



ALMA MATER STUDIORUM  
UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA



RETHINKING THE ROLE  
OF **SOCIAL SCIENCES (SSH)** IN **H2020**:  
TOWARDS A REFLECTIVE  
AND GENERATIVE PERSPECTIVE

**Brussels, February 26th 2015**

**Emilia-Romagna Region  
EU Office**

**WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS**

## **Workshop concept: The reflective and generative role of SSH**

Many countries still do not show clear and strong signs of recovery from the global economic downturn that started in 2008, which is causing a structural lack of resources in all sectors. The economic, demographic, social and environmental long-term challenges call for deep changes, questioning many of the assumptions that have underpinned our societies, posing new challenges for institutions, private e public organisations, policy makers and communities.

While austerity measures are adopted all over the world, societal challenges are intensifying: youth unemployment, elderly healthcare, migration, poverty and social exclusion, – along with other problems - press the public institutions with the contradictory request of innovating solutions.

Innovation is strongly needed to tackle real-world complexity. In this framework, the relevance of SSH need to be fully acknowledged. SSH do not only bring a reflective perspective but are characterized by a generative nature that produces visions and future scenarios. More explicitly, they help society to shape the future through ideas, experiments, scenarios, interpretations, facts that can address challenges and re-orient them by envisioning long and short terms innovations.

The generative nature of SSH produces research which presents some common features:

- Complexity: SSH show a repertoire of approaches, methods and tools that are much more effective in dealing with mapping and understanding complexity;
- Situatedness: the adoption of traditional innovation is quite distant from the mainstream of generative SSH that recognise situated, human-centred and participatory research approaches as the bases for building successful innovation processes, products and solutions;
- Culturally framed scenarios: SSH tend to produce visions and interpretations of the possible futures that strongly rely on past and present values, beliefs, motivations and cultures;
- Interdisciplinarity: SSH can easily be integrated with complementary disciplines to solve complex issues in innovative ways.

On the basis of these premises we would like to discuss a new role for SSH to face the big societal challenges that afflict Europe today.

## **Workshop programme**

The workshop, organized by the University of Bologna in collaboration with the Emilia-Romagna Region Office in Brussels, targets the academic community, private sector, policy-makers and civil society's stakeholders. The aim is to discuss the contribution of SSH in the joint effort of the scientific community towards the interdisciplinarity required by the programme Horizon 2020, but also the impact and valorization of SSH research.

The event addresses the issue of mainstreaming of SSH in Horizon 2020 but also specific themes that are included in Societal Challenge 6. The parallel panels will present existing experiences and projects where research methods and expertise in SSH, in collaboration with other disciplines and with the business sector, have led to practical applications. The panels are focused on six key thematic drivers:

- Social Innovation;
- Sustainable Lifestyle and Food;
- ICT and Social Inclusion;
- Culture and Creativity;
- Health, Care and Education;
- Public Policies, Work and Welfare

# PLENARY SESSION

## Summary of the keynote speech by Prof. Irene Hardill (Northumbria University)

In my plenary presentation I focused on two aspects of the generative nature of SSH: first, the wider impact on economy and society of SSH research projects, using examples of research funded in the UK by Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), and second I explore multi-disciplinarity, again with a UK example. Europe's challenges are interdisciplinary and international in their reach, these pressing challenges do not necessarily recognise disciplinary and geographical boundaries (ESRC, 2015).

The ESRC as one of seven UK research councils, it receives public funds to fund SSH research. It is the largest such funder in the UK. Since as far back as the 1990s (Woolgar, 2000), SSH researchers seeking funding from ESRC have been encouraged to reflect on possible impacts 'upstream' in the developmental process, and to regard 'impact' as an essential feature of any strong research proposal rather than a simple 'add on' (Buchanan, 2013; Bannister and Hardill, 2013).

While our workshop explored SSH and impact from a European perspective, there are important parallel debates in Canada on the mobilisation of knowledge (Cooper and Levin, 2010; Phipps and Shapson, 2009); in the US, relating to 'relevance' (Staeheli and Mitchell, 2005), which Phillips (2014) argues raises broader issues about the *"apparent tensions between impact or relevance and curiosity"*; and in New Zealand and Australia where the already-established lexicon of public engagement and outreach is being recast as one of 'impact' (Rogers et al, 2013).

So what do the UK research councils mean by impact? Impact has a number of dimensions, and for ESRC impact is delivered through funding world class social science research, and through the demonstrable contribution that makes to society and the economy, and to the lives of individuals, organisations and nations. This is an ethos enshrined in its Royal Charter commitment *"to advance knowledge and provide trained social scientists which meet[s] the needs of users and beneficiaries, thereby contributing to the economic competitiveness of Our United Kingdom, the effectiveness of public services, and the quality of life"* (ESRC Royal Charter, 1994).

