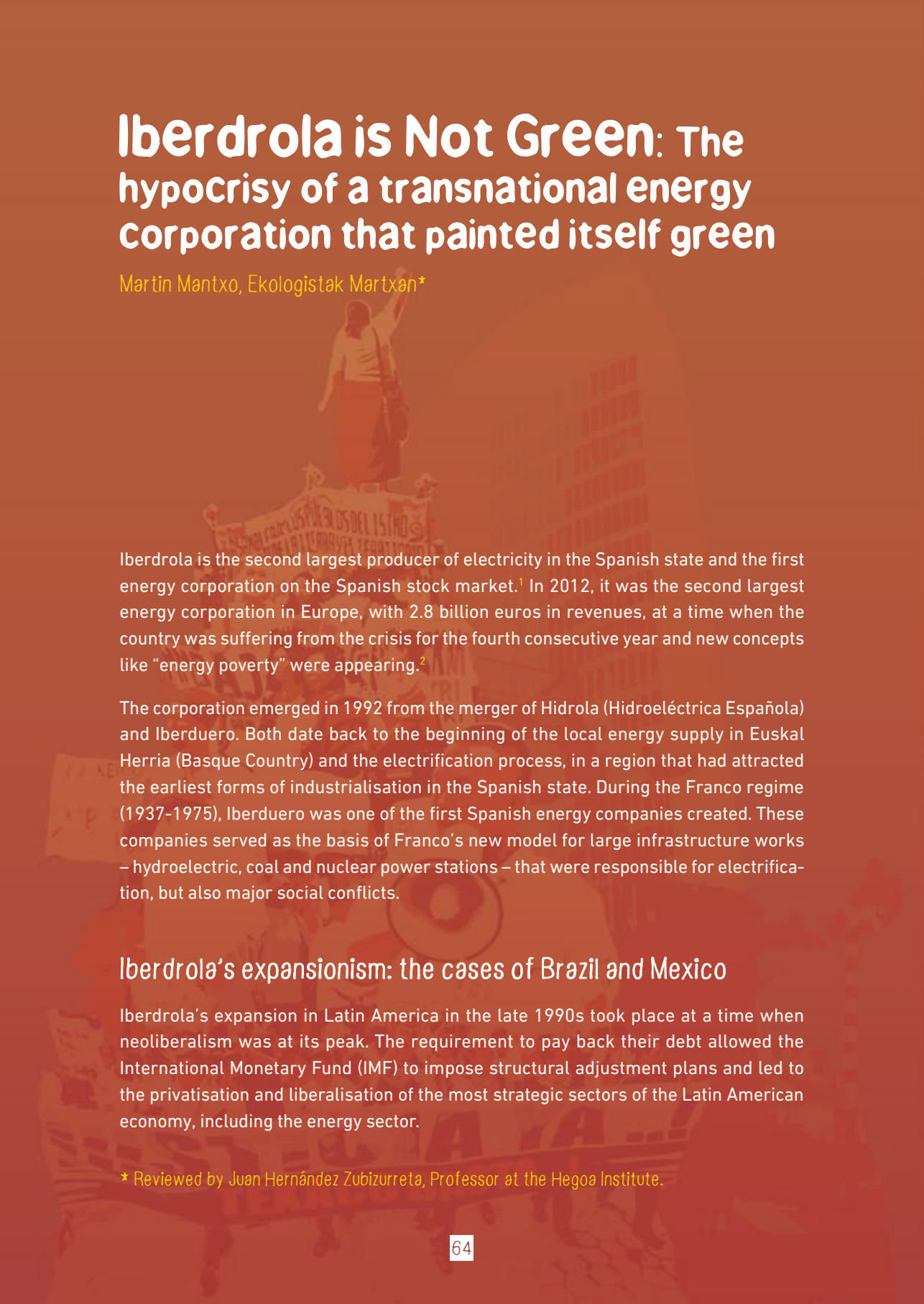
Iberdrola is Not Green: The hypocrisy of a transnational energy corporation that painted itself green

Martin Mantxo, Ekologistak Martxan*



Iberdrola is the second largest producer of electricity in the Spanish state and the first energy corporation on the Spanish stock market.[1] In 2012, it was the second largest energy corporation in Europe, with 2.8 billion euros in revenues, at a time when the country was suffering from the crisis for the fourth consecutive year and new concepts like "energy poverty" were appearing.[2]

The corporation emerged in 1992 from the merger of Hidrola (Hidroeléctrica Española) and Iberduero. Both date back to the beginning of the local energy supply in Euskal Herria (Basque Country) and the electrification process, in a region that had attracted the earliest forms of industrialisation in the Spanish state. During the Franco regime (1937-1975), Iberduero was one of the first Spanish energy companies created. These companies served as the basis of Franco's new model for large infrastructure works – hydroelectric, coal and nuclear power stations – that were responsible for electrification, but also major social conflicts.

Iberdrola's expansionism: the cases of Brazil and Mexico

Iberdrola's expansion in Latin America in the late 1990s took place at a time when neoliberalism was at its peak. The requirement to pay back their debt allowed the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to impose structural adjustment plans and led to the privatisation and liberalisation of the most strategic sectors of the Latin American economy, including the energy sector.

* Reviewed by Juan Hernández Zubizurreta, Professor at the Hegoa Institute.

