

Social Equity LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE



JUNE 5 - 7, 2013 - NC STATE UNIVERSITY, RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA

Housing

Social Equity, Social Justice, and Systems Theory in the Administrative State: The Case of Energy Policy

Thursday 3:45 pm; Panel 2

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Abstract: This paper commends the increase in theories of social equity, social justice and administrative justice. However, using energy policy as a case study, the paper proposes a more in-depth linkage of systems theory to social equity and social justice theories. As a complex case, energy policy involves global, national, regional and local policy issues as well as constituting a core component of policy issue networks involving economics, public finance, transportation, housing and community development and environmental policy. Moreover, federal, state and local energy-related policies and agencies are active in energy policy and management, including such distributive and redistributive strategies as public utility regulation, weatherization of homes and businesses, energy tax credits for appliance and transport efficiency and small and minority business development. The Office of Minority Impact and Diversity (OMID), a part of the U.S. Department of Energy, is mandated to assess the socioeconomic impact of energy supply and prices on minorities.

Consequently, systems theory helps to frame and assess the social equity and social justice aspects dimensions of energy policy by directing empirical attention to:

- a) How socioeconomic differences attributable to structural economic inequities retard the entire socioeconomic structure of the U.S. household sector;
- b) How institutional dimensions of energy demand reveal social inequities and justice issues driven by historical patterns of discrimination and segregation;
- c) How spatial dynamics such as urban-suburban-rural demographic and economic activity structure variations in energy supply, demand and cost; and
- d) What policy and administrative interventions have been, and are, evident to address these socioeconomic and institutional variations.

The paper synthesizes nearly twenty years of socioeconomic analysis conducted by David Poyer, Arvind Teotia and Lenneal Henderson at the Argonne National Laboratory.