3. Just transition: a conflict transformation approach

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Introduction

The planned retreat from a carbon-based economy is an essential component of addressing the root causes of climate breakdown. Nevertheless, how just, inclusive and equitable this transition might be is not guaranteed. With its origins in the trade union movement, the just transition stands as an energy transition pathway that can challenge head on dominant and comfortingly narratives on 'win–win' and 'greening business as usual'. The reality is that moving to a low-carbon or post-carbon economy and society means the end of the fossil fuel energy system. This throws up a host of complex issues ranging from the role of the state (national and local) in managing or coordinating the transition, issues of democratic voice and procedure, reframing fossil fuels as 'carbon resources', to divestment and reinvestment energy strategies.

Central to all these, and under-acknowledged in the literature, is to recognise that conflict and conflict transformation will frame and characterise the low-carbon energy transition. Therefore, lessons arising from the application of conflict transformation within the Liberal Peace paradigm will have to be recognised and radically reimagined if an emancipatory just energy transition is to be realised. This paradigm, arising after the Cold War, promoted the concept that liberal states were peacefully inclined yet advanced a neoliberal marketisation methodology that sustained levels of structural violence to exacerbate conflict and maximise profitability (Newman et al. 2009, p.12). While the potential for a just transition can lead to a net benefit for society as a whole, any transition will inevitably produce winners and losers in the process. Hence, the shift from one energy system to another is not as simple as switching from one fuel or source to another. The losers, particularly affected workers and communities, will have to be accommodated if the transition is to be considered just.

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For example, the dominant carbon-based energy system must be considered as forming a deep-seated 'petroculture' (Wilson et al. 2017). Awareness of culture formation is to be cognisant that any energy-climate transition is a political and political economy transition, and that as well as producing winners and losers, given the fundamental importance of the energy system to any social order, there will always be a 'dirty politics' of any 'clean energy transition' (Healy and Barry 2017, p. 453). As understood here, a just transition is the transition to a low-carbon economy and society explicitly orientated to ensure sustainability and climate action goals as well as the achievement of public health, worthwhile work, social inclusion and poverty eradication objectives. The chapter begins by tracing the origins of the just transition concept within the trade union movement in the 1970s to the most recent international instantiation in the Silesia Declaration and the inclusion of just transition in the preamble of the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement (UNFCCC 2015). In the following section, we continue this trade union (and broader labour movement) focus on policy implementation, the state and (constrained) trade union agency. The fourth section offers a constestatory account of the just transition which problematises the domesticating and consensus generating and compromising logic of social dialogue and the green growth frame which is at the heart of most official just transition strategies. Following this, we develop this constestatory analysis further by directly critiquing social dialogue within official (state, business and trade union) understandings of just transition and suggest that what is needed is a more agonistic conflict transformation framework. We seek to move just transition processes beyond the consociational model of elite, top-down decision-making and agreement, and suggest that conflict transformative perspectives require social mobilisations and contestation outside any formal and state-centred just transition process. The final section examines some strategies for these extra-official forms of agonistic and localised opposition ranging from protests to boycotts and tax/rate strikes.

The chapter suggests that the development of current structures to manage and implement a just energy transition are, while welcome, also woefully inadequate both to the planetary emergency we face and to the positive societal transformative opportunities presented by responding to that planetary crisis. What is urgently required is a far more confrontational narrative and the construction of self-emancipated spaces for dissent to challenge the uneven distribution of power within the negotiating arenas for just transition.

Origins and Genealogy of Just Transition: Towards the Silesia Declaration and beyond

The origins of just transition are in trade union campaigns to protect workers and communities during the environmental and social damage of the Industrial Revolution, securing health and safety at work, freedom from disease (such as miner's black lung) and better living and environmental conditions for workers and their families. The phrase 'just transition' itself was coined in the US trade union movement by Tony Mazzocchi, leader of the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers union (OCAW), who worked to bring trade unionists into the 'ban-the-bomb' peace movement, together with a campaign to protect atomic workers in the transition to nuclear disarmament (Roessler 2016, p. 6). Mazzocchi developed the idea to reconcile ecological and social concerns about jobs that were either unsafe or unsustainable and therefore needed to be retired or eliminated, but in a just and democratic manner (Stevis et al. 2020, p. 10). In the ensuing decades, the transformative possibilities of just transition were picked up and augmented by other unions, most notably the Spanish Comisiones Obreras that formed SustianLabour. During the course of SustianLabour's existence it 'played a critical role in the diffusion of labour environmentalism at the global level and around the world' (Stevis and Felli 2020, p. 2).

