

Procedural justice and fuel poverty in the city

Since several years, on every heating period Warsaw residents have hanged up posters and stroke against high electricity prices. While in Poland fuel poverty concerns mainly poorly insulated, single-family houses in the countryside, in cities the causes of this phenomenon are focused in municipal multi-family buildings and result from high costs of electric heating. Decisions about energy investments and supplies of gas or heating network depend on city authorities and energy companies. The lack of access to cheaper energy sources means that some families must heat their homes with electricity, which can drive them into a financial crisis, and threat older and disabled people's health and life. This often results in difficult choice between cold and humid rooms, or reducing expenses drugs or clothing. This raises the question about the fairness of the procedures and practices that led to such a situation. Therefore, the aim of the study is to explore how fair is the process of designing energy services and whose interests are taken into account in this undertaking. The study will show how decisions about energy services are made in the city, who participates in them, on what terms and how the needs of various social groups are identified. Thanks to this, I hope to determine how the value of the decision-makers hidden behind the technical infrastructure affects the everyday life of the residents.

The study will be based on case study of Warsaw. This city is a location where (1) there were the first citizens' protests in public space related to high energy prices in Poland, (2) there is a huge diversity of housing and ownership conditions of buildings, (3) reprivatization complicates investment activities, and (4) energy system is fully served by two foreign concerns and a state treasury company, independent of the city authorities. Within the project I will analyse secondary documentation (policy documents and legal acts, annual reports of energy companies, reports from public consultations and city council meetings, operational instructions of urban institutions, data about energy access) and conduct interviews with urban officers, national administration, energy companies, district officers, local organisations and residents. Moreover, I plan to conduct study visits in the locations where conflicts related to unequal access occurred. Then, MaxQDA programme will be used for analysis and interpretation of the secondary and primary data (interviews transcripts, notes from study visits and visual documentation).

In this research I would like to analyse the influence of urban policy procedures on fuel poverty distribution, combine it with the concept of justice using qualitative approach, which better explains motivations and decision making processes in urban policy. I will present results in academic journal article as well as during national and international conference. The crucial conclusions will be also shared in a substantial policy brief addressed to decisionmakers and officers responsible for fuel poverty mitigation policies in Polish cities.