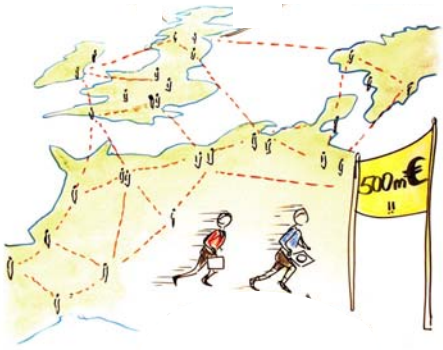
Final Report to Economic and Social Research Council

Success for Social Science in the European Union 7th Framework Programme



Prepared by Luke Georghiou and Michael Keenan, with illustrations by Joe Ravetz, University of Manchester

On behalf of a consortium of

Institute for Alternative Futures and
Institute of Innovation Research, University of Manchester

Institute for Alternative Futures
100 North Pitt Street, Suite 235
Alexandria, Virginia 22314 USA
(703) 684-5880
www.altfutures.com

E·S·R·C ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

Manchester Institute of Innovation Research
University of Manchester and UMIST,
Harold Hankins Building,
Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL, UK.
Telephone: +44 161 275 5921
Fax: +44 161 275 0923

March 2004

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Introduction

The EU Framework Programme supports research in social science in several ways: directly through those research themes and priorities in which social science work predominates; through policy-oriented work; in horizontal actions such as Marie Curie; and within mainly technological programmes as part of a multidisciplinary presence. Nonetheless the total share of resources remains at best a few per cent of the total and there is no overall strategy for social science in the Framework Programme.

Aims

This scenario-setting exercise aims to identify priorities in the social sciences that could shape or contribute to the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7), to consider **appropriate funding mechanisms** for implementation, to reflect and build upon developments in the European Research Area, and to **advise ESRC on its approach to FP7.**

Method

The exercise used a scenario workshop, attended by 30 UK and other European experts, to build a picture of what success would look like for social science in Europe in 2010, and to use this as a reference point to derive priorities and recommendations. The "success scenario" was built after consideration of nine key drivers of future developments covering macro-issues, developments in social science and European support structures for research. The drivers had been articulated through interviews in advance with participants and other experts. Three initial scenarios were used to integrate the information: exploring futures of social science in a problem-solving service function; in a mode dominated by traditional disciplines; and deep integration in both geographical and disciplinary terms.

Success Scenario – Social Science Giving Value and Being Valued by Europe

The success scenario developed has four main elements:

Proactivity – In which ESRC takes a leading role among its partner organisations in Europe in promoting the interests of social science in Europe;
Flexibility – Whereby participation in European research is unhampered by bureaucracy and supported by a flexible portfolio of instruments;
Relevance through excellence – Involving a transformed relationship with users and stakeholders at a European level; and
New foundations – Where methodological strength in social science is underpinned by high quality training and mobility of researchers.

Priorities and Recommendations

Proactivity

To give social sciences a stronger profile in the Framework Programme, ESRC should assume leadership in developing a common road map for social sciences in the EU covering key themes, instruments and funding strategies. Working with similar bodies in other countries, it should build a coalition that presents a strong unified voice for social science. At the same time it should facilitate the emergence of a **representative campaigning body** for social sciences in Europe.

A "big idea" for FP7 social science research should be identified through consultation, possibly on Europeanization of everyday life.

In the UK, support for participation needs to have a focus on building capabilities to take advantage of European opportunities. In addition developmental funds are needed for bidding for complex projects.

Despite scepticism about its added value, particularly if it does not have new money, there is a need for a policy on the European Research Council.

Flexibility

Flexible combinations of instruments appropriate for different research challenges are needed, with flexibility extending to the type, scale, deliverables and duration of research. Flexibility should also mean combinations of top-down and bottom-up agenda setting and of national and European programmes.

New funding instruments are required to achieve better embedding of social science in technology programmes. Mechanisms are needed for widening participation to bring in new researchers.

Disincentives to participation in the Framework Programme, both administrative and attitudinal, need to be addressed directly.

Relevance through excellence

Actions are needed to inform knowledge producers and users about the applications of social science in a European context. Such applications include: enfranchisement of European citizens through provision of publicly accessible intelligence and space for deliberative democracy, increased understanding of phenomena, Europeanisation of ESRC projects, facilitation of cross-boundary working, promotion of trans-national learning in policymaking and provision of policy advice

Development of indicators reflecting good practice in the use of research findings will help to develop competence. There is also a need to develop, understand and broker relationships with users.

New foundations

Participants identified promising research areas only as broad exemplars. A full agenda would require further broad consultation with the community. The following were considered deserving of support at a European level:
Supporting major EU objectives especially the Lisbon agenda
Other policy areas eg policing, inequality, access to education, health, ageing, mobility
Understanding European identity and Europeanisation
Social change, its causes and effects and interplay with European developments
Understanding military, political and economic configurations on a global scale
Co-evolution of technology and society, especially in genomics, nanotechnology and ICTs.

Social science in Europe requires substantial infrastructure: there is a need to further develop databases, archives & longitudinal datasets at European level and to provide accessibility & support. Better archives are needed to improve access to previous or ongoing research across the EU, especially that in the Framework Programme.

Greater researcher mobility is required, especially by UK researchers.

Methodological training should be a central feature of the Framework Programme, with special emphasis upon mixed methods and comparative studies.

1 Introduction

The European Union's Framework Programme, currently in its 6th iteration dispenses just over 5 percent of European public expenditure on civil research and development with a budget of over €16 billion over four years. Within that, social science has played a dual role, with both dedicated budgets and a role in other more technologically driven parts of the Programme. As *Figures 1* and *2* show, the dedicated budget for socio-economic research remains a very small share of the total. For example, in the 6th Framework Programme, Priority 7 *Citizens and Governance in a Knowledge Based Society* received a budget of €225 million, an order of magnitude less than that for the other priorities. However, through virtually all of the other more technologically oriented priorities there is a social science presence in terms of the content and expertise (participating teams), sometimes as the main theme and in other cases adding a particular set of perspectives within a multidisciplinary context. Furthermore, policy oriented areas such as *Science and Society* and *Coherent Development of Research and Innovation Policies* draw strongly on applied social science inputs taking the share of resources to 2.2 percent of the budget (as seen in *Figure 2*). Finally, horizontal actions such as the Marie Curie Fellowships also allocate a share of their resources to social sciences.

Despite this presence, there is no overall strategy for social science in the Framework Programme, nor in complementary activities promoting the European Research Area. For national organisations mandated to promote research and training in social science, and in particular the ESRC, this range of activities presents a challenge. The challenge is greater still when developing a strategy for the 7th Framework Programme. As well as concern for whether the thematic content provides opportunities for the best social science to achieve the maximum impact upon national and European goals, there are also issues concerning which structures and instruments best favour the social sciences. The 6th Framework Programme introduced new larger scale funding instruments, notably Integrated Projects (IPs) to pursue objective-driven research and Networks of Excellence (NoEs) to address fragmentation of resources by networking basic research across institutions. Renewed attention was also given to infrastructures. For social science, the latter does not only mean access to large scale computing networks, but also the construction and maintenance of datasets and other knowledge resources.

Debate on the role of social science in FP7 has been launched with a report from the European Research Advisory Board (EURAB) on ERA and the Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH)[1]. The report suggests a series of recommendations to the European Commission ranging from the strategic to the operational. The first recommendation was that SSH should command a more prominent place in future Framework Programmes with research themes concerned with the interactive and multi-level character of Europeanisation and the transformation of modern societies beyond culturally-integrated nation-states. To strengthen the participation of social science, suggestions included a widening of the understanding of the term research infrastructure to include SSH, a broadening of the socio-economic content of programmes, to be analysed to ensure that it was not rhetorical, and the retention of

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[1] European Research Advisory Board (EURAB) Recommendations on the European Research Area (ERA) and the Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH), EURAB 03.076 – final, January 2004

smaller funding instruments in addition to the new instruments of Networks of Excellence and Integrated Projects.

As a final new element, the past months have seen a strengthening effort by some countries to promote the establishment of a European Research Council (ERC) with a dedicated budget for the support of basic research at a European level (the Framework Programme principally supports objective-driven research). At the time of writing, the outcome of this move, the possible scale of funding, and whether it would come from existing or additional EU funds or from national subscriptions is not clear.

Against this background, this scenario-setting exercise sets out to pursue on behalf of ESRC and its community the following objectives, namely to:

- Identify a small number of high level priorities which could be used to shape the overall direction of FP7;
- Identify some key emerging research priorities in the social sciences which could contribute to FP7 and be supported by it (taking into account FP6 and earlier Programmes);
- Consider the issue of appropriate funding mechanisms through which these priorities can be implemented;
- Reflect and build upon developments in the European Research Area (ERA), including the agreed R&D targets and the extent to which the other ambitions of the ERA vision are being delivered; and
- Advise on options for the ESRC approach to FP7, both inside and outside the UK.

Stakeholders taking part in the exercise elaborated these objectives further, seeing for example, at the highest level, the need to identify the major social science challenges facing an enlarged Europe in a globalised world, and that social science is accepted and recognised as a valid, heterogeneous approach to understanding and informing policy, but with a different dynamic to that of physical sciences and engineering. In terms of practical goals, they concurred that there was a need to secure a strong and influential budgetary and programme role for social science research in FP 7, based on building a globally competitive social science capacity, strong cooperation and a pan-EU infrastructure, resources and data, which support social science and policy.

The approach adopted for the exercise, described in detail in the next section, uses scenarios to explore possible futures and responses to them. While it is less usual to use a foresight approach on an event due to be realised in less than two years time, in reality both the level of uncertainty surrounding the core issues and the fact that the drivers of social science at a European level need to be examined in relation to a timescale which refers not to the *commencement* of the Programme, but to its *outcome*, combine to make this a suitable approach. In general, 2010 has been taken as the reference year for this exercise.

