

The Value of Regionalism in Interdisciplinarity and Transdisciplinarity in Latin America

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Abstract: This article is inspired by a recent call for the establishment of “alliances for inter- and transdisciplinarity” issued by Julie Thompson Klein (2021) in this journal. Previously, in 2016, *Issues in Interdisciplinary Studies* published a Special Section devoted to Latin American experiences in interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity. The concept of “regionalism” was elaborated as a means to orient collaborative practices based on mutual learning and cooperation. Using this concept as an inspiration, this article explores the works of a network of Latin American researchers and practitioners called “Nodo de Estudios sobre Interdisciplina y Transdisciplina” (Nodo ESIT). The aim of this collective, created in 2018, is to promote, connect, and strengthen inter- and transdisciplinary teaching and research in different countries within the region. The Nodo ESIT offers a shared virtual space for exchange and collaboration among societal and scientific actors from different fields (i.e., academia, social organizations, decision makers, and the private sector). It represents seven countries in Latin America, and integrates participants from some European countries, who are working in the region. Drawing from the concept of regionalism and expanding Klein’s (2021) description of the similarities and differences among five international organizations, we elaborate on our network’s opportunities and the challenges it has faced in the Latin American context. Two questions guide this work: (1) How can inter- and transdisciplinarity be supported and enhanced in marginalized contexts? and (2) What are the best practices already implemented to foster inter- and transdisciplinarity in Latin America? We present the Nodo ESIT as an exemplary case of regionalism for inter- and transdisciplinarity in Latin America. We conclude by identifying three lessons learned and strengths achieved from this initiative thanks to a special constellation of actors, contexts, and actions.

Keywords: networks of practice, interdisciplinarity, transdisciplinarity, regionalism, Latin America, Nodo ESIT

Introduction

This article is inspired by a recent call for the establishment of “alliances for inter- and transdisciplinarity” issued by Julie Thompson Klein (2021). Klein analyzed the similarities and differences of international networks, acknowledging that collaborative dynamics are an intrinsic part of theory and process. We analyze the work conducted by a Latin American hub called *Nodo de Estudios sobre Interdisciplina y Transdisciplina (Nodo ESIT)*. In the Latin American context, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary initiatives, and their impact in approaching societal challenges have not been fully systematized or put into value (Vienni-Baptista et al., 2022). Lawrence (2017) has argued that to address complex problems, it is necessary to analyze in greater depth and contextualize the strategies that have been developed. Additional scholars have called for providing useful insights and tools for initiatives in the region (Vienni-Baptista, 2016b; Villa Soto et al., 2016), particularly when expertise is “reinvented” every time (Bammer et al., 2020). The complexity of research and political conditions in Latin America requires an awareness of existing conflicts and contradictory perspectives on knowledge to avoid reproducing an idealized view of coproduction processes (Phillips et al., 2018).

The socio-political context in Latin America led us to establish the *Nodo ESIT* in 2018, with the aim of promoting, connecting, and strengthening inter- and transdisciplinary research and teaching in Latin American countries. *Nodo ESIT* is a virtual space for exchange and collaboration among different actors from various fields, including academia, social organizations, decision makers, the private sector, and local stakeholders.

Drawing on the main elements of the concept of regionalism, and building on Klein’s 2021 article, we examine our network’s opportunities and the challenges it has faced within the Latin American context. Two questions guide this article: (1) How can inter- and transdisciplinarity research be supported in Latin American contexts? and (2) What are the best practices already implemented to foster inter- and transdisciplinarity in Latin America? Furthermore, we describe *Nodo ESIT*’s structure—defined as a horizontal space that promotes plural and diverse approaches to inter- and transdisciplinarity—and how it operates to generate exchanges and dialogues among its members. We conclude by identifying three lessons learned and strengths achieved from this initiative thanks to a special constellation of actors, contexts, and actions.

