reviewcafe\_sessions 1&2&3

**Session 1**  
  
The systemic approach need has been identified by the European documents, but it's clearly not enough and we should be able to concretize each needs into actions in whatever means, be it European Funded projects or the kind of supports. That's it. I think we need more concrete actions and to the ground solutions to tackle SSH.

So, you feel that any attempted review shouldn't just be a review of knowledge, there needs to be the action agenda...

No, recommendations are fine, but we need to transform them into actions at some point. So, there should be a process in the reporting, starting with recommendations based on evidence, and then action plan, as we're doing currently with the implementation plans of the SET-Plan, this is the baby of all this integrated roadmap, and also previous research and stakeholder consultations.

But whose responsibility is it for those actions? Is that the person that's doing the review to say what those actions should be, or is that, you then pass the baton on... You do your review; you pass it on to someone else and they come up with them? How do you see... 'Cause obviously, there’s different actors involved in each of those processes.

I would say that the recommendation providers also issue a list of proposed actions to achieve those recommendations and those actions are then discussed by the executive and by the policymakers to see whether this is feasible or not and adapt them to what is available in terms of tools and involve the relevant stakeholders to define these final actions.

Okay. What are other people's thoughts either on that or on other things? Are there any reaction? I have to see it right from the start. I'm too new in that field, so I didn't write anything down. That's fine.

Because I don't feel legitimate to. So, I may comment on the go, on­the­fly, but...

No, that's fine. I'm sure once we get into, for instance, thoughts on how reviews should be done, from your own PhD background, you'll have thoughts on how good reviews should be done. So even bringing your own personal thoughts to this is totally fine.

Okay.

That's fine, yeah, okay. What about either of you, in regard to the big question? Are reviews a good thing? Are they useful, how is it useful?

Yeah, I didn't quite get the question or what we should do with it. Of course, it's important to look what has been done in a SSH research and to know about the, let's say, field of study, and have a map what is done, where it's done, how is it done, and what is our source of knowledge. And of course, we need to review what we already have because there's a lot distributed. And it prevents us for reinventing the wheel and maybe adapting it to the current policy processes, but I think it's totally important to first look also at historical and cultural material on each member states, their energy identity, their energy cultures, their imaginaries about politics and energy and things like that and make the policymakers more sensible, that we need maybe to go a step back before we can do actions for the future and know about these issues, I think, yeah.

That's very interesting, thank you. Yeah, certainly. I mean so often people say... They'll publish something. And, of course, this isn't just in SSH, they'll publish some research, and the claim will be made at the start. This is brand new; this has never been done before, and they are always difficult claims to make. Some will say, "Actually, 40 years ago, someone did something quite similar. There was maybe a bit of a different conceptual name for it, but actually it stands for the same sort of ideas that you're doing and you just re­labelled it, either showing your ignorance of what was there, or that maybe... " I don't know. So, it's interesting, yeah, no need to reinvent the wheel, but yeah, but also to be adaptors, as you say.

Can I ask a question?

Yeah,

A pre question somewhat... Before this topic, and may I ask the same question, the other two? Energy SSH as a label, is this something that actually comprises... This is a commission label?

Yes, yeah.

Okay, so okay. This is in their documents?

Yes.

And then there are scholars like you and you who then try to live up to whatever that label seems to prescribe or seems to describe. I'm just trying to get an understanding here before... Because the next question that I have is also... But now, let's state the fact here.

So, from my take of it, it is very much an artificial label. You mentioned...

Like SSH.

Indeed.

[chuckle]

Yeah, that the commission have come up with.

Yeah.

Because they want to give some sort of attention to society.

Okay.

They don't really, at least didn't in my take, know quite all that involves, but from engaging with stakeholders, they knew that there was a lot in the social science and humanities, so...

Do they do the same with the other challenges? Is there a Health SSH or a Transport SSH?

That's a good point. Transport, actually talked about, at least, a lot of the Energy SSH stuff that the commission funds is actually transport.

Yeah, okay. Yeah, makes sense.

Yeah, but you're right, health, I'm not aware of... I haven't looked.

SSH is a cross cutting issue.

But in terms of dedicated funding for it...

Yeah.

'Cause obviously there's the mainstream, but there's also these dedicated... And they're committed that they will continue doing this...

I'm not aware of something like that.

But the thing that makes it difficult is that they've created this banner, and then they initially funded us in SHAPE Energy to overcome what they saw as fragmentation in the field because they wanted everyone to agree. And something that we've been constantly trying to tell them back is that actually you've created this SSH, Energy SSH label, to connect everyone that deals with people, humans, either on an individualistic level, on a collective level. I mean, there's so much going on, the people that stake their careers on disagreeing with other parts of SSH.

Yes, yes, yes.

And so, yeah, trying to show them that they've created this label. It's great they're funding it, it's great, but there shouldn't be expectations. That there should always be agreement within that because we need to embrace heterogeneity within the field, rather than search for any sort of... Yeah, yeah.

I mean, there is also from the research side, there's this, maybe call it the old school or however, on the research side, there was also an attempt to make this field of social science energy research to institutionalize it. A few years there's a journal for a social science energy research and I don't think it comes from the commissions side.

No.

So it's like general research­ driven...

That was an Elsevier initiative. And then they sought out Benjamin Sovacool.

And this guy is Benjamin Sovacool, who is like... I think everyone knows him in energy, social science energy research. And in his first journal paper, he says that he tried a lot of times in different journals to position his work and they didn't accept him, which was always so hard, because he didn't fit in.

Fit in, yeah.

So, he made this and then he had a huge list about, in which areas, why is SSH research and different things relevant. So, in my research, we'll be using this to get through this labyrinth of energy research and social sciences.

Okay. Because this project that you and [removed for anonymity purposes] are doing is also Energy SSH. In the end it is, yes.

I mean it's all funded by the commission, right?

No, it's...

[overlapping conversation]

But it's funny that the publisher and the academic way of fighting against this, a similar set of arguments is just Energy SS. There's no... Even though humanities, say, for instance there's a paper in there that says the role of energy history. So, they accept humanities for that. It's aims and scopes and official branding, it is just Energy SS.

Social sciences.