Figure 1. Evolution of the FPs research priorities *(Source: European Commission)*

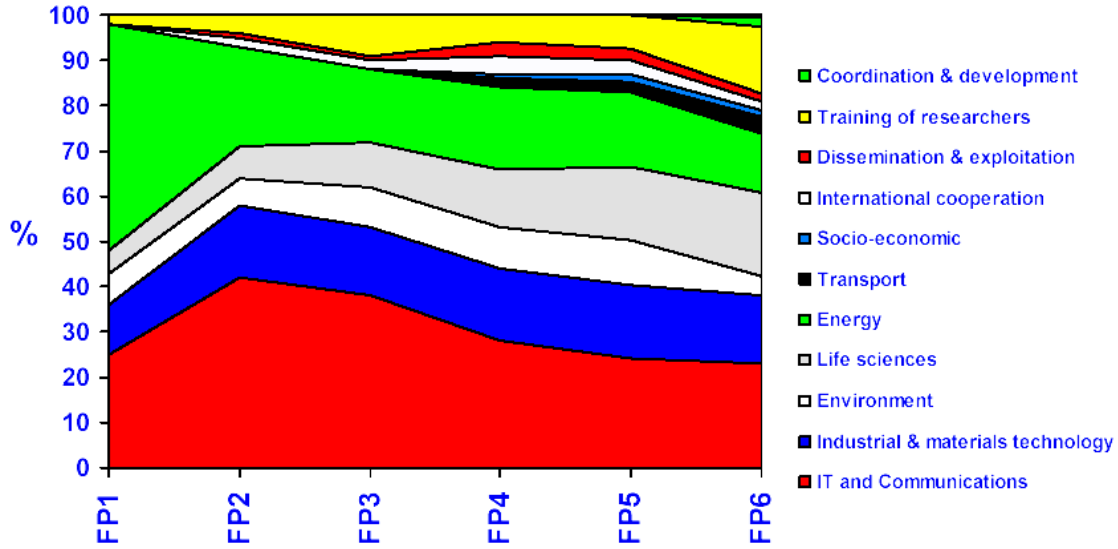
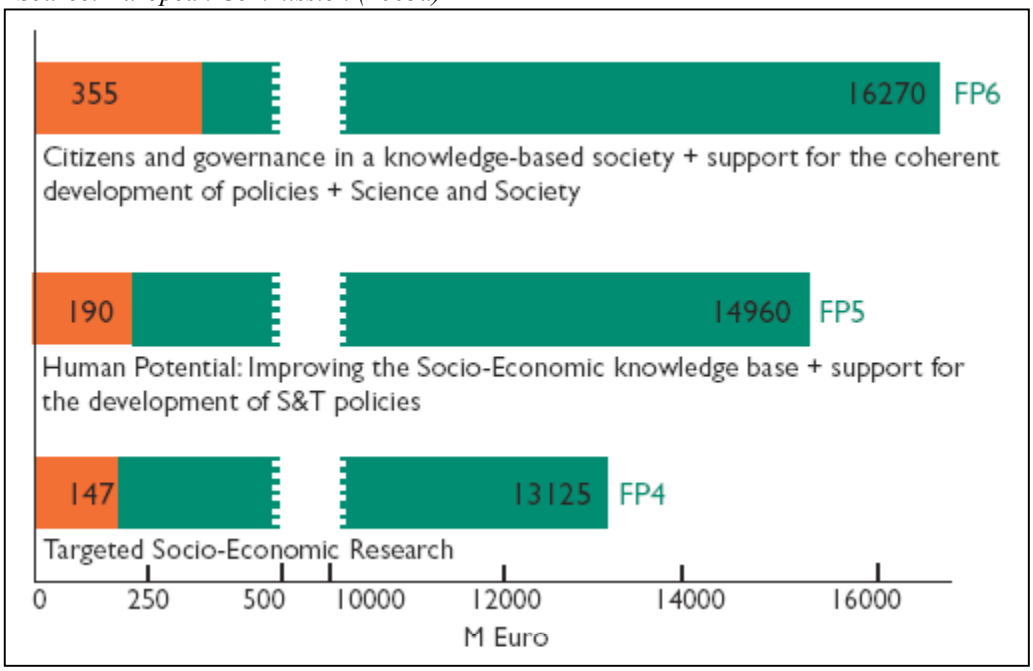


Figure 2. Evolution of SE relevant research activities in Framework Programmes
Source: European Commission (2003a)



2 Approach

Figure 3. Overview of Approach

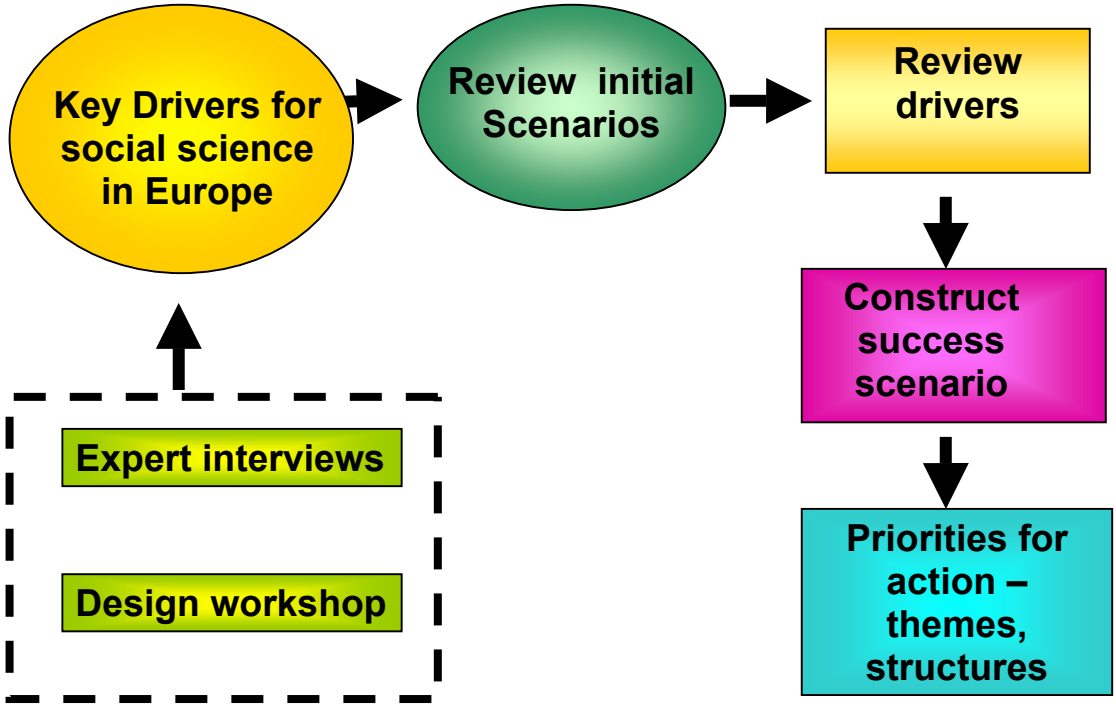


Figure 3 indicates the main elements of the approach. The key steps in the methodology are:

- Identification of *Drivers of Change*
- Development of *Initial Scenarios* based upon the drivers
- *Workshop* in which experts and key stakeholders review the above and collectively define the main elements of a *Success Scenario*
- Use of the Success Scenario as a reference point to derive *Priorities and Recommendations*

Drivers are factors that are believed to bear heavily on the topic of concern. The term is well-established in business and policy circles though in the social sciences they may be thought of in a less-unidirectional way, as influences that are often themselves affected by and conceptually or practically inter-twined with the subject they are supposed to be driving.

To identify and develop the drivers the first step was to appoint an Advisory Committee of experts and to invite them to attend a Design Workshop (or to be interviewed if they could not attend). The Design Workshop, held in November 2003, reviewed a wide range of drivers under 19 headings. The first group, described as macro-drivers, are defined as those with the potential to shape society, for example issues under the headings *demographics and migration*, or *culture and consumption*. A second set were more specific to European research, including for example, issues

under the headings *research governance and funding regimes* and *growing demand for engaged research*.

Following the Design Workshop, a working list of key drivers was identified. The next step was to elaborate, and if necessary, amend this list following consultation by interview with the wider group of stakeholders many of whom also would attend the main scenario workshop. Interviews were mainly carried out by telephone, with a small number executed face-to-face. The interview agenda was structured around three main sets of issues:

- **Research Priorities and Opportunities** – covering developments in social science in the next 5-10 years including new theories, methods emerging from the internal development of the field, issues arising from external socio-economic developments, changes in the nature of demand from users, and changes deriving from developments in science and engineering.
- **Internal Dynamics of Social Science** – covering changes in the main disciplinary composition, interdisciplinary developments, major changes in the infrastructure requirements for social sciences in the next 5-10 years (equipment, databases, e-social science, networks etc), human resources for social sciences, public perception and understanding of social sciences, and changes in the institutions involved in "knowledge production" in the social sciences in the next 5-10 years.
- **Institutional Structures for Research Support** – covering expected level of priority for social science in FP7, opportunities to build upon the social science content of FP5 and FP6, role of new instruments and different roles for social science, impact of ERA and ERC, contractual and accountability issues, and enlargement.

All of these issues were examined through the lens of **European Added Value**, that is whether the work should be done at EU level rather than nationally or inter-continentally, following arguments such as creating a critical mass of research, building shared databases, gaining insight from comparative perspectives, addressing transnational problems, addressing issues relevant to the EU's policy and regulation-making roles, or supporting cohesion and integration of new Member States.

The main element of this project was a **Scenario Workshop** held on 19/20th January 2004 in London. Approximately thirty invited participants came from major areas of social science in the UK, national and European funding bodies, stakeholder organisations and European academia. A full list is appended. The workshop began with assessment of the drivers and reaction to the initial scenarios, including an exploration of their implications for the project goals. Drivers were then revisited with the aim of defining what success for UK social science would look like for each of them. On the basis of these drivers, a Success Scenario was constructed. With this and the previous material as a reference point, participants then identified priorities and recommendations in relation to support structures, actions for ESRC, and examples of themes for research to be pursued at a European level. The full discussion, records of voting and other inputs were recorded on a groupware system known as Council.

As a final comment on the methodology, the success scenario approach has the advantage of providing a consensual and aspirational framework from which

recommendations can be derived. However, it has to be recognised that the concept of success can be contentious and is certainly dependent upon the perspective of different stakeholders. Thus, a government department might see success in instrumental terms of policy impact, while a research group would be more concerned with issues of quality and maintenance of a critical perspective. In this particular case, there are also potential divergences between success for UK social science and the overall success of European social science. Despite these potential tensions, it is usually the case that a Workshop can arrive at a common vision, and this was the case here.

Throughout the workshop, Joe Ravetz produced cartoons taking a sideways look at the discussion in real time. Several of these are reproduced throughout this report.

3 Drivers of Change

3.1 Drivers of Change

An established approach in scenario workshops is for participants to examine "drivers" that are behind the visible and/or anticipated trends and developments in the area of concern. One reason for examining such "drivers" is that they may change in ways whereby trends that appear to be well-entrenched turn out to be slow, reverse, or move in new directions. Together with the approach of multiple scenario analysis, this moves the focus of attention away from **predicting the** future, to examining **alternative** futures and prospects for these. By considering how "drivers" may evolve and interact, the aim is to give workshop participants a much better understanding of the dynamics of change, and the range of possible developments (of which the scenarios are bound to be a highly limited sample).

