

Social Research Call

Title:
*Environmental JUSTice Dimensions
of RENEWable Energies in Spain*



Acronym: JUSTRENEW

Project leader: Arnim SCHEIDEL

Host organisation: Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB)

Main purpose of the project:

The JUSTRENEW project aims to promote socially just wind and solar power in Spain by learning from nearly 30 years of conflict history over renewable energy projects. The project will systematically investigate the opposition motives and territorial injustices underlying these conflicts, as well as the demands made by citizens for more equitable and just renewable energies in Spain.

Design/methodology/approach:

JUSTRENEW considers conflicts and social mobilizations as meaningful political reactions to socio-environmental challenges that provide valuable lessons for improving renewable energy policy. The project will create the first countrywide wind and solar conflict database through a large-scale newspaper data analysis that is combined with an assessment of the territorial contexts in which conflicts unfold.

Potential results:

Among the expected results are a comprehensive wind and solar conflict database accessible to policy makers, civil society, project developers and researchers; articles and reports detailing justice concerns and citizen demands to improve renewables policy; and project developer guidelines. A conflict sensitivity map will inform regional planning, while diverse participatory maps developed with social sector actors will support civil society driven advocacy campaigns.

Social relevance of the research:

Conflicts over wind and solar projects have grown rapidly in Spain. The future expansion of installed capacity to meet the ambitious renewable energy targets are likely to intensify further conflicts. This poses a significant social challenge to achieve an equitable ecological transition in Spain. JUSTRENEW will produce socially robust, quantitative and actionable research outputs to address this concern and to advance socially just renewables.

Originality/value of the project:

JUSTRENEW draws on environmental justice scholarship to develop the first countrywide wind and solar power conflict database. Methodologically, the project builds on established newspaper data analyses yet innovates them by using Large Language Models (LLMs) to code data and narrate 30 years of conflict history from the perspective of affected groups. To assure socially meaningful analyses, the project is embedded in a framework of knowledge co-production.