Scientific impact, therefore – or the advancement of knowledge' - is foundational to this wider economic and societal impact, with knowledge disseminated in peer reviewed journals, for example. ESRC recognises that impacts from research can be generated through a range of diverse pathways, they can take many forms, become manifest at different stages in the research process, and be promoted in many different ways. Evidence of wider economic and societal research impact, for example, includes that it has been taken up and used by policy makers and practitioners, or led to improvements in services or business. According to one widely cited typology, the impact of social science research can be categorised as conceptual, capacity building and/or instrumental (Nutley et al, 2007) (or some combination thereof):

**Conceptual:** *contributing to the understanding of policy issues, reframing debates, changing the way a problem is framed.*

**Capacity building:** *through technical and personal skill development with the flow of tacit knowledge, such as capacity building within the academic community, and beyond amongst project partners.*

**Instrumental:** *influencing the development of policy, practice or service provision, shaping legislation, altering behaviour.*

The research councils have produced a series of impact case studies based on projects they have funded, which includes one about a project I undertook with Dr Sue Baines of Manchester Metropolitan University, which

sought to understand why people give their time to others by undertaking volunteering<sup>1</sup>. The policy context for this project was the government commitment to pushing volunteering as a way of reconnecting people with the labour market. But this research found that this understanding of why people volunteer to help others was too narrow. Most people volunteer to make a difference in the community rather than for career development. Indeed many volunteers are beyond the labour market – for reasons of age, disability or care responsibilities. Policies focused on volunteering as training for the labour market risks excluding and discouraging those who can't work.

The project produced a series of academic outputs (peer-reviewed journal articles, and a book, such as Hardill and Baines, 2011) on the role volunteering plays in people's lives, but we have also delivered conceptual impacts by reframing policy and practice through working closely with our partner organisations where we undertook the fieldwork and in the community where the organisations are based. Some of our fieldwork sites wanted to use our research outputs, to refine how they recruit and manage volunteers. So together we produced publicity material, and changed the way they recruit volunteers. We also helped the community bid for capacity building funds with which to grow the underpinning network of community organisations, and we worked with community organisations and the BBC to produce a short film about community building in an age of austerity (BBC, 2012).

A judiciously timed ESRC press release led to our work being picked up by a national organisation, the Disability Rights Commission, who approached us to provide case studies of organisations providing volunteering opportunities for disabled volunteers, along with the personal stories of disabled volunteers for their guidance booklet for the voluntary and community sector. At the national launch of their guidance booklet disabled volunteers who participated in our project attended and some spoke about what volunteering meant to them. The then Minister of the Third Sector launched a volunteering toolkit we developed at the House of Commons during National Volunteering week in 2007. To demonstrate impact one needs a clear audit trail, and clear evidence of change that has followed.

Turning now to the second theme, multi-disciplinarity, within and beyond the SSH. As I noted in the introduction Europe's challenges are interdisciplinary and international in their reach, and these pressing challenges do not necessarily recognise disciplinary and geographical boundaries (ESRC, 2015). I argue that SSH holds the potential to help understand and transform the complex challenges confronting economies and societies across Europe and beyond. SSH offer ways of seeing the world, of appreciating and responding to the complex challenges facing economies and societies. Moreover some SSH academics embrace epistemological traditions that have sought to engage with research users such as feminism, participatory research, disability studies and the more recently emerging field of sustainability science, and foreground co-production through user engagement, to bring about change, sometimes reaching out and working with groups that policy makers find 'hard to reach'.

Evidence-based policy and practice operates on a belief that knowledge is obtained through objective observation and reasoning. But the work of producing such knowledge is typically more 'messy', more iterative and more non-linear; features of the knowledge production process only made more pronounced by the rhetoric of knowledge exchange and collaborative working – again SSH illuminates such messiness (Hardill and Mills, 2013). Evidence-based policy is a key area where an awareness of how emotional relations shape society and space is important especially in times of economic austerity, when citizens are being asked in a multitude of ways to change their behaviour.