Based upon the interviews, nine drivers impacting upon social research in the Framework Programme were identified, as follows:

- Macro-drivers in European integration
  - Britain in Europe
  - EU Integration and Enlargement
- Social science developments
  - Styles and Methods of Social Science Research
  - Changing Nature of Knowledge Production Sites
  - (Inter)-Disciplinarity
  - Human Skills and Resources
  - Uses and Users of Social Sciences
- European research support structures
  - Framework Programme and ERA Instruments
  - European Research Council

Each driver was presented in a common framework, involving (a) a brief explanation of the salience of the issue, and an account of the major features it involves; (b) a set of key questions concerning the set of influences; and (c) three 'Outlooks' concerning possible future development. The Outlooks are intended to represent three distinctive patterns of development along the following lines:

- **Alpha Outlooks** represent a "business as usual" future, in effect an extrapolation of current forces and processes (if not always an extrapolation of trends). Current frameworks and conditions relating to the set of influences are expected here to remain more or less unchanged, or changes that are already planned or in hand are expected to be introduced as scheduled, more or less successfully.
- **Beta Outlooks** consider, in particular, some of the many things that could 'go wrong'. What would be the circumstances under which frameworks might break down without viable replacement, where projects and plans might go amiss? The intention here is to get a handle on counter-trends, reasons why

undue optimism might be unfounded, challenges that could well need to be confronted if we do set out on the routes mapped out by the Alpha Outlook.

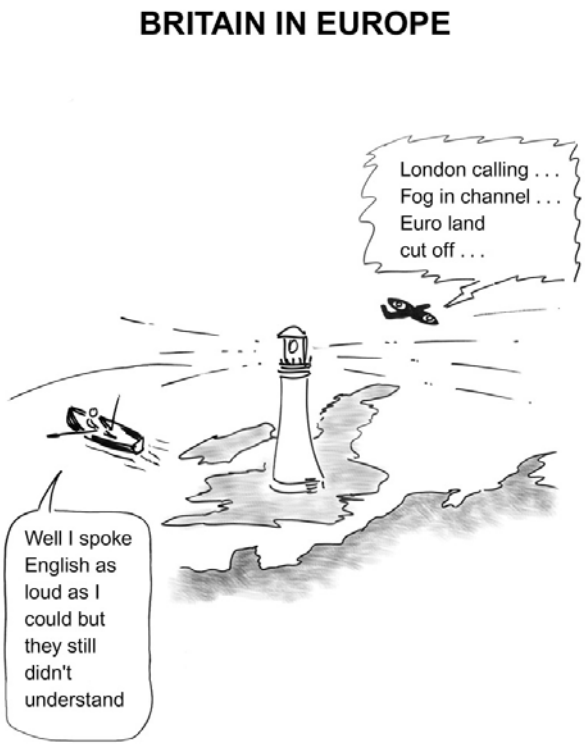
- **Delta Outlooks** consider potential changes in direction. The aim here is to go beyond analysis in terms simply of success or failure of the plans and programmes mentioned above. For instance, new goals might emerge, or new frameworks or rules of the game may be established. We are particularly interested in those possibilities that involve more visionary outcomes – especially if these contribute to solutions of major social problems.

The outlooks are not intended to be predictions, but rather they represent plausible outcomes. Needless to say there are many plausible outlooks for each area. Moreover, the drivers varied considerably in how far they have been documented and discussed in the scholarly and policy literatures, and in how explicit and forward-looking discussions have been as to their future evolution. Unlike such topics as, say, energy use, climate change, or household formation, there are few elaborated forecasts of these factors, let alone quantified ones.

Each outlook was captured as a set of bullet points. Both Beta and Delta Outlooks proved difficult to prepare in this study – not because it was hard to think of ways in which things could go wrong or in different directions, but because there were so many potential pitfalls and discontinuities. This was particularly challenging in the case of the Delta Outlooks, and to a large extent the choice of *which* path of development to focus on has been made on a somewhat arbitrary basis – the researcher's best guess as to the value of exploring one or other development in terms of stimulating debate in the workshop and thereafter.

We now provide a summary of the drivers. It will be apparent that there are numerous points where the discussions overlap – the drivers influence each other.

3.1.1 Britain in Europe



Britain has traditionally been viewed as the 'awkward partner' in Europe, with its opt-outs and rebate. Yet the progressive Europeanisation of many domestic policy areas is undeniable, with patterns of multi-level governance linking many actors and institutions below the level of Westminster and Whitehall with the European policy process. Key questions concern UK perceptions of the EU in light of EU institutional reform and enlargement, and the options open to the UK outside the EU.

- ***α outlook:*** Some success has been achieved in reforming the institutions and processes of the Union. UK public opinion as to

the benefits or otherwise of EU membership remains mixed, but this does not hinder the progressive Europeanisation of British governance at the local, regional and national levels.

- ***β outlook:*** Stalled attempts to address the democratic deficit and to reform the EU institutions post-enlargement have been compounded by growing disputes between the larger member states and the smaller ones. UK public opposition to the Euro is capitalised upon by 'Eurosceptic' politicians of all hues and a movement to withdraw has gained a good deal of ground. British influence in the EU drops off, and seldom does Britain take a leadership role.
- ***Δ outlook:*** A new set of institutions and practices have been built into which democratic oversight is firmly built. Governance in Britain is very much integrated into a wider 'European' system of governance. Open, participative and deliberative approaches towards policy-making and policy implementation have been systematically introduced into every level of the European model of multi-level governance.

3.1.2 EU Integration and Enlargement

EU integration and enlargement have been (through successive waves) ongoing endeavours since the founding of the EC. Closer integration involves not only European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), but also cooperation and coordination on other big policy areas, including home affairs and foreign affairs and security. Deeper integration requires substantial reform of the European institutions, particularly as the number and diversity of Member States increases. Key questions of concern centre on the impacts of enlargement, the emergence of a 'multi-speed' Europe of institutional 'variable geometry', and the demand for social science research to support growing policy responsibilities at the European level.

- ***α outlook:*** Incremental institutional reforms means that the Union gets by, but it works inefficiently. Due to budget restrictions, the Union is unable to support the new Member States to the extent expected and required.
- ***β outlook:*** Enlargement without institutional reform leads to paralysis and disaffection. A core group of Member States 'go-it-alone' in developing closer ties, whilst others look for changes to the Treaties in order to opt out of certain policy areas.

- ***Δ outlook:*** Enlargement brings a new economic and cultural vibrancy to the Union. Institutional reform makes for a sleeker and more democratically accountable Union that is closer in touch with the citizens of Europe.

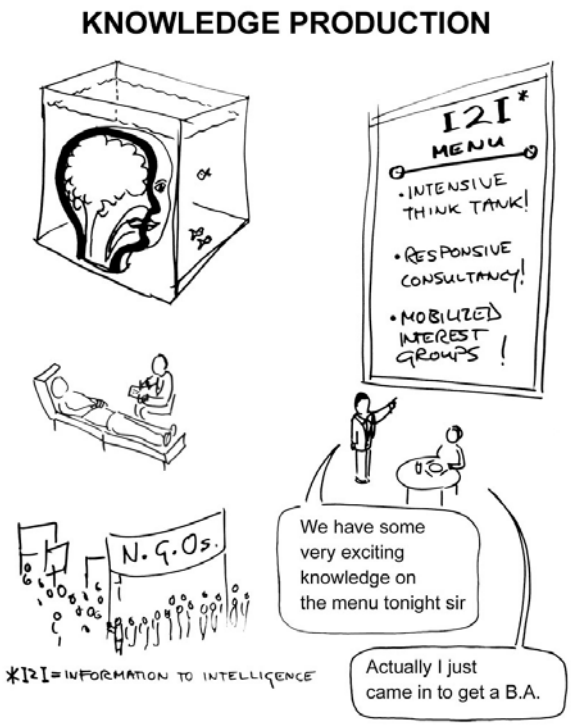
3.1.3 Styles and Methods of Social Science Research

Different social sciences have long displayed different patterns of use of methods and been subject to different impacts of fashions in methodology. In recent years, there have been repeated efforts to encourage more intensive and systematic use of a range of quantitative methods by social researchers. At the same time, the application of new information technologies opens new vistas for both qualitative and quantitative social research. Key questions concern the openness of disciplines to new approaches, and whether changes in the balance between different sorts of research method are likely to come about.

- ***α outlook:*** E-social science initiatives are successfully implemented and deployed across a wide range of disciplines. Results of such advanced methodological studies are described and explained using IT and associated approaches to visualisation.
- ***β outlook:*** E-social science turns out to be a solution looking for a problem. Moreover, efforts to apply the techniques to contentious social issues lack all legitimacy. Meanwhile, disciplines remain fragmented in terms of their methodological stances.
- ***Δ outlook:*** Social research methods, as much as the topics of research, are being reshaped by the opportunities presented by new data and technical facilities, by new types of social demand, and by the rapid rise of new conceptual approaches.

3.1.4 Changing Nature of Knowledge Production Sites

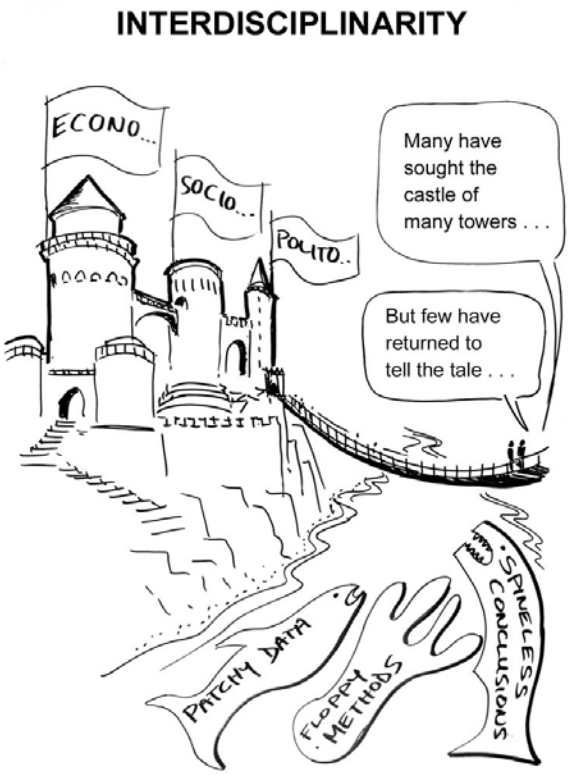
Traditionally, disciplinary university departments have dominated social science in the UK. In recent years, however, several new models have appeared, including larger concentrations of research in centres of excellence, a greater emphasis upon networking of remote centres, and the growing prevalence of Mode 2 knowledge production. Key questions here concern the Framework Programme's influence on traditional research communities.



- ***α outlook:*** There is a progressive but relatively slow diversification of the type of institutional setting for social science. Emerging specialised institutes, think tanks, and consultancies with greater agility and better communication skills meet the growing demand for social science inputs in government, NGOs and business.
- ***β outlook:*** Declining resources for social science within the Framework Programme create conditions of intense competition where success rates are so low that academic applicants move to other funding sources. In the medium to long term, the lack of support for longer term academic research causes a drying up of new ideas and conceptual tools directed towards European issues, with damaging effects on policy and practice.
- ***Δ outlook:*** Social scientists recognise that to compete and collaborate with natural sciences and engineering they have to achieve new levels of scale and organisation beyond the scope of disciplinary departments or single-issue centres.

