

THE NESTLÉ COMPANY AND THE DARK SIDE OF MINERAL WATER EXPLOITATION IN BRAZIL: A DECOLONIAL APPROACH

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Introduction

The exploitation of natural resources is a central aspect of the debate on the future of the planet. The constant and growing demand by the capitalist system to keep its productive standards worldwide has proved unsustainable (Un-Water, 2013).

In recent decades, the debate on the management and use of water resources has acquired strategic importance in the global context (Barlow & Clarke, 2003; Barlow 2009; Barlow 2015; Brei & Böhm, 2011; Brei & Böhm, 2013; Flores, 2013; Flores & Misoczky, 2015; Otto & Böhm, 2006). Water shortages in recent years have brought to light the need to think and plan a more effectively use of this common resource. However, in the capitalist context, water is a product in a broad and growing market to be exploited, at the expense of the springs supporting capacity and the interests and needs of the local communities located in the surroundings of the water exploitation. Proper fresh water for human consumption is only 2.5% of the world's total water and only 0.3% of all the fresh water on the planet is available in lakes and rivers (Companhia de Saneamento Básico do Estado de São Paulo [SABESP], 2015). This water is unevenly distributed, with 60% located in just nine countries, a fact that subjects 80 countries to water scarcity (Prüss-Üstün et. al., 2008). For instance, about 750 million people worldwide still lack access to reliable drinking water in a sustainable way, 1.8 billion resort to contaminated sources and about 2.5 billion people (over a third of the world population) have no access to adequate sanitation (Un-Water, 2014).

A forecast by UNESCO projects a 55% increase in the world's water demand by 2050 (United Nations World Water Assessment Programme [UNESCO], 2015). Water scarcity has thus been denounced by various institutions that demand public policies and concrete actions that can, at least, minimize this scenario. However, instead of actions for an equitable distribution of water resources to the regions in need, we are witnessing the

worsening of corporate disputes over water reserves, to be exploited and transformed into private springs for corporate profits.

There is a growing trend of the industry of spring and bottled water in terms of market share (Associação Brasileira da Indústria de Águas Minerais, 2014; Brei & Böhm, 2011). The global bottled water market reached a total revenue of US\$ 143,626 billion in 2013, representing an annual compound growth rate of 6.0% in the period from 2009 to 2013. The volume consumed in the market has also increased to 227.426 million liters in that year period. With the accelerated performance, the market should acquire a value of US\$ 196,014,500 billion in 2018 (Datamonitor, 2014).

Additionally, the industry is concentrated in the hands of a few companies. Four transnational companies amount to 45% of the total volume of bottled water: Nestlé, Danone, Coca-Cola and Pepsico (Associação Brasileira da Indústria de Águas Minerais, 2009), which represent “a powerful corporate water cartel that has emerged to seize control of every aspect of water for its own profit” (Barlow, 2009, p. 15).

The weakness in the regulation of the activity by the government worldwide (Serra, 2009) enhances the environmental and social risks of the activity, especially when it involves a transnational corporation operating in peripheral countries, with strong marks of coloniality.

Since colonial times, the periphery has been a major source of both natural resources and inexpensive labor (Coronil, 2005). Although the formal status of the colony in such countries has been extinguished, coloniality has remained to this day. The permanence of coloniality as a fundamental trait of modernity and the constitution of the capitalist world economy still allows the expropriation and control of natural resources in this region - although obviously not without struggling (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992). Talking about coloniality is not the same thing as talking about colonization. Drawing from a decolonial approach, coloniality refers to the predominance of power that generates Eurocentric knowledge that persists after the end of the formal colonization period in the ex-colonies, which requires the rationality of modernization from a perspective that is purely based on the northern nations (Mignolo, 2005, 2008). Also from a decolonial perspective, Castro-Gómez (2008, p. 283) points out that: “Coloniality is not the past of modernity; it is simply its other side”.

Thus, while the natural resources have paramount importance in structuring the colonial capitalist world system, there is a lack of critical debate about the role of nature in such process. At the location around them, both the centrality and natural resource

appropriation processes (Coronil, 2005) and the forms of human and cultural articulation developed are ignored (Escobar, 2005). Therefore, the historical experiences of the peripheral world, the relations of subordination, and the very natural resources disappear from this debate.

From a decolonial approach, in this paper, we propose to reconstruct Nestlé's fresh water exploitation in the local context of São Lourenço, Brazil. In this way, we can unveil the transnational's operations through the eyes of those who oppose and resist it directly.

