

# THE SOCIOPOLITICAL CONFLICT IN HYDROELECTRIC ENTERPRISES\*

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## Introduction

The Brazilian electricity is mostly (approximately 85%) produced from the force of the water that moves the 196 Hydroelectric Power Plants (HPP)<sup>i</sup> operating in the country, whose expansion is presented as something apparently inexorable, concerning the projects under study and installation (ANEEL/BIG, 2014). These construction works involve large areas affected by reservoir formation, construction site installation, roads for people's movement, material and power transmission lines that, among externalities, have in the "compulsory displacement"<sup>ii</sup> a neuralgic point of the socio and environmental plan discussion.

Even in a specific analysis of certain hydroelectric power plants, it is essential the awareness that it is situated inside a *social process* that "refers to wide, continuous, long-term transformation, that is to say, in general not less than three generations"<sup>iii</sup> (Elias, 2006 p. 27). The studied cases in general are conditioning and conditioned. Besides that, it is appropriate to interpret enterprises of this nature as members of an infrastructure public policy produced from an intense power correlation, not infrequently contradictory and which - when it is under installation - also stimulate the discussion and often the political conflagration.

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In the Uruguay River basin, reflections of the installation process of HPP Itaipu (Brazil/Paraguay) and Passo Real (Jacuí river) can be noticed. These HPP, although located in other drainage basins, significantly influenced the installation process and social mobilization in the HPP Itá (RS/SC), reference in the drainage basin. We can also notice reflections of the HPP Itá on the subsequent, such as HPP Machadinho (RS/SC), Barra Grande (RS/SC), Campos Novos (SC), until one reaches the case of the HPP Foz do Chapecó, latest, where we can notice changes in the strategy both those who defend the project and those who are opposed to it, all as result of accumulated experiences in the social process (Rocha, 2013).

Considering each new hydroelectric power plant during the social process, we can notice social reconfigurations that follow minimum trends towards the placement of alliances and rivalry between the social agents. We observed here these trends according to the idea of “political projects” in accordance with Dagnino, Olvera and Panfichi (2006, p. 199), based on the *gramscian* theory, “in order to designate the sets of beliefs, interests, worldview, representations of what should be life in society, that guide the political actions of different subjects”<sup>iv</sup>. Taking this idea for the hydroelectric issue, we can identify countless conflicts and disputes for power and interest, highlighting two social segments with clearly contradictory conceptions. In the lack of a better definition, these conceptions will be defined, in this paper, as *developmentalism* and *participatory* whose heuristic utility is to guide the analysis in order to distinguish the nature of actions of the agents involved. This way, it is convenient a brief description of these projects and their signatories.

The developmentalism conception is led by the market, reorganizer axis of economy and politics which, moreover, must incorporate society and environment from marketing principles that guide the different fields of social life. Regarding the hydroelectric power plants, the developmentalism project is represented mainly by consortia formed by the State and privately held companies, alliances that have been consolidated through what we call Special Purpose Entities (SPE)<sup>v</sup>.

Another point of view is offered by those who defend the conception said participatory, which presupposes that “the society participation in decision-making assume a central role”<sup>vi</sup>, being seen as “construction tool of a greater equality construction”<sup>vii</sup> and “citizenship”, in which specific demands of each social group and society as whole would be articulated (Dagnino; Olvera; Panfichi, 2006, p. 48-52). In the hydroelectric energy issue, this conception is represented mainly by the Movement of People Affected by Dams (MAB).

Based on this panorama we approached the hydroelectric issue, mainly the population resettlement, from the perspective of the conflict between consortia and the Movement of People Affected by Dams (MAB). From this point of view, we analyzed the conflict considering the population resettlement modalities foreseen in the main dams of the drainage basin, such as money indemnity, Letter of Credit, resettlement in remaining areas, small resettlements and collective rural resettlement<sup>viii</sup>.

Our goal is to understand in which situation these population resettlement modalities reflect on the sequence of the hydroelectricity social process of the Uruguay River basin. In other words, we intend to verify if there is a relation between the resettlement

modalities and the participation of subsequent mobilizations. Our question is essentially whether there is some resettlement modality that has pedagogical effect, acting as a stimulant for the participation and subsequent social mobilization, what would indicate an action void of immediate personal interest.

Besides the literature review about population resettlement, our discussion is based on field research performed under the project P&D 3936-003/2007 from ANEEL, entitled “Results evaluation and proposition of development model of resettlement programs of the population affected by hydroelectric projects”<sup>ix</sup> (PASE, et al, 2014). In July 2011, a group of five researchers, including the authors of this paper, performed a field research through interviews, in order to test the viability of a specific survey for the development of the afore-said project. The interviewees were selected from the empirical knowledge of one researcher who, since 2007, has developed a PhD project about this subject in the Uruguay River basin.

From the qualitative results and the improvement of the survey, we returned to another field research during the month of January 2012, with the support of over seventeen undergraduate and graduate students of Federal University of Pelotas (UFPEL) and Federal University of Southern Border (UFFS). This time, we interviewed 632 redistributed people by the hydroelectric power plant of Itá, Machadinho, Barra Grande, Campos Novos and Foz do Chapecó, the data were quantitatively worked through the SPSS<sup>xi</sup> software.

In view of the goals of the research project, we took the precaution of interviewing relocated by the different available modalities. For this work, specifically, we will concentrate our analyses of the Collective Rural Resettlement (CRR) modality defended by MAB.

This paper is organized as following: in the next section we will present the Uruguay River basin, our research locus, from a perspective of “analysis network” in which “points of power” are assembled, represented by social agents identified with different political projects. In the two subsequent sections we will present the main representative of the conceptions discussed. First of all, the Special Purpose Entities (SPE), their agents and actions using the hydroelectric power plants as reference. Then, the Movement of People Affected by Dams (MAB), using the resettlements as main references. The coexistence of these two perspectives allows us to present the “multiterritorialization” of the conflict, what we will do in the analytical section, presenting the research results complemented by final considerations.

## The Uruguay River basin as a network for analysis

The Law number 9.074 of July 7, 1995, which “establishes rules for granting and extension of public service concessions and permissions and take other measures”<sup>xii</sup>, defines in article 5, § 2 that “no hydroelectric power plant will be able to be bidden without setting the ‘great project’ by the grantor”<sup>xiii</sup>. This concept of “great project” is defined in § 3 of the quoted law as “all potential se in its global conception by the best bus shaft, general physical arrangement, operative water levels, reservoir and power, component of the chosen alternative for falls division of a drainage basin”<sup>xiv</sup> (Brasil, 1995). In other words, the “great project” means the best point of a river for hydroelectric exploitation from the technical point of view.

The concept of “great project” confirms the idea of Raffestin (1993) when the author says that “man is not interested in matter as undifferentiated inert mass, as long as it has properties that correspond to utilities”<sup>xv</sup>, in this case, the power generation. Beyond the technical aspect, preponderant in this concept to our analysis, it is important to have in mind another statement of the same author in the sense that “the relation that rises a resource is not strictly instrumental, but also political”<sup>xvi</sup> (Raffestin, 1993, p. 225).