3.1.5 (Inter)-Disciplinarity

Despite calls for greater interdisciplinary working (across social science disciplines and the natural sciences), most social science research is still performed from the vantage point of single disciplines. Disciplinary boundaries coincide with well-established professions and are therefore very difficult to challenge. Key questions here concern the extent to which university organisation and the RAE are open to reform that encourages interdisciplinarity, and the possibility for social science to become an equal partner with natural sciences when dealing with topics that demand research collaboration.



- ***α outlook:*** Interdisciplinarity continues to be promoted by the likes of ESRC and the EC, but with mixed results. Problem-oriented challenges continue to be offered to social scientists, but the best people become gradually less interested as their research findings appear to make little difference to policy.

- ***β outlook:*** Social sciences continue to be carried out as a bolt on extra to natural sciences. A more responsible science that takes greater account of environmental, social and economic concerns fails to materialise. Incentives largely remain to play to the interests and knowledge of those in disciplinary 'stove pipes'.

- ***Δ outlook:*** Research Hotels are established across Europe where people are lured from time to time to conduct high-quality interdisciplinary research. Several Institutes of Advanced Studies are established across Europe, whilst social and natural scientists collaborate on equal terms to address problems requiring an interdisciplinary approach.

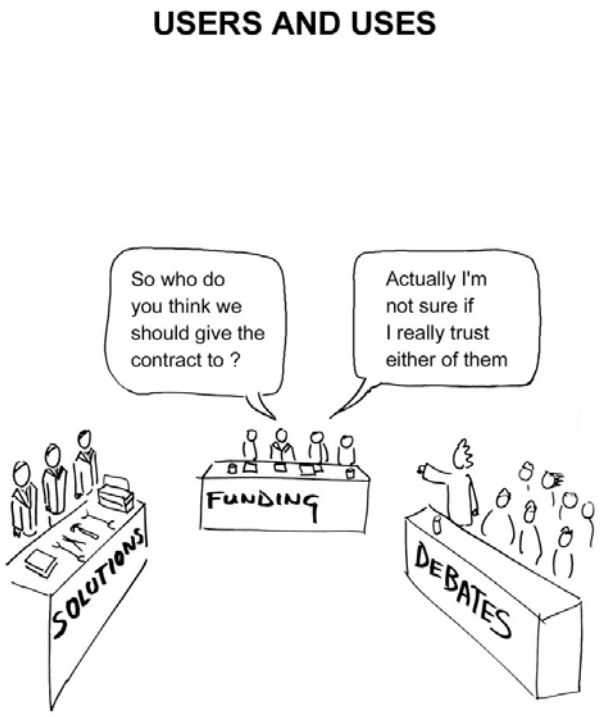
3.1.6 Human Resources and Skills

The number of people being trained in social sciences at university has never been greater, yet the recruitment and retention of high calibre academic staff is becoming an increasingly serious problem. The key questions concern whether shortages can be offset / exacerbated by brain gains / drains, and whether social scientists have the requisite skills to conduct interdisciplinary and problem-focused research.

- ***α outlook:*** Human resource shortages in certain areas, e.g. economics, result in near-universal salary differentiation based upon market price. Skills shortages and mismatches are still widespread, although expanded fellowship schemes from the likes of ESRC begin to make a difference.
- ***β outlook:*** Staff recruitment and retention hit crisis point, the time poverty experienced by social scientists worsens, and the flow of research funds to other non-teaching bodies, such as consultants, damages the renewal of some social science disciplines.
- ***Δ outlook:*** Non-traditional career paths are encouraged in a research system marked by interdisciplinarity and multi-site working. Gender mainstreaming is taken seriously.

3.1.7 Uses and Users of Social Science

In recent years, the status of social science has enjoyed something of a revival. The key questions concern the sorts of social research that are required by particular sorts of social actor and economic agent, the types of relation between research and "users" that are emerging, and the implications of these for the conduct and content of social research.



- ***α outlook:*** This is a future where social research continues to be in demand from a wide spectrum of users (and funders), but without any dramatic increase in the scale of academic social science, whose growth is more incremental. Social research evolves alongside its users, with researchers improving their ability to communicate their findings and to recognise interesting "signals" of new problems and ideas from their users.
- ***β outlook:*** Social science is marginalised. It is seen as irrelevant and/or unable to deliver on its promises.
- ***Δ outlook:*** Social science working practices and patterns of relations to users are very different from today. Social researchers commonly work in policy and industrial environments, whilst communication skills and sharing of results are much more emphasised than today.

3.1.8 Framework Programme and ERA Instruments

FP6 saw the introduction of a number of new instruments, some of which are more suited to social sciences than others. The key questions concern the durability of these instruments into FP7, their effects on social science in Europe, and their relationships with one another.

- ***α outlook:*** The new instruments are retained but traditional instruments receive a higher share of the budget than in FP6.
- ***β outlook:*** FP7 continues to focus resources on the new instruments, leaving social science in a supporting role to large technologically-led consortia.

Where support is given, as in Networks of Excellence, resources are spread so thinly that they fail to influence research strategies.

- ***Δ outlook:*** The thematic nature of Networks of Excellence plays a major role in promoting the emergence of new disciplines built around problems. Infrastructure funding is concentrated upon building knowledge rather than physical infrastructures. And, social sciences underpin new instruments that are used to better integrate the Framework Programme with the activities of other EC Directorates, e.g. the Structural Funds.

3.1.9 European Research Council

The idea of a single European Research Council (ERC) is not new, but has recently gathered pace. The rationale given for an ERC is the need to raise scientific standards by increased competition, reach critical mass in dispersed subject communities, improve efficiency in funding decisions, particularly for collaborative work, and make Europe a more attractive environment for industrial R&D. Key questions surrounding the ERC concern its scale and funding, the support it would give to social sciences, its relationship with existing EU and national funding mechanisms, and its mode of management.

- ***α outlook:*** The ERC is funded jointly by the Framework Programme and a modest amount of new money. Projects are funded not only on the basis of excellence, but also in terms of demonstrating the benefits of collaboration. Although social science achieves an acceptable level of funding, in general, enthusiasm for the ERC diminishes when Framework Programme-type accountability practices are imposed, *juste retour* seems to be in evidence, and the success rate of applications is very low.
- ***β outlook:*** The ERC is established with funds from the Framework Programme only. Traditional disciplinary interests, especially from the physical sciences, dominate the ERC. Social sciences are given a token budget, which is offset against ESRC's budget by the Treasury, thereby creating a transfer of funds from the ESRC to the ERC.
- ***Δ outlook:*** The ERC positions itself as the champion of interdisciplinary basic research. Its top priority is the support of younger researchers. National research support agencies view the ERC as an opportunity for rapid implementation of research with a European comparative dimension.

4 Initial Scenarios

Combining the elements of the drivers in theory could produce a huge range of possible scenarios. To assist the focus of the workshop, three initial exploratory scenarios were constructed. These emerged in embryo at the design workshop and took as their principal variable the core issue of this exercise, which is the relationship between social science and the Framework Programme, as well as its manifestation in terms of institutional arrangements for knowledge production. Three visions of the future were constructed:

The first entitled *In which we serve…* sees social science taking the role of a service activity, supporting other parts of the FP and in problem-solving mode. In the second, *Discipline must be maintained*, the emphasis switches to basic research led by researchers and operating to the agenda of its traditional constituent disciplines. Finally, the third, named from the poet Donne's famous lines on society: "No man is an Island, entire of itself; every man is *a piece of the Continent, a part of the main;"* to reflect a much stronger integration, both of the UK with European programmes and of social science within those.

Table 1 shows how the three scenarios reflect different elements emerging from the drivers.

Table 1. Inputs from Drivers to Initial Scenarios

Drivers	In Which We Serve…	Discipline Must Be Maintained…	A Piece of the Continent
European Research Council	Social science (SSc) gets diminishing share of ERC funds	ERC discipline dominated	Funds small projects similar to national agencies
FP and ERA Instruments	Large tech projects use SSc as problem solver	SSc areas of FP weakened by diversion of funding to ERC	Combination of Infrastructure, networks &traditional projects
Knowledge Production Sites	Universities acting mainly as subcontractors to consultants	New entrants take over as problem solvers excluding academics	User interface in spin-offs fosters but contains interaction
Uses and Users	Policymakers bias approach/results	Unable to engage with European issues	Academics out-power consultants using new tools and algorithms
Styles and Methods	Short-termism inhibits new ideas	Hampered integrated methods and interoperability of datasets	GRID/ Scale/ Convergence of qualitative & quantitative approaches
Britain in Europe	Polarisation between pro & anti-Europe studies	National funding bodies resentful of ERC levy	Much greater numbers of British expats and other Europeans here drive collaboration
(Inter)-Disciplinarity	Problem solving research predominates	Lip service but little funded	Networks create new specialisms
Human Resources	Training deficit develops	Cherry picking academics as consultants	Strong mobility
Integration and Enlargement	Brings new research issues but difficult to address some of them	Marginalised further and do not reengage social science nationally	Dynamic new communities boost research productivity

4.1 Scenarios for FP7

Increasing competition for resources

Growing political influence on the research agenda

A) In Which We Serve….

The tenuous grip of social science on its share of basic research funding in the FP and in the ERC is gradually slipping as physical and life sciences take an increasing share of these resources. Daunted by the high failure rates of applications of this type, social scientists are drawn to the much larger and easier to obtain resources available in other parts of FP. This has caused fragmentation rather than integration in the social science community in Europe.

Available resources are all dedicated to action lines built around socio-economic problem solving. Increasingly rigorous ex ante evaluation has focussed research into narrowly defined themes but at the same time has increased its connection with the needs of European policymakers and regulators. This is a two-edged sword for social scientists – on the one hand there is relatively easy access to data and sufficient resources to address the gaps. On the other hand, policymakers do not have a clear distinction between research and consultancy and expect to influence both the approach of the work and in some cases the results. Some highly publicised disputes have arisen on apparently factual studies such as the one on the employment histories of migrants. Enlargement has brought many new issues into the agenda for European social science research but there are difficulties in getting users to recognise and specify these in a satisfactory way when there is strong political pressure to emphasise economic growth and cohesion.

Polarisation of research	The inflow of financial resources to social science is welcomed but many worry about its consequences for the development of critical thinking. European issues are almost exclusively studied by two polarised groups, those funded by the Commission and those funded by anti-Europe foundations and political groupings.
Commercial-isation favours new structures	Problem-based research also typically requires large and well-coordinated teams and universities increasingly find themselves as sub-contractors in consortia led by consultants or think tanks with administrations dedicated to mastering this type of work. Some academics respond by founding their own companies to encapsulate this type of expertise. Universities too find that participation can be more effective through a subsidiary company than by traditional academic means, particularly as there are wider opportunities for subsequent exploitation of the knowledge generated. However, intellectual property issues begin to form a barrier to research progress.
Crisis management squeezes out new thinking and creativity	Less easy to detect but also of concern is a tendency towards shorter term issues in response to political crises or media concerns dominating the research agenda. Few would challenge the need for moving research resources to address emerging issues such as security and terrorism but the difficulty in this problem led environment is that the swings are rapid and large and do not leave enough space to incubate new ideas that are ahead of trends. A more systematic use of foresight and related approaches has reduced the scale of this problem but getting the findings implemented remains a matter of variable success.
Secondary role for social science research	The concept of social science as a service activity is also embedded within research itself. Many of the large networks and projects in ICT, biotechnology and nanotechnology have perceived the need for social research as an answer to some of the problems they encounter in terms of gaining acceptance for manifestations of their technologies. However, as with the policy/regulator customers they are not generally looking for critical approaches but rather for "solutions".
Training deficit	The predominance of contract research and its absorption of funds from European and national sources ultimately weakens the whole profession since it does not give the same priority as universities to channelling funds into renewing the research profession through postgraduate training. More enlightened performers host significant numbers of postgraduates and sponsor students but this tends to focus training on shorter-term issues.

