



Investigating the Regional and Individual Drivers of the Support for Renewable Energy Transition: The Role of Severe Material Deprivation

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Abstract Clean energy transition underpins the European Energy strategy with ambitious objectives for Renewable Energy Technologies (RET) deployment. Yet, social support remains a significant barrier to accelerating the energy transition. Existing studies have examined wide-ranging social-psychological factors that can affect support for RETs but have failed to address key local barriers. This study aims to illuminate regional characteristics that can influence social support for energy alternatives by assessing public support for two emerging renewables, hydrogen and biomethane, in three different EU countries, the Netherlands, Spain and Greece. We combine our micro-data with EU regional indicators to extend our model beyond known individual-level factors and test the effects of higher-scale antecedents covering regional development, poverty and social exclusion statistics. Our multilevel regression analysis reveals that severe material deprivation plays a key role in social support for RETs. In particular, our results suggest that people living in regions with elevated poverty levels are less likely to support such energy systems. This finding is consistent for both the renewables examined in the three EU countries studied. Our research offers significant and timely insights for accelerating the clean energy transition, while highlighting the need for better strategies to gain and increase social support for RETs.

Keywords Renewable energy acceptance, just transition, energy poverty, regional factors

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