Nevertheless, it was the establishment of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992 and the first Conference of the Parties (COP) in 1995 which created the institutional, policy and political space that facilitated the development of an international just transition policy. Having defined and developed the concept of just transition as a comprehensive opportunity to address interrelated social, economic and environmental issues (Galgóczi 2020), the international trade union movement set about strategically engaging with the 'social partners' in global business and through supranational government structures since the 1990s to establish a 'common narrative' (Rosemberg 2020, p. 36). From this, a set of principles that both governments and business would adhere to emerged, regarding industrial development and transition planning. Over the past decade the role of global unions and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) then sought to secure conditions for a transition that was fair to workers and sufficiently ambitious to realise the decent and well paid job creation potential of a low-carbon future (Sweeney and Treat 2018). This original intention was reflected by the ITUC at its second congress in 2010 in its resolution to combat climate change, which stated:

> *"Congress is committed to promoting an integrated approach to sustainable development through a just transition where social progress, environmental protection and economic needs are brought into a framework of democratic governance, where labour and other human needs are respected and gender equality achieved." (ITUC 2010, p. 1)*

The wider societal aspiration and ambition of this statement is evident, utilising a just transition as a catalyst to tackle other long-standing injustices within a framework of democratic control, beyond financialised neoliberal markets and top-down policy reforms. The trade unions' journey with this just transition project is decades old: the slogan of ITUC 'No Jobs on a Dead Planet' has become synonymous with the global movement for climate justice, and underpins union's attempts to reconcile the need to protect the interests of vulnerable workers, a stable climate and a habitable planet. Set against the backdrop of complex international negotiations, an ideological rapprochement between jobs and the environment was hard fought for by the ITUC. As regards the common acceptance of a just transition, Anabella Rosemberg, former Environment Policy Officer for the ITUC, rightfully questions 'Would it have been possible to imagine such a trade union slogan, anchored on social justice, but also on environmental protection, only a few decades ago?' (Rosemberg 2013, p. 19). Probably not, and despite its limitations at the negotiating table, without the efforts of the international trade union movement using the science, the notion of a globally recognised framework for a just energy transition might never have got started.

The inclusion of 'just transition' in the Paris Agreement, the International Labour Organization (ILO)'s adoption of a just transition agenda in 2013 and publication of its guidelines (ILO 2015) have all contributed to enshrining the concept in international and national policy domains. As the preamble of the Paris Climate Agreement states, the imperative is 'of a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities' (UNFCCC 2015, p. 2). However, the most significant development to date in the Just Transition international policy is the 'Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration' (2018) agreed at COP24 in Katowice, Poland. This declaration adopted by 37 countries and the European Union (EU) builds upon the explicit acknowledgement of a just transition in the Paris Agreement. The Silesia Declaration not only outlined provisos to protect vulnerable workers but also announced:

> *"the intrinsic relationship that climate change actions, responses and impacts have with equitable access to sustainable development and eradication of poverty;*

> *Recognizing [sic] the specific needs and special circumstances of developing countries, especially those that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change". (Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration, COP 24 2018, p. 1)*

Here we see a clear diversification of the just transition concept and the influence of the ITUC in its efforts to remediate, 'the ethical obscenity of the most vulnerable in world suffering most from actually existing unsustainability' (Barry 2013, p. 228). This recognition of the interaction among climate change, inequity, poverty and the needs of developing countries outlined in the declaration is undeniably significant, and an unambiguous recognition that a just transition is not simply about climate or energy.

The Silesia Declaration also highlights the challenges faced by 'sectors, cities and regions in transition', emphasising the 'importance of a participatory and representative process of social dialogue... when developing nationally determined contributions' (Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration, COP 24 2018, p. 2). The inclusion of sectoral and place-based references and an implementation imperative premised upon participatory social dialogue speaks directly to the need for a different and more emancipatory type of industrial planning for just energy transitions.