Thus, from a decolonialist perspective, we investigated the following question: how do the subaltern resist colonialism manifested in the water exploitation in São Lourenço, Minas Gerais, Brazil? By subaltern voices, we mean, social actors whose experiences and views have often been delegitimized in favor of the corporation discourses and strategies.

The study of colonialism in the exploitation of mineral waters by Nestlé in São Lourenço demands the rescue of the history of the transnational company's operations in this site. This historical reconstruction will be developed through the analysis of primary and secondary data collected in media sources and the analysis of two interviews with local residents members of the Amarágua Group (the main voice against the actions of Nestlé in the municipality), who are also activists against Nestlé. The data analysis is grounded on the decolonial approach. Herein, the term 'decolonial' entails not only the diagnosis of coloniality in modernity but also the understanding of possibilities to overcome it by the acknowledgement of subaltern voices. Thus, coloniality is understood here as a result of modern colonialism and establishes itself as a form of power that surpasses the relationship of domination or formal power among nations and peoples (Maldonado-Torres, 2007).

Theoretical and Methodological Frameworks

In this study, it is important to highlight that coloniality is not the same thing as talking about colonization. Coloniality is an element that permeates the relationships and structures of various countries, even after they become free of the formal colonial ruling. Rather, it is about a process that is directly related to modernity and the establishment of the capitalist world-economy.

In the capitalist world-system, which has been organized since the sixteenth century (Castro-Gomez & Gosfroguel, 2007), an interstate structure is created with well-defined hierarchical layers, where the colonies are definitely placed at the bottom (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992). Therefore, when bringing up the importance of the process of

conquering America, controlling the Atlantic as the origins of modernity and implementing economic factors and forms of exploitation as inherent in the development of such a capitalist (and colonial) world-economy that is established (Colaço & Damázio, 2010), this decolonial perspective allows us to understand Latin America reality, especially in a more complex and dynamic way, by rescuing relationships that may have been erased as part of the coloniality project itself.

The Latin American decolonial studies have intensely sought to break with the theoretical and epistemic control strategies adopted and legitimized by modernity, through rethinking and criticizing modernity and development, offering new ways of understanding the totalizing social reality through other forms of enunciation that are particular, possible, and multiple in their development (Escobar, 2008; Neske, 2014; Wanderley, 2015).

So, decolonialism is about privileging the border thinking, the epistemic response of the subaltern – situated in the oppressed and exploited side of the colonial difference – seeking to overcome / address the rhetorical project of Eurocentric modernity (Grosfoguel, 2008). The forgotten or suppressed stories are also counter-stories that promote this new epistemology (Mignolo, 2003). By shifting the locus of enunciation of the subaltern, this new epistemological subject promotes fissures in coloniality, challenging its logic and overcoming the delimitation/restriction of territorial thinking (Mignolo, 2003; Grosfoguel, 2011).

However, what is unique about decolonial studies appears to be more related to the “new lenses placed over old Latin American problems than with these problems themselves” (Balestrin, 2013, p. 108).

One of these problems concerns the appropriation and expropriation of natural resources in Brazil and in Latin America, which are still strongly present in the daily lives of people. This kind of activity, which reflects the coloniality present in the relationship among corporations, the local population, and nature, has been reported by several authors (Leff, 2001; Golçalves, 2004; Banerjee, 2011; Acselrad, 2013; Flores & Misoczky, 2015). Coloniality is manifested insofar as land, forests and water as assets that were sold as if they were stockpiles to private companies in a large-scale dispossession process (Acselrad, 2013).

Assis (2014) argues that coloniality in the appropriation of nature is at the same time a result of the construction in the interior of the modernity of economic-instrumental ways of thinking and exploring the environment, and of the expression of specific

processes from territorial expropriation that support the prevailing logic of capitalist accumulation and keeps the modern colonial world system running.

Acknowledging the role of nature in capitalism expands and modifies the temporal and geographical references that define the dominant narratives of modernity (Coronil, 2005). So, prioritizing the subaltern voices is part of the attempt to reconstruct the local reality (at its intersection with the global context) and from that understanding, the production of authentic and legitimate knowledge about the (Brazilian) reality. It is assumed therefore that the knowledge produced historically by traditional centers of knowledge is not the only one to be valid and legitimate, especially considering the social, political, cultural and even ecological dynamics of the different parts of the world (Walsh, 2008; Quijano, 2000; Mignolo, 2011; Spohr & Alcadipani, 2013; Miglievich-Ribeiro, 2014). For Mignolo (2000), the decolonization implies the attempt to make knowledge and the realities of subjugated peripheries “discovered”.