As part of its internationalisation strategy, Iberdrola set up in several Latin American countries (Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, Chile) at first. In some cases, however, it was forced to leave due to poor management and abuses (Bolivia and Guatemala).[3] Its operations are currently concentrated in Brazil and Mexico, as well as the United States, Greece and the United Kingdom (where it absorbed Scottish Power), and another thirty countries.[4] In recent years, its business abroad has grown considerably. In 2012, for example, its operations in the Spanish state only represented 25% of its net profits (2.8 billion euros),[5] and the bulk of its investments were expected to be concentrated in the United Kingdom (41% of the total), Latin America (namely Mexico, with 23%) and the United States (17%).[6]

Iberdrola has become one of Spain's four main energy groups.[7] These groups can be considered an oligopoly, as together they share companies, dictate policies, run lobby groups and employ the same energy model. Iberdrola is also one of the world's largest electricity corporations, with 31.7 million clients around the globe, and ranks 133 on the Forbes list of the biggest transnational corporations in the world.[8]

Its business abroad has been so profitable that in 2014, during its conflict with the Spanish government over the electricity reform the latter had proposed, Iberdrola President José Ignacio Sánchez Galán announced that the corporation would not invest in the Spanish state and would only do so in countries offering favourable conditions.[9] It justified its opting for the Latin American giants by arguing that both have "predictable and stable regulations", but also due to their favourable production conditions.[10]

The contrast between Iberdrola's greenwashing and its wager on thermal power plants and large dams

Just as the energy system was being brought into question by climate change, Iberdrola began to implement an aggressive "greenwashing" policy.[11] It launched a major publicity campaign consisting of advertisements that associate its operations with images of pristine nature, forests, and streams or waterfalls filling – for example – a green cube of water, all tinted green. This strategy includes the use of a new logo (a leaf, a drop of water and a sun) to convey the idea that the corporation only produces renewable energy. It also created a new affiliate dedicated exclusively to renewable energy, Iberdrola Renovables, which it later reabsorbed in 2011.

With the creation of this logo, all publicity was focused on this subsidiary, meaning that Iberdrola's name became associated solely with this kind of energy. The reality, however, is quite different. Iberdrola continues to operate thermal power plants run on coal and fuel oil, as well as new combined cycle and nuclear plants, and large hydroelectric dams. As indicated on Iberdrola's electricity bills, in 2013, depending on the time of year, between only 8.9% and 11.3% of the energy comes from renewable resources.[12]

Iberdrola in Brazil

Iberdrola's good relations with the Brazilian government could be seen at the energy corporation's shareholder meeting held in March 2014, to which Brazilian ex-president Luiz Inácio 'Lula' da Silva had been invited. Lula, who stated that Iberdrola's participation in the Brazilian economy was crucial, facilitated the entry of Iberdrola and other transnational corporations into Brazil, despite the fears his election raised among transnationals due to his affiliation to the PT (Partido dos Trabalhadores, or Workers' Party) and his trade unionist past.[13] In 1997, Iberdrola acquired 39% of Neoenergia and, in 2011, took control of Elektro, the sixth largest electricity distribution company in the country. By doing so, it became the largest distributor of electricity in Brazil, with over 40 million consumers, which is 20% of the country's population.

Structural adjustment programs forced Brazil – a country where the energy system was entirely publicly owned – to put its state enterprises up for sale, often at much lower prices than what they were actually worth and with the active support of the Brazilian National Development Bank (Banco Nacional de Desarrollo Económico y Social, or BNDES). The Brazilian government played a fundamental role in this process, as it introduced a series of laws and constitutional changes that, among other things, put an end to the distinction between national and foreign companies and eliminated the cap on ownership by foreign capital. Furthermore, state enterprises were prohibited from receiving loans from the government and being the majority shareholder of investment projects. The federal government also created several agencies to favour energy corporations.[14] The BNDES itself served as the vehicle for investing public funds in these private energy companies, including Iberdrola's subsidiaries. In 2009, the BNDES disbursed around 54 million euros, of which 75% were allocated to large corporations from the energy sector.[15]

One of the most important resources that the Brazilian government has put at the service of major transnational energy corporations is undoubtedly water. It is astonishing that in a country where hydropower represents 80% of the energy matrix and production costs are reduced (energy corporations are not charged for the use of water, for example), energy is so expensive. In fact, the inhabitants of the 60 million households in Brazil pay 25% more for electricity than people in France, where 76% of the energy matrix is from nuclear power and therefore, has higher production costs.[16]

In Brazil, Iberdrola owns six cogeneration plants, one combined cycle station,[17] one wind farm and 11 hydroelectric dams, as well as the Baixo Iguaçu, Teles Pires and Belo Monte dam projects. Iberdrola has particularly benefited from Belo Monte, which will be the third largest dam in the world. This project is an enormous social and environmental disaster, as it will affect 516 km^2 of forest (64.5 hectares in Permanent Preservation Areas, or APP for their acronym in Portuguese), 11 municipalities, nine indigenous territories and 30 indigenous communities. It will cause the displacement of thousands of people, including 50,000 indigenous peoples.[18]

Iberdrola in Mexico

Iberdrola arrived in Mexico in the early 1990s under the reforms adopted in the framework of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with the United States and Canada.[19] The reforms included changes to the Public Electric Energy Service Law (Ley del Servicio Público de Energía Eléctrica, LSPEE) and Article 27 of the Constitution to allow for the purchase and sale of communal lands.[20]

The first reform permitted private capital to enter the electricity generation sector and engage in activities that only the public sector had been allowed to operate since the adoption of the energy reform in 1938 by President Lázaro Cárdenas. Article 27 (paragraph 6) of the Mexican Constitution establishes that "It is exclusively a function of the Nation to generate, conduct, transform, distribute and supply electric power" and that "No concessions for this purpose will be granted to private persons".[21] Therefore, the reform of the LSPEE, which benefited corporations like Iberdrola, was illegal. On 20 December 2013, a reform passed by President Peña Nieto took privatisation one step further. This reform has been the object of harsh criticism: on 19 March 2014, approximately 10,000 people protested against it in Mexico City's main square, Zócalo. Iberdrola currently has six wind farms (five in Oaxaca),[22] six combined cycle stations (the last one, the Baja California II station, was authorised in January 2014), two cogeneration plants and two thermal power plants in Mexico.