Even categories defined legally from technical metrics as the “great project” can - and most of the time are - be politically disputed, being constituted as stage for conflicts between agents or contrary or contradictory social segments. A clear example of how the political dispute subsumes the boasted objectivity and technical neutrality occurred in the construction of Belo Monte Hydroelectric Power Plant where the dam was built 9 km far from the place studied and defined by the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

After setting the location of the “great project”, the power industry seeks to access it for the hydroelectric power plant installation. Nicolas (1996, p. 85) argues that “every space appropriation implies a new coherence attribution, from a new logic that acquires content with a specific social becoming, in which the individual and the collective are made.”<sup>xvii</sup> In this sense, a hydroelectric power plant installation implies a local geographical and social reconfiguration where, from the perspective proposed here, coexist at least two different logics of the spatial appropriation. One of them is supported by the Movement of People Affected by Dams (MAB) that consider itself representative of family farmers who live under a

“extremely simple technological model, although complex, since it is not only submitted to the permanent transformation seek as it is constituted in the slow evolution and, especially, in the adaptation of the technological model to space conditions”<sup>xviii</sup> (Nicolas, 1996, p. 87)

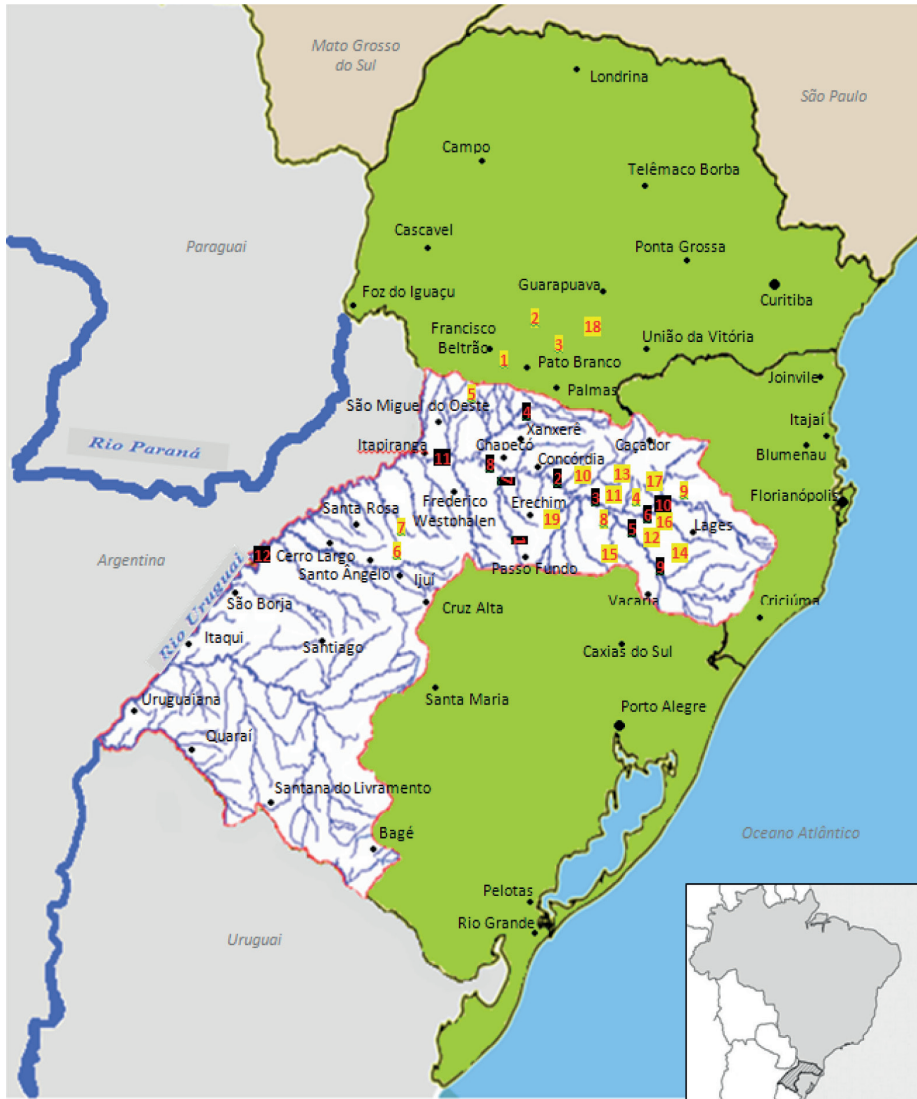
The other logic is suitable with the Special Purpose Entities (SPE), based on a “developmentalist vision” on which “it is performed a technological work not destined to improve the permanence of space-time forms, but oriented to accelerate change and intensify temporally the space appropriation”<sup>xix</sup> (Nicolas, 1996, p. 88).

The conflict between these two space appropriation logics coexist – or dispute – in the “great project” places, where the dam construction is planned. This way, power relations are configured, which deserve analysis from each specifically hydroelectric power plant, but end assuming a “network dimension”, which “never is – or almost never – random, because it crystallizes a whole set of factors that are physical or human: economic, political, social and cultural”. It is under this relational perspective we consider each hydroelectric power plant “as places of power” or points where “they are better defined in relative terms than in absolutes”<sup>xx</sup> (Raffestin, 1993, p. 155-156).

Having in mind that the hydroelectric power plants installation comprises a wide social process, the “network”, whose connection points we selected to this analysis are the Hydroelectric Power Plants (HPP) and the Collective Rural Resettlement (CRR). Each hydroelectric power plant or resettlement can originate a new point or “place of power”

as the affected often reassembled in places near to future dams. An exemplar case refers to the relocated people from HPP Itá who were resettled in the city of Campos Novos-SC, where there was already a project for building another dam, which were confirmed later. In doing so, the social process related to hydroelectricity in the Uruguay River basin was setting this “analysis network” that can be visualized through Picture 1, which includes the hydroelectric power plants and their resettlement.

Picture 1 - Map of the Uruguay River Basin



The main Hydroelectric Power Plants of the Uruguay River basin: 1-HPP Passo Fundo, 2-HPP Itá, 3-HPP Machado, 4-Quebra-Queixo, 5-HPP Barra Grande, 6-HPP Campos Novos, 7-HPP Monjolinho, 8-HPP Foz do Chapecó, 9-HPP Pai Querê, 10-Garibaldi, 11-HPP Itapiranga, 12-HPP Garabi. (number red with Black background). **Source:** Prepared by the authors

Moreover, the table below (Picture 2) helps in the understanding of the map, presenting the numerical correspondence of the points relating to the resettlements and reporting about the hydroelectric power plants from where they are, their localization and population.

