



The Future of Social Sciences and Humanities

Final International Conference

22-23 October 2009

Venue: Hotel Metropole, Brussels, Belgium

Thursday October 22nd, 2009

Session I: Do Social Sciences and Humanities have a future?

The future of the Social Sciences and Humanities depends on their ability better to meet the needs of societies. To reach society, the economy and the political system, good interaction is required between the different intellectual communities, an interaction that overcomes traditional feuds between schools and disciplines. The first session presents and discusses the results of the SSH Futures project, a study about the future of the Social Sciences and Humanities in Europe.

10.00 – 11.00 **Opening**

Chair: Andrea Schmölzer, Austrian Ministry of Science

Philippe Keraudren, European Commission

Ronald J Pohoryles, ICCR International

11.00 – 11.30 Coffee Break

11.30 – 13.30 **Roundtable: What Futures?**

Chair: Chris Caswill

A Future for the Humanities?

Allan Janik, The Brenner Archives

What is the role of social sciences and humanities in futures research?

Rafael Popper, University of Manchester

Foresight Study on the Future of the SSH

Tal Soffer, ICTAF

Results of the SSH Futures project

Patricia van Hemert, Free University of Amsterdam

13.30 – 14.30 Lunch

Session II: The Role of Social Sciences and Humanities in Europe

Session two focuses on the current role and importance of SSH research in Europe including its potential to support societal developments and its current problems and shortcomings.

14.30 – 15.30 **Keynote Speech:** Peter Nijkamp, Free University of Amsterdam
Commentator: Martin Peterson, University of Gothenburg

15.30 – 16.00 Coffee Break

Session III: Parallel Sessions on Social Sciences and Humanities in Practice

Even though social science knowledge has been seen as intrinsically and historically tied to policy and policy-making, there is also a sense that social science no longer matters or that it does not matter as much as it should. It is this concern that underlies much of the discourse on a user-oriented (social) science, new modes of knowledge production, interactive social science, (or context-sensitive science) and transgressive competence.

16.00 – 18.00 **Session III.a: Transdisciplinary Research: Politics and CSOs**

Chair: Annelies Brühne, University of Hannover

Doing Cooperative Research with CSO: Challenge and Implications for Social Sciences

Les Levidov, Open University

Working for and with the European Citizens

Andrea Ricci, ISIS

Doing research in the name of war? Experiences from a social science institute within the army

Phil C. Langer, Bundeswehr Institute of Social Sciences

Use and Abuse of social sciences in the policy-making process. Lessons from the past, warnings for the future

Wojciech Wozniak, University of Lodz

The potential for intervention through Co-operative Research

Sandra Karner, IFZ

16.00 – 18.00 **Session III.b: Users & Producers**

Chair: Ronald Pohoryles, ICCR International

The Conflict of Cultural Spheres and the Future of the Social Sciences

Gregor Fitzi, University of Florence

The Future of Social Sciences and Humanities

Rossitsa Chobanova, Bulgarian Academy of Science

International Comparisons in Sciences Studies: what and why do we compare

Anne-Sophie Godfroy, École Normale Supérieure de Cachan

Emerging Patterns of Depoliticisation and Engagement to Inform the Future of STS Research: A Case Study in Nanotechnologies

Francois Thoreau, SPIRAL

16.00 – 18.00 **Session III.c: Elements of Sustainable Development: Environmental & Social Issues**

Chair: Tadeusz Zoltowski, Foundation for European Scientific Cooperation

Shaping the societal impacts of engineering sciences; a reflection on the role of public funding agencies

Simone van der Burg, University of Twente

Public-Health Research – multidisciplinary, high-benefit, undervalued

Mark McCarthy, University College London

Social Indicators: their Origin and Uses between Social Control and Democratic Participation

Paolo Parra Saiani, Università Cattolica di Milano

Social Justice as the Problem for Research and Social Administration in Lithuania

Arvydas Guogis, Mykolas Romeris University

Friday, October 23rd, 2009

Session IV: Diversity and Innovation

Looking at the literature on the shift in knowledge production, one may get the impression that the traditional academic mode of knowledge production is old-fashioned and outdated and should be replaced by new forms of knowledge, e.g. interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research. Session four deals with this issue and the potential of academic research for innovation in theory and methodology.

10.00 – 12.00 Session V.a: The diversity of European SSH and the Case of the New Member States

Chair: Ekkehard Mochmann, ICCR International

Toward a complex vision of creative agents: revitalizing the study of institutions and economic reform

Roger Schoenman, University of California at Santa Cruz

The shaping of social sciences through research assessment

Tereza Stöckelova, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic

The Catch 22 Syndrome of Sociologists on the European Semi-Periphery: Exploratory Sociological Observations

Gad Yair, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

The suicide of the Social Sciences

Elisabeth Sundin, Linköping University

10.00 – 12.00 Session V.b: Innovation in SSH: Interdisciplinarity & Transdisciplinarity

Chair: Martin Peterson, University of Gothenburg

Cultural Memory. The potential of an inter- and transdisciplinary research project

Carin Franzén, Linköping University

Academic Narcissism and the Problem of Knowledge Accumulation in the Social Sciences

Saša Božić, University of Zadar

Collaboration in Social Sciences and Humanities: a guaranteed thing?