## **Conclusion**

In the UK impact is multi-dimensional; it is about scientific impact, as well as a wider impact on society and economy, where relevant. It is about bringing about and evidencing the wider public benefit of publicly funded research. The UK research councils assert the value of quality, impact and independence, and it is the independence of the research we undertake that may result in delivering uncomfortable messages and not

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/media/brief/impactcase/charity/Pages/Hardill.aspx>

merely selecting impact that comfort only the powerful. A desire to effect a positive impact on society and economy is the reason many of us became academics in the first place (Hardill and Baines, 2009; Hardill and Mills, 2013). A number of us embrace epistemological traditions that foreground co-production through user engagement, to bring about change, so we are hoping to change the world not interpret it (to misquote Marx).

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# REPORTS OF THE PARALLEL PANELS

## **Social Innovation**

*Rapporteur:* Francesca Rizzo: [f.rizzo@unibo.it](mailto:f.rizzo@unibo.it) (University of Bologna)

*Chair:* Taco Brandsen: (Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen)

*Speakers:* Agnès Hubert (Sciences Po); Dmitri Domanski (TU Dortmund University)

### **The generative role of SSH with respect to Social Innovation**

In the last 5 years we have assisted to a proliferation of documents, projects, initiatives on how SI can integrate and complement new forms of innovation toward EU growth and prosperity.

This new projects are calling/demonstrating the need of a new role of SSH as a trans-disciplinary platform to become agent for:

- designing and replicating a new wave of SI and investment on SI as new area of innovation that can open new market and economic opportunities by envisioning new solutions for societal problems.
- supporting and facilitating the interactions between SI and larger processes at meso and macro levels in order to create new opportunities for innovating policy;
- amplifying SI business models in public sector to provoke innovation and changes in public and private organisations.

Promising trans-disciplinary trajectories individualised during the workshop are:

- the intersection between design-business and economy- technology;
- the interplay between policy production (top down framework)and co-creation (bottom up innovation);
- the interchange between the reflective and generative (data and theories, facts and interpretations) knowledge produced by SSH;
- the complementarity between a human centred perspective in facing societal challenges and and the continuous process of technological innovation and infrastructures

### **Detailed indications**

This section collects a set of specific indications on the generative role of SSH for SI. Indications are classified under 3 main themes:

- Interdisciplinarity
- impacts
- practical and policy implication

#### ***Interdisciplinarity***

- Knowledge on SI has to be coproduced together with all the stakeholders involved. Practitioners and researchers, policy makers and creative communities, entrepreneur and facilitators.
- SSH are more suitable to co-design, prototype and start-up social innovation as it refers to societal problems and their solutions in a human centred perspective
- SSH can help to understand SI by not only studying differences but also similarities with other forms of innovation. Taking stock from theories on innovation.
  - SSH can help to understand the relation between ICT and SI and how the value produced by the specific SI solutions can be controversial with respect to the ethical or moral values.

### ***Impacts and valorisation***

SI is emerging as a new job market that requires new skills/competences/knowledge. SSH can take the leadership in the design of new curricula for SI. What is the role of education in boosting social innovation and what does it mean education in the context of SI?

- Mapping is not enough. SSH can support the process of linking bottom up initiatives in cluster of services that insist on the same challenge. Gaining impacts through building coherence and making meaning on the top of many micro initiatives
- Dissemination is not enough. SSH can help to design theories on SI to make evident actions at the meso level that can be produced to replicate, diffuse and scale SI (ecosystem of innovations; SI living labs; co-creation for societal challenges...)
- SSH can support hybridization and exchange between SI and public sector. SI can provoke changes toward innovation in public sector.

### ***Practical and policy implications***

- Establishing /conceive intermediate public and private infrastructure for SI (platforms, living labs, SI transfer office)
- Building up a continuous interplay between bottom up SI and top down policy. Quasi institutional environments where to experiment SI led by policy and policy production led by SI.
- Stock taking from previous research on INNOVATION.

## **Sustainable Lifestyles and Food**

*Rapporteur:* Mario Mazzocchi: [m.mazzocchi@unibo.it](mailto:m.mazzocchi@unibo.it) (University of Bologna) and Bettina Uhrig: [Bettina.Uhrig@nova.hioa.no](mailto:Bettina.Uhrig@nova.hioa.no) (NOVA - Norwegian Social Research)

*Chair:* Hans Van Trijp (Wageningen University)

*Speakers:* Sophie Hieke (EUFIC); Sara Roversi (You Can Group)

### **The generative role of SSH with respect to Sustainable Lifestyle and Food**

The balance between healthy eating and sustainable food consumption has rapidly gained relevance in the European policy agenda. The objectives of improving health through nutrition, and safeguarding the environment through a sustainable food chain may be conflicting, and the management of this complex interrelationship requires a strong evidence base.