Problem-Framing and key concepts: Policy implementation, the nation state and trade union agency

The potential of current just transition planning was unpacked further in a report entitled 'Implementing just transition after COP 24'. The report outlined a 'multi-scalar and multi-stakeholder' approach that required 'collaboration between the state, local communities and trade unions' with the 'centre of these discussions ... positioned at the national level' (Jenkins 2019, p. 9). In addition, the international fora are designated as arenas for the 'dissemination of information, exchange of experience, drawing of comparisons' (Jenkins 2019, p. 9). This is an important distinction since it provides clarity on the types of information and initiative expected from each layer of social dialogue. Furthermore, in the report, we glimpse the intention of the international labour movement to create a supplementary conceptual space which also gently challenges the economic status quo and current modes of production, stating:

> *"Stakeholders should define the scope and nature of change during the process of coalition-building and policy design and pressingly, policy coordination and integration, considering whether it is transitional or transformative. Transitional*

> *change continues with the current economic model, whereas transformative change is more radical, moving towards a broader conception of communities and more collaborative energy production and ownership." (Jenkins 2019, p. 11)*

While the report is meant as a vigilant policy briefing, immediately after the Silesia Declaration at COP24, it does highlight the evolving scope of ambition and the practical limitations of international trade union movement negotiating positions. There remains a 'distinct gap between international decisions and domestic positions' (ITUC 2017, p. 8). Individual nation states are not moving fast enough. In all of this it is important to note that the units for innovation and participation to promote a just transition are the signatory nation states. The recognition of this reality has critical implications for the types of social solidarity and coalition-building required to deliver sufficient levels of industrial planning, premised upon the understanding that the current and future trajectory of a just transition is nothing without the 'emancipation of workers' (Stevis et al. 2020, p. 21). Therefore, the emancipation of workers requires a deeper appreciation of the inequities of climate breakdown and how these are intertwined with pre-exiting and long-standing economic, democratic, gender and class injustices within workplace relations (Shantz 2002). So, this conception of a just transition is resolutely not the decarbonisation of capitalism with trade union input. Instead, it is a much more politically radical and opposition strategy for a transformation beyond capitalism, based on the transition beyond carbon energy. Thus, the just transition debate potentially puts domestic corporate green capital on the spot, pinning the hypermobility of finance and forcing business to 'clarify its story' (Moussu 2020, p. 71).

In this regard, there is also no reason why national and regionally delineated trade-union led campaigns cannot become more challenging and 'primarily concerned with tackling and reducing unsustainability, inequality and harm, full stop, rather than feeling forced (as much of the green movement has) to also develop a costed, evidence based, policy ready alternative sustainability model' (Barry 2013, p. 229). This logic provides a self-determining prerogative for the trade union movement and allows it to consider radical proposals with depth and ambition regarding, 'a fresh narrative, one that is deeply ecological and capable of connecting workers' needs to a vision for a truly sustainable society' (Sweeney 2012, p. 13). It also repositions the contribution of trade unions as part of a wider socio-political and ecological dialogue together with other groups and allies. The call for additional alliance-building between trade unionism and other progressive social movements as a prerequisite to create the necessary socio-economic conditions for a deeper just transition is a common theme among many scholars and activists of labour environmentalism and

left-green or eco-socialist political economy. This popular position also implies that it is not wise to assume that an ecologically sustainable world can simply be engineered through the normal policy reform process. Extra-parliamentary popular movements and mobilisations (such as Extinction Rebellion, general strikes and Youth Strike for Climate) will be needed beyond the confines of any formal social dialogue, adding deliberate conflict exacerbation as a necessary element of any conflict transformative energy and climate transition process.

Contentious issues and standpoints: Winners, losers and limits of social dialogue in the eco-modernist frame

A key feature that defines a genuine approach to a just transition is the honest recognition that responding to climate breakdown and creating a low-carbon green economy means there will be winners and losers. The 'win–win' logic dominant in mainstream discourses around energy and climate (especially within techno-optimist variants) appear neither valid nor honest. The shift from a carbon-based economy does mean that some industries, such as the fossil fuel sector, will lose out and will have to be retired, quickly. Hence, it is important to ensure, as far as possible, that no one is left behind in the energy transition or that the costs and burdens of the transition fall disproportionately on one section of the community or the economy (Barry 2019).

