evidenceplenary\_secondhalf

[00:01] [inaudible] is a call for opinion. Because the phrasing of the questions very much is... I'll just read the first question. Who should have the responsibility to pay for energy efficiency? Should energy efficiency be considered a national infrastructure priority? There was a very strong formulation of, "Okay give us a yes/no type of answer or just give us your opinion." There's very little instances that they're asking to give the substance of why you might have a certain type of opinion. And on the other hand, we completely agree that it was very narrow in who would be able to respond to this. My response was that a lot of these questions you couldn't even answer from an individual or an individual organization or community initiative type of perspective because they're very much umbrella questions as well.

Another example, "Is there sufficient support in place to deliver targets for all homes to be EBC BAN­C by 2035?" Who can answer that type of question other than those who are the experts, but also who have kind of this overview of the entire energy efficiency, building efficiency in the UK then? And we felt that the phrasing was very leading. "Should energy efficiency be a national infrastructure priority?" That comes a paragraph after they say they recommend that it would be. [chuckle] In those ways we felt that it started out slightly open, talking about energy poverty etcetera. But then in the end if you look at the questions... Yeah, it's narrow in who can respond and it's also very leading in the type of responses that they actually want to get and no call for evidence, just for opinions really.

They're looking for an endorsement basically. [02:06] [inaudible].

Yeah.

It was interesting as well the fact that there's just this implied linearity to the whole problem. The fact that just tell us what the barriers are and that once they know what they are... They don't even ask for evidence on how to address them, which would be good. So then... And embedded in that is the assumption that the... That they can be overcome. Not just that but they just need to know how to do it. And when, of course critical social scientists would say there's a messiness here and it's not always a neat and tidy policy solution, we just got to do the best we can and adapt. There's this... We're in this constantly changing dynamic environment." There aren't these neat and tidy solutions technologies related or not.

That word barriers. It comes up so often, you'd almost think that the whole of SSH as barriers studies... We can tell you how to overcome your barriers. Yeah. [03:15] [inaudible] we haven't even got on to the Horizon 2020 call. Should we talk about this for a minute? Does anybody have anything...

Anything that's surprising about those calls and the way they were framed or maybe that you weren’t very familiar with being written?

Maybe I think [removed for anonymity purposes] you should make your point about costs and how limited that is, because I thought that was... The way you framed these, these consultations and the way you conceptualized them has such a big impact on again the kind of responses and also the policy agenda that results from that. And I think you should at least mention that point.

Yeah. Yeah.

Remember they're gonna play the same trick on you.

[laughter]

Thanks 'cause I was waiting to get that one in. [chuckle] We looked at this and the response from the CREDS Centre, which is an energy demand centre, massively funded, 20 million... I think it's 20 million British pounds for five years. And the framing of this call is, granted there are these issues around this framed and maybe expert terminology in these things, but I think let's just say well they are looking for professionals. People who are expert in this area come forward and possibly including NGOs and such like. But on those terms this exchange is very revealing in terms of how...I don't just think in terms of energy efficiency's framed but more broadly energy policy. This is framed very much in techno economic terms we thought. And there's talk about fuel poverty and such like, but this is linked to a clean growth strategy. It's like, we're gonna cut carbon and we’re gonna have growth at the same time. There's no question we're gonna grow and we're gonna make lots of money out of doing that.

This kind of economic or techno economic frame is so dominant in the call for evidence that we see the CREDS Centre which is a bunch of social scientists... This is as [removed for anonymity purposes] said at the top, this is probably the biggest investment in social science, into humanities chunked up in a centre in the UK around energy demand that there is. It's interesting that they come back, and they say... And they initially try to broaden the framing by talking about multiple benefits. "There are multiple benefits of energy efficiency such as productivity, health and welfare." I quote them on that. But then what's interesting, they have this chance to open up the framing of this and they revert back to the techno economic framing to gain access to power in terms of informing policy.

They dish back up to the policy­maker, the framing they think that they want to hear. A very good example of this is page 29 onto 30, point 16 where they say, "Over the last five years there have been new policies in developing these multiple benefits." They even say a focus on non-cost multiple benefits for energy efficiency. And if you look at the top of page 30, have a look at those bullet points on the multiple benefits and every one of them is about cost and benefits in terms of economics. They talk about businesses being more productive, about rental income, about easier to mortgage, about business models, boosting productivity, high value jobs, the economy. I mean, I underlined, I pretty much underlined every single word in this bullet point. So...

