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Introduction

This study was initiated from a particular vantage point: Switzerland is the only research environment where a funding agency exists specifically for research projects in International Studies. Its name is the Swiss Network for International Studies (SNIS), and its mission is to support interdisciplinary research projects that look at the international scope, impact and bearing of a variety of issues, tackled from the perspective of different disciplines. Given the ongoing debate of what constitutes International Studies (Neumann, 2011), it can be said that the SNIS supports projects in International Studies writ large, whose main characteristics are interdisciplinarity and a multitude of contexts. These projects are broadly inscribed in the social inquiry approach (although some can also belong to disciplines such as public health, medicine and other hard sciences), performed with tools specific to the different disciplines involved in a given research.

Taking into account its particular mission, and an evolving European academic landscape (including funding and the nature of research), the SNIS wished to get a better understanding of the funding available for academic projects in International Studies in Europe. This exercise therefore serves two purposes: situating SNIS' activity in the broader landscape of European funding for social science research, and understanding the place and importance of International Studies projects in the panoply of funding schemes available for social science in Europe. As mentioned above (and further detailed below), interdisciplinarity is an integral part of International Studies, and therefore, it was necessary to also look at if and how it is present in the considerations of the funding agencies.

The main findings concerning the aforementioned aspects are as follows: as initially thought, the SNIS occupies a particular place in the academic funding landscape in Europe, as it focuses its financial support on a specific set of projects, which are international and interdisciplinary in scope. While examining what kind of definition of International Studies the agency uses in its evaluation and funding practices, and what type of approach to international research other European agencies have, it became apparent that there is a difference between the two, in that the SNIS uses an approach that blends and integrates various aspects of international research (geographical and disciplinary transversal themes, partnerships with different international institutions, multiple universities etc.) while a more mainstream approach – used generally in Europe – is one that favours the internationalisation of research, in the shape of teams made of researchers from several countries looking at the same issues in different contexts. Hence, the international is understood and practiced differently. Such is also the case with interdisciplinarity. While

in the case of the SNIS interdisciplinarity – mostly in its multidisciplinarity dimension – is a compulsory requirement, in many other funding programmes throughout Europe, it is mostly optional, largely due to research, funding and evaluation being structured along strict disciplinary lines. Hence, a general finding is that the SNIS does not only fulfil a particular administrative and intellectual function in academic research funding, but also upholds a certain perspective on what International Studies are. At a more general, European level, it can be said that the study of issues with international relevance is inscribed in the larger themes of social research, and there are no special administrative structures dedicated to them, other than specific calls for projects within research councils.

Method and definitions

The way these issues were examined was the undertaking of an extensive review of the websites and materials produced by national research councils, or national authorities, with a focus on their definition of social science, International Studies, on their statistical data concerning the funding of such projects (where available). Interviews with representatives of these agencies were also envisaged, but the low response to solicitations of interviews makes the few responses obtained a contribution to nuances in the information found through other sources.

These elements were approached and used in the vein of grounded theory, meaning that research started at its basis with a series of assumptions and categories, which it subsequently refined, specified and re-directed according to the findings in the materials consulted.

A fundamental choice for this study was to look exclusively at national research councils or national funding agencies, and to leave aside other national institutions, foundations, organisations etc. The reason behind this was that, operating at national level and often in direct connection with education ministries, these agencies express through their actions the strategy elected by each country with respect to funding academic research. Thus, they represent an indicator of the policy orientation in the matter, and hence provide an idea of what the general orientation is in this respect. In addition to these agencies, European funding schemes such as the framework programmes and other initiatives (below) are examined, as an expression of a European position on academic funding.

Regarding different notions examined, it was initially assumed that "International Studies" is an academic discipline on a par with other social science ones, such as international relations, sociology, economics etc. As a consequence, it was expected that projects in different databases could be identified according to this category. However, international relations, as an older discipline was also considered as a selection criterion for projects.

Another dimension considered was interdisciplinarity. According to I. Neumann's notes on it, interdisciplinarity is considered to have three axes: Common subject matter, common concepts/methods/theories, and/or common institutionalization. If the subject matter is what holds the enterprise together, we have multidisciplinarity. If concepts, methods and theories are common, there is transdisciplinarity. If there is common institutionalization, there is neodisciplinarity. (Neumann, 2011, p. 258). Keeping this description in mind, wherever possible, projects were checked against this criterion.

The account of the findings of the research includes a literature review looking at materials dealing with funding research in Europe, which also serves as a description of the current situation of funding and strategy in academia more generally.

It also includes the analysis of data gathered from the document/website reviews and interviews and the conclusion of the analysis.

Funding academic research – general landscape in Europe

According to an OECD study published in 2007, "the University is no longer a quiet place to teach and do scholarly work at a measured pace and contemplate the universe as in centuries past. It is a big, complex, demanding, competitive business requiring large-scale ongoing investment". (OECD, 2007, p. 5). Other articles, written by academic practitioners and examining the general state of academia corroborate this view (Enders, 2005, Farquhar, 2002, Frank, 2006, Griffin & Green, 2005, Mair, 2009), and draw a general picture which could be resumed as follows: due to financial pressures and changing views of what constitutes useful knowledge, the past three decades have witnessed a shift in academia worldwide, from developing knowledge and analysis for the sake of enriching and enhancing humanity's evolution as a whole, to producing academic deliverables and knowledge that can prove their immediate potential for application[1].

It is interesting to note that the language which is used to talk about academia and university has changed, in the sense that from bastions of knowledge and education, universities have become "issues", and often problem issues at that: "As higher education has grown and other pressures have constrained state funding, the financial sustainability of universities and other institutions of higher education has become an issue for policy makers, and for those who govern and manage these institutions" (OECD, 2007, p. 5).

It is suggested that in a global economy, academia has become merely another actor on the market, fact that has pushed for an over-professionalisation of teachers and researchers (Mair, 2009, p. 144, Yilijoki, 2003, p. 309) this having a bearing on the type of research that is being practiced, manifested mainly through narrow focus and a segmentation of processes.