Regionalism: Key Aspects for Analyzing Collaborative Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Practices in Latin America

In 2016, Bianca Vienni-Baptista edited, with assistance from Julie Thompson Klein, the special section entitled “Interdisciplinarity in Latin America” in

Issues in Interdisciplinary Studies (Vienni-Baptista, 2016). It included research and teaching cases from different countries in the region and mainly aimed to present for the very first time to researchers and teachers worldwide the main features of inter- and transdisciplinary work in Latin America. The objective was based on the need to foster dialogue among researchers and teachers from different countries facing related challenges in collaborative settings. Based on our personal experience and research in the region (Goñi Mazzitelli et al., 2018; Vienni-Baptista, 2016a; Vienni-Baptista et al., 2018), we believe that Latin American scholars and practitioners have not been hearing each other's voices even though a wealth of expertise and relevant interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary initiatives to approach complex problems and sustainability issues have been developed for several decades in the region (Simini & Vienni-Baptista, 2016).

The introductory essay of the Special Section began by recognizing the diversity in the current development of interdisciplinary research and teaching in Latin America in two spheres: (1) the primary areas of interest of the authors' case studies and (2) the approaches to integration and applications within a particular country. The aim of this section was to determine the factors driving interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary work in Latin America and learn about the decades-long traditions and current status of interdisciplinary work across the continent. The editor of the Special Section explored the singularities of interdisciplinary practices in four countries country (Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and Uruguay), taking into account the layered social and political histories of the region (Klein, 2016). The contributing authors were asked by the editor to reflect on the impacts of inter- and transdisciplinary research on cultural processes in Latin America, as well as the learning processes for inter- and transdisciplinary research and teaching that could be constructed in ways deemed appropriate at the local and regional levels. In their case study, Arocena and Sutz (2016) described how interdisciplinary research and teaching at the Universidad de la República in Uruguay were fostered through a reform mixing top-down and bottom-up initiatives. Burzstyn et al. (2016) illustrated the case of sustainability science in Brazil. The authors showed how different postgraduate teaching programs address these problems to better train future professionals using interdisciplinarity as the main approach to sustainable solutions. Two other cases (Hidalgo, 2016; Villa Soto & Blazquez, 2016) described successful examples of institutionalizing interdisciplinarity through a network in Argentina and a research center in Mexico.

Upon editing the contributions, the authors and editor of the Special Section realized that the specific circumstances under which interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity are conducted in Latin American contexts conditioned the impact and transformative potential of such activities. Specific features of inter- and transdisciplinarity in Latin America were further explored in

subsequent publications that focused on investigating the specific features of integration processes and their contribution to addressing pressing societal challenges in Latin America. For example, the current authors studied four Uruguayan interdisciplinary centers (accounting for coastal management, nanotechnology, climate change and poverty in childhood) to better understand how researchers from different disciplinary research backgrounds collaborated and planned their integration processes (Goñi Mazzitelli & Vienni-Baptista, 2021). The relevance of the research the authors carried out in 2021 lies on the fact that such studies were not available for the region.

In the Special Section's conclusions, the editor proposed rethinking the concept of "regionalism" (Vienni-Baptista, 2016a) by shifting the lens of interdisciplinarity from the negative connotation of intervention as a way of overcoming obstacles to the positive lens of generating novel approaches that also foster collective identity (Klein, 2016). Chou and Ravinet (2015, p. 368) elaborated on the concept of regionalism as a framework in which a national or supranational state authority can build a structure that could extend to the higher education policy sector. The Bologna Process in Europe and the MERCOSUR (Spanish initials of The Southern Common Market) Education Program in Latin America are examples of this approach. According to Chou and Ravinet (2015), such an impact lies in the reconfiguration of the space, scale, and power of the higher education system. Three lessons emerged from the authors' analysis:

- The new approach to regionalism must be comparative. Applying the concept of regionalism to study programs and organizations entails comparing varieties of higher education to consider a particular sector's prior isomorphism with other social sectors.
- It must be sector-based. Studying regionalism involves taking seriously the specific dynamics of higher education, including how different sectors interact with wider multipurpose regional organizations as well as individual national needs.
- It must be differentiated. Regionalism entails making a distinction between intraregional initiatives within one geographical region and interregional initiatives between at least two geographical regions.

