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Troubled Tapajós:
Popular politics and threat of dispossession by dam in the Amazon

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“If life was troubled already, to die drowned up is crazy, right? Has the government lost its senses? Will they warn us before everything is submerged so we can save ourselves and perhaps some livestock, so we can cling unto hilltops and look for shelter... those of us who have escaped [death] before. To die stricken is harsh.” The sense of desolation and puzzlement is combined with an ironic tone in the speech of Dona Maria, the 105-year-old matriarch on the margins of the Tapajós River, on the Brazilian Amazon.

Introduction

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, people of the Tapajós region have suffered the burden of simultaneous processes of massive timber extraction, expansion of cattle and soy farming, land grabs, and – most recently – the planning of thirteen dams in the whole river-basin. The Second Plan for Growth Acceleration (PAC2) designates the Tapajós-river dams as “strategic” to Brazilian development, and places them in priority operations, to be fully constructed by 2019. In 2006 many of the communities located in the would-be-reservoirs of these dams started to be informed of such plans by church-activists and others, and became involved in anti-dam struggles. Crescent mobilizations by peasant, riverine and indigenous communities are concomitant and intimately related to the increasing display and use of force by the federal government, alongside the proliferation of corporate responsibility initiatives, and conflict mediation consultancy – all of which incite profound political changes within local communities.

This thesis focuses on Itá, a centennial community of about 800 riverine, fishermen, peasant, extractivist people – small landowners, tenants, sharers of diverse natural resources – who are threatened by complete submergence from the São Luiz do Tapajós dam. Itá has a recent history of fierce mobilization against the dam, but lately has come to have split opinions and growing intra-community conflict on the issue of acceptance of the dam. The prospect of the dam coupled with the workings of both state and corporate agents have resulted in political splits within the community. Some have alleged it has caused the formation of virtually two different communities within the same locality.¹ The aim of this thesis is to depict the articulation of different forms of power in conduct and counter-conduct implied in the proposition of, and resistance to, the São Luiz do Tapajós dam in Itá. How are sovereignty, discipline, and governmentality implied in political action, citizenship and authority within Itá? How do notions of property, land, and territory come to play in these disputes?

In my attempt to answer these questions, I address the literature of peasant resistance, insurgency, politics of the governed, civil society and social movements. In spite of the recurrent depiction of the conflicts over large dams in the Amazon as two sets of opposing forces, by media and diverse actors (many of them external to the Amazonian space), positions of actual agents on the ground are quite

¹ The name of the community and the people who appear in this text have been purposively altered.

varied, multiple, and dynamic. The conventional narratives of an external state and capital imposing themselves on people and annihilating their social form needs to be critically examined in face of political agency on the ground and in historical perspective. This is a contribution anthropology may still make in debating peasant politics (Wolf 1969:ix). That is not to deny domination and oppression, but to perceive the specific forms of resistance in interplay with varied forms of power (Abu-Lughod 1990), differently affecting subjects on the ground.

I investigate the historical changes over the constitution and forms of community in Ita. Foundational here are dimensions of identity, economy and politics. The transformations over the forms of economic activity and labor along the twentieth century have had crucial implications on the 'community' form and its popular politics. In this sense, I relate empirically grounded material of contemporary features with their historical dimensions, or the macrohistorical foundations of microhistorical processes (Burawoy 2009, Tilly 1984). Inversely I also show how microhistorical processes may have effects in emergent, larger political-economy developments. Drawing on Brosius (2003), one important nuance I indicate is the necessity to go beyond the framework of opposed discursive positions in a social-environmental 'conflict', and try to understand how in a process of dynamic interplay agents may alter their positions and discourse. Although there may be historically antagonistic positions, diverse interactions have come to change agent's mobilizations towards each other. In that sense, I attempt to give an account of that complex interaction.

How do neoliberal policies coupled with neodevelopmentalist projects impact local people? What are the emergent forms of political activity, how are they created and what are their social consequences? What are their implications to theorize non-Western bourgeois forms?

I investigate 'popular politics' here borrowing from Chatterjee (2004, 2011) with an altered sense. Chatterjee defines popular politics as vaguely identified with 'political society'. 'Political society' is conceptualized as a domain parallel and separate of 'civil society' that emerges in postcolonial democracies. This concept refers to different, inchoate forms of political engagement of population groups with the modern state which does not conform to Western secularized (Christian) bourgeois institutions of civil society. Population is an empirical and descriptive concept, bare of the normative value implied in citizenship within the ideal of popular sovereignty. Population groups in postcolonial countries survive by sidestepping the law, however, also demanding benefits and welfare from government. Populations are amenable to governmentality, and demand so by a 'politics of the governed'. This politics of the governed has emerged to be a major form of political mobilization around the world toward the end of the twentieth century.

In the case of Ita, I show how politics of the governed work, but not as a domain, nor as exclusive resources to an empirical group. Ita dwellers engage in different political forms, and exert some sort of partial citizenship. A large part of their agency is dedicated to the demand and operation welfare, services and benefits from government, and are appropriately termed 'politics of the governed'. However, they also engage in actions of different forms. Differently from Chatterjee's empirical references, in the case of backwater Amazon, legality toward property is controversial and unclear – the murkiness is even recognized by the state. People in Ita are partially inserted in civil society institutions through membership in rural worker's unions (STTR), exercise of the right to vote and present candidacies in government elections, being part of NGOs, petitioning in courts. Concomitantly, they are also engaged in

everyday forms of resistance to all sorts of governmental and capital control (hunting and fishing prohibitions, as well as in intra-community disputes). Popular politics is termed here to embrace these different activities and forms of political agency. These are not all of resistance, or about escape of governmentality. Many of these activities emerge precisely from practices and technologies of government, and are given new forms by local agency. My attempt is to describe these emergent forms of political action and articulate conceptually the possibilities of political society, civil society, everyday forms of resistance, conducts and counter-conducts in the face of hydroelectric dam projects in the Brazilian Amazon.

The perspective of the construction of a dam, a radical intervention into territory, comes along with conflicting narratives of what the dam could come to mean for that region's future. The contrasting narratives around dams are permeated by diverse affects, and interpreted by different imaginations and memories. This political and cultural setting produces diverging futurities, or visions of the future, as Koselleck conceptualizes them. The dam moment is a time of crisis, which is simultaneously a time *in* crisis (Lomnitz 2003). The future as a cultural fact is a producer of difference and of politics (Appadurai 2013). The aim of this thesis is also to depict the articulation of different political stances implied in the proposition of, and resistance to, the São Luiz do Tapajós dam in Itá. This is done by describing the different futurities expressed by some of its dwellers, their specific relations to affects and interests, and the resulting political stances.

This analysis of Itá is based on ethnography, interviews, and to some extent on documental research and secondary sources. The discussion of empirical material is interwoven with conceptual discussions implied in contemporary politics. The ethnographic material presented here ranges from my first visit to Ita in July, September-November 2012, and August 2013. Other interactions in social movement and research meetings, as well as informal conversations were added to the date. Fieldwork was done while I worked in New Social Cartography of the Amazon Project, a research project based in Brazilian public universities in the Amazon region. The perspectives I present on Ita here stem from a research relations (Bourdieu 1993) cultivated during this period. I was hosted by very welcoming families. These have their specific positions within the community, and were my entry to the field. Being a male ethnographer in a much-gendered context made considerable parts of feminine realms and outlooks not available to my inquiry. Although a hindrance, this condition may have proven useful if we agree upon the patriarchal character of much of the politics in Ita. I cannot, nor do I presuppose to offer an omniscient/omnipresent perspective on Ita – which ethnographic practice and critique has rejected (and human condition has made its predicament). However, my account here is not presented in a dialogic manner (as is Baviskar 1995). That is, I do not constantly refer to my position within Ita's social space or relation to social agents in order to describe its terrain or the social agent's perspectives. I leave it to the reader to judge if he is persuaded by my account.

The 'Itá Community' – context and transformations

Itá is a community of about 800 riverine, fishermen, peasant, extractivist people – small landowners, tenants, sharers of diverse natural resources.² It is a locality established in the first decade of the twentieth century on the Tapajós River as an *entrepot* for rubber trade and extraction. The place was strategically chosen above the largest falls on the mid-Tapajós, providing road access to lower waters. It grew as a village on the booms and busts of extractive activities, resilient by developing its own modes of subsistence and collective life, premised in deep and broad kinship relation to other communities along the river's margins and cities.

In this chapter I describe this community's main economic, social, and political features expressed in identities, memories, and practices. I use Robert Murphy's ethnographic account of the 1950s to indicate profound transformation in communitarian features as I observed them sixty years later. I do not offer a history nor a detailed archival survey of what happened in this long period, but I use Murphy as a document, together with old maps, and recorded oral history, counterposed to my direct observations and interviews. These are important to show the local microprocesses in interaction with larger, regional and national macrohistorical processes to which I refer which permit an insight into conceptual discussions about popular politics and the current prospect of a dam, discussed in the next chapter.

The first families to arrive in Itá were poor immigrant laborers coming from the northeastern Brazilian states of Maranhão and Ceará, in search for a livelihood, rubber extraction, or on available portions of land. Early permanence in Itá was associated with patron-client relations, indentured labor and debt relations with rubber patrons, although a large amount of subsistence activities emerged, more significantly in times of rubber market busts. In the backlands of the Tapajós River, the Catholic Church had been an institution perhaps more active than state itself, and was soon to disseminate the notion and moral references of 'community' to riverine localities such as Itá.

Initially as a rubber-tapper's hub of settler character, Itá was early contended by indigenous groups. The whole of Tapajós River was inhabited by the Tapajós indigenous polity several centuries before the arrival of European colonizers. This people have left enormous quantities of archeological material, ancient pots, machetes and spears. Many archeological sites are within the actual community of Ita and its immediate surroundings. The Tapajós polity, though, was long dismantled. By the time Europeans arrived, diverse peoples inhabited the river basin. Tupi speaking peoples were migrating upstream the Amazon and its tributaries, away from settler colonization. By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Tapajós River was already in the rout of *drogas do sertao* trade (spices and medicine). The Mundurucu people were the main occupants of the mid and upper Tapajós. The Franciscan Catholics, who were attributed with the conversion and religious government of the Tapajós region, established

² Eric Wolf defines peasants "as populations that are existentially involved in cultivation and make autonomous decisions regarding the process of cultivation. The category is thus made to cover tenants and sharecroppers as well as owner-operators, as long as they are in a position to make the relevant decisions on how their crops are grown. It does not, however, include fishermen or landless laborers" (1969: xiv). The description of Ita here does include the latter category he excludes.

missions in Munduruku lands. As much as European colonization evaded indigenous populations fleeing conquest, several groups were incorporated into settlements by military, religious, and merchant means.

Columbia University anthropologist Charles Wagner was a pioneer in modern disciplinary ethnological fieldwork in the region (Wagley 1953).³ It was his student and later Columbia professor of anthropology, Robert Francis Murphy, who studied the Munduruku of the upper and lower Tapajos (Murphy 1957, 1960). According to Murphy's structural-functionalist approach to social change, the Munduruku at the time of his fieldwork, in 1952, were between 'two worlds', being pulled and pushed toward the modernity of national society:

"The 'pull' arises from the chronic demand for cheap labor in the Amazon; the 'push' is a product of the native's increasing desire for manufactured possessions, coupled with disturbances in his society which resulted from his acquisitiveness. The outcome of the process is the disappearance of traditional Indian social systems. But the affected Indians are not left in a social limbo. Rather, they shift their principal bonds of dependency to their already existent relations with the whites and move into the general orbit of caboclo society" (Murphy 1960:5).

Contrary to what may have been Murphy's perspectives, the Munduruku have not disappeared. In fact, if Murphy's demographic estimations were correct, the Munduruku population has increased ten-fold in the last six decades. However, it is worth to point to the fact that Catholic missions in the upper and mid Tapajos have drawn Munduruku populations from the savannah plains to the densely forested margins of the river and its tributaries. Missions and commodity traders (often coinciding activities in the past) were responsible in changing the Munduruku from the 'most warlike tribe' into 'friendly and docile rubber collectors and horticulturalists' (Murphy 1960:8). Until the twentieth-century, though, indigenous territorial divisions were not, if they ever were, settled. The Kayapo people would have periodic wars with the Munduruku. Ita' was also caught in this midst, if not partially a cause of these disputes. Rubber traders and tappers were involved in battles against Indigenous groups. From the point of view of some elders in Ita' who witnesses and took part in these battles, 'indians' were *brabos* (translatable as angry or savage), and wanted to raid and kill rubber tappers. In Ita, mainly "Gaiapós" (Kayapó), coming from the Xingú basin, would attack and raid the few residencies or workers extracting rubber. This antagonistic relation lasted until a few decades ago. The indigenous groups became a negative image to which Itá formed its own identity. Against 'indians,' Itá was, and is, 'white'.⁴

³ Wagley had been to the Tapajos river as part of health policy initiatives (SESP) aimed at the labor force of rubber production. He was a member of a governmental initiative which was a part of a broader program of US-Brazil partnership designed to guarantee stable rubber production for war effort.

⁴ The discursive duality between Indian and white, thus, may point to resemblances with subjectivities Shona Jackson (2012) identifies in Guyana. After presenting her argument, I will show how this duality is very much problematic in reality, that is, these two subjectivities are not correspondent with actual relations and agencies at play in Ita. In an attempt to describe the subjectivities and the objective political economy relations among ethnicities and peoples in postcolonial Guyana, Shona Jackson presents the notion of a *creole indigeneity*. Jackson sets this form of subjectivity in the continuities from imperial domination to postcolonial state-formation and nation building. In this continuity, the settler paradigm, Jackson asserts that enslaved and indentured laborers and their descendents do not cease to be a settler population, even if subaltern settler. As such, they continue to subordinate Indigenous peoples while at the same time they, who were actually not "aboriginal peoples", need to sustain a sense of belonging to land. Thus, a ontological need of belonging is inscribed in a notion of indigeneity

Migrant families who settled in Ita are conscious and proud of their origin, frequently identifying with the Northeastern state their families came from in the first decades of the twentieth-century. This does not come to question their legitimacy over Ita, with which many have deep, collective and affective identification and sense of belonging. Although Ita was formed in a negative identity toward raiding, *brabo* indigenous groups, it was very much a locality that received indigenous people and indigenous-descendent families. As Murphy observed in 1952, the ‘fundamental methods of farming and fishing are similar among both populations... as north Brazilian subsistence techniques are largely Indian-derived’ (1960:10). These indigenous and their descendents were either willing to come or were or somewhat coerced out of their lands (historically, a combination of both) along the last century, and settled in Ita to work in extractive industries and/or maintain self-sufficiency activities.

The actual subjective relations between indigenous and settlers in Ita is thus complex. Today, whilst some dwellers talk proudly of their indigenous background, or even of their present indigenous identity, many demonstrate aversion to it, denial, and awkwardness. Present relations to neighboring indigenous groups are ambiguous: some Ita dwellers have friendship, kinship and political allegiances, while others cultivate family grievances, despise, estrangement and aggressions. Recently, in the first decade of the twenty-first century, some Munduruku and Apiaka families settled in Itá for a few years, only later to leave and establish their own communities upstream. This coming together and subsequent going apart has left its specific ambivalences. Some Ita dwellers say the ‘indians’ decided to leave because their leaders wanted to “preserve their culture”. An outsider, temporary school teacher told me there were cases of rapes and sexual violence against indigenous women of the Munduruku people, which were not revealed by locals to me. With an Apiaka family and a family settled in Ita (composed of a ‘white’ father and a Borari mother) there had been cases of intense violence and death threats sprung from drunken men’s fight.

