



JUST TRANSITIONS: MAPPING PLURAL PERSPECTIVES FROM CIVIL SOCIETY IN BRAZIL AND GERMANY

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INTRODUCTION TO THE MAPPING STUDY AND MY POSITIONALITY



Much of climate action is trusted to the States, as we can see in the multilateral climate governance system at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change – UNFCCC, where the global commitments to tackle the climate crisis are consensually sought to later guide local climate measures. There, only State actors have a final say. Under this arena, grassroots climate groups, Indigenous Peoples, as well as oil and coal companies, all fall under the category of “observers” to the process, meaning they/we can watch, advocate, and make limited interventions on the way governments negotiate everyone’s future, but not directly make decisions.

It was after years of “observing” the UNFCCC process, alongside climate and social justice coalitions such as the **Women and Gender Constituency**, that I was able to understand some critical points underlying the global talks, such as the just energy transition issue. The interests at play within the largest United Nations (UN) conference are tremendously diverse and oftentimes conflictive with the very climate goals stated in the Paris Agreement. How can, for example, the UN allow that fossil fuels, mining and nuclear lobbyists observe such negotiations when they are representing the sectors most responsible for damaging ecosystems and escalating the climate crisis? According to Global Witness, at COP26 in 2021, fossil fuel representatives made up the biggest delegation altogether, surpassing any country team in Glasgow. This conflict of interest has been tirelessly addressed by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and social movements attending climate conferences in a non-succeeded attempt that the UN should be responsive to peoples’ claims over for-profit industries.

I want to explicit my positionality, as well as lay some observations drawn from my years working with NGOs, International Organizations (IOs), research institutions, including my voluntary and activist work with collectives, as well as from my participation in the climate conferences. At COPs, I have witnessed how the variety of actors falling under “UNFCCC observers” were not only representing opposing agendas among themselves, but also how complex and heterogenous the civil society organizations working for climate justice were. Thus, the effort to align demands and strategies for climate justice among such diverse groups of society and NGOs is challenging.

My interest in working with civil society groups comes originally from inspiring classes on social movements and civil society theories taken at University of Brasilia and Maastricht University. In between and after those studies, I experienced firsthand what it is to work with IOs and NGOs and to be a part of feminist groups and climate justice movements, in Brazil and in Germany. Over these years transitioning between paid jobs, academic dives, and activism around gender and climate justice, I have been more and more convinced that the solutions for the climate crisis can only come from intersectional work and peoples’ power. Besides, the limits between the research, activism and “project management” work that I have been performing have become increasingly blurred over the years.

The following mapping study does not fit masculine academic ideals of “neutrality”, as I am aware and transparent about how my past work and activist experiences and current positionality as a queer Brazilian young adult living and working in

Berlin, Germany, impacts the approaches I take up on this research. This study is not exhaustive, as it is based on online surveys voluntarily answered by the following identified and anonymous groups. Through this study, I start a mapping of civil society actors which are working on and for just energy transition and shed light on the diverse existent concepts on what a fair, post-fossil fuel era can look like. Valid to point that my delimitation of civil society actors included all collective actors which did not pertain to the government, the private sector nor the media. However, I left it up to the survey participants to self-identify themselves and choose whether they fit into my criteria.

With this mapping, I hope to contribute to the work of NGOs, social movements, think tanks, research institutions, cooperatives, workers' unions, and all interested sectors committed to implementing a just transition in Brazil, Germany and beyond. I am curious to see the pathways the just transition will take in the following years, and the ways civil society will shape and realise fair benefits from such complex, structural transformation. I hope you enjoy the reading!

How to read the following pages

The mapping exercise in the next pages shows identified civil society organisations from Brazil and Germany which are working on/for just transition. The maps include descriptive information on each identified and 1 anonymous organisations, based on their self-identifications provided through the survey, as well my own research through their public webpages. The descriptions include their location, their main constituents, belongings, the sector(s) they work on.

The pages following the maps include some quotes adapted from the responses I got from the surveys responded by each identified organization. The quotes include their responses to the questions:

- **Is your group/collective/organisations's work concerned with energy justice?**
- **For your group/collective/organisation, what is just energy transition?**
- **Is your group/collective/organisation working towards a just energy transition?**
- **What are the main challenges to the just energy transition in your context?**
- **What are the strategies and/or platforms your group/collective/organisation is working with in the lead up to the just energy transition?**

The quotes were adapted to create a more narrative style. The language originally provided through the survey answers were kept in the adaptation as much as possible.



