Global energy precarity:
the (un)domestication of energy deprivation

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Situating 'energy poverty'

- **Analytical divides: global South – global North; developed – developing**

- **In the global North**, problems of cold and energy-inefficient homes in particular, with their associated impacts for well-being and health. Focused on affordability.

- **In the global South**, the inability to access modern (clean) energy services in the home. Focused on the supply side and the need to expand electricity grids and the development of micro-generation from renewable energy

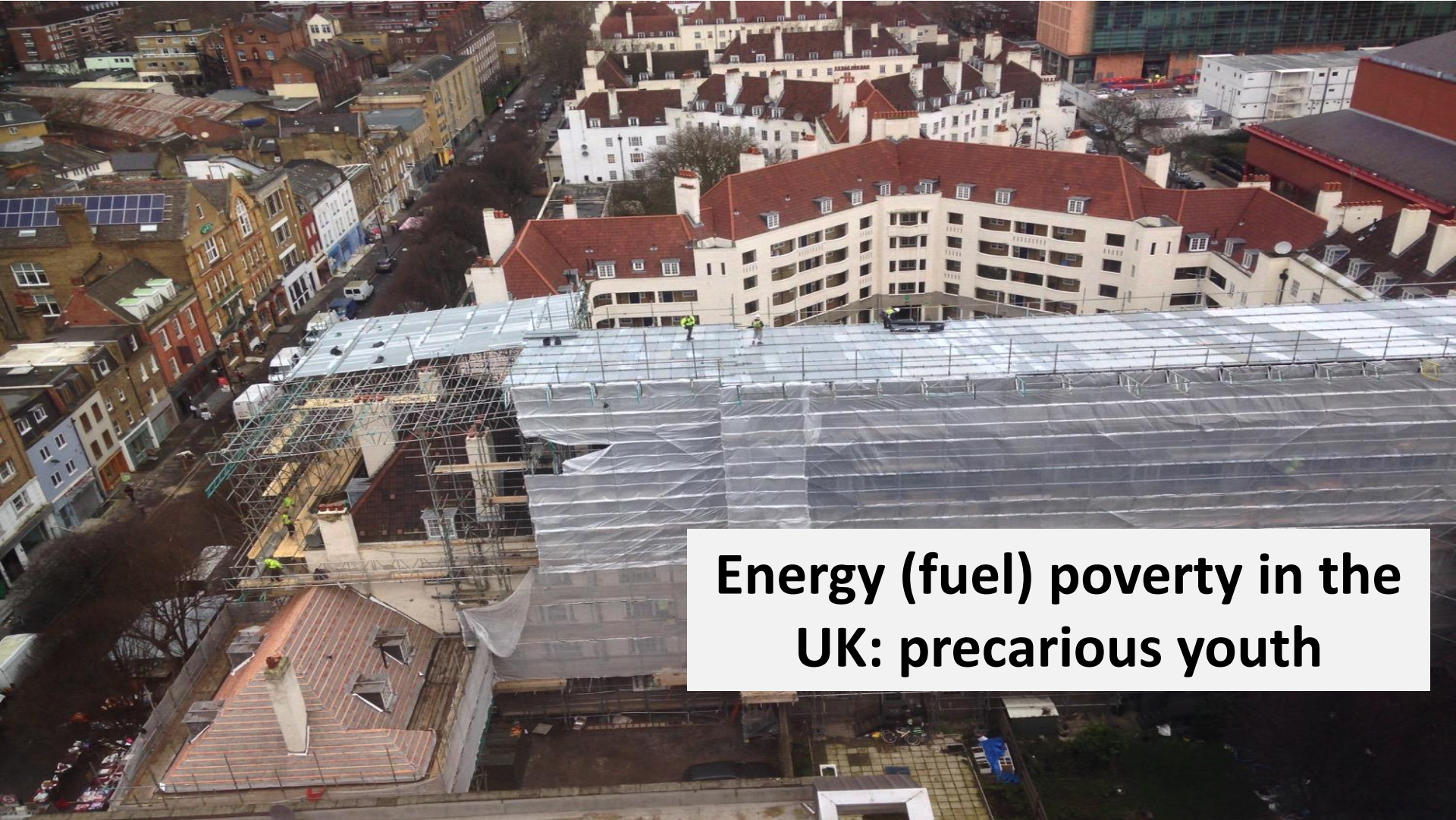# Global understanding of energy vulnerability (risk) factors

