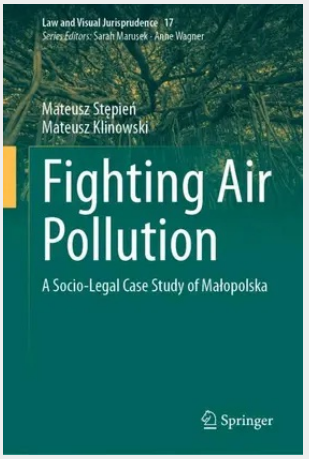
Stepien / Klinowski

Fighting Air Pollution

A Socio-Legal Case Study of Ma¿opolska



This book offers a comprehensive exploration of the struggle against smog in Malopolska, a province in the EU member state Poland. Although there is extensive literature on pollution, the perspective offered by the social sciences is rarely used to address this critical issue.
Pursuing a socio-legal approach, the book examines the social and political processes behind the implementation of parts of the EU's anti-air pollution policies and regulations. The case of Malopolska is particularly interesting for two reasons. First, because the region – and its capital, Kraków – were once confronted with severe smog, which led to the premature deaths of thousands of citizens. Despite the tremendous scale of the problem, public awareness remained surprisingly low. Second, because in the 2010s, a massive social movement emerged that pressured the local government to introduce two pioneering measures: a total ban on coal and wood heating in Kraków, and a gradual ban on inefficient furnaces in the rest of the region.
The book provides a detailed account of these processes and assesses the effectiveness of the attendant measures, thereby contributing to the broader literature on effective tools for cleaner air. It offers a valuable resource for anyone interested in addressing complex societal challenges through the law, and for all agencies involved in combating environmental issues, especially through the social sciences insights it shares.

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