

1.078 Supporting decision-making processes through the analysis of air quality policies acceptability.

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Abstract:

The SEFIRA (Socio Economic Implications For Individual Responses to Air Pollution Policies in EU27) EU FP7 project has been conceived in order to support the review and implementation of the air quality legislation, improving its effectiveness and acceptability. This task has been achieved through the coordination of trans-disciplinary scientific and socio-economic resources. Air quality policies are not implemented in a social vacuum; they require a continuous interaction with individuals, often implying significant changes in their lifestyles. In addition, the extent to which people endorse a policy is crucial in determining its effectiveness and success both at national and regional scales. However, while there is a broad consensus that public acceptability affects both the effectiveness and success of environmental policies, acceptability has not been fully studied and internalised in the models used to support the policies' adoption. Exploring different quality and quantitative approaches, we found that discrete choice analysis might offer a comparative advantage in supporting the decision-making process in particular when the implementation process involves behavioural changes. Discrete Choice Experiments (DCEs) allow investigating people's preferences and their potential behaviour, identifying variables affecting individual choices between two or more "choice alternatives". Within SEFIRA a choice experiment has been conducted, based on 16.100 interviews administered in seven European countries. In this experiment the social aspects related to individual choices have been taken into considerations and socio-economic data of respondents have been used, allowing us to perform a segmentation analysis and highlighting socio-economic differences in the air quality acceptability across the various countries. The results of our analysis suggest that the willingness of citizens to change their behaviour might be larger than previously estimated. In addition, differences in policy acceptability by country and socio economic structure of the population are highlighted.

