

From LPG to firewood – progress or setback in the energy transition in Brazil

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In the context of the climate crisis, the energy transition has been a key topic in society as well as in academia and research on it has gained increasing prominence in recent years. The energy transition, normally associated with the shift from the less sustainable and inefficient energy sources toward low-carbon sources, must also consider a broader spectrum of political, social, environmental and economic changes, and therefore must be more inclusive.

In Brazil, millions of people use solid biomass fuel, such as firewood, mainly for cooking, due to the lack of financial conditions to acquire Liquefied Petroleum Gas canister (LPG), in a clear setback in the energy transition. At the same time, this setback is intrinsically linked to the multidimensional phenomenon of energy poverty, increasing the challenges to face deprivation and the lack of access to energy among the most vulnerable population.

In that regard, considering that access to energy is emancipatory, that cooking is essential and can be considered a basic issue for the survival and well-being of the population, this study aims to examine the content of reports about cooking with firewood instead of LPG and how views about the problem have been brought up, as well as its possible causes, consequences, and solutions are communicated to society.

Thus, based on the content analysis of reports from four online newspapers, the setback in the energy transition that is taking place in Brazil was discussed. To achieve the objective of the research, archive research and content analysis were used as a methodology, reaching a total of 361 reports in the final sample for the period from January 1, 2019, to July 31, 2021.

It was concluded that the main factors found in the reports and disclosed to the interlocutors, and that possibly have led to this setback in the energy transition process, are economic, political, and due to the health crisis due to Covid-19 pandemic.