So, I mean, I know these things ended up sort of not mattering too much, but there there's no identity that people force again. The SSH isn't a thing, I think. So, like, you ask people for the labels, and they perhaps say they're an energy geographer, or they are, they're energy, so, either a discipline or so the identity's inherently sit within this Energy SSH.

Yeah. Yeah. And can I ask, the second question is, did you in SHAPE or for preparation of this project, did you ever try to make an empirical map of actual research that could fall under the label Energy SSH? So, is there any kind of substance to this?

To the label?

To the label?

Yeah.

In SHAPE Energy, there is no such inventory?

No, we did a set of annotated bibliographies where we intentionally tried to demonstrate according to set plan objectives, the range of different research that went on within each of these. So, we did a minimum of 100 different papers that we thought and that was a systematic review at least...

[overlapping conversation]

Okay, alright. Okay...

[overlapping conversation]

That was the one that I was involved.

Okay, so that exists?

Yeah, but yet it's not designed to be comprehensive. It's there to be an indicator, a prompt for discussion.

Yeah. Even though it's systematic, at least it gives you... You could now use this to map furthermore and say, "You could build up categories or you could build up, define the borders."

[overlapping conversation]

Sure. And Sovacool does this in his papers as well.

Yeah.

He does that to a certain degree.

Okay, okay.

He divides it into disciplines and does a review of the three biggest energy journals. Okay.

And categorizes them according to disciplines and theories.

Okay. I see, I see.

There is some, but no one's done a proper job.

Yeah. At least the exercise that we have here, the... Then the groundwork for actually then doing this at one point because you're asking us about how to best review, and so... Are you asking us to bring you input so that you can then are better equipped to do this kind of exercise?

Yeah, I think so. I mean in some part it's us doing it and also, it's us providing recommendations for others that may wish to do it.

[overlapping conversation]

Yeah, yeah, sure.

Our sort of role as a forum is sort of meant to be a bit beacon to help others. So, but we are doing... So we're producing semantics bibliographies again based upon these expert working groups that we’re doing.

Yes.

And there's a particular sort of mapping I suppose approach that's coming through that actually. Yeah.

Yeah, so... But no, it's more just, I suppose in itself trying to see what's interesting about some of these questions as well as being a point of contrast with some of the other points of the day. We just felt that there wasn't any time to carve out like...

No, sure, sure. I don't want to take too much with these pre questions...

No, it's fine. It's all interesting.

But I was just trying to...

No, I mean, I'm quite relaxed with the way everything's going.

And the thing is we also need to be aware of all the existing studies, not to duplicate, 'cause I see a lot of things at the European level that are kind of repeat or parallel studies. But you see them somewhere else, and you don't know if they're aware that such a study made by a private consultant on the matter.

So, that's [13:46] [inaudible] particularly away from industry researchers and consultancy. Yeah. So, this actually links perfectly to the question b, around the process that you go about collating evidence, so often like we were talking about yesterday over dinner, the sorts of databases or journals. If you were to search a database of research, maybe you omit all the industry or consultancy reports or maybe you would only go to certain parts of the field. Are there any other thoughts that you had around if you want... If you were to see a best practice, an excellent review, that's how we put it, then how would you do it?

That would be a study that would really take stock of all the existing recommendations and best practices in the field of SSH and the specific domain that is analysed.

So, you're saying that any review needs to have a clear guiding question and purpose to draw... Am I stretching too far? To draw the boundaries that you're searching within because, to generate that sort of thing that you need to have?

Yes, it needs to have a specific purpose and it needs to take into account the previous existing studies on the same topic.

So within your field of cognitive psychology, if you were to have read a literature review, and you would think it was a good one, what components would it have?

Well, it would have... It's getting back to what has been mentioned earlier in this conversation, not re­inventing the wheel, but sometimes the good basics, the good old papers, at least in the field I'm from, there have been very, very good papers dating back to the '60s, the '70s and they are still actually, very good.

And sometimes conceptually, they are better than the actual, the current research. If I may, to extend that, this reflection on... It's... That's more about how research is performed. It's a broader discussion about how research is performed nowadays. You were saying that some papers are presented as, "I have a new model or a new concept", and when you scratch a bit actually, it's nothing very new, it's the label or phrasing that is a bit new. But researchers nowadays are, and it's unfortunate, but they tend to do that because they need to have buzzwords, to... There is a competition going on. You need to attract... There are so many more publications that people who will read those publications in comparison to the '70s was for instance okay.

So that you have an incentive to over­sell your paper, your position by using buzz words in the title, in the abstract. And so sometimes, even though the basics are a bit outdated because they did not have the technology at that time, the concepts, they were sometimes more sound than they are now.

So, for me, a good review, if I go back to the question, would be something that collates the initial conceptual discussions that may be a bit old, but that sets the grounds and then go to something... Why am I saying that? Because some reviews do, or some researchers, again, it's in my own field, a field that I know, tend to also... If they are having a review of literature in their field, that they will go back to the last five years, as if after that or before, it has to be before, it was too late, too old. And it's important to have a balance of the bright, fresh, super new, but also the concepts that come back from...

Okay, so in a way your starting point, your point of departure, really, step zero, is the conceptual roots?

Yes.

Of which, if they're relevant 50­odd years ago, and then the review itself is more what's the state of the [19:18] [inaudible] the last five, 10 years? What's in the current empirical context? What can we say?

Yeah. And in concrete terms, if I would... Again, it's... With all the limitations of what I'm saying, if I would do that for myself, what I would look at is how many times... When you have many papers or books, in the end, they all point to the same five or 10 papers or books or chapters that are very, they set the ground. If I would have to review something provided from... I would also make sure that they would go to those... They would point to those basic grounds.

Okay, thank you, that's very interesting. What about you? What jumps out to you as methodologically sound?

I have the same constraint as you, I'm not from this field. But the two remarks that I would have is, first, I think... And I think you mentioned it before. If it is really research evidence for policy... If that's what it's about, then the key issue is really the question that should be answered. So, I think, from what I know, working at an institute is also with a lot of applied research, the clearer the question, and the clearer the question is negotiated between those who are the policy makers and those who are then actually doing the review or whatever.

And make the question understandable also by all the parties.

Yeah, in my understanding, this is a by­effect of a clear question that...

