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Representation of agriculture in water governance in São Paulo

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Abstract: The water resources management model in the state of São Paulo is characterized by the participation of water users from different sectors of the economy within the ambit of River Basin Committees and other organizations of the water management system. The purpose of this article is to present a survey and systematization of the performance of representatives of São Paulo's agricultural sector in this decentralized and participatory system of water governance. To this end, this article recreates the profile of this sectoral representation in the State Water Resources Council and in the Committees for rural areas with strong agricultural dynamics in the state. The findings of this study reveal significant political and propositional differences between São Paulo's agriculture and agroindustry sectors. Such differences have to do with the structure and capillarity of the entities that represent these sectors, as well as their divergent concept of management.

Keywords: Water governance; ruralities and the environment; river basin committees; society and water resources

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Introduction

The policies of water governance in Brazil that have been in effect since the 1990s are organized around a public governance agenda aimed at promoting political pluralism, involving various categories of actors and institutions that bring their specific interests to a decentralized forum and deliberate upon resource management (ABERS; KECK, 2013; JACOBI; FRACALANZA, 2005). This forum, called the Hydrographic Basin Committee, acts as a "parliament for waters." The public authorities at their different levels and civil society are represented in this parliament, including the large users of water resources and professional representatives and organizations that focus on conservation and management of natural resources (AITH; ROTHBARTH, 2015). (AITH; ROTHBARTH, 2015).

In fact, agencies such as the Basin Committees participate in complex networks for conducting public policies, a situation that causes increasing tension in the activities of governance the greater the set of social interests involved in the region and its resources (MARTINS, 2012). In the case of Brazil's rural areas, and especially in the state of São Paulo, these interests are marked by the decisive participation of agriculture in the exploitation of ecosystem resources. In order to address this situation, the main objective of this paper is to describe the systematization and analysis of the performance of representatives of São Paulo agriculture in the state's decentralized and participatory system of water governance.

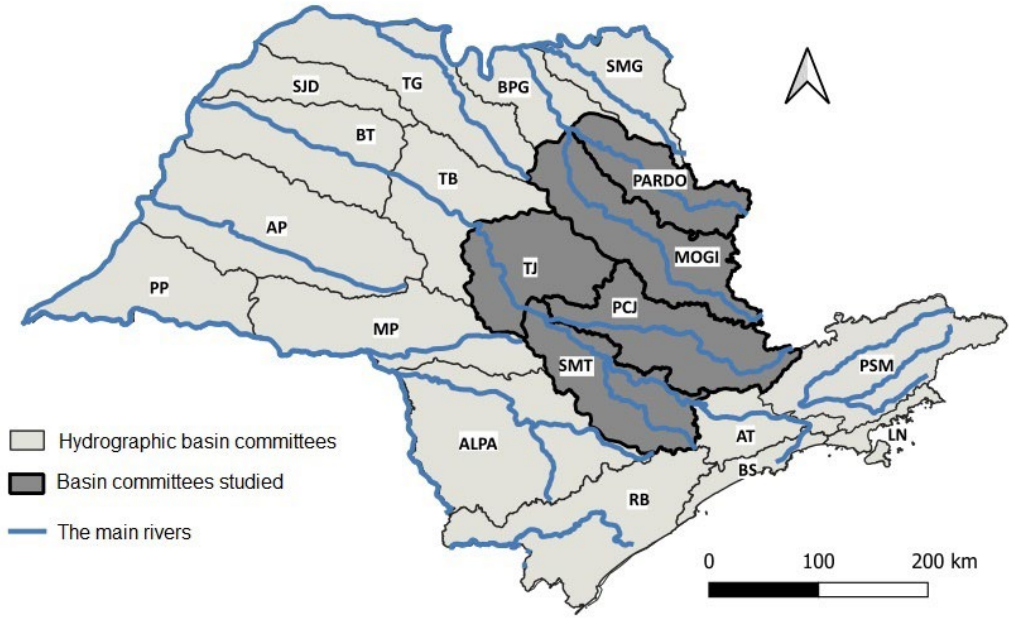
To this end, this article describes and discusses the profile of this sectoral representation in the State Water Resources Council and in the Basin Committees of the rural areas with the greatest agricultural dynamics in the state. This article is divided into seven topics that discuss the history of this representation, as well as its broader themes. After this introductory section, Section 2 outlines the research methodology adopted in this study, while Section 3 summarizes the general characteristics of water governance in the state of São Paulo, and Section 4 discusses the participation of agriculture in the State Water Resources Council. Section 5 describes the participation of this sector in five major River Basin Committees set up in rural areas of the state, while Section 6 considers the opinions of representatives of agriculture and agroindustry in the state regarding charging for water usage, highlighting the diversity of interests concerning the theme. Lastly, the final remarks point out analytical possibilities based on the main conclusions of this study.

Research Methodology

Qualitative social research procedures were adopted to examine the participation of agriculture in the State Water Resources Commission – SWC (Conselho Estadual de Recursos Hídricos – CRH) and River Basin Committees, involving a broad-scale exploratory research effort. A profile of the sector's representation was drawn up based on a documentary survey of the archives of the SWC and the River Basin Committees for the rural areas with most intensive agricultural production in the state. Five River Basin Committees were identified based on this criterion. These were the Tietê-Jacaré (TJ) and Sorocaba Médio-Tietê (SMT) committees, which cover an important stretch

of the Tietê River, from the outskirts of the metropolitan region to the center of the state of São Paulo, and the Piracicaba, Capivari and Jundiaí (PCJ), Mogi-Guaçu (MOGI) and Pardo River (PARDO) committees, which cover most of the northeastern region of the state, where agricultural activity is intensive.