Iberdrola Renovables, and later Iberdrola itself, concentrated its renewable resources activities in the area of wind energy – namely large wind farms that, as we will see shortly, have been strongly questioned due to their extensive impacts on the environment, society and the landscape.

The company's "green" image clashes with its wager on highly polluting and destructive forms of energy such as the new combined cycle plants or hydroelectric power. The former is based on liquefied natural gas that, being a new technology, is much more efficient than the conventional thermal stations in terms of emissions, but still generates large volumes of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. Furthermore, it is important to keep in mind the socio-environmental impacts associated with the extraction and transportation of natural gas. They can be seen in the case of Nigeria, which is where the gas Iberdrola uses in its plants in the Basque Country (Santurtzi, Bahia de Bizkaia, Castejón) comes from. There, the extraction (of both oil and gas) has had serious and irreversible effects on the people and the environment due to repeated oil spills and gas flaring, which corporations continue to perform with total impunity.[23] This also involves the contamination of the water that the environment and thousands of people depend on.

To this, one must add the effects of hydraulic fracturing or "fracking" – an oil and gas extraction technique that causes major environmental and social impacts and has generated protest in the countries where it is being used, namely the United States where it was first introduced.[24] In June 2014, Iberdrola signed a contract with US-based Cheniere Energy for the purchase of liquefied natural gas (LNG). The 20-year contract is for 0.4 million annual tonnes initially, and 0.8 million as soon as a third train at its Corpus Christi Liquefaction plant in Texas is ready.[25]

It is worth noting that these power plants benefit from emission allowances that the European Union grants to combined cycle plants for free (valued at 1.6 billion euros in 2011).[26] Iberdrola is the owner (or co-owner) of eight of these kinds of plants in the Spanish state, five in Mexico, seven in the United States, one in Brazil and four in the United Kingdom. Before the economic crisis erupted in 2008, the corporation had planned to build many more, but it had to desist due to the fall in demand and the burst of the real estate bubble. As in the case of its unbuilt nuclear plants, this goes to show that Iberdrola's model (which could be called the "neoliberal energy model") is not meant to respond to real energy needs, but rather to pure economic speculation, as the power plants, infrastructure and production are not proposed to satisfy a demand, but rather to generate profit. Perhaps the most illustrative case is that of Iberdrola's plant in Castejón, in the Spanish state, that did not produce one single kilowatt of energy in 2013 (even though it has a 86 MW capacity and was only built in 2001).[27]

Hydroelectric dams, of course do not require fossil fuels, but even so, cause severe environmental impacts, which arise from the entire construction and damming process, not to mention the methane emissions released by the decomposition of forests that have been submerged by a dam. Methane emissions contribute more to the greenhouse effect than carbon dioxide does. Furthermore, the dams block the river's flow, which has obvious consequences for the environment. Large hydroelectric projects are not an energy alternative, nor an alternative to climate change.[28]

Iberdrola strengthens gas, combats renewable energy sources

Iberdrola's greenwashing clashes with its belligerent policy against renewable energy in the hands of small producers. In 2011, the Spanish Association for the Thermoelectric Industry Protermosolar expelled Iberdrola for acting against the interests of the thermos-solar sector.[29] In October 2013, Iberdrola president Ignacio Sánchez-Galán declared, "If the production of solar and photovoltaic energy was suspended, the electricity bill

would drop 10%".[30] In addition to these declarations, the corporation took out advertisements in several newspapers affirming how expensive renewable energy is.

That same year, Spain's Partido Popular government heeded the proposal of Iberdrola and other major energy corporations[31] and reduced the electricity tariff deficit by 6 billion euros by eliminating subsidies for renewable energy sources, among other measures. With this cutback, renewable energy producers were unable to compete with the large electricity corporations.[32] The government also introduced a regulation[33] to stop electricity generated by solar farms and domestic surplus from being fed into the power network. Until then, policies for the promotion of renewable energy sources gave priority to the entrance of this type of electricity into the grid. The reason for this change was that due to the crisis and the excessive expansion of the energy sector,[34] the large electricity corporations did not have an outlet for all of the electricity they produced and opted for trying to limit small renewable energy producers (50,000 solar farms in the country).