We can envisage the difficult, but we would suggest necessary, strategy of balancing the deliberate delegitimisation of fossil fuel extraction and use, while simultaneously valorising and not demonising fossil fuel workers and communities (Healy and Barry 2017); hating the sin but loving the sinner as it were. On the one hand, there is a need to undermine the social legitimacy (or social licence to operate) of the carbon energy system, including the economic and cultural practices and values associated with it. On the other, as part of the necessity for developing working-class environmental consciousness, the alienated fossil fuel workers and communities cannot be portrayed as climate criminals or positioned as disempowered recipients of exploitative green capitalist enterprise. The views of former Irish President and former UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Mary Robinson, are important (and eloquently align with a worker-focused view of the just transition) when she stresses that:

> *"as we make the transition to clean energy, we must remember the millions of fossil fuel workers around the world who spend their lives extracting the fuel that has fed our economies. They too are victims of climate change and deserve to be treated with dignity. Their story is part of the struggle to climate justice. Others working in energy intensive industries – steel, iron, aluminium, power*

generation, and road transportation – will also be affected by carbon reduction and elimination". (Robinson, M. 2018, pp. 113–14)

The most important conclusion the trade union movement can draw from the stark reality we face is this: the transition to a low-carbon, sustainable future cannot be left to the investor class, chief executive officers (CEOs) of multinational companies, or governments that refuse to break with the current capitalist, carbon and endless growth economic paradigm. Therefore, can social dialogue as a diplomatic mechanism really deliver or is something additional required to move the ground? The answer to this question depends upon your interpretation of the just transition. Hampton (2015) notes that there is plasticity in the concept of just transition that allows for a more radical interpretation. On this issue, ecosocialist/feminist Jacklyn Cock also outlines this alternative position which 'views the climate crisis as a catalysing force for massive transformative change with totally different forms of producing and consuming, perhaps even moving towards socialism, but a new kind of socialism which is democratic, ethical and ecological' (Cock 2018, p. 222).

In this regard, largely, the international trade union movement paradoxically embraces the discourse of eco-modernism and a green growth paradigm which continues to put economic activity on a collision course with planetary limits (Barry 2013; Cock 2018; Sweeney and Treat 2018). Critical voices, such as Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED), take issue with the ITUC and the ILO for not challenging the economic status quo more robustly. Sweeney and Treat of the TUED are unambiguous in their analysis:

"Those in charge of the transition to a resilient low-carbon future have failed. What we have witnessed is more than two decades of talk with nothing like the sort of action necessary to back it up. This is not a problem of 'political will'; it is a problem of the capitalist political economy and the imperatives of perpetual expansion on which it is based". (Sweeney and Treat 2018, p. 18, emphasis added)

It is perhaps unfair to dismiss the protracted and serious efforts of the ITUC as a failure but a just transition that genuinely protects workers, communities and the planet necessitates a deeper reflection on what needs to be done. Just transition policy-making at an international level has been fully appropriated by dominant discourses, eco-modernisation and neo-classical economics, as evidenced in the provisos of the Silesia Declaration which calls for a 'paradigm shift' in energy use and consumption but also, in the same sentence, seeks 'high growth' (Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration, COP 24 2018, p. 1).

At the heart of this green growth perspective lies a fundamental contradiction, first, if the accumulation imperative of capitalism is the root cause of climate breakdown, then it seems strange to rely on the capitalist mode of production for solutions and an illusionary response to the ecological crisis (Fremaux 2019, p. 168). Sweeney and Treat (2018) suggest that a just transition is not inevitable, indeed it is not even likely without a radical shift in policy, away from a green capitalist paradigm towards public and social ownership models with more democratic control of key economic sectors such as energy.

