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Special Issue of the GeoProgress Journal

on

THE JUST TRANSITION FROM A GEOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

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CALL FOR PAPERS

The public and policy debate on sustainable development frequently refers to the need for a global just transition that is just for people and citizens, companies and sectors, cities and regions. Just transition is considered as a highly attractive promising economic model, part of the new narrative of inclusive growth story (Global Commission on the Economy and Climate, 2018). The complexity of the topic explains the number of specialized studies, the plurality of scientific approaches, the dissimilar conception of justice (Stavis and Felli, 2020), and the varied definitions of just transition that are more and more present in the literature (Stark, 2023). However, what a just transition entails from a geographical perspective is rarely specified (Heffron and Mc Cauley, 2018; Weller, 2019; Heffron, 2021).

The framework of just transition was introduced in 1970s by labor organizations in the United States, and a decade later in the United Kingdom. Initially, trade unionists understood just transition as a program supporting vulnerable jobs and communities menaced by the threats of closure or relocations of pollutant-intensive industrial sectors due to environmental protection policies (Just transition Centre, 2017). In 2015, the just transition has been then encompassed in the ILO's Decent Work Agenda (Stavis and Felli, 2015; Cha and al., 2020) and COP 21 Climate Change Convention, concerning labour and workers protection. In the subsequent COP meetings, specific commitments have been undertaken to manage the shift toward net zero greenhouse gas emissions (Bergamaschi, 2020; Johansson, 2023). Just transition is also involved in several SDGs (UN-CDP, 2023). The European Union, focussing on the consequences of decarbonisation, has developed policies to mitigate social and economic impacts on citizens, regions and industries of the achievement of climate neutrality. In the European Green Deal context, a Just Transition Fund has been established to support the most vulnerable territories (Moodi and al., 2021) and to ensure no one is left behind (EC, 2024). A large body of scientific works followed the inclusion of the just transition in the agenda of international institutions, approaching the subject from the perspective of job protection, energy justice, impacts on the economic system, governance, and public perception of decarbonization (Stark and al., 2023). In the definitions formulated by international organizations and scholars (Coenen and al., 2012; Hansen and Coenen, 2015; Heffron, 2021), just transition is usually conceived as a process aimed at ensuring the achievement of economic, social and environmental sustainability in ways that vary according to the specific economic, social, environmental features of the territorial contexts

(Demeterova, 2023). To date, however, limited researches are addressing from a genuine geographical perspective the different social, territorial, environmental, and economic aspects of the transition and their mutual interaction (Jenkins and al., 2018; Wang and Lo, 2021).

Consistent with this paradox, we propose to contribute to the academic debate with studies based on a multiscale spatial approach focussing on the mutual influence between the dynamics of transition and the features of different territorial contexts. The special issue *The Just Transition from a Geographical Perspective* aims to provide some valuable hints for policy development that can prevent the achievement of climate neutrality from generating new inequalities.

Theoretical and empirical works on the following topics are welcome (but not limited to):

- Framing of the just transition concept
- Narrative of territorial justice
- Regional implication of just transition
- Just transition in urban and rural area
- Spatial perspectives of resource sovereignty (food, energy etc.)
- Just transition in production, consumption and distribution processes
- Just transition and territorial resilience
- Governance of just transition
- Environmental and climate justice issues
- Polluting countries vs creditor countries
- Decarbonisation and issues of energy inclusion
- Financing just transition
- Geopolitical features of just transition

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- **October 30, 2024:** Articles (maximum 7200 words or 20 pages)

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