



Revista de Estudios Sociales Call for Papers

The *Revista de Estudios Sociales (RES)* of Universidad de los Andes (Colombia) kindly invites the academic community to submit articles for a special issue on the topic of:

“Social and Political Perspectives on the Energy Transition”

Guest Editors:

Johanna Höhl (LMU München, Germany)

Rosa Lehmann (Universität Heidelberg, Germany)

Claudia Alonso (Universidad de Chile)

Marcia Montedónico (Universidad de Chile)

María Cecilia Roa García (Universidad de los Andes, Colombia)

Articles should be submitted between
February 1st – 28th, 2027

Submissions will be accepted in either **English, Spanish, or Portuguese**, and should follow the [editorial and stylistic guidelines](#) of *RES*.

All papers should be submitted through the following link:

<https://revistas.uniandes.edu.co/index.php/res/about/submissions>

Overview

The growing shift from conventional to renewable energy sources, driven by efforts to decarbonize the energy sector and other industries, has brought into sharper focus the tensions and contradictions of a transition that relies heavily on technological solutions to the climate crisis (McCarthy 2015). Numerous studies have documented how these processes reproduce existing territorial conflicts; deepen socioecological inequalities associated with renewable energy infrastructure, the extraction of transition minerals, and competition over resources such as water and land; and disproportionately affect historically marginalized and racialized communities and territories (Barragán-Contreras 2022; Bustos-Gallardo *et al* 2021; Combariza Díaz *et al* 2024; Jerez *et al* 2021; Ulloa 2021). Renewable energy projects and policies thus tend to reproduce the conflict dynamics and power asymmetries that characterize the centralized fossil-fuel energy system.

Research has repeatedly shown that dependence on fossil fuels persists and that its political dimensions are becoming increasingly apparent: the transition to a decarbonized energy system, far from being a neutral technical process, calls fundamental paradigms of social organization into question. Instead, the transition is disorderly, contingent, and fraught with conflict. Temporal and spatial contradictions and asynchronies shape a process whose outcome remains open and contested, as actors with unequal power pursue competing interests and resistance emerges at different scales (Scoones *et al* 2015). These tensions manifest themselves in concerns over energy security; geopolitical competition for minerals and production sites (Kuzemko *et al* 2025); net-zero emissions targets; and rising energy demand, driven both by efforts to reduce energy poverty and by digitalization and the expansion of artificial intelligence. They are also evident in the enormous cost of transforming the global energy system, an issue debated through the lens of a just transition (Alarcón 2023; Mejía-Montero 2025; Pucheta and Sánchez 2022).

This dossier examines how current geopolitical shifts and tensions are reshaping the geographies of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), while also considering how developments within the region are, in turn, shaping disputes and objectives surrounding energy and the energy transition. It explores changing social conditions across different spheres and how these intersect: why and how conflicts and inequalities are reproduced, intensified, or mitigated; which actors are involved; how different decisions and governance processes lead to particular outcomes; and what competing narratives and imaginaries emerge around energy and the energy transition.

This dossier places particular emphasis on the material and spatial dimensions of energy. It considers energy infrastructure, the waste and legacies of the fossil-fuel system, everyday practices of energy generation and consumption, and the ways in which material realities, as they manifest themselves in specific territories, both shape and are shaped by the social processes surrounding energy transitions (Ávila-Calero 2025). Examining these material dimensions sheds light both on the challenges of technological change and on the patterns of inequality that are (re)produced in its name. In the fields of land use and food, a substantial body of literature has examined competition among different productive sectors for resources such as land and water, as well as alternative models such as agroecology. By contrast, work on the energy transition has focused predominantly on capital-intensive technologies and infrastructure, whose deployment may, at best, be decentralized or community-based. This emphasis has tended to sideline the possibility of rethinking social relations with energy itself (Torres Wong and Masera 2023).

The urgency of decarbonization has left little room for sustained reflection on how energy, its technologies, and their impacts are socially understood and represented, or on the discourses, assumptions, and narratives through which they are framed. Strictly speaking, the energy transition is both experimental and cyclical: throughout history, societies have shifted among different energy sources, favoring those with greater energy density and lower land requirements (Smil 2016). Growing energy demand, coupled with the drive toward decarbonization, brings to the fore contradictions surrounding territory, space, and the future of energy, which different actors envision and shape in markedly different ways.