**Picture 2 - HPP and their CRR**

| HPP (operational start)   | Municipality (map number red wich yellow background ) | CRR                     | Families   |
|---------------------------|---|-------------------------|------------|
| HPP Itá (2000)            | Marmeleiro-PR (1)                                     | Marmeleiro              | 32         |
|                           | Mangueirinha-PR (18)                                  | Mangueirinha/Itá        | 82         |
|                           | Chopininho-PR (2)                                     | Chopininho              | 74         |
|                           | Honório Serpa-PR (3)                                  | Honório Serpa           | 38         |
|                           | Campos Novos-SC (4)                                   | Campos Novos/Itá        | 28         |
|                           | Campo Erê-SC (5)                                      | Campo Erê               | 50         |
|                           | Catuípe-RS (6)  | Catuípe                 | 74         |
|                           | Chiapetta-RS (7)                                      | Chiapeta                | 66         |
| <b>Subtotal</b>           | <b>08</b>   | <b>08</b>               | <b>444</b> |
| HPP Machadinho (2001)     | Barracão-RS (8)                                       | Barracão I              | 29         |
|                           |   | Barracão II             | 20         |
|                           |   | Barracão III            | 59         |
|                           |   | Barracão Belo/Betiollo  | 5          |
|                           | Curitibanos-SC (9)                                    | Curitibanos             | 33         |
|                           | Campos Novos-SC (4)                                   | Campos Novos/Machadinho | 29         |
|                           |   | Campos Novos/Menegatti  | 13         |
|                           | Capinzal-SC (10)                                      | Capinzal                | 10         |
| Erechim-RS (19)           | Erechim   | 8                       |            |
| Zortéa-SC (11)            | Zortéa  | 7                       |            |
| <b>Subtotal</b>           | <b>06</b>   | <b>10</b>               | <b>213</b> |
| HPP Barra Grande (2005)   | Campo Belo do Sul-SC (12)                             | Barra do Imigrante      | 37         |
|                           | Anita Garibaldi-SC (13)                               | Anita Garibaldi         | 15         |
|                           |   | Santa Catarina          | 24         |
|                           |   | 15 de Fevereiro         | 16         |
|                           | Capão Alto-SC (14)                                    | Capão Alto              | 33         |
|                           | Esmeralda-RS (15)                                     | Esmeralda I             | 35         |
| Esmeralda II              |   | 31                      |            |
| <b>Subtotal</b>           | <b>04</b>   | <b>07</b>               | <b>191</b> |
| HPP Campos Novos (2006)   | Celso Ramos-SC (16)                                   | MAB                     | 59         |
|                           |   | Enercan                 | 22         |
|                           | Cerro Negro (17)                                      | Enercan                 | 18         |
| <b>Subtotal</b>           | <b>02</b>   | <b>03</b>               | <b>99</b>  |
| HPP Foz do Chapecó (2010) | Mangueirinha-PR (18)                                  | Mangueirinha/FzCh       | 44         |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>19</b>   | <b>29</b>               | <b>991</b> |

**Source:** Prepared by the authors based on field research.

The pictures 1 and 2 illustrate the perspective of “network” or network adopted here where each “point of power” can be taken through a dam or a resettlement. The Hydroelectric Power Plant (HPP) is constituted from developmentalism logic, anchored in a project that gathers private sector and public companies from different parts of the world which work at this location through a Specific Purpose Entity (SPE). The Collective Rural Resettlement (CRR), while regroup point of compulsory displaced farmers by space appropriation in order to install a hydroelectric power plant, represent the crystallization of the participatory conception through the actions of the Movement of People Affected by Dams (MAB).

Presented the idea of “analysis network” and their “points of power”, in the following sections we will make a more specific approach for each agent according to their actions and projects.

## The hydroelectric power plants as “points of power” of the Specific Propose Entities (SPE)

In our analytical model the hydroelectric power plants represent the points of power from the developmentalism conception for meaning

“unique opportunities to promote, in a regulated context, the articulation of international and national capital under the supervision of different national states and supranational organizations (...) the consortium is the social, economic and political concrete entity that operates this articulation”<sup>xxi</sup> (Ribeiro, 1991, p. 102).

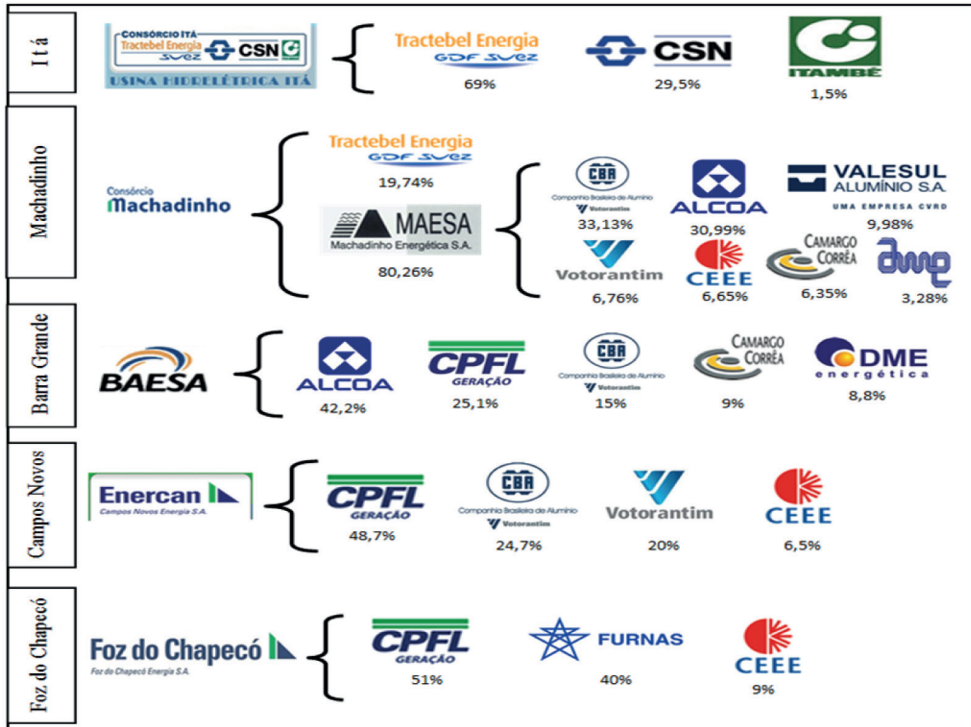
Although hydroelectric power plants represent these points of power, this does not mean the immobilization of these structures. Actually, it is worth mentioning the ability to “deterritorialization” inherent to these “economic power, political, social and cultural international, global or decentralized global structures”<sup>xxii</sup>, to be “present in many places, nations, continents, seeming to float over states and borders, currencies and languages, groups and classes, social movements and political parties”<sup>xxiii</sup> (Ianni, 1997, p. 93-94). These structures that, according to Ianni (1997), seem to “float” on different parts of the world are related to national states from a mutual adaptation.