Citizens (as consumers) are the core element for promoting sustainable lifestyles and better health, and an integrated effort of the SSH disciplines is needed to support evidence-based policies.

This poses formidable challenges. First, there is huge heterogeneity in lifestyles both within and across countries. This is also reflected by social inequalities which undermine cohesion and growth, with overnutrition and food waste coexisting with undernutrition. Second, in an era of post-globalization of food markets, policy-makers and consumers will be confronted with new environments and risks, including novel technologies and innovations along the food chain to respond to evolving consumer demand, but also recurring risks of food security which are not confined to developing countries, but also concern some vulnerable groups in Europe, especially low-income and the elderly.

### **Detailed indications**

The complex perspectives described in the previous paragraph translate into priorities, which reflect the need for *valorising interdisciplinarity, enhance positive social and economic impacts, and support better policies.*

#### ***Interdisciplinarity***

The generative perspective provided by SSH disciplines is expected to answer major questions like the following:

- Which kind of citizen/consumer will we have in 20-50-100 year time?
- How can the changing demands and motivation of consumers be 'captured' by interdisciplinary research?

#### ***Impacts and valorisation***

Food markets – besides being central to healthy lifestyles in a sustainable future – are also at the centre of EU competitiveness. Because of the rapidity of changes in consumer demands and technology, the SSH will be called to provide a constant input towards the following key questions:

- Will new generations be more responsible (sustainability, healthy ageing)?
- How can consumers be engaged by responsible research to co-create innovation in the food sector, enhance trust, avoid failure?

#### ***Practical and policy implications***

Three priorities are identified within this area:

- 1) *Food security* is expected to re-merge as a key issue in Europe, with a push towards guaranteeing security at the national/local level, also in response to the need for a more sustainable food chain. Food security (intended as access to an adequate diet both in terms of quantity and nutritional quality) is becoming a crucial priority for some sub-groups of the population, particularly low-income groups, migrants and the elderly.



- 2) Policy-makers and consumers will need to deal with *sustainability and health* simultaneously, and the trade-offs are still to be explored. For their nature, they call for strongly interdisciplinary research, not only within SSH, but also between SSH and the rest of scientific research
- 3) The current *economic crisis, and the volatility in prices* observed over the last decade, have brought the focus on the need for developing adequate policy instruments and market strategies to ensure that the adverse effects of economic cycles can be mitigated. This requires better longitudinal data which gather information from different perspectives, merging health data, with nutrition data, with detailed economic information

## **ICT for Social Inclusion**

*Rapporteur:* Laura Sartori: [l.sartori@unibo.it](mailto:l.sartori@unibo.it); Antonino Rotolo: [antonino.rotolo@unibo.it](mailto:antonino.rotolo@unibo.it) (University of Bologna)

*Chair:* Noam Slonim (IBM Haifa Research Lab).

*Speakers:* Horst Kraemer (European Commission- DG Connect ); Gianluca Pastorelli (Diesis)

### **The generative role of SSH with respect to ICT and Social Inclusion**

ICTs are central to EU strategy (namely, Europe2020) for societal and economic growth. However, SSH necessarily play a major role when social inclusion and social innovation are considered. The importance of a tight collaboration between scholars and policymakers is paving the way to new ways of thinking about research, leaving aside a deterministic vision of technology. The incoming H2020 calls partly give room to this emerging trend that we encourage and sustain for the future.

The session aimed at pinpointing crucial key points and issues in the field of ICT and social inclusion, such as digital competences and digital inequalities, innovative social and political behaviours (such as parallel currencies), e-health solutions for inclusion of disadvantaged social groups, engaged citizens in a more inclusive society, valorisation of regulatory models (legal, moral, etc.) for developing ICT solution in the field of social inclusion, fundamental rights in ICT, privacy and trust as values enabling, and not limiting, innovative ICT solutions for social inclusion, development in cooperation with strategic industrial stakeholders of common standards for representing and handling relevant economic, social, and environmental data needed for measuring and analysing social inclusion.

The panel then developed an in-depth analysis of the potential generative and reflective value of SSH research in the field of work and welfare. The focus has been on: Interdisciplinarity; Impacts (valorisation of research); and Practical and Policy Implications. Three speakers deeply discussed with the audience about the start of the art and possible future trajectories: Horst Kraemer (European Commission- DG CONNECT – H2 – Digital Social Platforms); Gianluca Pastorelli (Diesis), and Noam Slonim (IBM Haifa Research Lab).