BRASIL



1 Instituto Verdeluz / Fortaleza

- Grassroots collective and NGO, composed mainly of women and traditional communities.
- Works with coastal communities impacted by the construction of offshore wind power plants, and accompanies the licensing process for large solar farms that require the deforestation of Caatinga vegetation areas.
- Part of the climate and environmental justice movements. →

www.verdeluz.org

BRASIL

4 WWF-Brasil / Brasília

- International NGO, composed mainly of men, women and young people, part of the environmental movement.
- Works at territorial, national, regional and international levels, with analysis of energy supply alternatives, both renewable fuels and, electricity, as well as with the impacts caused by the use of fossil fuels, mainly oil and coal; promotes advocacy in the executive, legislative and judiciary, especially at the federal level, proposing public policies for the adoption of renewable sources and the end of fossil fuels, as well as engaging actors.
- Works with biomass, analyzing the production of biofuels in agroforestry systems; with the use of biogas in rural areas and landfills; for the progressive elimination of fossil fuels with stimulus for the progressive elimination of oil, ending the new exploratory frontiers, with emphasis on the Foz do Amazonas and Abrolhos regions; stimulus for a just transition from mineral coal in the south of Brazil to other renewable alternatives, considering the impacts on employment; hydroelectric plants, proposing hydroelectric plants, proposing alternatives to the adoption of small and large hydroelectric plants, analyzing the impacts of dams in hydrographic basins; solar, implementing pilots and discussing regional public policies for access to energy in isolated communities in the Amazon Rainforest; green hydrogen, analyzing alternatives for the production of green hydrogen through solar, wind and biomass. →

www.wwf.org.br

3 Central Única dos Trabalhadores – CUT Brasil / Sao Paulo

- Country-wide worker's union whose main members are Black/Afro-descendent people, men, women and youth.
- Members are workers in the fossil fuel, wind and solar sectors. Works at national, regional and international levels. →

www.cut.org.br

5 Grupo de Análise de Geopolítica Energética / Santana do Livramento, RS

- Research group working at national, regional and international levels, composed of Black people, Afro-descendants, LGBTQIA+, men, women and young people.
- Works with research on atomic, biogas, biomass, fossil fuels, geothermal, hydroelectric, solar and wind energies. →

www.quadpodcast.org

2 Instituto E+ Transição Energética / Rio de Janeiro

- NGO and think tank, operating at national, regional and international levels, without a specific identity.
- Works with advocacy, research and innovation on atomic energy, biogas, biomass, fossil fuels, hydroelectric, solar and wind power. →

www.emaisenergia.org



→ 1 Instituto Verdeluz / Fortaleza



Access to energy for low-income communities, since energy prices are rising in the global market, along with compensation of the social and environmental impacts generated by the installation of wind and solar power plants, with emphasis on locational alternatives that generate less impact are one of the biggest challenges for the just transition here. Historically marginalized groups, such as low-income communities should be the ones benefiting the most from a just transition. If it is to be done with the perspective of empowering communities to work in this new labor market, it should generate income for these people.



For a just transition, we are accompanying fishing communities that will be impacted by the construction of offshore wind power plants in Ceará, and we will promote training so that they can communicate to the public the impacts of these works and act in the licensing process to demand locational alternatives or due compensation. We are also following up in the Ceará council for the environment (COEMA) the approval of licensing processes for the installation of large solar panel farms that require the deforestation of large areas of Caatinga forest for their construction. In this sense, we are forming a technical committee with scientists from local universities to demand guidelines for the installation of these panels that have the least environmental impacts possible.



We don't think it is fair that Europe promotes its energy transition at the expense of the environment and local communities in developing countries, which is the case of Brazil, more specifically Ceará, since the renewable energies that are being installed here aim to produce green hydrogen to be sold in the international market, more specifically the European market. In low-income communities in the state of Ceará, people are being arrested for energy theft because they cannot afford to pay their electricity bills, since the energy transition in Europe has also increased the global price of energy, given the decrease in supply of fossil fuels while demand has remained the same. Thus, what we see is that there is enough energy to export to the European market, yet the population lacks access to basic services that should be considered rights, not commodities. A just energy transition is one that promotes the least possible environmental impact while at the same time social justice for historically neglected countries, communities, and groups.



→ **2** Instituto E+ Transição Energética / Rio de Janeiro



We produce knowledge and promote debates, considering geopolitical, scientific, technological, economic, social and environmental aspects of the energy transition. A just energy transition includes the social aspect as a priority. Besides the economic, technological, and environmental dimensions, it also aims to guarantee the development of society, including the low-income population, the most vulnerable – taking a regional development perspective, considering issues such as classes, races, gender. The energy transition in Brazil is an opportunity to promote its economic recovery with an inclusive development model and the active participation of society.