Implications of *In which we serve…*

Workshop participants were asked to review the scenario and to explore its implications. Many concerns were raised. At one end of the scale, there was the problem of getting potential users such as biophysicists to accept that that they need social science. More worrying was the implication of what was called "repressive tolerance", meaning the effects on social science itself of working within this frame. Concerns focused on a likely tendency to succumb to pressure to follow the political agenda and to move from critical to information-gathering research, "Dull questions will be asked and dull people will

answer them". At the extreme, recognition and money would "poodle-ise" social scientists and make them PR managers for controversial new technologies.

The service role would have major implications for the organisation of social science in FP7. At a project level, there could be an enforced embedding of social scientists, for example, through evaluation contracts, and exploitation and implementation plans. There would need to be compensatory mechanisms to counter fragmentation – some form of horizontal activities or institutional formalisation of social science as a "trade union". The new forms of knowledge production foreseen in the scenario would be manifested as synergies for combinations between consultants and academics making use of the problem solving capacity of the former and the rigour of the latter. A training requirement for large numbers of "number-crunchers" is implied.

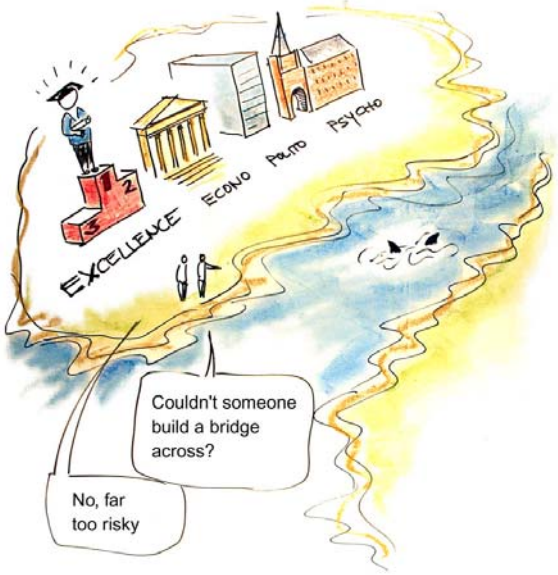
The implications for ESRC under this scenario are seen as twofold:

- Compensating for academic deficiencies at a European level; and
- Providing support for social science in problem-solving mode.

The first would involve ESRC acting as a conscience of EU social science and continuing to fund high-minded research at UK level. A role in promoting the "trade union" is also foreseen.

In the second, ESRC would undertake a brokerage role – matching appropriate social science skills configurations to particular points in the RTD supply chain, then, promoting feedback loops to the user community. It would try to assert a leadership role in setting a research agenda that UK academics could succeed in, and in securing better funding models that would allow academic exploitation of the results, for example revenue to prepare publications.

DISCIPLINED MAINTAINED



Traditional disciplines dominate

B) Discipline must be maintained….

The establishment of the European Research Council reinforced the trend already apparent in FP6 of a swing towards traditional disciplines. This arose through attempts to promote excellence. Though hotly disputed by many, excellence was defined in the type of disciplinary terms prevalent in the UK's Research Assessment Exercise. The ERC in its social science activities populated its advisory and selection committees with representatives of subject associations. While this in itself did not produce a disciplinary consensus (in fact in some areas it exposed the very different profiles of disciplines in different countries) it did lead to a conservative outlook. Calls for proposals gave lip service to interdisciplinarity but the scarce resources available in the face of massive oversubscription led to little work of this type being supported.

Reduced engagement with European issues

The drift away from interdisciplinarity had consequences for the development of the social sciences. The ability to engage with issues such as the ageing society, redefinition of the nation state, and security was hampered by the limited range of perspectives available. In turn this undermined the rationale for the ERC as a champion of basic research directed at European issues. This fragmentation also hampered the progress of integrated methodologies, notably in the sphere of e-social science. Another area where potential progress was ignored was in developing the interoperability of European data-sets.

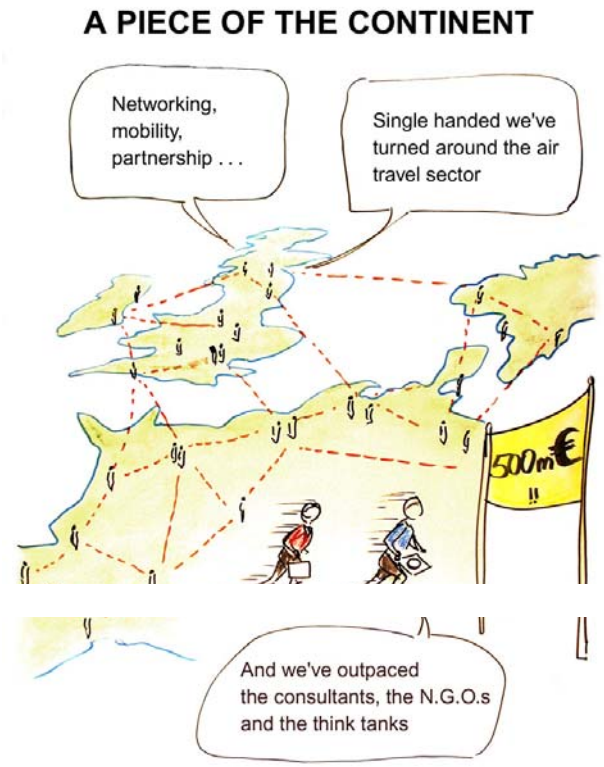
New players step in to meet user needs	Still more damaging was the pull away from the concerns of users. The trust built up in the UK between researchers and certain groups of users was not replicated in the European context. With no route for users to influence the European research agenda the academic community was rapidly displaced by new sources of investigation of European level socioeconomic issues. These included consultancies and think tanks, sometimes attached to the NGO sector, itself a growing market for social research. Initially the entry of these players was seen as positive by academics as a route to translation of research findings in to a context of application. However, the new entrants soon found it more effective to carry out their own studies with varying degrees of rigour and to cherry-pick leading academics as consultants able to give their work added legitimacy.
FP and national bodies both step away from funding European social research	The diversion of funding to the ERC had weakened support in the Framework Programme for social sciences except in a subsidiary role within large technologically-driven programmes. National funding bodies were resentful of what they saw as a diversion of their resources to a body which, unlike the Framework Programme, did not have a clear rationale for its existence. On the other hand there was a displacement effect which made them reluctant to contemplate support for international collaborative work when ERC funds were supposed to cover this, and hence undermined the early positive signs of increased coordination realised through other instruments such as ERA-Nets.
Marginalised social science in new Member States	New member states brought with them an interesting problem set and some alternative research traditions but the disciplinary structure of funding and selection tended to marginalise them further and prevent for them a re-engagement of social science at a national level.

Implications of *Discipline must be maintained*

Participants were concerned that under this scenario peer review processes would maintain conservatism through boundary closure, and that innovative work – between boundaries – would be reduced, such that vested interests would reduce interdisciplinary possibilities. The institutional conditions of knowledge production and the power that particular groups have to operate boundary closure were seen as areas requiring serious consideration under this scenario. Participants were very uncomfortable with the assumptions in the scenario that it is the business of social science to challenge and inform alternative suggestions – that was seen as requiring mobilisation across different groups working on the issues so that a more effective voice emerges.

Funding models here should be driven by considerations of epistemic gain through bringing together those who otherwise would not work on similar issues. Support should be provided for developmental purposes over a three-year time period with more 'bottom-up' work and not Networks of Excellence that bring together the 'familiar figures'. The emphasis would be to support those new to social science at a European level and so also address contractual issues and professional development. Also important would be the development of data bases - with training and proper support over the long-term - including longitudinal issues of accessibility and usability.

ESRC should help by providing support groups with developmental funds that provide systems of incentives for engagement. Some effort would be needed to redress the RAE-like focus in this scenario which counters any tendency towards innovation. More general issues to pursue would include the appropriateness of scale of research in terms of producers and users (more work on "epistemologies of reception"). This would involve thinking about inter-disciplinarity and the changing nature of knowledge production, reproduction, and reception. Also, there is a need to lobby effectively in relation to excellence of research already conducted – and to unpack the term 'relevance' to recognise issues of political accountability and legitimacy.



Transition for UK social science

C) A piece of the Continent

FP7 marked a major transition for the social sciences in the United Kingdom. UK social science, notably economics, had tended to regard its undoubted strength as a reason to hold back on commitment to participation in EU programmes, particularly in view of their reputation for bureaucracy. However, the lure of opportunity, the emergence of a wider range of funding instruments, and the increasing number of other Europeans training and working in British universities while retaining contact with their home countries combined to create the conditions for this step change.

Quantitative & qualitative research engage with infrastructure	Opportunity manifested itself in several ways. The development of e-social science and especially GRID technologies opened the way to linking data sets and to the collection of new data for comparative work with powerful analytical potential. Databases were no longer dominated by those defined at national level, rather being seen as defined at multiple levels of governance units according to the specifics of what they addressed. The European Social Survey was seen as an early historical antecedent. To take advantage of these opportunities, social science had rapidly to develop the scale of activity common in other research fields and hence large networks built around infrastructural support hubs became a frequent organisational form. Qualitative research also was presented with new opportunities driven by the development of sophisticated software tools – creating in turn the conditions for a convergence between qualitative and quantitative approaches.
Flexible range of instruments used	A varied and flexible approach to the use of support instruments by the Commission helped the process. The European Research Council was a new player but its projects tended to be quite small and not greatly distinguished from nationally funded work. Within ERA, social science benefited from a trio of mechanisms: infrastructure funding provided the means for physical networking and data-handling; support for networks gave researchers the means to continue building communities and in some cases the foundations of new specialisms; and traditional collaborative projects staged something of a renaissance, as the best means to engage social science with the concerns of users. Framework projects were enhanced by coordinated national activities using ERA-Net and a revamped Article 169. These allowed issues of more regional or sectional interest to be addressed without looking for wider European Added Value.
Greater mobility	Perhaps the best indication of the end of the island mentality was seen in human resource issues. The traditional reluctance of UK researchers to take posts elsewhere in Europe was rapidly overcome as more and more continental universities made English their main working language. Promotion of mobility of all kinds received higher priority. A boost to productivity came from the New Member States where poor local funding initially led to a brain drain but where the void left by the demise of communist social science created the space for the growth of dynamic new communities linked to these expatriates.
Applicability through excellence and intermediaries	An interesting paradox was that the strengthening of basic social science from the above trends increased rather than decreased its applicability. Academics found themselves in possession of tools and algorithms beyond the capabilities of the consultancy sector. Interfaces with users were still challenging and were sometimes undertaken by specialised academic spin-off firms. This arrangement suited many social scientists who appreciated the interaction with users but were concerned about whether this would lead to pressure to change unpalatable findings.