There is a lot of potential to go off in different directions and to just say... They could say energy efficiency is a means to foster regional development or skills development strategy or something. Now, I mean in fairness perhaps also that the policymakers that formulate the consultation, they should set this context. They should say, "We are interested in input on this, but not on that," because that's just in the interest of fairness and transparency. There's other ways to get all sorts of input and they don't know what to do with it, they can't do anything with it. And that again may then make people angry because they thought they had influence where they didn't have influence. So that isn't so very well done from the policy­making perspective if the context isn't set very well.

So, then CREDS' recommendations get narrowed down to subsidies and regulations, so there's no sense that there can be social change, social innovation, rad... And there's no radical dimension to the offer that's coming back. I think this says something about the science, the evidence policy interface, not just in the UK but anywhere in the world.

Do you reckon that's something that they intentionally did to mirror so that they could gain access or...

[overlapping conversation]

Yeah, and maybe that's part of the reason why they even wanted to write a response because they’re just on the same sort of level, I think.

Yeah, I think it's probably a bit of both, but I think there is a sense of the imagined user of their response to the call for evidence. And there's a bunch of points that they probably could have put in here, but they didn't put them in because they thought that either it wouldn't be taken seriously or they would just be seen as being troublemakers or crazy kind of... There'd just be silliness, the idea that there are other kind of ideas of how we measure progress other than GDP and growth, actually bringing that in which directly relates to issues of policy. Sorry, but this is just not on the table here. And there are people in that centre who might have those kinds of forms of evidence coming from their research, so yeah, it closes down the possibilities.

I have a question which might sound naive, but is there such a thing as a call for evidence? 'Cause the way... I was actually surprised to see consultation documents for our discussion today, but I find it very, very interesting because what you're calling for are opinions and what the role of evidence then is, is to for example to legitimise or back certain opinions. So actually no one is calling for evidence in that sense to phrase it critically and I was wondering what... That made me think about the role of evidence is then something which has a political component to it because it is in such processes used by different stakeholders, for example, to put forward different arguments. So, I was wondering if we should make that distinction clearly in the discussion.

Yeah, that's a really good point. So just focusing on the Horizon 2020 call [10:39] [inaudible] is not already [10:43] [inaudible], was there anything that particularly stood out in terms of how those calls are defining and expecting certain kinds of evidence?

[10:54] [inaudible].

Yeah.

[10:57] [inaudible].

We looked at document 5 as well which is the Horizon 2020 call socio­economic research conceptualising the [11:11] [inaudible] energy efficiency and energy demand and this was two­fold, so 2018 and 2019. So, 2018 was about the conceptualisation part, making the energy efficiency first principle more concrete and operational, and the 2019 call was more about the modelling which was the aim is to deepen the demand [11:35] [inaudible] in existing models with the impact expected to have

quantified indicators [11:41] [inaudible]. And the thing that struck us particularly from the social science [11:50] [inaudible] perspective, the title was "Socio­economic research." The two calls seemed to be in fact disconnected from each other. Because the question then would be in the 2019 call which is modelling it was very quantitative method [12:03] [inaudible], what conceptualisation did they use if the 2018 call is still underway? For me there was like, if you are actually conceptualising something under call for 2018, do you expect to have the results available to implement in 2019 modelling exercise?

So somehow it seems like we want to have this general conceptualisation and something to help make this operational, but we will continue doing the modelling anyway, whatever the conceptualisation output will be. So, for us there was a bit... Perhaps we needed to take a bit more of a step­wise approach towards the modelling exercise to really be able to integrate the insights from the 2018 call which had a bit of a wider socio [12:58] [inaudible] perspective to it. At the same time, we saw that even the 2018 call, the socio­economic aspects of that call were far more linked to the technical and economic then to for example, issues of justice, or even ecological when they list, it doesn't come out as strongly in the call. So, I think the main point for us is this disconnect for seeming strange sequence which didn't allow for the SSH [13:30] [inaudible].

That's a really interesting point. And of course, with the other Horizon 2020 calls, there's not really any connection between them, is there? There's the social innovation part of 2018 [13:46] [inaudible] in 2019. I don't know if they're supposed to be connected but...

So, if I may, [13:53] [inaudible] the reason why that is. I can get too much into detail, but of course there's [14:00] [inaudible] process on how those calls are shaped.

Yeah of course.