Universities, particularly in Europe, traditionally strongly supported by the State, are increasingly becoming autonomous and market-driven institutions, in charge of getting funding from sources other than the State. In such a context, academic output runs the danger of sacrificing quality and depth to market requirements, as well as becoming overly specialized and focused on single issues. (OECD, 2007, p. 6)

Another, very important, shift of the past decades is the fact that, in search for additional funding and innovative ways of "getting money in", universities have increased their research activities as compared to previous epochs, when they would focus mainly on teaching, and research activities would come in support of it. In other words, academic research has become an autonomous product that has increasingly become of interest for national

1 See research councils website such as http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-esrc/what-we-do/history.aspx (UK) and http://www.snf.ch/F/fns-portrait/Pages/historique.aspx (Switzerland).

governments and policies. (OECD, 2007, p. 11)

"National reports emphasize the growing importance of higher education in national policy, with governments looking to their higher education systems to help deliver a number of national policy goals. These goals include:

- up-skilling the population and Life-long learning;
- social inclusion, widening participation, citizenship skills;
- economic development;
- regional policy;
- cultural development and regeneration;
- knowledge-based developments;
- research and development, especially in science, technology and medicine". (OECD, 2007, p. 12)

As a consequence, national research councils have become closer in their funding policy to priorities as defined by governments and national interests. In fact, one interesting feature of note for European national research councils is their relationship with the policy establishment. In the Swiss and German cases, the funding agency was established as a foundation, funded by the government, by Parliament decree. In the UK, the Economic and Research Council was funded by the government and is part of the higher education establishment. In Norway, the link with the government is not just administrative, but is inscribed in the mission of the agency: "The Research Council of Norway is a national strategic and funding agency for research activities, and a chief source of advice on and input into research policy for the Norwegian Government, the central government administration and the overall research community". Furthermore, it is the only agency to explain its budget according to which ministry contributed how much to research efforts, the Ministries of Education and Trade and industry being the largest contributors.

Denmark's agency is under the administrative patronage of the Ministry of Science and Innovation (ACO, 2011, p. 72). France's agency has only recently undergone major restructuring in order to become more flexible (ACO, 2011, p. 71), and its mission statement does not specify its degree of closeness with the government. However, it is understood that it operates in touch with defined national priorities for research. Spain and Italy have their respective Ministries of education much more directly involved in funding research, whereas, in contrast, the Netherlands indirectly subsidises research through government contributions. (ACO, 2011, p. 74). These variations in the relationship with the central administration indicate different levels of intertwining with policy priorities.

Behind the curtains of European framework programmes

Compared to its neighbouring countries, Switzerland is strongly oriented towards basic research. It is typically based on a bottom-up principle, which means that the State interferes very rarely and focuses on setting the legal framework and providing the required infrastructures for good research. The SNIS makes no exception to this in the sense that it follows the same bottom-up line. Consequently, this allows for a large set of research topics.

Swiss researchers from universities and private industry have been involved in the European research programmes since 1987 on a `project by project' basis via funding from the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI). On 1 January 2004, Switzerland further became associated country to the Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP6). Since then European Union (EU) framework programmes have become the main source of public funding in research and development in Switzerland after the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF). According to the Federal Council, in the current FP7 generation researchers based in Switzerland have benefited from funding worth CHF 1.6 billion.

With the launch of the next Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (Horizon 2020) on 11 December 2013, the EU seems to follow an interesting trend. On the one hand, it aims to tackle the issues of less-research-intensive regions' poor participation in EU-funded projects by promoting an inclusive growth (e.g. through the Cohesion funds and large research funding schemes like `Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation´). On the other, it is restricting the list of countries eligible for automatic funding, arguing that some countries – in particular the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) – have reached the critical mass needed to cooperate on a reciprocal basis with the EU.

Horizon 2020 is a legislative package consisting of three pillars – namely Excellent Science, Industrial Leadership and Societal Challenges – which was proposed by the European Commission and has to be agreed upon by the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament as well. The parties reached a final agreement on 25 June 2013. As a consequence, the Parliament and the Council need to endorse this agreement through a vote expected to happen at the end of the year.

Types of National Research Councils

When looking at the European countries that are major contributors to academic research, there appear to be three broad types of funding cultures in Europe, which are called continental, Anglo-Saxon, and transition systems. (ACO, 2011, p. 7) The main criteria for this categorisation are the flexibility and mobility of staff, the possibility of access the academic market as a researcher or teacher, and the amount of bureaucratic steps to be fulfilled in order to obtain funding.

- The continental type includes Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain, and Turkey.
- The Anglo-Saxon type includes Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.
- The transition systems are typical of East and Central European countries. (ACO, 2011, p. 8)

National research councils in Europe are quite uniformly composed of commissions and divisions roughly following disciplinary divides and research priorities. (see Annex).

It is important to keep these distinctions in mind in order to understand the types of contexts in which research is funded. Without claiming causality between these different types of environments and the kind of research that they fund, context is always important when it comes to degrees of flexibility and diversity with which research is funded and exercised.

The continental style of funding is based on big bureaucratic framework programmes, both thematic and non-thematic, characterised by numerous regulations, not much international mobility or accessibility, and an unproductive mix of researcher and theme-based funding. This type of combination gives rise to ambiguous results in terms of projects funded, because there is not always a coincidence between research themes to be fostered and researchers' interests, thus creating imbalances between available funds and projects that need funding. An exception within the model is the German research foundation, which has a clear division between researcher and career focused funding and project focused funding. (ACO, 2011, pp. 7-8) Such distinction is useful because it does not impose particular themes over others to be researched, but is mindful of individual preferences. To a certain extent, this is also the case in the Swiss system.

The Anglo-Saxon type of research funding is more flexible in the sense that it allows for more international access and mobility, and tends to be more researcher-focused rather than project-focused. This means that from year to year and period to period the types of research funded within the humanities and social sciences change. An important feature of these funding schemes addressing the international dimension is the amount of money invested (particularly by the British, Swiss and Dutch agencies) in projects and initiatives involving the creation of transnational academic networks. (ACO, 2011, pp. 30-35) Such funding serves the internationalisation of research and may cultivate a flexible approach to research development.