Implications of *A piece of the Continent*

Workshop participants continued to be concerned at the implications of the inclusion of ERC in this scenario. The issue was raised again of what are the criteria for ERC - what is its European added value? Specifically, how is the ERC strengthening social science? If basic research entails developing the newest thinking, and thus that researchers will be most up to date, this would give them an advantage over consultants who are further away from the frontier. How does the ERC intend to increase the applicability of social science?

Concern was expressed at possible exclusion of social science from the FP. Participants felt that the role of the FP should be enhanced and broadened. If an ERC is established, social sciences are likely to be put there and then left out of the FP. There should be a balance between what is in the ERC and what is in the FP. The relation between the ERC and European Science Foundation (ESF) will need to be clarified - as will the relationship between ERC and FPs - will the ERC be independent? How will the categories of research activities be funded - will there be one pot or separate pots of funds? Social science should be pitching for a separate funding pot of 15-20 percent of the total if including the humanities – an order of magnitude more than at present. The relation to UK funds would need to be clarified.

In terms of the new forms of interaction envisaged in the scenario, there is a need for interchange between academics who move to policy advice and back to research – including a need to encourage this kind of exchange at different levels of the research career, not just the most senior staff but active more junior researchers.

Realisation of this scenario demanded use of the full range of instruments available to the Framework Programme. Hence, participants saw a need for instruments to support and build infrastructures, and methods, and tools that facilitate comparative studies. Tools were needed to open up national research programmes, facilitating new approaches to joint national/European programmes. Networks of Excellence should be continued, but with substantially increased funding for each one. Large collaborative projects should be funded, but with more openness and flexibility regarding members, topics, and methods. A balance should be achieved between support for large projects and for more traditional bilateral projects, as exploratory projects. The goal should be not only new knowledge, but also to structure the social sciences. These goals are sometimes not in harmony. Instruments should seek to harmonise these goals. Instruments are desired that are capable of involving social science across the FP. There should be a greater flexibility between the instruments so that they can be combined, for example. The European Research Council as seen in this scenario should be independent of both the Commission and national governments.

ESRC was advised to press for changes to EC funding, so that UK universities get full scale funding with real overheads covered. At a national level, the additionality rules should be dropped. In terms of content, it should press for support for different sizes and scale of projects – some smaller - not just large Integrated Projects. It should fight for a large programme of Europeanisation. ESRC should facilitate debate about Britain in Europe.

4.2 Success Scenario

The success scenario is constructed by revisiting the drivers in the light of the discussions about the initial scenarios and restating them in terms of **outcomes that would be desirable in the context of success for social science in Europe in 2010**. The views of Workshop working groups are summarised in *Table 2*.

Table 2. Drivers for Success Scenario

Drivers	Input to the Success Scenario
European Research Council	Ideally the European Research Council would not exist but if it does it is essential that it has additional funding over and above the existing amounts and does not act to diminish national research councils but rather works in collaboration with them. One option could be to have separate ERC's for different disciplines – with a separate one for social sciences. Its governing committee would comprise of representatives of European users and academics and stakeholders in public, private and voluntary sectors. It would be made up of a mixture of established and newer social scientists and not put together through professional body nominations. Its focus would be on infrastructure and resources: archives, datasets, labs, plus the production of highly trained researchers. Its themes would include addressing European problems and Europe in the world. It should support rigorous and comparative work that is innovative and should have interdisciplinarity as a core element of practice. Its operation would be with much reduced bureaucracy compared with the FPs.
FP and ERA Instruments	Current instruments assume a linear, seamless exchange of knowledge between expert constituencies, communities of practice and citizens. In reality, knowledge is episodic, generative, evolving and complex. None of the current instruments can accommodate this model of knowledge production. Knowledge happens in spite of these instruments not because of them. Integrated projects in particular are out of synch with the realities of knowledge production. NoEs offer a better prospect, because there is at least a seed and space for evolving knowledge. There is a 'societal learning' dimension rather than an organisational learning dimension that needs to be addressed - so some possible bases for 'instruments' might be knowledge regions (based on community-embedded collaborative knowledge systems) and 'social co-laboratories' - the opposite of the current 'centres of excellence-based' big science model). The 'how' question - operationalising this - is of course the difficult bit. The ideal size and composition of the network should depend upon the scale of the problem. There is a need for a dynamic, flexible structure but this has to incorporate accountability, monitoring and so on. Other issues are around selling these notions to 'hard nosed ' technologists and scientists. Appropriate partnership models are needed that dovetail with the architecture of the instruments. Instruments would therefore need to embed: true rather than tokenistic user collaboration; specialist management functions with commensurate skills development issues); and collaborative rather than adversarial monitoring and review systems Outputs should appear in more formats than reports - products/software/pilot projects/networks for dissemination: all making sure the work does not just disappear. Clarity should be established over responsibility for dissemination - researchers or those who commission it?
Knowledge Production Sites	Knowledge production sites should be multi-disciplinary research centres located within the university sector capable of networking across Europe in a flexible fashion. Their development would require universities to address tensions about the balance between basic (curiosity-driven, theory disciplinary based) and applied (demand-driven) research, and as well between research and teaching. Two other aspects need to be addressed at EU level: the building and access of large databases, and the development of management capabilities. The crucial question is where is the next generation of research and researchers to be sited? We need to recognise that knowledge is produced in many different contexts; it is generative and evolving. Productivity of knowledge generation in 'knowledge sites' (e.g. universities) is predominantly linked to motivation issues. Knowledge generation in projects implies a completely different set of issues -

	typically 'success' is associated with management style and structures within the architecture of the project. Therefore there is a need for greater flexibility in terms of rules of participation; flexible funding criteria; relaxing the demand for deliverables; getting rid of the adversarial style of project monitoring and review that currently characterises FP's – these need to be replaced with on-going collaborative reviews.
Uses and Users	Users should be integrated into the process of knowledge production. In this way, users would display a greater understanding of the tension in social science between immediate response research and longer-term investigation. There should be space for debate for the type of solution and the way research is conducted. The scope of research should extend beyond the traditional notion of priority to enter into research practices. Centres of exploitation/application should be established. These would be agencies to strengthen the use of whatever research is commissioned - a broker role/networking. Researchers should be facilitated to gain a better awareness of user communities. Users are more exacting/clear about what they want but it is recognised that users are not always those who commission research – they include business, citizens, NGOs etc.
Styles and Methods	Plurality should be recognised and legitimated - from ethnographic and visual methods, through to large scale and longitudinal data sets. Innovative work deploying old methods in new ways and new methods should be developed. There would be an understanding of different traditions in social research including participatory and action-learning work. An FP priority would be to ensure pooling of quality-assured data sets and resources and access to software that would be too expensive for individual projects. High quality data sets should be used for training, research and communication with research users. Quantitative & qualitative -multi methods – and interdisciplinary working should be encouraged. Where appropriate this should include collaborations with other sciences. There should be a systematic programme of skills enhancement and professional development for methods use. This would encourage rigorous and innovative approaches. Translation services should be also available in order that styles of research are more generally understood.
Britain in Europe	Britain would be a critical friend in Europe - maintaining intellectual activity that is challenging and promoting rigorous, evidence-based policy making. This would involve taking a leadership role and setting the agenda via forming strong partnerships.
(Inter)-Disciplinarity	Interdisciplinarity should be part of the landscape but not the full picture. The jury is still out on whether fundamental research needs to be grounded in disciplines. There would be a need to apply a 'fitness for purpose' test to whether a particular problem or objective requires a multi-disciplinary approach. The starting point should be the current status quo - characterised by institutional silos - structural change would be the first thing to resolve. The paradox is that the trend is towards more complex projects and integration (e.g. Integrated projects) - but intuitively it is likely that simpler projects would promote interdisciplinarity. Interdisciplinarity is issue driven and requires lasting investment for complex issues. Infrastructures will need to be flexible enough to vary according to time and need. There are key subsidiary issues – the human capital and training issue is one - are 'multi-discipline disciplines' needed? Also important are structures for integration - e.g. what are relative 'inter-disciplinary status' and 'inter-disciplinary readiness across EU member states and accession countries?

Human Resources	High-level training would be to common standards for PhDs and Post Docs and above - including publication in high quality science literature, and other formats. This should draw on complimentary expertise across the EU - removing obstacles to such collaborations/training activities. Also vital would be measures to ensure the proper engagement of senior researchers in EU research. These include senior level EU research fellowships and proper recognition by UK universities of EU research in career development. Remuneration and incentivisation should be considered, for example, allowing the buying of research time in EU research projects for real research. This could also be achieved through ensuring full funding for UK universities participation.
Integration and Enlargement	A considerably improved understanding of different traditions and trajectories of social science research should be achieved - so examining assumptions of how social scientific work will need to be performed, for what reasons and with what consequences - thereby challenging ways of conceptualising social issues. There should be a good system of academic/researcher mobility that operates in a fair way between countries (not one-way movements). Bureaucratic structures should be streamlined and practices changed in the context of enlargement. Enlargement would bring with it major transformations and heightening of social problems thereby leading to new opportunities for social scientists to research these topics. Old issues would be transformed by new conditions and circumstances.

4.2.1 Success Scenario – Social Science Giving Value and Being Valued by Europe

Proactivity: Success in 2010 sees ESRC taking a leading role among its partner organisations in Europe in promoting the interests of social science in Europe

Leadership role for ESRC

In 2010, the United Kingdom's evolution of its role as a critical friend to European institutions has been reflected in its attitude to social science research performed at a European level. Though conscious of the needs of partners in other Member States, this is manifested in a leadership role for ESRC and its community that set the agenda for social science in FP7 in both form and content and continues to do so.

More dedicated social science funding bodies create equality

Several other Member States, including a majority of new members, are now contemplating establishing a dedicated national support body for social sciences on the model of ESRC. This has not created a silo mentality in respect of cooperation with other sciences – on the contrary it has ensured that social scientists enter such partnerships as equals with their work valued fully. This has helped Europe to develop its comparative advantage in innovation for social goods and public services.

ERC based on additional funding and infrastructural niche

An early victory for the proactive approach was a campaign to ensure that the European Research Council was not dominated either by natural sciences or by traditional disciplinary interests within the social sciences. Action by a group of national bodies coordinated by ESRC secured the independence of ERC and focused its activities on areas where basic research would nonetheless yield high European Added Value – the development and application of infrastructure and resources for addressing European problems and the role of Europe in the world. They also secured additional funding for the ERC without negative consequences either for national funding or for the Framework Programme.