Before the crisis, Iberdrola and other major energy corporations focused on combined cycle power plants, which were presented as less polluting than other thermal stations, more efficient and based on cheap fuel: natural gas imported in optimal conditions from subjugated countries (Nigeria, Algeria, etc.). In a 10-year period, in the Spanish state, combined cycle plants with a total capacity of 27 GW were built.[35] In 2007, applications for 50 to 60 permits to construct combined cycle stations in the Spanish state were submitted. Obviously, due to the real estate and energy crisis, they were not built; this was the case of Iberdrola's Miranda de Ebro (800 MW) project, the expansion of Castejón (400 MW), another one in Santurtzi and it is understood that the Pasaia thermal station was to be replaced by Superpuerto, Langreo (1100 MW), etc. In 2012, half of the combined cycle stations in the Spanish state were inoperative; Iberdrola's Castejón did not produce not even one kilowatt of energy that year.[36] In 2014, Spain's regasification network operated at less than 30% of its capacity, and the combined cycle stations, only at 20% throughout the year. 80% of the time, they were not operating.[37] What is more, Iberdrola together with another 8 major European energy corporations[38] proposed measures to the European Parliament to increase Europe's dependency on fossil fuel and reduce renewable energy sources.[39]

Later, due to the expensive expansion that Iberdrola and other energy corporations resorted to, Iberdrola requested the closure of its own stations – including ones that were not very old, such as the Arcos de la Frontera combined cycle station (1600 MW, from 2005) in 2013, or in 2014, one of the three groups of the Castellón (1,647 MW, from 2002, which substituted the old conventional power station) whose production had been reduced by 70% since 2011 and only operated for a few hours a day. In this context of electricity plants operating below capacity, in addition to doing away with renewable energy sources, the large electricity corporations predicted that establishments with a joint capacity of more than 5,000 megawatts could be eliminated from the Spanish power grid.[40]

Mega-wind farms in Oaxaca (Mexico) and on the islands of the Aegean Sea (Greece)

In addition to presenting a more positive and "green" image to the public, wind power projects are highly profitable – not only because of the energy they produce, but also all of the economic incentives they receive for their so-called 'contribution' to climate change mitigation. In many cases, they are considered "Clean Development Mechanisms" (CDM) by the UN. Therefore, despite their low participation in Iberdrola's matrix (14.99% in 2005-2012), renewable energy represents 39.95% of its total profits.[41]

This sector also benefits from public incentives.[42] For example, in 2009, Iberdrola Renovables received 329 million euros in subsidies from the Spanish state and in 2010, another 743.8 million. In the United States, it received over 1 billion dollars from the government's stimulus package for renewable energy, and in the United Kingdom, it benefited from the Renewable Energy Act. Accepting government incentives and many other benefits is contradictory to the repeated affirmation of major transnational corporations – such as Iberdrola – of the desire to minimise state intervention in their affairs.

As declared CDMs, corporations like Iberdrola obtain carbon credits, which grant them the right to pollute other places based on the theory that they can compensate for this pollution with these projects. This is the only way the wide array of wind power projects that have invaded the Isthmus of Tehuantepec can be understood: 23 farms and 2,000 wind turbines, whose numbers are predicted to grow to 5.000. Iberdrola participates in the Spanish Carbon Fund (SCF), which also decides which projects meet the necessary requirements to obtain funding. This is the case of the La Venta II farm in Oaxaca. Backed by the World Bank, the SCF has 278.6 million euros.[43]

Despite the profits renewable energy generates for the corporation, the massive wind farms it has built in places like the Isthmus of Tehuantepec or the Aegean Islands are very far from having positive impacts on the people living nearby. In both cases, the goal is to develop large-scale production facilities geared towards foreign markets, while local inhabitants and neighbouring communities are the ones who end up being affected.

In Oaxaca,[44] Iberdrola, together with other corporations such as the Spanish construction company Acciona and with the financial support of the BBVA bank, have seized the land of indigenous peoples (Zapoteca and Ikoojts).[45] This land is particularly vulnerable, as ownership is communal and therefore, there are no individual property deeds. In this Mexican state, Iberdrola's has three wind farms (La Ventosa (102 MW), La Venta III (102 MW) and Bii Nee Stipa (26 MW), plus Gamesa's Dos Arbolitos farm, of which it co-owns 20%)[46] on approximately 60,000 hectares of collective property. They generate 1,263 MW (only 10% of the energy generation capacity that is estimated for this region).[47]

All of the windfarms together add up to 2,000 wind turbines, and the installation of some 5,000 is being considered.[48]

Iberdrola together with its business partners Gamesa and Acciona will be among the ones that benefit the most from the new Mexican plan to increase wind power production by investing 12 billion euros between 2015 and 2019.[49]

Iberdrola's wind project in Crete and other Aegean islands in Greece (Ios, Lesbos and Lemnos) must also be mentioned. Launched in 2004 via its Greek affiliate Rokas, the project originally included 17 wind farms. Two years later, the number of farms grew to 44, with a total capacity of 1,636 MW. The farms' locations coincide with not only archaeological sites, but also protected zones. This implies that the project's environmental impact has been underestimated, as it affects bird life and species such as the mastic tree (with its edible resin), which are essential to the local economy. These megaprojects have the additional risk of exacerbating erosion: since they are built on the islands' peaks, they involve clearing the vegetation in the area, building access roads, etc. Furthermore, the project underestimated the local communities on the islands and their economic activities, and built the wind farms close to inhabited towns and land. The communities did not have information until they held protests. These elements were denounced at the popular tribunal organised by various social organisations and jurists from the Spanish state and Latin America on 30 October 2013 in Bilbao.[50]

Iberdrola's nuclear past and present

Nuclear energy was introduced in the Spanish state during the Franco regime. One of the main driving forces behind this kind of energy was Iberdrola's predecessor, Iberduero. In Euskal Herria (Basque Country), its place of origin, the company is associated with nuclear energy and with the movement fighting against it (precursor of the ecologist movement). In fact, this movement and the constant popular mobilisations succeeded in stopping a nuclear power plant from being built in Lemoniz and in paralysing three other projects.