Taking these three lessons as a starting point, Chou and Ravinet (2015) proposed a heuristic framework for studying regionalism along three dimensions:

- A constellation of actors who play central and active roles in these processes, that is, identifying the individual and collective actors involved and mapping their patterns of interaction.
- Institutional arrangements adopted, abandoned, and debated, that is, identifying institutional forms and rules, as well as the instruments considered and accepted.

- Embedded and operationalized ideas and principles, that is, identifying paradigms, policies, and programmatic ideas guiding the different experiences of regionalism.

The updated concept of regionalism allows for conducting more context-sensitive integration and implementation processes in Latin America and contributes to the ethical-political dimension of how collaboration is defined, embodied, and enacted. We used this concept as a basis for creating the Nodo ESIT. We are arguing in this article that to ensure the success of collaborative projects in the Latin American context, researchers and practitioners must consider five main characteristics of this context: (1) engaging marginalized societal actors, (2) fostering greater participation, (3) acknowledging power imbalances, (4) managing conflicts and contradictory perspectives, and (5) directing an ethical-political engagement in the research process (Vienni-Baptista et al., 2022). These aspects encompass not only the situated nature of practices and processes, but also their political (and potentially transformative) dimensions in working in collaborative settings. A context-sensitive approach is necessary to promote latent—and particularly difficult—networking processes between scientific and societal actors in a disconnected region such as Latin America. Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary initiatives face common challenges, such as determining priorities and what language and concepts to use, as actors find themselves constrained by epistemic models often sprung in the Global North (Santos et al., 2019). Such initiatives are a means for power imbalance to be openly addressed by giving a voice to societal actors who are frequently silenced in research processes (Vienni-Baptista et al., 2022).

To further foster the concept of regionalism, we proposed a field called “studies of interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity” (*estudios sobre interdisciplina y transdisciplina*) within science, society, and technology studies (STS) (Vienni-Baptista, 2016b). The aim is to systematize and analyze inter- and transdisciplinary processes addressing societal challenges and problems to promote social, economic, productive, and territorial development. We seek to develop guidelines for designing university and public policies aimed at promoting inter- and transdisciplinary research and to systematize lessons that can be applied to other work contexts to foster inter- and transdisciplinary research and teaching (Vienni-Baptista & Goñi Mazzitelli, 2021).

Previous studies confirmed that interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity have been developed on the continent for almost 50 years (Hidalgo, 2016; Simini & Vienni-Baptista, 2016), responding to knowledge (co)production processes specific to the region. By systematizing and studying interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary development, Latin America researchers and practitioners can participate in the global discussion on the subject (Klein, 2021) and provide examples of good practices and successful processes that have

provided approaches and solutions to complex problems. Previous studies (Vienni-Baptista et al., 2020; Riveros et al., 2022) have identified, for example, the relationships between transdisciplinarity and the actions carried out in several Latin American universities under the label of outreach, as well as integrality, both of which are central concepts referring to coproduction processes. These are founded in the consolidation of networks of practice comprising large social systems through which researchers share information and expertise, even if they do not always produce new knowledge in an immediate or traditional way (Brown & Duguid, 2000). However, in these networks, the exchange of information often produces outcomes that are more difficult to quantify but equally important, such as public policy initiatives, alternative publications, or the development of long-term products. The effort to build networks of practice is becoming more prominent in Latin America thanks to various initiatives, such as the one described in the next section.

