

Globalization, Money and the Social Science Profession in Latin America

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Across Latin America we observe striking cross-national variation in how the social sciences are organized and funded (Bautista, et al., 2010; and Bay, Perla and Snyder, 2010). In Argentina, for example, public sector funding for research in anthropology, economics, history, political science and sociology plays a leading role, whereas in Peru public sector support is minimal and most funding comes instead from foreign sources. In Colombia we see a third pattern, with funding from both the domestic private and public sectors playing large roles. Does this variation in funding and institutional support affect the content of research? Do resource constraints produce dependence on funding organizations, and do sponsors have the power to influence the intellectual agenda? To address questions such as these, we draw on the results of a new survey of social scientists in Argentina, Colombia and Peru.¹ The analysis focuses on two crucial aspects of knowledge production: (1) international ties connecting scholars in Latin America to the global research community, and (2) how access to funding, both domestic and foreign, shapes research questions and agendas.

training to have a strong impact on the other four indicators of globalization, we carry out a statistical analysis of the relationship between location of training and these indicators.

We find a substantial difference in the proportion of scholars with foreign training in Argentina, on one hand, and Colombia and Peru, on the other. Nearly two thirds of respondents in Colombia (64 percent) and Peru (61 percent) earned their highest degree abroad, whereas only one third in Argentina (33 percent) are foreign trained. As seen in Table 1, foreign-trained scholars are more likely to receive foreign funding, study countries other than their own, belong to an international association and publish in a foreign language.²

Regarding *access to foreign funding*, respondents trained abroad are more likely to receive such funding. In Colombia and Peru, foreign-trained scholars are far more likely to get foreign funding than foreign-trained scholars in Argentina. This difference likely reflects the greater availability of domestic funding, especially from the public sector, for social science

research in Argentina (Bautista et al., 2010).

Location of training also affects the *scope of research*: foreign-trained scholars are more likely to study foreign countries. Still, many domestically-trained respondents also report doing research on other countries. A surprisingly large share of respondents—55 percent of Argentines, 59 percent of Colombians and 67 percent of Peruvians—have done research on foreign countries.

A substantial portion of respondents in all three countries belong to *international professional associations* (72 percent of Argentines, 51 percent of Colombians and 40 percent of Peruvians). Although foreign-trained scholars are more likely to belong to an international association, this relationship is statistically significant only in Colombia. Moreover, the proportion of *domestically-trained* scholars who belong to an international association is far higher in Argentina (69.7 percent) than in Colombia (30.0 percent) and Peru (28.6 percent).

Globalization and the Social Science Profession

How globalized is the social science profession in Latin America? Do Latin American social scientists have strong ties to peers in other countries? Does their research encompass countries other than their own and reach an international audience? To measure the degree of globalization, we focus on five indicators: foreign training; research on foreign countries; membership in international associations; and research published in a foreign language (that is, not Spanish). Because we expect foreign

Table 1: The Globalization of the Social Science Profession in Argentina, Colombia, and Peru

	Argentina		Colombia		Peru	
	Foreign Trained	Domestic Trained	Foreign Trained	Domestic Trained	Foreign Trained	Domestic Trained
Receive Foreign Funding	40.5% é	26.8%	60.4%	44.4%	58.1% é	25.0%
Study Countries other than Own	63.4% ^	50.6%	68.9% é	42.3%	74.2%	52.9%
Belong to an International Association	76.5%	69.7%	62.9% é	30.0%	44.4%	28.6%
Publish in Language Other than Spanish*	87.2% é	73.5%	77.8% é	31.8%		
Obtained PhD	90.5%	87.5%	70.8% é	7.4%	64.5% é	10.0%

Notes:

é/é: Statistically significantly higher/lower than "Domestic Trained" at the 95% confidence level, using an independent proportions test.

^/V: Statistically significantly higher/lower than "Domestic Trained" at the 90% confidence level, using an independent proportions test.

*: Question not asked for Peru.

The location of training also has an effect on the likelihood of publishing in a language other than Spanish. This, in turn, influences the potential international impact of research, because work published in a foreign language may reach a wider audience. Foreign-trained respondents in Argentina and Colombia, the two countries where the survey included a question about publishing in a foreign language, are more likely to publish in other languages. Interestingly, nearly three quarters (73.5 percent) of domestically-trained Argentines have published in a foreign language, compared to less than one third (31.8 percent) of domestically-trained Colombians.