Presently, there are no Indigenous claimants of an Indigenous land *specifically over Ita*, nor are Ita dwellers politically organized to hinder Indigenous land claims upstream. Rather, the ongoing threat of both communities, Ita and Indigenous, being completely or partially submerged by the Sao Luiz do Tapajos dam has put the social agents in relations of reciprocal solidarity and mobilization. This has acquired expression in both nongovernmental and governmental bodies. In Murphy’s fieldwork, he found that “Brazilians of the Tapajos River ...distinguish themselves from the Indian by the self designation of *civilizado* or, less often, *crístao* (Christian). The Indian is commonly called *caboclo* by them, which, ironically, is what the townsman calls the backwoodsman” (1960:15-6). I found the self-identification of *white* to be the most common or as measure of gradation (as in ‘those Indians are more white than Indian’. In return, I found no questioning that both are *Brazilian*).

(Jackson 2012:211) *not* necessarily connected with the idea of origin. The Guyanese state further denies the self-definition of indigenous peoples, maintaining the colonial designation of ‘Amerindian’, and makes it possible for Creoles to be designated as indigenous too.⁴ The Brazilian state, in contrast, does recognize the designation of Indigenous peoples in laws and policies. If we were to follow Jackson’s arguments, this recognition by the Brazilian state could mean that non-indigenous populations may have a sense of *not* belonging to the land, or, furthermore, an ontological uncertainty for their presence in a land from which they do not originate. The official recognition of indigenous populations versus the non-official, non-marked designation of ‘white’ might still give space for a binary option of identification. This is *not* the case in Ita.

Rubber time

Ita was a rubber-trade post strategically established upstream from a major set of waterfalls which interrupt navigation and trade during most part of the year, precisely in summer (dry) season, when rubber collection is most appropriate. For this feature, a precarious dirt road was made connecting the upper and lower courses of the Tapajos River for trade through land, using trucks carrying rubber and goods that connected Ita to another village. The road belonged to a company, which could then exercise effective monopoly of rubber trade in the upper stream of the river, as it dealt with different rubber patrons.⁵

Different *patroes* (patrons) controlled the rubber extraction by controlling the labor force through credit and trade. Patrons were local traders who established *barracoes* (stores), on the margins junctions of tributaries and the major Tapajos flow. They had the normative exclusive prerogative to buy rubber from and sell labor instruments and consumer goods to his rubber tapper *clientes* (clients). The store was typically also the domicile of the patron, and it had usually a few houses adjacent to it, in which clients dwelled. All were in the same forest clearing on the river bank. Ita was such a place, added with its more strategic importance connecting lower and upper streams. Patron trader usually had no legal title to the land they claimed to have exclusive rights to, but ‘receives rights of exploitation by paying the state tax on the gross cash return from the land’. The right to exploitation perpetuated by the state tax usually rests on a nebulous title, and it was control over land, not over titles, which established ownership in the Amazon (Murphy 1960:18).

Patrons had exclusivity over certain tributaries or zones of rubber tapping. The patrons allowed rubber tappers to extract rubber from their groves in exchange of trade monopoly for both buying rubber and selling goods. Patrons earned profits from both exchanges. On the other hand, rubber tappers were constantly in debt, and could not leave or change patrons at their will until their debt was paid. *Regatoes* or itinerant merchants also ventured into the region, buying and selling goods to rubber tapper. However, patrons were intolerant to loss in commerce, and would also deny further credit to clients who often dealt with *regatoes*. Less frequently, clients were evicted from their groves.

Murphy synthesizes the economic dynamics in the region encompassing Ita thus:

“The economic hierarchy of the [upper] Tapajos River consists of the company [which controls the road leading to Ita], with headquarters in Belem [capital of Para state]; the patrons who are by necessity customers of the company; and the rubber collectors, who are the clients of particular patrons. Transactions between all parties are made on credit. The company advances commodities to the traders and the latter to the rubber collectors against expected delivery of rubber. Very little cash passes hands.” (Murphy 1960:20)

⁵ “This was done by allowing only freight bought from the company and destined for freightage of the company on the company launches to be transported on the road. Several attempts at competition by passing cargo through the dangerous rapids have ended in failure. Whatever company has controlled the two-way trade of rubber export and consumer-goods import has been able to fix consumer prices at whatever the market would bear. These prices have usually been too high to keep stable, permanent working force, and there has been a chronic labor shortage on the Tapajos, even after the great rubber boom ended” (Murphy 1960:19).

Natives of Northeastern Brazilian states were attracted to this region with aspirations of wealth in rubber. Some settled in Ita and its surroundings as early as the first decade of the twentieth century, locals say. Murphy mentions he heard (in 1952) frequent remarks of how “life here is a sacrifice” and that “it is better to starve in town where there is movement and people than in this desolation”. More will be said about the idea of movement later. Murphy also said people were often “hungry and deprived of the barest necessities of life” (Murphy 1960:16). Rubber extracted from *Havea* was experiencing a multi-decade decline in prices, becoming submarginal in world markets, and rubber tappers were experiencing this depression. People born in the region were accustomed to their situation, but recognized their condition of poverty and despair (ibid.).

In addressing the configurations of state presence and government in the region of Ita, above the falls that designate the upper Tapajos in the early 1950s, Murphy describes thus:

“The governments of Brazil and of the State of Para are remote from the region. On rare occasions, one or two policemen from the town of Itaituba, the seat of the municipio of the same name which encompasses the upper Tapajos, ascend the stream in a trader’s launch to take a prisoner into custody. Medical facilities, either public or private, are almost nonexistent. A dentist from Santarem visits the population annually and pulls teeth for a fee, but medical doctors are unknown south of the rapids. There is a hospital at Fordlandia, the old Ford Motor Company rubber plantation – which is now a Brazilian agricultural experimental station – but the trip is too far and costly for most persons. Schools are totally absent. Inhabitants who read and write usually learned to do so in another area or through literate parents. Actually, the Mundurucu are in better position than their Brazilian neighbors, because both the Franciscan mission and the Indian Service post on the Cururu River offer limited medical and educational facilities to them” (Murphy 1960:16-7).

Considering the economic dynamics, forms of social labor and state presence in the region, much determined by its geographic qualities of difficult access, dispersion of production units, distance from cities, in Murphy’s account, the tenuous local community was the major form of sociality and individuation:

“Within the broad social framework imposed by the river system, the local community consists of the patron and his dispersed rubber-collecting clients. The patron serves as the focal point of community life: he is usually the *padrinho*, or godfather, of the customer’s children; it is there that secular festivals such as dances occur; and his store serves as the gathering place on Sundays or alternate Sundays when the people come to trade and enjoy social contacts. The patron is also expected to intervene in cases of serious violation of the law, and he is frequently called upon to settle disputes among his clients. The latter depend heavily on the traditional mutual obligations between patron and client. If the rubber collector falls ill and cannot work, the patron is also supposed to offer food and coffee when his client visits and to show generosity to the latter’s children, even if he is not their godfather. In turn, the client is expected to produce as much rubber as possible and to be loyal to his patron. But it is, at best, a very loosely knit community, for the membership shifts frequently and the daily life of people is carried on in one- or two-family isolation. The most important factor holding the community together is trade with the same patron.” (Murphy 1960:20-1)

Finally, Murphy terms this ‘the paucity of social interaction and loose cohesion of the community’, coupled with harsh labor days in rubber extraction and ‘complete individuation of production’. Such labor production would be channelized in commodity chains and make a livelihood off other commodities. Game and slash-and-burn agriculture were supplementary, he says (1960:22).

Robert Murphy provides a rich account and interpretation. It could be questioned in different aspects, such as the focus on economic cycles to the neglect of sociability as has been done by Oliveira (1978); or the contradiction between a ‘broad social system’ on the river, of ties of kinship, religion and work as opposed to loosely knit communities due to fluctuations of population. In any case, Ita was not as volatile or ephemeral as may have been other rubber trading posts. Related to its strategic position or not, it remained as a social hub of the region, grew in size, and received considerable infrastructure. Despite the failing rubber economy, Ita persevered. People mention they relied on fishing, game subsistence agriculture and local segmented market commerce. Other forest extractions remained, such as copaiba oil, palm hearts, fur trades, and others. Anyhow, the social unit Murphy describes as community is basically a geographic and economic outcome, why would it acquire the self-identification and normative frame of a ‘community’? Besides several omissions of social and collective practices, in the rubber collection itself, in fishing, cultivating, housing, and others, there is a strong religious aspect. The Catholic Church was present as an institution giving moral and discursive shape of Ita as a ‘community’. It was a crucial institution in forming local conceptions of time and historicity, as will be shown later. The Church held holidays, provided the village with a patron saint – which would mark an important annual festivity and social gathering - and identified helped identify dwellers as ‘Christians’, against ‘brabo’ indians.

In the 1950s there were still raids done by indigenous groups around Ita, as the elders say. They were fearful, and some had to abandon their isolated settlements upstream altogether and tended to join villages such as Ita.

The decadent rubber trade was to lose importance in the region to the point of residual reminiscence. Old rubber patrons had turned to other activities, gold-digging or other forest products trade, or had mostly moved away to town or capital. The social structure based on the rubber economy described by Murphy was to lose any meaning. There was no longer a patron to control the labor force by debt and coercion as there once was, nor to act paternally as a *padrinho*. Nevertheless, several community forms endured and flourished, maintaining networks along the course of the river, its towns and cities.

Recent memory and gold rush

In the 1950’s, gold was discovered in the mid Tapajos region, and Itá eventually became a gold-diggers *entrepôt*. Informal, unregulated gold-digging sites multiplied by the hundreds, attracting adventurers from all over Brazil to the region. Itá once again was mainly a hub, not a main residency site for gold-diggers. Dwellers would spend weeks or months in faraway digging sites, keeping their families in Ita. Others ended up finding home here after failed attempts to gain wealth in gold. In 1971 Ita received its first electricity-generation station, fuelled by diesel. Houses began to be lit for few hours every night, as long as fuel was available.

In 1974, the first National Park in the Amazon was created on the margins opposite to Itá, as an environmental compensation for the quixotic Transamazonian road. The Park dispossessed several riverine communities and families on one margin of the river. Opposition to displacement was in some cases fierce, but mainly unorganized. The Brazilian state was making its first legal and disciplinary move on that territory, with a road, a park, and the expulsion of its previous dweller with meager compensation, if any. Many of the families ended up establishing in Itá or in the regional town of Itaituba. Popular experience of the state was its harsher hand, and the memory remaining is that of oppression and defeat, a radically external intervention to which there was no feasible opposition. That was the Brazilian state acting by thrust of grand-planning, during the military dictatorship in times of the 'economic miracle' growth. The memory of the park creation is very much active today, and has its consequence toward the similar context of external intervention of the presently-planned dam. The autarchic posture toward projects in the Amazon, some argue, is one of the characteristic remnants of the dictatorship in the present democratic regime.

By the 1980s, with the gold-rush to its peak, Itá grew considerably in size, having, as some say, several hundred houses. Many of its residents took part in gold-digging. Most men in the village have had at least some experience with it, either digging themselves, operating machines, driving boats, logging and constructing platforms and houses, distributing goods and foodstuff, cooking, or selling their own produce to gold-diggers (*garimpeiros*). Women also often work in gold-digging sites as cooks. But even as a hub, Itá preserved a few nuclear and interrelated families, while it maintains close relations with kin who moved to the now larger, regional city of Itaituba. In fact, during the gold-rush of the 1980s, Itaituba had the largest number of daily airplane flights in Brazil. The airplanes transported gold and *garimpeiros* to their respective gold-digging sites. Itá was again an access for trading goods, taking provisions upstream, and settling during work intervals.

The Transamazonian Road made transportation from lower to upper Tapajós much easier, and the connecting Itá and the lower course of the river was made redundant for large-scale transportation. Nonetheless, it was eventually connected to the Santarém-Cuiabá Road, transversal to the Transamazonian, making land transportation to the local town of Itaituba much easier. No trade control into Itá could be controlled as it was once was by rubber trading companies. The impact on the control of labor force was significant, although not of complete rupture.

However, the gold-digging industry also implied large amounts of indebted labor. One had to be financed to be kept in a digging site. Food, clothes, goods, instruments, and accommodation had a highly inflated price. It cost much to be able to work in a distant site. Food was to be provided across long distances, and as gold rushed through, all related activities were proportionately expensive – with the major exception of the digging labor, which was generally done at one's own risks and debt. This incurred in occasions of indentured labor, prolonged tiling to pay-off debts and be able to move again. On the other end, fortunes made from gold were, and to a great measure still are, taken to be ephemeral, if not cursed or sinful (Guedes 2014:60). As quick as it is made, quickly it disappears – it never stops on people's hands.

Digging sites have their *currutela* (brothel), where, after days of work, money is spent in opulent amounts. *Garimpeiros* carry fame for being opulent, festive, and partially irresponsible if not averse to family values. It is part of a good number of male youth to try their chance in a *garimpo* (digging site), as

part of the socialization in becoming an experienced man in the Tapajos. They chase the *fofoca* (the gossip of the rush) to faraway places, leave families behind, make families elsewhere, dislocate constantly, flee state embargoes on digging, and party fervently in binges. Many, of course, maintain family residencies and periodically return home. But *garimpo* carries its dangers beyond nuanced moral interdictions. Impressive amounts of deaths occurred within *garimpos* and in the town of Itaituba in the 1980s. The Tapajos was considered on the most dangerous places in Brazil. Strangers, co-workers and even friends are said to have killed each-other for amassed gold. Even important local politicians are said to have made their fortunes and careers on gold stolen from corpses. The most legendary are said to have created common graves hidden in the jungle. Today, some have composed a class of capitalists in Itaituba. Others became beggars. The most significant threat nowadays is malaria. Some *garimpeiros* I talked to had had more than fifty crises of malaria fever. These legends and references make gold-digging a source of combined feverish thrill and abomination, ironically amalgamated into a staple, indifferent part of regional sociability.

Andre Guedes (2014) traces analogies of feverish movement of bodies in the gold rush, in brothels, during malaria, and in the broad hubris in the search of ‘movement’ by people in frontier regions. In contrast, the lack of “economic activity” peaks is emically interpreted as the sensation of ‘being stuck’, unable to walk away, living sedentary and ‘captive’ lives, a kind of “compulsory immobility” (Guedes 2014:59). Joseph Campbell finds it a paradox that people on the margins of the Santarem-Cuiaba Road, close to Ita, complain of ‘being stuck’ in spite of their “illegible mobilities” around the region (Campbell 2012). This may be somewhat explained by Guedes’ account, drawing from native perspectives, in which *movement* and *fever* is also an affect, a passion, an agitation and excitement of movement, not only a socioeconomic dynamic, even less so a literal expression. Such a desire for movement, fever, and depreciating the condition of ‘being stuck’ has many resonances in Ita. Some talk about the gold fever with nostalgia. Others keep chasing after *fofoca* all over the Tapajos River, and, in fact, in the whole of Pan-Amazonic region. This mobility, to chase after remunerative work, to be on one’s own, to experience the excitement and thrill, is a part of male sociability, especially for young males. A part of the population that settled in the region comes from this experience of ‘fever’ and ‘movement’. For this reason, many in Ita desire a new and more ‘movements’, such as proportioned by jobs in ‘firms’ drilling holes and doing assessments for the dam-project. A part of these would even desire the coming of the dam in expectations of construction jobs. However, other groups of dwellers value precisely the ‘tranquility’ achieved in Ita. Dona Maria, the 105 year old village matriarch pronounces just such preoccupation: those who are *sossegado* (at ease), *aqueles que escaparam* (those who have escaped) death and bonded labor, will they be able to have ‘peace’?