An important point to be envisaged is the link between the research funding cultures under examination and the way that the international is thought of. In other words, does a particular type of funding culture appear to co-exist with a certain way of understanding the "international" in international research and studies?

The research contexts that most interest the SNIS are those that are the closest to the Swiss environment, namely the UK, Scandinavian and Dutch systems. The French and German agencies are equally important, as they are the greatest of the European continental tradition and the best financed.

Although a causal relationship cannot be posited between a funding culture and a way of defining the international, certain elements can be observed in correlation. In order to get as representative picture as possible, the "international" sections of the national research councils were examined so as to see what type of international activities were encouraged, what types of calls for projects are featured, what partnerships are mentioned.

In the British and Swiss cases, which are considered to be the most open research environments, it is possible to speak about the international as in "international relations/studies" and international research. Insofar as international relations/studies are concerned, these two countries have a longstanding tradition of academic departments in these disciplines, and a history of intellectual inquiry in the matter. This might explain the high number of research projects funded in the area over the years, in the UK, and why in Switzerland there is such a specific structure as the SNIS to do that.

With respect to the international seen as internationalisation of research, these two agencies are similar to the others, in the sense that much of the same kind of international programmes are encouraged: European schemes (such as outlined above), bilateral and trilateral partnerships (Switzerland has quite an array of those due to its funding research as part of the country's support to EU accession countries and their research environments), and themed calls for projects. There seem to be themes such as the environment, renewable energies, development and democratisation studies that are transversal across the board of the research councils. There are also contexts in which a longstanding tradition favours particular areas of studies: Norway – peace studies, Switzerland – biotech and

pharmaceutical research, the Netherlands – agriculture, high-tech, and cultural dynamics, the UK – economics, development economics, all humanities, France – engineering, biology. These are not exclusive for the countries mentioned.

One feature that is interesting to mention with respect to the various national research councils is the degree of integration they acknowledge between their activity and the economic and political priorities of their countries.

The most striking case is that of the UK, where the Economic and Social Research Council has a very explicit policy of developing and promoting research that can have an impact on decision-making. There is also a declared alignment with the policy priorities of the administration and an investment in areas that are perceived to be in need of strengthening.

In the Swiss case, recently, the national research council has taken charge of funds to be invested in applied research concerning development projects, coordinated with the Swiss Agency for Development. In this particular instance, funds are specifically destined for a particular type of research, which is international by nature of its themes and interests.

In Norway, some of the calls for projects are decided with different ministries, as for example Foreign Affairs, Environment and the Economy, and individual ministries are important contributors for research (see above).

As far as the Dutch council is concerned, in consultation with the scientific field, government, civil society organisations and industry, the agency identified major social issues for the period 2011-2014 as research themes. The Dutch government is encouraging research investment in nine designated economic top sectors. Linked to the national research and innovation policy, the council has adjusted its themes in response to the top sector policy. Researchers and industry are brought together to realise innovative scientific research and particular attention is paid to research carried out in partnership with industry.

The Swedish council identifies itself as a government agency, working in collaboration with it in the establishment of themes and areas of research.

Other agencies do not explicitly mention a relation with the government or national administration, although there is room to believe links exist and influence research funding priorities.

Funding International Studies and International Relations research projects

When looking for ways to ascertain what is the nature of contribution to International Studies, it was nearly impossible to find out how many international relations or International Studies were funded, or in what context.

An analysis of funding International Studies and international relations projects begs a discussion on what exactly qualifies under these labels. The international relations discipline has more or less well defined boundaries. International relations as a discipline is considered to be the study of relationships between countries, including the roles of states inter-governmental organisations (IGOs), international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and multinational corporations. Different IR departments in different countries do not place the same kind of emphasis on these elements, or the methods and manners in which they are approached, which means that in reality, international relations can have a multitude of faces from a university to another. One is even more at a loss with International Studies as a discipline, because, if it is true that disciplines tend to be co-terminus with academic departments, there are even fewer International Studies departments than international relations ones. International Studies have tended to develop from area studies and international relations, and other disciplines whose members wished to go beyond disciplinary boundaries.

> Switzerland constitutes a good example on the variety of international relations and International Studies that are being cultivated.

Geneva is recognised for International Studies due to the Graduate Institute located there, which has built strong links with international organisations and similar structures, and the University of Geneva through its Political Science and international relations departments; the University of Lausanne, with the department of international politics, gets credit for sociology and anthropology based approaches to international relations; the ETH in Zurich is noted and known for its focus on quantitative and psychology based approaches to very technical issues, such as climate change negotiations, demography, environment issues; the University of Bern has a Political Science department which focuses mostly on international economic issues and has a strong European Studies bent; the University of St. Gallen proposes degrees in international relations, mostly centred around international economics and trade; and the University of Luzern has a strong cultural studies approach to

matters international. In addition to these universities' departments, Switzerland is home to 27 National Centres of Competence in Research, focused on different topics, covering both hard sciences and social sciences, which have International Studies elements in them. This is important to bear in mind for the discussion that follows, because it underlines the fact that although as disciplines international relations and International Studies have more or less defined boundaries, the take that each university department has on them ultimately is more important for projects that are developed. It is relatively safe to assume that other countries have a similar landscape as concerns the nature of their International relations and Studies departments.

Of all the national agencies websites, the only two ones that allow for a search through projects funded are the SNSF and the UK Economic and Social Research and Arts and Humanities Research Councils.