Figure 1 – Location of the studied watershed in the units of hydric resources management



Source: Report of hydric resource status of the state of São Paulo, 2011. Modified by the authors

The documentary research carried out between March 2014 and May 2017 involved an analysis of all the minutes of elections of the SWC and of the Committees, the River Basin Plans and the statutes of each management body (both current and previous versions, starting from the foundation of the SWC and of each Committee). This information was then systematized on spreadsheets, listing all the representatives elected by sector, in order to trace back the history of the administrations of the SWC and of each River Basin Committee. The Committees were created between 1993 and 1998 and organized into biannual administrative bodies, each committee thus comprising from eight to twelve administrations up to the year 2017.

After determining the composition of each of the administrations of the SWC and River Basin Committees, the elected and/or substitute representatives of São Paulo's agriculture sector were identified in each biennium. This identification was based on the statutes of the administrative bodies of this sector, which have agricultural (agriculture

and livestock farming) representatives and agroindustrial (processing of agricultural products) representatives from civil society. In addition, we sought to verify whether any entities explicitly linked to agriculture and agroindustry participated in these administrative bodies, acting as representatives of civil society that were not specifically allocated to the agriculture sector. This situation of overlapping representation was identified in almost all the committees.

Based on the identification of the representatives of the state agriculture, tables were drawn up to present the sectoral entities (members and substitutes) that participated in the Committees and the SWC. For the sake of elucidation, this article presents a complete list of the representatives of agriculture and agroindustry in the State Water Resources Commission – SWC in the 2002-2018 period. As for the River Basin Committees, the tables show the distribution of the entities that participated in at least two administrations of each Committee in the period of 1995 (or later, depending on the year the committee was set up) to 2017.

Having identified the representations of São Paulo agriculture in the SWC and in the Committees, the entities that had participated in these representations for the longest time were contacted, aiming to gain access to the material and documents produced by them during their participation in the governing body. This material served as the basis for the creation of a semi-structured interview to be held with representatives of the entities. The main themes addressed in these interviews were as follows. 1) Circumstances and motivations for participation in the administrative bodies. 2) Strategic actions of the representatives in management meetings, the agendas of greatest interest of the sector. 3) Political alliances between agriculture, agroindustry and other sectors participating in the SWC and the Committees. 4) Each representative's views about the relationship between agriculture, agroindustry and sustainable water use. 5) Last but not least, evaluation of the functioning of the system of governance. The choice of respondents was based on the purposive sampling technique (PATTON, 2002), from which the agents possessing the highest information density for the purposes of this research were identified. In all, twelve representatives of agriculture and four representatives of agroindustry were interviewed. The interviews took place between August 2016 and September 2018, using a digital recorder and subsequent transcription of its contents.

Water management in the state of São Paulo

The debate about social participation in public management usually brings to light the emergence of a new logic of production of decisions and agreements in the political scenario (ALMEIDA; TATAGIBA, 2012). When it comes to environmental issues, the stakeholders promote the interests of society in the face of the State's institutional strength by effectively participating in a space for discussion or deliberation, thereby enhancing the democratization of public management and expanding its effectiveness (ALVINO-BORBA; MATA-LIMA; MATA-LIMA, 2012).

In Brazil, social participation in environmental policies was strengthened in

the 1990s pursuant to the creation of several consultative and deliberative councils at different government levels, ensuring the regulated participation of organized civil society. The Environmental Councils, River Basin Committees and managing councils of Environmental Protection Areas call for the participation of civil society organizations such as NGOs and social movements in their operations (JACOBI, 2009a). As can be seen in the literature, this form of organization of these administrative bodies politicizes environmental management, aiming to solve problems and conflicts between groups and sectors involved (GUIVANT; JACOBI, 2003).

In the case of water management, the state of São Paulo pioneered the development of a decentralized and participatory structure, which even influenced subsequent federal legislation. Inspired by the French model of resource management, the São Paulo legislation of 1991 defined water management as participatory, integrated and decentralized at the level of river basin units. River basin water management was assigned to the River Basin Committees, which had a tripartite structure and equal representation between the state, municipalities and civil society. In general, representatives of the state comprise state departments and agencies more directly linked to issues of the environment and water resources, while municipalities are represented by their mayors. Civil society, which is represented by entities that operate in the region of each particular basin, includes universities, research entities, water users (represented by associative entities), associations specializing in water resources, class entities, community associations, as well as other non-governmental associations, usually of environmentalists (ABERS; KECK, 2004).

The state of São Paulo is currently divided into 21 Water Resource Management Units, each of which is overseen by a Basin Committee. These administrative bodies are responsible for planning and managing water usage. In this regulatory arrangement, the Basin Committees form the substance of the decentralization process, promoting debates on issues pertaining to the water resources in their respective basins, and addressing and solving actual and/or potential conflicts at a local level (JACOBI, 2009b).

