Evidence-based policy research: critical review of some international programmes on relationships between social science research and policy-making

Carlos R. S. Milani

MOST

Management of Social Transformations

UNESCO

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Carlos R. S. Milani
Federal University of Bahia, Brazil

MOST-2 Policy Papers series uses a novel methodology aimed at enhanced dissemination and usability of research results for policy-making. Designed according to scientific policy analysis principles, this methodology is based on a generic structure for producing documents.

The generic structure first enables different types of documents to be produced from the same original content. For instance, collections of the summaries of the various sections from the Papers produce Policy Briefs (5 pages condensed versions). Both Papers and Briefs are available in print and in electronic versions.

The structure also gives all documents the same appearance, so ease of reading improves with familiarity of the format. A better indentation of the text further improves the location and utility of the information: the content of each section in the document becomes a fully-fledged knowledge item that's easy to spot, extract to be better studied, compared and put into perspectives.

This logic serves as the foundation for the interactive Policy Research Tool that MOST is currently developing. The online tool will provide free and speedy access to policy-relevant comparative information, giving users the ability to create research profiles based on subject categories, produce customized reports with select content from the original documents, and easily compare cases and assess the relevance of the policy options available.

MOST-2 methodology helps respond more efficiently to different types of information needs and facilitates knowledge feedback and analysis, thus improving the use of research results for policy-making.

Carlos R. S. Milani (cmilani@ufba.br) is Professor of International Relations at the Institute of Humanities, Arts and Sciences of the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA, Brazil). He is also a CNPq research fellow, and the coordinator of the World Political Analysis Laboratory (LABMUNDO, www.labmundo.org). His recent publications include articles and books on transnational social movements, discourses and practices of international cooperation agencies, as well as globalization and world politics theory.

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Executive Summary

The report has two main objectives. Firstly, to critically present current programmes implemented by international organizations, which seek to enhance the interconnections between social scientific research and policy. Secondly, to highlight a series of critical issues with regard to the nature of the linkages between the two domains. This double venture and the debate it provokes ultimately aim to enable the MOST Secretariat to carve out its own niche in relation to other major organizations working in this field.

The first part proceeds to offer an empirical overview of the different ways that international multilateral organizations (United Nations University, the European Union, the World Bank, and OECD) build bridges between social scientific research and policy. Via this examination the paper reaches the conclusion that what one largely deduces from these ventures is that they are based on a rather positivist social scientific vision. Hence they, more often than not, lead to (with varying degrees) a rather conformist understanding of the link between the domains of research and policy (i.e. the emphasis is on evidence based research – with a strong quantitative dimension – providing solutions to problems).

In the second part, the MOST Policy Paper via an exploration of the complex links between politics and social scientific knowledge convincingly argues that the aspiration to universal applicability (and by extension to an ultimately benevolent problem solving character) on the part of evidence based policy making is problematic. Consequently, he suggests that alternative social scientific perspectives are legitimate and that the accumulation of scientific evidence that, nevertheless, does not address conditions of unequal distribution and/or disempowerment will not lead to significant social improvements.

> *It is possible to have bad evidence-based policy making if the evidence used is biased, flawed or incomplete. One could also say that, depending on the purposes of data collection, evidence may serve unfair and unjust policy objectives. Statistical data as well as cartography are "texts", and may be skillfully controlled and technically manipulated. (p. 45)*

The text promotes a vision of a critical and engaged social science that problematizes current policy practices and visions and, thus creates the possibility for social transformation: *"… research for policy is not so much about providing answers as about changing the way questions are understood, so that people (researchers and policy-makers, but other publics too) can begin to think differently, thus critically building the contours and contents of social problems"*. (p. 49)

On the basis of this discussion, a series of research questions are opened up which could guide the work of MOST and the methodology it wishes to create and promote. These fall, mostly, in two categories: Questions that deal with the historical trajectory of the institutionalisation of instrumental social scientific research in international organisations and national research-policy set ups. And questions that pertain to the policy implications of a new, more critical, problem building research-policy paradigm (e.g. a new role for politicians, the inclusion of civil society in the making of decisions, creating a public sphere for the dissemination of social scientific results and preoccupations which can thus reach a wider public).

Foreword

Launched in 1994, the Management of Social Transformations – MOST Programme, which is part of the Social and Human Sciences Sector of UNESCO, was designed to steer reflection and action in the vast field of Social Transformations. While its original mandate established a commitment to the promotion of research that was comparative, international, interdisciplinary and policy-relevant through the development of three thematic fields, in its Second Phase (2004-2013) the Programme has been reoriented, both thematically and in its modalities of operation.

The focus is now on building efficient bridges between social science knowledge, public policies and practice. Here, knowledge means what is produced within universities and academia, as well as non-academic experience and knowledge (for instance, within non-governmental organizations). At the same time, the making of public policies involves governmental and non-governmental actors, which means that the conception of public policy-making in this second phase of MOST presupposes complex dynamics of politics, including issues relating to:

- recognition of identities (those social subjects and demands that are included in the policy-formulation agenda);
- participation of actors (those actors who are invited to take an active part in the decision-making process);
- the nature of norms (the different kinds of policy norms dealing with universality and/or particularity, general objectives and/or focused results); and
- co-responsibility in implementation (the monopoly of the State in public action versus pluralistic approaches in public service provision and public-private partnerships).

The aim of the venture (theoretical and methodological reflection on the linkages connecting research and policy) is to make explicit the nature of the link between social science research and policy-making, in developed as well as developing countries. In other words, the MOST Secretariat is working to establish critical analysis on what the world knows about the

theoretical and institutional underpinnings of both knowledge production and its uptake by policy makers. The activity concentrates on four goals:

1. To determine an efficient methodology for social science research to be optimally inserted in policy-making processes
2. To capitalize, promote and diffuse our knowledge and understanding to three main categories of actors: social science researchers, policy makers/senior advisers and members of civil society
3. To define the niche that will be developed by the MOST Programme on the links between research and policy
4. To make recommendations for internal and external stakeholders.

The six-year course of activity has been split into three biennial periods. One of the main fields of action in the current biennium (2008-2009) includes mapping out the general, current state of Research-Policy Links. The series of MOST Policy Papers will present some of the findings of this endeavour.

GERMÁN SOLINÍS

Introduction

The MOST Programme, which is part of the Social and Human Sciences Sector (SHS) of UNESCO, launched in March 1994, was designed to steer reflection and action in the vast field of linkages between social science knowledge and public policies. Knowledge here means what is produced within universities and academia, but also non-scholar experience and knowledge (for instance, within non-governmental organizations). At the same time, the making of public policies involves governmental and non-governmental actors, which means that the conception of public policy-making during this phase of MOST, supposes complex dynamics of politics, including issues relating to recognition of identities (those social subjects and demands that are included in the policy-formulation agenda), participation of actors (those actors who are invited to take an active part in the decision-making process), the nature of norms (the different kinds of policy norms dealing with universality and/or particularity, general objectives and/or focused results), and co-responsibility in implementation (the monopoly of the State in public action *versus* pluralistic approaches in public service provision and public-private partnerships).

One can say that MOST's primary purpose, since the beginning of its activities, has been to transfer social research findings to public decision-makers. During its first eight years, the Programme's mandate had established a strong commitment to the promotion of research that should be comparative, international, across social science disciplines and policy relevant, mainly through international research networks. During this first phase, the main instrument used by MOST for research dissemination is its Clearing House – which functions basically as a portal containing information on research networks, their results, proceedings, and "best practices"

on urban, migration, multiculturalism, global governance, as well as local development policies.

According to the recommendations made by the Intergovernmental Council in February 2003, there was a thematic reorientation of the Programme, as well as a change in its modalities of operation. According to information available on its website, in its second phase "MOST focuses on **building efficient bridges between research, policy and practice**. The programme promotes a **culture of evidence-based policy-making** – nationally, regionally and internationally. As the only UNESCO programme that fosters and promotes social science research, it is placed in a pivotal position in the overall promotion of UNESCO's goals" (*our emphasis*). It is unclear whether or not the modalities of action (for instance, policy papers, briefings, organization of workshops and seminars) have changed in the transfer of social science knowledge to decision-makers. Internet MOST pages do not provide clear information on the four specific tools that have been developed in its second phase: (i) the policy papers series (which already existed before 2003); (ii) the digital library (which does not seem to be functional); (iii) the conference reporting system (which gives access to conference proceedings); and (iv) the origin and the development of the policy research tool.

Having introduced these contextual remarks, **this report has two main objectives**. First, to present and analyse **current programmes implemented by some multilateral and bilateral organizations**, trying to understand their philosophical foundations, ontology, methodology, hierarchies and distinctions set up in the field of social science research, as well as their institutional framework. This report focuses on four major organizations: the United Nations University, the European Union, the World Bank, and OECD showing thematic and interdisciplinary case studies that illustrate their choices, priorities, mechanisms, and procedures. Secondly, it aims to **sketch a series of critical issues** in understanding the complex and paradoxical relationships between the production of social science knowledge, and the politics of policy-making. The idea of a *politics of policy-making* – which implies a life of potential conflict and a field of on-going negotiation around political cultures, actions and practices – will be explained in detail in the second part of the report, when we also **outline some recommendations** that could support the

MOST Secretariat in developing a more focused strategy in the coming years – always trying to bear in mind MOST's concrete investment possibilities and its political niche in comparison with other major international organizations working in this field.

Part one

Social science and policy-making: the work of some multilateral and bilateral organizations

Four major international organizations are analysed in this part of the report: the United Nations University, the European Union, the World Bank, and OECD. The basic criteria for selecting these organizations are the following:

(a) The four organizations in focus have put into place a series of projects and debates to foster the importance of policy social research and evidence-based public policies. They have also published documents, books, policy papers, etc. that reflect upon the linkages between social science and policy-making.

(b) Their means, both human and financial, are of great relevance, and their contribution to the construction of models based on their own work seems to be considerable, both regionally and worldwide.

(c) We also make this choice because we suppose that the four selected organizations tend to express different cultural and political perceptions and interpretative frameworks of how social transformations, development, and governmental policies should be globally thought of, decided upon and implemented. In other words, we suppose that this variation in world visions should also result in distinct conceptions of how social science research and public policies relate to each other.

(d) The four selected organizations also announce in their programmes that they adhere to diverse methods of work in the implementation of answers in order to promote closer ties between social science knowledge and the making of public policies.