Finally, we consider the relationship between foreign training and the highest degree earned. In Colombia and Peru, foreign-trained respondents are far more likely to hold a Ph.D. By contrast, in Argentina foreign and domestically-trained respondents hold Ph.Ds in nearly equal proportions. This difference likely reflects the greater capacity of Argentina's "state-

sponsored" model of social science to train researchers domestically, as seen in the higher number of doctoral programs, especially in public universities, and government-funded fellowships for domestic graduate studies.³

The large number of Argentines with domestic Ph.Ds provides an opportunity to compare their characteristics to those of their foreign-trained peers. Foreign degree holders are significantly more likely to receive foreign funding: although less than half of all Argentine respondents received foreign funding, this proportion is even lower for domestically-trained Ph.Ds (28 percent). Foreign-trained scholars are also significantly more likely to study foreign countries and publish in a foreign language. Still, a majority (52 percent) of domestically-trained respondents in Argentina also study foreign countries and publish in a foreign language (75 percent). If studying foreign countries and publishing in foreign languages are attributes of a "globalized" intellectual profile, then the Argentine case shows that foreign-training

is not a necessary condition for acquiring this profile, although it does increase the likelihood of doing so.⁴

Money and Social Science: The Political Economy of Research

Research requires money. Without funding either directly to scholars or to institutions that pay their salaries, research is not possible. Disseminating the results of research through publications, especially books, also requires financial support. Yet reliance on funding raises questions about academic autonomy and even integrity. The potential for extra-university funding to undercut the autonomy of research is exacerbated in low and middle-income countries, where limited resources and low salaries may increase the vulnerability of researchers to the agendas of moneyed interests outside the academy. Moreover, because much funding for scientific research in such countries comes from abroad, the dearth of domestic resources raises thorny issues of national sovereignty.

Table 2: The Impact of Funding on the Research Agenda

	Interest ¹			Autonomy ²			Adaptation ³		
	Argentina	Colombia	Peru	Argentina	Colombia	Peru	Argentina	Colombia	Peru
Always	0.8%	2.7%	2.1%	42.6%	25.7%	13.0%	4.1%	1.4%	4.1%
Almost Always	0.8%	4.1%	4.2%	44.6%	40.5%	50.0%	10.7%	24.7%	16.3%
Sometimes	10.9%	20.3%	10.4%	8.3%	25.7%	23.9%	24.8%	31.5%	32.7%
Almost Never	27.6%	33.8%	47.9%	2.9%	4.1%	6.5%	31.0%	19.2%	22.4%
Never	59.8%	39.2%	35.4%	1.7%	4.1%	6.5%	29.3%	23.3%	24.5%

Notes:

1 "Respecto a la siguiente afirmación, señale la opción que más se acerque a su realidad: 'Trabajo en proyectos de investigación que no son de mi total interés, pero que tienen financiamiento disponible.'"

2 "Respecto a la siguiente afirmación, señale la opción que más se acerque a su realidad: 'Elijo mis propios proyectos de investigación y luego encuentro financiamiento para el proyecto que he definido'"

3 "Respecto a la siguiente afirmación, señale la opción que más se acerque a su realidad: 'Adapto mis proyectos de investigación para aumentar mis oportunidades de conseguir financiamiento para mi trabajo.'"

To explore the impact of funding on the social sciences in Argentina, Colombia and Peru, we asked respondents about three facets of the research process: 1) whether the availability of funding influences their selection of research projects (see the variables *interest* and *autonomy* in Table 2); 2) whether, after choosing a research project, they modify it to increase their chances of getting funding (see the variable *adaptation* in Table 2); and 3) whether funding agencies actively try to influence research (see the variables *suggestions* and *conditionality* in Table 3).

The survey results show that most researchers do not regard issues of funding as having a strong impact on selection of research projects. In all three countries, most respondents report that they “almost never” or “never” work on projects they are not interested in just because funding is available. Moreover, the majority of respondents say they “always” or “almost always” choose their own research project and then seek funding for it. The perception of autonomy is strongest among the Argentines, with 87.2 percent saying they “always” or “almost always” choose their own projects, whereas only two-thirds of Colombians (66.2 percent) and Peruvians (63 percent) hold this view. By contrast, across all three countries a striking proportion of respondents (40 percent in Argentina, 58 percent in Colombia, and 53 percent in Peru) reply that they at least sometimes *adapt* their research projects to increase funding opportunities.

How can we reconcile the fact that most researchers say they *choose* their projects autonomously and then seek out funding, yet most also report that they *adapt* their projects to get funding? Across the three countries, among those who report “always” or “almost always” choosing

their own project and then seeking funding, 25 percent and 50 percent respectively also acknowledge that at least sometimes they adapt their projects to increase funding opportunities. This suggests many researchers follow a two-step process: first, they autonomously define a project and then they adjust it to align with the interests of funders.