In the case of Latin America, this deterritorialization can be noticed through the work of Verdum (2007), who points the Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure of South America (IIRSA) and the *Plano de Aceleração do Crescimento*<sup>xxiv</sup> (PAC) as the development strategies that aim to promote large-scale projects and have energy as fundamental point. The IIRSA comprised a South America integration forum established in September 2000, in Brasília, gathering twelve countries aiming the “definition of a joint work strategy aiming for the integration of national infrastructures”<sup>xxv</sup> (Verdum, 2007, p. 17-18). Besides the States, the author highlights financial institution such as the World Bank (IBRD), the National Bank for Economic and Social Development (BNDES), in addition to large companies such as General Electric (GE), América Latina Logística (ALL), Vale do Rio Doce, Odebrecht, Petrobras, Andrade Gutiérrez and Queiroz Galvão (Verdum, 2007, p. 22), some of them directly involved in the construction, management or property of hydroelectric power plants of the Uruguay River basin.

In this context, Brazil launched in January 2007 the *Programa de Aceleração do Crescimento* (PAC) that, as Verdun points out, would aim to accelerate economic and technological modernization, increasing Brazil’s competitiveness and promoting internal integration, with neighboring countries and the world (Verdum, 2007, p. 28). From this perspective, we can understand that large-scale projects such as dams involve a network of agents in different spaces that are connected from several works that compound a larger project, inserted in the global capital logic.

It is not about preaching conspiracy theory of big capital extending tentacles in every corner of the planet but to recognize the complexity and contradictions embedded in this process and to evidence the relational nature between the transnational capital and the nation states that are articulated and materialized through the Specific Purpose Entities (SPE). This relation can be noticed in our analytical approach by shareholders frame of the main hydroelectric power plants of the Uruguay River basin (Picture 3):

Picture 3 – Shareholders of the main HPPs from Uruguay River basin



Source: Prepared by the authors

Although the hydroelectric power plants are widespread throughout the drainage basin, there is a repetition of companies as the case of the Companhia Paulista de Força e Luz (CPFL) and the Companhia Estadual de Energia Elétrica (CEEE-RS). Nevertheless, if we consider the Sistema Interligado Nacional (SIN)<sup>xxvi</sup>, the companies repeat the alliances or also participate in other consortia with different companies. Furnas (state) and Votorantim (private) are examples inside and outside the Uruguay River basin, which gives to the company the know-how and the economic flexibility that become decisive to the expansion of business projects.

Following in the analysis of the shareholders characteristics, it is possible to understand that between the main objectives of these projects there is, above all, the economic support. For shareholders such as the Alcoa or the Companhia Siderúrgica Nacional



(CSN), for example, energy is the essential raw material, given the high demand for aluminum and steel processing. Besides these companies, noteworthy companies that are not listed as shareholders in the hydroelectric power plants but occupy a strategic place in the industry such as ENGEVIX that operates in the planning sector as well as performing Environmental Impact Statement and Environmental Impact Report (EIS-EIR). Beyond ENGEVIX, *Voith-Siemens* and *Alstom* also show up supplying equipment and turbines.

Although we are aware that global projects are more complex than what we presented in this section, we tried to point out some components of the conception of a hydroelectric power plant while point of power. The essential for the analysis is to understand the union of national and international state and private companies in Specific Purpose Entities (SPE)<sup>xxvii</sup>. Besides that, demonstrating that they act aligned to a developmentalism conception and, without the intention to repress the analysis, suggesting the nature of the action of these agents regarding the conflict inherent to large-scale works such as hydroelectric power plants.

### The Collective Rural Resettlement as “points of power” from the Movement of People Affected by Dams (MAB)

The resettlements are considered the points of power where MAB actions prevail. In a generic way, Bergamasco and Norder (1996, p. 7-8) conceptualize the “rural settlements” as the “creation of new units of agricultural production through government policies aiming the reorganization of the land use for the benefit of landless or with little land rural workers”<sup>xxviii</sup>. In the same line, the “resettlement of people affected by dams”<sup>xxix</sup> are framed by the authors as a kind of settlement which, however, needs a better specification.

During the process of installation of the HPP Itá, in the Uruguay River, between the cities of Aratiba (RS) and Itá (SC), “the CRAB<sup>xxx</sup> directors incorporated the use of the term “resettlement” from the Eletrosul technicians, for whom “the ‘landless affected’ were already settled and therefore will be ‘resettled’, which actually does not correspond to the reality of landless rural workers”<sup>xxxi</sup> (Moraes, 1994, p. 158). Even if, technically, we agree that the term “resettlement” correspond to the variation of the term “settlement”, it is important to note that, in the case of the dams, “the habit of language made the word ‘settlement’ practically disappear of the vocabulary of directors, leaders and militants from the Movement of People Affected by Dams”<sup>xxxii</sup> (Moraes, 1994, p. 158). The use of the term “resettlement” that Moraes (1994) present based on the research regarding the HPP Itá, in the 1990s, can be perceived, according to our research about the most recent case (HPP Foz do Chapecó), used both by the consortium and the social movement<sup>xxxiii</sup>.

The (re)settlements do not usually happen deliberately, but they correspond to attempts to answer the social conflicts in the countryside (Bergamasco; Norder, 1996). Until the 1970s and 1980s, there was no prior planning for resettlement of the families affected by dams. During this period, the relocation happened “in the flood eve” or “almost simultaneously to the water rise”, as occurred in the cases of Sobradinho and Itaparica (São Francisco River, in the state of Pernambuco), in the 1970s, and Tucuruí

(Tocantins River, in the state Pará) and Itaipu (Paraná River, in the state Paraná), in the 1980s (Bergamasco; Norder, 1996).

Considering that the social movement against the dams could be identified in different regions of Brazil, it was in the case of HPP Itá that a great leap in the quality in relation to population resettlement, especially to the Collective Rural Resettlement (CRR).

The struggle for land towards the compulsory displacement resulting from HPP Ita occurred only under CRAB's organization. From the popular pressure, the social movement established an historic agreement with ELETROSUL on October 17, 1987, which was signed by the president of the company on October 29 and the Minister of Mines and Energy on November 6, always by popular pressure (Moraes, 1994, p. 167). Consequence of the same struggle, the social movement could participate in a Working Group which, together with cooperatives representatives and Eletrosul technicians developed a "resettlement project", an initiative that enabled the first group made up of 27 families who were resettled in the municipality of Marmeleiro-PR. However, in the following year, "Eletrosul stopped all negotiations, both the indemnities and resettlements"<sup>xxxiv</sup>. (Moraes, 1994, p. 169)<sup>xxxv</sup>.

That settlement project can be considered a turning point in population relocation resulting from hydroelectric power plants. However, the fact that it is "a document made by many hands", "from the massive presence of the company's technicians", and having in mind that "the project was built based on the model wanted in terms of infrastructure", the political meaning of these resettlements became decreased whether because the "movement options appear mixed to the state" or because the presence of the consortia technicians "complicates even more the understanding of the right to the land as a result of the struggle of those affected mediated CRAB"<sup>xxxvi</sup> (Moraes, 1994, p. 170-172).

