

Exploring the Role of Values in RRI for Energy Systems

7 – 11 January 2019 @Oort

The European Commission proposed 'Responsible Research and Innovation' (RRI) as a scheme for making science and innovation processes within its member states more societally responsive. The goal of this workshop was to develop an understanding of RRI for energy systems, i.e. to propose an approach for the governance of technological development and innovation in energy systems in line with public values. By bringing together scholars from a wide range of disciplines from the social sciences and humanities (SSH), the workshop sought to build a scholarly community able to develop a broad understanding of the implication of RRI for energy systems.

Taking the role of values in RRI for energy systems as an entry point was instrumental for initiating a dialogue among researchers working within scholarly traditions that do not often collaborate. This led to thorough discussions of some key concepts such as "values" or "responsibility". The goal was not to reach a consensus, but to understand basic misunderstandings between disciplines. A key contribution of the workshop was to distinguish descriptive approaches to values (usually adopted by social scientists) that consider that values can be assessed empirically, from normative approaches (more common in philosophy and ethics) that consider values as prescriptive principles.

Workshop participants made advances on several questions relating to values in RRI for energy systems:

- Conceptual clarification on the meaning of values and attempts to synthesize social psychological and ethical approaches to value in RRI for energy system
- Developing and using new approaches to identify and assess values related to the design and transformation of energy systems
- Analysing the current role of values in the governance of energy systems and proposing approaches to integrate values in the responsible governance of energy systems.

The workshop will result in the publication of a special issue on RRI for energy systems, collecting a series of papers based on ideas initiated during the workshop. Most of these papers will be co-authored by scholars who had not collaborated previously. Furthermore, an online platform has been established (website and Google drive) for this newly formed community to share ideas.

The format of the workshop enabled exchanges between scholars from different backgrounds. Lectures and seminars during the morning sessions would point to issues and trigger questions which the participants would explore in groups in more interactive afternoon session. During the first two days work was organized in larger interdisciplinary groups that developed a shared understanding over key conceptual issues. In a second phase, these groups split in subgroups tackling specific aspects of the identified issues and questions.

A large part of the interactive sessions was devoted to work on posters designed by the subgroups. This method enabled the participants to share ideas and record them at the same time. Participants then pitched their posters in plenary sessions. The posters were displayed in the lecture room, enabling other participants to comment and make suggestions with sticky notes as new questions emerged. The poster format enabled to record and stabilize ideas as they emerged, which helped participants to focus. Yet it was flexible enough to allow changes and adaptations as the workshop progressed: Some posters (and thus groups) were combined while others split. No participant was harmed during the process.

The workshop culminated in a practitioner's session, where preliminary paper ideas were discussed with invited experts to establish their novelty and practical applicability. We plan to organize future events in collaboration with practitioners, and to refine our ideas based on these interactions.

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