Methodologically speaking, it is important to assert that this report is the result of information that was exclusively collected by means of the international organizations' Internet pages, since there has been no possibility to undertake interviews and/or produce primary data for this analysis. This is a clear shortcoming of this report that must be acknowledged at its very introduction. We do believe, however, that websites and Internet reports show what these organizations intend to render visible to a larger public audience, thus making the analysis of discourses and narratives that we produce herein valid on the basis of the material that has been used and consulted.

Case One: The United Nations University (UNU)

UNU has five major roles according to its Charter: (a) UNU is an international community of scholars; (b) it is a bridge between the United Nations and the international academic community; (c) it serves as **a think tank for the United Nations system**; (d) it contributes to capacity development, particularly in developing countries; (e) it serves as a platform for dialogue and creative new ideas. Since its foundation in 1975, the University has evolved into a global network of 13 UNU research and training centres and programmes, and 14 associated institutions which carry out joint programmes with the University. Its two broad programme areas are "peace and governance", and "environment and development". UNU's principal stakeholders include *inter alia* the UN system and the Bretton Woods institutions; regional organizations and national and local governments; civil society networks and organizations; and private corporations (through particular partnership and funding schemes).

UNU develops its mandate in the field of science-policy linkages focusing on two major modalities: (i) building situational diagnoses on several issue areas, and (ii) transforming multidisciplinary research and knowledge into policy-relevant prescription and analysis. Within this second modality, it also develops models and scenarios, and evaluates the implications of different policy options. In fact, UNU presents itself as a think-tank for the UN, and attempts to give answers to complex **global governance questions**

and to communicate them to a diverse audience, including Member States and academia, but also the private sector and NGO networks.

UNU affirms that its science-policy communication activities include, for instance: (a) the involvement of practitioners in research by facilitating their participation in workshops and by bringing in mid-level management from key organizations as visiting scholars for two to three months in order to provide an opportunity for joint reflection; (b) quick publication of **policy/research briefs** for each research project; (c) policy advocacy (direct or through the media, particularly targeting national governments, civil society organizations, and global institutions); (d) organization of policy forums to disseminate the implications of UNU work; (e) undertaking more **rapid short-term projects** or **forums on urgent economic, political and social problems**. These short-term and urgent projects require a particular methodology, since they suppose more consultation with end-users in the formulation and implementation of such policy-oriented projects.

In its Strategic Direction Report (2007-2010), UNU reaffirms the need to disseminate information for policy-makers in a format that is accessible, mainly through short, readable policy and research briefs. As a matter of fact, UNU has been publishing "Policy Briefs" since 2005, mainly based on the research done by four of its institutes: WIDER (World Institute for Development Economics Research), whose major thematic interest has so far been research on spatial disparities; CRISP (Center for Research Innovation and Science Policy), working on issues relating to sciences and technology policies; EHS (Institute for Environment and Human Security), whose motto is: "Advancing human security through knowledge-based approaches to reducing vulnerability and environmental risks"; and IAS (Institute of Advanced Studies) based in Tokyo, whose thematic field includes issues relating to global environmental governance and sustainable development.

It is interesting to analyse, as an illustration of the kind of dialogue set up between social scientists and policy makers, WIDER Policy Brief number 3 (2005) devoted to spatial disparities. This policy brief states that there are some "appropriate" policies to be followed and implemented (Box 1). Inequalities and social disparities are presented across individuals and regions, but not across groups and social classes. The policy maker

who reads this information does not have access to the policy responses, but only to the diagnoses. He/she needs to go further in reading the whole UNU-WIDER research report. Nevertheless, one interesting aspect that can be seen in the text relates to the contradictory nature of development that is presented in the document, since spatial agglomeration and economic concentration are shown to produce both benefits and adverse effects. It is true, however, that the language used in this policy brief may be criticized for being excessively politically correct.

Box 1

Excerpts from Policy Brief 3 (2005)
Theme: Spatial Disparities

"There are two reasons why policymakers should be concerned about spatial inequality, defined as inequality in economic and social indicators of well-being across geographical units within a country. First, inequality between a nation's regions is one component of overall national inequality across individuals (the other component being of course inequality across individuals within each geographical unit or region). When spatial inequality goes up then, other things being equal, so does national inequality. Second, inequality between a nation's regions may be of concern in and of itself, especially when the geographical regions align with political, ethnic, language, or religion divisions. The 'new economic geography' has emphasized that there are powerful forces of agglomeration that tend to lead to a concentration of economic activity, magnifying natural geographical advantages that a region may enjoy. Thus spatial agglomeration brings the benefits of returns to scale, and hence helps efficiency and growth. At the same time, openness to the outside world, which is well recognized as a long-term source of efficiency and growth, can also lead to spatial concentration. The evidence presented in the UNU-WIDER project is clear, spatial inequalities are high and rising. What should be the policy response, bearing in mind the tradeoffs involved?"

Another illustration of policy advice in the field of reform of global political institutions can be found in Policy Brief number 2 (2005), written by Andrew S. Thompson (University of Waterloo, Canada). Making a summary of a book edited by John English, Ramesh Thakur and Andrew F. Cooper, and published under the auspices of UNU, this policy brief suggests the creation of a Leaders' Summit of 20 (L20) that draws its inspiration from both the current G7/8 leaders' meetings and the G20 finance ministers' meetings. The purpose of such an informal organization would be to bring together the leaders of key non-central States (i.e. other than Western Europe, North America and Japan) in the hope that this type of gathering of governmental peers (Presidents and Prime Ministers, ministers and national secretaries) might lead to resolutions of issues over which deadlock has so far been the norm. The policy brief analyses the benefits and unfavourable aspects of such a non-formal setting, since it does not follow the rules and procedures of intergovernmental bodies (UN, World Bank, WTO, etc.). The author of the document supposes that through non-formal institutions it is more feasible to reform and render the global political architecture more democratic. The text formulation does not eschew dealing with conflicts and politics – in this case, the global politics involving institutional actors, economic operators and corporate media, transnational social movements and activist networks – which are viewed as crucial matters in the future framing of global governance mechanisms. Neither does it announce any magic answers to global governance problems and shortcomings, thus **avoiding the "best practice" formula** that is so frequently used (and abused) by UN Agencies in general.

Box 2

Excerpts from Policy Brief number 2 (2005)
Theme: Peace and global governance

"Whether the L20 ever gets off the ground is, in the end, up to the world's leaders. As outlined above, there are a number of reasons why it could fail. Questions pertaining to the membership and the scope of the agenda still need to be answered, as do the questions about its potential relationships with the current international architecture. But these challenges are not impossible to overcome. Ultimately, the case in favor of establishing an L20 is quite strong, if for no other reason than the fact that maintaining the status quo no longer makes sense. While reforming existing institutions is one solution, it is not the only one: the international community must also decide whether the time has come for new institutions such as the L20 to be created. If it chooses to take this route, Reforming from the Top: a Leaders' 20 Summit offers important guidance on how to give shape to what remains merely an interesting idea".

In the case of the UNU Institute for Environment and Human Security (EHS), the strategy has been slightly different in terms of dissemination and reaching out to policy-makers. UNU-EHS has been conceived of and set up in order to improve the knowledge base for assessing the vulnerability and coping capacity of societies facing natural and man-made hazards in a changing and often deteriorating environment. The Institute aims to improve the understanding of cause-and-effect relationships, and to offer options to help reducing the vulnerabilities of societies. Interdisciplinary, science-based and human-centred, EHS projects are said to support decision-makers by providing "authoritative research" and information within its mandate. Starting this publication called "InterSecTions" (International, interdisciplinary inSecurity ConnecTions) in 2005, the EHS aims to make the results of its work known through publications in refereed scientific journals, conference proceedings and books. However, this is only one part of the story, particularly because those who read such journals and documents tend to constitute focused communities of interest and specialized audiences. That is why EHS has also decided to launch this publication series (both in paper and electronic versions), including short articles and monographs. One question should, however, be put straight away: can

policy makers and public professionals be addressed optimally through such kinds of scientific publications? Going through some issues published under the "InterSecTions" series, a careful reader realizes that there must still be an effort in terms of **language adequacy** and **understanding of complex issues** relating to environmental change by potential policy-maker readers. One could wonder how decision-makers can have access to risk analysis and policy scenarios built on global environmental complexities, particularly on topics that are very relevant to daily social and economic realities, if the content is not accessible and intelligible in a more simple fashion. It is true that Bonn's EHS distributes these publications free of charge; each issue is available for downloading on its respective series webpage,[1] but their content, it seems, still needs some sort of pedagogic revision. Thinking of "**a pedagogy of knowledge transfer**" and the rationale of research-policy linkages in concrete issue areas could be a hint for MOST in its future development.

In addition, it is important to say that, like many other UN institutions in the aftermath of the launching of the Global Compact by Kofi Annan at Davos in 1999, UNU is also involved in promoting alliances with the corporate sector, through its "Partnership Initiative". UNU acknowledges that it is important to "engage private enterprises in the work of governments and the United Nations, to build sustainable and equitable societies together, and to mobilize comparative advantages in pursuit of a world free from want and from fear". It reaffirms that business companies recognize that "addressing global problems such as poverty, environmental deterioration and trade imbalances through a Corporate Social Responsibility program is an investment opportunity". Through this Partnership Initiative (and here we cite the institutional rhetoric in the field of public-private partnerships), UNU supports efforts for national governance programmes together with long-term private business investment; corporate partners may enhance their credibility, image and reputation; and corporate partners may gain first-hand access to the University's extensive international networks. Moreover, private partners can have first-hand access to UNU research that shapes global values and policies. What is the role for the corporate

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1   We went through two issues of the series: *Nothing begets nothing: the creeping disaster of land degradation*, by Paul L. G. Vlek (2005), and also *Control, Adapt, or Flee: How to face environmental migration?* by Fabrice Renaud et al (2007).

sector in policy-making and social science research funding? What are the dangers for the future development of democracy when corporations are directly involved in public decision-making and funding of policy-relevant social science research? By quoting such remarks from UNU Internet pages and raising these questions we intend to suggest that some reflection is needed on the actual results of public-private partnerships in the funding of social science research, and the involvement of private companies in public policy-making and implementation. We will come back to this issue in the second part of this report.

