



Ambiente & Sociedade

ISSN: 1414-753X

revistaambientesociedade@gmail.com

Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação
e Pesquisa em Ambiente e Sociedade
Brasil

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Ambiente & Sociedade, vol. XX, núm. 3, julio-septiembre, 2017, pp. 257-270
Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Ambiente e Sociedade
Campinas, Brasil

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SHARED USE OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATER RESOURCES IN LA PLATA RIVER BASIN: UTOPIA OR REALITY?¹

WAGNER COSTA RIBEIRO²

This article discusses how the use of the transboundary water resources of the La Plata River Basin is based on the classical vision of political realism, in which the pursuit of national interests prevails. The use of water to generate electricity is not in accord with a broader utopian vision that has emerged from the discussions surrounding the use and destiny of cross-border water resources.

More specifically, this text outlines how Brazil and Paraguay established – initially through dictatorial and, therefore, ideologically convergent regimes – a cooperation agreement governing the use of the waters of the Paraná River for electricity generation. An agreement, nonetheless, that was the consequence of Brazilian hegemony at the time, which resulted in a large list of Paraguayan demands that gained greater prominence at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

The first part of the article consists of an essay on utopia, which is necessary in order to create a measure to try to answer the question posed in the article's title. It departs from the tenet of utopia as a collective political construct that is achievable. For this purpose, it is necessary to discuss premises that produce convergences, especially when it comes to countries.

In the next part, the reader will come across a discussion about international cooperation and the use of water resources. As we know, water should be close to all users. In a world in which there is still unequal access to water, one may ask whether international cooperation could be a utopia that will resolve this imbalance. However, as it will be seen, in the case under analysis, the goal of international cooperation was the use of water as a source of energy, leaving aside water supply for human and animal needs.

The third part presents the Itaipu Treaty, the result of previous negotiations between Brazil and Paraguay. An analysis of this case suggests that realism based on national interest predominated during the preparation of the initial document, which has been increasingly questioned by Paraguay since 2000. It can be observed that, after a series of negotiations

1. This research was funded by Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo – FAPESP (FAPESP Process nº : 2014/21734-5) and Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico - CNPq (CNPq Process nº 310631/2014-9).

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overseen by two leftist presidents, part of the claims of the Paraguayan government were met in 2008. Could this case be an example of utopia achieved?

In an attempt to answer this question, two distinct styles are adopted. The first part of this article consists of an essay comprising the free expression of the author's reflections upon utopia. It would not be appropriate to re-explore the works of classicists like More (1516, 2000) or even more contemporary authors such as Marcuse (1967), given that the focus of this article is to address utopia as a measure of relations between two countries. Thereafter, a classic academic style narrative is adopted, providing references to authors and documents.

Utopia: in search of a definition

Defining utopia requires reflection, given that it points to the future. This section raises concerns that should be taken into account when embarking on a collective utopian project, in the hope of sharing tensions that must be overcome in the pursuit of a less inequitable becoming for the use of transboundary water resources.

Utopia deals with becoming. It is a way of seeking to understand the coming-to-be by way of idealization. It is about seeking to build an achievable, and therefore applicable, alternative political project. To be utopian is to have a political project. It is to share ideas in search of a collective alternative to the reproduction of life that breaks away from current models based on the exploitation of human and natural resources and large-scale waste generation. It is to go beyond sterile consumerism depicted as the essence of life. It is to follow common paths towards new forms of socialization that can be renewed without disregarding future projects and those to come.

Utopia is collective because it is political; the greatest symbol of the social life that we adopt. Collective utopia is not only that which is dreamed collectively, but also that which is built together. When it comes to distinct and often irreconcilable interests, this requires discernment and the ability to engage in dialogue and leave certainties in order to search for alternative solutions to problems. Utopia is the pursuit of future convergence based on the collective analysis of reality. It is a collective construction that starts from a common diagnosis of the civilizational crisis that we are immersed to overcome such social, economic and financial inequality.

Utopia must have a basis in reality. When it occurs without a solid matrix it is reduced to a dream; a delirium that serves as poetic stimulus, which, though not so bad, is insufficient if the aim is to present a new project for contemporary society. Since a large part of contemporary society is attentive to minor stimuli, which offer rewards that are irrelevant to everyday life, and suffocated by the daily search for recognition from "virtual friends", it is necessary to discover the real world. It is essential to find real friends with whom one can share experiences geared towards a more socially balanced becoming for the use of natural resources. Reality today is hidden from the virtual pages that caress the soul through the recognition received from virtual friends. That is why it is essential to stimulate a return to empirical studies and to the study of real situations that result from facts that express the scope of the dominant classes. Part of the actions of this segment

of society mask the real world, which is ideologically translated as being perfect on the screens of our electronic devices. The real world shows itself in dispute. Social groups are under pressure, prevented from reproducing their ways of life due to the constant pressure to find new natural resources, resulting in a false notion of material abundance.