Discourse, symbolism, and aesthetics are just as integral to the energy transition. Energy policies are shaped by sociotechnical imaginaries that are often portrayed as neutral or inevitable, even though they are historically and politically constructed. In presenting

particular power relations as natural, these imaginaries leave little room for other ways of understanding and inhabiting energy territories. A critical examination of these visions—and of the narratives of progress and energy modernity and the aesthetics surrounding transition projects—reveals both the interests at work behind them and the alternatives they render invisible.

The Caribbean's experience of increasingly severe extreme weather events and rising sea levels has fostered both practical approaches and theoretical debate around community governance and energy autonomy (Rivera-Rodríguez *et al* 2025). From the perspective of socioecological transition, this work is prompting a rethinking of the concepts of vulnerability and risk management. Alongside these developments, social movements across Latin America and the Caribbean have long brought academic and artistic practice together, and this convergence is now creating space for imaginaries and vocabularies that offer alternatives to a techno-fix approach to the energy transition. Across the region, artistic practices have informed alternative mappings of energy territories and collective exercises in visualizing energy and territory, providing ways to challenge dominant narratives about energy futures. The work of collectives such as *Iconoclasistas* and *GeoBrujas*, for example, draws on an aesthetic and joyful engagement with geography to transform spatial relations in contexts of energy extractivism.

Against this backdrop of paradox and tension, the dossier moves beyond technical and infrastructural approaches to the energy transition, treating it instead as a social, political, discursive, multiscalar, material, and affective phenomenon. Its focus extends to the social relations that take shape around energy and the transition itself, as well as to practices and forms of representation that, in different ways, challenge prevailing formulations of the transition in national energy targets and by international organizations (Chemes 2023; Temper *et al* 2020). Social science perspectives are crucial here: they can deepen our understanding of the obstacles and challenges involved in technological change while also bringing to light the diverse contexts, ideas, and practices associated with the energy transition. The dossier focuses on Latin America and the Caribbean, where the material, symbolic, and territorial impacts of the transition are evident across a range of settings, including lithium and copper mining and the expansion of vast wind and solar farms.

One of the threads running through this special issue challenges the hierarchy—whether implicit or explicit—that often shapes academic knowledge production, relegating Latin America and the Caribbean to the role of a periphery that supplies empirical cases while treating theory as a “universal” endeavor—which, in practice, means an Anglo-American one. Instead, we foreground theoretical approaches and concepts developed in and from Latin America and the Caribbean that offer ways of understanding energy, the energy transition, and socioecological transformation as open-ended, fragmented, and contested processes, embedded in global power relations that give rise to specific territorial configurations. The region has a conceptual tradition of its own, spanning debates on dependency, decoloniality, and feminism (Lugones 2010; Quijano 2000), geographies of territoriality (Morales *et al* 2024), and the concept of the *sacrifice zone* (Valenzuela-Fuentes *et al* 2021), as well as the body-territory approach, which understands the body as both a spatial scale and a site of resistance (Cabnal 2010; Zaragocín and Caretta 2021). This dossier highlights the analytical potential of that tradition.

Call for Contributions and Suggested Topics

Against this backdrop, the dossier brings together empirical studies and conceptual reflections examining the impacts of energy transition across different places and scales in Latin America and the Caribbean. Drawing on the social sciences, and particularly critical geography, these contributions should offer a more nuanced, situated, and politically engaged understanding of these processes. Research in human geography has shown that an energy transition driven by technological change, without transforming human-material, human-energy, and human-nature relations, expands extractivism and deepens dispossession and inequality, particularly in regions shaped by histories of coloniality.

We welcome proposals addressing the topics outlined below, as well as contributions on related issues. Submissions may take the form of research articles, photo essays, multimedia or digital projects, or other alternative formats. They may be grounded in empirical material or primarily conceptual in nature.