Do funding organizations actively try to shape research? As seen in Table 3, the findings are ambiguous. Most respondents—70.6 percent in Argentina, 59 percent in Colombia, and 62.8 percent in Peru—report “almost never” or “never” getting any comments or suggestions from funding organizations on successful applications. By this measure, funding organizations seem to adopt a *laissez-faire* posture much of the time. Still, more than half of respondents in Colombia (63 percent) and Peru (52.4 percent) report that the resources they get are *conditioned* at least sometimes. By contrast, 61.9 percent of Argentine respondents say conditions are “almost never” or “never” attached to funding.

Together, the results suggest that scholars in Colombia, Peru and especially Argentina see themselves as autonomous in defining their research agendas. Yet they also recognize their autonomy is limited by the exigencies of getting funding and by the agendas of funding organizations.

Toward a Stronger Social Science of the Social Sciences in Latin America

Research on the social science profession in Latin America consists mostly of impressionistic studies that offer sweeping generalizations about the region as a whole, or, alternatively, focus narrowly on a single country. By generating and analyzing systematic cross-national survey and bibliometric data about the profession we aim to set the study of knowledge production in Latin America on a stronger empirical and comparative foundation.⁵ This, in turn, will help better test claims about the impact of globalization, foreign training, and foreign funding, such as those made by scholars of “academic dependency” (for example, Alatas and

Table 3: The Influence of Funding Organizations on Research

	Suggestions* ¹			Conditionality ²		
	Argentina	Colombia	Peru	Argentina	Colombia	Peru
Always				11.6%	15.4%	16.7%
Almost Always	7.3%	13.1%	16.3%	14.4%	13.8%	21.4%
Sometimes	22.0%	27.9%	20.9%	12.1%	33.8%	14.3%
Almost Never	38.7%	26.2%	39.5%	17.7%	20.0%	26.2%
Never	31.9%	32.8%	23.3%	44.2%	16.9%	21.4%

Notes:

* The responses for this question are "A Lot", "Regularly", "Rarely", and "Never".

¹ "¿Con qué frecuencia recibe comentarios o sugerencias a su solicitud de financiamiento de las fundaciones de las cuales recibe el financiamiento?"

² "Respecto a la siguiente afirmación, señale la opción que más se acerque a su realidad: 'Las fundaciones de las cuales recibo financiamiento condicionan los recursos que recibo'"

Sinha-Kerkoff 2010). We find partial evidence at best of academic dependency: most scholars do not see themselves as dependent on either foreign or domestic funding in choosing their research topics, although many do feel pressure to adapt their projects to appeal to funders and view these organizations as attaching conditions to their support. Moreover, perceptions of dependency vary strikingly across countries, with Argentines consistently reporting far more freedom to pursue autonomous research agendas than their Colombian and Peruvian peers. To explain intriguing cross-national differences such as these, our ongoing work on the political economy of knowledge production focuses on variation in how the social sciences are organized and funded: robust public sector support for research, as in Argentina, may attenuate perceptions of academic dependency.

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Endnotes

¹ The survey data are drawn from the Snyder Data Set on Social Science Research in Latin America and include 380 respondents, mostly with degrees in anthropology, economics, history, political science, and sociology, although some respondents hold degrees in other disciplines, including law, philosophy, education, linguistics and cultural studies. In Argentina, the questionnaire was distributed electronically across the country in August 2008 via a list-serve of the *Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas* (CONICET) consisting of approximately 1200 researchers. Two-hundred fifty-three completed surveys were received, for a response rate of about 22 percent. In Colombia, the questionnaire was distributed

in July 2008 to social scientists affiliated with the following leading universities in Bogota: Pontificia Universidad Javeriana; Universidad Externado de Colombia; Universidad Nacional de Colombia; Universidad de Los Andes; Universidad del Rosario. Seventy-five completed surveys were received. In Peru, questionnaires were distributed in July 2007 to all the approximately 200 social scientists affiliated with five leading universities and think tanks in Lima: Centro de Estudios de Promoción y Desarrollo (DESCO); Instituto de Estudios Peruanos (IEP); Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (PUCP); Universidad del Pacífico; and Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos (UNMSM). Fifty-two completed surveys were received, for a response rate of approximately 26 percent. The Snyder Data Set also includes bibliometric data on 23 variables for 740 social science books published between 2000-2008 in Latin America.

- ² Location of training may also have an impact on the productivity of scholars. See Altman (2012).
- ³ On how Argentina's "state-sponsored" model of social science differs from Colombia's "mixed economy" and Peru's "foreign-sponsored" models, see Bautista, et al. (2010).
- ⁴ Malamud and Freidenberg (2012) suggest that domestically-trained Ph.Ds from Argentina may also be exposed to the global research community through their ties with Argentine colleagues based abroad.
- ⁵ See Bautista, et al., 2010; and Bay, Perla and Snyder, 2010 for analyses of bibliometric data.

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