Utopia is to reveal the world as it is in order to change it. It is indeed a sad state of affairs when showing reality is already a utopian project. The world is depicted, particularly by the mass media, to be making progress through the emphasis given to technological innovations that, at the most, renew one aspect or another of life. The real world is not laid bare to the eyes of many people. Unveiling this mystery is a utopian task, given that it is built into mass media, anesthetizing minds and generating "false passions" that often lead to conflict.

Utopia is not to consume. Stimulating all manner of consumption results in an existence without meaning, which guides knowledge and freedom of choice towards purchasable objects, disconnecting life from essence, which is the pursuit of social realization as recognized by the group to which one belongs. This is why many people unfortunately translate utopia as the capacity to consume or, at best, as the elevation of those who are outside consumerism to the condition of being consumers. Milton Santos (1987) put it well when he said the consumer is not a citizen.

Utopia should not fail to ponder the reproduction of life. This consists of thinking substantively about how to replenish the material base of life; a key task in a world based on consumerism. It is clear, however, that reflection is not required in order to maintain consumerism. In the utopia of the twenty-first century, we must aim to build another world using natural heritage intelligently without casting aside the work of the millions of people who have helped to shape current spaces or, that is to say, produced space. This consists of seeking to ensure dignified living conditions for the planet's human and nonhuman population; a task that has yet to be completed. It consists of seeking lifestyles that ensure food security, shelter, and full socialization for all people. It consists of lending a new meaning to existence that goes beyond achievement through consumption.

Utopia without thinking the material base of existence is not utopia, it is just another form of ideology. How is it possible to propose something new if we fail to consider the basic necessities of life, such as food, shelter, and the conditions necessary for living in society? The hegemonic way of using our natural inheritance does not allow us to think becoming. The hegemonic way is based on the intensive use of natural resources and the depletion of the result of millions of years of natural processes to serve the consumption needs of a few generations! How is it possible to be utopian without considering the enormous pressure on natural resources such as water, soil, and energy sources? How is it possible to be utopian when holding a utilitarian view of the exteriority of consciousness? It is necessary to abandon this way of viewing the results of natural processes and human work and embark upon a new way of conducting life. To this end, it is necessary to rethink the socialization that animates human existence.

Utopia is becoming and therefore involves considering those who are still to come. The rights of future generations, which has received considerable attention within the scope of third-generation human rights, are based on the right of those to come to re-

produce their life. The controversial definition of sustainable development has at least generated fresh reflection, acting as a brake on capitalism by drawing attention to the need for its material reproduction and planting the idea that future generations will need clean water, renewable energy sources, and a reproducible material base that does not depend of the use of inheritance of natural processes, as it does today. Future generations are obviously unable to discuss a utopian project because they do not yet exist. In the same way, we are not able to fully influence how they will organize life. This is why we must at least leave our natural resource base as a legacy for future generations. What gives the current generation the right to deplete a heritage resulting from millions of years of natural processes? We do not know what life will be like in the future; however, we do know that future generations will need to use water, produce food, and generate electricity. How is it possible to be utopian if we fail to consider future fresh water sources (increasingly scarce in areas of high population density), agricultural land (for which it is necessary to avoid land contamination by agrochemicals and soil exhaustion due to the large-scale intensive production of commodities that do not reach our tables as food), and renewable energy sources?

Utopia is a way of viewing the world. It helps to elucidate the present through alternative projects forged through political struggle. It opens up a new window onto current social inequalities by seeking change in contemporary life. As a method for observing reality, utopia is a painstaking endeavor because, apart from a project and organization for the future, it necessarily demands that we characterize the contemporary world in order to define its changes. Radicalism cannot exist without the empirical study of the base of the reproduction of life, which is the first cause to be changed in the face of a utopian project. Building an alternative project in the face of hegemonic economic and political forces is by no means an easy task. It involves struggle, not only against all manner of mergers of capital and political power, the globalization of means of production, and training of minds, but also against the archaism that the nation-state represents. It is a contradictory world, considering that for a significant proportion of the world's population utopia consists precisely in the consolidation of nations states, expressed in autonomist projects that, rather than help re-explore the universality of human actions, lead to greater fragmentation of the world and social relations.