Other contextual distinctions must be made. The community of Ita, in contrast to Guedes’ ethnographic site, is not a ‘dead city’ in the aftermath of several “fevers” (of cassiterite, gold, and dams), but is a community with some autonomy toward the larger commodity productions, albeit with access to these. I have not seen a pervasive complaint for the return of “movement’ in Ita as Guedes seem s to have encountered in his fieldwork. Economic activities are somewhat available for its offspring, even if that involves migration. So are fishing and extractivist occupations. But people do frequently complain about the absence of good-paying jobs, wage-earning professions. On the other hand, Ita is faced with the possibility of complete submergence if the Sao Luiz do Tapajos dam is built. The possibility of an incoming dam and the dispossession is heterogenously interpreted within the community. Some are experienced in previous “movements”, “fevers” and “rushes” but do not desire new ones, especially if

they would mean the loss of hard-won tranquility. Others desire movement, and, among them, if the dam represents such a thing, may it come. Of course, different

On the other hand, the community of Ita does provide some occasions of ‘fever’, such as the one’s promoted by local leaders with the support of the Prefeitura, or the Church. These are festivities with music, drinking and dancing. The parties can last for days on end, with several people staying up uninterruptedly, going from the dance floor to the beach to the bar to the music shows. Some have quite a remarkable indurance. And such celebrations can also happen informally, between group of friends who just earned a good amount of money. However, events like these have been diminished because of violent fight that emerged in the recent past. In fact, partying and festivities is quickly associated with the danger of violence, and organization is set to control excesses. And drunken men are treated with caution, if not disdain. Another occasion that provides “movement” in the community are electoral periods, in which candidates come to make comicios and make informal conversations, sometimes arrangements and promisses in local families’ houses. In both festivities and political comicios, people from other communities come, and these serve as important socializing events.

Cutting across several decades and the interstices of commodity-exploration cycles, Itá, along with many riverine communities, developed its own specific production regime: based on subsistence crops, cassava, manioc, beans, cultivated according to swidden variations over close-by, common, untitled land; on fruit-trees and spices grown in backyards; on selective sharing of forest-vegetable extraction; and on fishing. Each family hurdled to maintain its house and backyard, a swidden, and routes within the forest to extract vegetable resins, fruits, and game. These forms of collective and semi- or partially-collective forms of land occupation and resource use, encompassed as “traditionally occupied lands”, has been given diverse legal denominations in federal and state constitutions as well as public policies in all levels of governments in Brazil (Almeida 2011).

Intense-labor activities often called for collective community work, ‘*mutirão*’, or exchange of labor-time amongst kin or fellow men. From these activities, subsistence and segmented market commerce were largely provided. They were in turn complemented with commodity-extraction activities aimed for extra-local market insertion – most notably, gold-digging. Land was considered ‘available’ to take all around the community, untitled, and not attributed with commodity- or market-value. In rubber-tapping and in many other commodity-extracting activities, indentured labor due to indebtedness was common. The labor force was controlled by access to credit and commerce rather than by access to land. Subsistence and autonomous economic activity gained intrinsic value, especially in a country so marked by the experience of slavery. To be able to work for one-self, regulating one’s everyday practices and its alleged ‘tranquility’, is held in high esteem, while some complain of lack of job opportunities outside of fishing, forest-extractivism or subsistence farming. Ita shares in common with many peasant communities the value of one’s freedom to work.

Village, territory, land and property

As elder residents tell their history, the village of Itá began with three houses, then a single row of houses on the waterfront. It grew to shape a few streets parallel and transversal to the river. The work of taking down the forest, the making of street was done by dwellers themselves. Streets, soccer fields, cemetery, and other common areas are widely considered as *belonging to the community*, not to the state, as it was its own dwellers who opened them up (deforested it) and maintain them. Here one can observe the presence of a somewhat changed Lockean notion of property. John Locke argues in the *Second treatise* that individual labor is the source of value and of transformation of worthless nature into useful property (Locke 2003). He proposes that mixing labor to nature extends the domain of the individual body unto part of nature. Private property then would come from marking something that was held in common, making it distinct and imbuing it with value, making it exclusive, and a property of one's own person. This Lockean understanding of property is both confirmed and contested in Ita, depending on the object or practice under scrutiny, as will be shown below.

The Itá village area (or residential quarters) is not property-titled, only unofficial possessions, as it is on the state-reserved margins of a “federal river”. Private property of house terrains and backyards are widely recognized and respected among locals, though. Family houses are taken to be the private property of a family, but not of an individual. Whenever there are quarrels within a family, the destiny of a house and its terrain remain in dispute. A family’s house may be built with the cooperation of other families in day-labor exchanges. However, this cooperation does not contest the particularity of that house as belonging to one family. The basic unit of reference and of proprietorship, then, as it relates to residency, is the family, nuclear or extended, not the individual.⁶ The terrain of a family’s house is also seen as exclusive property of a family. Its fruits, trees, spices, shades, underground and backlands are seen as property of the family. But at its edges it may be used by others for passage and other activities.

Common areas within the village such as streets, soccer fields, cemetery, river margins and docking areas are seen as property of the entire community, or at least the part of the community who collectively labored in that endeavor. It may be considered public, but this is usually understood as different from state property. The labor that transforms nature to produce use-value thus, different from the Lockean understanding, is not understood as individually appropriated or conducted. It is frequently a collective enterprise done in collaboration premised in previous, specific social relations, often interacted with kinship ties. New constructions and interventions done by state agencies, specially local *prefeituras* (municipal) governments, have come to make matters more complex. Public facilities such as the public school and health post might be seen as belonging to the prefeitura or as belonging to the community – built by the prefeitura with money that was rightfully directed to Ita from Federal budget distribution. In this latter stance, collective property becomes mediated by an overarching right, coming from the federal state and its distribution of resources to smaller federal units. Within and around the village, there remains a considerable ‘community area’, untitled and un-encroached upon, which stands as a “community reserve” for further village expansion or potential sale for new-comers. This “reserve” was also once used

⁶ In cases where a member of the family is seen to betray the moral underpinnings of that social unit (as is sometimes seen in adultery), this unit of property might seem as broken, and thus property may be claimed by exclusive individuals.

for swiddens or bygone houses. It remains to collective deliberation and political organization to decide upon its destinies.

The relation to land property, or even the designation of discrete slots of land pertaining to an individual through legal attribution is a recent set of phenomena in the region. The agricultural areas of Itá mingle with the village, but are mostly located outside, on village borders, along in-coming roads, or along river margins in the proximities (up to a day's travel in motor boat). It was only in the 1990s that this agricultural land around Itá came to be officially titled, mainly due to state programs for the "regularization" of land property in the Amazon⁷. Some individuals and families in Itá obtained titles and maintain their lot. Others sold titles after obtaining them. Others, yet, didn't bother to clear up a slot and register it; they became landless, sharecroppers, or non-propertied extractivists (of palm-hearts, for example). This has brought inequalities among village dwellers, although inequality there is a polemical issue (they do concur that all in Ita are rather poor, and no rich or 'big' people live there). However, property and formal land-titles became a larger community-issue in the twenty-first century. From 2000 to 2005, the meso-region of the Tapajós witnessed an increase in logging, cattle-raising, and, more importantly, soy cropping. This is epitomized by a wave of *grilagem*, or land-grabbing, that swept all around Itá, and the Tapajós in general. It is acknowledged that there is no longer 'available' or public land (in non-conservation units and parks) around the village. All has been taken up by farmers coming from southern Brazil, with many incidences of violence and death threats, even if with local-contracting and participation. Amidst this land-grabbing tide and 'regularization' policies, some Itá dwellers were impelled to define their land slots outside the usual perimeters of the community, areas which were relatively free for mostly anyone to extract plants or make a swidden in the past century, creating intra-communal conflicts between alleged proprietors and trespassing extractivists.

In these more recent attempts to obtain a legal land slot, Ita dwellers have gone out in the river in their canoes or small motor boats, into small tributaries of the Tapajos River, and searched for an adequate, unoccupied piece of land or forest. In the absence of a claimant, or in negotiation with neighboring claimants, one chooses a space for *his* slot⁸. The contemporary process of slot demarcation is usually done by making a trail that circumvents the slot. The size is commonly 500m by 2Km, a size used in by the INCRA governmental program of land-reforms in the Amazon.⁹ The criteria for belonging and property is not the labor over all of the terrain (which would be illegal due to deforestation restrictions by law); a trail circumventing the slot, a few swiddens, and periodic surveillance would do the job, plus the effort of spreading the word around, and making the tenure recognized by fellow villagers and neighbors. (An alternative not easily or cheaply available is to bargain with local INCRA officials and receive

⁷ The latest and most notorious governmental program is called Terra Legal, introduced by the Federal government within President's Lula mandate. The region had been target of different efforts of disciplining of territory and land. With the Transamazonian and Santarem-Cuiaba roads, land reform lots as well as conservation parks were designated in Ita's proximities. In between 1970s and now, different efforts were made to clarify and define land property in the Amazon. This has been a theme of enormous disputes and investigations.

⁸ This is indeed a gendered, masculinized endeavor, and ultimately to be registered under one individual male name. Interestingly, the privatization of property may have meant a larger male control over resources and means of production (see also Abu-Lughod 1990).

⁹ This program was initiated in the 1970s under the dictatorship, whose slogan was to "bring landless people to land without people". Many of the slots of land designated by this program near Ita had no access to by road until lately, or were appropriated by large proprietors, causing violence against peasants, forced disposessions, judicial disputes, and governmental intervention after sustained protest.

formalized land tenure, but this is prohibitively costly for local dwellers, and is mostly an option for land-grabbers from the ‘South’). Here an impetus to search for a Lockean *terra nullius* is identifiable, but only as an emergent feature of an enclosing situation coming from outside and above. This enclosing, though, is coming under the auspices of an environmentalized governmentality, in which environmental laws are pressed, and mostly alleviated by big economic and political bargains (corruptions, crimes, negotiations) between large proprietors and government agencies. Small aspiring proprietors such as Ita dwellers have a strong sense that they must not deforest a whole lot, and must keep within a notion of legal limits. Plus, the legal deforestation limits offer enough for subsistence crops under family labor. Taking down forest, save itself making a circumventing trail around a land slot, requires large efforts. As we can see, if in the Lockean conception of property the proper working of the land would be required, here some transformation of a forest is required for a property claim or value within the community. In an environmentalized governmentality, this must not be done in order to risk all of the property’s value for its low income laborers. The delimitation of property is only possible – it must be noted – by the official recognition of property set from above, by the state and corporate capital making land a commodity in the first place. For some decades, this commodity has had to be, in a high proportion, forested.

Most of these new land tenures are not yet legally recognized, though. Overlaps are usually resolved by negotiations or drawbacks in face of threats. However, the recognition of these tenures in form of exclusive and individual property is often defied, especially by those who seek to extract products from the forest. Some palm-heart extractivists from Itá itself will go into others’ claimed slots and cut down *açaí* palm trees in order to sell the palm hearts. The self-proclaimed proprietors protest the invasion, basically with five arguments: 1) the *açaí* is in their land and should be for their use; 2) the *açaí* can give fruits annually, in value much superior to its one-time cut-down palm extraction; 3) The standing *açaí* is good for the environment and feeds animals and game; 4) the *açaí* serves as a savings-account, and should be available to its owner when he is in need of money; 5) cutting down *açaí* is illegal and in doing so one is prone to be denounced to the authorities.¹⁰ The alleged invaders, in response, claim that that forest land previously had no owner, that it belonged to everybody, and that it is available to whomever enters it and extracts what he may. If the alleged owner hasn’t extracted its resources, it should be available, especially for those who do not have land. This claim, though, is not commonly made open – it remains as a sort of ‘hidden transcript’, although sometimes publicly argued (Scott 1990).¹¹

From these hidden transcripts and open debates on property, forest and rivers, we can see conceptualizations of the relation between community, labor, nature and property being mobilized according to opposing interests. These conceptions and practices contrast to the Lockean argument. As Mehta (1999) describes, Locke is mainly identified with secular or anti-Adamic political views; Nature and Earth are seen as worthless materials in themselves, and redemption comes with the enclosing from the common. For Locke, "even though the earth was given and held in common, neither the reception

¹⁰ The illegality of such extraction in fact serves as a threat to supposed invaders. To the threat of denunciation by the supposed proprietor, the invaders contest by responding with sabotage (untying the proprietor’s canoe in the middle of the night, ripping their fish cages on the margins, stealing pieces from their boats – ‘everyday forms of resistance’).

¹¹ Besides land properties are the rivers, understood as an open territory to all of the community to use of its resources. To be very brief, the river is comically dubbed as the local *fridge* for its easy access and availability for anyone to quickly obtain food, if not selling produce. The river is also feared for its strength and power in the waterfalls and rock formations, which have caused the death of many locals. For lack of space I leave out the debates on fishing regulations, registrations, welfare, and disputes.

from God, the holding, nor the fact of its being common has any individual, social, or political significance" (Mehta 1999: 125). In his theory, labor is an expression of individuality and precedes commonness. The earth as commonality – as America symbolizes for Locke – is a vacant space. Nature is simply not a constrain (not a fecundity, majesty, symmetry, or threat). No collective identity in experience, no local commonality is previous to contract, for Locke. For centuries this view has also been predominant in state, corporate and settler imaginaries of the Amazon.

In Ita, it is arguable that Christian views prevail in the conception of labor's relation to nature. Nature is seen as made from God, at his will and sense of perfection. It is also something to be careful about, feared in occasions. Nevertheless it must be changed, labored upon, and its evils taken care of. Nature also has an intrinsic value as it is seen to produce much by itself: fish, game, fruits, palm trees, available for man at some ease, many claim. Thus, in Ita nature is not worthless material, the forests and rivers are very much respected for their productive fecundity. The Lockean sense of the need to labor the *land* to produce private property is in contestation: the trespassing palm extractivist may mobilize this argument, as he argues he saw no property, only forest with available resources for him to labor (cut down) and sell as his property; the attempting proprietor of the land may argue in his favor that he chose a slot, and must keep a big portion of it with preserved forest, including palm trees, and that he has thus entitlement to their fruits (fruits which he might not altogether deny to a fellow extractivists). Anyhow, property has to be negotiated and sometimes fought over in community relations. It is also mostly reinforced by communitarian relations, and not some understanding of natural right. Exclusive and commerciabile property of land, in fact, came as a state initiative imposed from above in Ita. The legal titling and commoditization of land has brought Ita a world apart from the Lockean idealization, in which previous property, if left idle, would cease to be a property of one's labor. Now, land has entered a game of restrictions and scarcity.¹²

¹² Another feature of Locke's theory is that Nature is sentimentally inert, so that no emotional attachment or political identity stem from it. According to Mehta, an "implication of Locke's view is that by imagining nature as a physically and emotionally vacant space, with no binding potential, he makes all but conceptually impossible to articulate the origins and the continued existence of distinct political societies or nations" (1999:129). Thus, Locke's normative simplicity cannot explain nor guide transformation in relation to territory and boundaries. Contrary to Locke, Machiavelli's notion of sovereignty is very much attached to a specific territory. The prince, notes Machiavelli, must be well versed in the nature and terrain of his bounded subject unit (Machiavelli 2003:50-72). The sovereign prince, though, has no immanence from the terrain or its subjects, and embodies a hovering, external command (Foucault 1978:91) as well as secondary disciplinary powers. In Ita, the local political structure could not be described in such terms. Rather, instances of political deliberation emerge from social relations and kinship structures embedded in its particular territory. Dian Million reminds us that Indigenous culture or religious practices are very much connected to place and land, in contrast to "universal religions", which do not pose attachment to any particular place on earth (2013:116). In Itá, despite a majoritarian display of Christian religions ("universal", then), religiosity acquires a specific connection to territory, in the festivities that mark the coming together of neighboring villages, in the cultivation of a local saint called *Guabiraba*, in the respect toward buried family members, and even the collective designation of the "Community of Ita". Foucault demonstrates how the anti-machiavellian literature on the 'art of government' was much of a Christian reaction to Machiavelli, and which posed the immanence of government from the family to convent, to state (Foucault 2004: fourth lecture). Itá is partially a contemporary manifestation of this Christian endeavor to govern, but based on a 'community' as congruent to locality.