And it was not our intention at all to use the 2018 results [14:09] [inaudible] 2019 call. Those are completely disconnected, and they point to different policy needs. So, the one in 2018 was the conceptualisation and operationalising of a principle that was written in governance, the energy need but not defined. So, we wanted to include that same bottom up researchers and include the wider community had been shaping both qualitatively and quantitatively what this concept might be. Whereas in 2019, the need was different and was to enhance the action mode, that we knew since years to do the impact assessment, policies and where did they [14:54] [inaudible] the education [14:56] [inaudible] comes from. But doesn't really say anything of consumers.

So, there is only a percentage of this country that can be changed, but that's the only value that can be changed in order to include consumers into the [15:10] [inaudible] assessment and future policy.

[overlapping conversation]

I understand that from your introduction, I understood that already. It seems like a missed opportunity to not take this further into account when you're developing...

So maybe we will. The problem is that the results of the study [15:28] [inaudible]. It was just to... This is a challenge, I guess for us at least I think for [15:34] [inaudible] is that between when the need arises, the call is written, the project starts and you get the results there is a life span of five, six years. So, actually what even our [15:48] [inaudible] said, "I need the results now" but then we have to reach the call to get the results. And in seven years, maybe those results are no longer needed. [chuckle] So there is a bit of mismatch [16:00] [inaudible] and then the results [16:02] [inaudible] out of the... But this how it is.

We do need to wrap up quite soon but I just wanted to kind of open up if there was anything else that anybody thought hadn't really been covered yet.

Yeah.

We were a bit slow, we [16:18] [inaudible] and I think I certainly now that I heard everyone is that [16:22] [inaudible] really focuses on SSH.

[16:30] [inaudible] right there in the title. So, you hope so.

[overlapping conversation]

You can't really avoid it. I think [16:35] [inaudible] will correct me if [16:38] [inaudible]. But focus is quite [16:40] [inaudible] so it leaves space for a broad range of things, both humanities and social sciences. I thought that was quite good. But however, and maybe that's my own background reading too many policy documents and speaking of that. I kind of felt that... Well, it's about... The two projects are about applying more for the SSH perspective how to achieve the [17:04] [inaudible] transition. But it really felt like the commission is trying to [17:07] [inaudible] down your throat, its prioritises of [17:08] [inaudible] and sustainability not that much.

And it felt that this isn't necessarily very well... You don't really understand when you read it, "Am I supposed to work on the transition aspect or more like how can we achieve these three goals which are very easy" commission [17:26] [inaudible] understand what does that mean for me. As a scientist what does competitiveness mean, it probably means something else than it does for commission. And sustainability aspect is definitely left a bit out, even thought it's about the clean energy transition. So, I thought that was quite interesting. And it would be perhaps more interesting to have a better framing of the question, bit more broadly, maybe define these concepts a bit more so that as a scientist you understand what's asked from you or how you can... But apart from that I thought the other bullet points were really quite good.

So [18:01] [inaudible] about this one, just to be fair is that at the very start it says it's gonna be about issues relating social economic and gender and then it goes on. Then you get to the end, it will provide a better understanding of gender. The research questions in the middle, no mention of it whatsoever. They're all about acceptance and factors and business goals. I don't find something... Do you get these kind of buzzwords for him sometimes in these documents that aren't follow through. Anyway, I thought of one final question. Which is did anybody spot a humanity? You mentioned that there were humanities in here and...

Just of interest?

Well, what's the role of humanities?

I think at this point, you could find a way to fit it in to say, "Okay, so gender is in there". I think if we read it and think "Oh, I want to participate", you can a way to do that for me. But it [18:57] [inaudible].

Sure, so I think the cultural aspect refers to the humanity part, no.

The cultural aspect?

[19:06] [inaudible]. Cultural is addressing maybe the humanity.

Okay, yeah, and you think that was kind of meaningful then that introduces the kind of cultural... Actually, that's not to say it was a buzzword, that was actually something they generally are invested in. And they talked about populism and [19:30] [inaudible].

I've talked about fuel poverty, which sort of teases out issues of inequality, but it felt more like a missed opportunity, like sort of we were saying that when we first... When we read the opening, we were thinking, "Oh right, so maybe the evidence that it's about to seek is thinking along these sorts of lines but it conform to type as [removed for anonymity purposes] was saying. So there was a hint of it but it wouldn't follow it up.

[overlapping conversation]

What is the word, value... The value. It was not clear whether it was like the value as for the person, like the value in attribution or if it's the value like the public value.

Yes! Yeah. I noticed the same thing actually, the word value comes up loads, but a lot of the time it means it's not [20:30] [inaudible] so yeah, okay. So not great being [20:32] [inaudible]. Any final comments then before we move on to the next session?