Utopia defines a way of being that results in the qualifier utopian. However, being utopian represents the search for a becoming that is planned, coordinated, and organized by political struggle, for an isolated utopian is merely an idealist. Many ideas have been generated throughout human history; however, few have been assimilated and resulted in the production of geographical space. If one considers the fixed, forms, and structures present on the earth's surface (SANTOS, 1996), we can see just how much the ideally created technical base has gained "concreteness" in the realization of human creation; albeit a creation that belongs to but a few, concretized through the efforts of millions of workers who have acted on our natural heritage.

Utopia must be created collectively, as the coming-to-be of a project to organize life. The millions of unemployed people and victims of forced migration who wander among core countries are the result of an exclusionary production project defended tooth and

claw through the imposition of economic and financial sanctions on peoples and countries. The contemporary utopian being must seek to overcome this condition. In view of the complexity of the problem, we face a scenario that calls for global articulation. On the one hand, this is not difficult, given the technical means available (despite lack of access among a significant portion of the population). On the other, however, it becomes very difficult owing to the particularisms that emerge as alternatives in the face of the crisis, resulting in the more explicit resurfacing of irrational hatred and prejudice in face of differences, be it against immigrants or those who hold other religious beliefs and opposing political views. A collective utopia only makes sense if otherness is recognized as a way of organizing the reproduction of life.

Utopia is associated with youthfulness. It is an attribute that belongs to those who have a youthful spirit, which is evidently not exclusive to young people: a restless, critical spirit that seeks to recognize difficulties and alternatives to ward off the easily observable tedium of everyday relationships present in a variety of different socialization settings, including the workplace, school, and the family. Utopia and youthfulness walk hand in hand. They feed off one another, since they approach becoming from the same perspective. That is why building a utopian project requires the presence of restless minds, who are eager to reflect upon the condition itself in order to overcome it. Generally, this combination stays away from institutions, which are getting older in a temporal sense, and, especially, from avoiding the emersion of the other, otherness, and utopia. Nonetheless, they can become a reference for change, as long as they are open to the feeling of the new and the necessary revision of the foundations of present life, which have unfortunately become tedious because they are grounded in consumption, the lack of solidarity, and individualism. Young people tend to be gregarious. They seek to belong to a group that can provide them with identity, threatened at times during the search for employment or public subsidies; both guaranteed solely the capacity to buy in order to maintain a production system that adds little to life as a human creation and dimension. We cannot afford to waste more time crafting young minds with individual achievements mediated by game electronic devices. We must use these same networks and technical means to enable collective thought to flow and awaken the desire to interact and put aside our differences, whereby achievement is shared and not simply evaluated outside of somebody who expresses him/herself using human creation.

Utopia is a way of breathing in the contemporary world and withstanding the daily suffocation of our minds and hearts by various types of appeals, be they emotional, political, economic, or cultural. This daily suffocation hampers creation, curtails freethinking, and overwhelms youthful enthusiasm, impoverished by the gloomy prospect of a withering job market or employment in alienating activities. Based on this interpretation, utopia is a way of withstanding this pressure to be able to seek alternatives that lend true meaning to life. Groups are emerging in large cities, demonstrating a new form of sociality based on premises that break with the bourgeois past, at least as a project. New ways of living together and sharing spaces, bodies and minds are springing up in some places, showing that, at least spasmodically, the air is fresher and alternatives are beginning to gain visibility.

So, long live utopia! Long live collective utopia, which concerns itself with the socially inclusive replenishment of the material base of existence towards a more equal world.

International cooperation and water use

Both scarcity and supply can generate disputes over water use. In the first case, disputes generally revolve around ensuring an adequate supply of clean water for human use. But when there is plenty, there is a struggle for the implementation of different political projects to use water.

The adequate management of water for its various uses, from the most fundamental such as human and animal watering to use it as an input in the agroindustrial process stages in many countries, is rare. Typically, the responses to water needs are short-sighted and short-term. What matters is not water availability, but rather the desire to build, produce, and consume.

For many, the water cycle is defined solely by the natural processes of evaporation and condensation. However, the water cycle is fundamentally social. When we use water we add substances that alter its natural condition. Furthermore, the demand for water often exceeds available supply, causing water scarcity at local level despite overall abundance at a global scale. That is why localized water conflicts are becoming increasingly common. Such disputes manifest themselves in different ways, including protests led by political leaders and actions implemented by business groups and multilateral organizations.