It should be noted that this new regulatory arrangement confers to civil society a central role in water policy and management (RIBEIRO; JOHNSSON, 2018). According to Jacobi and Fracalanza (2005), social groups and particularly large users had to organize politically in order to participate in a Committee, aiming to defend their specific interests in water pricing, in the application of collected resources, and in the modalities of concession of water usage rights.

At the same time, the level of organization and participation of civil society in these domains is different if one considers the state of São Paulo and Brazil's other states (TRINDADE; SCHEIBE, 2019; EMPINOTTI, 2011). Dilemmas of participation in situations such as those of environmental inequality or specific social markers (e.g., gender and social class) have already been the subject in studies about Committees (FRACALANZA, JACOB; EÇA, 2013; EMPINOTTI, 2010, ARBAROTTI, 2018). Issues pertaining to challenges of the participation of social groups whose

cultural capital is insufficient for the sociotechnical debate that usually predominates in these spaces have also been investigated in the contexts of Brazil and the state of São Paulo (GARCIA, BODIN, 2019; MARTINS, 2013). As for the specific theme of these differences, Martins (2015) points out that the expression of the interests of organized social groups has resulted in the opposition of political strategies and worldviews, a situation that may or may not strengthen the River Basin Committees as a significant arena of socio-environmental debate. With regard to sectors related to agriculture in the state of São Paulo, this conflict of interests has been present for at least a decade in the State Water Resources Commission – SWC. The formation of the field of interests of São Paulo agriculture in the theme of water, in turn, is directly linked to the modernization that the sector underwent in the second half of the 20th century.

Agriculture and agroindustry in the SWC

In the last fifty years, São Paulo's agriculture sector has been marked by a strong expansion of its technological base, and especially by the new level of relations it began to establish with industrial capital. Shifting from its original status as a basic supplier of raw material for industry, agriculture modernized its production base through the acquisition of high-tech agricultural machinery and implements, and the incorporation of new knowledge involving modern genetics, physics and chemistry. This new level of inter-capital relations resulted in what some authors, as far back as the 1980s, dubbed Agroindustrial Complexes (SILVA, 1996; MULLER, 1989).

The constitution of these complexes revealed major transformations in São Paulo's agricultural production base, allied to increasing land concentration under the control of the few establishments integrated into the new order of relations. From the environmental standpoint, this movement of capitalization – or industrial appropriation of agriculture (GOODMAN; SORJ; WILKINSON, 1990) – promoted the large-scale degradation of the rural environment, not just in São Paulo. The ecological risks inherent in the components of the modern technological package were added to the financial stimulus via abundant agricultural credit (DELGADO, 2012), to the lack of control over agronomic revenue (ROMEIRO, 1998), and to the regional circumstances of political support and legitimation of the intensive use of agrochemicals in the country (GUIVANT, 1992). With regard to water resources, the intensive use of fertilizers is one of the factors most commonly associated with the eutrophication of rivers and lakes, acidification of soils and contamination of aquifers especially (GOMES; BARIZON, 2014; MARTINS, 2004).

Given this context of importance of agriculture in the state's rural areas, and considering its role in the use and degradation of water quality, the involvement of representatives of this sector in the new participative bodies of water resource management is particularly important. This sector has been actively participating in the SWC, in particular, since the early 2000s. As can be seen in Table 1, between 2002 and 2018, eight representatives of civil society linked to entities in the agricultural

and agroindustrial sector were members of the SWC. These included the Federation of Agriculture and Livestock of the State of São Paulo (FAESP)[1], which was the major representative of agricultural users in all the eight administrations analyzed and whose participation was outstanding. In conjunction with FAESP, the Brazilian Livestock Breeders Association acted as deputy representative of agricultural users of water resources during six administrations, and was then replaced by the Association of Sugarcane Suppliers in the Region of Catanduva in the 2014/2016 biennium. In the 2016/2018 administration, the Brazilian Agribusiness Association also resumed its participation in the SWC, continuing the participatory actions that it had implemented in the River Basin Committees since the 2010s.

Table 1 – Entities representing agriculture (*) and agroindustry (**) in the State Water Resources Commission – SWC, divided by administration. Period: 2002-2016

Entities	Administration							
	2002/2004	2004/2006	2006/2008	2008/2010	2010/2012	2012/2014	2014/2016	2016/2018
Federation of Agriculture and Livestock of the State of São Paulo – FAESP(*)	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Brazilian Livestock Breeders Association – ABC(*)	■	■	■	■	■	■		
Brazilian Sugarcane Industry Association – ÚNICA (**)			■	■	■	■	■	■
Foundation for *Agricultural* Development – FUNDAG(*)					■	■		
Association of Agronomist Engineers of the State of São Paulo – AEASP(*)			■					
Association of Sugarcane Suppliers in the Region of Catanduva – AFCRC(*)							■	■
São Paulo State Ethanol Producers Association – SIFAESP(**)					■			
Brazilian Agribusiness Association – ABAG(**)								■

Source: Minutes of the elections of the State Water Resources Commission. Data organized by the authors.

1 - Created in 1965, FAESP is the representative entity of agriculture companies and livestock producers in the state of São Paulo, maintaining relations with the municipal, state and federal public authorities. Its base is composed of Rural Unions, which have municipal headquarters.