Some challenges we face for a just transition include the lack of representation of the most impacted people in decision making processes, the equalization of different visions, needs and priorities so that the transition is fair, inclusive and possible within technical and economic principles. Also, the public debate in the country is still restricted to a small group and has a narrative more focused on technical and economic aspects. Brazilian political context does not prioritize the climate and social justice agenda. Those most impacted by extreme climate events and that have less representation in the decision-making processes should benefit the most from a just transition.



We work for energy democracy, of which climate justice is part of, as a discussion horizon to propose a fair energy model with the participation of the working class in its structuring. This discussion is placed as part of the strategic actions that include workers' struggles, such as training activities to strengthen the interventions by union leaders, advocacy in institutional spaces and construction of joint actions with allies. A just energy transition has been the priority proposal of the trade union movement, which defends a set of policies aimed at ensuring that the transition to low carbon production guarantees dignified living and working conditions for those sectors that will undergo transformations, respects human rights and equal opportunities for the entire working class and impacted communities and promotes decent work in the new economic activities developed.

→ **3** Central Única dos Trabalhadores / CUT Brasil / Sao Paulo



CUT is working on several perspectives to advance the just transition in Brazil, developing research to understand how the energy transition occurs in the country and how it impacts the working class, carrying out training activities to engage unionists in this agenda, developing educational and communication materials to expand the reach and understanding from our perspective, and acting together with national and international allies to strengthen the guarantee of the just transition. However, in Brazil, the just transition is challenged by threats to democracy and to the actions of civil society organizations and the trade union movement. Also, the energy transition is overall being conditioned by economic issues and not social and environmental ones. Last, there are attacks on labor and environmental legislations that impedes advances in terms of policies to confront climate change and injustices.



→ 4 WWF-Brasil / Brasilia

The coal phase-out in the south of Brazil must address the impacts on jobs in the region and ways to offset them. Also, we must consider the impacts of adopting various energy sources, like biofuels, biogas, solar, while eliminating oil and coal, especially on jobs, the local environment, the economy, and other social areas of life, such as safety, health, and mobility. A just transition is one that ensures access to low-impact, low-cost, low-carbon energy. We also need to ensure that access to energy is available to all, and that the energy sector limits and offsets any impacts on society and the environment. We work for a just transition by discussing the impacts of ending the use of coal for electricity generation in Brazil's south on employment, health, safety, including support for local movements, municipalities, and governments. We analyze job creation in the oil and renewable energy industries. We also propose alternative models for biofuel production with greater social inclusion and biodiversity. We also discuss models of energy access based on the characteristics of isolated peoples in the Amazon Rainforest.



The disproportionate weight given to the economic aspects of the energy production and use are a challenge for the just transition. Also, there is a lack of information on the positive and negative impacts of the alternatives of production and use of energy and little influence in the decision-making process by actors with less economic power. The lower income populations and those without access to energy should benefit the most from a just transition. This is because the externalities present today in the energy model, like pollution, climate change and loss of ecosystem services, fall disproportionately on low-income segments. In addition, the lack of energy access is an element that prevents socio-economic development to minimum levels.

→ 5 Grupo de Análise de Geopolítica Energética / Santana do Livramento, RS



Dominant interests, greenwashing, lack of understanding about the multiple facets of what a just energy transition should be and include, encompassing social class, ethnicity, gender aspects, as well as scientism disconnected from social reality are some challenges to the just transition. Everyone should benefit from a just energy transition, as it is holistic by definition. However, to be operationalized, it must presuppose the inclusion, empowerment, and emancipation of historically excluded groups, in addition to imposing brakes on interest groups that traditionally manage energy (and even the energy transition) as just another area of political and financial activity.

We work for the popularization of science and technology, including a podcast featuring topics such as energy justice. For us, a just energy transition is one that considers the sustainable development of energy modes benefiting all social groups, especially the less favored in the current energy policy and economy, so that from this transition a greater inclusion in all spheres of citizen life is developed.