Uday Mehta reminds us that "territoriality is, at least – but nevertheless crucially – emblematic of a distinct political identity, and hence not surprisingly it has served as a marker of a people's sense of autonomy, especially when that autonomy has been denied or compromised by imperial or statist power" (Mehta 1999:130). Military conquest, matrimonial alliances, language, ethnicity, geographical delineation, and various factors other than contractual preferences of private property owners have had effects in political identities and communities, through affects and emotional attachments. This is the case in Ita, where a sense of private property is ensconced in other collective relations which limit it to certain spaces and practices, in a constant negotiation, but under pressing governmental technologies to "regularize" land within the region.

Ita's territory predates the constitution of private property of land within the community, and develops alternatively to this normative notion deployed in the Amazon from above. The sense of private property was present in the unit of a familial house and its terrain; a collective/community exclusive property over a surrounding area, and a series of sections of the forrest available for Ita's dweller to rotate swidden cultivation, with no centralized control nor exclusive private access to parcels land. Thus, there is a gradation and intertwining of private property with common/open land. In fact, most of Ita's territories is constituted by negotiated and collectively recognized modes of property which are neither completely common nor exclusively private, but are premised in kinship and neighborhood relations. Alfredo Wagner Almeida terms these practices and uses as 'specific territorialities', which have come to constitute vibrant social movements and demand special forms of legal designation of "traditionally occupied lands" (Almeida 2011). In Ita, despite political mobilizations and collective and partially-collective uses of land and resources, I have not yet observed claims for differentiated land titles of non-private features. These territorial and social relations give rise to much of political mobilization and contestations outwards and within the community, as will be shown in the next chapter.

Dictatorship and State interventions in the Tapajos

The complete decline of rubber trade and incipient exploitation of gold in the Tapajos broadly coincided with the military dictatorial regime installed in 1964. As we could see from Robert Murphy's account, Ita and its region were largely devoid of public services and welfare. With its modernizing and nationalistic view, the regime's slogan at the beginning was "Security, Sovereignty, and Development". The Amazon Region as a whole was long regarded as an empty land, to be eventually occupied, 'colonized' and transformed into proper national economic territory. The military regime perceived that if it didn't act, that territory might be occupied by foreign or subversive forces. With a strictly homogeneous national ideal, the Amazon was to be occupied and its inhabitants transformed into 'Brazilians'. Such views were not new, by any means, but the rhetoric gained practical strength. The dictatorial government projected and executed the construction of large dams, the establishment of a special economic zone in Manaus, and the construction of several roads.

Most relevant to the Tapajos regions, was the construction of the Transamazonian and Santarem Cuiaba roads. These intersected and traversed thousand of kilometers previously inaccessible territory. These previous 'shatter zones' of refuge became interconnected by efforts of modern machine deforestation and massive-scale work force mobilization by the modern state (Scott 2009). Several new

military bases were installed, including an army base in Itaituba. Both roads were to receive settlements of landless laborers and farmers. The government's motif was "land without people to people without land" (Campbell 2012). Both the Transamazonic and Santarem-Cuiaba roads are relatively close to Ita, only a few kilometers away. This facilitated Ita's access to the city of Itaituba and elsewhere by land. However, poor road maintenance is a hindrance until today, and the city, only sixty kilometers away is reached in three-hour drive, if the road is not completely eroded or flooded by heavy rains.

On the other hand, the 1970s witnessed the emergence of large-scale environmentalism in Brazil. The Transamazonic Road was to be environmentally compensated by the delimitation and protection of the first Amazonia's National Park, across the river from Ita. This impacted the community in two meaningful senses: first, several communities located within the designated Park were evicted, and part of them moved to Ita; second, the Park prohibited any game, fishing, and extractivist activities, severely restricting the community's access to resources. The Brazilian government was first felt in the region as a strong, external, coercive and repressive agency. Families were removed from their previous locations with negligible compensations, and encroachments or incursions into the Park for vegetable-extraction were criminalized.

In the Tapajós region the gold-rush reached its height in the 1980s, and the population was increasing exponentially, with incoming immigration, together with regional urban centers sprawl. The state apparatus remained rather precarious, and the social configurations are often compared to a 'frontier' situation, or, in the commonsensical, media presentation, like the old American 'West'. State protections and guarantees of rights were largely absent or inoperative, as they largely remain today.

Itaituba grew rapidly, as the main gold-rush hub of the mid 1980s. Its airport registered more daily flights than any other in the country – almost all private planes owned by recent-made gold patrons. More than 600 airstrips were spotted in that municipality (by then the biggest municipality in the world, with 165,000 square kilometers – In 1991 it was dismembered into 4 municipalities).

Homicidal gold-related conflicts were common, mainly amongst work colleagues, competitors and disaffectionates. To this day, disagreements, antagonisms, disaffect, and conflicts carry the language of death. Not only murder, but various tactics of contention were cultivated over the years in patron/client, boss/contracted-labor, and co-worker/competitor relations. These are: sabotaging motors with salt or sugar; arson to green fields and machines; flattening tires, letting boats lose in the middle of the night; spoiling one's produce, ripping fishing nets or cages, dislocating landmarks, and so on. Safety, then, is sought by maintaining good relations, resourcing to community-intervention and kin-relations. Much of disagreements are solved locally, by informal council or negotiations and arbitrations. It is not desirable to maintain animosity, which could backfire in several ways. Today there are police stations within a two-hour drive from Ita, and even so local conflicts usually not mediated by such institutions, except in special occasions.

During the dictatorship, state incursions in Ita's region were coercive and disciplining, but restricted to domains of its own strategic interest or megaprojects. The daily lives of peasants were little altered or intervened by the state beyond territorial disciplining. No enhanced health and educational facilities were provided until very late into the 1980s.

In Brazil as a whole, rural workers and peasants were the social classes to suffer the most from the lack of governmental services and welfare, and the most to be persecuted by the dictatorial regime as a whole. While urban workers had a national minimum wage, no such thing existed for rural workers. Autonomous peasant organizations were forbidden, repressed, and in some cases, exterminated (Martins 2010). Similar postures were adopted toward indigenous populations.

The military dictatorship was a moment of 'high modernism' and large-scale development projects purported by an authoritarian regime and technocratic ideology. Nature and natural resources were more than ever in governmental technologies in Brazil until then subsumed to instruments of measurement so as to produce 'legibility' to the state, in order for it to be controlled (Scott 1998). It was during the military dictatorship that several dams were sought to be built in the Amazon. The main electricity-generation companies were nationalized and brought under concerted national, state-led planning (Oliveira 2007). Amazonian rivers were surveyed and their hydropower capacity determined. Some dams were built. However, most, as the ones in the Madeira, Xingu, and Tapajós Rivers were to remain as bureaucratic projects for decades.

The dictatorship had an out-put legitimacy. It was able to remain in power as long as it provided good economic results, made possible by high productivity, growth, and repression of the work force (Kohli 2004). However, in moments of international financial crisis, it opted to resume growth with heavy foreign borrowing. Ultimately the strategy did not work, as financial fluxes toward Global Centers proved to be of long-term. Before the economy collapsed, while political opposition gained momentum, the regime began a transition toward electoral representative democracy (Kohli 2004).

Democracy and governmentality

The 1980s in Brazil witnessed a double transformation: on the one hand the transition from a dictatorial regime controlled by the military to a democratic with universal adult franchise; on the other hand, a systematic economic stagnation and high inflation stemmed from profound financial crises. In 1985 the first civilian president was indirectly elected by the parliament, as well as a constitutional assembly. In 1988 the Federal Constitution was approved, plenty of social and economic rights, collective rights, and robust civil and political rights, including instances of direct popular law-proposals and consultation. Albeit, the Brazilian state was in fiscal crisis, and had very much lost capacity to implement policy or provide services which had been granted as rights (Haggard and Kaufman 2008). All-out rights were formally confirmed, but not implemented. The Constitution designated as the 'Citizen Constitution', or a 'programmatic constitution', would remain a promise of ever distant fulfillment.

The formally designated citizens were to exercise the right to vote and directly choose their representatives in municipal, state and federal levels, for legislative and executive branches. The popular vote became a necessary means for political representative's careers which were previously appointed by the military regimes. Direct electoral democracy creates the formal equivalence of one person-one vote for the definition of representation within government. Electoral democracy than creates conditions for the assertion of legitimacy from the consent of an enlarged group of people. The modern state, will attend these people, though frequently not as citizens, but as population groups, by means of governmentality.

Population is a relatively new concept within governmental technologies, as identified by Foucault (1978:65-7); different from the units of individuals or homogeneous bourgeois families of the liberal or contractualist political theory. Population is a descriptive and empirical concept, differentiated and heterogeneous, not normative. It is a biological aggregate, an empirical collectivity, describable and enumerable for the sake being target for *policy* (Foucault 1978:21). Population

“is assumed to contain large elements of ‘naturalness’ and ‘primordially; the internal principles of the constitution of particular population groups is not expected to be rationally explicable since they are not the products of rational contractual association, but are, as it were, pre-rational. What the concept of population does, however, is make available for governmental functions (economic policy, bureaucratic administration, law, and political mobilization) a set of rationally manipulable instruments for reaching large sections of the inhabitants of a country as the targets of ‘policy’” (Chatterjee 1997:170).

Governmentality is the form of power distinguished by Foucault which deals with population. Population is amenable to the ‘flexible braiding of coercion and consent’ of this form. It is a peculiar form of power, distinct from sovereignty or discipline (Foucault 1978). Governmentality, as Foucault conceives it, is three different and interconnected elements. First, it is ‘an ensemble of institutions, procedure, analyses and reflections, calculations, and tactics that allow the exercise of the *very specific, albeit complex, power that has the population as its target*, political economy being its major form of knowledge, and *apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument.*’ Second, governmentality is a tendency toward the pre-eminence of a *type of power called “government”* which lead to series of specific governmental apparatuses and knowledges (*saviors*). Third, it is the result of a process by which Middle Age’s ‘state of justice’ became the ‘administrative state’ and was gradually “governmentalized” (Foucault 1978: fourth lecture, pp.108-9, emphasis added).

To be noted, governmentality does not exclude other forms of power. Rather, it becomes a predominant form in a composite ‘edifice’ which correlates ‘sovereignty’, ‘discipline’ and ‘governmentality’. The modern regime of power remains composed of all three dimensions. The governmentalization of the state has been decisive in the creation of the modern state form, since the eighteenth century. This form of power is applied by the deployment of instruments, tools, incentives and motivations. With the expansion of the capitalist mode of production, so was governmentality able to expand to unprecedented domains, characterizing the contemporary neoliberal state.¹³

The type of power called ‘government’, or governmentality, is the ‘conduct of conduct’. For Foucault, just as power implies some sort of resistance, so does ‘conduct’ imply a ‘counter-conduct’ (Foucault 1978:196). In both pairs there is co-constitution, co-presence, opposition, and dynamic interplay which constitute a field of deployment and exchange of tactical elements. The oppositional pairs do not create a closed system, nor do they open the terrain to sovereign subjects of history who determine subsequent courses. However, it does reintroduce an element of ethics within fields of power previously theorized by him. According to his perspective, power relations are internal to social relations, but there is no clear agent or voluntary social action of change once normativity is internalized by subjects. The

¹³ A key difference in the neoliberal regime is the characterization of the individual no longer an element of production, but of consumption (Foucault 1979).

conceptualization of a field of force relations helps to put complex phenomena in perspective, and relate seemingly disparate elements in a field.

In response to governmentality, people are devising ‘new ways in which they can choose how they should be governed’ (Chatterjee 2004:77). Governmentality deploying its instruments of conduct among population is met by the counter-conduct of the ‘politics of the governed’. In seeking to conceptualize distinct political forms in postcolonial democracies, Partha Chatterjee draws

“two sets of conceptual connections. One is the line connecting civil society to the nation-state founded on popular sovereignty and granting equal rights to citizens. The other is the line connecting populations to governmental agencies pursuing multiple policies of security and welfare... I am calling it *political society*” (2004:37).

Civil society is the bourgeoisie’s counter-conduct to *raison d’etat* (Foucault 1978), while ‘political society’ is an inchoate counter-conduct to postcolonial capitalist governmentality in conditions of electoral democracy. ‘Political society’ is a conceptual appraisal suggested to describe empirical realities that cope with the modern state yet do not conform to (Western bourgeois, secularized Christian) principles of civil society.

Partha Chatterjee subscribes to the analytical disadvantage of the term ‘civil society’ in its uncritical and ubiquitous usage, which ranges from one extreme of completely depoliticizing ‘civil society’ to the other of blurring of distinctions with the political altogether. This conceptual overstretch ruptures the normative principles on which civil society stands – the institutions of modern European associational life. Rather, he prefers to employ the term in its restricted classical sense, similar to what Marx called *bürgerliche gesellschaft*, or bourgeois society (Chatterjee 1997:168). Civil society would thus mean a domain of social relations characterized by association of individuals in conditions of autonomy, equality, freedom of entry and exit, deliberative decisions, rights and duties, contracts and legality. In India and other postcolonial countries “the domain of civil social institutions as conceived above is still restricted to a fairly small section of ‘citizens’” (Chatterjee 1997:169).

Political society makes claims on government, not on constitutionally defined rights and laws. They strive through temporary, contextual and unstable arrangements arrived at through direct political negotiations (Chatterjee 2011:219). I argue that Chatterjee’s distinction of political society is useful to describe politics in Ita, even if it requires a few adjustments, which have been proposed by Menon (2010).

Governmentality and political society in Ita

As we have seen, the village of Ita is composed of household which never obtained official property titles, nor a collective title in the form of ‘traditionally occupied lands’. It stands on the margins of a ‘federal river’, which constitutes one more situation of lack of formal land ‘regularization’, as perceived by the Brazilian government. None the less, Ita dwellers have received government services and even facilities within the village. They are not, however, treated as proprietors, nor do they engage

the state as bourgeois civil society on most occasions. Rather, they operate in forms of political society and much of their daily political operations can be termed politics of the governed.

Until today, settlers and communities in the Tapajos region claim there's a lack of basic state presence, and land regularization, agricultural credit, cultivation-techniques training, health programs, education, and roads (Campbell 2012). In fact, a large part of state-apparatus incursions remain of disciplinary form – exemplary actions and small spectacles of police (occasionally as aid to oligarchic landed interests), army, or environmental guards. These absences, of course, are familiar complaints in many places in Brazil and around the world in varying degrees and forms.

In spite of conspicuous omissions, several public services have been partially or completely introduced in Ita over the last three decades. In 1971 the community had already received a diesel-electricity generator. In the 1980s, the community was contemplated with a public school. In the 1990s, the federal government created 'retirement' entitlements for rural elders, which occasioned in considerable change with systematic in-flows of money to communities, and presumably, in generational relations. In the same line, supplementary family income was provided for very low-income families who sent their children to schools. Hospitals were created in Itaituba, and health posts in other parts of the municipality.

In 1998, Ita received a direct-line connection to constant flowing electricity coming from the Tucuruí dam in the distant Tocantins River. A local politician, *vereador*, claims it was due to his pressuring of city and regional planners in Itaituba to extend the provision of power lines to benefit Ita community. This *vereador's* constructed narrative, true or not, refers to a form of service provision associated with government authorities and representatives which began to emerge in this particular part region.

No longer was it the rubber patron's duty to provide for the sick, nor was the Church sufficiently present to care for these things. True, the local church group together with kinship structures and solidarity did exert a lot of 'community work' and actions that could be translated as 'social security', but the state and government began to be present to an extent it had not been before. Selective services of education and health, which Robert Murphy (1960) identified as available to farther away Mundurucu Indians in the Cururu by virtue of the Mission or the state service in the protection of indigenous people, now were being deployed to non-indigenous populations in the mid-Tapajos. It was state sponsored governmentality sifting in, selectively and reluctantly, mostly pulled by community dwellers in their demands for local attendance.