Case 2: The European Union and the European Research Area

In 2000, the EU decided to create the European Research Area (ERA). This has meant starting the development of a future unified research area all across Europe. This ERA should enable researchers (i) to move and interact, benefit from high-level infrastructures and work with networks of different European research institutions; (ii) share, teach, value and use knowledge effectively for social, business and policy purposes; (iii) optimize European, national and regional research programmes in order to support the best research throughout Europe; (iv) develop strong links with partners around the world so that Europe benefits from the worldwide progress of knowledge, contributes to global development and takes a leading role in international initiatives to solve global issues. Moreover, this research area should inspire the best talents to enter research careers in Europe, incite industry to invest more in European research – contributing to the EU objective to devote 3% of GDP for research, and strongly contribute to the creation of sustainable growth and jobs. It is true that such a huge strategic change is still in the making in Europe, and that the reality of research is very diverse across the European continent. The creation of ERA coincides with budget cuts and reduction of posts in many European countries, which is just one expression of contradictions between what Brussels announces as its policy priorities and European national realities. With 80 per cent of public sector research in Europe being conducted at national level, mainly under national or regional research programmes, spending on science and research in the European Research Area is still far too low (around 1.9% of

GDP) for the region to catch up with the United States (approximately 2.6% of GDP) or Japan (2.7%).[2]

According to information made available in EU Research Directorate reports, seven years on the creation of ERA has become a central pillar of the European Union for growth and jobs, together with the completion of the Single Market, the European innovation strategy and the creation of a European Higher Education Area. Today, there are still strong national and institutional barriers which prevent ERA from becoming a reality. Fragmentation remains a prevailing characteristic of the European public research base. Researchers still see career opportunities curtailed by legal and practical barriers hampering their mobility across institutions, sectors and countries. Businesses often find it difficult to cooperate and enter into partnerships with technological research institutions in Europe, particularly across countries. National and regional research funding remains largely uncoordinated. This leads to **dispersion of resources and excessive duplication**. Reforms undertaken at national level often lack a true European perspective and transnational coherence.

For these reasons, the European Commission has published a Green Paper reviewing progress made with respect to the European Research Area, raising questions for debate. The Commission sought answers to these questions and solicited further new ideas in a public consultation which lasted from May to August 2007. Following the public consultation results (over 800 written submissions), the Commission and Member States launched a series of new initiatives to develop this research area, called the "Ljubljana Process", and five initiatives on specific areas of the ERA Green Paper. As far as knowledge-use and science-policy linkages are concerned, the Green Paper and the consultation process show some interesting features. It acknowledges that access to knowledge generated by the public research base and its use by business and policy makers lie at the heart of the European Research Area, where knowledge should circulate without barriers throughout the whole society. Another feature that should draw our attention is that social sciences are very rarely referred to. The Green Paper mentions the central relevance of effective knowledge-

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2   See: Euractiv Foundation at www.euractiv.com

sharing notably between **public research and industry**, and in this case exact sciences and engineering are also considered important.

In the consultation process, for instance, it is said in the Green Paper (The ERA New Perspectives, Public Consultation Results, page 68) that "regarding the main factors hindering efficient knowledge transfer to industry, most of the 528 on-line respondents consider cultural differences between the business and science communities to be a 'very' (293) or 'fairly' (146) important barrier". On page 74, it reaffirms that it is very important to increase the transparency of how scientific results feed back into policy-making and ensure multidisciplinary expertise in decision-making processes. Expertise and feedback are considered least intrusive for scientific communities, those which demand the least transformation of the *status quo* in the world of sciences. However, the Green Paper Consultation Process shows that there is considerable debate over other possible mechanisms, such as training scientists in societal issues or expertise by civil society organizations. On page 75 of the Green Paper, there is another mention of the issue of **dialogue between researchers and civil society**. Responses during the consultation process highlight that the major contribution of researchers to citizens' better understanding of the role of science has been the clarification of the social relevance of research for policy-making. Here, the matter of an "advocacy of research-policy linkage" seems to appear as an important issue. On page 78, one can read that "scientifically generated knowledge must be readily available for decision-making purposes. Of course, this requires the creation of fast and easy mechanisms for contacts between decision-makers and researchers". Box 3 below summarizes some highlights of the Green Paper as far as knowledge-sharing is concerned.

Box 3

Green Paper
ERA Knowledge-Sharing: main highlights

"Developing communities of knowledge where the differing worlds of research, industry and civil society can engage in processes and networks of communication is deemed a sine qua non for a well-grounded European Research Area. Cultural differences between the business and scientific communities and a lack of incentives for inventors or users remain major obstacles to efficient knowledge transfer. The knowledge gap between scientific communities and civil society, followed by lack of incentives and the use of technical language, are highlighted as the main factors hindering efficient knowledge transfer to civil society. Beyond dissemination of scientific knowledge, there is a broad agreement on deepening public engagement in research with interactive approaches and increased transparency on using scientific results in policy-making."

The European Union has also a particular portal for what they have called "European Research in Action", which focuses on the results of European research into the understanding and better formulation of issues of wide public interest. This impressive database is available in eleven languages, and presents information on several societal contemporary problems, including reports and information stemming from socio-economic research.[3] The topic devoted to socio-economic research, which we have analysed in more detail, presents the following thematic priorities:

(a) Societal trends and structural changes: research carried out in this area identifies societal trends such as changing family structures, cultural patterns and value systems. It acknowledges problems such as xenophobia and racism. The economic changes affecting the labour market, and mechanisms for social protection, inequality and discrimination are also investigated. This research area aims to provide a better understanding of changing employment patterns such as flexible, part-time and temporary work, and to provide information on changing gender stereotypes.

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3   See: http://ec.europa.eu/research/leaflets/index_en.html.

Furthermore, research focuses on education and training, and the role these two key variables can play in preparing individuals for the changing political and socio-economic environment.

(b) Technology, society and employment: these research programmes examine the ways in which suppliers, users, decision-makers and public authorities work together in assessing technological impact, and how public authorities, in particular, can then apply the results. The second main research under this item assesses the link between technological changes and employment. Here, work is being undertaken on tele-working, work organization and skills development. Another theme of this research area examines the role of innovation in education, training and life-long learning.

(c) Governance and citizenship: research in this field aims to identify and understand how multiple levels and new modes of governance can be developed, while maintaining accountability within the context of the European integration process. The challenge presented here is to ensure that democratic systems work properly under new conditions, such as the changing roles of public and private sectors, and the changing relationships between representative institutions and civil society organizations. At the same time, it tries to understand the formation and coexistence of multiple actors, and participation of Europe's citizens in public debate – which is instrumental in formulating and implementing policy. Research currently under way is presented on how the media and cultural elements like language, history, gender, religion and migration influence this.

(d) New development models fostering growth and employment: this work explores new sustainable development models which foster growth, job creation, equal opportunities, and reduce inequality while improving the quality of life. Within this process, the role of the public sector is explored and several indicators and methodologies are developed to assess the economic and social added-value of production models. This helps to identify policies best adapted to the European economic area, which take into account regional and demographic differences. Lastly, research concentrates on the analysis of issues such as organizational innovation,

and new types of work and employment, including the working potential of the older population.

This database is a powerful instrument of knowledge-transfer, and MOST should reflect upon its **financial means and human capacities to invest in the development of new databases** as tools to promote the dialogue with policy makers in general. Concerning other knowledge-transfer mechanisms, the "European Research in Action" portal mentions the "**Dialogue workshops**", which bring together researchers, policy makers, NGOs and concerned citizens to share and debate results of research, and assess their implications for policy-making. These workshops are said to have gradually replaced the "top-down approach", where experts disseminated information after consulting the citizens. The workshops have involved people who have practical knowledge and can provide feedback to policy processes. To date, workshops have been held on a range of topics including: employment funding, family and welfare, European citizenship, migration and social cohesion of migrants, racism and xenophobia. It could be of great interest for the MOST Programme to analyse the construction of the bridges within such policy processes.

Case 3: The World Bank

Three main activities have been analysed within the broad spectrum of programmes implemented by the World Bank in the field of social science and public policy linkages: the Policy Research Reports (and related Policy Research Working Papers), the Knowledge for Change Program, and Modeling Tool to Monitor the MDGs (addressed to policy makers, and based on the Development Data Platform). First, the **Policy Research Reports** (PRRs) aim to bring to a broad audience the results of World Bank research on development policies. These reports are designed to contribute to the debate on **appropriate** public policies for **developing economies** (*our emphasis*). PRRs are supposed to help policy makers take stock of what is known and clearly identify what is not known, and they should thus contribute to the debate in both the academic and policy communities on adequate public policy objectives. Because they summarize research, the PRRs are said to provoke further debate, both within the Bank and outside, concerning the methods used and the conclusions drawn. With regard to

these Reports, the WB recalls that the Policy Research Working Papers are more addressed to Bank researchers and the design of future Bank programmes (see example in Box 4).

In both types of World Bank reports, the production of empirical evidence rooted in **quantitative methods** is considered more strategic insofar as it should contribute to **efficient public spending** and thus **greater government accountability**. Social impact analysis is another example of policy-relevant research methodology that the World Bank affirms using in support of beneficiary countries. According to the Bank's explanation on the objectives and use of such PRRs, evidence-based public policies are those which have demonstrated benefits of **focusing on what works**, and therefore resulting in more efficient spending of public funds. It goes without saying that, in this case, there is a **strategic approach to creating knowledge** and steering its usage by developing countries in the policy-making process (*our emphasis*).

Box 4

Policy Research Working Paper "Globalization and innovation in emerging markets", by Gorodnichenko, Yuriy; Svejnar, Jan; Terrell, Katherine (2009).

Short summary

"Globalization brings opportunities and pressures for domestic firms in emerging markets to innovate and improve their competitive position. Using data on firms in 27 transition economies, the authors test for the effects of globalization through the impact of increased competition and foreign direct investment on domestic firms' efforts to innovate (raise their capability) by upgrading their technology, improving the quality of their product or service, or acquiring certification. They find that competition has a negative effect on innovation, especially for firms further from the efficiency frontier, and we do not find support for an inverted U effect of competition on innovation. The authors show that the supply chain of multinational enterprises and international trade are important channels for domestic firms' innovation. They detect no evidence that firms in a more pro-business environment are more likely to display a positive or inverted U relationship between competition and innovation, or that they are more sensitive to foreign presence."