Factor	Driving force	Sphere of action
Access	Poor availability of energy carriers appropriate to meet household needs.	External/internal
Affordability	High ratio between cost of fuels and household incomes, including role of tax systems or assistance schemes. Inability to invest in the construction of new energy infrastructures.	External/internal
Flexibility	Inability to move to a form of energy service provision that is appropriate to household needs.	Internal/external
Energy efficiency	Disproportionately high loss of useful energy during energy conversions in the home.	Internal
Needs	Mismatch between household energy requirements and available energy services; for social, cultural, economic or health reasons.	Internal/external
Practices	Lack of knowledge about support programmes or ways of using energy efficiently in the home.	Internal/external

The inability to secure adequate energy services (such as heating, lighting, cooling) lies at the heart of the condition both in the global South and the global North

Bouzarovski and Petrova (2015)

(Un)domesticating energy poverty

- **Energy poverty** is often tackled as a domestic issue via politics of household responsibilisation

- **Energy poverty** research often conceptualises the 'home' as apolitical and disconnected from socio-environmental systems in which materials and energy are produced, transformed and interchanged

- Support provided on recognition: **who are the deserving and non-deserving energy poor?**

- **Is energy poverty indeed a domestic issue?**

Energy (fuel) poverty in the UK: precarious youth

Hundreds of thousands living in squalid rented homes in England

Estimated 338,000 properties rented by under-35s hazardous and likely to cause harm

Rented housing so squalid it is likely to leave tenants requiring medical attention is being endured by hundreds of thousands of young adults in England, an analysis of government figures has revealed.

Rats, mouldy walls, exposed electrical wiring, leaking roofs and broken locks are among problems blighting an estimated 338,000 homes rented by people under 35 that have been deemed so hazardous they are likely to cause harm.
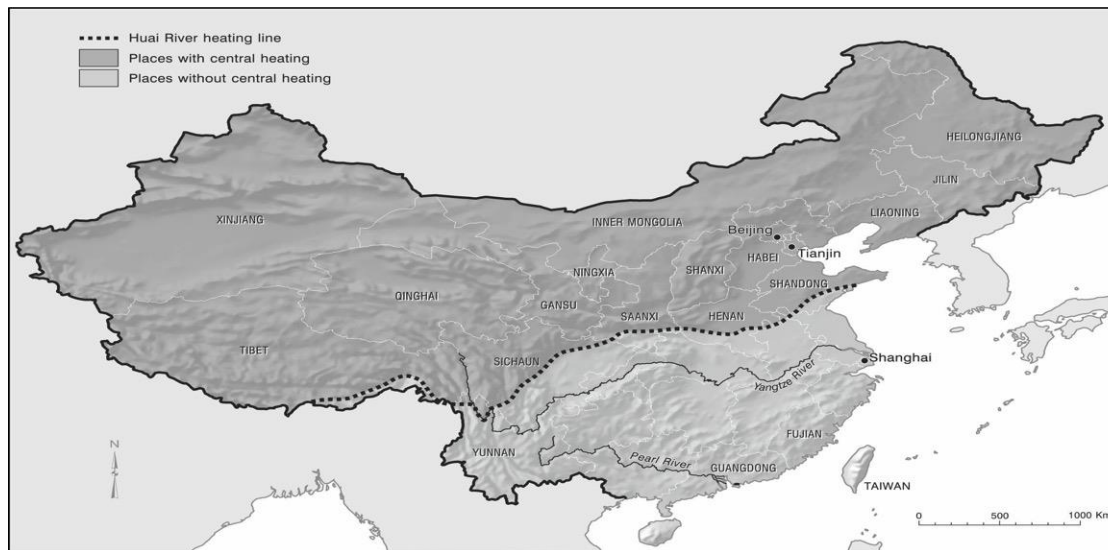
Energy deprivation among young adults is 'institutionalised and normalised by the widespread socio-political expectation that it is acceptable for young people to inhabit low-quality housing during the transitional and temporary period of 'youth' (Petrova 2017: 10)

- **In Greece,** austerity rendered 'new energy poor' include a variety of spatial settings – in urban and peri-urban locations alike – that are constitutive of multiple material sites while being dependent upon them

- For both the urban and peri-urban 'new energy poor' the importance of the urban-rural interface is a locus where dynamic energy coping practices tend to occur