Hence, the voice of the silenced is reaffirmed in the neocolonial relations that persist within the peripheral regions and Latin America is especially privileged as a locus of enunciation, showing that the experience in a specific location impacts not only the building of a common identity but also in the relations of power and knowledge (Balestrin, 2013; Oliveira, 2010; Walsh, 2008; Wanderley, 2015).

Thus, we aim to understand the discourse of the subaltern who resist against colonialism practiced by Nestlé.

Having said that, the corpus of analysis of this paper is represented by publications produced by media sources, by long semi-structured interviews with 2 representatives of the Amarágua group. The anonymity of the respondents is guaranteed in this study, so, we will refer to them by the fictitious names of Adélia and Pedro. Publications produced by the media play an important role in decolonial investigation since they reveal how the phenomenon under study has been approached and disseminated in society and how the same phenomenon is addressed by subaltern voices.

The analysis addressed in the next section lies in the characterization of Nestlé's trajectory in the municipality and of the resistance process, however, from the subaltern lenses.

The exploitation of mineral water by Nestlé in light of the decolonial approach

For the analysis of the resistance against colonialism manifested in water exploitation in São Lourenço, Brazil, it is necessary to reconstruct the company's operations in the region, considering that it is not possible to understand the resistance actions and the actual construction of subservience without referring to the establishment of the domination.

Brazilian legislation regarding the issue of water, especially mineral water, is conflictive. Although the Federal Constitution of 1988 establishes the right to an ecologically balanced environment, as an asset of common use and essential to a healthy quality of life, imposing to the government and society the duty to defend it and preserve it for present and future generations (Constituição da República Federativa do Brasil, 1988/2001), water management is governed by laws from the 1940s (Mineral Water Code and Mining Code) applicable to the National Department of Mineral Production (DNPM), in the Ministry of Mines and Energy agency. This implies that under Brazilian law, the mineral water, even after the changes in the mining code in 2012, has not undergone any change (Decreto Lei nº 7.841 /1945 de 8 de Agosto do Ministério das Minas e Energia, 1945; Decreto Lei nº 227/1967 de 28 de Fevereiro do Ministério das Minas e Energia, 1967).

Moreover, in 1997 the National Water Resources Policy (PNRH) was created, which diverges from the Mining Code, especially in what concerns the command and control of the mineral exploitation process. Thus, we point out that the legal scenario regarding mineral waters, though (or precisely because it is) confrontational, opens space for articulations and negotiations to facilitate the prioritization of corporations' interests because of the unequal power between such organizations and other actors. The Brazilian trajectory as an exporter of raw materials builds and reinforces the colonial difference, socially, culturally, and historically (Mignolo, 2013), which puts transnational corporations in a dominating position for the exploitation of natural resources, as will be discussed next.

São Lourenço is located in the south of Minas Gerais, in a region known as the Water Circuit, due to the high concentration of mineral springs, which led to the development of tourism as a major economic activity.

In São Lourenço, water sources are concentrated in Parque das Águas (Water Park) – which is the main local point of interest, as well as a plant for exploitation and bottling of mineral water. In 1890, São Lourenço was the first brand of mineral water to be bottled in Latin America. Until 1992, this activity was carried out by French company

Perrier, which operated only in the Oriente water source. In that very year, the company started to be controlled by Nestlé and in 1994, this Swiss company began to exploit the water springs of São Lourenço and also the management of the location of Parque das Águas (Nestlé, 2014).

From 1994 to 1996, the company increased the production of bottled water by starting to exploit a new water source called Primavera. Two situations were then configured: a) a significant increase in the volume of water exploitation, reducing the volume of water for other sources and activities carried out by the population and by tourists; and b) the bottling of mineral water from Primavera source, which would undergo demineralization process, that is, minerals naturally present in water were extracted and specific salts were added. This means that instead of selling bottled mineral water from Primavera source, the company changed its marketing to selling from this time on “chemical water” (Oliveira, 2011; Grupo Amarágua, 2013).

Water demineralization is prohibited by the Brazilian constitution and its use by Nestlé reveals the coloniality of nature, which reinforces the untying of the relationship among nature, the ecosystem, and the communities. Coronil (2005) points out that corporate control of highly sophisticated technologies has enabled companies to enhance the conversion of nature into a commodity, into a product, that captures new elements for the market and creates other ones from nature itself (techno nature).

