

SUMMARY

Spontaneous Interventions in Residential Fires

Previous research on the effectiveness of the emergency services has shown that ordinary citizens often play an important role when it comes to detecting crises and alerting or assisting with evacuation. In the event of a residential fire, the time dimension is crucial, and if spontaneous actions by passersby, neighbors, and others in the vicinity can reduce the time between the detection of the fire and the start of firefighting, they can play an important role in the work towards the zero vision for residential fires. Despite this, the extent and type of spontaneous interventions have not been significantly studied. This means that it is currently unknown whether spontaneous interventions are more common in certain areas and if socio-economic/demographic differences and trust between people and public authorities can help explain potential differences between different geographical areas.

Purpose and goals

The purpose of the project is therefore to investigate the role of neighbors and passersby in the detection of residential fires, to examine how this differs between different municipalities and residential areas in Sweden, and to determine if there is a connection between local community trust and intervention in residential fires.

The specific questions the project aims to answer are:

1. What role do passersby and neighbors play in the detection of fires?
2. How does the behavior of neighbors and passersby differ in different types of areas?
3. What societal factors affect the role of neighbors and passersby in detecting fires?
4. Is there a connection between municipal levels of trust and intervention in residential fires?

To achieve the study's purpose, we will combine data from various sources (including MSB's incident reports and the survey study Trust Barometer). The Trust Barometer is a survey study with a representative sample from 49 municipalities, regularly conducted by the Center for Civil Society Research at Marie Cederschiöld University. We will request incident reports from the emergency services in the 49 municipalities covered by the Trust Barometer. The results will be published both in the form of scientific articles written in English and a shorter popular science report written in Swedish.

From a societal perspective, the results can be very significant. The proposed study will provide increased knowledge about the role of neighbors and passersby in detecting and extinguishing residential fires and provide a better understanding of how actions differ between different places and within different groups. This will also give us a basis for reasoning about how to best support and encourage this type of spontaneous volunteering. We will disseminate the results both within the international research community and to emergency services, authorities, politicians, and other stakeholders at both national and municipal levels. To reach this target audience, we believe that the popular science report could be a valuable contribution as it can reach a different audience than scientific articles written in English.

Project information:

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