Therefore, the clamour to enforce one definition of a just transition over another could create a 'false binary decision, a distinction which fails to distinguish between the long-term and short-term interests of labour' (Cock 2018, p. 222). Therefore, perhaps, the long-term interests of labour can be met with a more radical approach that pursues a deep restructuring of the global economy but where the short-term needs of vulnerable workers in extractive industries can be addressed as a matter of urgency. However, the short-term and long-term interests of labour, society and nature will not be best expressed or even heard within a formal process of social dialogue which is underpinned and dominated by an economic paradigm that is also the root cause of climate breakdown (Sweeney and Treat 2018). While the mechanism of social dialogue is designated to sort out short-term and long-term issues for a just energy transformation, it is simply not equipped to do so because it 'rejects any serious challenge to current arrangements of power, ownership and profit, opting instead to draw comfort from an uncritical endorsement of "win–win" solutions and "green growth" for all' (Sweeney and Treat 2018, p. 3). Arguably then, the internationally agreed frameworks for a 'just transition' are nothing more than, 'spectacular reassurance strategies' (Gunderson 2020, p. 260) that are not designed to challenge the status quo; but tactical ploys that mitigate environmental concern with the public while simultaneously maintaining or accelerating the social-structural causes of environmental harm, weaponising financial capital with new green markets to exploit. Similarly, with a mixture of seriousness and humour Stevenson determines this type of illusionary discourse as, 'the concept of bullshit' which 'captures the mistruths and inconsistences we observe in global climate governance' but also 'draws our attention to the insidious effects of deceit and helps us grasp the type of reform needed' (Stevenson 2021, p. 87). The problem with the carefully constructed spaces for social dialogue is the distribution of power and the premise of consensus among unequals (Ruser and Machin 2017). There are currently no official vents for dissent, conflict and confrontation to counter the 'bullshit' and we are running out of time.

Open questions and transformative potential: Beyond social dialogue towards an agonistic conflict transformation framework

A conflict transformation framework develops a 'prescriptive direction' to reorient people from destructive and unstable relationships towards cooperative ones. It does this by first analysing the 'root causes' of conflict then engaging 'top leadership', 'middle-range leadership' and 'grassroots leadership' to help them move collectively from 'issues to systems' through grassroots training, problem-solving workshops and high-level negotiations that produce sustainable solutions beneficial to all (Lederach 1998, p. 39).

The opportunity for social dialogue as expressed in an international just transition policy, such as the Silesia Declaration, upholds the fallacy of win–win–win (accumulative growth, workers' rights and ecological sustainability). Just transition needs to be appropriated and reconfigured into an explicitly agonistic framework that allows conflict to be brought out into the open, debated, possibly democratically resolved, and provisional agreement and action created. It is a strong position among scholars and activists that a deeper just transition will only be possible if it is driven by a broad, democratic and progressive counter-movement outside official decision-making systems. This could create conditions on the ground for a more ambitious programme of radical reform that sits in opposition to the growth imperative of greening capitalist business-as-usual (Barry 2012b, 2013, 2019; Shantz 2002, 2012; Sweeney 2012; Cock and Lambert 2013; Felli 2014; Hampton 2015; Cock 2018; Stevis et al. 2018; Sweeney and Treat 2018; Barca 2019; Bell 2020; Goods 2020).

There are now several counter-theories that challenge the green growth imperative. The matter of conjoining steady state/degrowth/post-growth theories and just transition, in what-ever configuration, is complicated by the current position of institutional trade unionism that is tied to a growth paradigm within the eco-modernist turn. In this regard, Barca (2019) outlines an inescapable truth that just transition will lead to massive layoffs of workers within the extractive fossil economy and industrial agriculture, therefore any ecologically sustainable transition policy must include concrete recommendations for socially and economically sustaining livelihoods and communities in the transition process. Furthermore, sustainability transition politics, such as degrowth, 'will remain politically weak unless it manages to enter into dialogue with a broadly defined global working class – including both wage labour and the myriad forms of work that support it – and its organizations' (Barca 2019, p. 214). Both degrowth and just transition must be seen as converging aspects of the same struggle.

Barry (2012b, p. 141) concludes that 'post-growth critique must necessarily lead to a post-capitalist alternative and related political and ideological struggle'. Thus, the critical intersection of just transition and degrowth/post-growth economic planning directs us towards a deepening culture of decommodification, work not growth and the development of functional abundance within planetary limits. In this manner, a radical just transition cast within a degrowth/post-growth model is explicitly oppositional to neoliberal, financialised capitalism, exacerbates tension and initiates conflict, even as it is also concerned with democratically resolving those conflicts.