The SNSF stores projects since 1975 and the Economic and Social Research Council and the Arts and Humanities Council store projects since 1982. (Incidentally, the UK and Swiss academic environments are considered to be the most successful and open academic research environments in Europe. (ACO, 2011, p. 65)

In the Swiss case, a research under the category of "International Studies" yielded 1 answer, for a project starting in 2013. This result is taken to mean that the International Studies as a category has only been recently introduced. A search on "international relations" brought up 6 research projects financed by the SNSF since 1975 (the rest of contributions under the category being Phd., conferences, other form of career funding), 5 of which coming from the Graduate Institute. A search on "international" and another discipline, such as "history", "sociology", roughly yielded 2 results, namely research projects in international history, also from the Graduate Institute, which had equally been supported by the former Geneva International Academic Network (RUIG)[2] at one point of their existence.

Unfortunately, the database does not allow for searches combining terms such as "international studies" and "history", "anthropology" etc. However, as the search terms are extended to other terms, such as "comparative", "interdisciplinary", "context", "region" etc., the description of research projects suggests they have an international dimension, be it through the involvement of different countries or the scope of the research. In addition to that, project leaders are asked to give key-words describing their projects; given the variety mentioned above, it is entirely likely that many of the projects that could qualify as International Studies writ large were not "coded" as such, simply because those who made the description did not think of them as such.

In the UK case, which stores projects since 1982, interestingly, a search on "international

2 This institution preceded the existence of the SNIS, with the significant difference that the RUIG's scope was limited to Geneva Universities, whereas the SNIS covers all of Switzerland's Universities.

studies" yielded 1026 answers, of which 982 under "international relations". One conclusion that can be drawn from this is that the coding system for this database is more systematic and consistent over time, which in its turn could indicate the fact that researchers are more aware of a "unified" category. However, in the absence of a specific research of perceptions in this case, we can only surmise on the topic.

International writ large

Although in a majority of cases it is not possible to find out how many research projects that could qualify as International Studies are funded, what appears quite clearly from each website is that the international is a dimension that is cultivated and encouraged for the whole panoply of research initiatives. Indeed, all websites contain an "International" section. Most of them include the European funding instruments and also an internationalisation strategy for the research and for encouraging the mobility of researchers or the composition of international research teams.

European funding instruments are international by their very nature, given they often have a precondition of collaboration between different European academia and non-academia representatives. International cooperation is necessary to address effectively many specific objectives defined in Horizon 2020. This is the case in particular for all the challenges addressed by its third pillar `Societal Challenges´. International cooperation is also essential for frontier and basic research in order to capture the benefits from emerging science and technology opportunities. Here, the promotion of international mobility plays a crucial role for enhancing cooperation at global level and for fostering the competitiveness of European industry. Therefore, the focus of international cooperation in Horizon 2020 has been set on cooperation with three major country groupings:

- (1) industrialised and emerging economies;
- (2) enlargement and neighbourhood countries;
- (3) developing countries.

On 14 September 2012, the European Commission set out its new approach to international cooperation under Horizon 2020 in a Communication entitled `Enhancing and focusing EU international cooperation in research and innovation: a strategic approach´. As of 5 February 2013, partner countries accounted for around 5% of total participations; the top international partner countries being Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS), the Ukraine and the USA. One-in-five projects included an international partner in addition

to participants from Member States or associated countries.

As stated previously, the EU seeks to better distinguish between countries that shall benefit from EU funding or not. Indeed, in Horizon 2020 the EU Member States will be involved in the identification of areas for international cooperation and the development of multi-annual roadmaps for cooperation in research and innovation with key partner countries and regions. In this regard, it is expected that international cooperation with the BRIC countries will not be funded under Horizon 2020.

One area that has often been side-lined from mainstream research is humanities and social sciences. Originally envisaged to have its own pillar under Horizon 2020, the sector is now found within the Societal Challenges pillar. Formally, humanities and social sciences will play a key role in all the objectives within this pillar. However, the issue is how it will be implemented. Both the challenges themselves and the possible solutions need to be understood and addressed within a broad social and cultural context. Social sciences and the humanities therefore play an important role in developing, legitimating and implementing new solutions and policy in society. The framework programmes have important openings for humanities and social sciences and hence for International Studies and international relations projects.

In short, given its relatively weak performance in terms of international and inter-sectoral (from industry to academia and vice-versa) mobility, the EU via Horizon 2020 is trying to foster mobility across countries, sectors and disciplines in what appears to be a top-down manner, as opposed to the SNIS where the movement is rather `natural'.

> What can be observed after reviewing the different elements included in the various "international" sections is that, even if International Studies or international relations do not feature highly in the choices of projects, there is a strong push for the internationalisation of research.

The main ways in which this appears to manifest itself is through themes, building of an international infrastructure for research, building international research teams,

international cooperation between universities and the encouragement of comparative research on transversal themes.

To provide a few examples, in France efforts are invested into the construction of the European research space, in cooperation with other European research and academic centres, and the country participates in multilateral calls for projects, on various themes in different disciplines.

In the UK, the policy on social science research in its international dimension seems to be structured around the issue of influence: what can be done to make research developed in the UK more visible and more impactful around the world. Hence, the research council participates in European initiatives, has specific partnerships with countries such as China and Brazil and provides guides and toolkits pushing research as close to decision-making circles as possible.

Norway has an interesting approach to the matter, in that the motto of the national research council website is "research is inherently international", which is a good way of summing up the variety of international initiatives in which Norway seems to participate: researcher mobility, European cooperation, calls for projects in partnership with other countries.

Dr. Jon Holm of the Research Council of Norway underlined in the interview granted for this study that International Studies are not necessarily a priority or even a special category of interest for funding research (although such projects are funded), yet the international character of research is very much stressed in all projects funded in Norway. He noted that lately themed calls for projects in social sciences have been influenced by immigration and cultural studies, and there is emphasis of pushing social science research towards the interaction of agents with their wider contexts. Another interesting element was the mention that there is a move away from examining interactions between states and towards interaction between groups. In Norway, research on the international issue also goes through a focus on development studies, political geography and peace and conflict studies, in which Norway has developed a tradition.

Open calls for projects are also a scene more likely to receive more original research proposals. Dr. Holm also pointed out a will to encourage researchers take more risks in their projects.