Nodo de Estudios sobre Interdisciplina y Transdisciplina (Nodo ESIT) as an example of regionalism

In 2018, a group of researchers and practitioners working in various Latin American universities who had collaborated in different studies on inter- and transdisciplinary practices were invited to submit a proposal to the International Complexity Network (Red InComplex).¹ We sent forty invitations to colleagues already working on interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary research projects, teaching initiatives or in the science-policy interface. We found the opportunity of creating a network (hub) focused on “studies of interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity” (i.e., Nodo ESIT). The Nodo ESIT comprises 42 individuals as of 2023 from different backgrounds, including researchers, teachers, and students (undergraduate and graduate students at the master’s and up to a doctorate level) from public and private universities, as well as representatives of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). New members were included on a yearly basis. All members participate in the Nodo ESIT as individuals or as institutional representatives. A total of seven countries are represented in the network: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, and Uruguay. These participants are joined by researchers from or working in European countries, such as Finland, Germany, and Switzerland.

Two interrelated motivations led us to establish the Nodo ESIT hub. The first consists of social motivations and commitment to seek solutions to emerging problems in the region. Our goal was to identify various societal actors interested in participating in collaborative initiatives to approach

1 We thank Leonardo Rodríguez Zoya, Enrique Manuel Luengo González, and José Luis Solana for allowing our hub join the InComplex Network.

societal challenges, such as inequalities in land access, gender asymmetries, or water insufficiencies in marginalized communities. The need to seek ways to address complex problems—social, economic, production, and territorial—thus served as an impulse for establishing a hub in which to share different experiences, practices, and methodologies that would allow for an in-depth analysis and understanding of those problems. This effort was accompanied with the second motivation of (co)producing new knowledge to approach those problems by mobilizing different capacities of members of the Nodo ESIT. The aim was to learn from cases in the region and cross-compare factors that hindered or helped to achieve the desired impact through inter- or transdisciplinary initiatives. In this process, by incorporating a wider repertoire of perspectives, which societal actors bring with them from their different disciplines and expertise, new issues, problems, and dimensions of analysis emerged, thus resignifying the processes of coproduction of knowledge and the practices involved. Thus, a new model of the coproduction of scientific knowledge gradually took shape in the Nodo ESIT (Goñi Mazzitelli et al., 2021).

The second set of motivations was academic in nature and involved the need to consolidate an institutional space in which conceptual and methodological reflections on inter- and transdisciplinary research and teaching served as the foundation. We were interested in understanding how inter- and transdisciplinarity are being implemented in the region, how they are translated into research agendas, and their impacts on public policy. This interest helped promote the development of research and teaching programs based on and focused on collaborative practices. The authors together organized a series of four online workshops to discuss and identify common goals and interests. During the workshops different tools were used such as give-and-take-matrix (Stauffacher, 2021) and appreciative inquiry (Bushe & Kassam, 2005). Common interests were thus identified among members of the Nodo ESIT: (1) exploring and studying in greater depth the design of new collaborative practices among academic and societal actors, (2) addressing problems that emerge from the local context and require integrating different types of knowledge, and (3) contributing to the embeddedness of inter- and transdisciplinary research and teaching policies in different universities.

With these motivations, the Nodo ESIT's overall goal is to contribute to the production of inter- and transdisciplinary knowledge by systematizing and analyzing the emerging conceptual and methodological frameworks in Latin American practices and policies (Riveros et al., 2022). This contextualization makes it possible to identify both common and divergent aspects that inform research, teaching, and outreach activities. An additional goal involves the challenge of contributing to the design and enhancement of public and university policies that will advocate for collaborative work, thus avoiding an idealized view of coproduction processes (Riveros et al., 2022). Establishing the Nodo ESIT has strengthened collaborations between societal and scientific

actors, as well as systematized and analyzed inter- and transdisciplinary practices to put them into dialogue with other local and international networks.

The Nodo ESIT is conceived as a “network of practice” (Brown & Duguid, 2000) in which knowledge and practices developed by members are mobilized among themselves in ways that mutually enhance their practices. The network is sustained on guiding principles that were agreed upon with all members. These are: horizontality, information sharing, joint debates to strengthen our practices; and openness to enable the consolidation of proposed collaborations, activities, and debates.