Even so, both Iberduero and Iberdrola continued to develop this type of energy, which has been and continues to be the target of many campaigns and mobilisations. This is especially true now, as in addition to all the subsidies and moratoriums it has received, the company got the government to make changes to a law and give it 150 million euros to keep its ancient Garoña plant (43 years of existence) open.[51] What is more, this authorisation to maintain the plant operating came at a time when, in addition to being so old, the plant had already accumulated a track record of numerous accidents and shutdowns. All of this is happening now despite the fact that after the Fukushima accident, many countries decided to eliminate this type of energy production.

In addition to Garoña, Iberdrola has the Almaraz, Ascó II and Vandellós II power stations (Endesa is the co-owner of all three) and Confrents (Iberdrola owns 100%). These plants soon found themselves in the same situation as Garoña, but it appears that the government is proposing to keep them operating as well. Iberdrola is also involved in plans with GDF Suez on a new nuclear station NuGeneration (NuGen) in Cumbria (United Kingdom),[52] participates in a consortium for reactors 3 and 4 of the Cernavoda station (Romania; abandoned due to the crisis), and in nuclear engineering projects such as the modernisation of the Laguna Verde station (Mexico). It also is part of the Iter nuclear fusion reactor project.[53]

Iberdrola: macro-profits, macro-salaries and macro-skyscrapers

In the midst of the crisis, it is remarkable how much profit Iberdrola generated. Between 2008 and 2013, the corporation earned nearly 14 billion euros, which represents net profits of close to 3 billion euros per year.[54]

This number also stands out against the results other European corporations obtained during the crisis. With a turnover of 16.5 billion euros, Iberdrola obtained 1.5 million euros in profits (a similar percentage to that of other Spanish energy corporations). Meanwhile, giants like E.ON, with 61.9 billion euros in revenues, only produced 828 million euros in profits; and French-based EDF, with a turnover of 35.6 billion euros, earned 1.8 billion euros in profits.[55]

Similarly, since the beginning of the 2008 crisis, while peoples' wages fell, unemployment rose and electricity bills increased 323% (tariff) in Spain, the salary of Iberdrola president José Ignacio Sánchez Galán increased 119% from 2009 to 2012, reaching 6.2 million euros per year.[56] In the first half of 2014, Sánchez Galán earned 7.58 million euros, an average of 42,000 euros per day.[57] His astronomical wage was criticised by British parliamentarians.[58] Economics professor Roberto Centento called for the trial and imprisonment of Sánchez Galán and his 13 advisors for having salaries that were 30 times higher than those of their counterparts at Japan's third-largest electricity corporation (much bigger than Iberdrola) and five times higher than those of their colleagues at the E.ON power company.[59]

Popular Tribunal against Iberdrola, Bilbao, October 2013 / Ekologistak Martxan

Poster from one of the gatherings of movements resisting wind farms in Oaxaca, 2012 / Ekologistak Martxan

Poster for a protest held to denounce Iberdrola and BBVA, Bilbao, 2013 / Ekologistak Martxan

Conclusion

Iberdrola has continued to expand abroad using the policy that has characterised the corporation since its origins as an oligopolistic company in the Spanish state, where it imposed a way of producing, distributing and commercialising energy based on maximising profits and disregard for popular sentiment and needs. When it entered Latin America and other countries, its actions were guided by the same principle, as well as the hegemonic position it was afforded by the economic situation and the way it appropriated other companies (backed by structural adjustment programs, privatisation, etc.). In this *modus operandi*, the arrogance that is typical of transnational corporations can be clearly seen. Its objective was to increase its portfolio, its expansion zone and, of course, its profits and position in the ranking of major energy corporations, without getting to know these countries, their markets and much less their people and their needs. It has caused major conflicts, which forced it to rapidly leave some countries. In the countries in which it continues to operate (Mexico and Brazil), it has obtained some very favourable conditions thanks to the invaluable collaboration of their respective governments. In both countries, its social and environmental impacts are many and severe, which has sparked mobilisations and denunciations from environmental movements, user organisations, civil society platforms and other groups. These groups are already proposing changes to billing and production, and even an alternative energy model ruled by other values, such as understanding energy as a right and not just a way to generate profit for a few, and seeing users as more than mere consumers. It is no coincidence that Iberdrola's high point as a company coincides with this expansion, which is thanks to the profits it transfers from these countries to its headquarters. More than just an appropriation of resources, this transfer is often disproportionate and abusive, and, given the impacts it causes, can be considered a new process of colonialism.

Notes

1 Wikipedia. Iberdrola. http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iberdrola

2 Iberdrola came in second behind French corporation EDF, just ahead of Endesa. Cinco Días (2013). EDF, Iberdrola y Endesa, las eléctricas europeas que más ganaron en 2012. 27 October. (http://cincodias.com/cincodias/2013/10/27/empresas/1382875892_594669.html)

