

Towards a Just Transition

From Extraction to Equilibrium - Transforming Law and Governance

**Webinar series –
Towards equitable climate futures
17th October 2025**



Overview

- **Just Transition – what is it?**
- **Just Transition in governance and law**
- **Approaches to Justice and Transition – threads and trends**
- **Walking Towards a Just Transition – iedereen aan Boord, Rotterdam**
- **Reflections: Just Transition – Promise and Peril**



Just Transition – what is it?

Emergenced from trade union strategising

1990s labour movement in the U.S.; 2000 Canada; 2007 UK

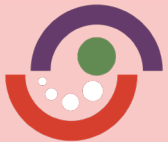
Evolved

In **scope**

- Climate policy now linked with **broader economic development** planning, retains a strong focus on fossil-fuel dependency
- At international **level** 2010 United Nations Climate Change Conference

In **role** and **purpose**

- Articulate and connects *justice* (climate, energy, ecology +) in a ‘*climate*’ context
- A framework for thinking about transition



Just Transition in law and in governance

In law(s) and institutions

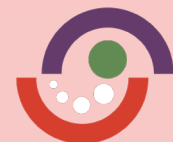
- **International:** Preamble to the Paris Agreement (2015)
- **Regional:** EU Climate Law, (EU's Just Transition Mechanism, and Fund)
- **National:** Scotland (JT Commission), Colombia, Ireland, Portugal, South Korea, Spain

In normative 'soft' law

- **ILO**, *Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all* (2015)
- **COP 27** (2022), Parties further resolved to 'implement ambitious, just, equitable and inclusive transitions to low-emission and climate-resilient development
- Core concepts in **related fields** e.g. democracy (energy democracy); sovereignty (food sovereignty)

Just transition litigation (emerging)

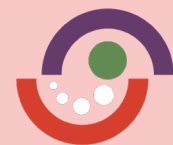
- On the *fairness/justice* of laws, policies or projects concerning climate action



Approaches to Justice

....found in literatures, and sometimes in policy

Justice dimension	Definition	Key questions
Recognition	Addresses social inequities, diversity and identity, and representation.	What kinds of injustice are recognised in this governance space? Whose needs are recognised and prioritised, and whose are missing? What interests are 'at the table' and what interests are not?
Procedural	Focuses on fairness of participation and decision-making processes.	How fair is the decision-making process? How transparent are decision-making processes? To what extent are decision-makers accountable for their decisions, and to whom?
Distributional	Focuses on how benefits and burdens are distributed.	How will the benefits and burdens of an initiative be distributed over different groups? Who has the greatest need? Are decisions on benefits and burdens fair and proportionate?

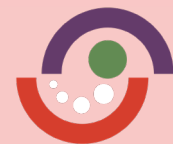


Approaches to Justice what's missing

Restorative	Emphasises the importance of compensating existing injustices and repairing damages.
Cosmopolitan	Highlights that justice principles apply to all human beings, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, or citizenship or other status.
Spatial	Focuses on how justice plays out in different spaces and scales.
Postcolonial	Acknowledges legacies of colonisation to contemporary socio-economic models of development. Addresses injustices related to the exclusion of non-western knowledges and perspectives.

Airey et al, *Towards a Just Transition* (2025: 27-28)

Intragenerational & intergenerational	Emphasises equity among persons living today, and between generations across time (future generations).
Multispecies	Emphasises equity in relations between human and non-human species, biodiversity and nature.
Epistemic	Emphasises the importance of knowledge and data to, and within, governance
Temporal	Focuses on the significance of time and temporality to justice and Just Transition
Relational	Based on the belief that all living beings are connected and interdependent; that relations of care and equality are central to life
Transition governance	Focuses on the effectiveness, extent and urgency of transition governance processes



Approaches to Transition

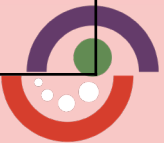
“A far-reaching structural change in socio-technical systems that enable a desirable societal function”

Key factors

Degree of change – how extensive? Status quo; managerial reform; structural reform, transformative (JTRC 2018)

Pace of change – temporal, how long to prepare, implement, results? How quickly affect most in need?