On the issue of interdisciplinarity, Dr. Holm stressed the difficulty to adequately assess it, because panels of experts are generally organised by discipline and broadening

the scope of panels of experts is only in its infancy. However, interdisciplinarity is considered an important factor in risk taking in research.

Switzerland participates in European and extra-European research partnerships, invests in extensive researcher mobility, and encourages transnational teams of researchers.

Katrin Milzow, Strategy Manager at the SNSF, and Ingrid Portner, Switzerland COST Programme Director, stress the fact that in Switzerland the internationalisation of research is an important aim, stimulated through various instruments, either granted to researchers or to projects. One of the ways of achieving this is by encouraging projects and initiatives on transversal research themes. However, Switzerland is also a special case, given that the SNIS operates on its territory and is backing projects with a particular International Studies focus.

This situation suggests a need to think again the notions of International Studies, international research and even international relations, not least by integrating the dimension mentioned in the first pages of this study, relating to the fact that governments and research funding agencies work in close cooperation in an academic environment that is highly competitive and more oriented to applied research than in previous eras. The themes of research are more and more influenced by what funds are available for. As universities are operating in an increasingly internationalised and globalised context, more funds are available for themes dealing with such issues, especially if they are transversal.

The interesting comparison arising almost naturally in this context is the different perspective that the SNIS in particular has in comparison with other agencies with respect to International Studies. Coming to the issue from a context traditionally seeped in international questions, international organisations and international theory,

> the SNIS can be said to have a "traditional" approach to things international, in the sense that the dimension is not something artificially created and encouraged, but rather taken for granted.

The SNIS, and RUIG before it, merely assumed that the study of the international had to be better organised and enhanced, in order to give value to something that was already "there". National research agencies, including the Swiss one, come from another standpoint, from which the international is not assumed or presupposed, but desirable and to be fostered. There is, however, both an implicit and, in some cases, explicit notion that research, of any kind, is international in nature, in the sense that it may apply and be developed internationally (Norway, Germany).

Interdisciplinarity

For the present study, it is important to take interdisciplinarity into account because it is tightly related to International Studies; even if the definitions of both notions are subject to debate, there is a sense that International Studies include a high degree of interdisciplinarity, simply because they look at problems and puzzles that cannot be tackled from the standpoint of only one discipline. Interdisciplinarity is a notion that is both widespread and contested in the academic realm. Surveys and analysis written about it suggest there are two main angles from which to look at it: as an academic research and teaching practice and as an organisational challenge.

This section will tackle the question of interdisciplinarity in academia as follows:

- a first part will do a review of recent studies and evaluations of interdisciplinarity;
- then, the contested and debated aspects of interdisciplinarity are discussed;
- a conclusive part discusses the institutional and organisational challenges that exist and that are currently being met with respect to interdisciplinarity.

Interdisciplinarity – ubiquitous and not quite

Interdisciplinarity is one of those notions that everyone agrees "we should do more of", but no one is sure of what it means or how it should be brought about. There is a general sense that, even if there is no consensus, interdisciplinarity is actually practiced in numerous institutions and centres, simply because the nature of the problems they look into requires it and that, lately, as academic research has moved closer to applied research, interdisciplinarity becomes a logical requirement.

In the Anglo-Saxon academic world, the first appearance of the notion is documented back in 1937, in a publication of the UK Social Science Research Council – Journal of

Educational Sociology – along with a notice for Post-Doctoral Fellowships for the SSRC (Frank 1988). Interdisciplinarity was used as a kind of "bureaucratic shorthand" for research involving two or more professional societies. (Chettiparamb, 2007, p. 12)

It seems that interdisciplinarity has had a fluctuating history as a practice in academia. In the 1930s and 1940s it was encouraged by the Unity of Science Movement, which was searching for "grand and simplifying" concepts (Chettiparamb, 2007, p. 12); in the 1960s it was taken up by the student movements in the US, who were demanding less disciplinary divisions and a more holistic approach to study (Chettiparamb, 2007, p. 12). The OECD published in 1972 a volume on interdisciplinarity, attempting to encourage the practice amongst its member countries, but 10 years later it found that it had essentially declined and universities had largely reverted to mono-disciplinary departments and structures. (Weingart, 2000, Levin and Lind, 1985)

An interesting observation concerning the 1990s is that, even if there were fewer interdisciplinary programmes and departments than in the 1970s, interdisciplinary activities took up a larger part of researchers' time (Klein, 1996, pp. 20-21). It is currently felt that interdisciplinarity lurches behind disciplinary façades, even if organisations and universities do not keep up with it from a formal point of view. (Chettiparamb, 2007, p. 12)

Part of the reasons for such fluctuations is that for centuries, academic research and teaching has been organised around disciplinary divisions and departments, and it is very hard in practice to bring down the walls that exist between them. Indeed, any study of interdisciplinarity starts by noting that "discipline" is part of the realm and the obstacle in this area. As several of the analyses cited in this study point out, the question is not only about combining different disciplines in order to tackle an issue, but about overcoming thought structures, diverging practice paths and sometimes irreconcilable differences between languages developed by different disciplines.

In other words, achieving interdisciplinarity is not only a question of resources, but also of epistemology and presentation.

A discussion of the challenges of defining interdisciplinarity will clarify the above.