Noncompliance with the law is not something that changes the plans of corporations, which in turn perceive the periphery laws as applicable only to those whose roots are in the ‘colony’ and not to those who see themselves as authentic representatives of capitalism (i.e. big private corporations), who put themselves as owners of natural resources (such as commodities). In this context, marked by the coloniality of power, the market requirements over the local laws prevail, even when corporations explore natural resources in that very country. The hegemonic discourse operates through corporate actions and official reports, spreading to other sectors of society, minimizing and canceling the effect of legal provisions.

Since 1997, the *Cidadania pelas Águas* group (later known as Amarágua) began receiving and disseminating reports that the Parque das Águas waters were changing in taste and volume. The movement is in this water struggle for almost 20 years (Serviço Geológico do Brasil, 2014).

The group aims to ensure greater rigor, control, and protection to the explored area; to fight for changing the country’s current law – which regards water as a mineral

ore – and to create jurisprudence on the predatory extraction of this natural resource/common good (Almeida, 2014; Grupo Amarágua, 2013). Also, they plan to turn Parque das Águas into a geopark, to ensure the protection of the subsoil and to “preserve the geological heritage for future generations; to educate and teach the general public about issues related to geological landscapes and environmental issues and provide means of research for the geosciences; to ensure sustainable development (tourism)” (Serviço Geológico do Brasil, 2014, p. 1).

The group started its actions through denounces in local media (Grupo Amarágua, 2013), seeking to draw the attention of the local state authorities and of the company itself. As a matter of fact, the company did take action, by suing the newspapers and their owners due to the publications.

“The other owner, of another newspaper, he wrote an article comparing the work of Nestlé to a cloud of locusts. He was questioned in court by Nestlé, but he gave up and I thought I did not have to do so. Then he called off the lawsuit, and was such ... he didn't want to go forward, they intimidated him” (Pedro, group leader, 2015).

The comparison of the company with a cloud of locusts illustrates the destructive capacity of its operations and the difficulty on the part of the local population – those who depend on the natural resources – to control the company's performance. The narrative above shows that the company uses the law as a way to protect its hegemonic discourse, preventing other discourses from counteracting and circulating around it. The company does not bother to legitimize itself in social terms through the dialog with the community.

“We have no idea about what goes on in Nestlé. The civil society must have access. It can have the concession, but the civil society must have the right to watch” (Adélia, group leader, 2015).

The search for references in the law led the movement to more forceful actions from 1999 on when it held meetings with businessmen, residents, politicians, representatives of NGOs, to discuss the exploitation of water by Nestlé. Gradually, the meetings were becoming empty since Nestlé demonstrated its power by suing those who manifested against it. On the other hand, at those meetings, representatives of public organizations insisted on disqualifying the allegations, which contributed to the company's strength.

“The only thing that stops those people from coming out on the streets is precisely the fear, the fear of exposing themselves, in a 45,000 people town where, in the worst case, the grandson is somehow related to a politician. The most distant descendant, for instance, a grandson, is related to a politician, so his grandfather will not expose himself. There is that thing, that traditionalism, the good relations in a small town, 'no, but doctor mayor..', we can't set against him. A city councilman is an authority, Your Honor, we can't pick a fight with Your Honor” (Pedro, group leader, 2015).

In the previous fragment in which an activist explains the reasons for the non-involvement of the population in the struggle against Nestlé reveals how local traditional relations, historically constructed, are elements that facilitate corporate actions, including the illegal ones. Such relationships are established “in the worst case” when it comes to address the public issues and the collective interest. The daily relationships between the corporations and government representatives are those that may enable the flow of information, coercion and the construction of subalternity in the local context.

The Cidadania pelas Águas movement after acknowledging the fear of the supporters and the debate emptying process took the decision to take more concrete steps and initiated actions along with regulatory agencies, the public persecutor's office, and politicians, denouncing Nestlé and demanding actions. In the early 2000s, the city hall held a meeting with participation of representatives of other government agencies and NGOs and members of Cidadania pelas Águas. The meeting where

“representatives of the public authority oddly claimed that it was not an official meeting, but a meeting of citizens concerned about the future of the city of São Lourenço [...] had the clear intention of trying to convince the members of the movement that there was nothing to worry about, the city hall would allegedly have the situation under control and that, under no circumstances, our mineral waters would be at risk” (Grupo Amarágua, 2013, p. 11).