Thinking about a utopian project for water use requires a clear understanding of the profound impact its social use has on the natural dynamics of water: whether it is for electricity generation, irrigation, and human and animal consumption, or for the maintenance of complex natural environments and industry, water use in our times alters its natural condition. Along its course through society, foreign elements are added to the chemical composition of water that are often not removed before returning to the water cycle. In addition, part of water is consumed in the production process or ingested.

More striking, however, is that access to clean water is a utopia for around 1.8 billion people on this planet (UNIFEC, WHO, 2015). In other words, drinking water without having to worry about illness and being able to bathe and brush one's teeth without potential health risks is a utopian dimension of water use even in the twenty-first century!

In light of the above, any utopian project should think of water in at least two dimensions: the provision of an adequate supply of water for human and animal consumption and for the maintenance of natural systems; and the purification of water after agroindustrial and human use through the universalization of access to water and basic sanitation.

This situation can be particularly tense at international level because it directly involves countries that dispute the destination of water (RIBEIRO AND SANT'ANNA, 2014). Water supply is not always top priority in projects involving water use. When water is abundant, as is the case with part of the transboundary water resources that flow between Brazil and Paraguay, disputed water projects allocate water resources either to agriculture or electricity generation.

In light of the above, the following question may be raised: could international cooperation constitute a utopian project?

To a certain degree, international cooperation may be a sign of progress given that two countries have managed to build a joint agenda that leads to convergent actions (RIBEIRO, 2012). However, there is a vast body of literature showing that relationships between the parties of international cooperation are often unequal or hegemonic. Thus, cooperation is not a synonym for utopia, because it is only able to forge closer relations between countries and their interests through contracts.

This issue gains even greater relevance when it comes to the use of water, given the specificities of this natural resource. Water should be available to all users, whether for drinking purposes, irrigation, or the production process. The same could be said for electricity generation, where water is accumulated in order to be displaced, to generate electrical energy.

In other words, when it comes to international cooperation and water use, we must not fail to take into the position of the water source in relation to users. With regard to agreements dealing with the diversion and channeling of water, the volume of water negotiated reflects relations characterized by water hegemonyⁱ asserted by one party over the other, as in the case of Mexico and the United States. In such cases, pragmatism prevails over utopia, resulting in one country receiving more water than the other.

With regard to shared water use for electricity generation, the situation is apparently different. That is, the water used for electricity generation flows between countries. The issue therefore becomes who will be the recipient of the energy produced. The case of the Itaipu Treaty signed by Brazil and Paraguay examined below helps to elucidate this issue.

The Itaipu Treaty: realism versus utopia

The La Plata River Basin is the eighth largest river basin in the world and the second largest in Latin America. With an area of around three million square kilometers (CAUBET, 1991), it extends throughout five countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay. The basin's main tributaries are the Paraná, Paraguay, and Uruguay rivers, which originate in Brazil. Formed by the confluence of the Uruguay and the Paraná rivers, the La Plata River forms part of the border between Argentina and Uruguay, where it empties into the Atlantic Ocean (figure 1).

The La Plata River Basin encompasses the entire country of Paraguay, 80% of Uruguay, 37% of Argentina, 19% of Bolivia, and 17% of Brazil (MELLO, 1997). The Paraná River, which harbors the Itaipu Dam, is about 2,570 kilometers long, 190 of which stretch along the border between Brazil and Paraguay (CAUBET, 1991).

There are around 60 bilateral documents signed by Brazil and Paraguay, some of which date back to the Empire of Brazil. In 1966, Brazil and Paraguay signed the "*Ata do Iguaçu*" (Iguaçu Act), which serves as a guiding framework for relations between the two countries. The *Ata* provides that the hydraulic potential of the *Salto Grande de Sete Quedas* or *Salto de Guairá* (Guairá Falls) shall be jointly harnessed. The *Ata* also provides

Figura 1: La Plata River Basin



Source: CIC, p. 14, 2011.

that the electricity generated shall be shared between the two countries and that the other party shall have the right of first purchase in relation to surplus electricity generated. The price of this electricity shall be set by a commission created by the two countries.

There are two notable aspects to this agreement: Brazil brought Paraguay closer to its interests, isolating Argentina (MELLO, 1997), viewed as an external enemy at the time of the military dictatorship in Brazil (1964 to 1985); Paraguay clearly had a considerably lower potential for use of surplus electricity than Brazil, revealing Brazil's intention to take advantage of the surplus electricity generated by its neighbor. In other words, Brazil's hegemony began to manifest itself, despite resistance from Paraguay, who insist that the use of water resources should be joint, as laid out in the *Ata de Iguaçu*.