Defining interdisciplinarity – a story without end (so far)

Any study of interdisciplinarity starts by circumscribing the notion. "Circumscribe" is a better adapted word than "define", because authors invariably spend 2 to 3 pages describing the realms in which interdisciplinarity might arise or be practiced, and generally fail to reach a concise definition. A representative, yet still approximate definition might be: "(...) interdisciplinarity is neither a subject matter, nor a body of content. It is a process for achieving an integrative synthesis, a process that usually begins with a problem, question, topic, or issue". (Klein, p. 175) Interdisciplinarity has several stable manifestations as:

- Multidisciplinarity – juxtaposition of various disciplines, sometimes with no apparent connection between them.
- Pluridisciplinarity – juxtaposition of more or less related disciplines.
- Interdisciplinarity – interaction of two or more disciplines using concepts and methods of two or more disciplines.
- Transdisciplinarity – establishing a common set of axioms for a series of disciplines. (Chettiparamb, 2007, p. 19, DEA-FBE, 2008, p. 27)

Some thinkers see the above categories as clearly separate (Repko, 2008, pp. 3-4) and stress the fact that within interdisciplinarity there are several kinds, such as instrumental interdisciplinarity, borrowing and integrating methods for addressing an issue, conceptual interdisciplinarity, using notions that apply in several disciplines, and critical interdisciplinarity, which questions established meanings. (Repko 2008, p. 17) There are also readings of this notion that look at the uses of interdisciplinarity, such as indiscriminate, fake, auxiliary, supplementary and unifying, each playing on the differences and similarities between disciplines. (Chettiparamb, 2007, p. 20) Generally, however, analyses concentrate on the multidisciplinarity-transdisciplinarity spectrum.

An important note to make is that the defining element of interdisciplinarity is integration. The concepts and methods used must function together in an integrated manner for the minimum criterion of interdisciplinarity to be met.

The fact that there is no agreed upon definition of interdisciplinarity obviously qualifies numerous practices under its umbrella. It also makes determining what research or action is interdisciplinary much more difficult.

Here intervenes the third issue present in this analysis, that of interdisciplinarity as an organisational and institutional challenge, which has a definite bearing on the number and quality of interdisciplinary research projects that are funded worldwide.

Disciplining research – organisational challenges to interdisciplinarity

In an article titled "Theorizing interdisciplinarity: the evolution of new academic and intellectual communities", a group of researchers illustrated why achieving interdisciplinarity is quite difficult. They took as a case study the difference between collaborative research and interdisciplinary investigations. Collaborative research is merely the bringing together of researchers from different disciplines on a particular project, whereas interdisciplinarity presupposes an exchange not only of good practices, but also of ways of thinking about research.

The example turns around interdisciplinary conversations, which are an exchange between two ways of thinking and performing analysis: metaphorical and metonymical. It is assumed that theorists think and analyse in metaphors, whereas observational scientists operate with metonymies, by looking at neighbouring landscapes. An interdisciplinary conversation between these two communities meant learning how to think in another language, using other categories of thought, even different strategies for looking at the world. It also meant using metaphors to understand metonymic relations between facts and using metonymies to reconsider the metaphoric constructions. The point of this example is that, in order to achieve true integration, it takes time and effort, because interdisciplinarity is not a one-off occasion, but a matter of process.

This is what is recognised and stated in most analyses focusing on the organisational aspects of interdisciplinarity.

In a report written by the Danish Business Research Academy and the Danish Forum for Business Education, focused mostly on the Danish environment, but also using foreign examples, it is recognised that interdisciplinarity yields interesting results, but that it benefits from comparatively few resources. (DBA/DFE, 2004, p. 3). Also, it seems that interdisciplinarity is exercised more often between disciplines neighbouring each other, than between ones which are farther apart. (DBA/DFE. 2004, p. 4) The time and efforts needed for developing interdisciplinary research and projects are difficult to quantify and

this is why it appears that, overall, in the European and US contexts, there is a lack of:

- strategic focus;
- incentives;
- formal requirements and criteria;
- focus on research management for interdisciplinary projects;
- encouragement for bringing down disciplinary barriers. (DBA/DFE, 2004, p. 4)

Paradoxically, the benefits of an interdisciplinary approach to research and study are acknowledged and appreciated. As a 2004 study on facilitating interdisciplinary research – written by the US National Academies Association – shows, interdisciplinarity is gradually becoming an integral part of the way in which researchers see and practice their work. Interdisciplinary courses appear to be more attractive to both undergraduate and postgraduate students, and the results of such types of research are inspiring. However, the fact that much of the current academic activity is still strongly structured around the artificial construct of disciplines prevents a simultaneous development of "underground" interdisciplinarity and organisational structures that support, practice and strengthen it.

In fact, an important feature that transpires from the studies performed on this subject, from the 1972 OECD one to the more recent analyses, is that

> unlike "normal" academic research, which can easily be done in solitary fashion, interdisciplinary research and activities are much more dependent on communities, groups, departments, teams and projects.

The interdisciplinary "orchestra – man or woman" is rare and to a certain extent defeats the very point of the practice. As interdisciplinary consortia, departments and calls for projects show, the team element is crucial for interdisciplinarity to develop.

To take a very close example, the way in which the SNIS ascertains the interdisciplinary nature of a project is by looking at the team members of a project, checking their training, as well as the methodology and concepts that are supposed to be used in a given research.

Other research councils as well as European calls for projects, in the rare cases when they require specific interdisciplinary research or are trying to foster them, they place great emphasis on the team element. Examples of European funded programmes boast long lists of researchers coming from different disciplines and countries.

What is interesting, and perhaps telling with respect to the different types of interdisciplinarity mentioned above, is that none of the calls for projects or funding programmes speak of communities, but of teams, essentially leading one to conclude that the interdisciplinarity cultivated is mostly of the simple juxtaposition of disciplines kind. It is not clear if this is an intentional measure, or a default feature resulting from a simple quantitative piling up of researchers.

At European level, interdisciplinarity is not explicitly defined in the framework programmes. The open and challenge-based approach followed by Horizon 2020 is expected to stimulate interdisciplinary proposals and projects, as well as to bring together all the disciplines, knowledge and methods needed to create impact. In other words, Horizon 2020 was also designed to stimulate a break-down of the silos of different research disciplines in order to develop the best solutions.