### **Detailed indications**

#### ***Interdisciplinarity***

There is no doubt that innovation and inclusion call for an interdisciplinary approach coupling robust theoretical models with a solid and comparative empirical research. Hence, public institutions, industries, and academia should be involved as true, collaborative partners. However, more emphasis should be given to academic research, which is strategic for ensuring a long-term impact on society through powerful innovation actions.

- One way to reach this goal is to empirically ground academic knowledge to social phenomena through both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Looking at best practices may not be enough given different social and institutional constraints.
- It is also important to develop a framework where empirical indicators, data analysis, but also regulatory models serve the purpose of understating reality as well as being the basis for policy making. Social sciences (not limited to economics, but also sociology, law, political science, philosophy and anthropology) strongly help in devising the right tools for explaining phenomena as well as for improving solutions.

#### ***Impact and valorisation***

- ICT for social inclusion will benefit from an academic research associated with stakeholders' activities and policy makers' needs, developing a mutual awareness and valorisation.
- Platforms are no longer only digital but also social, as recognized in several incoming calls. This means to pay attention to those who are going to populate platforms. This calls not only for usability and design, but also to developing a sense of belonging and to the social mechanisms that rule offline and online communities.

- To really achieve social inclusion in an ICT context more attention should be devoted to digital competences. Recent EU's DESI Index (Digital Economy and Society Index) highlights the need to improve demand for (public and private) digital services: this could only be achieved through basic and advanced digital competences available to the general population.
- Inclusion leads to innovation: an inclusive society that better foster innovation both in the public and private sector.

### ***Practical and Policy Implications***

A proper framework—where SSH and ICT studies and practices meet and collaborate—is based on both qualitative and quantitative indicators emerged from empirical SSH research. It will greatly help in explaining and helping in taking decisions.

Also, innovative ground-breaking ICT solutions for social inclusions will emerge from a generative view of SSH, which are expected to inspire new models and methodological paradigms for ICT (this view being solicited for instance by strategic ICT industries).

## **Culture and Creativity**

*Rapporteur:* Francesca Tomasi: [francesca.tomasi@unibo.it](mailto:francesca.tomasi@unibo.it) (University of Bologna)

*Chair:* Tobias Blanke (Dariah.eu)

*Speakers:* Elena Pierazzo (Université de Grenoble 3); Francesca Di Donato (NET7)

### **The generative role of SSH with respect to Culture and Creativity**

Culture and creativity is a big container aiming at collecting a huge variety of domains and related disciplines: from art to cinema/theatre, from tourism to cultural heritage (library, archives, museums), from literature/philology to design, from philosophy to archaeology, from history to geography.

The natural expression of activities in the CC domain regards three important levels of reflection: the reasoning on editorial practices, the valorisation of cultural heritage, the creation of new jobs for humanities.

In particular the CC domain is strongly influenced by the role of technologies related to humanities. The Digital Humanities approach seems a good way of rethinking traditional approaches, in a really trans-disciplinary model of research (i.e. new disciplines - new field of knowledge - emerging).

The focus on the panel was oriented on:

- Digital scholarship methods (editors and/or publishers);
- Cultural heritage data in a digital curation perspective (managing all-life cycle: creation, preservation, development, dissemination of data from the humanities);
- Creating new professionals (i.e. transmedia editor; content curator; social media strategist; digital PR).

Promising trans-disciplinary trajectories individualised during the workshop are:

- Culture dissemination: open access – open content – open publishing – open (linked) data – open knowledge – semantic data – standard and metadata – open collaboration;
- Fusion of humanities (which?, how many?) and sciences (IT). Digital humanities;
- Topic modeling (identify hidden thematic structures or topics in corpus of documents);
- Information extraction (automate extraction of specific words (nouns) from full-text documents);
- How to measure impact? And who has to do it?;
- Evaluation of new kind of research outputs (e.g. digital libraries, datasets, ontologies, digital editions, interactive maps, digital 3D objects)
- Reach a wider public (not only academic, e.g. scholars but also students, tourists, industries);
- Be part of Digital Art and Humanities Research Infrastructures (DARIAH).

### **Detailed indications**

This section collects a set of specific indications on the generative role of SSH for CC. Indications are classified under 3 main themes:

- Interdisciplinarity
- Impacts
- Practical and policy implication

#### ***Interdisciplinarity***

Fusion of arts and humanities + sciences = economic growth for industries involved in these topics (Brighton fuse report + UK REF 2014).

#### ***Impacts and valorisation***

Definition of impact: 'any effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia'.