3 In Bolivia, Iberdrola (via its subsidiary Electropaz) caused discontent in the population of El Alto due to its breach of contract, constant power outages and unjustified tariff hikes, which affected the poorest neighbourhoods and led to numerous protests in the early 2000s. In 2003, the corporation's offices were set on fire and in 2004, protests increased. In 2005, Iberdrola was forced to reimburse two million dollars to five municipalities for overcharges. In 2006, despite the introduction of the "dignity rate", the lowest income families still had difficulties paying electricity prices in El Alto, and in 2008, the Federación de Juntas Vecinales (Federation of Neighbourhood Councils) proposed that Iberdrola be expelled from Bolivia. The government nationalised Iberdrola's affiliates (Electropaz and Elfeo) in December 2012 for having denied families access to electricity. "We are forced to take this measure so that utility rates will be fair in the department of La Paz and Oruro and the quality of electricity services will be uniform in rural and urban areas", Evo Morales explained. See: El Mundo (2012). Evo Morales expropia cuatro filiales de Iberdrola en Bolivia. 29 December. http://www.elmundo.es/america/2012/12/29/noticias/1356790788.html and González, E. (2013). Iberdrola en Bolivia: una actividad nada ejemplar. Diagonal Periódico. 31 January. https://www.diagonalperiodico.net/global/iberdrola-bolivia-actividad-nada-ejemplar.html. As for Guatemala, Iberdrola conducted activities in this country between 1998 and 2010 and controlled 70% of electricity distribution. Energy production was based on hydroelectric dams. In 2009, it filed a lawsuit against Guatemala at the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID), in which it claimed that the country's regulatory body had caused them losses by reducing the price of electricity and demanded 672 million dollars in compensation. In 2012, the ICSID ruled against Iberdrola, ordering it to pay 5.3 million dollars to the Guatemalan state to cover its legal expenses. By then, Iberdrola had already disposed of its assets in this country. See: El Mundo (2012). Iberdrola pierde una demanda contra Guatemala por 'expropiación indirecta'. 21 August. http://www.elmundo.es/america/2012/08/20/noticias/1345495050.html

4 Scottish Power (2014). Webpage. http://www.scottishpower.com

5 Ruiz, A. (2012). Iberdrola sube su beneficio un 12% gracias al negocio exterior. El Plural. 24 October. http://www.elplural.com/2012/10/24/iberdrola-sube-su-beneficio-un-12-gracias-al-negocio-exterior

6 Iberdrola (2014). Junta General de Accionistas 2015. http://www.iberdrola.com/guiarapidadelaccionista/es/estrategia.html

7 The other large electrical corporations that are active in the Spanish state are: Gas Natural Fenosa, which is the result of a merger between the two energy corporations Unión Fenosa and Gas Natural; and Endesa, which now belongs to the Italian firm Enel. We use the term "oligopoly" due to the reduced number of companies that control the energy market and that come together in several areas (rates, Spanish Nuclear Safety Council) and in many projects and power plants, and share common interests.

8 Forbes. Website. http://www.forbes.com/companies/iberdrola

9 The reform of the electric energy sector in 2013 in the Spanish state introduced a new price-fixing mechanism. This mechanism only affected the energy system's regulated costs, when, in fact, the very structure of the market is what makes the tolls (support toll) insufficient to cover these costs. Therefore, the reform only addressed short-term economic patterns. Energy bills began to rise again.

10 For more information, see: Ecologistas en Acción (2013). Una reforma eléctrica insuficiente, insostenible e ineficaz. July. http://www.ecologistasenaccion.org/article26245.html ; Mateu, C. (2013). La absurda reforma energética de Soria es de Iberdrola. Suelo Solar. August. http://www.suelosolar.es/newsolares/newsol.asp?id=8546; and Martínez, V. (2014). Iberdrola carga contra la reforma regulatoria de Soria. El Mundo. 20 February. http://www.elmundo.es/economia/2014/02/19/5304a903268e3ecb4c8b457e.html

11 "Greenwashing" is the expression used for the practices of transnational corporations that have negative environmental impacts, but are presented in a way that leads one to believe they are beneficial.

12 Iberdrola water bill (2013).

13 Iberdrola (2014). Lula da Silva participa junto a Ignacio Galán en el encuentro internacional de directivos del Grupo Iberdrola. Nota de prensa. 27 March. http://www.iberdrola.es/sala-prensa/notas-prensa/nacional/2014/detalle/nota-prensa/140327_NP_01_EncuentroDirectivos.html

14 This was the case of the Brazilian Electricity Regulatory Agency (Agencia Nacional de Energía Eléctrica, ANEEL), the Chamber for the Commercialisation of Electric Energy (Cámara de Comercialización de Energía Eléctrica, CCEE), the Electric System National Operator (Operador Nacional do Sistema Elétrico, ONS) and the Energy Research Enterprise (Empresa de Pesquisa Energética, EPE). For more information on the privatisation of the electricity sector in Brazil, see: Nadaletti, C. (2010). Informe sobre la actuación de la empresa Iberdrola – Neoenergia en Brasil. Movimento dos Atingidos por Barragens (MAB); and Ekologistak Martxan and Uharte, L.M. (2012). Las multinacionales en el siglo XXI: Impactos múltiples. El caso de Iberdrola en México y en Brasil. Editorial 2015 y más.

15 Zibechi, R. (2012). Brasil potencia. Entre la integración regional y el imperialismo. Ediciones Desde Abajo. http://biblioteca.hegoa.ehu.es/system/ebooks/19560/original/Brasil_potencia.pdf?13835%2063837

16 Cervinski, G. (2013). El actual modelo energético brasileño. Movimento dos Atingidos por Barragens (MAB). 14 October. http://mabnacional.org.br/noticia/el-actual-modelo-energ-tico-brasile

17 Combined cycle power plants produce electricity using turbines and steam and liquefied natural gas for fuel. They are more efficient than conventional thermal power stations, but they still cause a large amount of toxic gas and greenhouse gas emissions.