The other entity that participated significantly in the SWC is the Brazilian Sugarcane Industry Association (UNICA) in the State of São Paulo, which was present in the last six administrations (from 2006 to 2018). UNICA joined the SWC, acting as substitute representative of the industrial users of water resources between 2006 and 2010. Thereafter, upon the creation of the category of agro-industrial users of water resources – which, in large part, resulted from the pressure and political lobbying exerted by the entity, UNICA took on the role of full representative in all the subsequent administrations. Moreover, in all the years of UNICA's participation in the SWC, the entity was represented by a single person hired exclusively to advise it on the theme of water resources.

This professionalization of representation had repercussions on the entity's different action fronts on environmental issues[2] . The entity's participation strategies and agendas with respect to water resources reveal significant differences as they pertain to FAESP's mode of action at the various levels of the governance system, as will be discussed later herein.

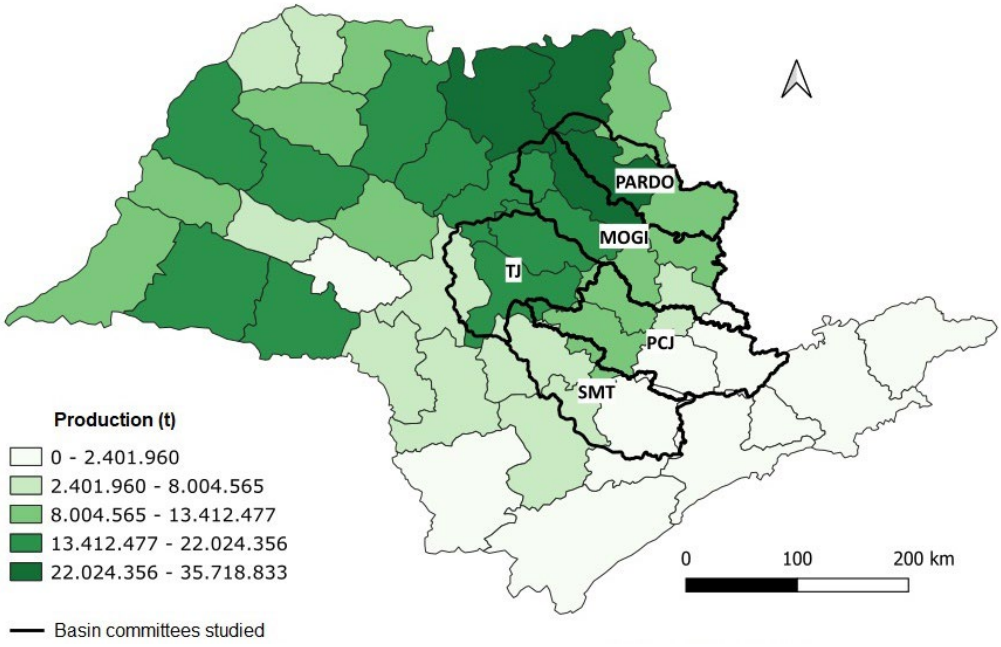
Agriculture and agroindustry in the River Basin Committees

This topic discusses the political performance of São Paulo's agriculture in the Basin Committees responsible for water management in the regions with the most intensive agricultural activity in the state. This involves characterizing the main economic activities of each of the basins in question and listing the representatives of regional agriculture that have already occupied representative positions (holder or substitute) in the respective Committee.

In the hydrographic division of the State's Integrated Water Resources Management System, the target region of this study is located in the area covered by the committees of Piracicaba, Capivari and Jundiaí (PCJ); Sorocaba-Médio Tietê (SMT); Tietê-Jacaré (TJ); Pardo River (PARDO), and Mogi-Guaçu (MOGI). As can be seen in Figure 2, the study region is marked territorially by the sugar and alcohol economy, albeit with different production intensities (an important situation from the sampling standpoint). According to data from the Agricultural Economics Institute, São Paulo has accounted for 55% of the country's sugarcane growing area since 2016. Just over 66% of the state's agricultural area is occupied by sugarcane fields (IEA, 2018). In the 2016/2017 harvest season, 172 sugar and alcohol mills were established in the state, which accounted for 56% of the sugarcane crushed in the country (UNICA, 2019).

2 - In addition to operating in the São Paulo water governance system during the same period, UNICA also played a prominent role in São Paulo's Agro-Environmental Protocol, aimed at reducing wildfires. With regard to the Protocol and the entity's activities, see Sabadin (2017).

Figure 2 – Sugar cane production by regional developement office in São Paulo



Source: Nwchiluk and Ramos, 2016. Database: São Paulo, IEA

The PCJ Committee, which was founded in November 1993, was the first São Paulo committee created based on the new directives for decentralized and participative water management. This committee oversees the second most critical region in the state in terms of quantity and quality of water resources, second only to the Alto Tietê administrative unit (which covers the metropolitan region of São Paulo). The main economic activities in the region are agriculture and industrial production, with a strong presence of the sugarcane agroindustry in the municipalities of Piracicaba and Rio Claro. The agricultural area is occupied mainly by sugarcane plantations.

The Basin Committees of Sorocaba Médio-Tietê and TJ were created in August and November 1995, respectively. The economy of these basins is very similar, also based on the cultivation of sugarcane and citrus fruits. Since these committees were founded, fourteen different organizations of civil society have represented the agricultural and agroindustrial sectors in the Sorocaba Médio-Tietê Committee, while twelve different entities have represented the TJ Committee and sixteen entities have represented the PCJ Committee.