Impact areas:

- Content industries (Film, Media, Library, Museum, Archives)
- Public engagement (Schools and education, Policy, Community and Local Government, Translation)
- Other (Area Studies: Asia [China and India], Software [especially in history]; Mobiles)

***Practical and policy implications***

<b>Civil society</b>	Influencing the form and content of associations between people or groups to illuminate and challenge cultural values and social assumptions.
<b>Cultural life</b>	Creating and interpreting cultural capital in all of its forms to enrich and expand the lives, imaginations and sensibilities of individuals and groups.
<b>Economic prosperity</b>	Applying and transferring the insights and knowledge gained from research to create wealth in the manufacturing, service, creative and cultural sectors.
<b>Education</b>	Influencing the form or the content of the education of any age group in any part of the world where they extend significantly beyond the submitting HEI.
<b>Policy making</b>	Influencing policy debate and practice through informed interventions relating to any aspect of human or animal well-being or the environment.
<b>Public discourse</b>	Extending the range and improving the quality of evidence, argument and expression to enhance public understanding of the major issues and challenges faced by individuals and society.
<b>Public services</b>	Contributing to the development and delivery of public services or legislation to support the welfare, education, understanding or empowerment of diverse individuals and groups in society, including the disadvantaged or marginalised.

## **Health, care and education**

*Rapporteur:* Arianna Lazzari: [arianna.lazzari2@unibo.it](mailto:arianna.lazzari2@unibo.it) (University of Bologna)

*Chair:* Francesco Ciabuschi (University of Uppsala)

*Speakers:* Mihaela Ionescu (ISSA); Monica Menapace (DG Research & Innovation)

### **The generative role of SSH with respect to Health, Care and Education**

From the workshop emerged that contemporary societies in Europe are faced with complex problems related to the themes investigated (health, care and education). Issues such as the social costs related to the growing antibiotic resistance as well as to the limited accessibility to high quality early childhood education and care services not only are threatening the well-being and quality of life of children, families and communities but also lead to growing inequalities and to the impoverishment of the EU social fabric.

A wide consensus arose that problems concerned with public health as well as with European youngest citizens' care and education are multi-dimensional phenomena and – as such – need to be investigated from an interdisciplinary perspective in order to be properly understood and effectively tackled.

### **Detailed indications**

The following section reports specific indications on the generative role of SSH in relation to research carried out in the fields of health, care and education. Such indications are classified under three main themes:

- interdisciplinarity;
- impacts/valorisation;
- practical and policy implications

#### ***Interdisciplinarity***

It was unanimously acknowledged that quick-fix solutions are inadequate to address complex social problems, which instead require to be understood within an eco-systemic perspective and tackled through cross-sectoral initiatives. In this sense, interdisciplinary research is to be assumed not only as an analytical perspective but also as an operational strategy for working across different sectors (health, care and education) and involving multiple stakeholders (public sector, private institutions and civil society) in the innovation of policy and practices.

#### ***Impacts and valorisation***

This call for the elaboration of rigorous participatory research and action-research methodologies that allow bridging the gap between academic knowledge and practice-based knowledge through the meaningful engagement of professionals and services' users in the process of knowledge co-creation. At the same time a closer cooperation between researchers, policy-makers and civil stakeholders at all level – local, regional and European – is seen as desirable in order to re-negotiate political priorities and research agenda on the basis of real needs of EU citizens and communities.

#### ***Practical and policy implications***

From this perspective, it clearly emerged that the contribution of SSH research in the field of health, care and education is inextricably linked to its interdisciplinary and participatory character. On one side, research that is carried across different disciplinary fields allow to understand complex social problems from an ecological perspective in order to address them systemically – and therefore more effectively. On the other, the engagement of relevant stakeholders in all phases of the research process through rigorous methodologies foster the development of innovative policies and practices that are people-centred and grounded on real societal needs. In this way, the findings of rigorous practice-based, participatory and context-sensitive research

can complement the findings of evidence-based research in providing decision-makers with reliable data for orienting the processes of policy reform.

To conclude, the discussion taking place within the workshop shed new light on how complex problems faced by contemporary societies in EU member states can be effectively tackled with the contribution of SSH research, which play a crucial role in fostering socially-responsive innovation of policy and practices through the integration of bottom-up and top-down decision-making processes.

## **Public Policies, Work and Welfare**

Rapporteur: David Natali: [david.natali@unibo.it](mailto:david.natali@unibo.it) (University of Bologna)

Chair: Tim Goedemé (University of Antwerp)

Speakers: Fintan Farrell (European Anti Poverty Network); Domenico Rossetti di Valdalbero (DG Research & Innovation)

### **The generative role of SSH with respect to Public Policies, Work and Welfare**

The session aimed at clarifying the key societal challenges in the field of work and welfare that should be at the core of the research and knowledge-production agenda of scholars, stakeholders and EU policymakers. The focus was on two key challenges: inequalities and the need for more effective and legitimate governance of labour market and social policies.