Several of the public policies implemented in Ita were not devised in national and international forums. Neoliberal management of populations in Brazil have a complex genealogy which stems from World Bank global policy shifts since the 1970s (Zibechi 2012; Sanyal 2014) to social movements and Church activists (Martins 2011). It has had different shapes and results. As was mentioned above, the Federal Constitution of 1988 stated a series of civil, political, economic, and social rights. It was rather a programmatic constitution, and kept as such for the diminished state power of implementing universalistic public policy after the financial and fiscal crises. In this wake, social services and policies

were designed to attend to emergency situations of extreme poverty by means of financial distribution to families.

After a few years of President Lula's coming to power in 2003, the public policy program called Bolsa Família gained world-wide notoriety for drastically reducing absolute poverty, diminishing levels of malnutrition, decreasing social dependency from patronage, by a minimum income for those with income below extreme poverty levels. This has also boosted demand-lead economic growth and the expansion of the domestic market, with consequences in production strategies, credit lines, etc. Often seen in a positive light, it is also criticized by conservative appraisals which claim to defend work ethics, or attacks on the electoral wins it has provided the Worker's Party. Another aspect of Bolsa Família is overlooked. It has to do with the management of populations. In fact, besides the positive results of the program, a fundamental feature of this governmentality is the insertion of previously marginalized communities into a market. Short of a universal right it is a targeted policy toward a stratum of population. It is not a constitutional right, but an executive decree, which could be suspended by will or fiscal/macroeconomic imbalances. Neither is it fettered proportionally to inflation.

One of the most salient political outcomes of Bolsa Familia coupled with sustained minimum wage increase and growth of formal employment was that, by impacting the lives of a vast majority of poor Brazilians, it has helped to consolidate an electoral shift, providing sequential electoral wins and a hegemony by the Worker's Party (Singer 2012). Social movements have faced the challenge of having their 'bases' supporting the Worker's Party government notwithstanding the government's policies oblivion of the movement's agenda, sometimes to worse performance than previous neoliberal governments (such as in land reform). This proved especially critical to some rural social movements, like the landless laborers movements, the movement of those affected by dams, and the maroon movements.

In Itá this Bolsa Familia governmentality has apparently manifested itself in the large electoral support for the PT government, but also in a diffuse sense of trust in government and the reliability on income transfers. A profound change issued in the necessity to maintain self-sufficiency production. Now, in absence of cash income from commodity-related labor, people can count on a minimum cash in-flow. This has augmented the commerce within the community, and helped maintain a dependency on an the market circuit, incorporated into modern consuming habits, and aspiring social ascendancy through consuming – even if local economic activity remains devalued in market terms. This has increased consumption levels and alleviated hunger in the community, it is claimed.

The same federal government advances the hydroelectric-dam project that would completely submerge all of the community's lands and drastically affect, if not dispossess, all its means of production and ways of living. Some of Ita dwellers accept such dispossession due to their already dependency on market consumption, their aspiration for money-transfers, their hope for 'movement' and jobs, and their belief that compensation would be provided.

Bold opposition to the dam proposed by the federal government is fragmented by high expectations of financial compensation, rehabilitation, and indemnification. Itá dwellers will hardly be incorporated within a higher-value economic activity. To be sure, from the point of view of capital accumulation, Itá is sitting on top of valuable resources; dwellers represent obstacles to development to be removed, and not workers to be incorporated within increased-productivity activities. They are to be dispossessed of their means of production and ways of living. Anyhow, they must still be nurtured with

welfare as populations, as ‘spare humanity’ that cannot be done away with in a liberal, bio-political order, and can even be fed to create value in domestic market consumption, precariously as it may be.

In the new configuration of biopolitical regimes, there is growing sense that basic conditions of life must be provided to people everywhere – if not by a national government, then by others –states, international agencies, NGOs, and even corporations (Chatterjee 2011:213). It is considered unacceptable that those who are dispossessed of their means of production or livelihood should have no means of subsistence. Thence, primitive accumulation is pushed by coercive means but also pulled by consensual or inductive forms of reversal or attenuation of consequences of primitive accumulation.¹⁴

In Brazil, Bolsa Familia is officially imbued with the idiom of citizenship and economic development rather than human development. It potentializes populations to integrate in the market economy. A suspicious effect, though, has been the facilitated dispossession and concentration of means of production, as Ita seems to exemplify. This case shows augmenting proclivities towards what Taiaiake Alfred calls “post-modern imperialism”, or government from within communities (Alfred 2009:25-6).

Democracy and political society in Ita

Democratization had large political effects in Itá. Here legal property of land occupation is not recognized nor are universal rights guaranteed, the condition of electoral democracy has created a particular form of what Partha Chatterjee has termed ‘political society’ (1997).

In Itaituba’s municipal government, local representatives’ careers began to depend on popular votes. And votes were to be found in population groups demanding government services and benefits where these were conspicuously absent, such in the rural communities of Itaituba. Competing candidates’ and office-holders’ territorialized electoral strategies were devised so as to guarantee votes. These strategies were mostly built upon two empirical conditions: first a territorial and population group which nurtured a sense of community (at least in rural localities by then), and; second, building upon a sense of the candidate’s social relations and commitment with the community.

This had a particular history in Ita. One of Itaituba’s vereador candidate was married to a woman from Ita. Using this relation, he garnered votes in the community for himself and for the mayor he

¹⁴ In a different setting and note, Dian Million, asserts that Human rights and humanitarianism that protect Indigenous rights are fungible, transitive moments, where "liberal western politics and capitalist economies moved from a disciplinary colonialism to a normative welfare-state "caring capital" that has now dissolved into our present, a well-integrated neoliberal multicultural biopolitics." (2013:8). This case bares some resonance in Brazil inasmuch as precarious recognition or reinforcements of rights are substituted or mingled with neoliberal policies that value the individual reintegration into the capitalist economy, and not guarantees of social collectivities. But in lieu of addressing the healing of indigenous populations, the case with riverine people in Ita is to address the lack of public services and effective economic and social rights. The case of Ita poses the severance of imminent dispossession of their means of production, while alleviating poverty by meager income transfers.

supported. In exchange for votes, it was expected a candidate would provide benefits, government services, or small compensations to the community. Constant, systematic or universal provision of services and welfare were certainly non-existent (such as health and education), nor were they credible outcomes to be expected specifically from a vereador. What was more commonly and perceived as a local politician's duty was to provide ad-hoc services to the community, such as gift work instruments, send an ambulance in case of emergence, or, most notoriously, help pay for funerals.

Hence local legislative and executive representatives began to build territorialized and community-strategies to guarantee votes. These politicians would pay a minimum wage to someone perceived as able to deal with community demands and harness votes in election times. Locals say politicians approached them in the city and offered them work as his *assessor* (assessor), in exchange for a wage or benefits, including community benefits. These would be 'community representatives', although initially not elected. From the community's point-of-view, this assessor became a connection to the local state institutions, and a means to provide some public services. The assessor was a contracted arm of the government within the community. He was only valuable to the politician if he was able to mobilize votes in elections and help to keep demands within the community minimally satisfied. From the communities point of view, the assessor was a resourceful person, one to which you can demand disparate services and attribute your trust and future vote according to satisfaction.

The assessor himself would become a mediator between services and demands, and he could chose to support other candidates. The assessor was both a political fixer and a local leader. In fact, it seems that assessors are simultaneously respected for their leadership and resented because of their connection to politicians. His community connection meant that, as an assessor, he had value within this specific community and limited use value for a politician elsewhere.

The services local governments provided were far from enough, the community came to realize. Office-holder began to be distrusted. And of course, competitive elections provided different candidates seeking votes and local supporters. After several years of working with the vereador married to a woman of local origin, Ita's Church leaders decided to support another candidate for Ita's sake, they claim. The family of the vereador's wife continued to support the politician, while Church leaders began negotiations and support for other candidates. Electoral and political differences eventually emerged into conflicts over dam-related issues, as we will see.

Itaituba had grown astonishingly in the 1990s-2000s, and the once significant vote bank of a demographically stagnant or declining Ita no longer provided valuable electoral leverage. The already-deficient state services in the region as a whole were particularly felt in a 'forgotten' and 'non-moving' Ita. Government services such as health and education, for which there was a federally determined distribution of resources based on population quantum were introduced. Ita received a school and a public health center. Overtime, the health center was depleted or under-staffed, even temporarily shut down. Families from other settlements upstream or in-road began to send their children to Ita so they could attend school. However, the school also became deemed insufficient. There is no permanent high-school in Ita, only a rotation of teachers who come inconsistently, and for whom it is often necessary that the local assessor picks up in the city, or articulates with the education secretary that a teacher may come.

An assessor has several duties, which are informally set, but widely recognized within the community. He takes individuals from the community to register for identity cards, social security

numbers, cash their pension checks, register voters, etc. He is called when a dweller is sick to take them to the hospital if the local health center does not suffice. He deals with the electricity distribution company of the telephone-line company when their service is down, which happens constantly, especially over rainy season. The assessor also articulates team-searches if a community dweller goes missing for long, on the road, forest or rivers. He receives gas from the politician so he can do all these things. And he usually receives a wage. This financial relation to politicians is a high income relative to local standards, and is seen as a trump, but also with resentment and envy, depending on the observer's relation to the assessor. I say *he* because so far I have not heard of a woman being an assessor. Additionally, an assessor discusses who will get government jobs within the community, such as school janitor, school vigil, occasional street cleaner, school cook, and even (some) school teachers. The discussion is made by several people, and it involves complex negotiations of needs, merits, connections, kinship, abilities, and politics. A decision is somewhat consensual, but it is backed up and transmitted to local politicians by the assessor. The assessor's is thus a position of significant communal power. It channels the meager government funds within the community to provide services and jobs in an otherwise low-income economy.

Assessor is also a position which demands a lot of work, patience, disposition at any time of the day, and exceptional social and emotional abilities within the community. An assessor must know his way in local bureaucracies, political parties, but mainly he must be attentive to the community, or at least the part that supports him and his candidate/politician. He is often demanded by his own kin and friends to intervene on their behalf, and hear complaints daily. He is a political fixer, but one which does not receive money from the local population, but receives from government (or its derivatives) to help government serve that community. This is sought in a community which does not have systematic access to the diverse governmental benefits which they desire or are entitled to.

The assessor-politician relation is one of partial dependency and partnership, each with his interests and limits, but dependent on trust. By no means is it free of contradictions and conflict, neither free of competition amongst politicians and their assessors. The politician-assessor relations are not like old patron-client relation of the rubber trade Murphy described. Neither is the politician-community a direct or patron-client relation. I would argue this form of mediation between community and governmental technologies is precisely what Partha Chatterjee has termed 'political society', as we have seen above (Chatterjee 1997).

The assessor became the 'community representative', although such arrangements were usually informal, and perhaps in some cases illegal. Surprisingly, this new political form of mediation has helped reshape Ita's community form in significant ways. Although before it had a moral, social, and notional form of community, based largely on Church institutions and practices, this mediation created a more explicitly political and representational form of community. Through this new political form, several economic, social, organizational issues would be channelized, especially those relating to the state and local government, but not only those, as the examples above illustrate.

This form of political society is clearly not a bourgeois civil society form. Through informal, flexible arrangements, it helped create representational structures and channels of demand and service deliverance, as well as political mobilization and votes. The selection of assessors became intricately

related to kin-relations and the formation of clusters of community leadership, which would come to play an important role in contemporary dam-politics.

It was the formal electoral democratic regime which helped consolidate political society relations in the representative system of local government in Ita. Through political society, Itá managed to guarantee a public school. A health center would come only in the late 1990s, with no doctors whatsoever and only intermittent nurse services until 2013. With the growth of Itaituba, Itá lost its populational leverage in election decision, together with its power to tilt public policy toward itself.

However, the community leader/assessor was not the only form of political mediation exerted in Ita. The Catholic Church remained as a strong presence. It is not the only Church in the village, to be sure, but it has been prominent in organizing events, seminars, and mobilizations about diverse regional issues. This is done in part by different *Pastorais* of the Church. The historically important *Comissao Pastoral da Terra* (CPT) has been present in the region for many years. It advocates and mobilizes communities and judicial means to guarantee social justice, specifically rights of peasants and rural workers to land. It was priests and activists associated with the CPT who first brought the news to Ita that plans to build a dam and submerge the whole community were under way, in 2006.

Subsequent mediation initiatives between Ita and larger political issues, specially to do with the dam project has included advocacy NGOs, social movement alliances, rural worker's unions, public prosecutors, and environmental agencies. Among these are institutions which do belong to civil society in its strict sense. These alliances, coalitions and multiple memberships problematize Chatterjee's claim that political society is a domain completely separate from and parallel to civil society.

In the twenty-first century, Itá attempted to build its own institutional representative arrangements, building on its experience with the leadership/assessor which had come to constitute a medium of community representation and reproduction. This attempt received help from social movements, the Church, and others. This legal, formal, coded form of community representation and mediation may be an emergent approximation to civil society forms. Not least, even within the political society form in Ita, many demands made were for legal rights guaranteed in the Constitution and infra-constitutional norms. Many of its claims are backed by legal texts, and legality is often voiced or pondered in its actions. Martins (2011) points to the fact that rural social movements in Brazil have more often than not been 'legalistic', that is, making demands backed by law, or seeking court rulings in their favor.

Chatterjee conceptualizes political society as an agglomerate of rather temporary, contextual, unstable arrangements arrived at by direct political negotiations. They are mobilizations of population with the rhetoric of community. In early formulations, Chatterjee made the strong argument that political society was a domain entirely separate from civil society. Both domains were constituted by different actors, institutions and practices. While civil society is delimited to a very small section of the society, political society designates the dynamics of the majority of population in postcolonial countries. Civil society refers to the modern elite groups that are 'walled up within enclaves of civic freedom and rational law' (Chatterjee 2004, 4). Political society, in contrast, refers to populations such as slum dwellers, who are the targets of state policy and state control, who do not enjoy the modern state's recognition of the 'ethic of participation' that is the basis of citizenship, but nonetheless organize and petition the state.

Political society according to Chatterjee is constituted by practices that are essentially political but look uncivil. Its violent acts are usually strategic, not insurgent or revolutionary. The material of political society is population groups, attributed with the rhetorical and moral character of community. Its institutional forms are still unclear (and may include parties, movements, non-party political formations). It is an abnormal field of exceptions, seldom stable, where maneuvers, resistance and appropriations are possible, and positions are conjunctural. It is a distinct field of both political demands and legal administrative technology; it is an emergent and inchoate response to changed conditions of governmentality, with demands for welfare, benefits, services and exceptions. It does not offer a narrative of transformation or revolution, but points to shifting historical horizon of political modernity.

Ita's case of political society form, its particular relations and procedure coincide with a number of critiques pointing that civil society and political society are not separate *domains* (Gudavarthy 2012, Corbridge et al 2013), but *styles of political engagement* (Menon 2010). Chatterjee himself accepts this direction within the conceptual distinction as a fruitful methodological dictum for empirical research (Chatterjee 2011).