There is another question to be raised in relation to PRRs, their dissemination and reaching out to the policy-making community worldwide. In a report published by the World Bank itself, it is said that the way the Bank's analytical work is disseminated and discussed is often inadequate. Reports tend to be long and often are not fully read even by policy makers. In many cases they are not translated into local languages or discussed outside a limited group of government counterparts.[4]

Second, the **Knowledge for Change Program** (KCP) serves as a very well-funded vehicle for the pooling of intellectual and financial resources for data collection, analysis, and research supporting poverty reduction and sustainable development. Launched in 2002 by the World Bank's Development Economics (DEC) Vice Presidency and its founding donors, Finland and the United Kingdom, KCP aims to encourage and facilitate the Bank's dialogue with partner agencies, developing country managers, and other interested parties. A subsidiary objective of this programme is to give support to data collection and analysis, and improve research capacities in the Bank's client countries. The KCP funds are said to have played an important role in influencing opinion-formation on development policies mainly through the **World Development Reports** (WDRs). The WDR 2008, for instance, has been cited by Nobel laureate Norman Borlaug, the Gates Foundation, Kofi Annan, several leading economists and, of course, support for agriculture projects is being scaled up significantly by the Bank Group itself as well as by many other donors. Herein resides one major influence of knowledge produced by the World Bank: it addresses its own constituencies direct (mainly donors and clients), and sets development agendas in several world regions, particularly in less developed Asian, African, Latin American and Caribbean countries.[5]

The methodological focus of the KCP, according to the World Bank, is to move rapidly into areas and development issues where the **creation of new knowledge** is likely **to assist the formulation of better policies with a greater impact on poverty**. The three trust funds established under the KCP support activities relating to overarching themes of

4   See: *Meeting the Challenges of Global Development: a Long-term Strategic Exercise for the World Bank Group,* October 2007, p. 64.
5   See: Knowledge for Change Program, *Annual Report* (2008).

(i) poverty dynamics and delivery of basic services; (ii) investment climate and trade and integration; and (iii) global public goods. As far as the first theme is concerned (poverty reduction), for instance, one of the main activities refers to the development of impact assessments, which tend to be considered a fundamental means to learn about the effectiveness of development interventions in achieving results. With **approximately 11.8 million US dollars of donor contributions for the develop-ment of this activity** (since its launching), the World Bank gives support to countries in designing evaluation methodologies, and facilitates global learning on development interventions based on such evaluations. WB is also initiating a series of projects which aim to assess the development impact of some new interventions in key areas such as education (school-based management), infrastructure (slum upgrading), health (HIV/AIDS), and rural development (land reform). Moreover, the Bank also uses poverty measurement as a tool for monitoring, describing and forecasting income poverty and inequality, including aggregate poverty measures, sharper poverty profiles, and better household surveys.[6]

In the field of **capacity building**, the Bank's efforts have been chan-nelled through country-level support to academic and technical institutions via its lending programme and associated technical assistance. The Bank offers training and courses, mainly **via the World Bank Institute** (WBI), and provides research grants to networks such as the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), the Economic Research Forum for the Arab countries, Iran and Turkey (ERF), and the Economic Education and Research Consortium (EERC) – for countries belonging to the Commonwealth of Independent States in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. These networks are in turn now part of the Global Development Network (GDN).

These capacity-building activities are monitored by researchers inside the WB Group. One should recall that, with a significant central research

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6   The procedures and criteria used under KCP are also worth describing. Proposals should demonstrate relevance to the objectives of the programme and details of key aspects such as innovation, partners, country participation, deliverables, and development im-pact. A log frame-type matrix summarizing project objectives, inputs, outputs, outcome/impact, performance indicators, risks and critical assumptions, is required as part of each application for funding under the KCP, to facilitate evaluation. The criteria for assessing proposals include the degree to which proposals are innovative, provide new knowledge and/or pilot/demonstration impact; demonstrate country participation and ownership; incorporate developing country capacity building; can apply to a different country or region; and achieve results while remaining cost effective.

department and myriad research activities throughout the organization, the WB Group constitutes one of the largest concentrations of development researchers in the world. The Bank's full-time researchers are mainly found in the Development Research Group (DECRG) within the Development Economics Vice-Presidency. These researchers in DECRG are embedded within a vast development agency (with a global staff of about 8,500) that is oriented towards the implementation of development projects in developing countries. What is the role of research in the development practice at the Bank?[7] Is the profile of researchers (disciplines, schools of thought, background) who are recruited by the WB an influential factor in research design and scientific options?

Ravaillon (2007), a professional with more than twenty years of research experience with the WB, affirms that the Bank has mainly developed two kinds of research. First is **evaluative research**, which is broader than impact evaluation, and attempts to assess whether development policies are **effective**, and under what circumstances they tend to be more effective. It embraces both "micro" interventions in specific sectors and policies, and it includes both *ex ante* and *ex post* evaluation. Evaluative research must be driven by questions formulated by policy makers, and not by preferences for certain types of data or certain methods. In evaluative research design, policy questions should constitute the driving issue, although the WB tends to focus more on methodological questions relating to data collection, software design, data analysis, etc. Policy should not fit the methodology, but vice versa.

The second type of cross-cutting research developed by the WB can be termed **methodological research**, which should help expand the tool kit routinely employed by policy makers and analysts, including the data collected and the methods used to analyse data. The Bank has become a major producer of development data, and WB researchers have played a crucial role. Nevertheless, Ravaillon (2007) recalls that "not every important piece of development research has an immediate and clear policy implication" (p. 1). Why? The author puts forward three main features to explain this: (i) policy makers and practitioners must still understand the potential for research to inform policy processes, and also be ready to

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7   See: Ravaillon, Martin. 2007. *Research in Practice at the World Bank. World Bank, Policy Research Working Paper.*

pay for the costs associated with research development; (ii) policy makers should increase their perception of benefits once research projects address what they consider to be "relevant questions"; (iii) research projects should also result in credible answers, which can be based on evidence, but not exclusively.

Of course, we should also say that this *dialogue* between researchers and policy makers is highly political, and involves micro background features of the research team, as well as (and mostly) macro institutional development factors. Schick (2002), for instance, through the analysis of a government-sponsored study of race relations in New Zealand schools, shows how political and institutional pressures and a positivist-empiricist research culture further supported a mechanistic approach to social inclusion. In her article she argues that a meaningful approach to difference and voice in inclusive research requires critical attention to the conditions of communication and the micro-politics of the day-to-day interactions that shape the meaning of social categories in practice.[8]

That is why policy research should not be limited to research projects on technical and methodological issues. Social science research may be rooted in a diverse set of ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies, including action-research, critical theory, and post-positivist research. As Cox and Sinclair (1996) assert, the world of research tends to divide the social reality into separate spheres, creating subdivisions that are dictated by arbitrary (and often very conservative) intellectual conventions. There is no such thing as *the* theory, since all theories are based on a context, and can relate to either ontologies of problem-solving (taking the world and its institutions as they are, seeking for solutions to concrete society problems) or problem-building (looking for the historical background, complexities and deep causes of social problems). In the first case, the number of intervening variables is limited; research is based on a particular problem to be analysed, thus producing laws and regularities. In the second case, there is no divide between research, society and politics; research is ontologically normative and epistemologically critical, since it seeks to produce social change according to a certain set of values. Critical social research is problem-building insofar as it does not separate facts from values, prob-

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8   See: Schick, Ruth S. 2002. When the Subject is Difference: Conditions of Voice in Policy-oriented Qualitative Research, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8 (5): 632-651.

lematizes society and social relations, and is not oriented towards adaptation and maintenance of a given *status quo.*[9]

Choucri (2007) rightly complements this reasoning affirming that there is a direct connection between knowledge and political factors, such as power, influence, capability, war and peace. This connection is generally acknowledged but seldom addressed head on by academia or international agencies. If we accept the idea that knowledge is power, it is obvious that its application is necessary for the actual realization of power. Power is embedded in concrete social relationships; it is not an abstract attribute of a single and isolated political actor. That is why knowledge may become both instrumental (i.e. leading to change) and contextual (constrained by conditions). Parenthetically, the formulation of evidence-based policy is precisely the use of knowledge for the pursuit of policy, and the resort to knowledge as a legitimization mechanism.[10]

Thirdly and in order to conclude on the Bank's activities in the field of research-policy linkages, under the **programme "Modeling to monitor the MDGs"** in the Development Data Platform, one can find other policy research tools available for decision-makers. The modelling methodologies being used by the Bank to understand the challenges of achieving the MDGs at country as well as global level use software programmes to deliver computable general equilibrium (CGE) models (neoclassic economics). These are used to analyse macroeconomic data, along with micro data gathered in detailed household surveys. Policy makers using these tools are supposed to be able to analyse various policy scenarios, while also comparing the outcomes of actual policies and programmes, with the counterfactuals. These computerized models can explain not only what happened as a result of a given policy, programme or project, but what would have happened had the policy, programme or project not been implemented. This modelling draws on the Development Data Platform. The Bank's Development Data Platform (DDP) is a web-based data tool that provides access to statistics from more than 75 key databases. Users can also access record-level data and documentation from over three thousand household surveys. The DDP Micro-data incorporates both innovative

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9   See: Cox, Robert W.; Sinclair, T. J. 1996. *Approaches to World Order.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (Chapter 6: Social forces, states, and world order, pp. 60-84).

10   See: Choucri, Nazly. 2007. *The Politics of Knowledge Management.* Paper prepared for the UNESCO Forum on Higher Education, Research and Knowledge.

IT design and development and a substantial effort to locate and format household survey data.

As a matter of fact, this brief analysis of the World Bank's **philosophical foundations** in defining the role of knowledge in policy-making shows its **normative options** in the use of social science methods, particularly relating to **neoclassical economics and functionalist sociology**, but also to **econometric and statistical modelling**. The appeal to quantitative methods and the production of empirical evidence stems from the fundamental notion that evidence-based public policy is rooted in research that has undergone some form of quality assurance and scrutiny. This is the kind of social science research that is supposed to bear the monopoly of the scientific nature and the methodological rigor.

As a matter of fact, such "scientific" developments in the field of policy research aim to "modernize" government by making greater use of evidence, especially evidence from the social sciences. Evidence-based policy-making strives to use only the best available evidence to inform policy. This evidence is rated in terms of its quality and the use of a relevant research design and is mainly quantitative. O'Dwyer (1994) says that evidence is broadly defined as research conducted systematically using scientific principles but there are differing interpretations of the strength and quality of findings produced by different types of research methods. Availability and validity are key issues.