This provocative, agential opposition of an unjust transition links to what Martínez-Alier (2002) terms the 'environmentalism of the poor'; those movements, mostly in the Global South, that resist extractivist, exploitative fossil capitalism. In so doing, this opposition, whether against extractivism or corporate or state 'unjust transitions', can contribute to a larger political purpose. This explicit opposition and the deliberate creation of political and ideological tensions, can open up the space for debate on how communities and societies can develop coping mechanisms, if not solutions, to localised instances of 'actually existing unsustainability' (Barry 2012a). Part of this oppositional agonistic politics of a just transition (which will, and should, involve non-violent direct action, in our view) is about the inclusion of non-energy and non-sustainability issues and problems, such as poverty reduction, tackling socio-economic inequality and wealth disparities, as suggested above.

As a veteran of the Northern Ireland peace process, former First Minister Peter Robinson has noted of his experience of peace negotiations, 'when a problem cannot be solved, it needs to be enlarged. [We] need to broaden the agenda and open up more scope for trade-offs and hopefully the inclusion of other issues upon which common ground might be found' (Robinson, P. 2018). Therefore, to expand the common ground for the common good necessitates the inclusion of social and environmental inequalities, constituted by the relations of domination and exploitation that maintain capitalism. Theoretically, the conflation of social and environmental inequities to the debate for a just energy transition can be viewed as green republican approaches, in which contestation is seen as important (if not more important) as consensus (Barry 2019; Barry and Ellis 2010), based on an account of democracy as non-violent disagreement (Barry and Keller 2014). As well as foregrounding the common good, a green republican perspective on the just transition would highlight the importance of contestation over consensus for example, thus disrupting the compromise for consensus logic of social dialogue in orthodox and official processes of just transition. Also, in valuing active citizenship (both instrumentally and

intrinsically), a green republican approach to just transition necessarily requires a focus on grassroots mobilisation. This is in opposition (or an agonistic complement) to the elite, technocratic, top-down and often consociational model observed in consensus-based and state-centric just transition strategies. Sociologically and strategically, this could manifest itself as a coalition of social movement mobilisations outside any formal just transition mechanism.

Social movements of this scale and range would also imply significant contestation with the eco-modernist turn, challenging the existing arrangements of ownership and power within just transition policy and planning spaces, regionally, nationally and internationally. The climate/conflict narrative for just transition, in respect of problem and solution, is informed by an understanding that the exploitation of workers' relations and nature are inextricably linked to the capitalist mode of production. As Silverman (2004, p. 133) explains, 'exploitation is the unifying term, which makes the common enemy common; both kinds of exploitation result from one process. ... This interconnection allows a unified approach to workers' problems and the environment's needs. It encourages a common solution and offers a profound basis for alliance with environmentalists around the world'.

Untangling the influence of capitalism as the dominant economic means of production in the push for a just transition will probably be a very complex, protracted and conflict-generating process. A meaningful just transition will require more than social dialogue, with a deep conflict transformation process that could create sustainable structural and cultural changes, allowing new institutions and practices to emerge that address the outstanding issues of moving from a carbon to post carbon society.

However, this will inevitably create tension, disagreement, suspicion and resistance, especially from those who will be, or see themselves, as losers from this energy transition. Therefore, the dynamism of a radical conflict transformation process, sustainability itself, can become more about developing political coping mechanisms that enable demonstrable change to emerge that is beneficial to affected workers and communities. This stands in stark contrast to the unrealistic and utopian technological 'solutions' currently based on 'managing the planet', which can be observed in proposals for 'earth systems management', such as geoengineering and large-scale carbon capture and sequestration (Fremaux 2019, p. 70).

Conflict, creativity and democratised and localised agonistic contestation and co-creation

A challenge in transforming conflict within any just transition is how, inter alia, activists, business, environmentalists and policy-makers can be moved from a rigid rationalist approach towards a more 'combined linear and process-driven' methodology that addresses unforeseen changes or conflicts as the transition evolves that is truly democratic, emancipatory and open to amendment rather than ignored. This would mean that it can be modified as the process develops insights on how to sustain both attitudinal and structural transformations (Rupesinghe 1995, p. 76). This processual approach suggests that for a just transition conflict transformation process to succeed, it needs to move beyond macro state or corporate needs, to find mutually compatible goals at the local level, particularly where local actors can have a voice in the design and management of multi-scalar and multi-stakeholder collaborations. Hence, the centrality of localised, bespoke, inclusive, participatory and institutionalised practices aimed at radical and transformative just transition processes. In addition, at the same time there need to be agonistic, oppositional and contestatory social mobilisation processes outside those institutionalised democratised dialogue and decision-making processes.