In this sense, a more specific difference between the *settlements* of the Landless Workers' Movement (MST) and the *resettlement* of MAB deserves to be noted. While the first are the result of mobilization, mainly through the landless "encampment", the last are the result of a collision between PPH and those affected, landless and owners. Whereas MST qualifies the political struggle through the "encampment time" (Loera, 2006), MAB, despite developing a process of resistance against dams, does not have the same opportunity, because the "militancy" occurs simultaneously to the "negotiation" possibility (Rock, 2010). Therefore, it is possible to relativize the nature of the resettlements as points of MAB political mobilization as the MST.

This peculiarity of resettlement - along with issues related to settlements in the generic sense - is a fundamental point for our research. In addition to that, we emphasize the relational nature of our analysis incorporating the resettlements as "social processes that involve significant periods of time"<sup>xxxvii</sup>, because they "are highly susceptible to changes in the initial conditions"<sup>xxxviii</sup>. In doing so, the resettlements "evolve in a field dominated by relations of power and they nature are essentially political"<sup>xxxix</sup> (Bartolomé, 2000). For this author,

"This temporal dimension means that the configuration of factors that can characterize a process in its early stages is open to changes

that originate not only from inside but also from its exterior (...) the simple fact of being affected by a project does not define a group in the sociological sense, namely it does not implies the existence of common attributes, neither common objectives (...) in fact these can be quite contradictory”<sup>x1</sup> (Bartolomé, 2000, p. 163 - 165).

In the previous section we approached the hydroelectric power plants as the materialization of the developmentalism conception. In another direction, the resettlements deserve to be relativized as materialization and representation of participatory conception because they are conceived from power relations between MAB and SPE in each case specifically. If we make a quick retrospective, in the case of HPP Ita (1990) while in the resettlements represented achievements of the social movement, they were also understood as benefits resulting from the dam installation. In the case of HPP Campos Novos (2005), for example, the resettlements were installed from the mediation between the SPE and an association that disputed - and replaced - the representativeness of those affected with the MAB. In the case of HPP Foz do Chapecó (2010), despite the efforts of the MAB, only 40 families were resettled from the creation of affected associations. These differences reflect on the changing context (privatization of the electricity sector, changes in the relation between mediators such as trade unions, churches and universities and rise of the Workers' Party to the government) and, consequently, the social movement also changes its way of acting (Rock, 2013).

The Collective Rural Resettlement gather families of small farmers who, in most of the cases, are organized under the aegis of the MAB before the compulsory displacement resulting from the installation of hydroelectric power plants, which put them as “points of power” from the perspective of a participatory concept. Considering that the Uruguay River basin comprises a region with more than 30 hydroelectric projects already installed or in the process of being installed and 29 resettlements resulting from these projects, it is important to understand when these points influence power relations that compound the “network” of analysis corresponding to the Uruguay River basin (Picture 1).

## The “multiterritorialization” of the Uruguay River basin conflict

The hydroelectric power plants materialized the developmentalism conception through the Specific Purpose Entities (SPE) actions, on the other hand local population are susceptible of a compulsory displacement through methods of population relocation where the Collective Rural Resettlement is MAB's favorite for keeping the previous bonds of neighborhood, but above all, for the possibility of transforming estates in areas of family farm, changing the productive logic. The Letter of Credit is the modality that suits to the SPE by the quickness of the exit of the affected from the area to be used for the hydroelectric power plant, besides having a lower cost in relation to the resettlements.

Both the hydroelectric power plants installation and population relocation cause social reconfigurations and change the territories, occurring what Haesbaert (2005) define as “multiterritorialization”, an answer to this process indentified for many as

‘detritorialization’<sup>xli</sup>. According to the author, beyond the loss of a territory, the term suggests a discussion about the “complexity of the (re)territorialization processes in which we are involved, building territories much more manifold”<sup>xlii</sup>, and “these (multi) territorialization processes need to be understood especially by the potential of innovator political perspectives they imply” (Haesbaert, 2005, p. 6774).

The companies consortia (SPE) act - and control - different places being called of “the owners of the Uruguay River” (Paim; Ortiz, 2006, p. 56). On the other hand, it is important to check to what extent the affected represented by MAB, beyond the detritorialization or the simple resettlement in elsewhere, by reassembling in resettlements, have the possibility of “specialization” and “territorialization” participatory.

Regarding to the MST settlements, Fernandes explains that “spatialize is to conquer new spaces, new places, new experiences, develop new forms of struggle and consequently new achievements, transforming reality, fighting for the future”<sup>xliii</sup> (Fernandes, 1999, p. 136). Consequently, “the settlement is the conquered territory, it is therefore a new resource in the struggle for land which means part of the possible achievements, above all, the possibility of territorialization”<sup>xliv</sup>. Thus, it is evidenced a relationship between the terms “spatialization” and “territorialization” in the sense that “part of the territory is conquered in the spatialization of the struggle, as a result of the formation work and movement organization. In doing so, the conquered territory is asset and possibility of its territorialization in the spatialization of the struggle for land”<sup>xlv</sup> (Fernandes, 1999, p. 241-242).

Carrying the idea for the analysis of the social process regarding to population relocation resulting from hydroelectricity, against the attempts of the struggle territorialization or spatialization we seek to understand the point which the resettlements may reflect the multiterritorialization of the conflict between MAB and the SPE. We will do this highlighting, first, among the resettlement modalities, which would be the one where there is greater participation of affected in mobilizations against hydroelectric projects (not those that directly originated its compulsory displacement). Then we will verify the motivations of these mobilizations in order to determine their relation with the respective modality and consequently with the actions of its proponents.

In response to the first point, we select the question (No. 48) which we asked: “After your resettlement, did you participate in mobilization support to other affected?” Based on the survey results we obtained the following table (Picture 4):

Picture 4 - Involvement of the affected in mobilizations after their relocation

|       |                            | Resettlement Modality |       |       |       |       |       |           | Total |
|-------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----------|-------|
|       |                            | RAR                   | SRR   | CRR   | LC    | Money | UR    | Agreement |       |
| Yes   | Quantity                   | 16                    | 5     | 136   | 53    | 49    | 4     | 4         | 267   |
|       | % between YES answers      | 6%                    | 1,9%  | 50,9% | 19,9% | 18,4% | 1,5%  | 1,5%      | 100%  |
|       | % inside the modality      | 43,2%                 | 20,8% | 59,1% | 29,4% | 36,3% | 19,0% | 100%      | 42,3% |
| No    | Quantity                   | 21                    | 18    | 93    | 125   | 86    | 16    | 0         | 359   |
|       | % between NO answers       | 5,8%                  | 5%    | 25,9% | 34,8% | 24%   | 4,5%  | 0%        | 100%  |
|       | % inside the modality      | 56,8%                 | 75%   | 40,4% | 69,4% | 63,7% | 76,2% | 0%        | 56,9% |
| DK    | Quantity                   | 0                     | 0     | 1     | 1     | 0     | 0     | 0         | 2     |
|       | % in relation to the Total | 0%                    | 0%    | 0,2%  | 0,2%  | 0%    | 0%    | 0%        | 0,3%  |
| DA    | Quantity                   | 0                     | 1     | 0     | 1     | 0     | 1     | 0         | 3     |
|       | % in relation to the Total | 0%                    | 0,2%  | 0%    | 0,2%  | 0%    | 0,2%  | 0%        | 0,5%  |
| Total | Interviewed                | 37                    | 24    | 230   | 180   | 135   | 21    | 4         | 631   |
|       | % in relation to the Total | 5,9%                  | 3,8%  | 36,5% | 28,5% | 21,4% | 3,3%  | 0,6%      | 100%  |

RAR: Remaining Areas Resettlement; SRR: Small Rural Resettlements; CRR: Collective Rural Resettlement; LC: Letter of Credit; UR: Urban Resettlement; DK/DA: Do not Know or Did not Answer.