Table 2 lists the entities that participated in two or more administrations in each Committee. In this group, agricultural trade unions (institutionally represented at the state level by FAESP) stand out as the most active in each of the Committees. In the So-

rocaba Médio-Tietê Committee, two entities exhibited outstanding performance, namely: the Rural Union of Piedade, which participated in eight committee administrations, and the Agricultural Trade Union of São Roque, which participated in six administrations. UNICA acted as representative of the agroindustrial sector in six administrations. Indeed, in TJ, the most long-lasting representative was UNICA, which participated in seven administrations, from 2001 to 2017. The participation of important entities such as the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA) and the Brazilian Association of Citrus Exporters (ABECITRUS) was more sparse and pointwise. Lastly, the most active trade unions were those of Araraquara and Pederneiras, each of which participated in three administrations.

Table 2 – Entities of agriculture(*) and agroindustry(**) with the greatest participation in the SMT, TJ, and PCJ River Basin Committees, divided by administration - Period: 1995-2017

River Basin Committees	Entities	Administrations										
		1995/1997	1997/1999	1999/2001	2001/2003	2003/2005	2005/2007	2007/2009	2009/2011	2011/2013	2013/2015	2015/2017
Sorocaba / Médio Tietê	Rural Union of Piedade (*)			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Agricultural Trade Union of São Roque (*)		■	■	■	■	■	■				
	Brazilian Sugarcane Industry Association in the state of São Paulo – UNICA(**)					■		■	■	■	■	■
	Rural Union of Ibiúna(*)								■		■	
	Rural Union of Porto Feliz(*)						■		■			
	Rural Trade Union of Cerquilho(*)				■	■						

Tietê Jacaré	Brazilian Sugarcane Industry Association in the state of São Paulo – UNICA(**)			■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■
	Rural Union of Araraquara(*)	■	■	■								
	Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation – EMBRAPA(*)	■	■									
	Brazilian Association of Citrus Exporters – ABECITRUS(**)					■	■					
	Rural Union of Pederneiras(*)									■	■	■
Piracibaba, Capivari and Jundiaí	Rural Union of Campinas(*)		■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Rural Union of Indaiatuba(*)		■	■	■	■	■		■		■	■
	Rural Union of Limeira(*)		■		■		■	■	■	■	■	■
	Rural Union of Rio Claro(*)			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Brazilian Sugarcane Industry Association in the state of São Paulo – UNICA(**)				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Rural Union of Piracicaba(*)				■	■	■	■	■	■		
	Rural Union of Extrema(*)						■	■	■	■		
	Rural Union of Jundiaí(*)					■	■	■				

Source: Minutes of the elections of the State Water Resources Commission. Data organized by the authors.

Table 2 also reveals the significant participation of UNICA in the PCJ Committee, acting as representative in eight consecutive terms (from 2001 to 2017). As in the other two Committees, the participation of trade unions was consistent, with the Rural Union of Campinas participating in nine administrations and the rural unions of Indaiatuba, Limeira and Rio Claro each participating in eight administrations.

The PARDO and MOGI committees were created in February and June 1996, respectively. Their domains are also marked by the strong presence of the sugarcane agribusiness. Sugarcane cultivation predominates in the regional landscape. To a lesser extent, the agricultural area of the Mogi-Guaçu river basin is still occupied by pastureland and citrus cultivation – the latter also aimed at agro-processing in the region.

In the period of 1997 to 2017, fifteen entities elected to the MOGI Committee from 1997 to 2017 were directly linked to the agricultural and agroindustrial sectors. In the same period, the PARDO Committee was represented by ten entities. Table 3 indicates the strong presence of entities linked to the sugarcane agroindustry in the two committees. The entities that stood out in the MOGI Committee were UNICA (eight administrations),

Brazil's largest sugar and ethanol cooperative – COOPERSUCAR (seven administrations), the Western São Paulo Sugarcane Growers Association – CANAOESTE (six administrations), and the São Paulo State Sugar Producers Union – SIAESP (three administrations). In the PARDO Committee, the entities that stood out were CANAOESTE (six administrations), UNICA (five administrations) and COOPERSUCAR (two administrations). Another organization with outstanding participation in the PARDO Committee was the Brazilian Agribusiness Association – ABAG, which was active in the last seven administrations (from 2001 to 2017).

Closely linked to agriculture, the most active entities in the PARDO Committee were the Rural Union of Ribeirão Preto and the Vargem Grande do Sul Potato Growers Association – ABVGS, each participating in eight administrations. In the MOGI Committee, the most active trade unions were from Leme and Pirassununga, each participating in three administrations.