Lessons from liberal approaches to peace-making demonstrate that for conflict transformation to be successful all participants need to have the 'moral imagination' to 'sustain the change processes engendered by an accord' (Lederach 1998, p. 47). This is why, ideally, a shared and agreed transition vision is important in energy and climate politics. A shared vision can only emerge from open dialogue, contestation and deliberation, not technocratically from the top-down or from the centre of political power to the conflicted periphery. The latter, especially in relation to fossil fuel extraction (notably coal, oil and fracked gas) is often ecologically and public health-wise deemed a 'sacrifice zone', even as it is also a place of jobs and orthodox, unevenly distributed, economic development (Scott and Smith 2017). Therefore, any just transition needs to be agonistically transformed with the active participation of those deemed losers from the transition away from fossil fuel extraction. This is so, not least, to enable affected communities to be both compensated and their creative energies enabled to co-create sustainable, workable and localised solutions within participatory processes, that go well beyond elite level social dialogue, as applies to official just transition positions.

What transformative just transition processes require are 'post-liberal' green political approaches that move beyond the capitalist, growth-oriented 'neoliberal

development model' (Richmond 2011, p. 35), which is ecologically and socially unsustainable, that is, ecocidal and unjust. These radical, post-liberal approaches 'confront direct, structural, or governmental power at the international and state levels or local elite power' (Richmond 2016, p. 33) and create opportunities for new employment opportunities for those deemed collateral damage in a sacrifice zone. Therefore, if a radical, eco-socialist political economy is to advance a just transition worthy of the name, it needs to learn lessons from neoliberal attempts to promote conflict transformation as a technology to transition polities from war to a structurally violent peace. Moreover, just as non- or extra-democratic technological-technocratic approaches to 'solving' the planetary crisis are deeply flawed (Barry 2012a), so are neoliberal technologies of conflict transformation (Brennan 2017).

Within this context, while the theoretical framework for conflict transformation is valid, any future transitional activities, and policies arising, within a green political economy need to shift the language away from condoning the neoliberalism and structural violence of sacrifice zones towards an emancipatory low-carbon cooperative future which is rooted in the communities it seeks to transform. These actions need to transform individuals and social systems so they can develop strategies and practices that transition polities beyond carbon, and beyond capitalism. In following established conflict transformation theory, this will require a vision, with short- and long-term objectives that are based on achieving basic human needs and rights, and ensuring human well-being for all, for ever (Gough 2017).

These objectives will require a new green economy, including a new conceptualisation of 'economics' (Barry 2012a, 2012b) that tackles the root causes of our growing planetary emergency through an integrated framework, inclusive of connected and networked local, national and international actors and actions to tackle the root causes of climate violence. One that is co-produced by engaged grassroots leaderships in processing and progressing just transitions at the local level. These transformative processes need to address both the relational dimensions and structural dimensions to help envision and identify those leaders skilled and knowledgeable in transitioning people, place and planet into a low-carbon economy. They also need to build the capacity, and develop the potential, of grassroots leaders to design and advocate for an emancipatory just transition within the administrative and governmental processes that manage polities at the everyday level. Being rooted in the grassroots of an emancipatory green political economy, these localised transitions may then produce the sustainable transformation required to address both the episode and epicentre of the planetary crisis. This may be realised by radically reforming

the personal, relational, structural and cultural norms that inform and shape the governance of a polity and its political economy, especially its energy system. This inclusive, participatory decision-making is required to produce and enact the imagination and local creativity required to move populations through a just transition towards the construction of relations that prevent a relapse into climate extinction.

