existence of truly diverse and plural programs.

Based on a review of the needs and characteristics of the university systems and academic communities of the Latin American and Caribbean region, the aim of this commission is to contribute to the development of foundations, methodologies, processes, and tools that can be recommended as a long-term goal to the national and institutional evaluation systems of the region. Special emphasis is placed on the creation of appropriate tools for institutional evaluation and training in social and human sciences (SHS).

The expectation is that the outcome of this commission may nurture a long-term process.

Functioning

This commission will have two moderators who will moderate the debates, ensuring equitable and dynamic speaking time for the assistants, notable researchers, and operators. Likewise, two rapporteurs will record what happens during the three working spaces, distributed in two days.

This document is intended to spark debate and dialogue between participants.

Arguments

Institutional evaluation and accreditation policies for undergraduate and graduate courses have been implemented in Latin America and the Caribbean since the mid-1990s, in line with the neo-liberal structural reform processes of the States. At present, most Latin American and Caribbean countries have an evaluation and/or accreditation agency or some type of ad hoc institution. Most of these agencies are state-owned. In those countries where the impact of privatization and commodification of higher education has been more intense, there are private agencies and, even, international accrediting agencies can act on national institutions.

Those processes contain contradictions. On the one hand, they have contributed to the formation of academic markets at the national and regional levels by assigning prestige among higher education institutions. Also, to the extent that these policies place special emphasis on teacher productivity, individual productivity is often privileged at the expense of the collective, promoting competitiveness among colleagues and hindering solidarity and collaborative work. Such use of productivity criteria leaves out of our programs long-standing scholars and researchers that have been trained in a different academic culture. On the other hand, some countries have avoided the deepening of privatization trends in the sector by regulating, for example, projects for the creation of private universities.

In most of the countries of the region, accreditation of postgraduate careers is mandatory, while, for undergraduate degrees, only those that have been declared of public interest by the State⁷ are mandated to do so. Another distortive element follows from the fact that, in the majority of countries in the region, accreditation is paid (and with high costs), which has resulted in the promotion of a scenario of deals and corruption.

The panorama of university evaluation and accreditation policies is completed by regional accreditation policies in the framework of regional integration processes. Thus, for example, in 2002 the MERCOSUR regional university and university accreditation policy was implemented, with an experimental phase (MEXA) and becoming permanent in 2008 (with the ARCU-SUR system). It is worth noting that most evaluation and accreditation policies focus on professional qualifications. SHS, in general, do not have differentiated evaluation strategies.

In general, the processes are carried out in three stages: the institutional self-evaluation, the external evaluation (by peer reviewers) and the final decision of the institution that grants the accreditation. The dimensions analyzed are institutional context, curriculum, faculty, students and graduates, and equipment and infrastructure. In the case of the degree courses, the evaluation criteria are formed prior to the accreditation processes (standards) through commissions of experts in the discipline. On the other hand, the processes of institutional evaluation imply a more in-depth analysis of the higher education institution, with a focus on the dimension of the institutional context (government and self-regulation, mission and vision of the institutional project, the way in which the teaching missions are fulfilled, research and outreach, financial sustainability, etc.).

Although there is evidence of policies that seek to analyze programs and institutions in an integral way, the prevalent views are based on use as an undisputed measure of the quality of the actors' productivity,

⁷ Although the definition of “public interest” varies according to each country, it is generally limited to those professions in which its practice may endanger the health, safety, rights, assets, or education of the inhabitants.



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understood as the number of articles published in international indexation systems. This raises numerous criticisms, among which stand out: the prioritization of the research function over other university missions; the idea that the popularization of research results should be carried out exclusively in an international mainstream circuit of publication in article format –at the expense of regional and national publication circuits and other forms of communicating academic activity–; the loss of academic autonomy to abide by the rules of the international circuit of publications (fully privatized) –letting go of the language of origin, asking questions that aren't relevant to the local/national/regional reality, using hegemonic theories and invisibilizing Latin American social thinking–; profit-focused internationalization to the detriment of a caring internationalization based on regionalization. Besides, those trends have been accentuated with the popularization of international rankings that assign prestige based on indicators of doubtful rigor and relevance when it comes to assessing university institutions.

Lines of discussion of the Commission

This Commission will discuss principles and recommendations to take into consideration for institutional evaluation and proposals for undergraduate and graduate training in SHS.

1. Identification of elements to consider in a comprehensive and non-punitive evaluation of higher education institutions and graduate and postgraduate programs. We refer to transversal issues such as theoretical plurality, perspectives, and methodologies, including critical and Latin American and Caribbean theories (which question social reality); activities oriented towards the construction of fair and equal societies, encouragement of cooperative and solidarity practices; democratization and participation; gender; accessibility; etc.
2. Avoid the hierarchization of university functions, to evaluate them on equal footing and in an integral manner (teaching-training, research-production of knowledge, outreach-linkage, including here internationalization activities).
3. Create proposals for indicators based on the transversal issues mentioned in point 1, for the analysis of the institutional, curriculum, teaching and administrative staff, students, research and extension policies, and infrastructure aspects.