Table 3 – Entities of agriculture(*) and agroindustry(**) with the greatest participation in the MOGI and PARDO River Basin Committees, divided by administration - Period: 1997-2017

River Basin Committees	Entities	Administrations									
		1997/1999	1999/2001	2001/2003	2003/2005	2005/2007	2007/2009	2009/2011	2011/2013	2013/2015	2015/2017
MOGI	Brazilian Sugarcane Industry Association in the state of São Paulo – UNICA(**)		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Brazilian Sugar and Ethanol Cooperative in the State of São Paulo – COOPERSUCAR(**)	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
	Western São Paulo Sugarcane Growers Association – CANAOESTE(*)				■	■	■	■	■	■	
	São Paulo State Ethanol Producers Association – SIFAESP(**)							■	■	■	■
	Rural Union of Leme(*)	■	■				■				
	Rural Union of Pirassununga(*)		■	■		■					
	Commercial, Industrial and Rural Association of Pinhal(*)		■	■							
	Mogi Guaçu Farmers and Livestock Breeders Association (*)			■	■						
	Society of Sugar and Alcohol Technicians of Brazil(**)	■	■								

PARDO	Rural Union of Ribeirão Preto(*)										
	Vargem Grande do Sul Potato Growers Association – ABVGS (*)										
	Brazilian Agribusiness Association in the Region – ABAG(**)										
	Western São Paulo Sugarcane Growers Association – CANAOESTE(*)										
	Rural Union of São José do Rio Pardo(*)										
	Brazilian Sugarcane Industry Association in the state of São Paulo – UNICA(**)										
	Brazilian Sugar and Ethanol Cooperative in the State of São Paulo – COOPERSUCAR(**)										

Source: Minutes of the elections of the State Water Resources Commission. Data organized by the authors.

The decentralized nature of the River Basin Committees, allied to the meager participation of many of the entities, does not suggest causal relationships in terms of sectoral cohesion among the representatives of agriculture. Nevertheless, other variables – of a political or even territorial nature – may still influence the practices of representation that are found in this type of environmental governance. However, in the case of the São Paulo committees, at least one state agenda contributes to the mapping of the interests of the agricultural and agroindustrial sectors in the target period of this study. This agenda is the debate about charging for water usage in the state.

Sectoral views on charging for water usage

After numerous debates among the participants of the new water governance system in the state and more than eight years of legislative negotiations, the law for charging for water usage in the state of São Paulo was finally approved in December 2005. Since then, the River Basin Committees have been discussing the implementation of water usage billing, with discussions ranging from the creation of user records to the definition of the amounts to be charged for each user segment. In the case of agriculture in particular, the difficulties involved in drawing up records and the prediction of an additional period for the implementation of billing farmers rendered the topic highly relevant to the Com-

mittees during the period under study, although its effective implementation is still in the regulatory phase.

In the period of debates on the bill – the first version of which dates back to 1998 – agriculture in São Paulo was organized around positions that, for the most part, reflect the sector's representation in the SWC and their replication, to a greater or lesser extent, in the Committees themselves. Having been active in the SWC since 2002, FAESP – which formally represents the rural trade unions that served on the committees during the target period of this study – remained opposed throughout this period to charging farmers[3] for water usage. In an article on the subject published in 2000, Fábio Meirelles, president of the entity since 1975, had already addressed issues that would defer charging the agricultural sector for water usage.

> The charge for water usage in agriculture, applied inadequately, inefficiently and without a strong scientific basis, will significantly affect the agricultural sector, which has been in a deep crisis since the beginning of the decade (...). In view of this situation, it is recommended that the agricultural sector be treated differently with regard to charging it for water usage, exempting it from this measure pending the conclusion of scientific studies to provide an initial basis for its discussion, and if necessary, its implementation (MEIRELES, 2000: 200)

The three versions of the bill that called for charging in the state were under discussion in the Legislative Assembly of São Paulo for seven years. Initially proposed in 1998, the bill entered into an emergency regime in the state legislature in December 2000, but was only voted on in December 2005. According to Martins and Valencio (2003), the strongest objections to the approval of the bill came precisely from the state congressmen linked to agricultural interest groups. These authors stated that, in the Legislative Assembly, the proposal of subsidies was the most recurrent theme among the amendments proposed for the bill for charging for water usage. Of a total of 19 subsidy amendments, 11 proposed exemption for agricultural users, with explicit support from FAESP[4].

This position of FAESP was adopted by many rural trade unions within the scope of the River Basin Committees. Most of the unions that participated actively in the PCJ, SMT, TJ, PARDO and MOGI Committees supported the argument about the serious implications that charging for water usage would represent to agriculture. However, from the perspective of these representatives, this position does not seem to be the result of debates or general guidelines from FAESP. Instead, the refusal to charge for water usage arose from the experience of these representatives themselves, who are farmers and landowners.

3 - It should be noted that in the French system, which had served as a model for the São Paulo water management system, agriculture was also opposed for almost thirty years to participating in the policy of charging for water usage. About this process of resistance and political confrontation, see Bourblanc (2019).
4 - FAESP's position was partially accepted in the final text of the law approved in December 2005. In the transitional provisions, the state law determines that rural users would begin to be charged for water usage four years after the charge became effective for other users.

> This work does not come from the Federation. It's us right here. We are agriculture, we make the union. This is our daily routine. We know that charges like this one (for water) would bankrupt a lot of people. The Federation is there to do politics, and whoever helps the president [of FAESP] also works there and has no idea about the grower's daily activities. (Representative of the Rural Union of Extrema in the PCJ Committee, in the administrations of 2005/2007, 2007/2009, 2009/2011, 2011/2013, 2013/2015 and 2015/2017. Interview held in September 2016.)

