



**SERIES OF DEBATES ON "POLITICS AND KNOWLEDGE"**

**Organized by: Ivàlua i l'Obra Social "la Caixa"**

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**1. PRESENTATION**

A society and a political system based on preferences and interactions amongst people tend to work better than one based strictly on the intellect, said political scientist Charles Lindblom in defence of modern democracies.

But, what should be the role of intellect and knowledge in a democracy? The promise that science can tell us what problems need attention and what policies work best continues in force for advocates of evidence-based decision-making. For them, expertise and scientific knowledge should become the plumbings for a policy process jammed with excessive partial interests and ideological beliefs.

Others, however, are suspicious about expertise: who is this new guest who, without a certificate of democratic legitimacy, asks for a seat at the table where decisions are made? Who verifies what "evidence" is? Should knowledge relegate the political debate by pointing out the "technical" way to take? Aren't numbers mere metaphors in the political persuasion game, serving the same particular interests that evidence advocates want to overcome?

In sum, is there a conflict between science and democracy? And most important: is there a way to balance knowledge and democracy, so that public policy is better able to transform the world into a better place?

This series of dialogues aims to address these issues, combining both international insights with experiences from our immediate environment.

## **2. LOCATION AND SCHEDULE**

**Place:** Sala d'Actes, Palau Macaya

**Dates:** February 16th, March 16th, and April 15th, 2015

**Time:** 17.00h. a 19.00h.

## **3. TARGETED AUDIENCE**

People interested in collective problems, as well as those wishing to become active participants in the policy formation process, either as politicians, civil servants, analysts, journalists, members of non-profit organizations or citizens.

#### 4. PROGRAM

##### **FEBRUARY 16th: THE USE OF EVIDENCE IN THE POLICY FORMATION PROCESS**

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Introductory presentation of the challenges that knowledge faces when it comes to influence decision-making on collective problems: from the difficulties to generate robust knowledge to the competition with other logics in the process of problem definition, solution building and policy implementation.

##### **Presenters:**

**José Maria Labeaga**, Director of the Doctorate School at the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED), and former director of the Instituto de Estudios Fiscales.

**Joaquim Brugué**, Professor of Public Policy at the Universitat de Girona and author of the book "It's politics, stupid".

##### **Discussant:**

**Fernando Vallespín**, Professor of Political Science at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. And Director of the Instituto Universitario Investigación Ortega y Gasset

**MARCH 16th: WHEN POLITICS ENTER THE ROOM, RATIONALITY JUMPS OFF THE WINDOW?**

Radio talk-style debate, coordinated by a renowned journalist, with retired representatives of the different actors that play a prominent role in policy formation: lawmakers, government, media and political parties.

**Presenters:****Decision-making at the House of Representatives: what determines the vote of a Congressperson?**

**Joan Ridao.** Former Member of the Spanish Parliament and professor of Constitutional Law at the Universitat de Barcelona (UB).

**Decision-making at Government: politics, policies or Sir Humphrey?**

**Montserrat Tura.** Former Mayor at Mollet del Vallès and former Ministry of Interior and Justice at the Catalan Government.

**Decision-making in political parties: rationality versus electoral rationale?**

**Agustí Colomines.** Former director of the Fundació Catalanista i Demòcrata (CatDem) and professor of Contemporary History at the Universitat de Barcelona.

**The influence of mass media on the political agenda: why do newspapers never talk about policy at the "Politics" section?**

**Albert Sáez,** Deputy Director at El Periódico de Catalunya

**Discussant:**

**David Gonzalez.** Editor of Politics at La Vanguardia

**APRIL 15<sup>th</sup>. HOW TO PUSH KNOWLEDGE INTO THE POLICY FORMATION PROCESS:  
INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES**

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This debate will introduce international initiatives to facilitate the policy – knowledge dialogue, such as nudge units, knowledge brokerage agencies, “whatworks” centres (promoters of systematic reviews of evidence), research units within governments and other experiences that can inspire future actions in Catalonia.

**Presenters:**

**Joachim Möller**, Director of the Institute for Employment Research at the German Federal Government

**Tom Gash**, Research director at the British Institute for Government

**Discussant:**

**Jacint Jordana**, Director of the Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals (IBEI) and professor of political science at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF).