

Complexities of a Just Energy Transition: Ideological Paradoxes, Economics and Law

Magnus Abraham-Dukuma,
PhD Candidate, Energy and Climate Law,
Faculty of Law, University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand;
Phone: +64276233582; Email: mca13@students.waikato.ac.nz

Overview

Climate change concerns have engendered the need for energy transition from conventional fossil fuels to renewables and other conceivable clean technologies. The discussion in contemporary times transcends mere shifts in energy sources. It is now centred on just energy transition; but just transition at the expense of what variables? This paper proceeds with the inclination that there are multiple critical challenges in need of consideration when planning for a just transition. Amongst the conceivable challenges, the paper draws attention to the complexities of ideological paradoxes; economics of energy demand and supply in contradistinction to current global state of investments in renewables/clean energy sources; and the role of law in proffering solutions through suitable regulations and policy mechanisms. The ideological paradoxes contemplated are conflicting notions of fossil fuel divestment/abolition, energy efficiency mantra, and corporate shifts by energy companies.

Methods

The paper adopts a doctrinal method comprising conventional legal and economic analyses to critically examine the identified issues.

Results

The examination suggests three key results – prevailing dominance of fossil fuels in energy economics and investment; appreciable understanding of the interactions between identified paradoxes; and difficulty in driving a just energy transition until these paradoxes are addressed.

Conclusions

Conclusions and insights revolve around realising apparent difficulties in achieving a just energy transition, need for well-thought pragmatic regulations and economic policies to incentivise increased investments in clean energy sources, balance energy demand and supply dynamics and address ideological paradoxes antithetical to the just transition mantra.

References