The account above shows the attempt of the local government to assume the position of resources defender (“our waters”) and also of a representative of the citizens’ interests (the city hall would have the situation under control), thus undermining the political articulations initiated by the Cidadania pelas Águas movement.

The actions of public bodies, particularly the city hall, reveal the alliances between the state and the market as complementary dimensions of a unitary process that drives the expansion of capitalism through the perpetuation of center-periphery relations (Assis, 2014), no longer explicit only through geographical dimensions, but within the dynamics of the different territories. Thus, the previous fragment, as well as the attempts to silence or coerce local activists, are ways of indicating the subaltern position of those who do not represent (or submit to) capitalist interests. Therefore, the activists find themselves in a fight not only against Nestlé but also against the government officials who has always co-opted and being aligned with the interests of the corporation.

This situation approaches what Santos (2007) calls "territorial fascism", which occurs when social actors who hold strong patrimonial capital take over control of the territory in which they operate from the state, or neutralize that control by co-opting state institutions and performing social regulation on the residents without their participation and against their interests.

In this challenging scenario, the movement still managed to retain two main action fronts: the search for supporting the legal confrontation against Nestlé water exploitation, including a complaint against the company and the search for a change in legislation on the Parque das Águas and its listing as a geopark – a situation that would prevent the exploitation of the subsoil. The second action way to seek both local and national support took place through local mobilizations, demonstrations, meetings, interviews to newspapers and magazines, dissemination through social networks.

In 2001, the movement managed to file a civil action through the public prosecutor's office against Nestlé, claiming that the exploitation of Primavera source and the demineralization of waters (since May 1999) were illegal, which meant that the profit from the marketing of Nestlé Pure Life water was characterized as illicit enrichment. Added to such complaints were the environmental damage with the disappearance of the Magnesiana source (which dried up over that period) (Grupo Amarágua, 2013).

As a result of this action, in the same year, the justice ordered the suspension of the production of Pure Life water by Nestlé. The company appealed to a higher court, won the case and returned to produce, claiming that it would have significant economic losses in the event of stopping the operations at the Primavera source, an argument that reflects the coloniality of nature. In fact, there is a legal acknowledgment of the hegemonic discourse in which nature is a commodity and the corporation has priority over it and over local interests, in order to keep their profits. However, the movement

stood firm, appealing and maintaining the process in court, while constantly pressing the prosecutors and politicians for the conviction of Nestlé.

In 2004, a public hearing was held with the participation of representatives from environmental agencies, city, state and federal governments, as well as members of Water Circuit NGOs and Nestlé. The company presented a proposal to suspend the production of Pure Life in São Lourenço, shifting it to a different location. Conversely, the company sought prior authorization of operation to another location where they were supposed to install (which was not presented at the meeting) before the vote of the responsible agency. Again, the population of São Lourenço have never been acknowledged as an interested part, and the decisions were taken without their awareness and participation.

Again, the pressure exerted by the Cidadania pelas Águas movement along with other NGOs managed to avoid the granting of the advance licensing. Disputes in court lasted from 2001 until 2006, when the prosecutor's office and Nestlé signed a Conduct Adjustment Agreement, which called for the withdrawal of the civil action against the company and the closure of the Pure Life activities, along with the prohibition of the manufacture of water with added salts from a mineral source (Grupo Amarágua, 2013). This achievement led to prohibit the production of the *Pureza Vital* water in São Lourenço, the transnational very “flagship”, responsible for the largest share of its revenues in 2014 and produced in 56 countries (Observatório Social em Revista, 2015).

This was a significant achievement for the movement against this large corporation, but not the end of the struggle. In 2013, members of the movement met with representatives of the District Attorney's Office and the Cambuquira NGO and filed a request for the Listing of the São Lourenço's Water Resources, which represents greater protection for Parque das Águas, although the operation of mineral water is still permitted.

The achievements in the legal framework demanded the movement to learn by practice and develop protection strategies. The movement's performance is marked by informality. There is no constituted legal identity, people participate as they please and the way they can, without demands or a hierarchy. Most activists attend public acts but avoid meetings with public agencies. This is another mark of colonialism that we acknowledge from the activists claims and, for that very reason, they respect the positioning of the locals. However, they also resent it.

“Since we have no legal identity in the group, they have nobody to sue, so if we keep pushing things to one another, they won't find anyone. It's our trump, you know? (...) I

don't know, [...]I don't know who came up with that. This is the legal way we have to get away from those guys. We have to be bandits just like them” (Pedro, group leader, 2015).