What is not recalled in policy briefs or institutional reports is that there is some disagreement in the literature about whether or not "evidence-based" policy-making is better than other forms of policy-making. Neither do they do recall that evidence-based research policy also reflects a conception of the kind of linkage that can be set up between social science research and public policies. Institutional research reports do not mention, moreover, that it is generally recognized in the literature that evidence is not the only factor influencing policy-making.[11] Knowledge (and evidence is also knowledge) also comes with diverse degrees of uncertainty that are seldom acknowledged by international agencies. Policy-making, as politics, is present everywhere. Its context and conditions are often very distinctive.

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11 See: O'Dwyer, Lisel. 2004. *A critical review of evidence-based policy makin*g. Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Southern Research Centre, AHURI Final Report, No. 58.

As Choucri (2007) says, that is why knowledge management focusing on policy issues can seldom assume that "one size fits all".

▶ *Case 4: The action of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in the field of education*

In 1968, OECD's Directorate for Education's Section on Research and Knowledge Management set up the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI), whose main mandate is to promote studies on research, innovation and knowledge management. A new research focus emerged in 2003, building on recommendations by the CERI Governing Board, which stressed that "**evidence-based policy research is a vital complement to other practical and innovative processes in teaching and learning and should not be neglected by policy makers as a source of innovation**". The project has centred on a series of workshops (see box below) which brought together researchers, experts and policy makers to exchange experiences and practices. These workshops have reviewed main aspects of evidence-based policy research (methods, transaction costs, and capacities), and have also discussed what constitutes evidence for research in **education**, how that evidence can best be used, and how to identify best practices in the field. As a result of these workshops, in June 2007 CERI released a book entitled "*Evidence in Education: Linking Research and Policy*". At its very introduction the book states the following: it is crucial that educational policy decisions are made based on the best evidence possible.

Box 5
CERI Workshops on Evidence-Based Policy-Making in the field of Education

Workshop	Where?	Main questions and focus
First held in April 2004	Washington D.C.	What constitutes evidence? Comparing advantages and shortcomings of a range of established social science research methodologies.
Second held in January 2005	Stockholm	How diverse are stakeholders (researchers, policy makers, practitioners and the media)? Communicating needs, priorities and outputs.
Third held in September 2005	The Hague	What are the effective mechanisms for mediating between research and policy/practice? Defining the roles and achievements of brokerage agencies (good practices).
Fourth and final held in July 2006	London	How to implement evidence-based policy research? The focus was on implementation, scaling up and sustainability.

Several documents made available by CERI on the Internet reiterate that evidence-based policy is defined as "the conscientious and explicit use of current best evidence in making decisions and choosing between policy options". Evidence-based policy research (EbPR) is thus defined as the research that is used to produce evidence-based policy. This seems obvious, but it creates at the same time an important differentiation, since EbPR is distinguished from "purely scientific research" in that the former is oriented to informing action while the latter is oriented towards developing theory and testing hypotheses. Both types of research cannot be considered mutually exclusive; however, the formal justification given in OECD's documents for setting up such a distinction is the following: "burdens and standards of proof of causality are

very different and in many cases evidence-based policy is obliged to use the best available evidence at a given moment in time".[12]

Of course, one cannot separate this formal distinction from the reasons why OECD's Member States and CERI have decided to invest (time, funds, expertise) in EbPR in the field of education. In the reports and Internet material that we have consulted, we can read that OECD shares some fundamental working principles, as follows:

(i) There is a growing concern with accountability, transparency and effectiveness of educational policies and educational research in OECD countries.

(ii) The information readily available for policy-making is often unsuitable, either because the rigorous research required for policy needs has not been conducted, or because the research that is available is contradictory and does not suggest a **single** course of action.

(iii) OECD countries share a belief that education and knowledge are increasingly important factors in innovation and economic growth.

(iv) There is a need to set up a clearer definition of educational research, and more consistent support for it.

(v) It is necessary to shift from a linear to an interactive model of research utilization, for instance, by means of employing teachers as researchers and identifying the knowledge needs of stakeholders.

On the one hand, what such principles reaffirm is evidently relevant from the viewpoint of micro relations between the world of educational research: *inter alia*, the way research is conducted, who it involves in its methodological development and scientific process, the scientific opening to demands stemming from policy makers, policy epistemic communities, and non-formal groupings. At the same time, no one would currently dare say that policy makers need not be accountable

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12   See: Burns, Tracey and Schuller, Tom. *Evidence-based Policy in Education: new opportunities and challenges*. Paris, Centre for Educational Research and Development, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, draft version, 2006. See also: *Evidence-Based Policy Research: the next step*. Report drafted by Olaf McDaniel, Lotte van der Linden, and CBE Consultants BV (Amsterdam). Session organized by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science for the OCED Conference on Evidence-Based Policy Research. The Hague, September 2005.

for their actions and decisions *vis-à-vis* civil society organizations and citizens. On the other hand, what such tenets seem to ignore is the contextual reality within which we need to situate the dialectical, contradictory and political relationships between social science research and policy- making. These principles do not integrate questions of political autonomy (of individuals, associations, NGOs), funding, institutional development, training capacities and public-private tensions that are fundamental variables in today's analysis of science-policy relationships under a mode of regulation and a discourse that tends to privilege an ethics of the market over an ethics of the public good.

It is true that experts participating in the series of workshops organized by CERI acknowledge that EbPR is a complex and potentially contentious issue which generates serious political debate. They recognize that it is unlikely for there to be a set of conclusions or recommendations which sit comfortably with every OECD policy regime. Among the most important reasons for the lack of success of EbPR in education, OECD's experts have pointed out the following: (i) short-term politics: there is no time to include the present EBPR results in the practice of the political decision process; (ii) there are no structural links between research and schools; (iii) misinterpretation of research by media and politicians; (iv) lack of interaction between research, policy and practice; (v) research results often do not fit into policy's agendas or interest; (vi) absence of suitable mechanisms or incentives at school level to feed evidence into classroom practice; (vii) teachers have to respond to immediate classroom needs and cannot wait for research results; (viii) present EbPR does not provide sufficient classroom tools to play an important role; (ix) researchers and practitioners do not speak the same language and operate in isolation from each other; (x) negative evaluation results can be interpreted (by public and politicians) as proof of bad policy; (xi) politicians often have their specific ideas and are frustrated when evidence tells them that they are wrong.

These explanatory factors apply to the reality of OECD countries in the field of educational policies, and demonstrate that there can be no single best method or type of evidence-based policy research. National contexts are variable, and the key is for research and policy communities to deploy appropriate and contextual combinations of approaches

and methodologies which match the characteristics of the policy issues under consideration. They must also have the capacity to select, implement and evaluate these combinations. Governance (including types of political arenas, backgrounds of political culture, the meaning and importance of authority, and institutional mechanisms of policy dialogue) between these two epistemic communities (the science community on one side, and policy community, on the other) is central in the definition of future scientific and political cooperation schemes.

How does OECD attempt to foster these dialogues? Of course, through some traditional mechanisms embedded in international cooperation (policy briefs, workshops, publications, which we have already mentioned in the analysis of other multilateral organizations), but also with the support of brokerage agencies, such as the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre (EPPI-Centre) within the University of London,[13] the Knowledge Chamber of the Netherlands,[14] the Danish Knowledge Clearinghouse, What Works Clearinghouse (USA), the Canadian Council on Learning, and the Social Care Institute of Excellence (United Kingdom). Many of the agencies have been created as a result of the OECD/CERI workshop series (box 5). These brokerage agencies are also distinguished in their goals and means, with New Zealand's Best Evidence Synthesis Programme providing an example of a brokerage programme within the Ministry, whereas the Canadian Council on Learning, although also federally funded, is separate from the provincial Ministries. The United States' What Works Clearinghouse functions in collaboration with a number of other institutes and subcontractors, and also conducts consumer surveys and questionnaires to ensure that the service it provides

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13 Formed in 1993, EPPI-Centre works on health and education policy-relevant research. For details, see: http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk. It is interesting to read EPPI-Centre's glossary, where we can find the following definition of evidence: "research evidence is knowledge and understanding developed by empirical and conceptual research. There are many types of research, all with their own methodology for creating and evaluating evidence".

14   Established in June 2006, the Knowledge Chamber of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is a meeting point for the top of the ministry and knowledge institutes, such as advisory councils and planning offices. It formulates subjects on which more knowledge is needed. Knowledge questions here feed back into the process of evidence-based policies.

is meeting the demands of the users (researchers, practitioners, policy makers, etc).

With the support of relatively well-funded external agencies, CERI has, for instance, been able to establish a series of criteria for what it considers to be sound, rigorous and relevant EbPR. It is worth noting that all these criteria deal with methodological issues only, as follows:

- Causality claim: to what extent does the research method ascertain whether a causal effect happens or not?
- Explanation claim: to what extent does the research method explain how or why the causal effect is happening?
- Transportability: how far is the evidence such that the results can be applied to most (or all) of the relevant field in different settings of time or space?
- Stability: will the evidence be reasonably stable over time in its application?
- Validity: does the research use instruments which measure what it is intended to measure?
- Variability: to what extent does the research method involve or permit variation in the type of intervention?

We believe that such questions deserve further analysis by the MOST Secretariat if and when it disseminates its policy briefs and policy papers, since the answers eventually produced in each case may be thought-provoking in the understanding of the research-policy linkages. CERI has set up these (methodological) criteria focusing on a very particular field of action (educational policies), based on social realities of OECD countries and available macro educational indicators that allow for such a generalization. What is the reality of UNESCO and MOST? What are the possibilities for MOST to focus both thematically and regionally? Moreover, experts involved in EbPR tend to share a certain number of philosophical principles (the role of social science research, the distinction between theoretical research and EbPR, the acceptance of current governance structures that lead international relations, etc.) and training backgrounds (levels of expertise, experience and practice in the field of EbPR), thus constituting a quite homogeneous epistemic community. Again, who are the stakeholders of MOST? What is their intellectual involvement and experience with

issues relating to the policy-research nexus? How do they formulate their policy demands? Is there a degree of coherence and homogeneity in the policy demands sent to the Secretariat of MOST? We intend to come back to some of these issues in the final part of this report.[15]

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15 In the analysis of international organizations, it is important to note that UNDP does not have a particular programme on evidence-based public policies; however, it develops many tools in which it presents good practices for decision-makers, **guides for action** in the field of democratic governance, as well as **development indicators** and methodologies for building indicators. One example is the "Guide to Civil Society Organizations Working on Democratic Governance", published by the Oslo Governance Centre: this guide offers a snapshot of more than 300 civil society organizations working on democratic governance at global and regional level, and it provides information on CSOs across UNDP's priority democratic governance areas. In the field of indicators, one can recall the "Governance Indicators: A User's Guide", which is a joint collaboration between the Oslo Centre and the European Commission, providing direction on how to use and where to find sources of governance indicators. Intended for the non-specialist user, this guide brings together information on how to use indicators and where to find material on those sources in one easy-to-use package. Finally, one can also refer to the "Governance and Conflict Prevention database", which allows UNDP practitioners to access information electronically on best practices and lessons learned in UNDP governance and conflict prevention activities for policy formulation efforts.