Schonig (2023) Transition trajectories – objectives and activities	
Art.9, EU Taxonomy Regulation (2020) For the purposes of this Regulation, the following shall be environmental objectives : (a) climate change mitigation; (b) climate change adaptation; (c) the sustainable use and protection of water and marine resources; (d) the transition to a circular economy; (e) pollution prevention and control; (f) the protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems.	Some activities need to improve Some need to be phased out New ones need to be phased in



Towards a Just Transition – Walking

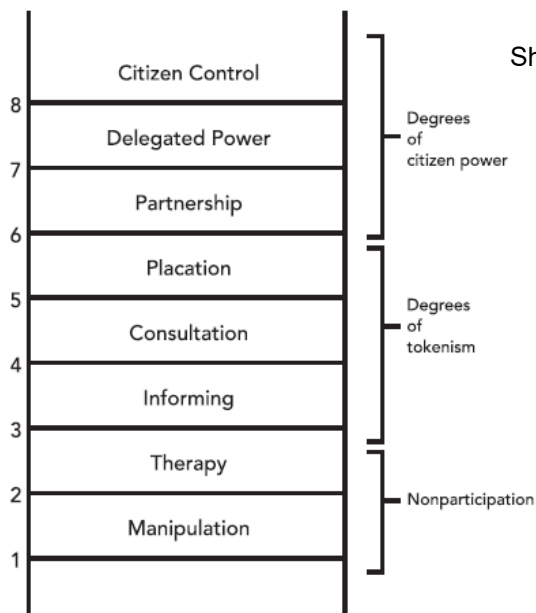
Iedereen aan Boord, Noordereiland, Rotterdam



Dimensions to Just Transition – Noordereiland

1. Assessing communities' influence in participation – assessing power

Examples of ways of assessing e.g. Arnstein, IAP2 frameworks

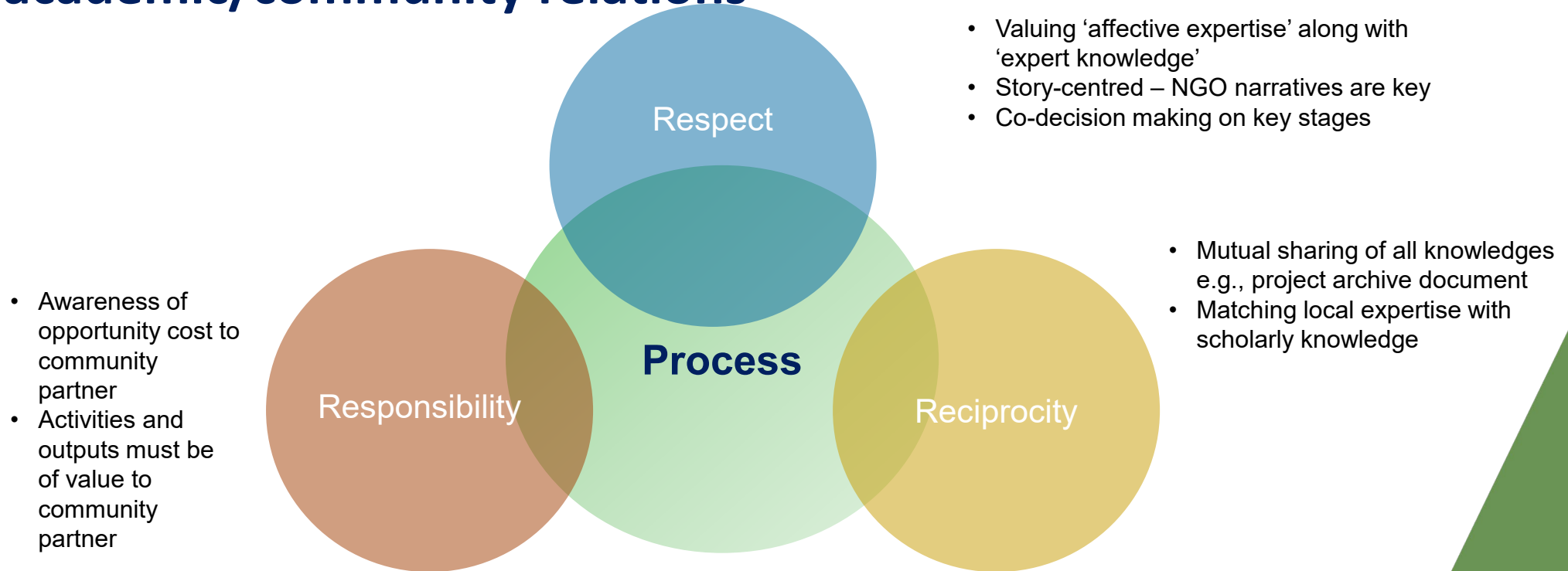


Sherry Arnstein's Ladder of Participation (1969, 1996)

Dimensions to JT – Noordereiland

2. **Grounded** (centred on everyday experiences) and informed (building on....)
3. **Values and practices of**
 1. Collectivity & Solidarity,
 2. Empowerment as process
 3. Participation in decision-making (internal and external)
 4. Restoration and regeneration of nature
4. **Contextualised**
5. **A governance focus**
6. **Epistemic Justice** democratic citizen science (including next)

TJT & Right Relationship in academic/community relations



The promise and peril of Just Transition

[Towards a Just Transition Report](#) '*Towards a Just Transition – Walking Practices, Legal Possibilities*,' (July 2025), and [Briefing Notes](#)

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