Energy precarity in China:
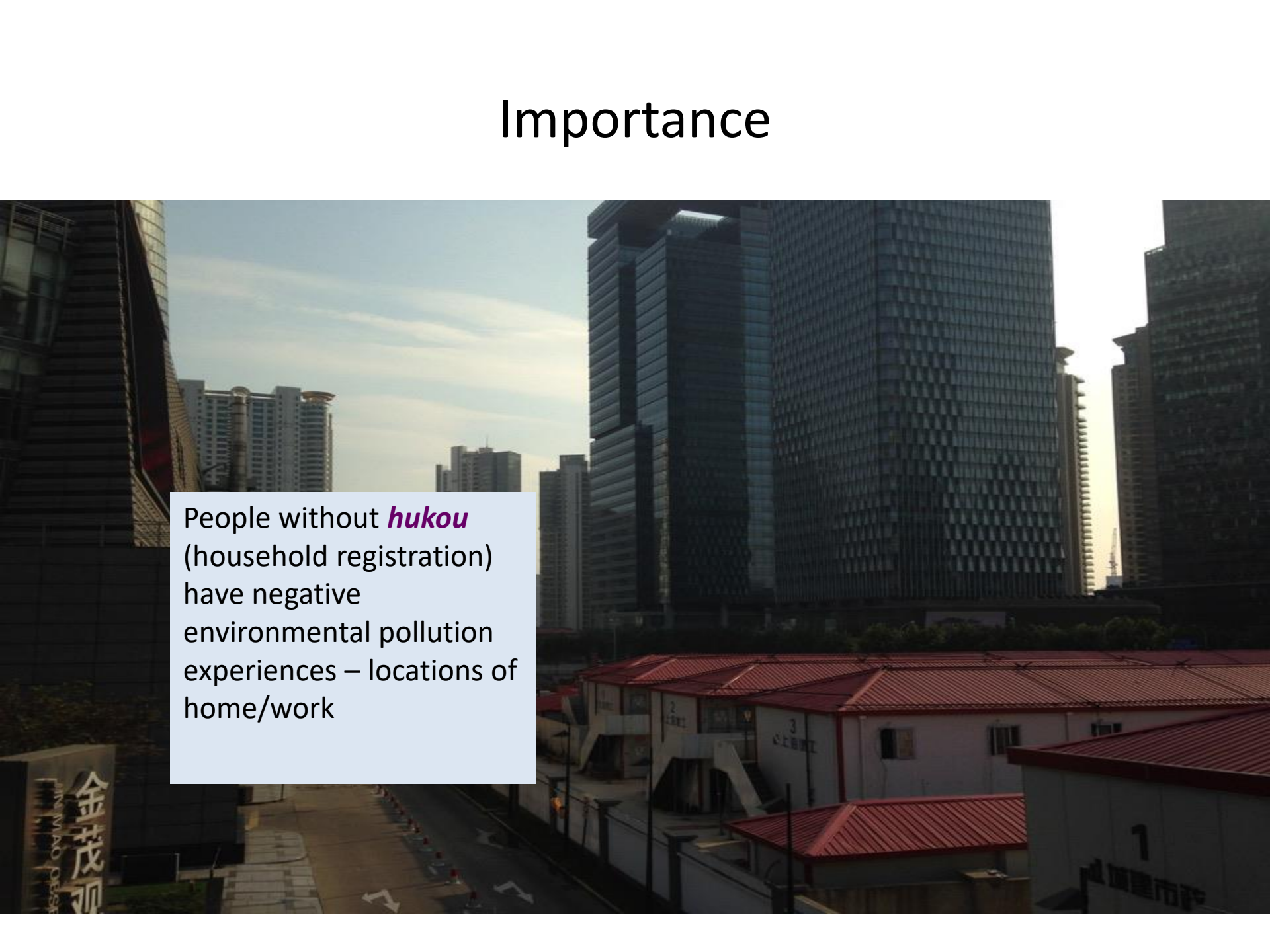# In-between citizenship and geographical divides
(Browne, Petrova and Brockett, 2017)

'The Heating Line' - drawn along the Qin Mountains and the Huai River

1950s Qin-Huai River policy thermal comfort provision: free winter heating for homes and offices in cities (subsidies and district heating) north of the Huai River;

Importance

People without *hukou* (household registration) have negative environmental pollution experiences – locations of home/work

South Africa: The primacy of electricity

- The production of electric lives
- The neglect of non-electric energy
- The symbolic and material power of the grid:

  "electricity is so important in this country, because it symbolizes access to *services that are useful* and that *the privileged enjoy*" (Interview, Government, emphasis added)

- Energy precarity in the municipal arsenal

Conclusions: implications for research and policy

- **Energy deprivation** is a result of uneven spatial and social implications of the production of broader socio-economic and political inequalities outside the home

- **Energy deprivation** depends on energy transition pathways, and therefore should be addressed as part of them

- **Energy and non-energy related measures** at neighbourhood, community and city level could be effective in addressing the issue

- **The benefits of targeting energy deprivation are systemic** and beyond carbon and energy savings

Source: http://www.history.com/topics/hurricane-katrina

Thank you

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