In 1973, Brazil and Paraguay signed an agreement to harness part of the hydroelectric potential of the Paraná River – the “*Tratado para o Aproveitamento Hidrelétrico dos Recursos Hídricos do Paraná River do Salto Grande de Sete Quedas ou Salto de Guaíra*”. This treaty provided for the creation of *Itaipu Binacional*, which would oversee the planning, construction, and operation of the hydroelectric power plant. The treaty provided that each country should create an autonomous body linked to the *Itaipu* whose missions should be defined by mutual agreement and which should provide the capital necessary

from each party. It is important to highlight that even before the agreement entered into force the two countries already cooperated to undertake studies to assess the hydroelectric potential of the Paraná River. In other words, the Itaipu Treaty, as it became known, reaffirmed a previous commitment to cooperation undertaken by the two parties.

The commitment to sell surplus electricity was also reaffirmed under Article XIII of the treaty in the following terms:

“the electricity produced from hydroelectric sources as referred to by Article I will be shared in equal parts between the two countries, each of which shall have the right of first purchase, as established by Article XIV, of the electricity not utilized by the other country for its own consumption.

Sole paragraph. The High Contracting Parties undertake to purchase, jointly or separately in the way they see fit, the total installed output.” (THE ITAIPU TREATY: 4).

In other words, the Itaipu Treaty confirmed the commitment undertaken seven years earlier, but with one addition: the parties shall purchase the total installed output, which once again benefitted Brazil, given the uneven demand for electricity between the two countries. This means that Brazil and Paraguay, partners in a venture where Brazil is by far the largest consumer, must consume all of the electricity generated.

This unequal political arrangement could be classified as realism. There is no utopia without a common perspective. The agreement enables Paraguay to harness the hydroelectric potential of the Paraná River, which it does fully aware of the Brazil's hegemonic aims.

A new left or an old realism?

The debate was resumed thirty years after the Itaipu Treaty entered into force. At the unveiling of the turbines of the *Itaipu Binacional* in 2003, the President of Paraguay, Nicanor Duarte Frutos, proposed a downward revision of the interest rates on the debt contracted by his country at the time the plant was constructed, which seemed to have little effect on the Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

However, President Fernando Lugo, who took office in 2008, requested a revision of the treaty and his country's debt with Brazil. One of the core themes of his election campaign was energy sovereignty, which for him meant being able to take better advantage of the electricity generated by Itaipuⁱⁱ.

Like Lugo, his Brazilian counterpart Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva was also left leaning. Was it time to establish a new utopia? Or would classical realism based on the hegemonic interests of Brazil once again prevail?

The list of Paraguayan demands was by no means short. The countries main demands apart from the revision of the electricity tariff, once again placed on the negotiation table, were greater participation in decision making within the *Itaipu Binacional* through the creation of a new board of directors and greater autonomy in relation to electricity commercialization.

The Brazilian government accepted two of the above items. The revision of the debt factor, formally based on the US inflation rate, was pegged at 7.5% per annum. Another item that was agreed was the review of the tariff, whereby the annual amount paid by Brazil rose from US\$120 million to US\$360 million.

Although the agreement increased the amount received by Paraguay, it is far from energy sovereignty, where the country itself would define the price. Furthermore, although the revision of interest rates was an improvement, Brazil did not go so far as to cancel the debt.

One would imagine that negotiations between two leftist presidents would have resulted in a more lasting and utopian outcome. This was not the case, however, between Brazil and Paraguay. It is evident that, though improvements were made, Paraguay's demands were only partially met. More than this, tensions continue to be perceived as national and in confrontation with each other. The two countries were unable to establish a common agenda on broader issues such as the end use of electricity.

The treatment of this issue by Brazilian diplomats and President Lula resulted in a quick solution that only partially met Paraguay's demands. It is clear that this posture is very different from classical water hegemony exerted by military governments. After all, in relation to improving the living conditions of the population of his neighboring country, a concern expressed by Lula on various occasions, the President was consistent.

The question remains as to whether it might not have been possible to discuss another jointly elaborated agenda involving issues ranging from electricity generation to its utilization. Utopia is still to come in this dispute, especially given the directions taken by the two countries recently, which are likely to lead to an intensification of nationalism to the detriment of a more general vision that serves both countries.

Final considerations

How can we apply utopia and becoming to an intense bilateral relationship such as that between Brazil and Paraguay?