As an example, in the science-led pillar of Horizon 2020 the focus is set on strengthening researchers' international, interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral mobility through the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, one of the schemes getting more funding from Horizon 2020. The same applies to the European Research Council Synergy Grants where beneficiaries are selected according to the type of activities foreseen in the project: Here, the principle of interdisciplinarity is said to be key although it is not explicitly formulated in the selection criteria. In addition to this, the Future and Emerging Technologies Flagships initiatives were created to tackle grand interdisciplinary science and technology challenges. In short, the first pillar of Horizon 2020 includes research initiatives that are science-driven, large-scale, multidisciplinary and built around a visionary unifying goal. This requires cooperation and partnerships among a range of disciplines, communities and programmes. The third pillar, which is dedicated to seven societal challenges identified by the EU institutions, also break traditional research silos and target solution-driven interdisciplinary actions.

Apparently, there is a recognition at European level that solutions to today's and future challenges will increasingly be interdisciplinary. However, the incentives to generate interdisciplinary research across Europe and beyond seem to be still rather weak. As a matter of fact, this is reflected in the way the EU tries and encourages interdisciplinarity through Horizon 2020.

The Danish study mentioned above strongly insists on the fact that, generally, research councils do not do enough or are not adequately funded to systematically support interdisciplinarity. One of the reasons behind this might be because councils, although they pay heed and recognise the benefits of interdisciplinarity, do not specify which kind, nor are there many initiatives to look into that could be pertinent for different themes or areas of study.

Linked to this is the fact that there are not enough appropriate criteria for evaluating project proposals. As the representative of the Research Council of Norway – cited above – specifies, evaluation committees largely follow disciplinary divisions in their organisation, and having experts from several disciplines in a committee does not mean that they are qualified to evaluate complex proposals and their degree of interdisciplinarity. The question of communities and teams is played as in a mirror in the funding agencies committees.

The US study performed on academic interdisciplinary research in 2004 suggests that, even if the benefits of this type of endeavour are recognised, at an organisational level there are numerous transaction costs that are to be incurred in order to perform an adequate service to this issue: grants need to be organised, evaluation criteria defined, staff must be recruited and trained in project management and overview.

> One way in which different national research establishments are trying to deal with interdisciplinarity is by creating consortia and institutes that are explicitly dedicated to interdisciplinary research. Amongst these, the centres focused on hard and life sciences are more numerous than the social sciences ones.

In Switzerland, the NCCRs are explicitly interdisciplinary. The programme focuses on the promotion of new innovative and interdisciplinary approaches. Of 27 such centres, two, one focused on Democracy and the other on Iconic images, engage the social sciences, the rest concentrating on hard sciences. Although interdisciplinarity features strongly in the description of these centres, it is not clear which kind they foster and with what degree of intentionality. Other SNSF research funding instruments like Direct Project Funding (the

main instrument of the SNSF) encourage proposals of an interdisciplinary nature, even though they are never considered to be sufficient as such.

Even if the intentions of such centres and initiatives are noble with respect to the goal of interdisciplinarity, to a certain extent, they do it a disservice, as they create enclosed spaces for a practice, which, fundamentally, thrives on the opposite, i.e. openness and almost transgressive exchange with its surroundings. By putting in place specialised structures to this effect, there is the risk of strengthening existing patterns of disciplinary organisation, leaving interdisciplinarity to evolve as a requirement connected to the contingencies of research.

> Currently, interdisciplinarity occupies a paradoxical place in the realm of academic research.

On the one hand, its merits and fruitful results are recognised and desired by an increasing number of researchers and academic institutions. The more research gets oriented towards dealing with problems that need creative solutions, the more interdisciplinarity is called for. On the other hand, despite the existence of certain structures and funding encouraging it, there is still a lack of systematic action and collateral mechanisms that could make interdisciplinarity a pervasive practice in academic research.

One of the reasons behind that is the fact that there is no agreed upon definition of interdisciplinarity, nor, on a case by case basis, discussion of what kind of interdisciplinarity is best for a particular academic endeavour. In the absence of that, administrative set-ups lag behind practice and, at times, even hinder it.

In the broader landscape of this study, which seeks to establish what kind of funding exists in Europe for International Studies projects, the issue of interdisciplinarity, which – as stated in the introduction of the study – is tightly connected with this area of research, represents another feature which both complicates and enriches the picture. As International Studies are almost inherently interdisciplinary, this represents a chance in their probability of being fostered; however, it may also be the characteristic that "drowns" them in the mass of other projects, which have the tendency to promote international collaborative research rather than a veritable integration of methods and concepts.

Conclusion

This study was commissioned by the Swiss Network for International Studies with the aim of understanding where it is placed as an institution in the European Landscape of public funding agencies for academic research.

It was acknowledged from the beginning that within the Swiss context, the SNIS is a unique case, an intellectual and material product of Geneva's international institutional and academic set-up and the will of the Confederation to strengthen the links between Swiss universities and International Organisations. Its specificity is the funding of research projects in International Studies writ large.

Research amongst the European funding agencies (particularly Western and Northern ones) show the SNIS to be a unique type of institution.

However, the most interesting conclusions in this study are not the ones connected to institutional set-ups, but what these arrangements have as a bearing on what International Studies are considered to be.

Generally, in Switzerland, International Studies projects, as they are funded by the SNSF and the SNIS, are heavily influenced by the two major international relations teachings institutions, based in Geneva and Zurich. These entities have what could be called a relatively "traditional" approach to International Studies, including the study of multilateralism, international institutions and processes, as well as an approach that looks at the interplay between the national and international realms of action.

A closer look – classifications of the different funding agencies permitting – at funding agencies in Europe (including Switzerland) suggests that there is also another way of understanding International Studies, and it includes going beyond the discipline of international relations and including the internationalisation of research. Essentially, this means the constitution of international teams of researchers working on similar issues. The big European funding schemes such as the framework programmes are good examples of this, but other agencies, such as the Norwegian, British, French, and Swiss ones also provide such opportunities.

Another way in which the international dimension of research is deployed is through the constitution of interdisciplinary research themes and programmes, such as the ones

funded by the Research Council of Norway regarding society issues, health programmes and the way they unfold in specific national contexts.

The development of this type of approach can be said to be much more frequent than the funding of research projects that have an international dimension taken per se into consideration.

