SSH knowledge transfer activities included in the Technological and Social Development Projects (PDTS) of Argentina. Is changing researcher's evaluation enough to improve knowledge transference?

Mauro Alonso[1]

[1] *mauroralonso@gmail.com* ; *malonso@sociales.uba.ar*
Universidad de Buenos Aires, Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, Argentina

Paper abstract

In 2012, Argentina's Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry (MINCTIP) created the *National Advisory Commission for Science and Technology Human Resources Assessment* as an intent to review existing research assessment criteria with special focus on researchers involved in knowledge transfer activities. As a result of the Commission's work, Argentina's MINCTIP stablished a new S&T project denomination (Technological and Social Development Projects –PDTS-) for research activities that focused on knowledge transference and appropriation by specific societal users. Researcher's participation in this Projects granted the researchers involved in them access to a different performance evaluation carried out by an *ad-hoc* assessment committee instead of their traditional disciplinary commissions. The MINCTIP goal was to promote knowledge transfer activities by offering a differential performance assessment mechanism to those researchers involved in such research and, as well, to attract –in line with a political intension to "make knowledge a resource for the country's development"[1]- more researchers to this endeavor. The official Documents that stablished PDTS projects defined them as it reads from the *National Advisory Commission Document Number I:*

1) a Project that *effectively uses* S&T knowledge from one or more disciplines

2) has as its final objective *solving a specific problem or practical need*, not only justified by scientific curiosity or disciplinary knowledge advancement

3) its general objective must be in line with a national, regional or local interest

4) their results must not only solve a specific problem by applying existing knowledge but the project has to *develop cognitive innovations or create new knowledge*

5) must identify a *knowledge user* in the project (public or private organizations) that has *the capability of adopting* the results[2]

The PDTS projects are available to every discipline and S&T institution and since 2013 the MINCTIP created a National Bank of PDTS projects (BNPDTS) in which each institution could submit their projects to go through an accreditation process conducted by PDTS accreditation committees to be included in the BNPDTS. Since, the BNPDTS has accepted

---

[1] Argentina's Science Minister Dr. Barañao editorial. Available in: http://www.vocesenelfenix.com/content/un-nuevo-rol-para-la-producci%C3%B3n-del-conocimiento-en-la-argentina.

[2] *Official National Advisory Commission's First Document. Available in:* http://www.mincyt.gob.ar/adjuntos/archivos/000/031/0000031881.pdf

over 300 projects from multiple disciplines and institutions. In this context, this paper's goal is to focus on the SSH projects included in the BNPDTS guided by the following questions: what kind of SSH research projects were included in the BNPDTS? How do SSH researchers involved in PDTS projects understand and define knowledge transfer activities? Who are the users of their knowledge? What type of SSH knowledge has been transferred to users? How was their performance assessment during their involvement in PDTS projects? Was offering a differential research evaluation mechanism enough to promote knowledge transfer activities?

In order to address this questions I have conducted a qualitative exploratory work strategy based on over 20 in depth interviews with both science policy makers MINCTIP and researchers of SSH PDTS projects included in the BNPDTS.

The analysis presented in the paper revisits Castro-Martinez & Olmos-Peñuela (2014) SSH transfer activities conceptual framework and Vaccarezza & Zabala (2002) concept of *strategy* to observe in which ways researchers stablish connections with users in order to seek ways to make their knowledge usable. Finally, the paper will present the first findings regarding the research evaluation process that took place in the *ad-hoc assessment committee* for SSH to discuss its reach based on interviews to committee members and PDTS researchers.

This paper presents preliminary findings of the author's in progress doctoral research.

References

Castro-Martínez, E., & Olmos-Peñuela, J. (2014). Características de las interacciones con la sociedad de los investigadores de humanidades y ciencias sociales a partir de estudios empíricos. *Revista iberoamericana de ciencia, tecnología, sociedad e innovación*, *9*(27), 113-141.

Vaccarezza, L. S., & Zabala, J. P. (2002). *La construcción de la utilidad social de la ciencia: Investigadores en biotecnología frente al mercado*. Buenos Aires. Ed. De la Universidad Nacional de Quilmes.