Source: Pase et al, 2014.

The table provides an overview of the resettlement modalities and participation of the affected in social mobilizations against the hydroelectric power plants. Focusing on the analysis of the two modalities that interest us (highlighted in the table), we can see that the Collective Rural Resettlement (CRR) show up as the one in which the most part of the affected, 6 out of 10, participate of mobilization after being relocated. On the other hand, we verified that the modality Letter of Credit presents a lower rate of participation of the affected after the resettlement, with only 3 out of 10. Then, if we consider the total number of participants in the mobilizations, 6 out of 10, they come from resettlements while only two are from Letter of Credit (LC). The answer to the first question helps to understand MAB's preference for the CRR modality while the SPE prefer the Letter of Credit modality.

According to what we showed previously, factors such as gathering in CRR contrary to spreading in the case of LC is the main factor explaining the difference in the mobilization of these people after the resettlement (Rock, 2010; 2013). However, the superficiality of these statements led us to follow Lieberman's (2005) orientation for the "synergistic value" of an analysis by mixing the quantitative and qualitative methods. The first allows observation of the data set whereas the second allows a closer causal analysis (Lieberman, 2005, p. 440). In order to achieve the motivations that reflect the conflict "multiterritorialization" and what is MAB's influence in the process from the idealization of the Collective Rural Resettlement (CRR) we did in-depth interviews.

From a semi-structured interview we asked the interviewees to manifest the reasons for participation or not in mobilizations related to other enterprises in the period after their resettlement. We got various answers and we decided to group them according to meaning categories and through them we formulated the following table of motivations for participation in social mobilizations against hydroelectric power plants:

Picture 5 – Framework of the relocated motivation

| Answers | Meaning  | Motivation  |
|---------|--|---|
| Yes     | Human Solidarity   | “to help others”, “I would like all could get the same I could”, “help those who suffer like we suffered”, “one helps the other, it has to be this way, right?”   |
|         | Alignment with the MAB   | “because we are all fellows”, “to help others affected”, “for the land reform”, “to share my experience”, “to defend the rights of the affected”, “because we are all from the same class”, “because I participate to the women movement”, “to help the landless”, “to help to create more resettlements” |
|         | Specific Interests   | “to help other fishermen”, “to ask machinery for the resettlement”, “to seek improvements for the community”, “to renegotiate the debt with the bank”, “because of some of my relative who needed”, “to repair the houses”, “to ensure more budget for the resettlement”                                  |
|         | Retribution  | “to help who helped us”, “I was helped and I feel it is my duty”  |
| No      | Work in the property   | “we just have time to work”, “I have no one to take care of the property”, “it is not possible, I have to work”   |
|         | Accommodation  | “we are already assembled here”, “I received a Letter and did not care anymore”, “I’m already satisfied”, “I settled down and did not want to know”   |
|         | Individualism  | “my fight is over, I do not have to wade”, “I started taking care of my life”, “people from each municipality have to get organized”, “I have already wear myself out, they also have to wear themselves out”   |
|         | Alignment with the entrepreneurs   | “the company is good for us”, “I had already agreed with the company that I would not take part of the manifestation”, “we made a deal with the consortium”, “if we do not get it right, there’s no way”  |
| Others  | Those who did not participate claimed motivation like “they never called me”, “it was too far”, “I do not like invasion, we get frown upon”, “my mother was sick”. While those who participated claimed “requests from neighbors and family”, “curiosity”, “to get to know new places” |   |

Source: Prepared by the authors

In order to elaborate this table we limit ourselves to organize the answers in groups, in the sense of reproducing the most common motivations. Besides not being aim of this methodology, the search for statistical accuracy in qualitative answers is compromised by the ambiguity of some answers. For example, an answer like “to help a friend” could be classified according to a sense of solidarity, but it could also be retribution or even personal interest. So we decided only to list the motivations from the highest to the lowest frequency, so that, between the “YES” answers - who participated of manifestations after the resettlement - the more common the motivations were those we classified as “human solidarity” (40%), “alignment with the MAB” (20%), “specific interests” (20%) and “retribution” (10%). Among the “NO” answers - from those who had not participated of manifestations after the resettlement - the most frequent was due to “work in the property” (40%), “accommodation” (30%), “individualism” (15%) and “alignment with the entrepreneurs” (5%). Various answers, inconsistent or that we could classified in different meanings, we classified under another large group (“Others”).

Answered the second question about the motivations of those affected to participate or not of the mobilizations, we assess that human solidarity is the main factor for participation, regardless the resettlement modality. Systematizing the argument based on the data we can say that most relocated affected who participate of the manifestations is resettled in CRR, modality encouraged by MAB. However, according to the affected, the main motivation to keep in the struggle, to continue participating in the movement,

even after the resettlement, is solidarity with those who “will suffer” the same process that they had once suffered.

## Conclusion

With nearly a century and a half of hydroelectric power plants installation in Brazil, the social process related to the construction of dams in the Uruguay River basin was started from the 1960s when the exploitation of hydropower potential was assumed systematically. In this process, social agents involved in power relations that are intensified in each dam to be installed can be identified, for analysis purposes, under two different perspectives and, often, contradictory: the developmentalism and the participatory.

In the perspective of the “analysis network”, each hydroelectric power plant and their resettlements represents “points of power” that allow a “multiterritorialization” process of the conflict between the MAB (related to the participatory conception) and the SPE (as materialization of developmentalism conception). Among the resettlement modalities likely to choice by the affected, the Letter of Credit appear to be more appropriate to the SPE objectives, because it has a lower cost to the companies’ coffers. Whereas, in view of the MAB, the Collective Rural Resettlement (CRR) modality favors the mediation of movement with the grouped families, besides suiting better with the land reform goals and change in the productive system, accessory flags of the movement.

Considering only the largest dams of the basin and their population resettlement, we have a network analysis (Picture 1) where we can see the possibilities of “multiterritorialization” of the conflict. In this perspective, we can note that, although the CRR is still the main core of post-resettlement mobilization, the greater motivation of those affected to participate in new manifestations is mainly due to “human solidarity” and not by the action of a pedagogical formation developed by MAB. The non-participation in post-resettlement manifestations occurs mainly by “accommodation” and the fact that farmers “are not able” or “do not want to” get away from the new properties to participate of these events, even if these properties have been conquered through the mobilization organized by MAB.

