

The image shows the cover of a report. The background is a dark purple vertical band with white text. On either side of this band, there are grayscale images of a cornfield under a cloudy sky. The text is centered and reads: 'Rapporteurship of the debate' in a smaller font, followed by the main title 'Energy and Gender: Ecofeminist views on energy' in a large, bold font. At the bottom, it says 'Xarxa per la sobirania energètica. La Fede, April 24th 2017' in a smaller font.

Rapporteurship of the debate

Energy and Gender: Ecofeminist views on energy"

Xarxa per la sobirania energètica.
La Fede, April 24th 2017

1 Differential impacts that the fossil energy model and patriarchal capitalism have on women and men:

- 1.1. Care debt, with an “ecological debt” vision, which is directly related to the fossil energy model and patriarchal capitalism, which puts forward a mercantilist rational and leaves out the reproduction of life. The impact of this model on territories and bodies-territories.

REFLECTIONS

What can concepts such as ecological and care debt bring us?

Following the thread of the proposals posed by the feminist and ecological economy that organize work and resources around the reproduction of the life, so, we can ask ourselves, what do we need the energy for? What uses do we prioritize?

Energy is at the service of large companies and of resource and wealth extraction. The energy sector is one (just as it was construction and housing) that allows the exponential generation of profit and financialisation of the economy. In this sense, the energy uses related to the maintenance of life are of no interest. However, these are the same uses that, operating under neoliberal logic, are extremely profitable and a substantial business (for example those associated with the right to decent housing, basic supplies, etc.). It is therefore key, to remove them from this market and commercial gain rational, in order to place them at the service of the citizens.

That being said, energy must be at the service of the people, putting life at the centre. Focusing on sustaining life and not at the service of capital. Energy should enable us to improve living conditions of the people. Meaning that in the Global North it is necessary to cut down, so

that in the Global South it is possible to grow (understanding that growth as the fact of being able to access - and give life - related uses to those energy resources). That energy should also involve the defence and improvement of human and non-human life.

For example: “Living, eating, moving” is the proposal made by partners who are carrying out a project in Viladecans, and who are linked to the reproduction approach and the sustainability of life, they also recommend reading Energy and equity by Ivan Illich - in line with the proposals to reduce energy dependence, with an emphasis on energy reduction.

On the other hand, it is necessary that “men” lose privileges so that “women” gain decision-making spaces. And for women to be in decision-making spaces it is necessary that they get involved in the spaces of the reproduction of life.

The personal is political. Problems in the “private” must be transferred to the common space. Mutual support is key to empowerment. Not only is it material problems (and material needs) that we have to “battle”, but also relational and emotional ones.

At the same time, it is urgent that we stop looking only for technological solutions to solve vital necessities because they may contradict sustainability. If the technique and technology propose systems that impact on gender inequality, it will be necessary to question them. We must think of technology in other less masculine ways. Energy is very broad; we do not see it only from the technological point of view.

Community feminism also brings us a much needed vision:

- In addition to criticizing capitalism and patriarchy, it proposes a different view of anthropocentrism from the recovery of a vision of interconnection with nature (biocentrism). Due to the inheritance of ancient cultures, this proposal understands that you cannot defend the body without defending the territory (Mother Earth) and you cannot defend the earth without defending the body because they are as one, they depend on each other. Countries such as Ecuador and Bolivia have even included in their Constitution the vision of other forms of development such as the so-called "Good Living" and "Living Well", related to the unity of life that all ancient traditions hold (with different denominations).
- In response to the energy crisis, science has not necessarily approached other ways of understanding what is happening and possible solutions, hence the importance of generating diagnostics, analysis and interdisciplinary responses (basic sciences + social sciences, scientific knowledge + traditional ecological knowledge). Knowledge about energy cycles and the use of energies (different energies and ways of generating them) already existed in ancient cultures, hence the importance of seeing how they can complement each other. In the case of Europe, there is knowledge from peasants, fishermen, and local traditions that can help to understand current phenomena and provide answers from integrity with nature.
- The role of women in the struggle for energy or social justice does not necessarily guarantee the improvement of women's conditions or gender equality. There are many female leaders who are "successful" in the environmental struggle, but in their families or communities have unequal relationships.
- Free and informed prior consultation of communities on extractive or energy projects is a pending issue in the world. In mega-diverse countries (biologically and culturally diverse), attempts have been made to implement mechanisms to achieve them in accordance with the international rules related to the specific rights of tra-

ditional communities, owners of ancestral territories (UN Declaration on Indigenous Peoples, Convention on Biological Diversity, Nagoya Protocol, WIPO Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge Tools, among others); however, its application is complex by several factors, beginning with the political will for its fulfilment. The majority of cases establishes as mandatory to carry out the consultation, not necessarily to accept its results; so that workshops or consultation processes are carried out to comply with the standard, but it is not fulfilled what the community has decided. That is why it is very important that when proposals are proposed, a regulation is created that compels the decisions of the communities to be adopted.

ALERTS

It is false that women have recently joined the labour market.

It should not only be us women who defend life and territories, they must be part of this vision and key perspective.