Flexibility: Success in 2010 sees Participation in European Research Unhampered by Bureaucracy and Supported by a Flexible Portfolio of Instruments

Flexible instruments fit-for-purpose

In 2010, the support environment of the FP has evolved significantly. After the 6th Framework Programme, it was recognised that the episodic, generative, evolving, and complex nature of knowledge production could not be addressed solely by the existing portfolio of instruments. Flexibility was recognised as the watchword in the design and implementation of instruments. Thus, the size and complexity of projects depends upon the scale and nature of the problem addressed rather than the expectation that researchers will adapt their programmes to fixed support models. User collaboration is no longer seen as tokenistic as models are sought that harmonise with the architecture of the instruments. Some new approaches were introduced targeted at societal rather than organisational learning include *knowledge regions* based on community embedded collaborative knowledge systems, and *social co-laboratories*.

Reduced accountability burden but greater delivery achieved

Flexibility was also introduced in the rules of participation and funding criteria. Project control systems more appropriate to knowledge generation were instituted, relaxing the demand for deliverables and doing away with adversarial monitoring procedures. To the surprise of many, the demise of the large paper stacks of deliverables resulted in a big increase in the effective outputs from projects, both in the academic literature and through novel format, in dissemination to potential users. The enthusiasm of researchers to promulgate their findings was matched by professional support from the Commission and national bodies in organising media and events to facilitate the process.

The growth of larger institutes within universities and the increased participation of free-standing research performers have led to full cost funding being accepted as the normal model for research justified by relevance criteria.

Allowing cumulative benefits to develop across successive programmes

In terms of content, a key recognition was that the benefits of research are cumulative, and that far greater continuity was needed between successive FPs to allow successful activities to gather strength and momentum. A careful balance is now struck between fostering dynamic new entrants and allowing the most successful in previous programmes to continue to develop their work.

Relevance through Excellence: Success in 2010 sees a Transformed Relationship with Users and Stakeholders at a European Level

Users integrated in knowledge production

In 2010, users are more integrated in the knowledge production process; and many have acquired at an institutional level, an understanding of the tension between immediate response research and longer-term investigation. Researchers have also gained a better awareness of user communities. The larger scale of many research units creates more space to perform both researcher-driven and user-driven research.

Brokers help social science link to policy decisions

Application of research is aided by the emergence of specialised broker agencies, which also help in synthesising and communicating user needs. This has been particularly useful in representing the needs of users that do not directly commission research. The net result of these changes is that social science is regularly informing European policy decisions, and hence, contributing to the EU's social and economic objectives. However, this contribution is not a technocratic one, rather maintaining critical distance and ensuring that human and social dimensions are represented.

New architectures for university research

The environment in which social science operates has changed dramatically in some respects and very little in others. Universities have maintained their predominant role as knowledge production sites, but internally they have changed: multi-disciplinary research centres capable of networking across Europe form one important model. These compelled universities to address the tensions between basic, curiosity-driven, disciplinary research, and applied, demand-driven research. There has also been a re-appraisal of the research project as a unit of knowledge production with a recognition that new architectures and management styles are needed.

Interdisciplinarity part of but not whole picture

Interdisciplinarity is now recognised as part of the research landscape but not the full picture. Many still believe that fundamental research needs to be grounded in disciplines but also recognise that certain problems or objectives require an interdisciplinary approach. Training of researchers now includes specific inputs on how to benefit from interdisciplinary working.

New Foundations: Success in 2010 Sees Methodological Strength Underpinned by High Quality Training and Mobility

New methodological strength basis of increased standing for social science

In terms of how research is done, the landscape has changed. Plurality in methodology is recognised and legitimated, from ethnographic and visual methods through to large-scale and longitudinal data sets. Quantitative and qualitative methods are combined. Participatory and action-learning work are also valued. At a European level, pooling of data sets and access to programmes reduces costs and increases access. Transnational comparisons are a matter of routine and are a basic element in researcher training. Translation services make styles of research more generally understood. Where appropriate, collaborations with other sciences are undertaken. New opportunities and the broader benefits of collaboration ensure that the quality level is at a global standard in many fields. The sum of all of these advances has been to give social science a recognition at political level equivalent to natural science.

Enlarging capabilities and problem set

Enlargement and integration have considerably improved understanding of different traditions and trajectories of social science research and led to new conceptualisations of social issues. They have also brought a new agenda of social problems to address through research, for example, issues surrounding an exacerbation of existing tensions and inequalities in European society.

Multiple mobility

Training has benefited strongly from European collaboration, both through access to complementary expertise and through setting common standards. EU research is now recognised as a strong positive element in career development. Mobility is high, but more or less in equilibrium in terms of the direction of flow. It is also recognised that mobility needs to be fostered not only in geographical terms, but also across institutional types and across themes.

5 Priorities and Recommendations

With the reference point of the success scenario and the material used in its assembly, participants were asked to identify priorities and recommendations for ESRC. These are clustered under the same headings as the success scenario and address actions for ESRC ("Pro-activity"), improvements in support structures ("Flexibility"), use and users of social science ("Relevance through excellence") and priority themes for social science research at a European level ("New foundations").

5.1 Proactivity

5.1.1 ESRC assumes leadership

Social sciences need a stronger profile in the Framework Programme, in terms of both quantity and nature of resources input to research and training and of the influence exerted by their outcomes. To address this problem, the social sciences need to be better organised and represented. Accordingly, the following specific recommendations were made:

- ESRC should assume leadership in Europe in developing a **common road map** for social sciences within the EU and promoting this on a common basis at the national and supranational levels. Such a road map should pay attention to key themes and their rationales, the size and scales of instruments and the need for more responsive funding. It should also push for a central role for social sciences in shaping the objectives and themes of FP7.

- ESRC should build on its present successes in working with similar bodies in other countries to **build a coalition that presents a strong unified voice for the social sciences in Europe** (as there are in the natural sciences and industry). The challenge of this is substantial given the different research cultures and traditions and of their different 'starting points' and agendas, not only between countries but also within them through different disciplines but the potential rewards are commensurate. A particular challenge will be to gain support from countries where support for social science is not strongly institutionalised. However, as the success scenario indicates there may be long-term benefits in supporting such institutionalisation. The need for transnational representation has historically fed back into national structures in the development of European research policy.

- ESRC should further explore **European social science partnership**, outside of the structures and "constraints" of the EC. A first practical step would be to review the extent and vigour of these; and

- ESRC should consider using its influence to help create **a representative campaigning body for the social sciences at European level** - what Workshop participants called a "European Trade Union" for social sciences - using existing EU interest groups and networks that already represent social scientists. The sense here is not one of representing organised labour but rather one of collective interest. Such a body would be a counterpart to the coalition of support agencies referred to above. While not strictly speaking the duty of a research council a facilitating role could catalyse a development of this kind.

ESRC needs to sell a "**big idea**" to the EC for FP7, and that this idea should be identified through consultation with the UK social science community. A favourite among workshop participants, however, was the idea of a large FP7 programme on the challenges linked to the growing "Europeanization" of everyday life, which would contain a mix of scale of research projects. In preparation for such a programme, ESRC should facilitate debate about Britain in Europe. Other possible big idea candidates include "Evolutionary Social Science" and "Competing Models of Applied Social Science". Further ideas for social science research at the European level are provided in Section 6.4.

At home, ESRC should try to ensure that its constituents (UK researchers and students) are **well-equipped with the knowledge and resources needed to take advantage of European opportunities**, e.g. ensuring that UK students do take up opportunities to study across the EU. Accordingly, ESRC should encourage researchers to bid for / attempt to set up participation in FP7 projects as a twin strategy with working for reduction of barriers to participation (see next section). The list is familiar but needs renewal and adaptation as the Framework Programme develops. For example, ESRC could

(a) Provide **developmental funds for assembling bids for more complex projects** the new instruments and infrastructure. These are at least an order of magnitude more time-consuming and resource intensive to assemble than standard projects. This should compensate for the revealed deficiencies of university administrations in comparison with centralised Continental research organisations when bidding for leading roles in, for example Networks of Excellence. There should also be a recognition that over-subscription means that failure is a likely outcome in a significant proportion of cases;

(b) Examine who in the UK (and other EU countries) is successful in the FP and highlight the factors contributing to their success and use this as one element in developing a **management training programme for social scientists**, offering programme leadership ideas/models to guide researchers in problem-solving policy issues in large consortia. In the past "big science" experience has been confined largely to the natural sciences and has given its practitioners an in-built advantage in dealing with larger scale activities.

(c) **Build national capabilities in the types of research likely to succeed at European level**. This could mean developing initiatives with various forms of funding that support individuals and groups in embarking upon comparative research, or research with an international perspective.

5.1.2 W[h]ither the ERC?

A clear policy towards the development of the European Research Council is needed. There was much scepticism expressed at the Workshop as to the need for the ERC – as one working group put it, the 1 per cent GDP ceiling for the EC budget clearly spells business as usual, so we should avoid risky innovations such as the ERC, and instead concentrate on learning from experience and improving the Framework Programme. But if the ERC is to be established, the following recommendations were made:

- The ERC should be independent of the European Commission and national governments. In this regard, its construction could be delegated to the European Science Foundation (ESF).
- The ERC should have agency status, that is to say it should be an autonomous body in terms of its procedures and strategy and its accountability should be at the

level of the organisation as a whole, meaning that it should not be obliged to adopt bureaucratic public service procedures, and in particular not the dysfunctional regulations hampering the Commission's operations.

- The ERC should provide support for basic fundamental top quality social science research. In other words, funding should be led by excellence.
- The ERC should provide additionality to national funding councils

5.2 Flexibility

Flexible combinations of instruments relative to the research challenge are needed at the European level (not the tail wagging the dog). It is recommended that this flexibility should extend to include:

- The **type of research** funded, with a mixture of directed research relevant to policy and practice and responsive mode research;
- The **scale of research** funded, with a distribution of large projects and more traditional exploratory projects with small numbers of partners. The latter are important in the social sciences, where large projects are not always needed. There should also be wider possibilities for combining instruments;
- A **balance between 'top-down' and 'bottom-up'** agenda-setting and a need to link these to support structures. Flexibility in allowing organic development and in defining methods is essential. In this regard, instruments like NoEs should continue to be used but with substantially increased funding. Also, if large collaborative projects are to be funded, they should allow for more openness and flexibility regarding members, topics, methods (i.e. responsive mode should not just apply to small-scale projects);
- The **duration of research** funded, with a mix of short-term user-oriented projects and longer-term reflective research. In other words, there is a need to move away from seeking quick-fix solutions to entrenched problems and challenges. But there is also the potential for synergies between academics and consultants to combine the rigour of academia with the client-focused problem-solving capacity of consultants;
- **Combining European and national research programmes**. This will require an opening up of national research programmes and better use to be made of the support instruments now available for this; and
- A **mix of expected deliverables** from EC-funded research, ranging from policy-oriented instrumental deliverables to academic publications.