Yeah, I have a lot of comments on the document foreword maybe this is [20:48] [inaudible] me, I'm aware that if the conversation is about empowering consumers or whatever, then you have a specific focus and you don't have [21:00] [inaudible], which is clear, but I think it's interesting in itself that there are no other [21:04] [inaudible]. For example, I found that... For me it's really interesting that in this whole idea of the energy transition there is an idea of a win­win solution, so kind of everyone wins and if there are barriers or problem then it's because of lacking consumer acceptance in a way or maybe [21:27] [inaudible] there's not enough funding or whatever. At least that's what in the [21:37] [inaudible]. But it's not about other conflicts that's [21:42] [inaudible] In fact, what about vested interests of fossil energy companies? What about infrastructure that is just not meant for decentralised energy transition? Which is, I think these would be... A lot of these would be core questions or research interests for SSH.

But they're not really [22:06] [inaudible] I'm a political scientist that's [22:08] [inaudible] I am looking for conflicts everywhere, but they are everywhere when you look at the energy transitions. Or I think it's interesting that there is a very narrow perspective on renewable energy, which is clear because it's a renewable energy directive so don't get me wrong, but this is... It's integrated in a wider setting where at the moment there are very powerful fossil energy interests and I think that's remarkably important when you talk about a transition [22:49] [inaudible].

That's so interesting the way that conflict is just simply [22:54] [inaudible] to say that there comes just kind of this issue of acceptance. Yeah. Okay, we probably should move on now otherwise we won’t be getting our lunch on time. So, [inaudible] do you want to...

Just maybe couple remarks because, which are important to understand the way that columns are formulated. You're looking at calls come from the second pillar of Horizon 2020, right? Horizon 2020 has three pillars, the ERC, The Challenges and then the Centre of Innovation, which now works from the innovation council. So, in the second pillar, the focus is very much on application of research, investment and growth and all these things, so it has to have a result. And as such, when you write a call you always have to link it back to some kind of policy framework, this is why the three priorities from the Energy Union are in there, because you simply cannot write a call in the second pillar and just keep it very broad. You can't just say "we're interested in knowing and understanding better this and that," that's just not enough for the second pillar. For the first pillar it might be enough, but for the second pillar it's not enough, so you need an anchor, you need some kind of policy anchor.

And yeah, so, if it looks like something's being shoved down your throat that's too bad because it was meant to be like that, but you need such an anchor. Something else I wanted to say I forgot, but that was, so never mind. It's just you need to look at where that is. Normally, you... These things aren't particularly strict so you can stretch the limits nonetheless, but you need to come in the second pillar, you need to have an anchor in policy, you need to come to impact. The impact portion is actually quite important, and they need to be as concrete as you can make them. So that's just the frame that you're working on.

That's not fun, because we have selected some documents that aren't representative of anyone or anything, really, yes, thank you.

Thank you, so we're almost at lunch, but we have one final thing to do if we're able to do it fast. Are they in the corner?

The worksheets that were on the chair, I think may now be behind the sign.

Perfect. So, if those worksheets could be circulated. So, this afternoon we have a sort of set of cafe conversations, hopefully now we've got a fairly informal feel. And we hopefully want to continue that this afternoon where we'll talk around three different topic areas, in the spirit of providing a prompt for discussion.

[background conversation]

Yeah. Thanks so much. So, yeah, so this afternoon we're gonna continuing some discussions around key prompt areas, and... Did you wanna open it from the other side? There they are, yeah, so for that there's these three areas and they're in each different room. So, there's one up here and then there's two which are on the ground floor. So if you're in group A or group B first, you may wish to take down your sheet, so then you don't have to come back up after lunch to then come back down, just thinking of saving your legs. But there's some light questions here, which if you could spend maybe 10 minutes now going through, that would be great.

Yes, and then the hope is that in each of those half an hour breakouts in groups of maybe four or five, we'll be able to just discuss what people's thoughts are and dig a little bit deeper. And ultimately, if there's other interesting things that we can spin out of from these questions, then that's fine too, but just as a starting point these things could be interesting. So just for 20 seconds maybe, I think each of us we're just gonna say why we've picked each of these. So in the spirit of just going A, B, C... [inaudible], A?