Ita's political society forms have proven to be relatively efficient forms of dealing with local governments so as to obtain differential services and benefits within their constituencies. It has also been an efficient means of helping to register the local population into federal public policies. In doing diverse mediation and service duties, it has helped reshape and give new meaning to the 'community'. With this came realignments of power and inequalities. However, Ita has negligible leverage toward the federal government if contained in local political society in the same manner it deals with local government. This has to do with the scope of constituencies and electoral weight. When it comes to issues such as Federal Parks, Roads, and, most importantly, hydroelectric dam issues, this minute political society form gains thrust only by taking part in larger regional alliances of social movements, in national social movements of people affected by dams, protest and negotiations in Brasilia, with regional NGO advocacy and expert committee groups, indigenous and collective rights campaigns, Church campaigns, establishing relations with public prosecutors and taking part in collective legal actions. All of these actions have helped reshape Ita's political society configuration. Many of its active participants have gone to different parts of Brazil, interacted with a wide range of social agents, engaged in pedagogical experiences and have even become integrated into larger movements. Some of these larger associations are somewhat conflicting among each other, and Ita's members are aware of that. None the less, they accept support and refuse interaction based on its own deliberative and strategic dynamics.

On the other hand, Ita's local political society form can also give way to intra-community disagreements, realignments, forms of power and resistance. Such have been consequences and causes for the decision for Church leaders to shift support from one vereador to another. The vereador whose wife is from Ita, has kept her families support. Through this family and others, he has also designated other assessors, which became internal rivals to Church leaders as 'community representatives' and later as 'community president'. This rivalry was only made definitive and irreconcilable with the issue of the dam under full sway over the community, as will be shown below.

For now, it is important to note that Ita's popular politics is inhabited by political society forms, but also emergent differential forms, perhaps morphing into civil society. Anyhow, it entered into

allegiance, and overlaps with, civil society forms in different instances. It has reshaped the community form to a political meaning, causing unprecedented forms of local power and resistance.

In the roughly centennial portrayal of Ita's transformations presented until now, we have seen an initial form of patriarchal control of the economy by rubber patrons, who controlled credit and commerce and exerted important community functions, but who were themselves subordinated to a larger corporation who owned Ita's road access. With the decline of the rubber trade, local work became more self-reliant and free, had to amplify activities of self-subsistence and unmediated or less-mediated community life. Small commodity trade was promoted. With the gold-rush, new influx of population came, as well as new opportunities of gaining wealth were pursued, avidly, it must be said. Roughly in the same epoch, the Brazilian state made its first systematic and permanent disciplinary incursion into the territory of the mid-upper Tapajos River. At once constructing large roads, establishing land reform lots, creating a National conservation Park, and forcibly evicting Ita's neighbors (some of which became its residents). Together with incoming large farmers and land-grabbers to the region, state-sponsored land regularization programs have caused previously commonly held or 'free' land to be privatized. This has increased gender control of means of production, and caused inter-family inequalities of land access within the community. During the dictatorial regime, but mostly after democratization, the region began to receive governmentality apparatuses significantly, even if deemed insufficient. These have provided basic education, minimal health services, and acted to integrate Ita more into consumer commodity market – helping to relief hunger and other maladies, even if causing more dependency. Electoral democracy in local rungs of government has created conditions for an interplay with informal 'community representatives' and assessors, who mediated between the territorialized population and the state, channeling demands as well as services and welfare. This local form of 'political society' has been interacting with previous religious, kinship and authority structures so as to produce realignments of political allegiances, resource distributions, and larger political connections, with increasing local stakes.

The subject of politics and disputes over the construction of a hydroelectric dam that would submerge all the riverine and peasant community of Ita has been postponed. This was to contextualize the forms of power and possible resistances at play in the community, as well as to avoid 'ethnographical refusal' which misconstrue local agency (Ortner 1995).

With the trajectory presented, we can no longer theorize whichever resistance to dams in Ita as a complete insurgency against the state (Guha 1983), a peasant rebellion (Wolf 1969), a desire to evade the modern state form and its government (Scott 2009), or even as opposition to modern capitalist modes of production in agriculture (Scott 1985). Rather, the predominant mode of political action seems to be of 'political society' (Chatterjee 2011), negotiating counter-conducts to governmentality as means for survival and maintenance of an honorable community. This political society, however, does overlap somewhat with civil society forms, and does give sway to 'everyday forms of resistance' and 'hidden transcripts' (Scott 1985, 1990).

Dam dispossession and parochial popular politics

Discursive affirmations of resistance toward external domination by state and corporations have missed important features of localized political agency against dam construction. Recent attempts to theorize such phenomena have overlooked crucial dimensions. Levien (2013) suggests there is a specific ‘politics of dispossession’, distinct from labor politics, but also from peasant politics as have been theorized in social sciences. He suggests the process of land dispossession itself shapes targets, strategy and tactics, organization, social composition, goals and ideologies of anti-dispossession struggles. His theorization is based on cases in India, and it is dependent upon the premise that it is that state that spearheads the process of dispossession. In Brazil, as will be shown, dam-dispossession is only indirectly dealt with by the state. Rather, dispossession is dealt with by corporations who designate who will be dispossessed and what s/he is entitled to, along the process of Environmental Impact Assessments the corporations themselves administer and pay for (Hochstetler and Trajan 2014).

On the other hand, Hochstetler and Trajan provide a statistical analysis and case study to conclude that “both community and state actors (in the environmental licensing agency and the Ministério Público) are more likely to challenge development projects if they can find allies in each other or other civil society actors... [and that] larger projects are also more often challenged” (2014). My ethnography confirms these broad claims made by Hochstetler and Trajan, and reject Levien’s model/theory of ‘politics of dispossession’. Blatant in both accounts are ethnographic refusals, which, not to be disciplinarily parochial, mean the underplay of culture, context, the dissolution of subjects, inappropriate theory of agency, and a refusal to enter the write the lived worlds inhabited by those who undergo such processes of dispossession or environmental conflicts (Ortner 1995). Here I present a modest attempt at describing ‘ethnographically thick resistance’.

Conflicts over land, timber, mining grounds, and extractivist and fishing territories, have marked the fringes of capital-accumulation and population dispersion into indigenous lands. The absence of state authority in the expansion of capital’s activity and everyday organization of life in the region has meant very corporeal prices to pay. Capitalist expansion and accumulation was done over the dying bodies of dozens of thousands of laborers, opening the way for incipient state presence and eventually some ‘liberal’ freedoms.

Andre Dumans Guedes suggests that, contrary to capitalist expansion, frontiers and great transformations, phenomena such as *return* of capitalist activities, are not given much attention by modernist social science, which emphasizes moments of supposed *ruptures* and discontinuities, of encounters of previously impervious entities:

“Without problematizing here this idea of an advance of “frontiers”, we could say that the concern over what happens in them [frontiers] reveals more about the interest in studying the advance and expansion of phenomena supposedly definitive of “our” society – commodification, monetization, deterritorialization, civilization, modernization – than about the specific reality of those who are “steamrolled” by it. Consequently, those who have already been “deflowered” by these phenomena – having been reached by them in the past and today finding themselves distant,

therefore, from the frontline of the “frontier” – seem incapable of offering the social scientist much in the way of attraction as an object of analysis” (Guedes 2014:81).

In consonance with Guedes’ suggestion, one needs to recognize the character of Ita and its position in face of the prospect of a dam not as a complete rupture from the past, but an experience that has some resonance with Ita dwellers’ experience. However, this resonance must not be prejudged, but identified in the experience, aspirations and conceptions of the social agents themselves.

Many men give up jobs related to gold to return to Itá and work in alternative activities such as fishing, cropping, or commerce. However, until today the best paying activities are still considered to be specific positions within machine operations in gold-digging. Second comes the talented and persistent fishermen, and then followed by public employees in the local school and health center, which are much desired positions, with stable, (relatively) high incomes. To work for a local politician may also provide a wage or small material gains. However, many Itá dwellers complain about the lack of good-paying jobs available, and the meager welfare income many receive.

In fact, it was with a feeling of relief that a couple of dozen men from the community started to work temporarily for some geologic-prospection company a few years after the turn of this century. Without a clear idea of what exactly the drilling of holes and other operation, they continued to labor for making ends meet. There was a diffuse talk of possible dams in the region since the 1980s, when the first studies of energetic viability were carried in the basin, but it seemed a remote, if ever coming, horizon.

In 2006 a Catholic priest, active within social movements and social advocacy in the region came to know of the plans to effectively build dams in the Tapajós as part of the recovered investment-planning and infrastructural-development of the Brazilian government under Lula, in the Growth Acceleration Plan (PAC) frames. He then made a non-often visit to the village, and broke the news that the companies working in Itá were to provide data for the building of a dam which would probably dispossess everyone there. Detailed information was largely unavailable, but consequences were deduced from previous experiences with dams shared by the Movement of those Affected by Dams and by recent projects in Madeira and Xingú rivers. The whole of Amazon basin had begun to be circumvented by dams. The priest had learned this from social movement and policy networks, and in turn warned Itá leaders and those close to the Catholic Church. These were subsequently given the opportunity to insert themselves in regional social forums, seminars, and community gatherings, to be informed and discuss what was being sought for the region by the federal government and private initiatives. These meetings put Itá leaderships in touch with several social movements and associations, NGOs, advocacy groups, public prosecutors, activists, intellectuals, and dam-affected communities from other rivers. They soon spread the word, with the aid of videos, magazines, bulletin reports and narratives. Since 2008, large annual meetings were held in Itaituba and Itá, garnering contact amongst social agents. A broader political awareness sprung within Itá as to the meaning of the dam and other “development” projects sought in the Tapajós and Amazon

regions. A majority of dwellers, though, would not participate in meetings for different reasons, even if aware and opposed to the dam.

In 2009, the Brazilian National Electricity Agency approved an inventory for the construction of seven dams in the Tapajós basin. Four of them were taken up in the PAC2 plans, to begin soon. São Luis do Tapajós dam is the biggest of them all, and the fourth largest dam in Brazil once built, producing over 6.133MW. Regional and local articulations began to gain momentum in response. A few local Itá families, though, especially one with ties to a local *vereador* (municipal legislative representative), would advocate in favor of the dam as a means of jobs and development.

The lack of transparency, information or assurance about any prospects of the dam, especially the absence of dialogue between distant planning-commissions, corporations and local communities, opened the space for all sorts of speculative thinking about the dam-prospects and its outcomes. Two powerful strains of information started to circulate: the promises of ‘development’ in economic growth by drastic interventions in an allegedly rather forgotten corner of the country; and the registers of a history of degradation, trouble and poverty creation. These strains of information were interpreted locally into differing futurities, or visions of the future – paramount to the political outcomes of the social-environmental conflicts.

The Breaking of a topographic landmark: citizenship and sovereignty

On a summer afternoon in 2010, Itá was typically hot. Two technicians working for a company contracted by corporations drove into the village, lifting dust, making noise, and naturally calling peoples’ attention. No one in Itá had or could afford a car by then. The only four-wheeled vehicles to pass by were trucks adapted to transport people twice daily to the city, 3 hours away, or an occasional public service-related vehicle. A private car was a rather odd ball, and still catches peoples’ attention. The two technicians parked on a street one block away from the river and began to labor. They were installing a bronze piece on top of a cubic concrete base. Community dwellers didn’t know exactly what that was for, and some were quite irritated by those works. On the one hand, outsiders were again showing up in big cars and working on their streets, which some of them had built over the decades without government assistance. The streets were a form of collective, community property, as was described above. They were made from the sweat of their own labor, trees cut down, roots removed, branches burned, earth smoothed, flooding damages contained, bridges laid out. On the other hand, that service was probably making the means for the building of the dam and the complete submergence of the village.

The technicians putting the landmark in place worked for a company contracted by the corporations doing the dam assessments. The employees didn’t ask for local permission to do so. When asked by locals, they said it was the ‘president’ who told them to do it. A local inquirer thought it had been the ‘community president’ who had allowed this, and went to him to complain. The community president then said he had given no permission and did not know what service was being done, and was irritated by the attribution of his concession for the works. The local-inquirer then went back to the technicians, now accompanied by more fellows. They confronted the permission for the works, and the technicians said it had been the President *of Brazil* who gave them permission to do the job. Angered by

the technicians' alleged arrogance, men gathered around them and impeded any further work, or even exit from the village. Some locals then affirmed a widely held feeling: "well, the Brazilian President doesn't give those kinds of orders here; it is us who decide what can be done in our community" (recall the streets had been made by Itá dwellers, not by public authorities, and a feeling of possession is present). By a sudden suggestion, hammers were quickly brought to the area, and the landmark was destroyed by several dozen men. These local men then circulated the community and destroyed any object, water-measuring rulers, etc, used for the dam-studies. The technicians were allowed to leave the village, and promised never to come back. Anger had given way to action and enjoyment.

One person associated with a dam-supportive *vereador* called him up. The vereador then went on to a local news channel to make a live public accusation of 'vandalism', crime, and 'terrorism', allegedly perpetuated by Itá community leaders (all kin-related between themselves) who opposed his policies. He also filed a police report in similar terms, asking for investigation. The next day, social movements and advocacy groups came in public to support actions taken by Itá dwellers and denounce the politician's accusations. The accused leaders were granted lawyer's defense in the police investigations by a social justice and rights organization; they were also given right of response in the news channel. On TV some Ita leaders asserted their 'right to defend the community' against adventuring-technicians and big dams. The politician then came out and concurred to the community's rights.

The breaking of the landmark episode gained local, regional, and national notoriety for Itá. However, it was interpreted in different ways. By some local politicians, supporters of the dam, it was an act of vandalism, against the region's development. By many of the community members, it was merely the assertion of their right and esteem. By social movements, it was seen as a brave act of resistance to capital in the form of a dam. One can also see it as an act of momentary insurgency. In the interstices of conflicting constitutional rights and lack of specific regulation for dam-related policy, in a region of public-policy deficit, the negotiations of legitimate conduct was decided by a moment of force and assertion. Thus, within legal indeterminacy, communal sovereignty as self-determination was exercised. Following the breaking of the landmark, with popular consultation, a decision was made to forbid any further research within the community. The political form of corporate capital had lost this battle, for a moment.

This episode is significant not only for its repercussion, but mostly because it revealed as much as it problematized the understandings of authority, citizenship and sovereignty in the community's territory. Ita is a locality largely built by its members. Recognized as such, the community exerts a great means of authority within its traditional territory. Ita is at least a couple of hours drive away from the nearest police station, if one has the immediate motorized means of transportation available. The state is selectively, if precariously present in education, sometimes in health care, and, in the last few years, with Bolsa Familia welfare cards. Official election ballots are not missed, though. Roads are publicly maintained with difficulty. Most community issues are resolved internally; state authority can be dodged or bent in an everyday basis. This makes up for the condition of limited self-rule in the community, which can make some individuals unwelcomed or unauthorized. In fact, it would be hard if not impossible for an individual to maintain residency there without the approval, informal as it may be, of his permanence. People are called into a collective life that entails norms and power relations. The self rule of Ita could appear at first as remainder of the classic ideal of citizenship (Pocock 1995), a projection of the Greek *polis* ideal, in which citizens were heroically rulers and ruled. As such, if we follow Pocock, we could

expect exclusions from the restricted status of equal citizens. But Ita is also immersed in a modern state jurisdiction, where a citizen is caught in series of laws and regulations not necessarily at his grasp to be remade. In this world of law, the meaning of the political is changed from self-determination. A citizen may become equated with the *subject* of a law and of the rulers and magistrates empowered to enforce those laws. The difference between the classic citizen and the modern subject is that the former ruled and was ruled, the latter could go into court and invoke a law that granted him rights, immunities, privileges, and even authority, but he might not have any ado in the making of the law (Pocock 1995:38-9):

"*Legalis homo* is perpetually in search of the authority that may underlie determinations of the law; the need to close off this search within the human world may induce him to locate sovereignty whenever it seems to have come to rest, in prince or people, and there are circumstances in which sovereignty may be lodged in the assembly of the citizens, so that the individual as citizen comes again to be what he was in the classical ideal, a coauthor of the law to which he is subject. But there are so many other possible locations of sovereignty, and so many ways of determining and discovering law other than by the sovereign's decree, that even when the subject is a member of the sovereign, he is unlikely to forget Charles I's dictum that "a subject and a sovereign are clean different things" and may ask whether he is the same person when ruling that he was when being ruled" (Pocock, p.40).