GERMANY



10 Wuppertal Institut für Klima, Umwelt, Energie gGmbH / Wuppertal

- Research institute, without a specific identity.
- Works with research for energy system scenario analysis, technology assessment, policy analysis for energy efficiency, green hydrogen, flexibilities.
- Works at municipal, national, regional and international levels. →

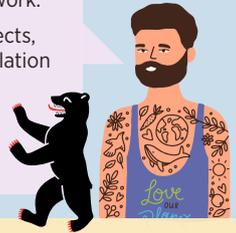
www.wupperinst.org



8 BürgerEnergie Berlin e. G. / Berlin

- Energy cooperative composed mainly of men, women and youth.
- Part of environmental and climate justice movements.
- Works with production in the implementation of cooperative projects; distribution, with participation in a re-municipalized energy network.
- Includes wind and solar energy in its projects, especially for residents, through the installation of solar systems on rented properties at municipal level. →

www.buerger-energie-berlin.de



6 Renewables Grid Initiative – NGO / Berlin

- Non-governmental organization –NGO, without a specific identity.
- Works with solar and wind energy production and transmission, research, innovation, and advocacy, at national, EU and international levels. →

www.renewables-grid.eu



9 Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung (RLS) / Headquarter / Berlin

- Non-profit public foundation, composed mostly of white German men and women.
- Part of the social justice movement. Supports groups and movements of women, Indigenous Peoples, LGBTQIA+ people, Black and PoC all over the world.
- Works on advocacy both in Germany (municipal, state and national levels) and internationally, especially through political demands. It works for the phase out of nuclear power, and for a fossil fuel future. →

www.rosalux.de

7 Anonymous union group / Berlin

- Workers' trade union.
- Works on advocacy at national, regional and international levels. →



11 Initiative Buirer für Buir / Kerpen

- Grassroots collective, without a specific identity.
- Part of the climate justice, social justice and environmental justice movements,
- Works with advocacy as a citizen initiative for the phase-out of lignite coal. Works at municipal, national and regional levels. →

www.buirerfuerbuir.de



GERMANY

12 Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF) / Munich

- NGO and grassroots movement, part of climate justice, environmental, feminist, social justice movements.
- Mainly composed of women, also men, LGBTQIA+ people, Indigenous Peoples, forest peoples, people with disabilities, Black and People of Color (PoC).
- Works on advocacy for a socially just energy transition, for coherence among EU social, climate and energy policies and national policies, especially focusing on the gender-energy nexus. As gender experts, WECF conducts research with the aim of bridging gender gaps in research and innovation projects by establishing intersectional approaches. WECF runs gender-responsive energy projects by establishing energy communities, production/consumption sharing and decentralized energy systems. Works with solar energy (installation of photovoltaics, trainings, energy communities) and wind energy (including its acceptance by civil society, gender mainstreaming and empowerment of women in the sector).
- Works at territorial, national, regional and international levels. →

www.wecf.org



→ 7 Anonymous union group / Berlin

The energy transition is urgently needed, but it must not take place unilaterally at the expense of workers. In the industries surrounding the energy transition, good work characterized by collective bargaining must be created and safeguarded. Employees are central to achieving the climate targets and the success of the energy transition. In terms of distribution policy, too, care must be taken to ensure that costs are distributed fairly. A just energy transition brings together the social and the ecological with the goal of a just transition. Workers are central to a social-ecological transformation. No one must be left behind and the political framework conditions in the just energy transition must enable active shaping. We feed our demands for a just transition into political processes and the public debate.

→ 6 Renewables Grid Initiative – NGO / Berlin

We contribute to initiatives to combat energy poverty and for a just transition. In the former, we investigate how the innovative business models developed in energy communities can fight against energy poverty. In the latter, we contribute with our expertise to develop, design, and improve a tool assessing different territorial just transition plans. We contextualize the just energy transition, considering the procedural justice, effects of distribution of costs and benefits, the intergenerational justice, the global justice, and the economic ownership. Our activities aim at enabling the participation of the highest possible number of affected actors in a given energy matter. We support transparent and inclusive processes, in which each voice and perspective are considered. Most of the energy transition actors understand the justice only in economic terms. Very often the environmental or social facets of the just energy transition are not fully considered. We think that the whole society would benefit from the energy transition process, that is just, and we strongly support the environmental NGOs.

→ 8 BürgerEnergie Berlin e. G. / Berlin

After the re-municipalization of our city's power grid, we want to ensure that access to the power grid is simplified for small producers. This serves the decentralization of energy production and participation in it. Social concerns of electricity consumers are to be given greater consideration. We want to democratize energy supply as a public service. Through targeted public relations work, events and the implementation of tenant electricity projects, our cooperative is trying to pave the way for a just energy transition.

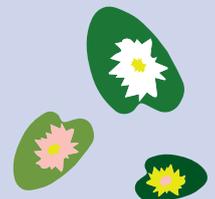
WHAT DO WE WANT?
JUST TRANSITION!
WHEN DO WE WANT IT?
NOW!