The previous section shows that the resistance is not taken in a homogeneous and structured manner. Formality was not missed in this group; furthermore, it is necessary to protect one another to maintain the legitimacy of their ideals. Resistance strategies are adapted according to the available resources and the movements performed by the corporation. Therefore, in the field dominated by the corporation, it is necessary to use unorthodox and seemingly incorrect strategies in the view of the group member themselves, who reveal their inquietude by stating that *“we have to be bandits just like them”*.

Although they have to use their own resources to carry out activities without any physical space or support, the activists choose to do so, because the creation of a structure, the formalization, would require resources that are not easy to obtain. According to them, all local NGOs related to environmental protection are in some way linked to the government, which implies dependence. The formal and traditional model of organization tends to adapt to relationships that are defined by the capitalist game, losing its origins and its focus.

“They are used to it, they've got used to it, to win over us because of our lack of structure ... To defend themselves against us they don't need to stop, because they have a legal body with 40 attorneys (...), so they keep it like that, they bet on that all the time and they manage to be successful, but we won't give up our fight, we have to find successors (...)” (Pedro, group leader, 2015).

Moreover, the lack of structure, resources, and a larger staff also makes the battle more challenging. The attention is focused, above all, on the continuity of the movement. After nearly 20 years, with few activists, even with important achievements such as the prohibition of demineralization and sale of Pure Life, the movement has not legitimized itself in the municipality. The hegemonic discourse is still strong enough to define the relationships in the local context.

The personal costs of being part of the resistance are very high, although the social benefit – stopping water exploitation and demineralization in the city – is targeted at those who live in or visit the site (the tourists) and even those who consume bottled water and often do not know what they are consuming. The assessment of the importance and

significance of the movement's achievements goes unnoticed by activists, feeding a certain sense of powerlessness.

“We realize we are powerless, the feeling of powerlessness is rather strong, I got depressed for knowing that nothing was making progress, you know, for seeing the society omitting themselves, not caring, not valuing... so, the entities that... corporate members, businessmen, mayors, councilmen, judges, prosecutors, won't give the answers we need and that they should give us, they don't strive, they put everything in a water bath to see if we get tired and we are about to quit (...)” (Adélia, group leader, 2015).

As for Nestlé, the colonial difference is what allows the institutional, political, economic and social relations in this context to favor the emergence of the coloniality of power, suppressing the discourses of those who live on the oppressed and exploited side of the colonial difference, or in other words, the border thinking people. The abolition of border thinking renders the counter-hegemonic discourse invisible, reinforcing colonialism, which in turn nourishes the colonial difference.

Final reflections

In this study we aimed to reconstruct Nestlé's fresh water exploitation in the local context of São Lourenço, Brazil, from a decolonial approach. By doing so, we could better understand the effects of its operations through the eyes of those who oppose and resist Nestlé's strategies.

As previously highlighted by Mignolo (2003, p. 357): “The power of coloniality is embedded in the state and as such it produces the colonial difference and represses the possibilities of thinking from it”. Following this position, we found that the social mobilization against the exploitation of mineral waters of São Lourenço (Minas Gerais) by Nestlé plays a political role in seeking the decolonization of power, rebuilding the socio-historical and culturally constructed power relations.

From the decolonial perspective and from the locus of enunciation, the resistance movement against Nestlé depicts the power of subaltern border thinking since it makes ‘another’ perspective and ‘another’ way of thinking visible, diverging from the Eurocentric and dominant perspective of knowledge. So, this approach changes local people's condition of subordination and invisibility. Thus, this border thinking has historically and culturally impacted the hegemonic power relations of the transnational over nature. In this case, we aimed to build from this study new forms of enunciation and

knowledge that causes cracks in the coloniality of power, which insists on a single hegemonic discourse.

In short, although the company sets itself in a superior position to those who live on the location of São Lourenço, the movement of Cidadania pelas Águas (later renamed as Amarágua) organized themselves in order to resist the commoditization of water, defend the local natural sources and the spring. Moreover, the group revealed the invisible and naturalized power relation between them and Nestlé. Therefore, they have stressed the transnational strategies of cooptation, coercion and force to legitimize actions that are not even legal (such as the demineralization of water). They did that through the manifestation of their doubts, complaints, and projects for the municipality. Finally, the analysis of the trajectory of this particular kind of resistance reveals how colonial difference is part of the local identity, which does not mean that there are no possibilities of struggle, confrontation, and even a few wins.

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