Contributions should engage with one of the dossier's three thematic areas:

1. Materialities, Spatialities, Temporalities

Energy transition is more than a technological process: it brings tangible changes to territories, bodies, ecologies, and temporalities. This thematic area considers how energy spaces are produced and transformed; the socio-spatial and temporal legacies that fossil fuels leave in places where new infrastructure is planned; and the ways in which specific materialities—critical minerals, wind, and solar radiation—give rise to different territorial configurations, conflicts, and imaginaries of the future. Questions of particular interest include:

- How are energy spaces produced and (re)configured? What residues and socio-spatial legacies do fossil fuels leave in territories where new infrastructure is planned?
- How do energy decisions affect bodies, ecologies, and temporalities in specific territories?
- What role does materiality play in producing energy spatialities and temporalities? How do the conflicts and imaginaries surrounding lithium or copper differ from those associated with solar energy, which can, in principle, be harnessed in many different places?
- What different sociometabolic configurations are associated with different resources and energy sources, and what are their implications for the political economy, governance, and narratives surrounding socioecological transformation through renewable energy?
- How are relationships among energy resources, land, water, and minerals established, and how do they evolve over time?

2. Discourses, Symbols, Aesthetics, Visions of the Future

Energy transition processes reshape not only infrastructure and territories but also the frameworks through which energy futures are understood and contested. This thematic area examines the sociotechnical imaginaries that guide—and often naturalize—particular transition pathways; the aesthetics and regimes of visibility surrounding energy projects; and the cultural and artistic practices that create space for imagining alternative futures. It also considers how narratives of transition intersect with broader discourses of progress, development, and risk. Questions of particular interest include:

- What sociotechnical imaginaries and proposals put forward by different actors take shape in the energy transition process—for example, around energy justice? How have these been debated from critical and decolonial perspectives?
- What ideas, images, and imaginaries inform an aesthetics and an ethics of energy transition? How are these images produced and circulated, including those promoted by powerful actors such as the fossil-fuel industry or major renewable energy consortia?
- How do energy transition narratives draw on and interact with imaginaries of uncertain futures, collapse, expectations of progress and development, or even regression?
- How are socioenvironmental conflicts surrounding renewable energy projects or critical mineral extraction expressed and articulated?
- What community-based, territorial, or grassroots experiences offer alternatives to dominant energy models? How do they propose different approaches—for example, relational or circular forms of energy, or forms linked to the human body—that challenge the hegemonic narrative of linear energy?

3. Social Relations

Energy transition entails far-reaching changes in social relations: among state, market, and community actors; across local, national, and global scales; and in the uneven distribution of benefits and burdens. This thematic area focuses on the forms of governance, participation, and conflict that emerge under the imaginary of transition, as well as the inequalities, dispossession, and exclusion that are reproduced or transformed in its name. Questions of particular interest include:

- What forms of energy governance, democratic participation, and socioenvironmental conflict emerge under the imaginary of energy transition?
- How do energy transition processes take shape in Latin America and the Caribbean, and which actors drive or resist them? What regulatory frameworks, institutional arrangements, and financial instruments structure energy-related decisions across the region?
- What forms of inequality, dispossession, or exclusion are reproduced or transformed in the name of energy transition?
- What opportunities do energy transition processes create for community and local initiatives?

- How do local forms of knowledge and social practices foster alternatives to existing energy models?
- What new practices are emerging around energy and energy transition?
- How are “green extractivism” and neocolonial relations being called into question at different scales as patterns of dependency are reconfigured? How can conflicts among actors within countries and regions—among elites, between working-class communities and elites, and between urban and rural populations—be analyzed beyond the framework of neocolonialism?

Cross-Cutting Perspectives and Experimental Methodologies

The dossier also welcomes cross-cutting contributions that use experimental or unconventional methodologies to investigate the social and territorial impacts of energy transition from a critical perspective. These may include critical cartography, different forms of territorial visualization, photo essays, multimedia or digital projects, and other approaches to knowledge production that combine artistic practice with analytical rigor. Contributions may explore which methodologies are best suited to critically examining the social and territorial impacts of transition, as well as the ethical implications of producing imaginaries of energy futures. Submissions may therefore take the form of conventional research articles or adopt any of these alternative formats.

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