This factors confluence points to the fact that the developmentalism conception tends to strengthen its “multiterritorialization” in each new hydroelectric power plant installed, either by strengthening through repetition of shareholders, either by their interaction with the remaining local populations. On the other hand, the participatory conception has in the “multiterritorialization” its greatest challenge, since the Letters of Credit grow in an inversely propositional way to the resettlement in each new dam and tend to disperse the affected making the social mobilization difficult.

Finally, our work indicates that the succession of hydroelectric power plants tends to consolidate the ideals that affirm the primacy of the market and developmentalism. On the other hand, the resettlements, privileged points to MAB’s work, do not present the same capacity to articulate and encourage participation. Beyond the conclusive, partial character, our construction opens precedent to the analysis of the evolution of social movements, especially the MAB as well as the performance of the companies (public

and private, national and multinational) that compound the Brazilian electricity sector. Moreover, it can be quite stimulating to analyze this object through the theory of advocacy coalition of public policies analysis, a task that will undertake in another research.

## Notes

- i Those dams with capacity until 1 MW of installed power are considered Mini Hydropower Plants (MHP); those between 1,1 MW and 30MW of installed power are considered Small Hydropower Plants; and those with capacity over 30 MW of installed power are the Hydroelectric Power Plants and they represent approximately 65% of Brazilian hydroelectric generation.
- ii According to Magalhães (2007, p. 14), the term designates “the process by which certain social groups, in circumstances over which they have no decision power, are forced to leave or be transferred from their houses and/or their land. There is therefore a restriction content of decision-making inside their own social group, that has occurred from an outside intervention”. The author analyzes the term considering the public, academic and the specific case of Tucuruí instances, demonstrating the relation of this displacement with aspects such as “stress”, “social suffering” and “embarrassment”. It is true that these factors are associated with the “compulsory displacement” however, for our discussion, the greatest contribution lies in the fact that the term is used as an “umbrella” that is used as shelter to terms like “relocation, resettlement, reinstallation, population transfer; and some other designate intermediate phases of the displacement process, as indemnity, expropriation” (Magalhães, 2007, p. 113-114).
- iii Free translation of “refere-se às transformações amplas, contínuas, de longa duração, ou seja, em geral não aquém de três gerações”.
- iv Free translation of “para designar os conjuntos de crenças, interesses, concepções de mundo, representações do que deve ser a vida em sociedade, que orientam a ação política dos diferentes sujeitos”.
- v According to the law number 11.079 of December 30, 2004, which establishes general rules for Public-Private Partnership (PPP), the hydroelectric projects will be conducted by their respective Special Purpose Entities (SPE), which have their creation due to that plant which they intend to install and operate.
- vi Free translation of “a participação da sociedade nos processos de decisão assume um papel central”.
- vii Free translation of “instrumento da construção de uma maior igualdade”.
- viii About the modalities particularities, see Rocha, 2012a.
- ix Free translation of “Avaliação dos resultados e proposição de modelo de elaboração de programas de remanejamento da população atingida por empreendimentos hidrelétricos”.
- x Preliminary versions of this article were discussed in academic events. The project has led to more than 70 conference papers and journals.
- xi Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.
- xii Free translation of “estabelece normas para outorga e prorrogações das concessões e permissões de serviços públicos e dá outras providências”.
- xiii Free translation of “nenhum aproveitamento hidrelétrico poderá ser licitado sem a definição do ‘aproveitamento ótimo’ pelo poder concedente”.
- xiv Free translation of “todo potencial definido em sua concepção global pelo melhor eixo do barramento, arranjo físico geral, níveis d’água operativos, reservatório e potência, integrante da alternativa escolhida para divisão de quedas de uma bacia hidrográfica”.
- xv Free translation of “o homem não se interessa pela matéria como massa inerte indiferenciada, mas na medida em que ela possui propriedades que correspondem a utilidades”.
- xvi Free translation of “a relação que faz surgir um recurso não é puramente instrumental, mas também política”.
- xvii Free translation of “cada apropriação do espaço implica uma nova atribuição de coerência, de uma nova lógica que adquire conteúdo com um devir social específico, no qual se tecem o individual e o coletivo”.
- xviii Free translation of “modelo tecnológico sumamente simples, embora ao mesmo tempo complexo, já que não só não está submetido à busca de transformações permanentes como se constitui na lenta evolução e, sobretudo, na adaptação do modelo tecnológico às condições do espaço”.
- xi Free translation of “realiza-se um trabalho tecnológico não destinado a melhorar a permanência das formas espaço-temporais, mas orientada para acelerar a mudança e intensificar temporalmente a apropriação do espaço”.
- xx The quoted sentences are a free translation of “dimensão de uma malha”, “nunca é – ou quase nunca - aleatória, pois



cristaliza todo um conjunto de fatores, dos quais uns são físicos, outros humanos: econômicos, políticos, sociais e culturais”, “enquanto locais de poder” and “se definem melhor em termos relativos que em absolutos” respectively.

xxi Free translation of “oportunidades únicas para se promover, num contexto regulamentado, a articulação do capital internacional e nacional sob a supervisão de diferentes Estados nacionais e de organizações supranacionais (...) o consórcio é a entidade social, econômica e política concreta que opera esta articulação”.

xxii Free translation of “estruturas de poder econômico, político, social e cultural internacionais, mundiais ou globais descentralizadas”.

xxiii Free translation of “presentes em muitos lugares, nações, continentes, parecendo flutuar por sobre Estados e fronteiras, moedas e línguas, grupos e classes, movimentos sociais e partidos políticos”.

xxiv Also known as “Growth Acceleration Program”, it is an infrastructure program of the Federal government of Brazil.

xxv Free translation of “definição de uma estratégia de trabalho conjunto visando à integração das infraestruturas nacionais”.

xxvi It is a control system which assembles electricity production and transmission system from Brazil.

xxvii The way the inclusion of global projects at the respective locations occurs, in the prospect of the IIRSA and the Specific Purpose Entities, was thoroughly presented in Rocha (2012).

xxviii Free translation of “criação de novas unidades de produção agrícola, por meio de políticas governamentais visando o reordenamento do uso da terra, em benefício de trabalhadores rurais sem terra ou com pouca terra”.

xxix Free translation of “reassentamentos de populações atingidas por barragens de usinas hidrelétricas”.

xxx The Regional Committee of the Affected by Dams (CRAB), organized in the late 1970s in the Uruguay River basin towards the installation of the HPPs Itá and Machadinho, can be considered the embryo of the Movement of People Affected by Dams (MAB).

xxxi Free translation of “os dirigentes da CRAB incorporaram o uso do termo “reassentamento” dos técnicos da Eletrosul, para quem “os ‘atingidos sem terra’ já estavam assentados e, portanto, vão ser ‘reassentados’, o que, na verdade, não corresponde à realidade dos trabalhadores rurais sem terra”.

xxxii Free translation of “o hábito da linguagem fez com que a palavra ‘assentamento’ tenha praticamente desaparecido do vocabulário dos dirigentes, lideranças e militantes do Movimento dos Atingidos por Barragens”.

