

Theme: Transitions to Sustainability

Panel: Energy Transformations, Energy Epistemics, and Governance – the role of the Social Sciences and Humanities

Abstract Proposal: “The Social Sciences and Humanities in the EU’s Horizon 2020”

An energy system transition is not purely technocratic. The transformation from a resource over-exploiting to an attentive and sustainable society is most notably a social and cultural question. Therefore the embedding of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) in energy research seems highly relevant to achieve the EU’s ambitious energy policy targets for 2030. The 8th Research Framework Program of the EU – Horizon 2020 – follows a twofold approach; besides the 6th Societal Challenge “Europe in a Changing World – Inclusive, Innovative and Reflective Societies”, SSH is also integrated as a cross-cutting issue in all other Societal Challenges, including “Secure, Clean and Efficient Energy”. So far the realization of interdisciplinary energy research projects including SSH are limited especially due to a lack of guidance. Researchers, National Contact Points as well as evaluators of potential research projects require mechanisms and an implementation plan to act upon. An additional perspective I want to draw attention towards are the different practices of knowledge production, the various epistemic cultures and understandings of a science-society relation relevant to the respective discipline, which may also be an impeding factor for interdisciplinary research projects between classical energy research and the SSH.

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