

Transdisciplinarity, counter-narratives and the making of Philippine energy futures

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The Philippines' reliance on coal for electricity generation is often justified in terms of its stability, abundance/accessibility and affordability as a baseload energy resource. Coal accounts for nearly 60 per cent of the total energy mix, making it the dominant fossil fuel source. This paper (re-) examines these rationales through transdisciplinary research with stakeholders on the fringes, or outside, of formal energy institutions and provision. Heterodox economic approaches, civil society accounts, and everyday lived experiences illustrate the uneven sharing of costs and benefits between end-users, taxpayers, providers and investors and belie the apparent advantages of coal, with inflexibility, high tariffs, and lack of grid access cited as persistent problems. Coal-fired power is moreover found to be rendered 'economic' by capital guarantees that shift business risks on to consumers. The paper concludes by reflecting on the transformative potential of transdisciplinarity in the making of energy futures.



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