



ESRC Future Research Leaders- Mapping Urban Energy Landscapes (MUEL)

Research Summary

How can we achieve a socially just city, which is also low carbon and climate resilient? In this research project we argue that sustainable urbanization will strongly depend on the possibilities offered by actually existing cities. This means looking at the built environment and the people who live on it, specially, how people live in existing cities with different energy sources and different energy systems. For example, even two global and strongly connected cities such as London and Hong Kong may have very different drivers of energy use when energy is used in London to heat buildings and in Hong Kong to cool them. This may affect people's choices and their access to energy, particularly for those who are the poorest in each city. This also means looking at the different processes of energy innovation, and the institutional contexts in which innovation takes place. Underlying the central question of this research is a concern with ensuring that climate change mitigation goals are not prioritised over UN's goal of ensuring energy access for all.

From this perspective, the objective of MUEL is to understand the relationship between energy use, access to services and spatial transformations. The project looks for context-specific pathways to transform the energy system in different cities such as Hong Kong (China), Bangalore (India) or Maputo (Mozambique). This work will help drawing pathways for sustainable development adapted to the specific situation of each city. I am looking away from American and European cities because a lot of academic work has already focused in these regions and I believe there is much to learn from experiences in less researched cities. The project employs different qualitative research methods, including archival research and qualitative interviews with energy innovators and users in each city.