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(IN)JUSTICE IN RURAL WORLDS

WATER, TERRITORY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Mirta Niselli Rolon (mirtaniselli@gmail.com)

Monique Medeiros (mmedeiros@ufpa.br)

Marta Rolón Jiménez (martanoemironjimenez@gmail.com)

This research analyzes territorial dynamics in the Paraguay and Tebicuary river basins in Paraguay, with an emphasis on wetlands—ecosystems characterized by an abundance of water but influenced by changes in land use. From a water governance and environmental justice perspective, it examines how these transformations, driven by productive development and accessibility, generate risks to environmental resilience and compromise the availability of quality water for the local population. The study seeks to understand how changes in land use and vegetation cover affect the variability of water resources and the territory's capacity for environmental resilience. To this end, soil and vegetation data and the National Agricultural Census are integrated with satellite imagery of the river basin, complemented by an Environmental Performance Index (EPI) that assesses practices and institutional processes in water and territorial

management. Preliminary results indicate that the expansion of land use reflects a particular model of agriculture that promotes certain social groups as well as productive development. However, the evidence also shows that this process leads to transformations in the landscape and water quality, posing significant challenges for the governance of wetlands and water resources in the basin, especially in terms of environmental equity and risk distribution. The research aims to generate technical inputs to guide sustainable strategies for territorial and environmental management, promoting integrated practices of economic, social, and environmental development that can serve as a basis for public policy formulation.

Palavras-chave: land-use change; water governance; environmental justice; water resources management; environmental resilience.