

Application requirements

Please submit your 250-word abstracts to the session organizer(s) by December 15th, 2019. All abstracts must include a title, your name, institutional affiliation, and contact information.

Session title

Whose Future is it anyway? Struggles for Just Energy Futures.

Session chair(s)

Eva Eichenauer, IRS, eva.eichenauer@leibniz-irs.de

Timmo Krüger, IRS, timmo.krueger@leibniz-irs.de

Questions over the design of future energy systems and their respective impacts have (again) become a prominent issue in public and political debates in the Global North – at the latest since the rise of the *Fridays for Future* movement. However, these futures are increasingly contested and formerly rather neglected dimensions of justice are coming to the fore – while others remain marginalized.

The further expansion of wind power in the former forerunner state Germany almost came to a standstill because many projects are opposed by the local population, not only because of a lack of regional value creation, but even more so, because decision making processes are perceived to be unfair. The yellow vests movement in France opposes rising fuel prices as a means to reduce CO₂-emissions and accuses the government of a general neglect of social and distributive justice. The residents of coal regions are skeptical about a coal phase-out because they fear that they will be left behind – in economic terms, but also in terms of infrastructure and cultural participation.

At the same time, new initiatives and protest forms like *Ende Gelände*, *Extinction Rebellion*, *Fridays for Future*, and the *Sunrise Movement* have a strong mobilizing effect that calls on politicians to meet climate targets and to accelerate energy transitions. They address questions of intergenerational and global justice.

But still many ambivalences and contradictive implications of energy transitions are rarely dealt with – especially when the destructive effects are felt in the Global South. Workers in many regions of the world suffer under poor working conditions in order to satisfy the resource needs of the low carbon energy infrastructures in the Global North. Farmers fear for their livelihoods as land-use-conflicts will exacerbate with the expanding bioeconomy strategies that more and more governments of the Global North pursue. The massive extractivism of lithium – which is required in large quantities if electro mobility is being expanded on a grand scale – will destroy ecosystems and local economies (e.g. farming, salt extraction, and tourism in the case of the Salar de Uyuni in Bolivia).

Hence, when we discuss just energy futures, then we have to go beyond mere questions of procedural and distributive justice. Recent concepts of energy justice (e.g. Jenkins et al. 2018) or just transitions (Heffron/McCauley 2018) for example have suggested to consider the multi-faceted entanglements of time and space when discussing generational and spatial justice. Another important facet is the up- and down-scaling of actions and their impacts on the various dimensions of justice across different scales.

The panel seeks to address these multidimensional aspects of justice in conflicts over energy futures in the Global North (including their complex interrelations with the Global South). Submissions for presentations on the following issues are welcomed:

- Conceptual approaches to justice in relation to climate change and energy transitions (just transitions, energy justice, etc.)
- The political debates of concepts like climate justice, energy democracy, just transition, green new deal, etc.
- Implications of energy future pathways for different dimensions of justice
- Empirical papers on struggles for just energy futures