18 See the MAB Amazônia website: http://mabnacional.org.br/amazonia/belomonte and the Movimento Xingu Vivo para Sempre website: http://www.xinguvivo.org.br. See also: http://www.xinguvivo.org.br/2010/10/14/perguntas-frequentes/, http://mabnacional.org.br/video/14-mar-atingidos-por-belo-monte-exigem-seus-direitos; http://www.lavanguardia.com/internacional/20110820/54203028466/una-represa-amenaza-con-desplazar-a-50-000-indigenas-en-brasil.html

19 This period also coincided with the presidency of Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994) and the privatisation of state companies. In fact, during that time, more than 90% of the 1,150 public enterprises were privatised. See: www.sinembargo.mx/01-10-2012/379209

20 The reform of this article was key for the establishment of wind power megaprojects, which we will examine shortly.

21 See: http://www.metro.df.gob.mx/transparencia/imagenes/fr1/normaplicable/2014/1/lspee14012014.pdf

22 The projects in Oaxaca are: La Ventosa, La Venta III, Bii Nee Stipa (I and IV) and Parques Ecológicos de México.

23 Nigeria-based Environmental Rights Action has rigorously monitored the impacts of the extraction of hydrocarbons in this country. See the organisation's website at : http://www.eraction.org

24 For more information on fracking, see the blog of Ecologistas en Acción: http://fractura-hidraulica.blogspot.com.es. For more on the situation in different countries, see: Mantxo, M. (2014). Fracking: la resistencia mundial continúa. Rebelión. 11 October. http://www.rebelion.org/noticia.php?id=190688 and Mantxo, M. (2011). Frack Off!!!. Gara. 12 December. http://gara.naiz.eus/paperezkoa/20111212/309141/es/Frack-Off

25 No al TTIP (2014). Cheniere e Iberdrola firman un acuerdo de suministro de GNL por un período de 20 años. 30 May. http://www.noalttip.blogspot.com.es/2014/06/cheniere-e-iberdrola-firman-un-acuerdo.html

26 Greenpeace (2013). Iberdrola, empresa enemiga de las renovables. 29 May. http://www.greenpeace.org/espana/es/Blog/iberdrola-empresa-enemiga-de-las-renovables/blog/45322

27 Pérez-Nievas, F. and Montero, O. (2014). Iberdrola admite que la actividad de la central de Castejón en 2013 fue nula. Noticias de Navarra. 9 October. http://www.noticiasdenavarra.com/2014/10/09/vecinos/tudela-y-ribera/iberdrola-admite-que-la-actividad-de-la-central-de-castejon-en-2013-fue-nula

28 See the sizeable bibliography compiled by International Rivers on greenhouse gas emissions of large hydroelectric dams: http://www.internationalrivers.org/resources/a-bibliography-of-key-scientific-articles-and-publications-on-greenhouse-gas-emissions. Also see: http://www.internationalrivers.org/problems-with-big-dams

29 Energías Renovables (2011). Protermosolar echa a Iberdrola de la asociación termosolar. 31 de octubre. http://www.energias-renovables.com/articulo/protermosolar-echa-a-iberdrola-de-la-asociacion

30 Murcia, J. (2013). El Presidente de Iberdrola afirma que el precio de la luz bajaría un 10% si se eliminara la energia solar y fotovoltaica. ABC de Sevilla. 14 October. http://sevilla.abc.es/economia/20131014/rc-presidente-iberdrola-afirma-precio-201310141606.html

31 The large Spanish energy corporations are, in addition to Iberdrola, Gas Natural Fenosa (after the merger between Gas Natural and Unión Fenosa), Endesa (belonging to Italian ENI) and Repsol, the oil corporation. There are also small producers and distributors such as Zencer, Ecooo and Gesternova, and others such as Som Energía and Goiener that are cooperatives and committed to renewable energy.

32 See: http://www.iberdrola.es/sala-prensa/notas-prensa/nacional/2012/detalle/nota-prensa/121113_NP_02_GalanCongresoADP.html. Sobre el debate http://unef.es/2013/07/una-radiografia-a-la-generacion-del-deficit-de-tarifa/

33 Amendment no. 475 of the draft Law on the Electricity Sector establishes fines of up to 60 million euros for households that have a 200-watt solar panel without authorisation and authorises inspectors to revise installations put in for one's own consumption. See: http://www.congreso.es/public_oficiales/L10/CONG/BOCG/A/BOCG-10-A-65-5.PDF

34 This Spanish energy policy is a megalomaniac, greedy, ambitious and arrogant policy that is a reflection of unbridled urban planning and the construction of major infrastructure works (freeways, airports, high-speed trains, etc.) that generated a huge debt and consequently a major economic crisis, which was exacerbated by the international financial crisis.

35 See: www.nuevomodeloenergetico.org/pgs2/index.php/main-page-list/sabias-que

36 See: http://www.diariodenavarra.es/noticias/navarra/tudela_ribera/2013/12/29/iberdrola_ampliara_central_termica_castejon_141695_1007.html and www.fundacionsustrai.org

37 See: www.nuevomodeloenergetico.org/pgs2/index.php/main-page-list/sabias-que

38 The corporations that participated in 2013 in the Magritte Group, which pressured the European Parliament and the European Commission to eliminate policies in favour of renewable energy sources, are: Iberdrola, Gas Natural Fenosa, GDF Suez, ENI, RWE, E.ON, Enel, Gasterra and Vattenfall. Boyle, G. y Achterberg, F. (2014). Atados: Por qué las grandes eléctricas europeas quieren dejarnos enganchados a la importación de combustibles fósiles. Greenpeace. October. www.greenpeace.org/espana/Global/espana/2014/Report/cambio-climatico/Atados.pdf

39 Ibid.

40 Martínez, V. (2014). Iberdrola pide el cierre de otra central de gas al caer un 70% su producción. El Mundo. 22 November. http://www.elmundo.es/economia/2014/11/22/546fac53268e3ea7728b456e.html

41 Uharte, L. M. (2012). Las multinacionales en el siglo XXI: impactos múltiples - El caso de Iberdrola en México y en Brasil. Editorial 2015 y Más.