FP instruments, as currently constituted, lack the flexibility to fund the full range of desirable social science research. Moreover, existing instruments make it difficult for social sciences to collaborate with other disciplines. Yet, there could be epistemic gain through bringing together those who would not otherwise work on similar issues. To address these challenges, the following recommendations were made:

- New or reformed instruments are required that are capable of **embedding more social science in technology programmes** across the FP (which, after all, constitute the main body of research funded by the FP);

- **Embedding may need to be 'enforced'**, for example, in evaluation contracts, exploitation and technology implementation plans, foresight exercises, cross-boundary consultancy work for integrated projects, etc. This process needs a more proactive support than at present where exhortations are made in programme documentation but no attempt is made to broker wider participation and scope, However, embedding should go beyond this 'service' function for the natural sciences. **Social science research may need to be 'ring-fenced'** within the horizontal activities to ensure that it is included on a sufficient scale within Integrated Projects;
- **Funding should be made available for promoting inter-disciplinary thinking** and as noted in 6.1, pre-project development. This could be done, say, over a three-year time period;
- NoEs bring together the 'familiar figures' and so in their current form are unsuitable for supporting those new to social science research. Attention should therefore be paid to **widening participation**, especially in the light of EU Enlargement, through measures common in national settings such as **"starter grants" for recently appointed/qualified researchers.** By linking these new researchers, the seeds of future networks can be sown.
- Researchers should have a 'licence to innovate and explore'. In this context, the **right culture needs to be developed in order to admit mistakes and to learn from them**, i.e. a 'licence to admit to ignorance in order to learn'. This will provide a better environment for the integration of disciplines and new institutional formation.

5.2.1 Reducing or removing disincentives to participation

ESRC should address the numerous disincentives to applying for FP funding, where necessary, in conjunction with other funding bodies, such as the European Commission, the Higher Education Funding Councils, other Research Councils, UK Universities, etc. Important disincentives include:

(a) The **low overhead rates** paid by the EC;

(b) The **administrative burden** on researchers and universities in participating in the FP;

(c) The **large-scale** nature of the FP instruments, e.g. Integrated Projects, which are difficult for social scientists to use;

(d) **The Research Assessment Exercise**, which discourages interdisciplinary and innovative research in some though not all disciplines;

(e) The **low value attached to EU reports in academic evaluations** even where these are widely cited (plus a dual publication strategy whereby academic outputs are also encouraged as key project outputs, and that these publications are subsequently supported/promoted by the Commission);

(f) The **inadequate administration capabilities in UK universities**, in dealing with the complexities of European reporting, funding and auditing;

(g) Moreover, if the Government is serious about building a knowledge-based society, then the **Treasury should review its additionality rules in the shape of Euro-**

PES with a view to their abolition. In the current form of these rules, a move to explicit funding of basic social science research would result in a deduction from the equivalent national budget – in this case the ESRC. While the rule is intended to focus thinking on whether research should best be done at European or national level, it ignores the potential synergies of dual support. This caution is reinforced by the fact that other countries do not follow the same rules.

5.3 Relevance through Excellence

5.3.1 Uses of social science knowledge

Knowledge producers and users should better understand the variety of uses to which social science can be applied in a European context. As well as the Commission and national organisations taking a more proactive approach to obtaining user involvement at all stages before, during and after research, examples of good practice should be analysed and disseminated to potential applicants.

In this regard, workshop participants identified several ways in which social science research could be applied at the European level, including to:

- **Enfranchisement**, including the provision of publicly accessible intelligence about social, economic and political issues, and opening up spaces of deliberative democracy;
- **Increase understanding** amongst social scientists and practitioners of the phenomena being studied, their change and variability;
- **Europeanize issues and the research connected with** them where a European perspective is clearly required, for example by encouraging reviewers of ESRC projects to identify opportunities for extending the scope of the work in this way;
- **Facilitate cross-boundary working**, for example, helping organisations (Private and public sector and NGOs) through process and relationship problems, improving public understanding of science and technology, increasing the utilisation of scientific advice and of research findings.
- **Promote transnational learning in policy-making**, whereby state and regional level decision makers learn through comparative and case study work. This might also include learning from comparisons between Europe and elsewhere in the world, for example the USA;
- **Provide policy advice**, especially supporting the goals set out in the Lisbon Strategy, and improving the fit of EU policies with the reality and experience of living in Europe in all its diversity; and
- **Develop indicators that reflect good practice** in the use of research findings in order to enable evaluation and quality control and to get beyond simple summations of output data.

Each of these uses should be addressed when identifying relevant users and appropriate research instruments.

5.3.2 Integrating users

Workshop participants also highlighted the need for relationships to be better developed between research producers, users and funders. Specifically,

- **The question of 'relevance' should be unpacked**, recognising the issues of political accountability and legitimacy. More generally, further work should be done on epistemologies of 'reception' to understand the role of knowledge in its application context;

- Assuming that social science has a potentially useful role to play in collaboration with natural sciences, **brokerage work needs to be done** to match appropriate social science skills configurations to particular points in the RTD supply chain and to promote feedback loops to users of these combined approaches; and

5.4 New Foundations

5.4.1 Research areas

A new openness to methodological experimentation should be encouraged within the Framework Programme, particularly with respects to participatory approaches, simulation and modelling, e-social science, and comparative quantitative and qualitative methods. As to the research themes that might be addressed at a European level, workshop participants were keen to highlight **broad exemplar objectives** only, rather than assume they were constructing a defined research agenda. This was because almost any thematic area could be legitimately addressed at European level. They also recognised that in many areas work has been done in Europe but is not well-known, hence there is a role in diffusing such knowledge. If ESRC and/or the European Commission want specific research areas to be identified, then some sort of detailed consultation exercise should be conducted that elicits the views of a wide variety of research performers and users. Accordingly, workshop participants limited themselves to identifying the following broad areas as deserving further social science research at the European level:

- **Supporting major EU objectives**, e.g. the Lisbon Strategy, European Monetary Union, the Governance White Paper, etc., and reform of others, e.g. the Common Agricultural Policy. In particular, the Lisbon objectives constitute a suitable entry point for social sciences
- Besides the big political goals, there are many other areas of policy-making at the European level that require social science support. These policy areas include **policing, crime, inequality, social cohesion, social inclusion, access to education, work, health, ageing societies, welfare, mobility**, etc.
- **Understanding European identity and the processes of Europeanization**. This is especially important in the context of enlargement – what will it mean to be European in 2010, in the light of enlargement, and in the light of the changing world political situation? This also refers to Europe's world vision and roles, and a re-appraisal of its positioning vis-à-vis historical engagements (e.g. Mediterranean, Africa, Latin America, etc.). How should the identity of Europe in the world be built? It will be important to understand the new Europe and its place in the world - for economic development and for quality of life, in the light of social and

demographic changes. Issues of cultural identity and understanding diversity are also important in this regard.

- **Understanding social change – its causes and its effects – and its interplay with European developments and policies.** There is increasing recognition that EU level decisions, in one way or another other (e.g. competition rules and employment) and frameworks (the euro, Schengen, child custody issues) are playing a growing role in everyday life and their inter-play with other transformations (e.g. growing roles of 'locality' in building identities) yet much remains to be researched. Clearly, Europe faces some serious challenges, for example, persisting and widening inequalities, social exclusion and its implications for social stability, and the future of the social welfare system in Europe. How social policies shape and alter behaviour is an area of particular interest.
- **Understanding military/political/economic configurations and their effects on a global scale.** This deals with embedding the European 'social model' in international rules and about 'credibility' as regards military or security. It also refers to the position of the EU vis-à-vis wider global developments and other poles of influence (Pacific Rim axis, new coalitions, developments re Brazil, Russia, South Africa, India and China). Examples include the relation between affluent lifestyles in first world countries and global environmental consequences.
- **Understanding the co-evolution of technology and society**; especially in the areas of genomics, nanotechnology, and ICTs

5.4.2 Infrastructure

In addition to funding research**, infrastructures and resources for research at the European level are required**. Accordingly, workshop participants made the following recommendations:

- Effort should be made to further develop **databases, archives and longitudinal datasets**, etc. at the European level. Furthermore, as accessibility and usability will be important issues, training and support should be provided over the long-term;
- The **results of previous or ongoing research across the EU should be better archived and made more accessible** than is currently the case. This especially applies to research funded under the Framework Programme;
- There should be greater effort from the ESRC and its European counterparts to **encourage researcher mobility** between countries in order to gain from experiences and to explore new research possibilities. This is especially a problem with UK researchers, who are not actively encouraged to spend time working in other parts of Europe; and
- Methodological training and awareness-raising, with a special emphasis upon promoting **mixed method approaches and methods and tools that facilitate comparative studies**, should be a central feature of the Framework Programme.

6 Workshop Participants

Anne Anderson	Multimedia Communications Group, University of Glasgow
Clement Bezold	Institute for Alternative Futures
Phil Cooke	Centre for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences, Cardiff University
Joe Cullen	Tavistock Institute
Glyn Davies	Economic & Social Research Council
Fiona Devine	Dept of Sociology, University of Manchester
Todd Erickson	Covision
Jane Falkingham	Research Group on Simulating Policy for an Aging Society, University of Southampton
Kieron Flanagan	Institute of Innovation Research, University of Manchester
Ted Fuller	Teeside Business School, University of Teeside
Luke Georghiou	Institute of Innovation Research, University of Manchester
Linda Hantrais	European Research Centre, Loughborough University
Anne Harrop	Joseph Rowntree Foundation
Adam Heathfield	Strategy Unit, Cabinet Office
Ray Hudson	Dept of Geography, University of Durham
Nikos Kastrinos	DG RTD, European Commission
Michael Keenan	Institute of Innovation Research, University of Manchester
Luk Van Langenhove	Comparative Regional Studies Programme, UN University, Bruges
Philippe Laredo	Ecole Nationale des Ponts et Chausses
Tim May	The SURF Centre, University of Salford
Ray Pahl	Dept of Sociology, University of Essex
Richard Pearson	Institute for Employment Studies, University of Sussex
Joe Ravetz	Centre for Urban and Regional Ecology, University of Manchester
Steve Rayner	SAID Business School, University of Oxford
Paul Rouse	Economic and Social Research Council
Harry Rothman	University of Nottingham
Ozcan Saritas	Institute of Innovation Research, University of Manchester
Nikki Slocum	Comparative Regional Studies Programme, UN University, Bruges
Andrew Sors	DG RTD, European Commission
Joyce Tait	ESRC INNOGEN Centre, University of Edinburgh

6.1 Interviewees not attending Workshop

Paraskevas Caracostas	DG RTD, European Commission
Chris Caswill	ESRC
Angela Dale	CCSR, University of Manchester and Director ESRC Research Methods Programme
John Dupre,	ESRC Centre for Genomics in Society, University of Exeter
Roger Jowell	City University
Richard Lempert	Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences Directorate (US) National Science Foundation
Ulrike Meinhof	University of Southampton
Tim O'Riordan	University of East Anglia
Howard Silver	Consortium of Social Science Associations
Nigel Thrift	University of Oxford
Andrew Webster	University of York