Yes, yes. But it can be clear for...

But there is, sometimes it's even necessary to have a negotiation process. So, if I can imagine that you would have to do... You were commissioned to do a review for the DG RTD on Energy SSH, then the immediate thing would be that you really would have to clarify the terms. I think that that's the one thing that's essential. And the other thing is also very general comment where, I don't know if I'm saying something that you are aware of or not, but there is actually a pretty broad discussion and literature in general on how to write what is often called evidence summaries.

Sure. Yeah.

And I don't see... This should be taken into consideration, under any circumstances, whatever the specificities of Energy SSH are, but this should be... There are good practices and established rules, so to say. There's also literature that discusses this... I think Paul Kierney did a lot of this, Claire Dunlap and people like this in political science, or popular culture, whatever their field is. There is clearly [22:38] [inaudible]. This should be the basic obviously. That's the two things that I can add because as I said, the Energy SSH previously have not...

No, no, it's fine, it's fine, that's why I'm here.

And you're... Depending on the question, the question is always how deep you're going into this. Of course, you can imagine the most excellent or the point of reference in terms of in an academic way of doing such a review would always be the, I don't know how you pronounce it correctly, the Cochrane report. Cochrane... Is it Cochrane or Cochrane report? It's coming from medicine originally, and it is the attempt to do a meta study of existing studies on certain medical clinical studies with the idea that in clinical studies very often you have various low sample rates, and you have a lot of... Very often, findings from studies are generalized in a way that doesn't deserve to be generalized in that way.

And so, the Cochrane report has been established over the last 10 years as something that is kind of the top league. Difficulty with that, that it usually takes up to two years to write one report on a various sample. It's really very thorough. It goes into each methodological failure of each study, and so on. So it's really top notch, from the point of view that you will really have a perfect overview, but it's very time­consuming. It's very resource­intensive.

So if you have a very important question, then it may be worth going this path, but if you just want a summary of existing evidence, then it's probably simpler to go in a different... To make a compromise and to say, "Okay, I only have two months to do this and it's not that important to go into each statistical velocity of each study because that takes a lot of time." Yeah, something like that.

That's very interesting, thank you. I think we're gonna have to draw it down and move to the next one.

[overlapping conversation]

Yeah, so they'll start with half an hour. In fact, I think we've actually gone over, which is fine. So, I think you're now... What we've tried to do is for you then not to stay together...

Yes.

So that then everyone is... 'Cause otherwise you'll probably... 'Cause they're obviously quite... There's a lot of similarity in the discussion. You'll probably just have the same discussion each time, so...

[background conversation]

Thanks for all your contributions.

[background conversation]

**Session 2**  
  
So, Recap. The purpose of this session is to just have a bit of a discussion around anything that is unique about how you would go about reviewing existing work as opposed to producing new work. In the previous session, we ended up almost disregarding some of these and just joining that with a general discussion which is totally fine. So, It'd be interesting to see what jumps out to the three of you, or obviously due as well around what is most interesting. I can always give a bit of a summary of what had just been talked about and you could bounce off of that or we could dive straight in, if you have immediate things that you wanna sort of push discussion on.

What's most useful to you?

I don't really mind. I suppose it's probably... We just want a bit of an open discussion that's led by what you want to say. So, if you have something that you want to make sure we talk about, then feel free just to open it straight up and we can hit the ground running. If you'd rather have more of a reaction to what's here then I can do that, so it could end up being a bit of a hybrid.

Well, it's probably good to have a... Yeah, start off with a... At first and then I can always cross compare what you said with what they said, yeah. Exactly.

Okay, so, the first question. I suppose the thing that underlies this obviously is, is it the role of Social Science and Humanities to even service the needs of policy, which is a bigger question, but as per [removed for anonymity purposes]’s comment around lots of, for instance, with the societal challenges, pillar, obviously existing for that need. If we jump over that hurdle, how do you think reviews could be useful? In what ways would they be used or sought after?

We have four points.

Okay.

We need to learn from past projects' research if we want to, one, avoid replicating the same mistakes. Two, select success stories. Three, gain an understanding of gaps. And four, encourage cross fertilization or dialogue. So, thinking of failures, best practices, gaps and symmetries. I don’t know if that answers your question.

Yeah, lots in there. And how could you imagine that cross fertilization would be? Would that be the job of the review to do that or would the review in your mind be a trigger? 'Cause obviously the purpose and the boundaries of the review work in itself, if cross fertilization is a purpose, an end point, for that. Then how could you imagine that would be set up to achieve that goal?

I did a study on multidisciplinary research [removed for anonymity purposes], so it was thinking of the integration of SSH in H2020 ICT­related research programs and there the idea was, okay you need that at an institutional level, right? You need to have this awareness of how SSH is integrated, how it is working, how it isn't working as a base point, right? In order that you can build on that, and you can build in new types of projects, or encourage... One of the things that they ended up picking up from the study was sister projects where you might say, okay, there are particular type of problems or calls where we believe that the interdisciplinary is super important.

There's others where we think that you could have a technology program and an SSH program next to each other, but they need to be talking to each other and we need to be encouraging this cross fertilization because we believe that that's the only way to go forward to understand and to solve a complex problem, right? It's not that the dialogue is the end point, but in the end, it's going to help you have a better solution to a policy problem. If it's done in a smart way, and not just a... You have two meetings and that's it, thing.

You're saying that the review is... That the prompt for discussion...

I think you need the review in the overview. It's the prompt for discussion, but then you have to kind of build that into the projects, and go beyond that as well, right? You can review what is existing but then you have to see how do you... That's kind of answering more of what I had for [removed for anonymity purposes] [chuckle], is how do you then build that into those best practices that those are shared, that those are now. I just... Sorry. I'll stop after this. I did this study in 2014 and then I just finished, or am finishing the 30th of June, a project that was run by the Joint Programming Initiative Urban Europe, which is not within the H2020 scheme, but has a little bit of... It has commissioned coordinate, well, not quite... Anyways, it's a coordination of national research agencies where they decide to be in a call.