Part two

Sketching a series of critical questions on the relationships between social sciences and policy-making

In part one of this report, the aim was not a thorough evaluation of science-policy linkage programmes being implemented by multilateral and bilateral organizations; rather, our aim has been to introduce briefly some practices and understand (both contextually and ontologically) the main tools that are highlighted in their communication strategy as a means to foster the dialogue between social science research and public policy formulation. In sum, the first part of this report has shown a profound sense of continuity and regularity in the way programmes and activities are thought of and implemented by the four selected international organizations. To a larger extent, irrespective of their diverse foundational philosophies these organizations share the need to invest in evidence-based policy research, and promote policy dialogues as an instrument to build a broader consensus on the role of empirical evidence in policy research. Regardless of their cultural differences and specific political mandates, they all disseminate policy briefs, build databases and promote policy forums. We can, of course, also pinpoint some particularities in their action as individual organizations: for instance, UNU promotes short-term demand-driven pilot projects and builds situational diagnoses on several issue areas, the EU focus on research-industry relationships, the WB steers training in creating and monitoring development databases, whereas OECD has a particular (but not exclusive) interest in the field of educational policies.

In part two of this report, we intend to raise some critical issues on the why such a broad consensus has been possible, and sketch a series of

questions that could hopefully support thinking and decision in the further strategic development of the MOST Programme. We base our reasoning in a series of arguments that we have developed in previous publications.[1]

To begin with, as Richard E. Lee *et al* (2005) affirm, it should be recalled that social science has, since its institutional development in the nineteenth century, had an "ambiguous relationship" with social policy. Using the metaphor of a "*tumultuous marriage* in which the rules of conjugality were never fully established or agreed to by both parties*", the authors recall that the linkages between social science and policies have also gone through the myth that the accumulation of data (usually statistical data) would illuminate the directions in which the State might proceed, by means of various new policies and reforms, in order to alleviate the ills that the associations of information could perceive. This was also the influence of a positivist and functionalist problem-solving spirit adopted by natural science, which was transmitted to social sciences in their historical development. During the 1950s and 60s, this thinking began to get institutionalized essentially in the more industrialized States (the United Kingdom, the United States, later in Australia and Germany). This institutionalization has also reached multilateral organizations, including through the implementation of some programmes described in part one of this report.

The idea behind the empiricist creed was that the promotion of social policy was not politically neutral, thus it was more appropriate for social scientists to play a role that would be "value-neutral" and "professional". This gives rise to the waves of programmes on "applied social science", as opposed to merely theorizing about social relations or merely undertaking empirical research.[2] To sum up, there were two contradictory positions: Max Weber and Robert Merton, tenors of science as truth and the principle of axiologic neutrality on the one hand, opposed to critical thinking and

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1   For further details, see: Milani, Carlos R. S. 2005. *Les relations entre les sciences et la décision politique : le chercheur, les institutions politiques, les décideurs et la gouvernance.* In: Solinís, Germán. Construire des gouvernances: entre citoyens, décideurs et scientifiques. Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 288 p.

2   See: Lee, Richard E.; William J. Martin; Heinz R. Sontag; Peter J. Taylor; Immanuel Wallerstein; Michel Wieviorka. 2005. *Social Science and Social Policy: from national dilemmas to global opportunities.* Reference Paper for the International Forum on the Social Science – Policy Nexus, Buenos Aires (Argentina) and Montevideo (Uruguay), UNESCO, MOST 2, 30 p.

problem-building theories defended by thinkers such as Antonio Gramsci and Karl Manheim, on the other. Nevertheless, even when research indicates scenarios for practical action, it takes more than knowledge and social science research to make policy. One should recall variables such as social creativity and individual imagination to build workable proposals, but also social mobilization and political support or contestation (i.e. the *politics* of science-policy) to transform these proposals into policy (or avoid their becoming policies).

The relationships between social science and policy-making can be thought of on at least four levels of analysis: the researcher, his/her methodological and ontological choices; the historical processes of institutionalization of social sciences (nationally and, in more recent times, internationally); the motivations of decision-makers; and, finally, the structures of political governance that organize the contexts where these relationships and key actors evolve (State, international organizations, brokerage agencies, social movements, NGOs, corporations). These four levels are particularly relevant for a more acute analysis when one notes that with globalization, decision-making tends to move beyond symbolic and material frontiers of the State (from public to private, from national to global). Questions such as "what is the utility of social science research?", "who funds research and why?", "who are the decision-makers in policy-making?", "who defines the priorities?" or "how legitimate are influential international agencies in setting up national priorities?" become central for policy debates in democratic societies both in industrialized and developing countries.[3]

This is because globalization is not merely a competition for market shares and well-timed economic growth initiatives; neither is it just a matter of trade opportunities and liberalization. Globalization has also evolved into a social and political struggle for imposing cultural values and

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3   Speaking at UNESCO in 2006, Professor A. H. Zakri (Head of UNU Institute of Advanced Studies) appealed for international help to foster relevant research programmes in the developing world, where "the pressures are greatest, the need most acute and it is really a matter of life and death". Nevertheless, instead of pinpointing the inequalities in North-South relations in the field of university and scientific development, Professor Zakri stated that many universities in developing countries are not relevant, affirming that a universal characteristic of university success is "relevance" or "research utility". "Universities and the research they undertake need to be relevant – to their government's policy, to their people's educational needs and to their community's needs" (quote).

individual preferences: the current global economic system optimizes the values and criteria of performance, efficiency and productivity. Nowadays, performance defines the new *locus* for the belonging of global subjects that ought to thrive on the accomplishment of short-term responsibilities at any cost. Being efficient and cultivating performance has become the new global avatar for the myth of progress and development; global performance provides a new sense of universality for national communities. It goes without saying that such an over-estimation of economic performance, which in general one finds in the discourse of many global economic players, has direct implications for democratic life in general, and for the analysis of science-policy nexus in particular. According to these global market ethics, political negotiations must also follow the pattern of efficiency and, thus, fall into the market's timetable; there should be no room for doubt and long deliberation in a global risk society.[4]

As O'Dwyer (2004) asserts, political decisions about social policies are rarely the direct outcome of social science research. They are more usually the result of conflicting pressures by social actors – entrepreneurs, workers' organizations, religious authorities, special interest groups, and the media. The author shows that there has recently been increasing interest in Australia in evidence-based policy-making (EbPM), mainly stemming from new policy developments in the UK. Multilateral organizations play a major role in disseminating views and methods on how to think and act in the field of social science-policy nexus, as we have described in the first part of this report. Based on the Australian reality, the author mentions the international success of an evidence-based approach to health, education, criminology and social work, which has stimulated this change. While the concept of empirical evidence should help to promote more and better use of research findings and a more systematic use of knowledge, it is difficult to produce the necessary kinds of evidence to inform other policy sectors (such as housing and urban policy) in such a way as to label these policies "evidence-based". This is principally because of the difficulty in isolating

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4   See: Milani, Carlos R. S. 2006. Globalização e contestação política na ordem mundial contemporânea. In: *Cadernos do CRH (UFBA)*, v. 19, p. 377-383. See also: Milani, Carlos R. S. 2008. Bridging divides between environmental governance and transnational contestatory movements: culture of politics and institutional perspectives in the sustainable development agenda. In: *International Studies Association (ISA) 49th Annual Convention*, 2008, S. Francisco (California), Archives of the 49th ISA Annual Convention.

the effects of interventions in housing and urban issues from wider social processes and their geographic variations.

This distinguishes EbPM from public policy based on more conventional policy development processes where intuitive appeal, tradition, politics, or the extension of existing practice may set the policy agenda. EbPM is not synonymous with good policy- making, but evidence-based policy-making is more likely to be good policy-making in some particular fields. Here, again, excessive generalization (both thematically and across countries or cultural contexts) may be a perilous temptation. It is possible to have bad evidence-based policy-making if the evidence used is biased, flawed or incomplete. One could also say that, depending on the purposes of data collection, evidence may serve unfair and unjust policy objectives.[5] Statistical data as well as cartography are "texts", and may be skilfully controlled and technically manipulated.

Some factors influencing the use of an evidence-based approach in policy-making that should also be taken into account are: prevailing public opinion, organizational culture, incompatible time frames in policy-making and research, values and ideology of both researchers and policy makers, control of power, political goals, as well as institutional development and degree of autonomy of the social science community. Carol Weiss (1979) identifies "four I's" which characterize policy-making in general: ideology (people's basic values – of policy makers and wider society); interests (personal or organizational, such as personal career aspirations or maximizing budgets); institutional norms and practices (for example, the US congress works largely through face to face contact – reading is not part of the norm and so written documents of research findings are likely to be ignored); prior information (policy makers already have information from various sources).[6]

Based on these four "I's" and because "research utilization" is associated with a variety of different meanings and interpretations, Weiss (1986) later identified seven different models of research-policy relationships: (i) the knowledge-driven model (basic research highlights an opportunity →

5   See: O'Dwyer, Lisel. 2004. *A critical review of evidence-based policy making*. Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Southern Research Centre, AHURI Final Report, No. 58.
6   See: Weiss, Carol H. 1979. «The Many Meanings of Research Utilization», *Public Administration Review*, 39 (5): 426-431.

applied research is conducted to define and test these findings → appropriate technologies are formulated → application occurs); (ii) the problem-solving model (evidence is produced in a particular field in order to solve or shed light on a particular policy problem); (iii) the interactive model (information for policy-making is not only produced by researchers, but also by planners, practitioners, interest groups, journalists, etc.); (iv) the political model (research is used as a means of legitimization of policy decisions); (v) the tactical model (research is an excuse for inaction); (vi) the enlightenment model (cumulative research and information over time sensitizes policy makers to new issues); (vii) and research as part of the intellectual enterprise of society (research is not an independent variable affecting the policy process, but rather policy interests often set the parameters of research and the scientific agendas).[7]

The first two models are very linear in their nature, and presuppose relationships between the world of social sciences and policy-making communities that are spontaneous and free from pretension or political calculation. Both share positivist principles in their epistemology and methodology. They seem to inform many policy-research projects and EbPR programmes analysed in part one of this report. The third model is rooted in a phenomenological understanding of social reality, where human interactions tend to erase conflictual situations, confrontation and absolute opposition. The other four models take the politics of science-policy relationships into account, and suppose different functions and uses of research by policy makers.

