

Deliberation in the service of just transition. Evaluation of deliberation in Polish Citizens' Assembly on Energy Costs

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Abstract: Tackling the challenges of climate change and the energy crisis requires public administration to undertake firm actions toward a just transition. Since the policy-making in the area of just transition requires consideration of various problems and concerns numerous social groups, it can be improved by the use of participatory and deliberative tools, such as citizens' assemblies.

To provide expected benefits, deliberative processes should comply with certain criteria formulated in the literature (Gutmann, Thompson 2004, Cohen 2005, Fishkin 2009, Gastil et al. 2012). However, there are still very few studies evaluating the practical implementation of deliberation within citizens' assemblies and similar processes (Knobloch et al. 2013, Farrell et al. 2013, Suiter et al. 2016).

Thus, the aim of the study is to (1) evaluate deliberation in a citizens' assembly with the use of an evaluation model formulated by Gastil et al. (2012), (2) identify the causes of (non)fulfilment of specific evaluation criteria, and (3) identify elements of design or implementation of the assembly which could be improved to raise the quality of the deliberation.

The research will be based on the case study of the First Polish Citizens' Assembly on Energy Costs, organised in 2022. The case study will be conducted with the use of desk research analysis, participatory observation of deliberation process, in-depth interviews and focus groups interviews. Desk research analysis is aimed to investigate the design of the deliberation, while the aim of participatory observation is to analyse its implementation. The interviews, conducted with various groups of actors participating in the assembly (assembly members, stakeholders, organisers and observers, who are experts on deliberative democracy) are aimed to complement the findings of desk research and participatory observation.