The session has proved all the actors involved in knowledge production (scholars, stakeholders and the Commission) are consistently focusing and investing on the two topics that will be in many respects at the base of the next calls in Horizon 2020 – H2020 (as confirmed by the Commission).

The panel then developed an in-depth analysis of the potential generative and reflective value of SSH research in the field of work and welfare. The focus has been on: Interdisciplinarity; Impacts (valorisation of research); and Practical and Policy Implications.

These issues have been debated by the three speakers: *Tim Goedemé* - Project Manager of IMPROVE, an FP7 research project on 'Poverty Reduction in Europe: Social Policy and Innovation' provided the voice of scholars and analysts on the key challenges and the potential role of SSH research in the field; *Fintan Farrell* – Project manager of EAPN, European Anti-poverty Network; and *Domenico Rossetti di Valdalbero* – European Commission, DG Research and Innovation, Unit B6 on Reflective Societies).

### **Detailed indications**

With the help of the three speakers we looked backward at the good practices in SSH research of the past, and looked forward at the potential for future advancements. In the following we summarise the main findings for each theme.

#### ***Interdisciplinarity***

The three speakers provided interesting evidence of the progress made on data collection, analytical reflection and dissemination of research results through SSH projects. While they all stressed the importance of a fruitful dialogue between disciplines (in this field, economics, sociology, political sciences, just to list the most evident cases), they also pointed to some analytical potential proved by past research. The main progresses in the past consisted of:

- The *accumulation of qualitative and quantitative information* on both policy measures to address inequalities and poverty, and modes of governance. In order to go beyond simple mapping of good practices it is important to define new indicators to accumulate these experiences and take stock of all the relevant empirical evidence;
- The *combination of macro and micro analysis* is crucial: macro theories about the origin of inequalities and the innovative aspects of governance arrangements are important to use empirical information collected through micro-analysis;
- *Conceptual clarification and methodological fine-tuning*. Past research proves there was still some ambiguity and vagueness in the terms and concepts proposed by scholars. In this case, the dialogue between analysts and stakeholders proved relevant for concept clarification.



All in all, the main challenges for the future of SSH is to use the information gathered at all levels in the context of more elaborated theories and analytical frameworks. This is a key strategy to make the contribution of SSH more effective in shedding light on major societal challenges and contribute to a true reflective and generative approach.

As stressed by Domenico Rossetti di Valdalbero, this more elaborated strategy should be activated to address the main analytical and political challenge of the next years: the reconciliation of the individual and collective dimensions of the strategy to deal with inequality and more effective governance. The individual dimension has to do with the *empowerment* of European citizens that are key actors in the improvement of societal conditions. The collective dimension is framed in terms of the need for a *collaborative shared economy*, where collective actors are implicated in a set of modes of governance to make public policies in the field of work and welfare more effective.

### ***Impact and valorisation***

The session also contributed to look at the past experiences about the dialogue between researchers and stakeholders. This is an important source for the valorisation of research and to open room for a major impact on the European societies.

- There is an evident need for *permanent dialogue*. Past experiences in SSH show the dialogue between scholars and stakeholders has not to be developed just in the context of the research project: starting with the project and ending with the deadline of the project. By contrast, it has to be permanent and to inspire both the design of research, its concrete delivering and the assessment phase.
- *Stakeholders are knowledge producers*, as stressed by Fintan Farrell – EAPN. They are not just passive partners. They have their own research capacity and represent a source of information on good practices and the main demands coming from the citizens. In all these respects they are active partners in the process of knowledge co-production.
- An example of the potential for increasing the impact of SSH research through the interaction of researchers and stakeholders is represented by *the interplay between the Europe 2020 strategy and H2020*. The EU focus on poverty, with a target of poverty reduction, has largely contributed to the increased interest of H2020 to the issue of poverty and inequality in Europe.

For the future, it is a priority to make scholars increasingly aware of policymakers' agenda and stakeholders' demands, while the latter (policy makers and stakeholders) should be informed of the top research themes and priorities. This dialogue should help analysis and policymaking to be consistent and mutual reinforcing in their capacity to address societal challenges.

