Eco-social Synergies: Legal Challenges at the Intersection of the Environmental and Employment Realms

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ABSTRACT

Contested Political Economy - Contested Just Transition

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The increasingly contested strategy of just transition offers itself as a register of the views of various categories of actors towards the political economy/ecology of labour and the environment, including its legalization.

In the first and shorter part I will clarify and differentiate amongst those actors that are opposed to green transitions and, by extension, just transitions. I will then differentiate amongst those who are in favor of green transitions but who consider ecosocial justice as, at most, a collateral result. This background is necessary because the increasing evocation of green and just transitions can well obscure the fact that much of the energy and broader political economy are not going through a green transition not to mention a just green transition.

Within these parameters I will examine the most prominent and developed just transition policies and proposals emanating from various categories of actors. These include states and subnational governments, intergovernmental organizations, unions, corporations, environmentalists, and other social forces. I will do so by employing an analytical scheme that differentiates just transition proposals and policies in terms of their breadth (spatial and temporal scales and societal and natural scope) and depth (their social and ecological priorities). In this longer part I intend to place just transition policies and proposals within broader visions of an ecosocial political economy/ecology. Parallel to this analysis I will suggest -in a very preliminary and cautious fashion- how the competing political economies/ecologies embedded in the various approaches are reflected in the legalization of the concept.