But what I really appreciated about the kind of JPI Urban Europe headquarters and the overview of it is, instead of just having your policy officer, they were going far beyond. They were bringing all the projects that were within a certain call together on a yearly basis. They kind of had theme days of things that you had to come. It was your project money; it was one of the things that you signed up to. But it helped you to talk across projects and to realize that you have a lot of things, and we were all dealing with the same type of... Different responses to the same call text, right? But then they also did that across multiple call years, and this allowed them to have a better sense of what was going on at that institutional level, but then also it really helped to have those... It kind of naturally nurtured those dialogues between different projects, which is also great for networking in future calls, etcetera. But there certainly was this element of A, not waiting until the very end to get some of the research results but B, also recognizing that there might be other approaches that you can’t integrate now, but that start useful conversations.

Okay. So, bringing it back then to the review that was the starting point. Obviously, you were saying that the review is a part of a much wider process, which I think we probably would certainly all buy into, but that the review itself, what of... Did anyone else have anything else to add around why that could be sought?

You mean the first question?

Yeah. But in case there was anything else to add before we moved on to the next...

Yeah, I mean, just a few points on this. Just to kind of answer the question as it's stated, as you said, rather than to sort of deconstruct it. These things can be quite useful to... Especially if we're saying that Social Sciences Humanities beyond naturalistic social science isn't that necessarily present in policy world or the approaches and perspectives and world views aren't necessarily well understood, bringing together this kind of weight of evidence, I'm showing the diversities that exist within SSH is actually quite a useful thing to do, to bring that forward to policy makers who may be...

Or to the policy world, in that sense. You can draw out wider things and also hopefully attend to contexts which, so that you can see from that that there is a bit of a challenge here in this kind of review work because a lot of this evidence is gonna be quite particular if it's beyond naturalistic social science it can be interpretive or qualitative forms of evidence and then it's very difficult to review these kind of things. I'll come on to the challenges with that in a moment on the second question, but there are some kind of negatives, right? So, you said or not so...

Sure, sure.

It's out date or out of context, so there's a danger that things that are kind of, you say "state of the art", but you can be bringing things forward that might be a little bit out of date but also there is this danger of kind of de­contextualizing the specificities in which these studies are done can be just written over through this kind of review process, but there are ways of overcoming that as we'll come on to in relation to question two. [chuckle]

Okay. I feel like we're all probably edging towards question two, which is the big one of them, but was there anything that you two wanted to add? It doesn't matter if you don't. On question one, I mean, obviously a lot's been covered.

I had several thoughts now, when I was listening to you. Maybe picking up on your statement with a very practical issue bringing together projects. So, I think this realization is already there and... For instance, I think we want also to invite you to our in the clustering event where we bring together all the SSH projects from this course that are still ongoing. And I think that could be quite useful, like I said, in terms of networking and exchanging ideas. But I think also that a project such as energy shifts, I think you should actually... I don't know what's exactly in your grant agreement, but I think you should take over this role in integrating the ongoing projects and bring them together or reviewing the evidence so I... Yeah, that would be my idea. I haven't...

[laughter]

I can't change your job description, of course, but...

Give us lots more money and...

[laughter]

But I think somebody should do that, actually. I think it's because like you said, so the evidence existing is quite heterogeneous and of course there's the risk that you just take up some results and it's not in context anymore, but on the other hand, I mean, if results are so... There are so many results and reports and [0:11:28] [inaudible] and... So, no policy maker is gonna read all these deliverables, so we have to try to really get the main messages. Extract the main messages and feed them to the people who have some kind of power.

Which I think relates to what [removed for anonymity purposes] was saying in... I like the phrase "attend to the context". It's a simple turn of phrase, but I suppose if the reviews were to be picked up and gain some sort of policy traction, then you don't want it to just be a descriptive account. A summary of what happened. You want there to be some sort of nuance, contextual understanding, development of ideas, setting up a future agenda either theoretically or conceptually or applied with governance ideas, whatever it may be, but there needs to be the big "so what" thrown in, which I feel is sort of the unspoken thing. What we've all been saying, right? If we're going to have a review, there needs to be the bigger purpose. It's not just for, to save someone some time reading lots of papers. I mean, that in itself is a helpful thing, but there needs to be a bigger question for it. Did you have anything to add before we came on to.

Maybe just one point about communication or that you have to be mindful of communication. I'm not a policy maker myself, so I cannot really say from this perspective what would be useful for me as a policy maker, but from what I've experienced as a researcher in a position of, for example, delivering something to policy, I found that it... Like you said, it helps to know the context, it helped to know what the policy maker wants to have, what kind of knowledge because it can be sometimes an overview of all the knowledge, the results, the field or sometimes it's just the main messages in a very specific thing. I'm also trying not to deconstruct the question, but what is...

Sure, sure...

What is a policy maker, then, in the end? And I guess I'm having trouble to find this one answer to that question and also for this reason, but I guess communication being mindful of what the aims are and who you are communicating to is helpful?

Okay, okay, that's all really useful. In terms of then this bigger question, of how you would go about fulfilling all of these big ideas? Either as part of a bigger process or as the ends in and of itself, we have mentioned a few things in terms of what we'd want in terms of we'd want there to be something bigger that's drawn out of it. Seemly quite wide boundaries of the review, you seem to be implying as well.

Potentially.

Yeah. As long as that meets the needs. Well, yeah, what did... There are systematic review methodologies that come out of the medical area and Health Sciences, and these have become kind of the gold standard in terms of the kind of thing that you're talking about here and this kind of mimics a lot of the discussions that are going on across the workshop.

One kind of approach is to just mimic and to try and fit in with the kind of gold standard that's handed over from the natural physical sciences. We came up against this task, very kind of really head­on in the [removed for anonymity purposes] project, where we had to do a review of the many different ways in which societies engaging with the low carbon transition in the UK and UKERC, this big research center that we're involved in, have a systematic review function that follows this kind of natural physical science approach. And so, we were kind of... It was expected, a little bit that we would do a systematic review. By doing this, we came up against a lot of the challenges and a lot of things that we talked about in response to question one.

Some of the things that we did differently. What systematic review does is take a very well­defined review area and it tries to be quite complete in relation to that. That doesn't really work in an SSH or beyond naturalistic social science area because, we start to understand that the term how you frame things, or the search terms that you use, then dictates what you find. That has to be... That has to...

