

The 2022 energy and inflationary crises: Data, experiences and opinions of Spanish energy vulnerable households

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Abstract-

The 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine has caused a profound socio-economic impact in Europe. The EU and its Member States implemented different mitigation strategies in this energy and inflationary crisis context.

However, European households' situation and response to these shocking crises were unknown when these policies were implemented. This paper aims to shed light on what this emergency has meant for vulnerable groups by focusing on the impact of energy poverty on their socio-economic condition. The study explores the situation of the households assisted by the Spanish Red Cross using a mixed methodology of quantitative (primary data survey, N=1557) and qualitative (focus groups, N=45) research. Thus, this article combines data and experiences of these vulnerable communities with opinions from the NGO technical staff and experts from academia.

The results unveil complex and ambivalent circumstances concerning energy vulnerability in this population. Their most pressing problem is the inability to maintain thermal comfort at home in winter and summer. These two seasonal faces of energy poverty are linked to the poor quality of their dwellings and energy services. Moreover, other contributing factors are their socio-economic situation and the 2022 high energy prices, which pushed more than 90% of them to cut off or reduce heating consumption during the 2022–2023 winter. Finally, this paper highlights how this population employs different coping strategies affecting their quality of life. Eventually, the paper's findings and recommendations might support relevant stakeholders in addressing energy poverty during emergencies, thus contributing to pursuing a just energy transition.

Index Terms- Energy poverty; Lived experience; Fuel poverty; Energy vulnerability; Energy crisis; Mixed methods

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