An example of how to understand these models could come from a UNU seminar organized in 2007 on the topic "Strengthening Linkages between Science and Policy". This seminar was held as part of the 21st Pacific Science Congress in Okinawa, Japan, in June 2007. The two main questions addressed during this seminar were:

- Why, despite recent advances in biotechnology, nanotechnology, medicine and environmental sciences, do more than 1 billion people around the world continue to live in extreme poverty without access to proper nutrition, safe drinking water and basic medical services, and survive on less than 2 USD a day?

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7   See: Weiss, Carol H. 1986.The many meanings of research utilisation, in M. Bulmer (ed.), *Social Science and Policy*. London: Allen Unwin.

- Why, despite unequivocal evidence that global warming will continue to cause dramatic changes in wind patterns, precipitation and extreme weather that will negatively affect human populations, are policies mitigating these effects being debated?

The main conclusion of this 2007 seminar was that tenuous links between science and policy can be seen as one of the primary reasons why better technologies are not accessible to the poorest people on Earth. The seminar report presents conclusions that may induce an uninformed reader (an uninformed policy maker?) to think that simply through greater investments in science policy the benefits of technological innovations and economic growth would trickle down to all individual members of a society, regardless of established patterns of domination, exclusion and social reproduction of inequalities. It would be naïve to think of major global ecological crises, world food security and climate change only as a problem of access to technology and insufficient investment in sound research-based policies. Building such a simplistic answer to the questions raised during the seminar may also show how the "narrative of linkage" can be used as an excuse not to tackle power relations that are inherent in society, both nationally and internationally. It would also demonstrate how difficult it may be to set aside the first three models introduced by Carol Weiss. It seems there is no doubt that a paradigm shift is needed in the way science-based advice (and social science-based advice in particular) is translated into successful policy if we are to achieve environmental sustainability without compromising social justice worldwide.

Based on Burrel and Morgan (1979), let us build a figure (see figure 1) where we can find two analytical axes for understanding major premises in building models on social-science and policy linkages. The horizontal axis deals with objectivity and subjectivity, and refers to sources used in social science research in order to construct an ideal of social reality. The objectivist approach to social science is rooted in an ontology of realism, a positivist epistemology, a deterministic conception of human nature, and a nomothetic methodology. The subjective approach to social science is based on an ontology of nominalism, an anti-positivist epistemology, voluntarism, and an ideographic methodology. The vertical axis presents the normative and ontological perspective of social sciences before the idea (or need) of social change: upwards one can situate perspectives of radical

change (a sociology of deep social transformations), whereas downwards we find a sociology of regulation and adaptation within the *status quo*. [8] This second axis corresponds to the role that the researcher may resume in defence of transformative social sciences, including through their relationships with policy networks and non-scholar communities. In this sense, the presentation of intellectual ideas through social science research may threaten a certain notion of truth which has claimed a false appearance of universality.

Figure 1: Paradigms and Models in the Analysis of Social Science and Policy Linkages

Sociology of radical change

Sociology of adaptation
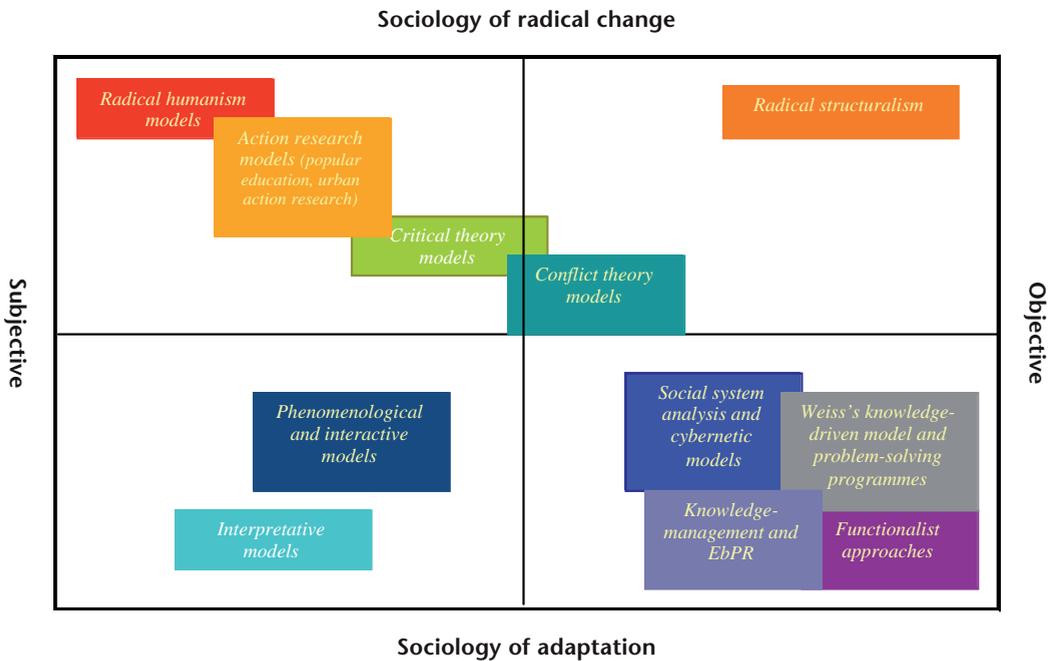
This figure shows the legitimacy of alternative perspectives. It entails a culture of debate, argumentation and dialogue in the analysis of other models for understanding linkages between social science and policy-making. Hopefully, it will also provide the means for an international organization such as UNESCO to embrace other frames of reference

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8   Burrel, Gibson; Morgan, G. *Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis: elements of the sociology of corporate life.* London: Heinemann, 1979.

and not worry too much about orthodoxy. Of course, the legitimacy of non-functionalist paradigms is not assured today, and should not be taken for granted. However, unveiling the ontology and epistemology of EbPR models adopted by the large majority of international organizations today may also allow for a more pluralistic debate on the issue of social sciences and public policy linkages.

How can this figure support some strategic thinking for MOST in order to craft an original analytical framework? What critical possibilities does it offer in the understanding of the role of EbPR promoted by many multilateral organizations? These are difficult but necessary questions. As Lather (2008) affirms, the time has come to break out of the regulation, standardization and surveillance of research and the speculation on what it would mean to be a "mature" or "objective" science, and move beyond, towards a more complex scientificity, where the empirical becomes more interpretive, not less.[9] There is therefore a need to refuse to concede science to scientism, and reopen the debate on when, why and how research matters in policy-making. Statements on how "rigor" in research is the most direct route to better policies must also be discussed based on the actual policy-making process, and the options made by models presented in figure 1.

There is a clear need to shift the discourse away from the focus on "objective" and technical questions of research design and methods in order to move towards the analysis of dialectical relationships between research and policy. Questions on method and design are not irrelevant, but they seem to have erased the key role of political behaviour of political actors in current international programmes dealing with EbPR. As Lather (2008) shows, the interest in research that informs policy and practice is shared across disciplinary boundaries and methodologies and among the "interdisciplines" that have long characterized the field of education. The "alternative" models presented in figure 1 may also raise pertinent (and different) questions to the understanding of the linkage problem. One of the issues is how the theory/practice or basic/applied distinctions are to be thought. Taking the complexity into account entails a more philosophical and less instrumental (re)thinking of the research/policy nexus.

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9   See: Lather Pathi. 2008. New Wave Utilization Research: (re)imagining the research/policy nexus, *Educational Researcher*, 37 (6): 361-364.

Thus, it is useful to note that research for policy is not so much about providing answers as about changing the way questions are understood, so that people (researchers and policy makers, but other publics too) can begin to think differently, thus critically building the contours and contents of social problems. Working towards a more complex scientificity entails a sort of "philosophy of negativity" (Lather, 2008), where modes of contestation would be as constitutive of the very scientific field within which one locates one's research work. Of course, this would mean shifting the standard of intelligibility for policy research away from the positivism that underpins hegemonic understandings of evidence, objectivity, reason, measurement, value-free facts, research utilization and responsible knowledge production.

As Pawson and Tilley (1996) affirm, in conducting research, sponsored research in particular, political considerations mitigate reflexive impulses that might undermine the authority of the research. Apart from structural factors building the politics of science-policy relations, what goes on "behind the scenes" at both meso- and micro levels is also a significant aspect of knowledge production. Factors such as professional, situational, cultural and interpersonal relationships between researchers are rarely addressed in methodological sections of research reports or in texts relating to methods. Researchers' attempts to situate themselves in relation to their work signal an awareness of the centrality of research identities to the process of knowledge production but often do not address the ways in which research relationships and settings shape research findings, analyses and reporting. Research grounded in a commitment to social change inevitably begins with at least a provisional presumption that social difference, inequality and spatial disparity are both organized and knowable.[10] Contrary to the positivist and rationalistic creed, political rationales need not be discarded as criteria for some research and policy decisions.

