Social Sciences and European Research Capacities

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Final Workshop

The Socialisation of the European research in the perspective of the knowledge society
Interpretations and policies with
the contribution of social sciences

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Speech by

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I would like to make three short remarks on the concept of socialisation of research which is at the core of the handbook presented today.

I will do it from the point of view of our institute which is strongly oriented to contributing knowledge to public policy design and implementation, whose associates are social scientists (mainly sociologists) and which is focused on citizenship.

My first remark is that the concept of socialization could contribute to clarify the deep meaning of and research policies implemented so far in Europe**.**

For a number of reasons:

- It shows the existence of a **plurality of actors** of public research policies. These actors do not include only the European Union, Member states and regions, but also various professional groups, universities, companies, citizens, etc.
- It highlights **different dimensions** of problems concerning research world, showing that, for instance, solutions cannot be just economic ones (more money to research) but should also address other aspects
- The socialisation concept allows to see even a macro public policy like the **Lisbon agenda** from a different perspective and to make connections between elements that are usually considered unrelated.
- With the idea of including socialisation in research policies it is possible to conceive **new actions** that enrich the debate on the Lisbon agenda and to activate **support policies** for its implementation.

The second remark is strictly connected to our being social scientists. I think that this handbook through the idea of socialisation of research gives important insights on the role that social scientist can play in this field.

- In fact it does not only show that social sciences should be fully integrated in public policy identification and formulation - which is not obvious at all.

- The handbook could also offer suggestions for the **research funded by the European Commission**, on possible issues for collaborative research, supporting and coordinating actions, and on the implementation mechanisms of the Seventh Framework Programme. (For istance, foreseeing mechanisms for better supporting the cooperation between social and natural scientists)

As you will see the handbook provides an overview of the possible uses of social sciences.

There is the **practical use**, the least scientific one, through which social scientists act as facilitators in the science-technology-society relations.

Then there is the **interpretative use** of social sciences, which refers to investigating and understanding social processes. In the case of science and society, social sciences can help in investigating both the inner dynamics of science and tecnology and the interactions between science and technology, on the one hand, and society, on the other hand.

But there are two more uses – the functional and the substantive use - which are in my view the most interesting ones and also the least practised ones.

The **functional use** is oriented to producing knowledge which is immediately applicable to policies. This handbook is an example of such a use.

Finally, there is the **substantive use**, which evolves from the idea of a single scientific field involving all disciplines, both natural and social ones. "Substantive use" means that social sciences can contribute to investigating specific natural science topics as well. This can take different forms:

- Putting scientific questions in a broader perspective;
- Identifying implications of research for social life;
- Contributing to building an interdisciplinary approach.

In this way the handbook offers a direction for social scientists who wish to cooperate with other scientists in identifying new and more effective policies for scientific and technological research.

The third remark concerns citizenship. It is unlikely that socialisation policies can be put in practice without involving and mobilising European or even non-European citizens. The implementation of the Lisbon process, and the establishment of the European Research Area, also depend on the role that citizens play. We need to involve citizens not just because it is a good thing, but also because it is necessary, for a number of reasons.

- In the post-academic era, research is no longer carried out in the isolation of laboratories and is increasingly affected by the general societal framework (and the citizens have somethiing to say on this framework).

- Since research is increasingly contextualised, that is, guided by policies, the role of citizens is crucial. Think for instance to sectors like transport, energy, environment or health….

- Moreover, we increasingly see phenomena in which a right to a **scientific citizenship** is claimed (following Marshall's framework). Think for instance to the Pirate Party which obtained a significant number of votes in the last European elections ad is increasingly spreading out its ideas.

Therefore, if we will not take into account citizenship, there is the risk for science to produce a sort of responsibility gap or - better - a lack of technological responsibility which in turn may create a real democracy gap.

The socialisation concept is therefore a tool to understand the dynamics of citizenship and to bring citizenship into research and technology policies in the perspective of "doing" things.