

Gsurc 2014 Proposal

Title: The Belo Monte Dam Complex its effects on Indigenous Communities

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Abstract: Hydroelectric Dam projects have become increasingly controversial in the past two decades. Hydropower projects have occurred in countries all over the world, like Brazil, Canada, Ethiopia, Guyana, Malaysia, and Peru (Survival International 2010). What all these projects have in common is that they displace native peoples. I use the example of the Belo Monte dam project to illustrate the issues that come along with building large dams, and how they affect the surrounding communities. In this paper I discuss the history of the Belo Monte dam, the ramifications from building the complex, and alternatives that would better suit the parties involved in the controversy to illustrate how the construction of Belo Monte is an act of structural violence. The definition I use for structural violence comes from Galtung, violence built into the structure that shows up as unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances (Galtung 1969:171). The Belo Monte Dam Complex forces indigenous populations to move from their native lands to a life they are not used to nor want to be a part of. This complex not only affects the indigenous populations but also the lower economic populations surrounding the area. The only people gaining from the complex are people who belong to the highest socioeconomic status in Brazil.

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