42 Ibertrola (2011). 743,8 millones en subvenciones por renovables. 14 March. http://ibertrola.blogspot.com.es/2011/03/iberdrola-renovables-cerro-el-ejercicio.html

43 Martínez, B. and Gilbertson, T. (2013). Castillos en el aire: el Estado español, los fondos públicos y el mercado de carbono de la Unión Europea. Carbon Trade Watch. http://www.carbontradewatch.org/downloads/publications/EU-ETS_SpainES-web.pdf

44 Hidalgo, R. (MAPDER) Parques eólicos de Iberdrola en el Istmo de Tehuantepec (Oaxaca). In: Acusaciones populares contra Iberdrola. Plaza de Arriaga, Bilbao. 30 October. http://issuu.com/ekologistakmartxanboletina/docs/iberdrola_tribunal_bilbao_declaraci. Also see http://www.afectadosambientales.org/asamblea-de-los-pueblos-indigenas-del-istmo-de-tehuantepec-en-defensa-de-la-tierra-y-el-territorio

45 See: http://www.tierrayterritorio.wordpress.com, http://resistenciacontraeolicos.blogspot.com.es, https://www.capitalmadrid.com/2014/10/29/35795/las-empresas-espanolas-apuestan-por-mexico.html, http://www.alainet.org/es/active/67436, http://www.periodismohumano.com/economia/multinacionales-lo-que-la-energia-eolica-espanola-se-llevo.html, www.iberica2000.org/es/Articulo.asp?Id=3403, www.ikbalam.org/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=10

46 See: www.gamesacorp.com/es/productos-servicios/parques-eolicos/presencia

47 SIPAZ (2013). Impactos y afectaciones de los proyectos de energía eólica en el Istmo de Tehuantepec. Informe Sipaz, Vol. XVIII (3). September. http://www.sipaz.org/es/informes/117-informe-sipaz-vol-xviii-no-3-septiembre-de-2013/468-enfoque-impactos-y-afectaciones-de-los-proyectos-de-energia-eolica-en-el-istmo-de-tehuantepec.html

48 Ekologistak Martxan (2015). Iberdrola y otras energéticas en Tehuantepec: Charla de Rosa Marina Flores Cruz (APIIDTT). Boletín 136. April. http://issuu.com/ekologistakmartxanboletina/docs/boletina_136

49 El Economista (2015). México lanza un plan de 12.000 millones para la eólica e invita a Iberdrola, Gamesa y Acciona. 13 January. http://www.eleconomista.es/economia/noticias/6386776/01/15/Mexico-lanza-un-plan-de-12000-millones-para-la-eolica-e-invita-a-Iberdrola-Gamesa-y-Acciona.html#.Kku8BOJ6GHOefth

50 See: Acusaciones populares contra Iberdrola. Plaza de Arriaga, Bilbao. 30 October. http://issuu.com/ekologistakmartxanboletina/docs/iberdrola_tribunal_bilbao_declaraci

51 Ownership of the Santa María de Garoña nuclear power plant is shared equally between Iberdrola and Endesa (each own 50% of Nuclenor's shares). See: www.nuclenor.org

52 Wikipedia (2014). Page on GDF Suez. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GDF_Suez

53 Even though the project was designed in 1986, it was only launched in 2006 in Cadarache, France. It had an original budget of 14 billion euros, making it the fifth most expensive project in history. For information on opposition to this mega-project, see: http://www.stop-iter.org or http://www.sortirdunucleaire.org/Stop-ITER

54 Información Sensible (2014). Ganar en tiempos revueltos - Iberdrola ganó 13.911 millones de euros durante la crisis. 20 January. http://www.informacionsensible.com/news/1427/Iberdrola_gan_13.911_millones_de_euros_durante_la_crisis

55 See: https://www.diagonalperiodico.net/global/21208-grandes-electricas-espanolas-duplican-beneficios-europeas.html

56 Información Sensible (2014), op. cit.

57 El Correo (2014). El presidente de Iberdrola gana casi 42.000 euros al día. 23 July. http://www.elcorreo.com/bizkaia/economia/201407/23/sueldo-sanchez-galan-millones-20140723123214.html

58 Scottish Power increased electricity prices 10% and gas, 19% in this country (June 2011), while his salary had nearly doubled (up to 12 million euros). The company was also accused of "false advertising", which was investigated by Britain's energy regulatory authority, Ofgem. http://ibertrola.blogspot.com.es/2011/06/portada-empresas-energia-consumidores-y.html). Véase también: http://www.expansion.com/2011/06/18/empresas/energia/1308395538.html?a=f9248f65fb57e1a51782eda7ea6b43cb&t=1308556663

59 Economía Zero (2013). Piden cárcel para Sánchez Galán y sus 13 consejeros de Iberdrola por cobrar 30 veces más que en Japón. http://economiazero.com/piden-carcel-para-sanchez-galan-y-sus-13-consejeros-de-iberdrola-por-cobrar-30-veces-mas-que-en-japon