Another final key aspect that we would like to highlight has to do with the research process itself. Who participates in the definition of the policy research agenda? Whose interests are taken into account? Contrary to the common sense that may prevail in "participatory projects", it

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10 Pawson, R.; Tilley, N. 1996. How (and how not) to design research to inform policymaking, In: C. Samson and N. South (eds.), *The Social Construction of Social Policy: Methodologies, Racism, Citizenship and the Environment.* London: MacMillan, pp. 34-52.

would be naive to think that a history of exclusion can be overcome by "including" individuals already identified and selected because they are disempowered by those very structures. Calling "them" empowered is not enough. If we are concerned about issues of voice and exclusion in the production of knowledge, then it is critical to recognize the situated character of the research process itself.[11] As Schick (2002) recalls, these conditions of research are at least as influential in shaping the meanings research produces, publicizes and legitimizes as the superficial markers of identity foreseen in the research design. No matter who decides what categories will be used and how they will be defined in principle, in practice, inclusiveness is produced in the micro-politics of day-to-day interaction. Designing qualitative research practices that attend to these relationships more self-consciously and reflexively may offer a more productive challenge to exclusion in knowledge production.[12]

Some questions for the future

To conclude this report, and steer debate within the MOST Secretariat, we have organized a series of strategic suggestions and theoretical questions for the future development of MOST in promoting social sciences and policy linkages. Based on many of the arguments presented above, what follows should be read as a series of guiding topics for discussion. An attempt to define an original approach and to establish some definitions of how MOST conceives of linkages between social science and policy-making could take into consideration, *inter alia*, the following issues:

Research on other universalities
of the research-policy linkages

(1) Based on the assumption that empirical-evidence research policy has turned out to be the hegemonic conception on linkages between

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11   For a critical account of participatory experiences in Brazil, see: Milani, Carlos R. S. 2008. O princípio da participação social na gestão de políticas públicas locais: uma análise de experiências latino-americanas e européias. In: *Revista Brasileira de Administração Pública*, v. 42, p. 551-579.
12   See: Schick, Ruth S. 2002. When the Subject is Difference: Conditions of Voice in Policy-oriented Qualitative Research, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8 (5): 632-651.

social science research and public policy formulation, two avenues of work could pave the way for MOST in its future development:

(a) How, when and why has this hegemony been built? For instance, MOST could foster research on the national trajectories of social science institutional building where EERP has developed more thoroughly (such as the United States of America, the United Kingdom, among others). MOST could also deepen the analysis of the roles played by international agencies, rooted in the first results presented in this report. MOST could also analyse national strategies of integration (from outside to inside) of EERP approaches, for instance, in Latin America. How, why and when have we started promoting and using EERP methodologies in developing countries in general, and in Latin America in particular?

(b) Are there other problem-building approaches on R-P linkages that could constitute a counter hegemony or other expressions of universality? MOST could promote studies on national social science institutionalization processes in Latin America aiming at understanding how EERP methodologies may have contributed to the withdrawal of endogenous approaches (action research, popular education, etc.) from local research and policy agendas. MOST could develop and fund national case studies trying to analyse how R-P linkages may be conceived of in different manners. Could MOST identify and disseminate different historical traditions and recent reform policies that may have an impact on R-P linkages (in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Mexico, Venezuela, for instance)?

Work on what already exists within MOST: explain the functions and objectives of tools that are already available

(1) Are available tools different from what other agencies propose and do? Do they reach a different audience? Do they convey particularly different contents? In what sense are they relevant? Are they

complementary one with another? What is the specificity of the MOST tool that is available on the Internet?[13]

(2) In the case of policy briefs, many international organizations suppose that they are efficient in promoting dialogue between research and policy, but how efficient are they? Who actually receives, reads and uses them, and how? Who writes them? In the case of MOST, is it possible to benefit from the expertise of its research networks and ask project leaders themselves to prepare a policy brief based on some of their fields of expertise? One might suppose that some researchers would feel privileged to have a piece of their research work formatted as a policy brief to be disseminated through UNESCO's networks and reach a larger audience.

(3) Based on the assumption that R-P linkages vary according to themes, agendas, contexts and cases, could MOST interview policy makers, researchers and other social actors on practices used in order to use social science research in the decision-making process? Could these interviews show improvements, contradictions and limits of these practices? If we take the example of participatory budgeting in Brazil, there is extensive research which has been undertaken, many different practices across the country, distinct social actors involved in the political process, etc. What interesting and contradictory remarks on these experiences could MOST analyse and discuss? What lessons could be learned from these experiences in Brazil?

Define MOST's main partners and beneficiaries

(1) Can MOST work efficiently with many diverse partners? Is partnership diversity an asset for MOST? Or given the reality (financial,

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13   It is interesting to note that the MOST Secretariat document "Policy Research Tool: Background, Design Methodology and Application" (November 2007) states that one of the main goals of the tool would be to set up "a no-fee online policy research service which is expected to further new modes of decision-making, based on actual evidence from realities on the ground" (page 2). It also affirms that "the knowledge needed to design effective policy must thus be made available to decision-makers in *forms* they can use. The currently fashionable call for *evidence-based* policy specifies what constitutes *effective*: policy designed by reference not to common sense or to ideological preconceptions but to prior practical experience" (page 3). We strongly believe that the MOST Programme should steer some more analysis on how and why EERP may suppose that what it labels as "practical experiences" are not inhabited by world visions, ideologies, theories of the social and the political.

operational, human resources) of some multilateral agencies and their current agenda, would there be a need for MOST to limit the scope of partnerships in order to be more focused and efficient (both in substantive matters and methodologically)?

(2) Assuming that funding mechanisms have an influence on the way R-P linkages are built and practised, can MOST promote a critical reflection on current public-private partnerships in the development of social sciences, and also their impact on policy formulation and implementation?

Develop a "pedagogy of knowledge-policy dialogue" in the field of social development

(1) In the preparation and development of an analytical framework for MOST, some of the research questions we have discussed in this report should be tackled, such as:

(a) Who are the players and how do they interact? What is the quality of communication between the different sets of agents involved in commissioning, executing and implementing policy-relevant research?

(b) What are the kinds of methodologies and epistemological para-digms which dominate within policy and research communities?

(c) At what levels are policy goals set and policies fashioned and implemented?

(d) Which forms of capacity are most in need of expansion or strength-ening? How and by whom should this be done?

(e) What are the development opportunities for social science researchers (refresh, retrain, updating)? What is the quality of social science research infrastructures?

(f) What are the different roles played by mediation actors and bro-kerage agencies in different countries? How effective are they?

(g) How do different structures of governance shape the meaning of policy-relevant research? To what extent do different levels of policy-making have adequate access to research?

(2) Once MOST completes a preliminary step of defining its own con-ception and analytical framework, could it develop pedagogical tools

(guides, e-learning modules) working exactly on the critical contradic-
tions of the research-policy nexus that national trajectories analysed
(for instance, in Latin America) might reveal? Through a "pedagogy
of the knowledge-policy dialogue", could MOST bring about concep-
tual clarification, as well as analyses of the limits of a cause-and-effect
linear reasoning?

Policy Papers

1. *Searching for New Development Strategies – The Challenges of the Social Summit, Ignacy Sachs*, 1995.

2. *From Social Exclusion to Social Cohesion: Towards a Policy Agenda*, Sophie Bessis, 1995.

3. *Cybernetics of Global Change: Human Dimensions and Managing of Complexity*, M. Mesarovic, D. McGinnis and D. West, 1996.

4. *Multiculturalism: New Policy Response to Diversity*, Christine Inglis, 1996.

5. *Démocratie et citoyenneté dans la ville du XXIᵉ siècle*, Céline Sachs-Jeantet, 1997. (French only)

6. S*ustainability: A Cross-Disciplinary Concept for Social Transformations*, Egon Becker, Thomas Jahn, Immanuel Stiess and Peter Wehling, 1997.

7. *Nouvelles configurations villes-campagnes*, Ricardo Abramovay and Ignacy Sachs, 1999. (French only)

8. *Fight Urban Poverty: A General Framework for Action*, Denis Merklen, 2001.

9. *Domestic Democracy and International Democracy: Deficits*, David Steele, 2002.

10. *Rural labour migration in China: challenges for policies*, Zhan Shaohua, 2005.

11. *Intercommunality: The success story of CODENOBA, Argentina*, Nicole Maurice and Clara Braun, 2005.

12. *Anti-poverty Policies and Citizenry: The "Chile Solidario" Experience*, Julieta Palma and Raúl Urzúa, 2005.

13. *Illegal Drugs and Human Rights of Peasants and Indigenous Communities: The Case of Peru*, Carolina Navarrete-Frías and Francisco E. Thoumi, 2005.

14. *Illegal Drugs and Human Rights of Peasants and Indigenous Communities: The Case of Bolivia*, Carolina Navarrete-Frías and Francisco E. Thoumi, 2005.

15. *Illegal Drugs and Human Rights of Peasants and Indigenous Communities: The Case of Colombia*, Carolina Navarrete-Frías and Francisco E. Thoumi, 2005.

16. *El rol de las ONGs en la reducción de la pobreza en América Latina*, Ferrer, Marcela; Monje, Pable; Urzúa, Raúl, 2005.

17. *The System for Evaluating and Monitoring Social Development Programs and Policies: the case of the Ministry of Social Development and the Fight against Hunger in Brazil*, Vaitsman, Jeni; Rodrigues, Roberto W.S.; Paez-Sousa, Rômulo, 2006.

Special Edition. *Public Participation in Socially Sustainable Urban Development*, György Enyedi, 2004.

Special Edition. *Social Science and Social Policy: From National Dilemmas to Global Opportunities*, Richard E. Lee, William J. Martin, Heinz R. Sonntag, Peter J. Taylor, Immanuel Wallerstein and Michel Wieviorka, 2005.

Management of Social Transformations (MOST)

Policy is the priority

While it still promotes international, comparative and policy-relevant research on contemporary social transformations, MOST is now emphasizing the research and policy interface as its major *raison d'être*. Tackling the sustainability of social transformations is the programme's main task, which implies action at normative, analytical and strategic/political levels. It must concentrate on research of direct use to policy makers and groups involved in advocacy.

MOST's emphasis is thus on establishing and interconnecting international policy networks with renowned social science researchers to facilitate the use of social science research in policy-making. This means bringing together basic research with those entrusted with policy formulation in governments, institutions, actors and in UNESCO itself.

Tools for policy-making

The Policy Papers, dedicated to social transformations and based on policy-relevant research results of work carried out by MOST and by other sections of the Social and Human Sciences Sector (SHS), are intended for policy makers, advocacy groups, business and media.

SHS is seeking new ways of distributing knowledge to target groups, such as ministers of social development, advocacy groups, UNESCO National Commissions and local authorities. It has launched a tool for online knowledge management and meta-networking for decision-making and strategy. This knowledge repository will use innovative and refined search tools to facilitate access and intelligibility of complex research data for all potential users.