Energy poverty in Belgium: context and associated vulnerabilities (first results)

Françoise Bartiaux\textsuperscript{1}, Rosie Day\textsuperscript{2} and Christophe Vandeschrick\textsuperscript{1}

\textsuperscript{1}Univ Louvain (BE) \textsuperscript{2}Univ Birmingham (UK)

Energy vulnerability in Europe
DG ENERGY, Brussels, 27\textsuperscript{th} February 2014
Outline

• Brief presentation of the 2GENDERS project
• Estimation of the proportion living in energy poverty in Belgium (GGP data)
• Energy poverty and associated vulnerabilities
Brief presentation of the 2GENDERS project
2GENDERS research project

• **2GENDERS**: Generation and Gender Energy Deprivation: Realities and Social policies
• Funded in 2013-2017 by BELSPO
• 4 Partners:
  - UcL: F. Bartiaux, C. Vandeschrick, A. Baudaux, C. Luyckx, N. Frogneux, O. Servais
  - U of Antwerp: S. Oosterlynck, B. Delbeke
  - U of Mons: W. Lahaye, P. Jamoulle, A. Sibeni
  - U of Birmingham: R. Day
2GENDERS project: 5 WPs

1. Coordination with stakeholders, policy recommendations
2. Identification of the population in energy poverty in Belgium (Quantitative analyses)
3. Energy poverty and other vulnerabilities: practices and meanings (Quantitative and qualitative analyses)
4. Energy justice for a + cohesive society
5. Dissemination activities (policy briefs, training for social workers)
Estimation of the proportion living in energy poverty in Belgium (GGP data)

Results before possible weighting!
Welcome to the GGP

The GGP is a Longitudinal Survey of 18-79 year olds in 19 countries that aims to improve our understanding of the various factors - including public policy and programme interventions - which affect the relationships between parents and children (generations) and between partners (gender). A broad array of topics including fertility, partnership, the transition to adulthood, economic activity, care duties and attitudes are covered by the survey. The accompanying contextual database (cdb) holds data on legal norms and regulations, social norms, measures of welfare state policies and institutions as well as general economic and cultural indicators. You can also access the data via our Online Analysis tool.

- http://www.ggp-i.org/bhhb
Participating countries

- **Currently Wave 1 data are available for 16 countries:** Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation

- **Currently Wave 2 data are available for 6 countries:** Bulgaria, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary and the Netherlands
### 2 variables to build an EP variable

| Can afford keeping your home adequately warm? | Unable to pay utility bills (electricity, water, gas, ...)?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>7,1% (493)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td><strong>1,4% (96)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \chi^2 = 63,456 \ (p=0,000) \]

**IN5c:** Has your household been in arrears at any time during the past 12 months, that is unable to pay as scheduled utility bills, such as for electricity, water, gas...?

**IN6c:** There are some things many people cannot afford even if they would like them. Can I just check whether your household can afford keeping your home adequately warm, supposing you wanted them?
### A 3<sup>rd</sup> variable to build an EP variable

Thinking of your household’s total income, is your household able to make ends meet (IN4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Arrears: yes</th>
<th>Adequat. warm: no</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very difficult</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rather difficult</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rather easy</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very easy</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>460</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9.1% in energy poverty
Comparison GGP / SILC

GGP: 9.1% in ‘energy poverty’ (2009)

SILC: 14.7% in ‘energy difficulty’ (2011)
Estimated proportion in ‘energy poverty’ (GGP) and in ‘energy difficulty’ (SILC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GGP</th>
<th>SILC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brussels</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flanders</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallonia</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GGP/SILC: Different variables, different definitions (+sampling error)
Energy poverty and associated vulnerabilities
Among those in EP (not in EP)

- 38.6% problem with its structure (14.2%)
- 25.0% too small a dwelling (10.2%)
- 16.0% problem with its light (too dark) (8.7%)
- 27.3% noise (neighbours/street) (17.0%)

HH49: Do you have any problems with the following aspects of your accommodation and its neighbourhood?
Social isolation

Among those in EP (not in EP)

- 22.3% dwelling too far from family (11.4%)
- 18% have not enough support if problem (7%)
- 20.9% have a general sense of emptiness (8.5%)
- 28.5% have not a lot of people that I can count on completely (13,8%)
- 13.3% often feel rejected (3.9%)
- 13.6% have not enough people that I feel close to (6.4%)

HH49I, HE25a, HE25b, HE25d, HE25e, HE25f
Social isolation (cont’d)

Among those in EP (not in EP)

- 45.8% cannot afford **having friends or family for a drink or meal** at least once a month (8.2%)

**IN6e:** There are some things many people cannot afford even if they would like them. Can I just check whether your household can afford having friends or family for a drink or meal at least once a month, supposing you wanted them?
Social isolation (cont’d)

Among those in EP (not in EP)

- 40.2% haven’t spoken to anyone about their experiences and feelings (39.6%, non sig.)
- 40.6% haven’t listened to someone about his/her experiences and feelings (36.2%, sig. at 5%)

HE18: Over the last 12 months, have you told to anyone about your personal experiences and feelings?
HE21: Over the last 12 months, has anyone talked to you about his/her personal experiences and feelings?
Mobility

Among those in EP (not in EP)

- 18.2% lack of services and shops (13.5%)
- 21.8% lack of leisure spaces like parks or playgrounds (12.9%)
- 15.8% lack of public transport (15.0%; not sig.)

HH49: Do you have any problems with the following aspects of your accommodation and its neighbourhood?
Among those in EP (not in EP)

- 15.7% would like to have a car or a van available for private use but cannot afford it (2.6%)

- 14.1% would like to have an internet connection but cannot afford it (2.6%)

**IN3:** If you do not have an item, please indicate whether you would like to have it but cannot afford it, or do not have it for other reasons.
Health (general)

Among those in EP (not in EP)

- 14.4% are in a (very) bad health in general (3.7%)
- 38.3% have any long-standing illness or chronic condition (22.8%)
- 22.9% are limited in their ability to carry out normal everyday activities because of a physical or mental health problem or a disability (12.8%)
Health (psycho-social)

Among those in EP (not in EP)

- 19.1% often or (almost) always felt depressed (4.7%)
- 16.1% often or (almost) always felt lonely (4.7%)
- 18.4% often or (almost) always felt sad (5.7%)

HE25: I am going to read out some statements about your current experiences. Please indicate for each of them to what extent they have applied to you in the last few weeks?
## A gender effect?

### 1-person household

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In energy poverty?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>85.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>84.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>84.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \chi^2 = 0.199 \ (p=0.655) \]

### Lone-parent family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In energy poverty?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>77.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
<td>74.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td>75.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \chi^2 = 0.379 \ (p=0.538) \]
Very first conclusions
Main results

- From the GGP data (2009): definition of energy poverty, made of 3 variables → 9.1% in Belgium
- + in EP if living alone (15.3%), or heading a 1-parent family (24.9%)
  - Small gender effect (+F) but not statistically significant
Main results (cont’d)

- People living in energy poverty have associated vulnerabilities:
  - Housing
  - Health
  - Social isolation and psycho-social health
  - Mobility
Next steps

- Further analyses of the GGP data
- Comparison of results obtained with GGP data and SILC data
- Exploration of the similarities & complementarities between quantitative results & qualitative data
- Framing the results within the energy justice paradigm
Thank you for your attention!