The Nodo ESIT faces the challenge of setting up a space that promotes a plural approach while avoiding the imposition of a single viewpoint, making it possible to identify, analyze, and share the diversity of practices and perspectives among its members. At the same time, the space is horizontal, stimulating the active engagement of all its members who jointly design the activities to be conducted based on the questions and identified needs. The Nodo ESIT has a coordinating team tasked with boosting and furthering mutual exchanges, as well as maximizing the intersecting interests and accumulated capacities offered by members. Consequently, the coordinating team fostered two levels of participation and exchange: (1) a collective level and (2) a level formed by working groups. In this way, we sought to develop a trial organizational model in which both levels would inform the exchanges, mutually influencing and feeding back into each other.

The collective level of Nodo ESIT (i.e., the collective level) is operationalized through collective plenary meetings held at least three times a year. During these meetings, joint activities are planned, and members discuss their respective works with one another while sharing details about different projects. These plenary meetings are complemented by panel discussions that facilitate further exchanges and debates on the different conceptual frameworks and practices presented. As of this writing, six panel discussions have been held, covering various topics, including innovation and interdisciplinarity in the framework of science, technology, and innovation policies; critical perspectives of interdisciplinarity in Latin America; and transdisciplinary institutionalization processes. The panels were targeted to the hub’s members, seeking to consolidate our community of practice and allowing enough time to discuss topics that may be included in the hub. These were recorded only if all participants agreed.

The second level involves working groups formed around specific focal points. During the first year, the Nodo ESIT set out to jointly build different groups based on members’ personal interests in inter- and transdisciplinarity. Then, we identified the members’ main interests and common topics and questions they wished to develop and explore in greater depth within the network. Defining these working areas served as a starting point for setting the collaborative work in motion. These work areas or focal points were as follows:

- Exploring and systematizing theoretical and methodological approaches to inter- and transdisciplinarity in Latin America.
- Studying the ways in which inter- and transdisciplinarity are institutionalized in Latin America and comparing them with other regions.
- Advancement and development of university policies.
- Implementation of inter- and transdisciplinary educational programs.

The working groups—and the topics they address—respond to the interests of the Nodo ESIT members. Currently, there are five active working groups:

1. “Methods and Tools” Working Group: This group brings together the different theoretical and methodological approaches practiced by its members in their respective research and teaching activities. The aim is to identify the methodological frameworks used that allow us to recognize the particular characteristics acquired by inter- and transdisciplinary approaches in our region. One of the main outputs of this working group was a working paper that systematized various methods used in different projects in five Latin American countries (Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Costa Rica). It was presented in a panel discussion at the International Transdisciplinary Conference in 2021.
2. “Assessment and (E-)Valuation” Working Group: The group focuses on values that are driven by collaborative practices. Using the concept of *buen vivir* (good living) as a basis for their work, members of this group promote a manifesto that collects values, skills, and competences needed for transdisciplinary work. Based on an in-depth exploration of collaborative practices in different contexts, this manifesto strives for care and respect in transdisciplinary research.
3. “Mentorship Initiative” Working Group: Following the international effort realized by Kirsi Cheas, this group supports the International Initiative on Mentorship for early-career researchers. It offers a space in which members can exchange ideas on common obstacles and struggles faced by early career researchers when fostering an inter- or transdisciplinary career.
4. “Communication in Inter- and Transdisciplinary Settings” Working Group: This group discusses and elaborates on the challenges of communicating among members with different perspectives, including scientific and societal actors who have varying aims and interests. The group also supports the internal communication of the Nodo ESIT and the management of the bulletin, the website, and its social media channels.
5. “Expertise in Integration and Implementation Processes” Working Group: As a result of the call for papers in a Special Collection led by Gabriele Bammer (Bammer et al., 2020), a specific subgroup was formed. With the aim of writing a contribution to that collection, six

Nodo ESIT members met over the course of three years to reflect on practices situated in Latin American contexts (Vienni-Baptista et al., 2022). Once the article was published, its members joined other sub-groups, taking their reflections to the collective.