# CONCLUSIONS

**Prof. Jon Bannister (Manchester Metropolitan University), keynote speaker**

Ultimately, the workshop drew together rapporteurs from the various substantive panels. The intention of the session was to explore issues governing the endeavour to engage in the co-production of generative knowledge, the factors conditioning the up scaling of this activity in SSH, and the challenges surrounding the uptake of generative knowledge by policy makers. To be clear, the foundation of this discussion rested on experiences of successful engagement between SSH researchers, stakeholders and research users. Each panel evidenced the substantial time and resource committed to building the robust and sustainable relationships that enable collaborative research. The various researches reported were oriented towards helping transform a range of societal challenges, and within specific localities there was clear evidence substantive research impact.

The panels reported the difficulty in securing the time and resource to build relationships with stakeholders and research users. It was contended that this situation arises as the funding priorities of, and consequent researcher work loading by, higher education institutions (across Europe) do not fully recognise the importance of these activities. Further, opportunities for SSH disciplines to collaborate and the training that underpins engagement with stakeholders and research users is not (consistently) provided. Taken as a whole, these issues act as an important barrier to the up scaling of SSH researcher engagement in generative knowledge production. The panels also reported the challenge in securing the uptake of generative knowledge by policy makers. Here, two key issues were identified. First, and in many situations, there lacks an infrastructure through which researchers can engage with national and international policy makers and stakeholders. Second, and related, the panel membership recognised that strategies of knowledge transfer and exchange were insufficient, in and of themselves, to support the uptake of knowledge. Rather, there required to be greater appreciation of the process of policy making (on the part of SSH researchers) and the moments in which generative knowledge might best be introduced in to the policy cycle.

## FINAL AGENDA

- 09.00 - 09.30**      **Registration**
- 09.30 - 09.45**      **Welcome and introduction**  
Lorenza Badiello (Emilia-Romagna Region)
- 09.45 - 10.00**      **The strategy of the University of Bologna to foster multidisciplinary: the EuPer initiative**  
Dario Braga, Vice-Chancellor for Research (University of Bologna)  
Alessia Franchini (University of Bologna)
- 10.00 - 10.15**      **The reflective and generative role of SSH**  
Giulio Ecchia (University of Bologna)
- 10.15 - 10.40**      **Addressing the impact of SSH**  
Irene Hardill (Northumbria University)
- 10.40 - 11.00**      **Societal Challenge 6 “Europe in a changing world: inclusive, innovative and reflective societies” in Horizon 2020**  
Domenico Rossetti di Valdalbero (European Commission, DG Research & Innovation, Unit B6, Reflective Societies)
- 11.00 - 11.15**      Discussion
- 11.15 - 11.30**      *Coffee break*
- 11.30 - 13.00**      **Three thematic panels in parallel:**
- 1. Social Innovation:**  
*Panelists:* Taco Brandsen, (Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen); Agnès Hubert (Sciences Po); Dmitri Domanski (TU Dortmund University); Francesca Rizzo, *rapporteur* (University of Bologna)
  - 2. Sustainable Lifestyles and Food:**  
*Panelists:* Hans Van Trijp (Wageningen University); Sophie Hieke (EUFIC); Sara Roversi (You Can Group); Mario Mazzocchi (University of Bologna) and Bettina Uhrig (NOVA Norwegian Social Research) *rapporteur*

### 3. ICT for Social Inclusion:

*Panelists:* Noam Slonim, (IBM Haifa Research Lab); Gianluca Pastorelli (Diesis); Horst Kraemer (DG Connect); Antonino Rotolo and Laura Sartori, *rapporteur* (University of Bologna)

**13.00 - 14.00**      *Lunch*

### **14.00 - 15.30**      **Three thematic panels in parallel:**

#### 1. **Culture and Creativity:**

*Panelists:* Tobias Blanke (Dariah.eu); Elena Pierazzo (Université de Grenoble 3); Francesca Di Donato (NET7); Francesca Tomasi, *rapporteur* (University of Bologna)

#### 2. **Health, care and education:**

*Panelists:* Francesco Ciabuschi, (University of Uppsala); Mihaela Ionescu (ISSA), Monica Menapace (DG Research & Innovation); Arianna Lazzari, *rapporteur* (University of Bologna)

#### 3. **Public policies, work and welfare:**

*Panelists:* Tim Goedemé (University of Antwerp); Fintan Farrell (European Anti Poverty Network); Domenico Rossetti di Valdalbero (DG Research & Innovation); David Natali, *rapporteur* (University of Bologna)

**15.30 - 15.45**      *Coffee break*

### **15.45 - 17.00**      **Presentation of the panels' results and conclusions**

*All rapporteurs*

*Chair:* Jon Bannister (Manchester Metropolitan University)