

Planning for energy justice? A discourse analysis of energy planning and climate policy in South America

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Abstract-

Energy justice (EJ) frameworks strive for the equitable distribution of the costs and benefits of energy resources and systems. However, the meanings, values, and connections between EJ and energy planning remain ambiguous. This study employs a discourse analysis of top-level energy planning and climate policy documents from Argentina, Brazil, and Chile. The analysis identifies distinct EJ themes and maps these differences across seven primary social dimensions: Indigenous peoples, vulnerable populations, energy poverty, human rights, gender equity, citizen participation, and sustainability and well-being. The results indicate intertextual and extratextual tensions. For example, intergenerational and non-human justice adds new perspectives to planning policy, however, adoption of phrases like ‘citizens at the center’ and ‘leave no one behind’ in the analyzed documents indicate a homogenized view of EJ that may be directed by Global North discourse and downplay local struggles. This homogenization reflects implicit tensions and discrepancies between international agendas and the nuanced EJ needs and realities outside the Global North. Our analysis directly engages with questions on reconciling competing theories of energy justice and conceptualizing conflicting priorities between regions, offering insights into the complex landscape of energy transitions.

Index Terms- Energy justice; Energy planning; Climate planning; Global south; Discourse analysis

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