The leadership of indigenous women in the social movements to defend the territory has not necessarily involved change in their inner circles.

What does a care economy mean and what does it not mean?

Wanting to give value to the historically invisible care tasks, as well as showing that energy has to serve us to maintain more dignified lives, does not mean that we are talking about caring and sustaining at any price: "We deceive ourselves and others with the verbs to share, collaborate, participate, do together, give, contribute, be, give us, expose ourselves, initiate processes ... But under these wonderful words many times what we are doing is forcing, conditioning, leaving no alternative, extracting, exploiting and removing time, dedication, attention, affection and life of those around us" (Marina Garcés).

This also leads us to consider how the patriarchal and neo-liberal logic (of "free" competition, self-exploitation, of taking for granted that work of care) is present within the movements of which we are a part.

POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTIONS AND / OR ANSWERS

Formulas that allow life cycles to be respected.
Comprehensive vision that is shared by different struggles and social movements

1.2. The differential impact on men and women of the energy model (and more generally, it may be interesting to also look at the differential impact of the crisis and, consequently, of the differential impact on the logics of the neo-liberal model - heteropatriarcal capitalism)

REFLECTIONS

Can we find concrete differential impacts that women perceive compared to men as a more vulnerable group and who are exposed to the injustices of this energy and socio-economic model?

As commented by our colleagues who are part of the struggle against TTIP / TISA / CETA, "We know from the feminist struggles that have taken place in Latin America since the 80s, that all neoliberal policies always affect, first and foremost, the female population". The downward harmonization of European legislation in the TTIP (but also other structural adjustment policies along the lines of the EU, imply a loss of rights on many issues that will affect women more: environmental issues (greater impact on pollution), health (medicalization of the female reproductive cycle) or food sovereignty (access to a decent diet and knowing where the food in the market is coming from). The same is true about energy rights and creating energy sovereignty in towns, which is threatened by the accentuation of the fossil and mercantile model, the expansion of the extractive frontier (fracking, bituminous sands ...), etc. In addition there is the threat posed by these treaties and policies for remunicipalization processes, since they facilitate the ground for companies to take to States and Administrations before arbitration tribunals (ISDS).

What are the consequences of these differential impacts?

The direct consequence of these impacts is that it increases vulnerability and even more care needs to be taken. At the same time, in situations of precariousness the search for mutual support is accentuated, thus generating even more demand in the workload of care, mostly assumed by women. It also generates an impossibility (or high difficulty) for the generation of income, by the reducing opportunities and the precarization of conditions and offers.

Liberalization processes generate competitiveness/competitive environments where collective vulnerabilities, groups, etc. are not recognized. It rewards a logic of "we can all compete because we know we will win" that opposes the eco-feminist perspective and the logic of caring for our vulnerable bodies, with the possibility of addressing that same vulnerability at different levels, and each one in its specificity (intersectionality).

How do we put those exploited, expropriated, or those affected by energy in the same boat?

It is key to invite workers in the energy sector (mostly men) to be part of these demands. So that these workers can also converse with someone suffering from energy poverty and with someone affected in their territory by an energy project, at the same table. In this sense we value efforts like the Volt, where it would require more presence of the workers.

ALERTS

It is important not to make the feminist-energy struggle a "NIMBY". Intersectionality is essential, not only in terms of identifying the multiple vulnerabilities that overlap, but also in the task of transforming the mercantile into one which allows us to sustain life (and thus involving the field of energy and many others). We cannot only see how the energy, production and labour market model must address gender inequalities, but also that the demand must come from the different areas that we need to transform.

What about the people (99%) who will not be able to afford or assume such a necessary ener-

gy transition? We cannot leave the majority of the population out. An energy empowerment for everyone is necessary.

POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTIONS / ANSWERS / PROPOSALS

We do not need more competitive environments, but rather care and cooperation. From feminism and ecofeminism we must strongly criticize the policies of austerity and structural adjustment, as well as the European directives and the impulsive packages to the infrastructures and "investment", which not only jeopardise life/lives but promote a logic that opposes life being at the centre.

2. Energy as a sphere of power and patriarchal culture

2.1. Energy as a sphere of power (culture of experts) from which women have been excluded.

REFLECTIONS

Why is energy such a low-feminized sector?

Can we talk about a sphere of power where we are also excluded?

What cultural and structural causes allow for it?

What relationship have women had with energy throughout history?

Can we think of any way to overcome this gap in the new energy scenarios that are opening up?

It is key who (and how) is going to decide this new model, and what it will imply. First of all, we must move away from the mantra "to produce, to produce and to produce".

Energy diagnoses are usually performed by men, and often it is a faulty, biased diagnosis. If

we exclude women from that diagnosis, we will not have a true and complete picture. We have to start talking about the things that are directly affecting us, our vital needs. Under this same logic, the management of energy power puts up the oligopoly lords and, in the boards of directors, if there are women, often has more to do with revolving doors than with the search for fairness.

With employment opportunities in clean energy and efficiency the same is happening: either they are foreseen and promoted with a gender perspective or women will be left out due to training bias of these new jobs.