Each working group developed an agenda of activities. Thus, depending on each focal point and the working groups' members, different activities were developed, including monthly meetings and panel discussions open to all members of the Nodo ESIT. These activities revolved around conceptual debates (e.g., the different ways in which transdisciplinarity is defined) and methodological exchanges (e.g., which methods are used and adapted to integrate diverse knowledge).

A variety of concrete outputs resulted from these activities and exchanges, including academic articles, working papers, and participation in conferences and panel discussions. The collaborations of members in the working groups have delivered concrete outputs that were subsequently presented in international events: (1) participation in regional and international conferences as roundtable organizers and keynote speakers (Latin American Association of Social Studies in Science and Technology Conference 2021 (ESOCITE) and Interdisciplinary Foundations and Applications Conference 2021 (JFAI)), (2) coauthoring of academic articles (for example, Vienni-Baptista et al. 2022), and (3) working papers systematizing discussions and findings from the working groups' projects. The working groups, as microlearning spaces, thus allowed for a better understanding of inter- and transdisciplinary work, which was conveyed to all Nodo ESIT members. Through these efforts, the network's identity gradually consolidated.

The coordinating team faced the challenge of articulating and connecting the two levels (the collective and the working groups). Figure 1 shows the articulation between these two levels of interaction and the integration of knowledge and practices. To facilitate communication and interactions among the members, apart from different virtual communication channels (a mailing list, and Twitter at <https://twitter.com/nodoesit>), a newsletter was designed to share information on the various activities socialized by members (calls for participation in conferences, publication of articles, attendance in seminars organized in other spaces, etc.). All of these serve to connect and strengthen the "network of practice" promoted by the Nodo ESIT and is complemented by an official website (<https://www.incomplex.org/nodos/nodo-estudios-sobre-interdisciplina-y-transdisciplina/>).

This form of organization—between the collective level and the working groups—served as a means of building a common ground among members and the inter- and transdisciplinary practices carried out in their respective contexts. This structure helped establish trust and exchanges that facilitated the identification of commonalities and differences in their work. In turn, these

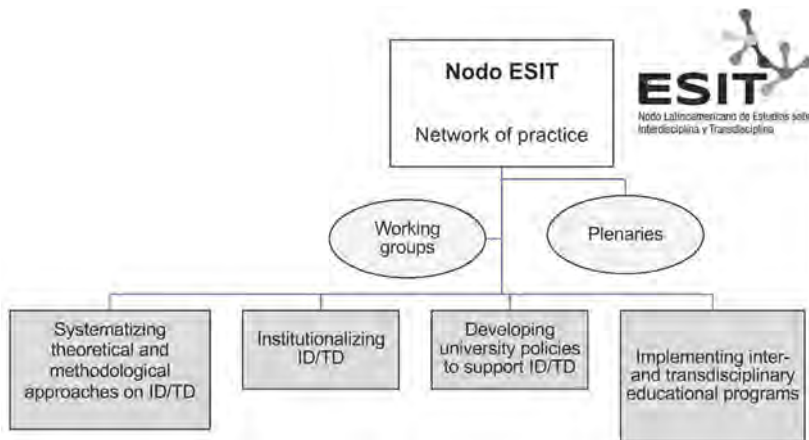


Figure 1. The Main Focal Points and Working Groups of the Nodo ESIT

helped members initiate further collaborations and achieve greater learning from local initiatives rather than implementing models of collaborative work developed in other regions, such as the Global North.

Concluding remarks

This section provides an overview of the lessons learned in the Nodo ESIT thus far and what strategy is considered by the authors to best support inter- and transdisciplinarity in our context. We elaborate on what has been uniquely accomplished thanks to the creation of this hub.