The terms of the Itaipu Treaty, agreed between two dictatorial regimes, laid bare the asymmetric relations between the two parties. The document was questioned on a number of occasions over the following decades, culminating in the revision of the terms of the treaty in 2008.

The main question has always been the tariff paid by Brazil to its neighbor, an issue that has been somewhat sidetracked by the price increase. However, new tensions involving the use of the transboundary water resources of the La Plata River Basin are likely to arise in the short term given the sweeping political changes underway in both countries.

These episodes raise concern regarding new sources of conflict between the two countries. Paraguay is well able to demand a further tariff adjustment in coming years, despite commercial and contractual constraints. Indeed, in 2012 the Paraguayan government threatened to renege on the contract and stop selling surplus energy to Brazil. This incident, which had no major repercussions besides the declarations made by the countries' political leaders, confirms the importance of seeking to understand what is at

stake for Paraguay and Brazil, given that interests may eventually diverge, resulting in renewed tensions concerning the La Plata River Basin.

In light of the above, it is evident that the situation between Brazil and Paraguay in relation to transboundary water resources remains far from cooperation without conflict. Despite the quick resolution to the latest stalemate, given the progressive convergence of the country's respective political leaders, new demands are likely to arise from parties that are unable to develop a long-term water use plan that meets the interests of the majority of their population. For this reason, it could be understood that cooperation between Brazil and Paraguay to harness the hydroelectric potential of the Paraná River is lacking and subject to new sources of tension in the medium term.

Notes

- i A review of the concept of water hegemony can be found in Paula and Ribeiro (2015).
- ii For information on energy sovereignty see Canese (2011).

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Submitted on: 14/03/2017

Accepted on: 23/08/2017

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/1809-4422ASOCEX0005V2032017>

SHARED USE OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATER RESOURCES IN LA PLATA RIVER BASIN: UTOPIA OR REALITY?

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Abstract: The shared use of transboundary water resources has the potential to be a utopia for the use of cross-border natural resources. However, this type of approach between countries is not common. In the La Plata River Basin, recent tensions between Brazil and Paraguay associated with the use of water resources for electricity generation highlight the challenges of international cooperation. This text discusses the proposed revision of the Itaipu agreement put forward by Paraguay in 2008. This revision resulted in an increase in the price of surplus electricity received by Paraguay from *Itaipu Binacional*. The tensions between these countries were caused by the use of water, which in this case is abundant; unlike other situations in which conflict can often arise due to water scarcity. This case is also notable because it involves the use of water for electricity generation rather than human consumption.

Keywords: international cooperation, the La Plata River Basin, transboundary waters, Brazil, Paraguay.

Resumo: Compartilhar o uso de água transfronteiriça pode representar uma utopia no uso de recursos naturais em uma zona de fronteira. Porém, ainda não é frequente esse tipo de abordagem entre países. Na Bacia do Prata, tensões recentes entre Brasil e Paraguai pelo uso da água apontam os desafios para a cooperação. Esse texto discute como foi tratada a proposta de revisão do acordo de Itaipu, apresentada pelo Paraguai, em 2008. Como resultado, verificou-se uma melhor remuneração àquele país pela geração de energia por parte da empresa Itaipu Binacional. A tensão entre os países resultou do uso da água, que é abundante nesse caso, diferentemente de outras situações na quais ela surge pela escassez do recurso hídrico. Também é relevante que ela envolveu a geração de energia, e não o abastecimento humano.

Palavras-chave: cooperação internacional, Bacia do Prata, água transfronteiriça, Brasil, Paraguai.

Resumen: Compartir el uso de las aguas transfronterizas puede representar una utopía en el uso de los recursos naturales en una zona de frontera. Pero no es frecuente este tipo de

enfoque entre países. En la Cuenca del Plata, las recientes tensiones entre Brasil y Paraguay por el uso del agua para generar energía apuntan los retos para cooperación. Este texto analiza la propuesta de revisión del acuerdo de Itaipú propuesto por Paraguay en 2008. Como resultado, hubo un pago mejor a ese país para la generación de energía a partir de la empresa Itaipú Binacional. La tensión entre los países es resultado de la utilización del agua, que es abundante en este caso, a diferencia de otras situaciones en las que surge por la escasez de recursos hídricos. También es relevante que se trataba de la generación de energía y no para el consumo humano.

Palabras clave: la cooperación internacional, la Cuenca del Plata, agua transfronteriza, Brasil, Paraguay.