Who then benefits from this exclusion of women from the sphere of power represented by energy? In fact we have been excluded, but not completely. We have been included and have gotten closer to energy spheres when it was convenient (the arrival of household appliances and the reduction of the time required to perform some tasks of care), facilitating in theory the incorporation of women

into the labour market, but actually causing a double-edged sword, double workloads. They were incorporated into the labour market and continued to assume domestic work. This sphere also allowed for a deepening of the individualization and the loss of spaces which women created for mutual support and organized themselves collectively. Without pretending that we are returning to hand washing (neither them nor us), it is important to recognize that the sphere of power represented by energy is in fact an iceberg in which we must recover, give value, and put at the centre those apparently less decisive uses of energy which are essential for life.

It is necessary that the entire population and not only experts, engineers, etc. participate in the energetic field (importance of post-normal science). Not only think how many kWh and what change of technology, but also how we democratize, how we become more sovereign. An initial informative part is essential.

When we talk about the change in energy model, we need to talk about energy efficiency. This is, or should be, transverse, just like feminism.

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We are in a moment of breaking roles and therefore we should start from a vision of co-res-

ponsibility. It is not a question of whether men or women take on the job of caring, but that this is done by the family or family unit (made up of whoever it might be).

Often "We change technology so that it does not change anything". We must prevent that from happening, and also put technology at the service of walking towards even more dignified lives for everyone.

We will not say anything more than that we are not energy experts because we are not engineers. We are experts from another point of view, in addition to that there are many female engineers.

POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTIONS / ANSWERS / PROPOSALS

There is a need of empowerment by women in roles of spokespersons and creators of content.

Recovering decision-making positions, recovering new working niches, maintaining the link with the uses of energy that have to do with the reproduction of life, and bringing this aspect closer to the general population which is not convenient for the oligopoly, because it is the most inclusive and closest part, that can act as a mobilizing lever.

2.2. Dynamics of macho power within the groups of resistance to large megaprojects and in general within the MMSS, the environmental movement and "the left". Assembly logics but with unequal power: who is the speaker, who is visible, etc.?

REFLECTIONS

Can we talk about energy democracy if women are absent?

What dynamics of power and inequalities are manifested in the social movements linked to energy, the defence of territory, the struggle against megaprojects, etc.? Why?

It might seem that energy (energy activism, environment) does not interest women, but this hypothesis is false in cases such as protesting megaprojects in which women have taken a central role putting the defence of life as the core of these struggles, or in cases such as the Alliance against Energy Poverty, in which the message is bought mainly by women because they are precisely the ones who are activating

networks of mutual support, those that are dealing with bureaucracy and the ones that again support life. Then another interesting question might be: Do we want women to be interested in energy activism from the more technical side, or is it more the case that we get men (or the rest of women who still do not feel involved), and in short, the population, to feel called to defend these rights, from the perspective of the defence of life?

The democratization of energy will be useless if women are left out. These are internal dynamics, from within, but they also have outward effects. Who is the spokesperson, the types of leadership being validated the masculine leaderships, from values associated with men: hardness, certainty, taking of the word vs. take of the action or assuming invisible works.

When we talk about energy sovereignty and the right to decide, we assume that a fairness scenario must be created for this right to decide. Fairness among peoples, evidently, taking into account the oppressions that the capitalist-neo-colonial system inflicts in the territories where raw materials are extracted, but also gender equity. Being able to exercise the right to make one's own decisions on energy for women is not possible if we are excluded from decision-making positions, if we do not feminize certain labour niches or if we do not recognize the care debt generated so that this model has been possible. We will not be able to be energetically sovereign if we do not allow women access to this right, nor if we do not achieve that this right implies a change of logic and objective meaning the reproduction and sustainability of life instead of commodification for the profit.

ALERTS

Just as from Xse we say that we do not want a renewable model driven by the Oligopoly, or that it is not sufficient an Energetic of Barcelona if this does not include the active participation of the citizenship and that therefore the subject of this energetic revolution is as important as its content. We also defend that we are not interested in a renewable model that does not recognize this bias and gender oppression. So energy sovereignty cannot not be feminist, in the same way you cannot look only to the North. It would not make sense to aspire to models of management and governance that guarantee these rights at the level of Catalonia, Spain or EU, without considering and fighting aligned with the communities of the Global South without access to light and where they pass electric power lines or where energy resources are extracted. Similarly, it would make no sense to do so without considering and fighting in line with the women who suffer the weight of the global chains of care activated by the neo-colonial patriarchal capitalist model with its dispossession and impoverishment.

POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTIONS / ANSWERS / PROPOSALS

This same session that has been held today is a first attempt, a first step of something that we must continue working and making mainstream, in both the medium and long term.

The session began with Blanca Bayas giving a brief introduction to the feminist economy and to the care crisis. Next, Mònica Guiteras applied these concepts to our energy model under the form of questions and readings to what was previously proposed and shared. Thus, the debate was initiated.

It was decided to let interventions happen one after the other, even if they were not necessarily a response to, or in dialogue with, the previous ones, nor if they followed the order of questions raised in the beginning. However, in order to help the rapporteur, the organisers of the debate have rearranged the interventions following the initial pattern of issues.



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