

BOOK REVIEW

Translated Version

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THE ENERGY EMANATING FROM NEOS

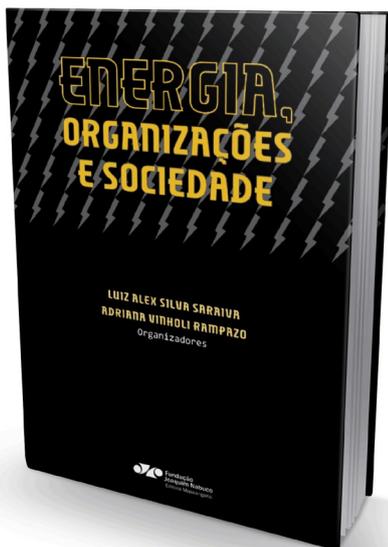
ENERGIA, ORGANIZAÇÕES E SOCIEDADE (ENERGY, ORGANIZATIONS AND SOCIETY)

Luiz Alex Silva Saraiva e Adriana Vinholi Rampazo (Orgs.). Recife, PE: Editora Massangana-Fundaj, 2017. 284 p.

Through 15 years of research, The Core of Organizational Studies and Society (named, in Portuguese, as Núcleo de Estudos Organizacionais e Sociedade, or NEOS) has already been consolidated as one of the main centers related to the area in Brazil. *Energy, Organizations and Society* is a volume that encompasses the mark of productivity and creativity that emanates from NEOS.

In its' organizers' words, the book aims to “debate the confluence between energy, organizations, and society in an interdisciplinary and necessarily critical way” (p. 9). The relevance of this type of debate stems from the fact that the Brazilian energy sector was structured on hydroelectric foundations, based on a type of calculation that highlighted that this is the least costly way—strictly in financial terms—to generate energy in a country with geoclimatic characteristics such as ours. Giving ideological support to this viewpoint—which has historically been unable to address the risks involved in actions based on the modern way of proceeding without reflexivity (Beck, 1992)—developmentalism places the rapid increase in electricity supply as imperative, as well as the economic growth that may occur. What is not explicit in this discourse is the direct side effects in specific and socially constituted territories (Santos, 2005). It is precisely in the sense of explaining and problematizing what such hegemonic discourse does not account for or address—the local socio-environmental developments of such an energy matrix—that this work offers significant contribution.

In addition to the presentation, the volume includes nine chapters prepared by specialists from different disciplines that problematize the energy issue in an articulated way with the various organizations involved and their most diverse social developments. The intertwining of the themes addressed in the chapters (cN) can be noted as a virtue in a book composed by numerous and diverse hands. It begins from the composition and (re)ordering of Brazilian electric systems (c1), passing through the hydro / hydroelectric technocentrism's pitfalls and class interests in sector decisions (c2). The discourse supporting the alleged condition of hydroelectricity clean energy is problematized (c3). It proceeds to discuss the premises of national planning for the sector and associated conflicts (c4), environmental licensing as a national policy instrument of the area (c5), and a case of licensing marked by great asymmetry in a process the authors called, “pain-concentrating,” such as the suffering imposed on the places (c6). Continuing vigorously, the work seeks to address the change-oriented coping promoted by large hydroelectric projects in communities that (de)territorialized, can no longer recognize themselves on the ground where they step (c7), the marks



By

MARCIO SÁ

marciodesa@gmail.com

ORCID: 0000-0002-1001-8381

Universidade Federal da Paraíba,
Departamento de Ciências Sociais, João
Pessoa, Paraíba, Brazil

Marcio Sã

of hydroelectricity in the capitalist space production (c8), and, finally, an experience of mobilizing minorities threatened by another sector venture documentary analysis (c9). Furthermore, some reflections may be conjectured when we consider the possible global and local developments regarding to the themes synthesized above.

On one hand, the Chernobyl nuclear plant disaster in 1986 can be considered a landmark of the global dimensions that disasters related to the choice of certain energy production means can take. Undoubtedly, that event contributed to the ideas of Ulrich Beck (1992) to gain greater repercussion. He defends the idea that in a risk society, “society becomes reflexive (in the narrowest sense of the word), which means that it becomes a theme and a problem for itself” (Beck, 1997, p. 19). In the conventional modern paradigm, the German sociologist proposed a “reflexive” alternative, because we would be living in the “age of side effects.” The energy issues addressed in the book reviewed here challenge us to incorporate the greater reflexivity necessary for intelligent life in our time; after all, energy production with a significantly lower socio-environmental impact—wind and solar, for example—needs much more growth throughout production. Finally, how much more global, social, and environmental damage will the planet and its inhabitants bear?

On the other hand, it was Milton Santos’s conviction—considered revolutionary because he treated the geographical space as a “social instance, such as economy, culture and politics” (Souza, 2005, p. 252)—that “it is the territorial use, and not the territory itself, which makes it the object of social analysis” (Santos, 2005, p. 255). The reading of geographical space as a social instance is projected in the way Santos (2006) observed territory as a socio-historical construction—a phenomenon that imposes itself on nature. Territory would not be “just a set of natural systems and overlapping systems of things, territory can be understood as used territory, not the territory itself. The territory used is the ground plus the identity. Identity is the feeling of belonging to what belongs to us” (Santos, 2002, p. 15, author’s griffin). The “belonging” to a place

(and vice versa), as a shared sociocultural condition, allows us to highlight the identity dimension affected by enterprises such as hydroelectric ones. In other words, the social fabric implications of various communities and member’s intimacy, deterritorialized because of the developmental paradigm still in vogue in Brazil, also have devastating potential on the social and intimate levels of those who cohabit under a specific localism. Thus, it is necessary to add the losses of the various localized minorities that objectively suffer the collateral effects of models, such as the hydroelectric—still implemented today in a rather thoughtless way, to the threats on a global scale.

Overly necessary, these debates and their developments are also legacies of the last century and still need more force in the public scene of our country in the 21st century. In other words, we are not discussing “news,” but something that unfortunately remains increasingly urgent.

Lastly, like other titles by Massangana-Fundaj Publishing House, the book is available for free download through its website: https://www.fundaj.gov.br/images/stories/editora/livros/livro_energia.pdf. Good reading!

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

The author declare that they participated in all stages of development of the manuscript. From the conceptualization and theoretical-methodological approach, as well the theoretical review (literature survey), and finally, writing and final review the article.