In this case, in the period under analysis, within the scope of the management structure, FAESP did not play an effective role as stakeholder, i.e., an articulator of interest groups and a proactive agent in the public environmental debate, ready for collective engagement and strategic cooperation (ALVINO-BORBA; MATA-LIMA; MATA-LIMA, 2012). Strictly speaking, FAESP did very little to put together political deals involving its union base in the water governance structure. In the SWC, the entity maintained a rarefied discourse regarding São Paulo agriculture, since its unions, which were atomized, were not called upon to opine upon or offer proposals for the group in order to face the challenges imposed on agriculture by issues such as the valuation of water resources.

On the other hand, a few unions have put forward a discourse that differs from that of FAESP. In the ordinary assemblies, some representatives of the sector in the PCJ Committee and in the TJ Committee have shown support for the charge given the possibility of capturing part of the funds raised for the development regional agriculture projects. In other words, the revenue obtained from water usage charges could be added to the resources regularly raised by farmers from traditional instruments of agricultural policy.

> In the technical chamber of the Committee, we even proposed that we had to ask for incentives for agricultural practices, even with regard to rural sanitation. Unfortunately, the Committee members themselves questioned us about the use of this money. But it's not like that, since we're asking for incentives for the conservation of slopes at the banks of reservoirs and rivers. (Representative of the Rural Union of Pederneiras on the TJ Committee in the administrations of 2011/2013, 2013/2015 and 2015/2017. Interview held in March 2017)

On the part of the representatives of agriculture, the difficulty of obtaining financial resources through the River Basin Committees led the sector to adopt a discourse in defense of the instruments of Payments for Environmental Services (PES). In this regard, the sugarcane producer and representative of the Rural Union of Rio Claro in the PCJ Committee, declared:

> Within this space we actively pursue Payment for Environmental Services – PES. Now, in the state of São Paulo, this is a very complex agenda. People will not reforest if there is no compensation. In fact, our Union has already embarked on a project with UNESP and the

> Municipal Administration, and we want the Committee to participate as well. We call it the PES Sugarcane Project. Producers don't even know what PES is, and in this project we are raising their awareness, explaining that their property has to be in order, and so on. (Representative of the Rural Union of Rio Claro at the PCJ Committee in the administrations of 2005/2007, 2009/2009, 2009/2011, 2011/2013 and 2013/2015. Interview held in August 2016)

In recent years, energized by the context of changes in Brazil's Forest Code, FAESP has also started to recommend PES as an important strategy for the adhesion of São Paulo farmers to the growing scenario of environmental control of production, and particularly as a means of fundraising. This position of the Federation was confirmed by the entity's representative in the SWC, and has been presented in its newsletters since 2015-2016[5]. This involvement of the entity, however, had not yet spread to its unions up to 2017.

In the debate about charging for water usage, the attitude of UNICA, representing agroindustrial users, differed from that of FAESP and of most of the rural unions. After deliberating about the implications of charging, the entity favored the implementation of this administrative instrument, but from a highly strategic perspective. According to the entity's representative in the SWC:

> Charging for water usage will undoubtedly represent a cost for the sector. But it must ensure that water will be available to us when we need it. We cannot be penalized for the lack of this resource, since charging for it must inhibit its misuse. It is also not right that committees use this resource for sanitation works, for the environment. That is a task for the government, and its costs should not be defrayed by the users. (Representative of UNICA in the State Water Resources Commission, in the administrations of 2006-2008, 2008-2010, 2010-2012, 2012-2014 and 2014-2016. Interview held in November 2016)

In fact, UNICA's favorable attitude towards charging for water has to do directly with ensuring the future use of the resource, thus mobilizing the moral precepts (or magnitudes) of the market to adjust the demand for environmental "good" through the signs of scarcity revealed by its cost[6]. In the case of this entity, its direct participation in the River Basin Committees increases the centralization of political positions, since it is its members who act directly in the governing body. FAESP, whose capillarity of positions depends on its power to persuade its associated unions, faces the opposite situation. This difference in the institutionalization of representation results, in the case of farmers, in unorthodox positions with regard to sensitive issues such as charging for water usage.

In addition, the action strategies of the entities clearly indicate that FAESP has yet

5 - The FAESP-SENAR Newsletter, which has been published since 2007, puts out an average of four issues per year. In the period of this study, this newsletter published articles on the environmental agenda dedicated basically to the reformulation of Brazil's Forest Code.

6 - On the notion of moral magnitudes in orders of justification from the sociological perspective, see Boltanski and Thévenot (1991).

to focus its attention on the decentralized nature of the administration provided by the River Basin Committees. On the subject of water, there is little interaction between the entity and the unions that participate in the Committees. In contrast, ÚNICA's activities are coordinated, and include representatives from other sectors, following mapping centralized by its representative in the SWC.

> We hold regular meetings with our representatives on the Committees. We define lines of action and discuss specific problems. We also have a spreadsheet listing the entities with which we can talk. Some are from the sector, others are not. We do this to assist our people in the committees. (Representative of UNICA at the State Water Resources Commission in the 2014-2016 administration. Interview held in November 2016).

These differences in the action profiles of representatives of agriculture and agroindustry lead to at least two highly relevant conclusions that shed light upon the dynamics of the River Basin Committees in rural São Paulo. The first is that agriculture or even agroindustrial complexes cannot be interpreted as a political unit for the identification of sectoral interests in water related issues in the state. The interests involved in the relationship between agriculture and agroindustry are diverse and contradictory, judging from the very origin of the capital invested in these accumulated fronts. The forms of action in the SWC and in the Committees allow us to affirm that agriculture and agroindustry comprise different universes, with multiple interests and views on the uses of water and its instruments of administration.