This idea of reflexivity, the way in which you try and access something shapes what you access, this recursive kind of play between subject and object, actually has to be brought in as a key guiding kind of principle of... You kind of do a reflexive approach to how you... For instance, just to illustrate, when you're saying, how is society engaging in the energy system? What do you mean by the energy system? Now, obviously, the systematic review would define that very clearly. Our approach is to not define that clearly but to attend to the multiple framings of what the energy system might mean. So, you open up... Another thing that you do in terms of a key cri... What is it... The kind of procedures or rules, guiding lights, let's call it, attend to diversity. You don't close down around very precise kind of measurements about energy efficiency... From this boiler is always between this range and this range.

You kind of open up to a diverse, in our case, the way in which people are engaging with the energy transition, which is loads of ways. You try and attend to that diversity rather than you looking at opinion surveys or behavior change. You also... I think it's interesting what should be included, excluded. This idea of a boundedness, you're just very open about that. You say what you’ve excluded. You don't...

You can't include everything, but you don't pretend that you've been complete. You say we frame this in this way, and there are uncertainties with this. These are some of the things that we would, from this UKERC mapping would be...

Presumably everything, you're doing, you're transparent, and the openness, transparency. The other thing we did is, obviously this is a bit of a hacked term now, but we co­produced this, right? So, you don't just do this in an isolated situation. We had a bunch of different policy makers, NGOs, civil society groups, who bring their own framings of the things that we were dealing with, and we then came up with the kind of search arrangement and then they kind of interrogated that and added other things in. There's a way in which your review isn't separate from the policy process or the different communities that you're trying to engage with. You do it in an open transparent, co-produced way, in an iterative way. So, I guess we took quite an experimental approach to doing and we didn't call it a systematic review, we called it a systematic mapping. This idea of mapping diversities rather than completeness was a key kind of...

Mapping is an interesting term though because that sort of implies in some ways...

Well, I think you can... All these terms are there to be captured and then to have the reflexive version made available. And until social science humanities comes up with alternatives, actual alternatives whether it's methods, ways of seeing, actual practical interventions, we're still gonna be here saying, 3% to 4%.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah. Totally.

Perfect.

Oh yeah. Okay. So, we've probably got up to five minutes left, and that's when it starts the next room. But there's obviously a lot there that [removed for anonymity purposes]'s kindly taken us through, and of course, yeah, it is an excellent paper. But what are people's thoughts, reactions? Did you have different things here? Anything that grouped together the sorts of things that you maybe suggested in your third? Or I could start to cross compare against these if people didn't. You've got lots of things written there, [removed for anonymity purposes].

I don't know if it fits, but the first thing that crossed my mind thinking about the third question was, what about the IPCC process? Because in terms of review, what I understand is special about the IPCC process is that it is a scientific process gathering state-of-the-art research. I mean, it’s very interdisciplinary, mostly natural science, but policy makers are involved at various stages and from the very beginning on. And I am aware that this hasn't led to more action on climate change, for example, or on climate change mitigation necessarily and that it is debated.

But I was just thinking about the process and also what has been mentioned several times now. What is actually a review? I think you said that it's rather a process instead of just looking at things and gathering, but it's a whole process of also bringing together people to speak from a very early point on. And so, this is what I thought of, and that's the example that crossed my mind. Not knowing if it's perfect or not, but just as a starting point.

It's interesting, I suppose, because one of the unique things with IPCC is that one, the flagship documents, the summary documents are written and negotiated by those that didn't produce the research themselves, which from everything that's been said so far, it's presumably actually because most people are researchers in the room, talking about how the researchers would do it, but it does certainly create a different dynamic, different vested interests coming in to see what is presented. And again, maybe it comes back to the role of... The purpose of the review. Okay.

Yeah. I can only echo what [removed for anonymity purposes] shared that... What came to my mind was inclusive and iterative, you can't do it in one go.

[chuckle]

And you need to recognize your own disciplinary or knowledge boundaries and try to go beyond that. Right?

Mm­hmm. Yeah. Okay. I can, if you're interested, I suppose as we're near the end, I can say everything that came out. So, we had a very general discussion that started off around labels of SSHs. We're very interested to know about the sort of artificial construction of the term SSH and where it came from, and what agendas fed into it as part of, I suppose, them thinking through some of these questions, which was an interesting detour.

[laughter]

To question the question.

[laughter]

Yeah. But it was... I entertained it; it was interesting.

[chuckle]

But there's something that they were really keen on, was making sure that there was some tangible recommendations or pointers that would come out of it. They were talking about duplication. They were talking a lot about research that is isn't in universities, so industry and consultancy, and about how a lot of the work often overlooks a lot of the insights that are in there, because it's not in the same databases that are often included.

They wanted to clear personal boundaries, in the same way to your point around co­production. They were wanting always the minimum that SSH should be involved in developing a clear question. But actually, that question there should be a longer pause, and that that should feed into almost perhaps even a formal process of negotiation for that question, which has clear terms, which perhaps have... Which are transparently represented. They weren't saying that there needed to be consensus on what those terms were, but there needed to be clear discussion around what those terms could be seen to mean.

So as you suggested a step further where there's multiple terms, although I think that was more in the search terms, whereas they're more thinking about the starting, guiding question. And then they wanted that process of negotiation to involve non­academics, particularly policy actors. So that then if there's any hope of the review feeding into anything, then actually, they're recruited and they're vested in the process from the start. There was talk about literatures from policy studies that talk about establishing rules on how to write evidence summaries.

And talk around almost covering the basics, and not wanting to show your ignorance. So something that they were saying was actually almost that the point of departure, the way in which the review exercise is set up, which is almost as sort of a problem definition, conceptual sort of way. Like what's the problem that we're seeking to address. That could actually connect with literature that's almost 50 years old, and that that should potentially be embraced at the start. And then once that... Once the ground is set on what the problem is, then boundaries are set perhaps with the last five or 10 years the current empirical context, as you said, out of date, out of context.

They were saying some of things actually, that premise, the review could start off conceptually by having no limits to it, but actually sometimes if you're wanting to get more state-of-the-art understanding, or at least something that has current policy relevance and traction, having a review that is something that's grounded in the current context makes sense. So, all in all, I think they were saying a lot of similar things to you. It sounded as though; I think you were embracing.