Ülle Must, Archimedes Foundation

La science juridique et ses évolutions au sein de l'interdisciplinarité : l'exemple de la gestion / conservation de l'environnement marin

Bertrand Cazalet, CERTAP

10.00 – 12.00 Session V.c: Complex methodologies

Chair: Tal Soffer, ICTAF

Will computational social science dominate or divide the social sciences of the future?

Edwin Horlings, Rathenau Institute

Measuring the Evolution of socio-economic structures in a massive multiplayer online game

Stefan Thurner, Santa Fe Institute

The SSH in the Science of Complex Systems

Jeffrey Johnson, Open University

12.00 – 12.30 Coffee Break

Session V: Are the Social Sciences and the Humanities a source for 'enabling' knowledge?

Session five addresses the role of the Social Sciences and Humanities in the development of the knowledge society and whether they are a source for 'enabling' knowledge.

12.30 – 13.30 Keynote Speech: Nico Stehr, Zeppelin University

Commentator: Jenny Andersson, CERI Paris

13.30 – 14.30 Lunch

Session VI: European Research Area: theory and reality

The development of the European Research Area (ERA) aims at increasing cooperation in Europe. The question is how to deal with the diversity in the European research landscape. In contrast to calls for convergence the SSH Futures project recommends exchange and best practice models to maintain the balance between national diversity and European unity.

14.30 – 15.00 *Potential of and possibilities for the SSH in the European Framework*

Programmes for Research

Nanna Rosenfeldt – DEA

15.00- 15.30 *The obstacles to the emergence of a European space of Social and Human Research*

Sapiro Gisèle – CNRS

15.30 – 16.00 *The ESFRI Roadmap – an opportunity for Social Sciences*

Krauwer Steven – Utrecht University

16.00 – 16.30 Coffee Break

16.30 – 17.30 *Closing Plenary*

What can SSH contribute to the development of EU? Recommendations of the SSH Futures Project

Ekkehard Mochmann, ICCR International

www.iccr-international.org/ssh-futures

OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the conference is to examine and to discuss the role of social sciences and humanities in knowledge production, and the interaction between knowledge producers and knowledge users.

The exploitation of research in the social sciences and humanities remains occasional and tentative. Increasing the impact of this knowledge on policy, economy, democratic participation and society as well as raising awareness for the specificity of social sciences and humanities knowledge seems quite necessary. On the other hand, social sciences and humanities are undergoing structural changes to better meet societies' needs. This is why interdisciplinarity and transgressive knowledge become increasingly important.

Not all social scientists would agree that social science research is or should be relevant for policy (directly or indirectly). There is, however, a certain tendency among research commissioning institutions to believe (at least implicitly or internally) that only that social science research ought to be funded which explicitly and directly relates to policy. Our understanding of the research and policy dynamic is that it is complex and non-linear and that if we wish to make social science research more relevant for policy – in the positive sense, i.e. for the purpose of moving towards a knowledge society and evidence-based policy – we need to understand the complexity of the whole process of knowledge production, dissemination and exploitation.

The main objective of the conference is to discuss:

- the achievement of Social Sciences and Humanities so far,
- the potential of inter- and transdisciplinary research,
- facilitators for and barriers to increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Social Sciences and Humanities,
- the expectations of policy makers, NGOs and other funding organizations of the Social Sciences and Humanities and their potential to respond to these expectations.

The conference does not privilege any mode of research, be it basic/generic or applied, disciplinary, interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary.

BACKGROUND

This conference is the final conference of the SSH-FUTURES project commissioned by DG Research in the 6th Framework Programme. The project was completed by an international consortium headed by the Interdisciplinary Centre for Comparative Research in the Social Sciences (ICCR).

The Social Sciences and the Humanities have an important mission in the formation of the Knowledge Economy and Society and evidence-based politics. However, the role and contribution of the Social Sciences have not yet been fully comprehended. There are discrepancies between the potential importance of social science knowledge and the comparatively low attention it receives from politics, other research communities and the public in general.

Social Sciences and, to a lesser extent, the Humanities have contributed to this phenomenon. The landscape is fragmented, as the Social Sciences and the Humanities are, to some degree, split according to national boundaries and disciplines, even sub-disciplines.

This leads to two major threats: to an over-emphasized claim to autonomy (the 'ivory tower' phenomenon), on the one hand, and a misunderstanding of what 'applied research' means for the Social Sciences and the Humanities ('consulting approach'), on the other.

How can the Social Sciences and the Humanities better cope with the needs of society? This is the key question that will decide on their future.

The issue is contingent on three elements: an understanding of what society's needs are, what the Social Sciences and the Humanities have to offer and if knowledge-producing institutions can deliver the expertise requested.

In complex societies, it is evident that single disciplines cannot provide solutions to problems on their own. The co-operation between all types of knowledge producers is important and necessary. 'Useful' research combines knowledge from different disciplines. Hence, interdisciplinary research plays a key role in the acceptance of the new mode of knowledge production, which is expected better to address policy concerns and social demands. To reach society, the economy and the political system, good interaction is required between the different intellectual communities, an interaction that overcomes traditional feuds between schools and disciplines.