The non-systematic presence of the state in the quotidian of Ita opens space for many forms of local authority. Arguably ubiquitous in modern nation-states, shared authority over the conduct of people is nevertheless bound to acquire particular local forms in this community. Sovereignty may appear to have 'come to rest' in diverse moments, shifting as they might be. In these occasions, as Pocock puts it, the ideal of classical citizenship expresses the need to explore this road back to the heroic simplicities of the *polis*.

The breaking of the landmark in Ita was one such moment when a large part of the community's male members exerted determination of rule over what was to be done in their territory, in an improvised but accorded, insurgent manner. Verbally and physically, the alleged authority of the Country's president was defied. In sequence, all of the signs that represented the advancement of the hydroelectric dam and the disappearance of the community were also destroyed. This was at first addressed as criminality by an opposing politician. The accusation of criminality then revealed the threat of the state subverting the community act of determination. Much more of local authority could be compromised if criminalization proceeded. It became clear that the state could in fact intervene much more drastically in their lives, calling sovereignty to itself, and disciplining their conducts. In response to this accusation, the breaking of the landmark was defended on two different registers: one on the rightful authority over the streets built by the community; the other on the right to protest and resist external impositions in the absence of due process of information, consultation and mutual agreement. The first rests on a notion of right to property, the second on social and political rights. Both justifications in terms of rights operate the logic of placing the determinations of the heroic citizen into a set of laws that define rights to things, thus reinserting the aloof citizenship back into a *Legalis homo* jacket (Pocock 1995:41). A peculiarity of the case is the justification in terms of *rights* – rights to things that may be contested to be of state authority (i.e. streets, common areas, and territory). Surprisingly to a positivistic-legalistic point of view, this justification was publicly accepted by the politician, denouncer of the act. This, we may deduce, was an unspoken act of political society negotiation and temporary treaty. The following decision of the community to bar any

further research was done in terms again of a self-ruling citizenship, a moment of determination, but in the deliberate production of a territorialized norm. This may also be dubbed as sovereignty – a defining instance of authority that determines a rule to be operated (Pocock 1995:40).

Here we may discuss the meaning of sovereignty, and a few of its iterations from modern political thought to contemporary Indigenous political critique. Machiavelli's notion of sovereignty was founded on a discrete territory, and implied a relation of externality of the sovereign to its territory and subjects. Locke, on the contrary, posed the foundations of political society in a contract premised on the natural law of individual property. Both of these politico-philosophic stances posed a conquering ethos to the modern state over Indigenous populations, the first by denying immanent moral justification for sovereignty, the second for disqualifying Indigenous practices as foundations for political society and proclaiming Indigenous land to be *terra nullius*. This political thinking thus informed juridical and informal state practices in the Americas, helping to shape the settler state.

Thence, land was gradually conquered and populations subsumed. Even traditional treaties such as those of the Iroquois were to be ultimately ignored (Wallace 1946). Indigenous people reacted to acts of conquest and subsumption into settler states by proclaiming sovereignty over territory, bodies and ways of life. The affirmation of sovereignty here enters the intellectual realm with a self-conscious political project, not unique in relation to Western philosophy in this respect. The particularity of proclaiming actual sovereignty to Indigenous peoples subsumed by settler states, though, departs from a common juridical trope in Western political thought that argues that sovereign is the deliberative stance that has the objective power to decide over the suspension of law, over the exception, over a state of emergence, and, ultimately, over life. Such trend in Western political thought is depicted by Foucault (1978:263) in the theory of *coup d'Etat*, which gains a contemporary expression with Schmidt (2006), and a older genealogy in Agamben (2003). This political conception lies in an objectivistic and military appraisal of the possibility to decide over life and overpolitical and social organization.

Indigenous political critiques claiming sovereignty have departed from this notion in several ways. The core argument is the advancement of self-rule and autonomous self-determination of Indigenous polity. As Alfred (2009), Million (2013), Simpson (2014), and Walia (2013) have argued, this goes much beyond, and cannot be confounded with self-determination and self-government strictly within settler state governmental apparatuses. Thus, Taiaiake Alfred calls for a no-submission and no-cooperation with settler states and for a resurgence at once spiritual, cultural, economic, physical, and political, to undo settler colonialism (2009). Dian Million specifically points to the danger of self-determination being subsumed into state-determined biopolitical programs of healing: "In this context, well-being, physical and mental health, is articulated as a key component for human development within self-determination goals at the same time an autonomous self-determination is left vague and poorly defined" (Million 2013:6). She adds that in Indigenous political activity, "whatever powers of self-determination that can be eked out must be fully cognizant about what it means to exclude women, other gendered peoples, or our relationship and responsibilities to what sustains us, because government arises from these relations" (2013:180).¹⁵ Finally, Million questions any absolute sovereignty, of a nation that

¹⁵ Million writes as an "Indigenous feminist" with responsibility to Indigenous people, but doesn't write *about* indigenous people (2013:25-6). Her appreciations, she claims, are "suggestive rather than definitive" critiques (2013:180).

would be sovereign enough to determine to kill a section of its population identified as an enemy. Thus, human rights do pose some sort of limit she perceives as positive, as possibilities to advance claims for self-determination (even politically). A somewhat similar strategy is proposed by Walia, in as much as she advocates for Indigenous and immigrants rights as citizens, but is very careful not to limit these claims for citizenship as a self-rule to be contained within exclusivist polities such as nation-states. Rather, her claim is for universal, anarchist self-rule with the undoing of borders (2013) of different kinds. The claim here is not restricted to Indigenous self-rule, but is also premised on it. As much as Alfred frames his project as to undo settler colonialism, he also locates this in the remaking of global political orders.

All of the above claims for sovereignty depart from Machiavellian and Lockean conceptions of sovereignty, as well as from the theory of *the coup d'Etat* or power of emergency theories. Their analysis stem from the understanding of polity as emerging from different practices of kinship, solidarity, spirituality, relation to land, and power over life. In this sense they, share a critique of sovereignty that was put forth by the 'art of government' literature opposing Machiavelli. The polity, or government, has to be permeated with moral objectives.

The Indigenous or anarchist political critiques above extrapolate, intellectually, the critiques and claims for rights and self-determination made in practice as was shown above to be the case in Ita. This is not surprising due to the fact that Ita does not identify as Indigenous in an oppositional way to a settler state. In fact, they celebrate national holidays in standard patriotic ways, even organizing local parades on Independence day. Many of the dwellers aspire government jobs or even representative posts. Their claims for self determination are done in selective occasions, and come from a historical construction *vis-a-vis* state apparatus as much as within social norms. The Church may not be overlooked here either, as the 'community' form is a normative stance in a link of governmental (spiritual and social) scales and processes. So the momentaneous determinations of sovereignty or authority within Ita do not come to be addressed openly or coherently as either a project of sovereignty, nor of complete self-determination. Much of the political activity and organizational form of the community has been recently reconfigure precisely by the channeling of demands on and welfare benefit of state governmentality. In other words, much, if not most, of everyday politics in Ita is of the 'politics of the governed' form – counter-conducts to governmental technologies.

The prospect the complete flooding of its territory, however, has enticed much political and imaginative dynamics, open to different political possibilities. As will be shown bellow, the self-determined norm restricting dam-related assessments within the community would come to be corrupted by capital empowering previous intracommunal feuds. Alongside, came exhibitions of powers of exception by the Brazilian state in the shape of military demonstrations and operations in the Tapajos.

Futurity as a cultural fact

In an important essay, Reinhart Koselleck (2004) defines futurity as a specific vision of the future, implied in a historicity, or vision of time itself. He makes a basic distinction of modes of *historicity*. His thesis is that between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries "there occurs a temporalization of history, at the end of which there is the peculiar form of acceleration which

characterizes modernity”. Within the time frame stipulated by the author, different *futurities*, or visions of the future, are presented: timelessness, prophecy, prognosis, and progress (or philosophy of historical process). As Koselleck presents us, there are two opposing historicities: one of timelessness and *prophecy* located in the sixteenth century, and a second one of *progress* and modernity, consolidated in the eighteenth through nineteenth centuries. In between these two poles is an early modernity, where politics operates through *prognosis*.

The rational forecast, art of prognosis, cut through Machiavelli, and dealt with finite possibilities and probabilities. Prognosis remained within the dimensions of political situation (Koselleck 2004:19), and the immersed politician could only make a moral judgment in terms of the lesser evil (ibid:18), as human nature was deemed wicked by definition, according to Machivelli (2003). The resulting three basic, different historicities are explained by Koselleck:

“*Prognosis produces the time* within which and out of which it weaves, whereas apocalyptic *prophecy destroys time* through its fixation on the End. From the point of view of prophecy, events are merely symbols of that which is already known. A disappointed prophet cannot doubt the truth of his own predictions. Since these are variable, they can be renewed any time. Moreover, with every disappointment, the certainty of approaching fulfillment increases. An erroneous prognosis, by contrast, cannot even be repeated as an error, remaining as it does conditioned by specific assumptions” (Koselleck 2004:19, emphasis added).

“The prognosis implies a diagnosis which introduces the past into the future. This always guaranteed futurity of the past (...) the political existence of the state remains trapped within a temporal structure that can be understood as static mobility” (Koselleck 2004:22). Thus, progress comes as a rupture: “It was philosophy of historical process which first detached early modernity from its past and, with a new future, inaugurated our modernity” (ibid: 21). An “audacious combination of politics and prophecy” constitutes the philosophy of progress: “Progress occurred to the extent that the state and its prognostication was never able to satisfy soteriological demands which persisted within a state whose own existence depended upon the elimination of millenarian expectations” (ibid: 21). The future contained within progress possesses two, ground-breaking qualities: first, an increasing speed, second, an unknown quality.

These three historicities, or futurities are embedded by Koselleck in three distinguished and sequential historical periods. As conceptualizations of history by social agents, they become explanatory of political and social agency in each period. We may use those distinguished conceptualizations of time, these three historicities to reveal crucial aspects of political agency in contemporary Brazil. However, the trick is, then, that in the particular social situation of Ita all three futurities are present. The succession apparent in Koselleck’s essay would be deceiving. Further, the different futurities are sometimes operative in the discourse and actions of the same person.

During the first half of the twentieth century, the notion of an unlimited, unhindered human progress was largely undermined by the experience of wars, crises and catastrophes. In the aftermath of the Second World War and during the construction of new world order, progress was reincorporated, tamed as it were, into state policy and economic enterprise. This new configuration of futurity is called

development. Development, this creature of progress subsumed back into prognosis is still a crucial idiom of politics and capital in the Global South, including our parochial case of Itá.

In the endeavor to analyze futurities in Itá, Arjun Appadurai may complement our concepts by suggesting our consideration of “future as a cultural fact, that is, as a form of difference” (Appadurai 2013:286). As such, future is shaped by imagination, anticipation, and aspiration. Future “is not just a technical or neutral space, but is shot through with *affect* and with *sensation*” (ibid, emphasis added). The author’s conceptual connections may not provide a robust theoretical system, but help us further interpret the situation in Itá. Interestingly, Appadurai points to the cultural shaping of “capacities to aspire” and its unequal distribution, and ideas of the good life. To him, a missing piece in anthropology is the “effort to understand how cultural systems, as combinations of norms, dispositions, practices, and histories, frame the good life as a landscape of discernible ends and of practical paths to the achievement of these ends” (2013:292). That is, Appadurai point to a developmental futurity of subsuming progress back into prognosis. Inasmuch as Itá could be taken broadly as one “cultural system” that gives place to opposed political stances and aspirations, one can associate different futurities also to different affects. Diverging affects activate ‘cultural systems’ differently, so as to create contradicting futurities. The affective valuation of the present configuration of life is put in perspective to future possibilities of a new configuration of life and its projected affective evaluation. In terms of political agency being explained by this filter, interests and affects are equivalent as motivations for a specific futurity. That is, interest may be analytically equivalent to affect so as to produce a political stance. A few cases of differing affects, interests, and futurities are presented below, in brief summaries of life-stories from Ita dwellers. These cases illustrate the different futurities made present as well as the contradicting political stances in relation to the Sao Luiz do Tapajos dam.

A present of prophecy, prognosis, and progress

As was mentioned above, the contemporary conflicts in Ita are constituted also by a multiplicity of futurities being conceived at the same place, and possibly even by the same person. First, let me describe at greater length the basic political stances, tactics, affects, beliefs and futurities of Roberto, the prominent fishermen and religious leader in the village. I will then briefly compare other people’s stance to his.¹⁶

Roberto is an active Catholic in the local Church. In his regard Itá “is a paradise” – with tranquility, fresh air, and peace. As downsides he mentions the high quantity of mosquitoes during rainy season, and lack of better education for his children. He is involved with community organization and willing to act in politics, sometimes mobilizing the idiom of personal sacrifice for the community, and including broader environmental concerns (of species’ survival, of trash treatment, and of deforestation). Roberto’s “biggest dream is that the hydroelectric [dam] does not happen”, and that he may live in Itá “until the end of life if possible, without having to fight with anybody”. Accordingly, without the dam, “there is much to be developed”: “a lot to be taken [extracted], *babaçu* fruits – if there would be a

¹⁶ All of the interviews referred to here were made in the summer of 2012. The interviewees’ names were altered.

company to buy it”, *cumaru*, more fishing, with “each one having its buyers and money to maintain his family, their education”; and the development of solar and wind power:

“God left us [things] to use and enjoy, but not to destroy. Man himself is the destroyer of nature and of his own life. If I destroy a forest, I am taking away many lives. I feel pity of striking a tree with a knife. We try to search for the best” (Roberto, 2012).

He makes good money from fishing, enough to get by with hard work. Doesn’t want to work for dam-related research companies and earn “dirty money”.

“The dam brings development only for the big companies. Work here is carrying metal, concrete, sand. People here don’t have studies for that. What can develop is the swelling of unemployed people in the city, with month-long lines to get a job. Companies are bringing everything from outside, the municipality stays just with the talk. Criminality, prostitution, and stealing. For us ribeirinhos [riverines], it will only bring loss, only backwardness. To them, we will live only off a basket of [welfare] food.” (Roberto 2012)

Besides community organizing, with its church and more political dimensions, Roberto partakes in social movements and public meetings. He doesn’t know of any case where a dam was put to full stop or was completely given up, however. He knows of cases where it was delayed. He thinks of the possibility of *empatar*, or to stop with physical impediments, the coming of machines used in the construction works, or to stop the public auctions for the power-plant developers. But how one can stop the dam is a frequent question he asks, without a clear answer yet.

He says he often prays after watching news on television. According to him, “we are living the last book of the Bible, the Apocalypse... a many wars of nations against nations...” If the coming of the dam will be a part of this, he is not positive. In his own words:

“I ask God: ‘if it is to fulfill your word, let it be fulfilled’. Because, never, who will be against it? And if it is not, I ask Him, if it is to be fulfilled... ‘if it isn’t, put Thy hand over these projects of destruction’. Because, you see, God gave us all for free, this air, this sun, these waters, these fish, these forests, for us to use, enjoy. And these people want to finish with the water, with cement, to block the river and finish everything. I always ask God, too. I struggle to defend, because God said that if we cross our arms and wait for it to fall from the sky... He says: ‘Do it for me and I will help you’. So I am doing my part. If I deserve to receive God’s blessing in these wishes, may it happen! If not, let him do His will. Because we [corrects], many say: ‘boy, that there [the dam] is a project by the government, there is no way out or against it!’ They are forgetting of God. Because, if it His will, it happens, if it isn’t, there can be the completion of the projects’ whichever works, but it doesn’t happen. First of all we have to put God in front, and then Man, right? (...) If the dam happens, it’s God’s will. If it is not his will, it doesn’t happen. By the asking of many, millions and millions of people, let there be more care for the environment, more preservation, for it not to happen... And on the other hand capital is talking louder, that it [dam] needs to be done. That if it is not, there’s no development, no improvement. It wants to break records (...), because the quantity of dams that exist in Brazil, right?, is still not the necessary to cover necessities. They could invest to make function those [dams] which already exist. Amplify. Tucuruí [dam, in Tocantins River] doesn’t function more than a third of its capacity. (...) What we have in this river [Tapajós] in terms of research, it’s to finish it all off. For the person who sits and analyses, and sees all that we have today and may not have later, it’s worrisome. (...) At least our part we have done. If God

not... if it happens and he believes it is deserved, I am practically consumed. If it's not to happen, let Him improve it and change courses, right?" (Roberto 2012).

