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SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON THE HOUSEHOLD TRANSITION TO RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES: A RESEARCH DESIGN

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***Abstract:** Energy production and consumption patterns represent one of the greatest political, economic and social challenges the world has faced in recent decades. Although measures to address these challenges have been planned and implemented at global, regional, national and local levels, households remain one of the most important actors in tackling these challenges. In 2022, for example, households accounted for 25.8% of final energy consumption in the EU (with 63.5% of final energy consumption used for heating purposes in the residential sector). In Serbia, the share of household energy consumption in final energy consumption is even higher (40% in 2020). This situation offers a great opportunity to reduce energy intensity, pollutant and greenhouse gas emissions, switch to renewable energy sources (RES) and increase energy self-sufficiency. However, one of the most important questions in this context is how households make the decision to switch to more sustainable heating systems. The term “sustainable heating system” implies an increase in the share of renewable energy sources (RES), more efficient energy use, a reduction in primary energy demand, a lower environmental impact and the promotion of economic feasibility. Although empirical studies on residential heating (as one of the dominant forms of energy use in households) are widespread in the literature, these models have mainly neglected deeper socio-economic and especially cultural factors that influence energy consumption in households. With this in mind, the aim of the paper is to develop a more comprehensive research design to understand the socio-economic and cultural impacts on the process of household transition to renewable energy sources.*

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