Sorry, can I make one last remark on the last point? Because, again, looking at the first question, so we said... I think a review, yeah, if it aims to cover the state of the art, I think this is even... It may not be the state of the art anymore, but okay. It still has a lot of value, and not only for policy makers, because... Yeah, I think it would be extremely useful if I look... So, because I'm...

Well, I'm administering Horizon 2020 projects and just to give you one example, I have one project that's under this social innovation call. It's really not, I don't know how it passed the threshold because I think that the research questions and the evidence etcetera, they have... I mean, this was done in the 1970s or so. This is pretty banal from a point of view and so why don't we give them a lot less funding, because they can just pick up on what exists already. They don't have to re­invent the wheel again. Why can't we take that money and give it to really innovative approaches that really do make a difference, and not just give funding to people so they have jobs in doing something that is not new. [laughter]

Yeah, yeah, we're gonna have to check, but I'm thoroughly interested in all those sorts of things. The way that the funding calls are constructed, which sort of end up being this reference point in which the evaluations are done. You go through word-by-word and... But then seeing the process in which,and being part of the process of how these calls are constructed to then seeing where the money goes at the end of it and it sort of, it tends to go even within SSH to lots of modeling projects that feel comfortable getting a comprehensive picture of the reality that they just see as fitting, which tends to be around the individual with lots of different factors fitting around it. It's interesting to see the chain of the follow­through, 'cause you can... It's there.

Yeah, no, I think, yeah. We can discuss that also later because it's a very valid point, yeah. Sorry to cut it off but we went over as well.

[background conversation]

So, the final hurdle. Still got the energy? [laughter] There's a refreshments break after this, isn’t there? All right? And then it's the discussion.

When does the workshop finish?

Five.

Five, okay.

**Session 3**

Yeah, definitely. Okay. I reckon we start straight away. I think there's a couple of others... We can approach it two ways. I could either summarize what's been discussed so far, and you could bounce off it and add and disagree. Or we could just dive straight in, if you had particular things that you wanted to make sure that were talked about and then I could sort of cross compare with that later on, if that's appropriate. It depends how strongly the things that you have written that you wanna make sure is discussed. I don't know if you have particular views.

Why don't we start with talking about what you've done, and then I can always refer back to that. Just so then the thoughts that you have, we do them justice. I don't know how the others have been arranging it, but we've certainly been using these quite loosely, these questions. So, completely fine to say, "Well, actually let's start thinking about something else." I mean these questions are definitely not perfect so we could spend all day long deconstructing them, which perhaps isn't the best use of time but there's certainly room for a bit of that. I feel like the meat of it is probably in the second point, but we could just briefly raise any additional points on the first one. Is there anything that you really wanted to raise around why reviews of past existing knowledge would be interesting and sought after?

For policies?

Yeah. Or for users of...

And the question is how, no? Because I... Not why? Yeah?

How... Yeah, yeah, fair point.

Because from my point of view, it very much depends on who you address. I mean, I know it's not meant as a deconstruction of the question but really as part of a response, because I think when you for example, summarize research for local governments, it has to be very simple, easy to read. You probably have to have highlights; you probably have to have examples. I think examples work very well, etcetera, but if you have more... I don't know, if you try to influence intergovernmental bodies like the IPCC, you have to do reviews in a completely different way, because otherwise it would never be acknowledged as a valid form of evidence. I think the way what evidence is, what is relevant or legitimate evidence is very different and depends on who you address.

Well, that is certainly something I would be interested in hearing from all of you. More generally, is what do notions of legitimacy, validity, reliability. All these things, if they even matter, because I suppose they have sort of a certain natural science baggage to them. But what we think they mean, if they have much meaning for the sorts of expectations. If the review is the boundary object, then what the policy community think of that. And then we as perhaps the producers of that research...

How we interact with that based around those sorts of notions and what that means is interesting. But I suppose maybe we can come onto that and there's been implicit points about that within which we previously talked about, but okay... So, any other reasons why... So for instance, [removed for anonymity purposes]. Obviously, the implementation plans, lots of things that are happening there, which are sort of exercises to see well, what knowledge exists and how could that maybe be fed in, in some ways. From all of the policy committees you're engaged with, why are they interested to do those sorts of things?

If I have to think about this review of past research, it comes to my mind also, how back in the past you want to go. Because then, I mean, to me it feels there is a difference between what education is about and then what research is about. So, in terms of, of course if you go to way into the past of course, then all the people also in the policy making should be aware of [0:36:42] [inaudible] research. And that should be done at educational level. While for the research itself then I see for policy makers of course being more interested in way more, let’s say, recent or research or... It's not so clear to me at this point also the question itself that you are posing.

Okay. Okay. So, I suppose I am thinking that if one of your industry stakeholders or if the European Commissioner is saying to [removed for anonymity purposes], "I want this, I want growth in pushing energy technologies," or something like that. And then you're tasked with connecting them to, I don't know, some of your special groups who could give them... So even if it's not a review, it's existing knowledge.

Existing knowledge, okay.

And I suppose, yeah, I was just interested to know if there was any way in which... Why those motivations are there. I mean, perhaps it's just obvious that they don't want to fund new research. They know that the knowledge is out there, they just want it but if there is anything within that...

The reason... I think there might be an interest of course, is also what we are trying to create now with shifts, to create this bridge between the researcher and the policy because they might have some of course, needs or questions that have been widely addressed already but they might not be specifically aware about it. So, of course there is an interest. The difficult part is in the how, as you were saying. So, I think with shifts we are already developing interesting tools to connect that. To make sure that this connection is created somehow. Yeah, we need to explore more.

So, there's a role, I suppose there's a... This is something that the other groups came up with actually. That they were interested in almost sometimes there being a formal process of negotiation or something where the terms of the review were sort of almost agreed beforehand, so that then I suppose if then it was a useful exercise by the end of it, there would almost be, not quite a sign off on the terms, yeah. I mean, what are your thoughts around who guides the purpose of the review?