xxxiii Although we believe that the term “resettlement” is better for those affected by dams, beyond any more specific difference, it is worth to remind of Zimmermann (1994, p. 206-207) by highlighting that the settlements represent the struggle for land that somehow identifies farmers beyond individual interests. According to the author, this supposed “homogenization” is marked by the Anoni Farm, in the city of Sarandi-RS, which, although it is recognized as a stronghold of the Landless Workers’ Movement (MST), was initially expropriated by INCRA in 1972, for resettlement purposes of farmers affected by dams. Thus, what matters is that these spaces refer to farmers who, for different reasons, fight for the land.

xxxiv Free translation of “a Eletrosul interrompeu todas as negociações, tanto as indenizações quanto os reassentamentos”.

xxxv In 1998, ELETROSUL – in a privatization context –, implemented the modality Letter of Credit or Self-resettlement “in default of CRAB” (REIS, 2001, p. 157), marking the antagonism between identified perspective with the two political projects that we glimpse in the Uruguay River basin hydroelectric issue. Initially, the Letter of Credit was established in order to value the situation of those who were not proprietary, getting to be seen as an achievement of social movement itself. Then this modality has been absorbed by the entrepreneur and started to represent a problem for social mobilization by the fact that it is extended also to owners and thus came to represent an alternative for the resettlements, according to what we detailed on another occasion (Rocha, 2009).

xxxvi The quoted sentences are a free translation of “um documento feito a muitas mãos”, “da maciça presença de técnicos da empresa”, “o projeto foi construído com base no modelo que se queria em termos de infraestrutura”, “as opções do movimento aparecem misturadas às do Estado”, “dificulta ainda mais a compreensão do direito à terra como resultante da luta dos atingidos mediada pela CRAB”.

xxxvii Free translation of “processos sociais que envolvem períodos de tempo significativos”.

xxxviii Free translation of “são altamente suscetíveis a mudanças nas condições iniciais”.

xxxix Free translation of “evoluem em um campo dominado por relações de poder e são de natureza essencialmente política”.

xl Free translation of “essa dimensão temporal significa que a configuração de fatores que podem caracterizar um processo na sua fase inicial está aberta a mudanças que se originam, não apenas do seu interior, mas também do seu exterior (...) o simples fato de ser afetado por um projeto não define um grupo no sentido sociológico, a saber, isso não deixa implícita a existência de atributos comuns, nem de objetivos comuns (...) de fato esses podem ser completamente contraditórios”.

xli Free translation of “‘multiterritorialização’, uma resposta a esse processo identificado por muitos como ‘desterritorialização’”.

- xlii Free translation of “complexidade dos processos de (re)territorialização em que estamos envolvidos, construindo territórios muito mais múltiplos”.
- xliii Free translation of “especializar é conquistar novos espaços, novos lugares, novas experiências, desenvolver novas formas de luta e, conseqüentemente novas conquistas, transformando a realidade, lutando pelo futuro”.
- xliv Free translation of “o assentamento é o território conquistado, é, portanto um novo recurso na luta pela terra que significa parte das possíveis conquistas, sobretudo, a possibilidade de territorialização”.
- xlv Free translation of “a fração do território é conquistado na espacialização da luta, como resultado do trabalho de formação e organização do movimento. Assim, o território conquistado é trunfo e possibilidade da sua territorialização na espacialização da luta pela terra”.

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# THE SOCIOPOLITICAL CONFLICT IN HYDROELECTRIC ENTERPRISES

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**Abstract:** Electrical energy is the basis of the lifestyle of contemporary society, whose main source in Brazil, is the dam, requiring the construction of major infrastructure projects. These projects drive contradictory social and political processes. In these processes, we glimpse the conflict between the Specific Purpose Entities (SPE), proponents of hydropower, and the Touched, representative parts of local populations forcibly displaced as a result of these works Movement of Affected by Dams. Having *locus* as the basin of Uruguay, southern Brazil, this article discusses the conflict through a “loop analysis” consists of hydropower and resettlement. We sought to understand the frequency and the motivations of those affected to participate politically in later demonstrations against their relocation hydropower. Therefore, we use a methodology that links qualitative and quantitative tools based on empirical research. The study enables us to understand that the primary motivator for participation of those affected in later for their resettlement mobilizations is human solidarity.

**Keywords:** Social Conflict, Hydropower, Movement of Affected by Dams, Resettlement, Special Purpose Company.

**Resumo:** A energia elétrica está na base do estilo de vida da sociedade contemporânea, cuja fonte principal no Brasil, é a hidrelétrica, que exige a construção de grandes obras de infraestrutura. Estes projetos impulsionam processos sociais e políticos contraditórios. Nestes processos, vislumbramos o conflito entre as Sociedades de Propósitos Específicos (SPE), proponentes das hidrelétricas, e o Movimento dos Atingidos por Barragens (MAB), representante de partes das populações locais deslocadas compulsoriamente em decorrência dessas obras. Tendo como *locus* a bacia do Uruguai, no sul do Brasil, este artigo discute o conflito através de uma “malha de análise” composta por hidrelétricas e reassentamentos. Desse modo, procuramos compreender a frequência e as motivações dos atingidos para participarem politicamente de mobilizações contra hidrelétricas posteriores ao seu reassentamento. Para tanto, utilizamos uma metodologia que articula instrumentos qualitativos e quantitativos baseados em pesquisa empírica. O estudo nos permite compreender que o

principal motivador para a participação dos atingidos em mobilizações posteriores ao seu reassentamento é a solidariedade humana.

**Palavras-chave:** Conflito Social, Hidrelétrica, Movimento dos Atingidos por Barragens, Reassentamentos, Sociedade de Propósito Específico.

**Resumen:** La energía eléctrica es la base de la forma de vida de la sociedad contemporánea, cuya principal fuente en Brasil, es la hidroeléctrica, lo que requiere la construcción de grandes proyectos de infraestructura. Estos proyectos impulsan procesos sociales y políticos contradictorios. En estos procesos, se vislumbra el conflicto entre las Entidades de Propósito Específico (SPE), los defensores de la energía hidroeléctrica, y los representantes de las poblaciones locales desplazadas el Movimiento por las Represas (MAB). Tomando el locus del trabajo, la cuenca del río Pelotas - Uruguay, Sur del Brasil, este artículo aborda el conflicto a través de un "análisis de bucle" consiste en hidroeléctricas y reasentamiento. Hemos tratado de comprender la frecuencia y las motivaciones de las personas afectadas para participar políticamente en las manifestaciones posteriores en contra a nuevos hidroeléctricas. Por lo tanto, utilizamos una metodología que vincule herramientas cualitativas y cuantitativas sobre la base de la investigación empírica. El estudio nos permite entender que el principal motivador para la participación de los afectados en adelante para su reasentamiento es movilizaciones de solidaridad humana.

**Palabras clave:** Conflicto Social, hidroeléctrica, el Movimiento de Afectados por Represas, Reasentamiento, Sociedad de Propósito Específico.

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