→ **9 Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung – RLS / Headquarter in Berlin, with more offices in Germany and other 26 regional offices worldwide**



In Germany, we are primarily engaged in educational work and political education on the topic of energy democracy. We produce educational materials, protest cards on fossil energy sources/abolition of fossil raw materials. For example, we prepared feasibility studies on a just transition in the Rhineland and Lusatia. Internationally, we work with organizations that are committed to the implementation of energy justice, energy democracy, as well as education. A just transition means to provide consumers with good and cost-effective access to alternative energy sources. In this process, all sectors and levels are included, i.e., communication with fossil energy unions, inclusion of regions in which both fossil energy sources are mined and converted into electricity. A just transition also entails a transparent communication to lead to a rethinking, for example, in the identification of coal miners with fossil energy sources.

The realization that we cannot continue with the burning of fossil fuels for electricity, heat and mobility, and that the resource for renewable energy partly poses new problems, such as extraction in countries of the Global South. Also, some energy resources considered sustainable (hydrogen, nuclear energy) have no solutions because of the dangers they pose (e.g. nuclear) but also because they have a large raw material consumption (hydrogen production + nuclear energy). A rethinking of electricity consumption is unfortunately not yet foreseeable, but it is imperative! The just transition should ultimately benefit the most the energy consumers, people who live near coal-fired power plants (at least from a health point of view), people who are already suffering from climate change, or who would be even more affected by it with higher emissions, socially weaker groups who cannot afford renewable electricity and providers of renewable energies.



→ **10 Wuppertal Institut für Klima, Umwelt, Energie gGmbH / Wuppertal**

We do studies and scientific monitoring of distributional effects of energy policy instruments. A just energy transition should show a fair distribution of costs and benefits of changes in energy consumption and energy supply between regions, social classes or groups, generations. It should not aggravate social inequality but reduce it. At the same time, it should contribute to the achievement of the 1.5-degree target in climate protection and to environmental relief. If the energy transition is just, tenants will benefit, as their heating costs are reduced through energy efficiency and the living comfort increases without the total rent (warm rent) increasing. Also, unemployed or precariously employed people who are qualified and find good employment in energy efficiency (e.g. building refurbishment) and renewable energies; all those who live in areas with poor air quality; pupils and other groups whose learning and working conditions are improved through energy-efficient building refurbishment.



→ 11 Initiative Buirer für Buir / Kerpen



Energy justice comes with the phasing out of coal-fired power generation – replacing it with renewables. Energy justice is for present and future generations and comes through affordable electricity from the sun and wind. It means citizen energy in the foreground. We need to nationalize energy supply or organize it regionally in cooperatives. And a just transition means affordable, available energy for all people without extreme damage to the climate and the environment, especially no fossil fuels.

→ 12 Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF) / Munich

The definition of a just energy transition has initially been developed around territories the most affected by energy transition, not around people the most affected. Progress happened, but we are still lacking social considerations of the impact of the energy transition on vulnerable groups. The understanding of the relevance and the adoption of efficient gender transformative programs are lacking. Processes to involve citizens in the energy transition exist but they do not address all societal groups and are not sufficiently used or simplified by legal and organizational frameworks. For example, societal groups that are considered to be more vulnerable than others, and which are characterized with more than one descriptive category, for example elderly women, low-income single parents, people with migration background with low education, etc. It is key to have an intersectional approach to target groups in the just energy transition. These most vulnerable groups are usually more affected by pricing of energy supply (energy poverty) or heating/cooling household (renovation measures). Also, those are the citizens that are the less represented in decision-making spaces.



Energy justice is our umbrella approach; we implement it in our energy projects. We work for and understand the just energy transition as a process, by assessing the impacts of the energy transition on all social groups especially the ones considered as vulnerable; enabling everyone to participate and benefit from the energy transition, from everywhere with a stronger focus on areas most affected by it (e.g. coal regions); and through coherent and inclusive social, climate and energy policies and programs. We also raise awareness through giving inputs, trainings, events and publications on the topic. We do gender trainings and advocate for the use of gender tools and instruments on different levels. With partners, we work on the establishment of gender-just or intersectional policies for setting up or changing energy communities and reforming energy politics. We raise awareness about the importance of the use of gender-just communications.



Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) e. V.

The Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) conducts research with the goal of identifying, advancing, and guiding transformation processes towards sustainable societies in Germany and abroad. Its research practice is transdisciplinary, transformative, and co-creative. The institute cooperates with partners in academia, political institutions, administrations, civil society, and the business community to understand sustainability challenges and generate potential solutions. A strong network of national and international partners supports the work of the institute. Among its central research topics are the energy transition, emerging technologies, climate change, air quality, systemic risks, governance and participation, and cultures of transformation. The IASS is funded by the research ministries of the Federal Government of Germany and the State of Brandenburg.

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