If you think about it from an academic point of view, if you want to do a state­of­the­art review, you have certain objectives in your mind. Your objectives are to identify gaps, to outline future research questions, to establish what potential trade-offs are there and what benchmarks you can use to make decisions on these trade-offs, set priorities and why. What are the reasons behind the priorities? Identify linkages between sectors, between empirical cases, between disciplines. All of these kinds of objectives are part of your analysis, I would think, your review. I would be a bit cautious about establishing pre­defined terms of reference in the sense that the biggest benefit as an academic is that you have the freedom to explore avenues that are interesting.

And that may be controversial and that may require you to highlight that difficult decisions need to be made. Which might require a re­prioritization to something that has been done in the policy sphere for the last 20 years and suddenly we have enough knowledge now to say that that was the wrong priority. Because the impacts beyond the policy field are far more negative than was originally imagined. We know all these unintended consequences that we know about. And that's maybe the time scale question. Depending on the time scale, the more knowledge you have, if you...For the terms of reference, perhaps what would be useful in that regard, is rather an agreement that your state-of-the-art review will be taken up in the policy sphere. But the terms of the review should not, I think, be defined in advance, for the purpose of serving policy makers already established goals.

What do you see as being included within terms of references?

So, for me, if you say terms of reference, it means you're establishing the questions. And I think that's not... That's already closing down the possibilities that you might come up with from your review in advance and I think that's limiting the scope. Perhaps something else is meant by terms of reference, in your perspective. But that's when I hear terms of reference, I hear what questions I am allowed to investigate or what questions am I supposed to focus on. And if something else is coming up in my review, I have to put it aside because it does not fall within the terms of reference even if that something else could fundamentally question some of the priorities that have been set.

And I think that's where we have to be able to keep this freedom, to actually go down the avenues that are not necessarily politically acceptable or are not established in the policy field. And that's part of our role as critics also of policy. The trouble is that so far a lot of that sort of criticism maybe is not taken up because it is critical. So maybe there needs to be more work done on how you take this critical review which might redefine priorities and how it is integrated more into the policy cycle. Maybe framing it as learning as opposed to criticism, you know some sort of... We were talking about also earlier how we're not necessarily the best skilled at doing this. It's not part of our training, but we need... I think that is also part of the role that academics have that other actors maybe don't have the same sort of freedom to do.

Okay, thank you. Yeah, I'll...

But can I ask back... Do you think that setting or agreeing on the scope does limit the possibility that you come up with results? I think agreeing on a scope does not limit your possibility to come up with something that might not be intended.

Potentially, but I think if you have a scope, it already sets the boundaries of what you're going to look at.

It does.

If you don't... If you haven't agreed that scope with the policy maker and you are building this... Anyway, you to scope on, you cannot look at everything, that's for sure as an individual person. But the scope that you might set might be different to the scope that a policy maker would set. So, I would suggest that we should not necessarily agree on all those details in advance. There's...

Interestingly, the previous group made the exact same point but opted to include within it, as part of opening things up and finding multiple framings of it.

Yeah, and potentially that would work.

So, for instance, instead of having set of key search terms that are put through the search database to get the papers, they use that process to get multiple terms of reference, maybe, within the process or multiple search terms feeding in. Because, for instance if the agreed question is looking at the role of, I don't know, consumers in the NG system, obviously there's loads of big terms in there that mean different things and have a whole load of [0:44:29] [inaudible].

But indeed, it would depend on how narrow the terms of references are defined, and how you can leave within the scope, if it's a broad scope potentially, it's perfect.

But once you commit, you're committed to the boundaries of... Yeah, yeah. What about... Feel free, you have to respond to what's been said? Is there anything that you wanted to add?

I think one more question on this, terms of reference thing is just that I know that up here for example the project it supports the scientific advice mechanism, has two tracks in a way. And one thing is where they are requested by [0:45:08] [inaudible] commission to shed light on a specific issue. And it was for example on, carbon capture and storage.

I think that wasn't the request from the commissioner, but there was still this allocated policy that right isn't working out if you want more carbon capture and storage. Now, of course that's a different question than if carbon capture and storage is, for example necessary at all, but the other track of the project is where they can independently start proposing topics to look at. And that's not original research, it's mostly a review of existing things and maybe with original research into it as well but... So that's... It's one mechanism as well that uses kind of both ways. Top down and bottom up.

So, you're saying the review is almost the starting point for further research? That was almost a purpose of it, to guide what they then would go and do?

Well, if it's aimed at providing policy, suggestions.

Okay.

Or saying, "Okay, if you want to go in this direction, this is maybe the way to go or this is not the way to go." But it's interesting in my view, because it kind of manages these both ways of saying okay, this is research that we're being asked to do by a policy maker, and these are... There are also reports that are bottom up on the initiative of things and maybe if you want to really look at terms of reference, maybe it's interesting to analyze that in more detail.

Okay. Anais, did you have anything that you wanted to throw into the melting pot?

No, the thing that I have noted about the topic, I think that they have been covered by her contributions. So, for now I think that I don't want to ask anything else. No.

No? That's okay. Something else that was raised previously is the idea of being systematic and whether that matters and what's involved within it. I mean, 'cause systematic literature reviews has a lot of history in medicine, really and how... And I suppose that's often the gold star standard for how the medical research is then reviewed and your searching and including everything and they've just done a lot of that, sort of the meta­studies of... Anyway. So, often when people say, "Well, I want to do a systematic literature review," they always copy and paste the methodology of that to here. Were there any thoughts in the room about how borrowing those sorts of methods from non SSH disciplines to do SSH reviews, how that fits?

Is that relating to question two?

I suppose it is, yeah.

The methodological process.

Yeah, I'm at the moment in the process of doing such a systematic review on the water consortium and it's really, really difficult because the review group consists of more quantitative [chuckle] people and me doing basically the more qualitative stuff, and it's really difficult to follow... It's just not so easy to follow predefined principles of systematic reviews because a lot of these systematic reviews are on counting words or numbers.

Yeah, yeah.

Which then is really difficult, so you actually have to find... And they also use kind of these new technology things of, coping with big data sources or whatever, but for a lot of research questions that come from a more SSH perspective, this is just not possible because there are no meaningful results. From counting specific words and also because people use... And also, different research communities, use different words or terms to describe maybe similar things.

