

## *Contesting energy transitions: wind power and conflicts in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec*

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### *Abstract*

Abstract This article studies the expansion of large-scale wind energy projects on the Isthmus of Tehuantepec (Mexico) and local socio-environmental conflicts that have emerged in response. It explores how the neoliberal agenda in Mexico is shaping a specific way of implementing wind energy projects, and how this is leading to local resistance and the production of alternatives. The article is based on a historical analysis reconstructing the main features of wind power development, and pathways of struggle. By following a political ecology perspective, wind energy is seen as embedded in a wider frame of power relations and the uneven patterns of the Mexican economy. The struggles of indigenous groups are thus analyzed as the expression of peripheral communities against the enclosure of communal lands, the private appropriation of benefits, and the lack of democratic procedures involved in these projects. The discussion emphasizes the role of communal identities and institutions in building successful networks, while introducing new concepts (energy sovereignty) and alternative schemes in wind power production (cooperatives). The overall approach of the article is that any move towards a different energy system should be politically encouraged by social and cultural means, rather than be largely economically motivated. Keywords: wind energy, neoliberalism, socio-environmental conflicts, energy sovereignty, cooperatives, Tehuantepec

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