These transformative objectives will require, as indicated previously, large-scale social mobilisations by different groups ranging from students, environmentalists, trade unions, workers and faith communities. To realise these outcomes, grassroots leaders and environmental activists need to utilise and promote a form of Mêtis, forms of practical cunning and strategy, tactics and ways of operating that can enable grassroots communities to produce 'victories of the "weak" over the "strong"' (de Certeau 1988, p. xix). It can also include acknowledge that sometimes 'you have to pick a fight to win it' as Martínez-Alier (2002) suggests in his analysis of the 'environmentalism of the poor'). For de Certeau,

> *"Mêtis is a type of intelligence and thought... It implies a complex but very coherent body of mental attitudes and intellectual behavior which combine flair, wisdom, forethought, subtlety of mind, deception, resourcefulness, vigilance, opportunism, various skills, and experience acquired over the years. It is applied to situations which are transient, shifting, disconcerting and ambiguous, situations which do not lend themselves to precise measurement, exact calculation, or rigorous logic". (de Certeau, 1988, p. 3)*

In many respects, Mêtis could be viewed as 'virtues' of social mobilisation and agonistic contestation. That is, dispositions, character traits and learned and inherited and invented strategies of grassroots opposition, rooted in place and time as opposed to some grand or universal theory of change. Practices of Mêtis can be protests, parades or planning objections to climate extinction practices or unjust energy transitions. In utilising their microphysics of power, through this form of 'antidiscipline', where these communities oppose policies and macro planning objectives or utilise their purchasing power to withdraw support from businesses damaging their communities, such leaders and activists may then self-generate a transformative outcome from their own actions. This focus on the consumer and household is important for a number of reasons pertinent to transformative accounts of just transitions. First, it calls attention to the importance of the consumer/consumption dimensions of just energy transitions to balance the predominant focus on primary energy resource extraction and energy production and industrial use in most accounts of just transition analysis

(this is logical given the trade unions origins of the concept of course). Focusing on the consumer means widening and deepening the just transition focus to ensure that, for example, higher renewable energy prices should not be the outcome, since this would unfairly and disproportionately hurt low-income and vulnerable populations. Linking back both to the oppositional and green republican insights, a just transition, as we understand it, should mean 'no carbon taxation without participation and agitation' (Barry 2019). Secondly, this focus on the consumer highlights the strategic and disruptive opportunities of tactics such as consumer boycotts and withholding payment for energy services, including withholding taxes or rates owed to the local or national government, as part of localised, context-specific grassroots activism. This organised and sustained activism could result in the institutions of the state (including the local state), as well as multinational carbon energy and related industrial organisations, changing policies and practices in a more transformative and less 'business as usual' direction.

Conclusion

The transformation of the energy system in addressing climate breakdown could and should fundamentally change society, the economy, culture and politics for the better. However, for these multiple benefits to be achieved, the urgent and rapid transition to low-carbon energy has to be achieved in a manner that is open, democratic, inclusive and, most importantly, just and fair. Moreover, this just transition requires the honest recognition that we should avoid the lure of a 'win–win' policy-reform or techno-optimistic logics and/or top-down solutions. Instead, a just transition acknowledges that while there will be multiple benefits, there will also be downsides, losers and adjustment burdens, and therefore conflict and disagreement. Hence the need for conflict transformation processes and insights to be integrated within thinking and planning for a just energy transition.

Also, this conception of a just transition requires we move decisively beyond perceiving the energy transition as the greening of business as usual or the decarbonising of capitalism. These approaches may achieve the latter, and this is the reason why such mainstream political and policy approaches to addressing the climate/energy crisis are dominated by such status quo-reinforcing reformism. However, the acceptance and encouragement of non-violent conflict, contestation and agonistic disagreement around any energy transition (the green republican position) creates the space and, we would argue, necessity for moving beyond neoliberal capitalism objectives and business as usual outcomes. The vision of a just transition, outlined previously, can be captured

in paraphrasing the Scottish novelist, Alasdair Gray: 'Let us transition as if we are in the early days of building a better society', or as the spark that lit the youth strike for climate movement, Greta Thunberg, has put it,

> *"Avoiding climate breakdown will require cathedral thinking. We must lay the foundation while we may not know exactly how to build the ceiling. Sometimes we just simply have to find a way. The moment we decide to fulfil something, we can do anything. And I'm sure that the moment we start behaving as if we were in an emergency, we can avoid climate and ecological catastrophe. Humans are very adaptable: we can still fix this. But the opportunity to do so will not last for long. We must start today. We have no more excuses." (Thunberg 2019, p. 67)*

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