The second relevant conclusion is that the sectoral representations in the River Basin Committees are characterized by different types of composition and interactions. The assumption that a representative network is created simply as the result of institutional approaches may lead to significant analytical errors. In practice, the apparent common interests are mediated by intersectionalities that escape the impenetrable management of environmental resources. In the case of rural areas, these intersectionalities permeate agrarian history, the circumstances of territorial and institutional dominance, economic motivations, and even the ordinary relationship of agents and social classes with ecosystem resources. In this study, these intersections are revealed in the way rural unions are managed, in the organization of political participation, and in the socio-environmental agenda that is recognized as a legitimate category by the different representative entities.

Final Remarks

The purpose of this article was to systematize the participation of agriculture in the first two decades of implementation and structuring of São Paulo's water governance system. This study retraced the history of representatives of this sector based on the profiles of the entities participating in the committees. To a large extent, this representation took place in the State Water Resources Commission – SWC and in the River Basin Committees through the participation of agroindustrial entities, trade unions and

producer associations – in the latter case, sectoral business associations (in the case of sugarcane growers) or associations identified by techniques for water use (in the case of irrigation manufacturers).

Among the most significant conclusions of this study is the fact that the participation of agriculture in the River Basin Committees and in the SWC cannot be dissociated from the history of representation of the agroindustrial sector. However, the formation of agroindustrial complexes in the state does not point to the full integration of the interests of farmers, landowners and industrialists. These complexes make up dense networks of power, with specific levels of territorial and market disputes. However, in socio-environmental governance, the articulation between different classes and class fractions depends to a large extent on economic approaches, and no less importantly, on the moral-discursive constructions around what is classified as sustainability. The polysemy inherent in the notions of sustainability and economic development requires research efforts about the effective levels of approximation between agriculture and agroindustry in the River Basin Committees.

On the other hand, between the representations of agriculture and agroindustry in São Paulo, moments not only of complementarities but also of political and propositional distancing were identified. Furthermore, the construction of a single explanatory hypothesis for the profile of rural representations in the forums of water governance in the state would greatly simplify the history of these areas. Therefore, more than explanatory hypotheses, the findings presented here call for attention to focus on the specificities recreated and reproduced in the dynamics of each representative network. The reason for this is that São Paulo's agriculture and agroindustry, as an important power bloc, operate in different networks and fronts, mobilizing forces outside the forums of governance whenever it suits the sector's purposes. The strength of this representation, therefore, reaches the Committees, i.e., it is not produced in them. In this context, specific studies of the River Basin Committees, based on the interactions, dynamics and strategies of the entities engaged in their internal management agendas, may reveal much about the complexity of environmental governance in rural areas, especially insofar as it concerns the empirical articulation of the dimensions of the agrarian and environmental issues in administrative practices.

Notes

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SciELO

A representação da agricultura na governança paulista das águas

Rodrigo Constante Martins
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São Paulo. Vol. 24, 2021
Artigo Original

Resumo: O modelo de gestão dos recursos hídricos no estado de São Paulo é caracterizado pela participação dos usuários de água de diferentes setores econômicos no âmbito dos Comitês de Bacias Hidrográficas e demais estruturas do sistema de gestão. O objetivo deste artigo é apresentar o levantamento e a sistematização da atuação dos representantes da agricultura paulista nesse sistema descentralizado e participativo de governança. Para tanto, o trabalho reconstrói o perfil desta representação setorial no Conselho Estadual de Recursos Hídricos e nos Comitês circunscritos aos territórios rurais com maior dinâmica agrícola do estado. Os resultados do estudo revelam significativos distanciamentos políticos e propositivos entre setores da agricultura e da agroindústria paulista. Estes distanciamentos relacionam-se com a estrutura e a capilaridade das entidades representativas dos setores, além da própria concepção de gestão disputada entre os segmentos.

Palavras-chave: Governança das águas; ruralidades e meio ambiente; comitês de bacias hidrográficas; sociedade e recursos hídricos.

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SciELO

La representación de la agricultura en la gobernanza del agua en São Paulo

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Alexsandro Elias Arbarotti
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Artículo original

Resumen: El modelo de gestión de recursos hídricos en el estado de São Paulo se caracteriza por la participación de los usuarios del agua de diferentes sectores económicos dentro de los Comités de Cuenca y otras estructuras del sistema de gestión. El objetivo de este artículo es presentar la actuación de los representantes de la agricultura paulista en ese sistema participativo de gobernanza del agua. Para ello, el trabajo reconstruye el perfil de esta representación sectorial en el Conselho Estadual de Recursos Hídricos y en los Comités circunscritos a los territorios rurales con mayor dinámica agrícola del estado. Los resultados del estudio revelan distanciamientos políticos y propositivos entre sectores de la agricultura y de la agroindustria paulista. Estos distanciamientos se relacionan con la estructura y la capilaridad de las entidades representativas de los sectores, además de la propia concepción de gestión disputada entre estos segmentos.

Palabras-clave: Gobernanza del agua; ruralidades y medio ambiente; comités de cuencas hidrográficas; sociedad y recursos hídricos

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