



Understanding urban governance through air pollution policy instruments

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Overview of presentation

Introduction

Policy instruments and air pollution

Method

Preliminary findings

Conclusions



Policy instruments and air pollution in cities

- ▶ Various taxonomies of policy instruments and tools (starting with Hood 1986)
- ▶ Balance between hierarchy, provision and persuasion probably necessary to combat air pollution
- ▶ Choice of instrument can tell us a lot about state-society relations (Lascoumbes and LeGales 2007), 'policy styles' (Howlett 1991) and governance approach (Jordan et al 2005)
- ▶ By extension, the blend of instruments can also indicate types of 'green state' (Eckersley 2004) or 'environmental governance regime' (Duit 2016)
- ▶ Can qualitative study of a subnational government identify **why** it takes a particular green state/EGR approach?



Why cities?

- ▶ Cities are a much more manageable unit of analysis than national governments
- ▶ Opportunity to compare different cities within the same national political system
- ▶ This could help to disaggregate the various factors that lead to the adoption of a particular type of EGR
- ▶ Cities are seriously affected by air pollution and have adopted different types of policy instrument to combat it; these are useful indicators for identifying a particular EGR

Hierarchical regulation

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EXTENDED SMOKELESS COAL AREA

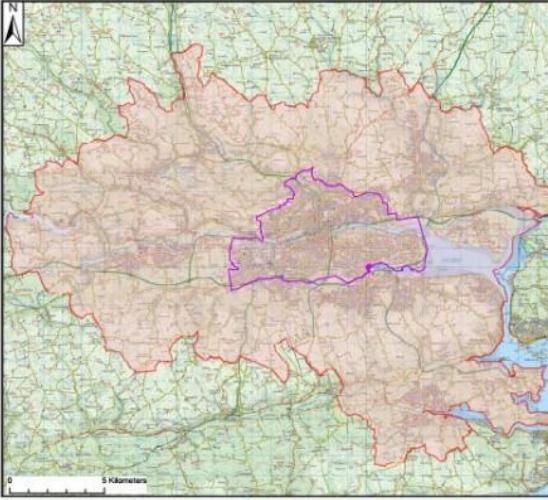
Air Pollution Act (Marketing, Sale, Distribution and Burning of Specified Fuels) Regulations 2012
Specified area of Cork

Legend

- Cork City Council Administrative Boundary
- Cork Smoky Coal Ban Specified Area

It is an offence to burn, sell, market or distribute coal that is not "smokeless" anywhere in Cork City and large parts of Cork County including Ballincollig, Tower, Blarney, Glanmire, Little Island, Monkstown, Passage West and Carrigaline.

For further information on the new regulations, or for clarification of the exact extended area boundary, contact Cork City Council (T: 021 4966222) or Cork County Council (T: 021 4532788). Information and detailed maps are also available on both councils' websites and on www.environ.ie/en/Environment/Atmosphere/AirQuality/SmokyCoalBan



(Re)distributive



Educational



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Research focus

- ▶ How and why might EGRs emerge and evolve within cities? Which (f)actors are influential in their development?
- ▶ Could political party control, and/or public opinion within the city, be important drivers of the type of EGR that a city adopts? Or are broader structural issues (central-local relations and funding, EU regulations) more influential?





Method

- ▶ Two contrasting English cities:
 - ▶ Nottingham – second most deprived city in England, long standing Labour council
 - ▶ Westminster – one of the most affluent boroughs in the country, long standing Conservative council
- ▶ Both operating within the same national and EU legislative framework, and both have poor air quality
- ▶ Qualitative fieldwork interviews with council staff, elected representatives and other local actors
- ▶ Analysis of local strategies and policy documents

Initial findings

- ▶ Contrasting drivers and approaches to air quality:
 - ▶ Nottingham views air quality as a *compliance* issue – do the minimum required to meet EU legal thresholds
 - ▶ Westminster much more pro-active; air pollution policy is evidence-based and an important *quality of life* issue. Also supports London Mayor action, e.g. on ULEZ
- ▶ Both using a blend of different policy types – but often for different reasons
 - ▶ Nottingham introduced a parking levy to cut congestion and raise money to extend the tram network, not improve air quality
 - ▶ Westminster introduced ‘no-idling zones’ and a diesel parking surcharge; it is much more explicit about the health impact of pollution



For example:

► In **Nottingham**:

“It is only the existence of EU directives on air quality, coupled with legal action by activist lawyers at Client Earth to force government compliance through action in the Supreme Court, that has got us to where we are now”

“What we’re required to do is fulfil a statutory duty and discharge statutory functions... if you want to do more than that, you then need teams and part of the organisation to make bids for funding and we just do not have that capacity.”

► In **Westminster**

“The council has promised to bring in road closures, ban polluting vehicles, replace old boilers and plant gardens around schools. The zones will be funded by Westminster City Council’s D-charge — a surcharge of £2.45 an hour for pre-2015 diesel vehicles parking in areas of the city.”



Concluding thoughts

- ▶ Still early days with limited data analysis so far
- ▶ Municipalities do have agency in determining air pollution policy, even in England
- ▶ This agency is tempered by local political factors and priorities
- ▶ This suggests local democracy is alive and well, but:
 - ▶ Key issue of capacity (fiscal and civic) for action highlighted by the contrast between Nottingham and Westminster
 - ▶ Regulation may be unpopular in those areas where people have more pressing concerns. Will a reliance on persuasion and distributive initiatives be sufficient to combat air pollution?



Questions?

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