This characteristic ties in well with the second aspect of research funding examined in this study, namely interdisciplinarity.

Interdisciplinarity is a feature of International Studies that came under scrutiny for the purposes of this analysis in order to understand if its association with such projects is, again, a special feature of SNIS funded projects, or otherwise.

What appears to be the case is that a certain form of interdisciplinarity, namely the one consisting of juxtaposing disciplines for the purposes of particular projects, is relatively frequent in European contexts. However, as previously stated, interdisciplinarity, overall, has a mixed reception and treatment, not least because the entire academic realm is going through a process of compartmentalisation of research and its funding.

As a general conclusion to this analysis, it is important to point out that the SNIS, through its funding, upholds a particular perspective of International Studies that is all encompassing and interdisciplinary. As such, it makes an important contribution to the existing funding and intellectual landscape, by maintaining an approach that is inclusive in a generally fragmented context.

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- Switzerland – www.snf.ch
- Belgium – www.research.be
- Denmark – www.dg.dk
- France – www.cnrs.fr
- Norway – www.forskningsradet.no
- Sweden – www.vr.se
- The Netherlands – www.nwo.nl
- The United Kingdom – www.esrc.ac.uk

Annex

For a few examples, in Switzerland there are:

- Division I: Humanities and Social Sciences
- Division II: Mathematics, Natural and Engineering Sciences
- Division III: Biology and Medicine
- Specialised Committee International Co-operation
- Specialised Committee Interdisciplinary Research

In the UK:

- Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)
- Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC)
- Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)
- Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)
- Medical Research Council (MRC)
- Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)
- Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC)

In Norway:

- Energy, Resources and the Environment
- Innovation
- Science
- Society and Health

In France:

- Environment and biologic resources
- Human and Social Sciences
- Security Engineering
- IT and communication sciences
- Sustainable Energy
- Biology and Health

In Portugal:

- Exact sciences
- Natural sciences
- Health Sciences
- Engineering and technology
- Social sciences
- Arts and humanities
- Other areas
- Other programmes

Some research agencies websites are more explicit and transparent than others in listing what are the areas receiving funding. It is relatively safe to assume that the designated ones are considered to be a priority.

In addition to national research funding programmes, there are also European level funds. Here is a selection of the most important ones, with a particular focus on Horizon 2020.

The new European funding programme will have a budget of around € 70 billion for the seven-year period according to the agreement reached by the EU institutions on 17 July 2013, thus making Horizon 2020 the world's largest research programme. In comparison, the previous multi-annual programme (FP7) had a financial allocation of € 53 billion. The adoption of the respective work programme and the publication of the first calls for proposals are expected to start on 11 December 2013. Horizon 2020 consists of three pillars and is structured as follows:

Pillar I `Excellent Science´

The first pillar is dedicated to strengthening the excellence of the European science base and aims to provide a continuous source of world-class research to guarantee Europe's long-term competitiveness. It is composed of:

- European Research Council (ERC) — to support the most talented and creative individuals and their teams to carry out frontier research of the highest quality.
- Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) — to provide researchers with excellent training and career development opportunities.
- Future and Emerging Technologies (FET) — to fund collaborative research to open up new and promising fields of research and innovation.
- European Research Infrastructures — to ensure Europe has world-class research infrastructures (including e-infrastructures) accessible to all researchers in Europe and beyond.

Pillar II `Industrial Leadership´

The second pillar strives to promote activities where businesses set the agenda. It should provide investment in key industrial technologies and maximise the growth potential of European companies by providing them with adequate levels of finance. The corresponding research funding instruments include:

- Leadership in enabling and industrial technologies
- Access to risk finance
- Innovative SMEs

Pillar III `Societal Challenges´

The third pillar brings together resources and knowledge across different fields, technologies and disciplines to deal with major challenges with which the citizens in Europe and elsewhere shall be confronted in the coming years. Actions in this pillar cover activities from research to market with a new focus on innovation-related activities. Respective research The following challenges are identified:

1. `Health, demographic change and well being';

2. `European Bioeconomy Challenges: Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry, Marine and Maritime and Inland Water Research';

3. `Secure, Clean and Efficient Energy';

4. `Smart, Green and Integrated Transport';

5. `Climate Action, Resource Efficiency and Raw materials';

6. `Europe in a changing world - Inclusive, Innovative and Reflective societies';

7. `Secure Societies - Protecting Freedom and security of Europe and its citizens'.

The corresponding research funding instruments are among others:

- Collaborative Projects (CP) — they address pre-defined research topics described in so-called work programmes. The European contribution is limited to a certain amount, depending on the scale and the objective of the project.

- Coordination and Support Actions (CSA) — they cover not the research itself but the coordination and networking of projects, programmes and policies.

There are also transversal schemes which do not make part of a defined pillar. Those schemes are:

- Spreading excellence and widening participation

- Science with and for society

- European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)

- Joint Research Centre (JRC)

The European Science Foundation (ESF), which includes a social science section and in turn an international relations department, also issues every year a set of calls for proposals. Although the ESF does not consider itself as a funding organisation as such, some ESF sub-programmes are of interest to this report:

- EUROCORES — enables researchers established in different European countries to develop collaboration and scientific synergy in areas where European scale and scope are required to reach the critical mass necessary for top class science in a global context.

- Forward Looks — enables Europe's scientific community, in interaction with policy makers, to develop medium to long-term views and analyses of future research developments with the aim of defining research agendas at national and European level.

- Research Networking Programmes — lays the foundation for nationally funded research groups to address major scientific and research infrastructure issues, in order to advance the frontiers of existing science. These long-term programmes, subject to selection through an open call and an international peer review process, must deal with high-quality science and demonstrate the added value of being carried out at the European level.

All these funding programmes include contributions to social sciences, and although the available databases or reports do not give details about how many projects concern International Studies or international relations, it can be assumed some such projects are funded.

European framework programmes cover all EU countries and are extremely heavy on the bureaucratic side. However, as stated previously, they have important openings for humanities and social sciences and hence for International Studies and international relations projects.

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