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The Water Licenses Issue in Goiás, Brazil: Inequalities, Disputes and Brazilian Productive Model Criticisms

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Abstract

Agribusiness is a model of Brazilian rural development that is constantly defended, especially by the political classes, as the base and vocational future of the State of Goiás, located in Brazilian mid-western. In a model of capital accumulation through the predatory usage of nature, agribusiness can be associated with intensive livestock production, technological packages (chemical and genetic), and has been interpreted as synonymous with development and strength. However, this system excludes other productive models and ways of life that do not fit productivist practices, expanding the concentration of income and land and converting land and water into mere resources, as if they could be dissociated from nature, and did not matter to keep life on the planet. Because the state of Goiás has a significant agricultural contribution to the country's economy, since it is one of the largest producers of soy, corn and sugarcane plantations, which depend on a large volume of irrigation, it was selected as a standard case to understand the reproduction of agribusiness in the Brazilian rural environment. Thus, this research discusses whether the productive model of excessive water use is correlated with conflicts over water, through the analysis of licenses for irrigation and disputes over water in the state of Goiás. An investigation into irrigation concessions was carried out, noting that, in 2020, there were 1,853 catchment points active in Goiás, which could be associated with the expansion of water conflicts. According to the Pastoral Land Commission and the National Water Agency, between 2016 and 2020 there were 16 conflicts in Goiás that reached 1,752 families. By data comparison it is possible to say that the conflicts are not related to water scarcity, but to their poor distribution and usage, and in regions with great number of pivots grants they are accentuated. It concludes that it is not possible to understand water without considering the right to life, since it is necessary to establish a purposeful agenda between the various sectors of society and the public administration for the best use of water resources, so abundant, but, due to economic power, so uneven in accessibility.

Keywords: Central pivot grants, Development, human right to water, Water availability, Water commodification