We value three strengths in the work established and developed by the Nodo ESIT. These interrelated strengths enabled us to examine inter- and transdisciplinary work in greater depth. First, the Nodo ESIT has managed to set into motion a network of practice that has allowed its members to recognize and assess their inter- and transdisciplinary practices. This recognition took place primarily at the level of the working groups, insofar as they are micro-spaces for exchanges, allowing for recognition and more in-depth reflection on their practices. However, this did not occur easily and automatically. In fact, these exchanges revealed difficulties highlighted by the members regarding the development of inter- and transdisciplinary research and teaching in the region. Thus, for example, the working group focused on “Methods and Tools” allowed for shared reflections on their working experiences as Latin American researchers and practitioners, the strategies deployed, and the tensions encountered when implementing collaborative settings in marginalized

contexts. The group organized a series of presentations and discussions, which took place over the course of a year, and jointly identified concrete research and teaching cases in which inter- and transdisciplinary practices were applied. These cases were studied by applying a comparative analysis and systematizing the results in a working paper. The cases showed significant progress in transdisciplinarity as a method for the coproduction of knowledge in the region in both epistemological and methodological terms. However, at the same time, they also revealed the tensions that may be caused by such processes in the academic space in which they take place, particularly with respect to evaluation processes that do not usually recognize these collaborative processes.

The second strength lies in the fact that the initiatives carried out within the Nodo ESIT have a common epistemological vocation, thus revealing a concern for the language used to communicate their findings. Similarly, a methodological concern has emerged in relation to fostering inclusive and participatory tools—either by overcoming obstacles to participation or by reflecting on the limitations and possibilities of integrating vulnerable societal actors into collaborative processes, which demand reflecting on specific challenges. For example, the working group on “Expertise in Integration and Implementation Processes” identified conceptual and theoretical agreements that facilitated cognitive and social integration, as well as developed a heuristic tool to study the expertise developed in five case studies in Latin America (Vienni-Baptista et al., 2022). The design and implementation of inter- or transdisciplinary methods and tools that are suited is one of the hub’s major achievements.

The third strength has to do with the construction—currently underway—of a repository (similar to a toolbox) of experiences, concepts, and methods generated by the working groups, which allows for the consolidation of a “memory” of inter- and transdisciplinary practices in the region not yet existing. The working groups highlighted a wide range of learning opportunities provided in the day-to-day work in each country. The resulting reflections and their systematization informed the working agenda of the plenary meetings (i.e., the collective level), thereby connecting in that space the contributions produced and advancing toward the identification of new work areas to focus on and the inclusion of new members. In this respect, the Nodo ESIT is currently working on developing a collaborative platform to give visibility to the repository, with the possibility of identifying methods and tools that are useful in vulnerable contexts.

The prominent weakness is that the Nodo ESIT does not have its own funding. Efforts to raise funds to continue developing this space have been difficult and may have impeded discussions and interactions among members. As an example, the long-term sustainability of the hub is endangered as there are no resources to organize in-person meetings.

The concept of regionalism provided a framework for the hub to reflect on the inter- and transdisciplinary work carried out in Latin America by its members. In dialogue with conceptual and methodological frameworks from other regions, we were able to contrast how these are applied and transformed in our own research and teaching processes.

The next step for Nodo ESIT is to continue with the work and reflections underway, specifically in terms of contrasting them with other regional and international networks including AIS (which publishes this journal). Thus, we aim to foster a cross-fertilization of conceptual and methodological frameworks that will allow for a wider recognition and analysis of inter- and transdisciplinary practices, as well as facilitate their inclusion in various institutions. In this way, we can address the complex issues that our contexts are currently facing.

The consolidation of inter- and transdisciplinary networks of practice is an enriching element for strengthening collaborative research and teaching in the specific context of Latin America. Our experience tells us that the concept of regionalism, that is, the understanding of these networks as spaces that represent regional issues, has served as a tool for strengthening the formation of the Nodo ESIT. It has achieved synergies despite funding, time, and resource constraints, guided by the sole mission of creating a space that is horizontal but rich in the variety of approaches and perspectives it encourages. Based on these differences, we have succeeded in linking together a group of social actors committed to inter- and transdisciplinarity in the Latin America region. And this article appearing in this AIS journal is part of the much-needed process of “alliances” that Klein’s (2021) challenge article had hoped for.

Biographical Notes

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