

Abstract Title:

**Energy poverty and STS**

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**Abstract:**

This presentation will try to analyze the institutional changes that emerged during the liberalization of the Austrian energy system from 2000 till 2012 and its implications for energy poverty. Energy poverty generally occurs when a private house hold has to spend more than ten percent of its monthly budget for adequate energy services and is therefore connected with the level of income, the build infrastructure and the development of energy prices. The transition of the Austrian energy system developed in combination with a co-evolution of socio-technical (the introduction of ICT in customer management) and socio-economic (increase of income-poverty) changes that will be in the focus of this paper.

A case study in the Austrian province of Styria showed that the process of liberalization had enormous effects on the forming of new or the adaptation of existing policies directly or indirectly connected with the social consequences of energy poverty. This presentation will try to fathom how the co-evolution of institutional and technical change affected certain low-income groups. The new horizontal management paradigm and legal changes of the liberalized energy system allowed the forming of new customer relation strategies and even the beginning of decentralized micro-generation of power. However, the new possibilities of the liberalization and emergence of new technologies do not equally enable all groups in society to participate. This presentation will therefore provide an analytical perspective on the transition of energy systems in combination with socio-economic developments and socio-ecological inequality.