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Conference theme: Energy and Climate / Energy Poverty

Dreams of Power: Approach toward Shale Gas Exploitation as a Part of Political Culture.

My research object is the process of prospecting of shale gas inaugurated in Poland in 2011. Due to the preliminary stage of my research, in my paper I will present the most important facts about the strategy towards shale gas applied in Poland and discuss the interpretative framework I am going to use in my doctoral dissertation rather than discuss the results.

Reactions to shale gas exploitation, which changes global energy market in an unexpected way and which may influence significantly the future energy scenarios differ across the countries. In the US this technology is widely used, but arguments against hydraulic fracturing as a method which damages environment and water resources are being raised. In Europe the majority of countries remains cautious, and some (France, Bulgaria) even suspended hydraulic fracturing technology as potentially dangerous for health and environment. In this situation, the enthusiasm observed in Poland among politicians from all significant political parties and expressed by the general public, is exceptional.

In my research I am going to present and explain how production and evaluation of knowledge about a new technology (first and foremost about risks and opportunities that it brings) interplay with local political culture and political (national) identity, understood as a commitment to realize (or avoid) certain versions of the future (Jasanoff 2009). At the same time, political culture / identity is not treated as given and stable, but as co-produced by technological choices (Hecht 2009).