

Some hints about the changing landscape of Science & Innovation Policy Studies (SIPS) in Europe

Philippe Larédo

Université de Paris-Est (ENPC) & University of Manchester (MBS)

Atlanta conference on Science Technology and Innovation
Policy (October 19-20, 2007)

Contents

- Evolution in key topics of interest: focus on 6 + 3 themes
- Three movements in the overall community
- Relations with policymakers: too much rather than too little?
- Two central issues for the future

Are key topics evolving?

- 6 central themes where interest has been widely growing: innovation / knowledge dynamics / globalisation of firm RDI / European 'fragmentation' and the conduct of national systems / democracy in a 'knowledge age' / universities
- 3 lasting themes (more focused?): 'sub-national' policies / 'institute' evaluation / IPR & knowledge dissemination.
- Of course, not an exhaustive list, only the vision of the speaker!

Are key topics evolving? (1)

- Innovation is an ever growing focus of interest.
 - How can we develop a friendly ecology? And in particular how can public procurement turn into a major lever?
 - Innovation in societal issues (the old 'mission oriented' paradigm revisited) with the emerging notion of 'grand challenges'
 - "Manufacturing industry is the agriculture of tomorrow": what do we know on innovation processes in services?

(NB - sessions at the conference show the importance of innovation issues but with different foci: systems, policy & indicators + one session on energy)

Are key topics evolving? (2)

- “Frontier” science & breakthrough innovations
 - revisiting knowledge dynamics: variety of ‘search regimes’ & institutional implications,
 - “nano enabled” convergence
- Globalisation, new fast rising economies and the location of firm RDI capabilities

(NB sessions on bio and nano, sessions on global collaborations, FDI and global knowledge economy, papers on Korea, India & China)

Are key topics evolving? (3)

- (European) integration & prevailing 'fragmentation': from performer to governance issues, multi-level governance
- Policy shaping (more than making) in knowledge-based societies: public debates, ethics, 'responsible dialogue' or 'technical democracy'
- Universities: excellence, third mission, differentiation, researcher careers

(NB at least 6 sessions on Universities and career paths)

Are key topics evolving? (4)

- Clusters, poles, creative cities, RSI ... and the rise of 'regional policies
- The performance of public research activities (whether in universities or labs): the evaluation of 'institutes'
- IPR and knowledge dissemination: revisiting patenting, 'heterogeneous' IPR systems, revisiting the role of start-up firms

(NB sessions on regions, clusters, IPR, small firms and VC)

Movements in the 'Community' (1)

- From SPS to SIPS, toward a growing articulation between STS and SIPS studies
- A dual movement of:
 - concentration with reinforcement of large centres (Manchester) and creation of others (Lund & Circle, Paris & IFRIS, Spain and new CSIC centre)
 - multiplication of small specialised teams in numerous regions
(Counter-example: the fuzzy German situation)

Movements in the 'Community' (2)

- PRIME and the creation of a shared platform.
 - over 50 institutions and 70 groups participating
 - 4 functions
 - * training and the next generation of researchers (PhD conference, summer schools, PhD mobility ...)
 - * indicators: a European network to support the design of 'positioning indicators'
 - * collective review actions and the shaping of the long-term agenda
 - * exploratory projects and the fostering of heterodox approaches

Relations with policymakers

- Strong traditional channels: researchers as 'experts', individually or collectively - e.g. multiple EC expert groups...
- No annual event, but multiple joint conferences (EC, European presidency)
- The mobilisation in so-called OMC-based benchmarking exercises and through IPTS/Erawatch
- The never-ending process of national institutional reorganisation (always 2 or 3 countries on the move)
- (NB: far less foresight and a return of evaluation)

Two central issues to conclude

1. Not connection with stakeholders, but taking distance
 - a bilateral relation (funder and user often similar) and the pressure of present day problems
 - drives to short termism & conservatism: where can we reconceptualise lasting old & new problems?
2. Reconsidering our objects: can knowledge production remain a sectoral policy when turning into a central asset for all activities & thus policies