So, you have to give a lot of effort to predefine your specific categories and... What I do is define specific categories and keywords and also related keywords. So, keywords that mean kind of the same thing as this one, so that then different researchers or coders can apply this. But, yeah, I think it's difficult and it seems to me that at the moment, there is a specific really increasing or enlarging community that specializes...

[laughter]

In the systematic review things as a kind of a business model and yeah, I think it's really important to have in mind before a team can analyze and how, with such a methodology and in what way this is kind of a buzz word that works for certain interests and for others, not.

I think there is also other ways of doing state­of­the­art reviews besides these systematized... [laughter]

Systematic reviews. Also, there's just the review of literature that has brought the field of knowledge forward in a greatly... There's often once in a while an article that's like, "Oh, we haven't thought about it from this angle before," And then it breeds a whole new set of research articles that you can refocus your review on what this leap forward has meant, and has it really been... There's that kind of review of the state of art of a new leap, if that makes sense?

Yeah, yeah.

As opposed to an entire field.

Yeah, like the seminal shift, the seminal work has shifted.

Don't use the word seminal.

That was...

[laughter]

Important.

That was last year’s buzz word.

Yeah.

Is that relevant for a scientific reader or for a policy reader?

Both, because I think...

Because a policy reader might also be interested in like... Okay, there are 20 articles saying that intervention A works with trade­offs that are nice or not, and intervention B works less nice. So maybe it might be a little bit different in some cases. Just wondering if you had to design policies, then just mentioning or just looking at the more of a seminal article that brought forward or interesting when the idea behind public policy is that you just want to reduce the uncertainty about the policy that you're implementing.

Yeah.

So, you want to make... So you would like to see evidence that it says, "Okay, this could work, or it couldn’t work, but then they might also not like it."

Mm­hmm.

Because it might also be a challenge then to say, "Okay, there's evidence that something has big trade­offs, certain policy makers or politicians might also say "Okay, then we don't want to do something." But it's also another aspect of evidence saying that that could be also too much, in case you have a very ambitious policy which happens in energy.

Yeah.

[pause]

Well, I want to add something...

Yeah.

To several contributions. But from my experience, like picking up what you are saying, last summer we did a systematic review of... It was quite strange, but it was like a literature review on innovation energy policies and we did it within a cross section version. So we were like people from maybe, I don’t know, 12 different countries and seven or eight different disciplines.

I have to say that it was very difficult because we had to predefine a lot of things. We didn't do this thing of counting words or something like that, but we defined a group of indicators with keywords and related words but also keywords in each of the language because we expanded the literature review, not only to English literature, but also to case studies from different countries, because it was a very applied research and innovation and specific policies. And, well, I have to say that it was difficult, but it was worth it. So, I think that it was one of the better literature reviews that we did.

And we also find a lot of difficulties like trying to silo the literature and policy because there you have... There's a mix of academic literature with grey literature, which different understandings on the evidence of what's meant to be grey literature and policy briefs, policy reports and what's understood as evidence in academic literature and that was like vital for us. How could we include all this literature, grey literature, it was super interesting for our topic, but it was not recognised as relatable, no, from the academic community. I don't know.

And how was that process managed as in, like as a set of writers when there are so many contributors?

Well, at first... [chuckle] Yeah, at first it was a little bit, but finally we built Google Drive. Like yeah, a collaborative document with all the indicators, a lot of comments. First each of us did a proposal of contributions in English and not English. Then we did a selection of literature that we wanted to include, and we proceed to the revision and we selected like one coordinator to try to, I don’t know, [0:56:04] [inaudible], was difficult.

You flagged a thought in my mind around reviews and search terms that focus on English evidence. What are our thoughts on how we search for evidence and what that can mean for when we're only potentially engaging with databases that are organised with the English language? Yeah. So, with the big review task that you're doing at the moment?

It's all me. Yeah, that's mainly Web of Science, Scopus things. I think this is a huge problem that you have very narrow the data from the beginning.

Is this...

We tried to expand, yes, but it was pretty difficult. 'Cause then we had to do deal with with a lot of... Well, a lot of sources that we were not very sure if they were relevant or not.

Yeah, it's very difficult, I guess, what to include and whatnot.

But we were looking for innovative policies and it was difficult with the academic literature, not only because of the concept of innovative or innovation, it's difficult to [0:57:48] [inaudible]. But also, because there are academic articles based on case studies or specific policies but they normally try to contribute in a more abstract level and it's difficult then to select the specific literature that can be useful.

There's some very interesting points that you raised about language because I don't know how it is in other disciplines, but certainly in pseudo-science, which would be the discipline I would most closely identify with, is the tradition of how the discipline is carried out depends on the language.

So, the French political science tradition is completely different to the English political science tradition. [0:58:34] [inaudible] aspects of politics in French literature. And in English literature, it's a lot of IRs, organisations, it's institutions, it's a very different way of doing political science and we don't speak to each other. It's completely almost apart. And it would be very interesting to have some sort of combined review from a social science perspective across language barriers. I don't know who that would do but that would be a huge. That would be an amazing task to do, yeah.

Yeah. And then the other thing that's sort of... That hasn't been mentioned in any of these, but sort of is I think alongside in terms of language is the culture in which evidence is produced and published, and what deems to be credible. Cause obviously, there's this obsession with going for journal articles to be included, but obviously that is then only for those that have the money to either publish, and the money to access, and it's within this Western bubble. Yeah, there's a...

Plus, probably wouldn't be the best way to communicate to policy work in some way.

Mm­hmm. So, you can see why that happens, but it does then mean that then it just sort of closes down how the sort of evidence that ends up feeding in... You're going for the English; you're going for the western...

I have to give the Horizon Program some credit there though, because they really force you to look outside your discipline and your geographic location and your comfort zone in terms of honing, that tradition, they really force you to make real bridges across different geographic locations.

Open policy...

Yeah.

Yeah.

Also, their own data policy. So in some ways, the science research policy group is pushing us in a certain direction and it's... I guess it can be painful, but it has its benefits.

Sure, sure. No, no, definitely.

[chuckle]

We're fighting with the engineers. But this is not what I mean by legitimacy. [laughter]

Don't mention the word epistemology. [chuckle] Great, okay. Thanks so much. I'll stop my timer.