Yes, great. So, in the cafe which I will be facilitating where we'll be up here in this room, we will be focusing on evaluations. So that one particular kind of research, that's often swooping directly into future policies, programs and projects. And we're gonna be talking about what role SSH evidence currently plays in various complaints and evaluations based on your experiences. I'm particularly focusing on what's being missed, what's being neglected and what could be done differently. And the implications actually, from the particular roots that evaluations tend to take at present. So yeah, I look forward to discussing that with you later. And sorry, can I just say this while we're on this subject, we should maybe just update the timings for the cafe sessions, before you all disappear off. 'Cause again, we're running about 20 minutes late.

Sure, sure. Okay. Yeah, before we give you the final minute warning, we'll give you a nod of what they'll be. So, B is me. I'm in one of the downstairs rooms. This one's on reviewing existing evidence. I suppose the main reason we wanted to carve out time for this, was because a lot of, I think that so far what we've been talking about is almost the primary research of creating new knowledge, when obviously there's a lot of policy research initiatives where the question is well, what do we already know? What has already happened? Particularly, I mean there's been so much great research over decades in this area, how best to tell the policy worker what the current state of the art is. And that I think leads on to the role of SSH meta­logically within this process, as well. There's a lot of talk around, you know, if you're going to do a literature review, does it need to be systematic and what does that mean and how much does that matter? So just sort of unpacking some of these things could be a really interesting discussion. Douglas?

Okay, thanks, yeah. I've been thinking about how we can structure programs at university, to really help get this agenda forward because in a sense... Well, purely at doctorate level everyone's undertaking an individual PhD project which is a very personal experience based on generating new knowledge, new insights, new information. A similar argument could be made about master's program [29:55] [inaudible] at such an advanced level. But then really the challenge is, how you then shape what your knowledge and understanding is and how you convert that or translate it or present it as something that might be recognised and have an impact that we're teaching through evidence. So, I'm interested in discussing different approaches at universities, so if you've got any personal experiences of this area then you're very welcome to come on and share them and just to think about how can you go back to your own institutions. So how can other organisations think about... Or how can universities in terms of structure, so that they're able to take this agenda forward.

Thank you.

Can I ask a question?

Yeah, of course.

I was wondering for cafe A and B, when you're talking about SSH evidence in policy making, you don't mean SSH within the project, for instance. So, my immediate way of thinking is, okay, the project leads to recommendations, which then can be... But you're thinking more of the direct process, not necessarily the longer, working through projects which then... Because it kind of leads to the question that I had a while ago of, how are we actually integrating SSH in existing projects and are we doing that in a way that is smart or that actually, you have a true dialogue between disciplines rather than... My experience is mostly we get involved, we do our mapping, we do our literature review, we say, "This is the approach that should be taken," and then the technologists go off and they do their thing without really taking us into account. So, it's kind of this box checking exercise of, they're in this, but there's no true dialogue. So, I don't know if that's in there or if your focus is more with policy level.

I think...

Which is fine.

Our hope is to have these sufficiently open ended, so that then...

It can go either way.

So, it could be either way.

But I'm quite excited by this idea of looking internally within projects of what we do because I think the point that was made about how much was self censor­y in order to kinda fit with certain other agendas, is a really important one. So, I'm definitely interested to explore that.

Okay. Alright... I won't be self-censoring. [chuckle]

Yeah, I have a similar question, so... Maybe just asking but I'm not, [chuckle] I'm not sure I understood. Yeah, when you refer to SSH evidence for cafe A, do you mean... So, if I evaluate a larger policy initiative, do I evaluate... You mean I evaluate how well citizens' concerns, etcetera were addressed? Have they changed that behaviour, this kind of thing? Or do you mainly, do you more refer to, were social science methods used to evaluate?

So, I think to me, it's very much about both the questions and the agendas, I think, in the evaluation. So, within that process of carrying out an evaluation, has SSH been feeding into the actual questions that they asked all the way through those stages, so through the methodologies and the actual collection of data. So just to give one example actually that, when renewable energy directive, consultation was a kind of evaluation. It asked people to look back on this policy and as we've discussed the way those questions were actually framed and the way that those answers were designed was although kind of loaded and either included or excluded SSH in certain ways, so that's just one example, yeah. But it can also be very specific projects that are being evaluated and what role does SSH play in those evaluations.

Okay.

And we appreciate that some may be more comfortable having more detail on certain parts of these questions than others, so if you're not sure, then that's fine to leave bits blank and focus on other areas. It's just a starting point for discussion, really. So, yeah.

'Cause just to be aware, the evaluation of a policy is completely different from evaluating a smaller scale project. So, we can move on.

So, meaning we'll bring out those differences in our discussion, yeah, that would be nice. Yeah.