Synthesis and work continuity

At the end, the Commission must produce a document which lays the foundation for a regional debate agenda and that should include the first consensus reached around the planned lines of discussion. It is also expected that different initiatives (existing or potential) will be listed, to continue with the discussion, and the best means to achieve that. Finally, the expectation is to discuss possible modalities for consultation and debate of the progress and draft proposals of the Commission with the interested parties in the evaluation systems, and between specialists in academic events in the region and other regions as well, in addition to strategies for transferring the proposals towards evaluation policies and practices in the region.

Commission 3: Evaluation of the social impact of research



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Goal

The goal of this Commission is to develop a critical perspective of the evaluation processes of the social utility and impact of research in the region's countries.

Based on a review of the needs and characteristics of the university systems and academic communities of the Latin American and Caribbean region, the aim of this commission is to contribute to the development of foundations, methodologies, processes, and tools that can be recommended as a long-term goal to the national and institutional evaluation systems of the region. Special emphasis is placed on the creation of appropriate tools for institutional evaluation and training in social and human sciences (SHS).

The expectation is that the outcome of this commission may nurture a long-term process.

Arguments

The social impact of research as "some effect, change or benefit on the economy, society, culture, public policy, public services, health, environment or quality of life of the population beyond academia" (see: [Research Excellence Framework](#), REF).

One of the objectives of this commission is to promote a discussion to create a conceptual framework that defines what is understood, locally and regionally, as impact/incidence/social utility of the knowledge produced by social sciences and humanities in Latin America and the Caribbean and, in consequence, present proposals for their evaluation.

As a starting point, there are some theoretical inputs (assumptions, *a priori*):

- The impact/incidence/social utility of knowledge is not intrinsic to the traditional products (publications) of academic practice (although it does not exclude them) but is the result of a contingent interaction between different agents involved in the knowledge production process (scholars, policymakers, NGOs, social organizations, companies, etc.)
- The evaluation of the impact/incidence/social utility should incorporate the analysis and nuances of the interaction between scientists and users and the meanings resulting from these interactions so that: greater interaction between scientists and extra-academic actors in the process of knowledge production, greater potential capacity for knowledge to consolidate its impact/incidence/social utility.

Assessing the impact/incidence/social utility of knowledge should include a discussion that allows for the observation and consideration of those science-society interactions that result in knowledge "in use", that are not always formalized in traditional linkage and transfer mechanisms (agreements, contracts, patents, etc.).

The assessment of the impact/incidence/ social utility of knowledge must acknowledge time as a central component since what is being evaluated is not only the results of research linked to a project but also



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other exchange/appropriation operations in which the temporal variable may coincide with the period defined by a research project.

The assessment of the impact/incidence/ social utility of knowledge should incorporate the voice of the agents that appropriate and consolidate acts of use of knowledge.

Lines of discussion of the Commission

This Commission will discuss principles and recommendations that should be taken into consideration in research evaluation in SHS in terms of their social utility and impact.

1. Creation of a conceptual basis for naming impact/incidence/social use of SHS knowledge (what is it?) that incorporates the nuances of the knowledge production dynamics of SHS researchers. Some aspects that should be developed are:
 - ✓ Typology of manners (strategies) of interaction between scientists and users
 - ✓ Typology of “products” of research in SHS (differences between results, objectives, outcomes, outputs, etc.)
 - ✓ Typology of “users” of SHS knowledge

2. - Approximation to possible indicators of measurement of these activities or processes (translation of these typologies into empirical indexes or definition of observable actions)
- Identification of agents (or necessary qualities) that are in a position to perform the evaluation

3. Discussion regarding the role that the evaluation of impact/incidence/social use of knowledge should fulfill. (“Grimact” case:
<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2019/05/28/grimpact-time-to-acknowledge-the-dark-side-of-the-impact-agenda/?fbclid=IwAR2jx1HE4r5K377QtX0wybOALencRdqBwpCdZGzcy0auflQafbZ5QOXOw4>

Synthesis and work continuity

At the end, the Commission must produce a document which lays the foundation for a regional debate agenda and that should include the first consensus reached around the planned lines of discussion. It is also expected that different initiatives (existing or potential) will be listed, to continue with the discussion, and the best means to achieve that. Finally, the expectation is to discuss possible modalities for consultation and debate of the progress and draft proposals of the Commission with the interested parties in the evaluation systems, and between specialists in academic events in the region and other regions as well, in addition to strategies for transferring the proposals towards evaluation policies and practices in the region.