Roberto's futurity is very much shaped by a prophetic horizon, marked by negative events and the Apocalypse. But he defies dam-projects and other issues in a complementary, prognostic way. He is determined to do what is good to the community, and by doing so, may be blessed. God's desires would be in sync with Roberto's actions in organizing and resisting. Salient in his word is his affectionate relation to Itá, its surrounding environments, his way of life, and the value of the (Christian) community. When his mother passed away in a city hospital, though, he decided not to bury her back in Itá, because, he argued, if the dam is built, it would submerge the local cemetery. Roberto and his wife also refrain from investing in home improvements or small-business amplifications, preferring to invest their diminished economy in something less-prone to risk of submergence.

Ivaldo, another of Itá's religious leaders, speaks of the "End of times" and Apocalypse. Instead of a Catholic he is member of the Assembly of God. Differing from the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God and the theology of prosperity, Ivaldo affirms that "prosperity" may come, but it is not "salvation". Some of his fellow churchmen do not see this distinction clearly, he says. Ivaldo is against the building of the dam. He speaks of the sadness that strikes him when he is working out in the fields, planting fruit-trees, and thinks that all will be flooded. Because of that, he is working less, he claims, and planting less trees. As an improvement for Itá, Ivaldo would like to see a good health center, better quality education, and a ball court. In his view, the dam comes from greed, and from the 'big ones' wanting to override the 'small ones'. For him, his way of opposing the dam is through prayer. He doesn't want to be overtly active against the dam because of his post within his church, in a community which according to him has two nuclei – one pro, the other against dams. So not to indispose himself with anyone, he doesn't want to get involved in debates or actions. He says that if he gets involved, he may "plant a little seed of bitterness in [his or others'] heart", and this would be bad for his religious and spiritual standings.

A member of the Catholic church participated in my conversations with Ivaldo, and later told me he agreed with most of what Ivaldo said, except about "remaining neutral", to only pray and not becoming indisposed with some people. In this catholic man's view, God won't do anything without someone's initiative – or else, when a person acts, God can support it. Roberto also contends that to mobilize oneself to guarantee one's rights is not an offense or aggressive/violent action to create bitterness.

So far, one can see that futurities enacted in face of the dam-construction may gain several prophetic features. Plus, they are shaped by a specific belief in God's wills and its relation to social agency, as well as social and communitarian affects. Religious beliefs and stance to affects determine the relation of prophecy to prognosis (political action) within that specific futurity.

More than thematic and deep conversations, the issue of God's will as related to the dam become verbalized in quotidian affairs. Women washing clothes on the river margins engaged in such arguments when a *crente* woman (of the God's Assembly) yelled out loud: "May God soon bless us and bring this dam about! I want to get out of here!" A catholic woman then answered: "This dirty business [the dam] has nothing to do with God! If you want to leave, you might as well just go!" We might say the *crente* woman had a prophetic vision of the dam, albeit one radically different from its framing within Apocalyptic times – to the contrary, it was the inauguration of a promised, new time of freedom and

success. It somewhat resembled the ‘theology of prosperity’ Ivaldo complained was common among his church fellows. The catholic woman who contested the *crente* by the river later gathered in an early-evening porch chat with colleagues. Collectively they mocked about visions of God being a “trash-collector”, to “go chasing after people’s mess”.

As counter-examples to these prophetic-cum-prognostic futurity stances against the dam, I will now show two cases. The first is of Tito, another prominent fisherman in the village; the second is the case of Daniel, a prominent gold-digger. I first met Tito when crossing his daughter’s backyard. He was living there while renting out his house for a contracted company to host its manager, employees and machinery. Later that day he approached me to show the beautiful fish he had just caught.

Tito was a lover of Itá’s reality, of the river and his profession, often smiling and enjoying his day-to-day. He had become know for catching huge fish in the waters nearby, making a 500 pound plus sale out of one fish. This was like receiving a whole month’s paycheck in one night. As one of the most successful fishermen, plus small business-owner, Tito fared well in terms of income, despite remaining fairly humble in his possessions. He is not considered a show-off or a stuck-up, like Daniel is taken to be by many. Tito declares to be against the construction of the dam, and knows well that it would mean a great amount of dying fish. Nevertheless, Tito rented out his house to contracted companies doing assessment for the dam. From his point of view, nothing can be done in Itá about this. It is an “issue of the big ones to decide, the research, the government, the judge, and public prosecutors”. There is nothing that the ‘small ones’ could do about it – be it articulating meetings, forbidding research, or engaging in direct action. The National park had been built despite everyone there; other dams are being built in other rivers... In the mean time, he was dedicated to advance his possessions in the city, to provide a house for his grandchildren, and to pay for his daughter’s college education. Tito is catholic, but did not frequent the local church on Sundays, declaring it to be because of the absence of a proper priest in the community. When asked if the dam had something to do with God’s will, he said he didn’t know. Neither did he associate it with the end of times. He hoped to be resettled in a decent place, and be able to continue fishing, perhaps even construct a fish-farm. Meanwhile, he had to guarantee a means for his family in the city. Here we see prognosis relatively independent of prophecy or even progress. With the memory of the action of distant state will pressing its orders in the region, nothing could be done locally to repel the dam. His alternative was to earn money with assessment companies, devoid of much affect.

Now our second case, a stance in favor contracted companies’ presence and pro-dam: Daniel. Daniel was born in Itá, and, since many years, works as a machine-operator in a far away gold-digging ferry. He earns what he considers to be the best salary in the region one could get with his lack of education (roughly two thousand dollars per month). Remarkably, Daniel has the most expensive house equipments in the whole village, resembling an urban middle-class residency, even if he has to work away from his family most of the year. He says he likes Itá, but is frustrated by the lack of opportunities there for his children. He wants them to have good education and earn a lot of money, to be able to consume the finest things. It doesn’t interest him to talk to Itá dwellers; he prefers to talk to “smarter, people who are *more*”. He believes the dam will bring about ‘development’, through jobs and opportunities. That the whole ‘village has to be drowned is unfortunate, but part of the deal’. He wants to be able to ‘join families at leisure in beach walk-ways in Manaus or Rio de Janeiro’ – that is the image of development Daniel foresees and aspires. He acknowledges that the whole dam issue might not be just, but that it is a good deal, an opportunity for Itá. He was initiating the geo-referencing of his terrain and its formal legalization

as his property, to ensure his indemnification when the village came to be displaced. Daniel was also initiating business moves in the city – investing in real estate in anticipation of population booming in search for jobs, as well as starting a speed-boat cooperative to work for corporate-contracted firms. Daniel's futurity is clearly prognostic and bent toward progress, with firm believe in a better future, and a higher affection for faraway places than his own home village.

Exemplified in the cases of Roberto, Ivaldo, Tito and Daniel, not to mention the *crente* and catholic women, we see different combinations of prophecy or progress with prognosis. These futurities are based on multiple affects, aspirations, memories, and imaginations. Their disagreements, though, become divided into two, basic levels. One is the position in relation to the dam together with belief in some sort of collective agency to stop its construction. The second, interrelated level is the immediate stance toward the entrance and permanence of corporate-contracted firms within the community's territory.

Such as I perceived the situational, political stances in Itá by mid 2012, rather than a binary distinction between those in favor of the dam and those against, I saw a wide variety of personal positions: First, there were those who opposed the dam and used varied tactics: impediments to dam-related research and assessment on the local level; involvement in social movements, advocacy organizations, attendance in meetings and information diffusion on broader scales. This entailed national meetings of the Movement of those Affected by Dams (MAB), and even direct dialogue with federal minister negotiated by MAB, in efforts to change national public policy and the amplification of rights. Second, there are those Itá residents who are against the dam but are not prone to political activism such as meetings and institutional engagements. They may be staunch militants on practical, local actions, open or covert. Third, there are a good number of people with no clear stance toward the dam, nor the research carried locally. Then, fourth, there are people who are in favor of private, contracted companies working inside or around the community for they provide jobs and opportunities such as rents, paying of food, cooked meals, and consumers in local commerce. Their stance toward the dam may even be negative, but they see no great promise in local action, above all, against activities which may bring money or surpass them altogether with the dam-construction. Finally, there are those residents who firmly defend the presence of contracted companies in the community, and believe the construction of the dam represents positive economic and social opportunities. Both the first and last positions described have connections to local politicians, and engage in institutional organization of some sort. They represent the biggest dispute within Ita's political society. All of the positions, though, are well versed in everyday forms of resistance, as well as show disposition, in some cases, for overt conflict, even though this is much avoided. These impinging conflicts have much to do with futurities and the multiplicity of contradictory narratives of the future, similar to a situation of crisis, as will be shown next.

Futurities in time of crisis

The perspective of the construction of a large dam and the flooding of an entire community's territory partially recreates the context of economic crisis such as Claudio Lomnitz (2003) describes of 1980s Mexico City. Although I have not heard the term 'crisis' while in the field, the dam project creates

a “serious impediment to the production of credible images of a desired future” (Lomnitz 2003:131), at least for a group of Itá residents. It is not clear, though, that this has brought a generalized “heightened historical sensibility”, or the “interruption of the pertinence of past expectations and experiences in the present” (Lomnitz 2003: 134). As we have seen, there is the emergence of other historicities, such as the prophetic, having a role to play in the interpretation of events. Anyhow, under the uncertainties and anxieties created by the dam project, the social situation has “increased the desire for narrative” (Lomnitz 2003:136) as well as the “desire for confidence and consistency” (Lomnitz 2003:138). The absence of a unified narrative – in conditions of lack of reliable or stable information – gives rise to personal and collective confrontations with ontological uncertainties. The dam moment is a time of crisis, which is simultaneously a *time in crisis* (Lomnitz 2003:145).

All of the community takes part in at least certain forms of suspension of social reproduction, or alters its reproduction significantly. For instance, families have halted the burial of their dead in the local cemetery, preferring to use a farther and dam-free cemetery in a neighboring city. Several families have suspended investments on home improvement or maintenance. Some people gave up constructing desired small businesses. In this sense, there are strong indications of a “sense of expropriation of the future” (Lomnitz 2003:139). On the other hand, some individuals see the moment as an opportunity of investing – literally of planting seeds, in some cases – so as to harvest compensations later (although this seemed an exception rather than the rule).

In a context of an impediment to credible images of that specific collective future, one can observe, and expect more of, “the suspension of normative behavior” (Lomnitz 2003:134). Tensions and conflicts were indeed emerging and escalating in Itá. At the same time, this represented delay in assessments and a general risk to the whole chronogram of the dam enterprise. To resolve this, new governmentality measures were deployed. Corporate capital realized one of the means for smoothening tensions was mediation, and the creation of a credible common narrative through dialogue.

Community politics and corporate mediation

After the breaking of the landmark, opposition to the dam in Ita had been made practical by the community-sanctioned restriction on any research done for the assessments required for the dam. The impediment of research was understood by the community as the feasible and tactical obstacle for the dam. By mid 2012, this tactic alignment of community resolution began to be broken when contracted research-companies began to offer money, rents, and jobs to community-dwellers to cooperate with, and lease their lots for research to be carried. The debate between access to the community and control over private land reemerged, and was resolved in the following terms: no research was to be done inside the community, but research companies could be hosted in private houses, contract local laborers, and sometimes transit through community areas. This created tensions, dislikes amongst community members, and radicalized oppositions between those against the dam and against the research for its assessment, on one side, and those who wished to make money from this opportunity and, in some cases, were in favor of the dam, on the other side.

Hauling over complexity, the tension between the nucleus of those opposing assessments-research and those who wished to profit from it became interpreted as those *for* and *against* the dam. Conflict was imminent and possibly explosive. In this moment of crisis and economic risk, the corporations responsible for the dam-prospects and assessment-studies contracted a human-relations and conflict-mediation company. This company's task was to inform local communities of all corporate (their contractors') initiatives, tentatively in advance of their effectuation – basically a public-relations function. Secondly, they were to establish 'dialogue' between contending parties within local communities, especially in the insurgency-prone Ita. Their tactics was to minimize conflicts, and make community relations manageable outside of both confrontational and legal-judicial realms.

Uday Mehta shows that the intervention of political power in the British Empire was justified by liberal thinkers as if it would synchronize temporalities – put 'backward' people on the track of 'progress' (Mehta 1999: Ch.2). Dian Million (2013) argues a similar process is happening in the neoliberal context, except by virtue of *narrative*: governmental initiatives privileging the spelling out of individual narratives, only to subsume them into one and same governmentality path. The narration of the process of dam-building, 'information' and 'dialogue', would put people in a commonly understood futurity. In Ita, the importance of unified narration became paramount for the corporate-mediation initiative. Corporate mediation was creating mutually engaging dialogue between parts, and nurturing terrain for a unified and credible narrative. However, this was an exercise contracted by defined, antagonistic partisans exerting a controlled means of narration after all.

Managing community relations in Ita was to make sure dam assessments were completed. The initial idea of the company was to simply inform the content and method of each research to be made, and the order of their completion to the assessment of the dam project as a whole. The technical aspects once narrated were to instantiate a blend prognostic historicity to it. Communal time in crisis was to consent to corporate futurity. When realizing that there was in fact an organized resistance to the dam, as well as vocal, unorganized supporters, the mediation company made a daring move. They proposed the setting up of a 'community council' in Itá, constituted by a parity composition of two groups: three representatives of those against the dam, and three representatives of those in favor of the dam. The then 'President of the community' joined the council on the side of those against the dam. The initiative was lead by company employees in setting its agenda. The council consolidated representation for two antagonistic positions in equal proportion. This split-representational configuration lead to further concrete, mutual incidents of sabotage, back-talks, insults, threats, and physical injuries. In one of the council's first meetings-to-be, death threats happened within the community, escalating to near collective violence. Direct confrontations without physical injury, and especially everyday forms of resistance permeated the quotidian of Itá. One of the leaders told me that the community has become "practically two communities in one locality".

In a strong sense, the 'community council' set up by a corporate-subcontracted, private company began to act as a fundamental political body of the Itá community. In many ways, it overrode all other autonomous political instances and institutions. This representational set up of stale-mate in the community's interest, together with narration of the dam assessments' technical aspects and operations opened the way for the expression of individual interests and their articulation for the reception of research firms within the community. A specific futurity of technical operations was coated with expressions of progress and development, to become prevalent in political deliberation. The council and mediation narratives were opening paths to the execution of corporate objectives. In sum, corporate

mediation was successful in overriding local autonomous political expression, at least temporarily. Some community members even proposed that the newly established council should manage all topics of community affairs from then on.

Governmentality is here undermining determinations of aloof, autonomous citizenship. Within neoliberalism, the capitalist and liberal attempt to 'synchronize' different temporalities is still forced in the name of progress and development. A significant difference is the stronger correlation of the governmentality form of power in the imposition – so as to activate fragments of the social into imbuing their subjectivity with the fulfillment of capitalist accumulation. Through corporate initiative, dialogue and narration may be directed to subsume contending futurities into capital's primitive accumulation.

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