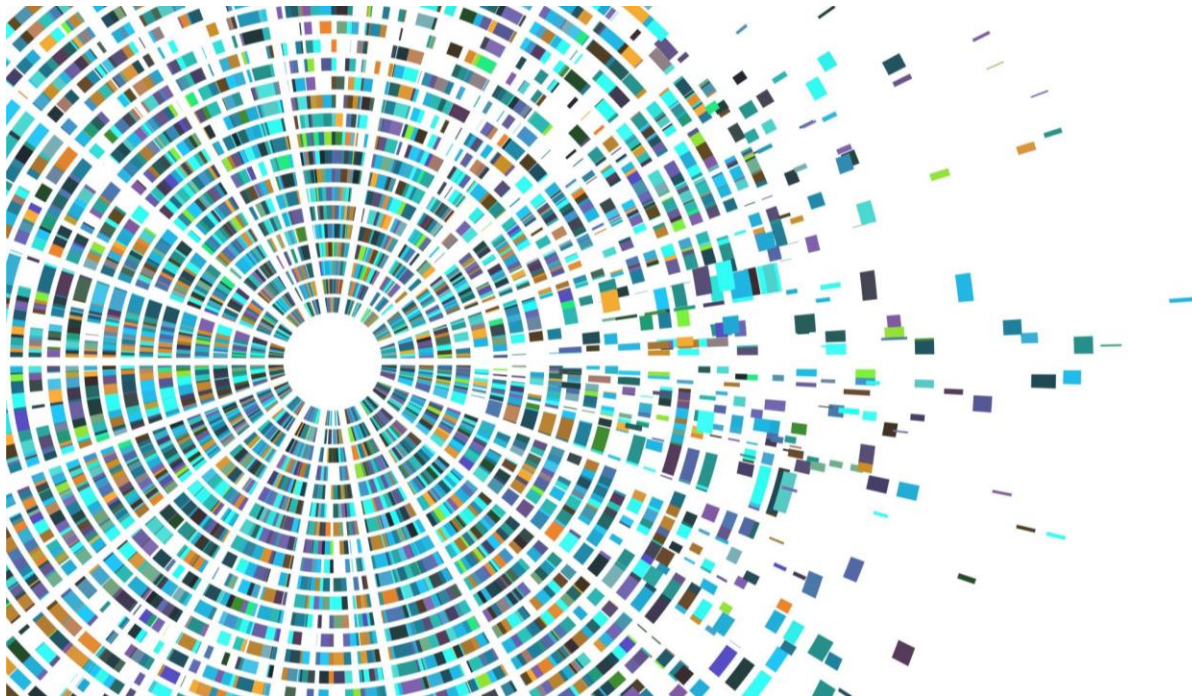


Autonomy of science
academies and their
interaction with others.
Some issues to deal with

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A science academy and its environment

- Opportunities for interaction of a science academy with related and complementary organisations are an indispensable component **to nurture** development, exchange, collaboration and diversification. Generally, one of the most important deployments is the recognition of the achievements of national scientists, creating ways to highlight the careers of **researchers and scientific institutions**.
- Therefore, projecting efforts to identify **younger generations** is a permanent commitment to participate in discussion spaces and contribute to a growing replacement of capacities and references at both national and international level. Finally, the aim is to maintain a critical and representative group in various areas of scientific knowledge.

Perhaps a simple approach can better facilitate the concept of the autonomy of academies of science and their relationship to the State or national government:

- On the one hand, science is concerned with asserting and concluding with evidence-based arguments based on the results of its research. They lack external influence because the *de facto* data prove it (the information they generate is not "shaped by external factors").
- But on the other hand, decision-makers base their policies on winning votes and maintaining power during their term in office and claiming their policy goals. However, their determinations are not necessarily based on consultation or scientific advice.

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- To the chagrin of incumbent rulers, there is no negotiating option that modifies scientific information or conforms to the political plans of the government in power.
 - Scientific knowledge **must maintain that autonomy, independence and objectivity** precisely to consolidate an inalienable, credible and unchanging position over time ... unless new discoveries emerge and methods are corrected.

Turning to the situation of the Bolivian academy of sciences and its relationship with the State:

- The Academy was created by supreme decree and was directly dependent on the vice-presidency of the state. Sixty years later, it came under the Ministry of Education as a decentralised unit with legal independence.
- It has 14 civil servants and receives national funding for the payment of salaries, social benefits and operations without affecting the internal functioning of the Academy in its provisions and has a board of directors, chaired by a presidency.

Bolivia's critical group of scientists and advice to decision-makers

- It is estimated that the country currently has just over 3,500 scientists in the natural and social sciences. The Academy has 30 full academics, 12 of whom are active in their areas of specialisation with intellectual production at university level. But of the total, 60% are over 70 years of age.
- As the academy is not set up to generate original information, nor does it shape intellectual production at the institutional level, scientific advice falls directly on experts and universities. Government bodies can interact directly with specialists on critical issues. And if the academy were to be consulted, it would refer to the same experts and university institutions.

Therefore, in general terms

- If there is consultation with experts (who may be members of the Academy), independent scientific advice is given, but it is not crucial for government. Nor is scientific information substantial for policy making.
- But if a crisis arises (e.g. subsidised gasoline), updated reports are required for the search for options to produce biodiesel (to be continued)