

Relocations in the city of Encarnación, Paraguay. Urban and socio-economic effects.

Giménez Castro Gloria¹, Villa Gloria², Brites Walter³

^{1,2} (CIDUNAE. Centro de Investigación y Documentación de la UNAE/ Universidad Autónoma de Encarnación, Paraguay. ³ CONICET-IESYH. Argentina.

Abstract: This paper is about the problem of the socioeconomic conditions of the homes relocated by the Yacyretá Hidroelectric Project in the city of Encarnación, Paraguay. Such approach analyzes the uncertainty and vulnerability generated by the relocation and socio-urban transformation programs. In this sense, the objective is to know and characterize the economic, labor and health problems that families are going through and, at the same time, analyze what are the main daily adversities that the population must face. Methodologically, the research starts from a mixed approach, quantitative and qualitative approach with descriptive design, since the research focuses on knowing aspects related to subsistence practices, within the framework of the socioeconomic and environmental vulnerability of families, analyzing dimensions related to culture, to understand how is the way of life resettled families, the experience of the changes in the order of socio-housing and economic processes.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In this article we will discuss the analysis of compulsive relocation of a group of riverside population and poor of the city of Encarnación, (Paraguay) and its incidence both in the loss of the right to urban space, as well as in the reproductive practices of those affected families. The Yacyretá project responsible for the production of electrical energy and located 90 kilometers downstream on the Paraná River, flooded approximately 846 hectares of the city's surface, both by the elevation of the river and by the internal streams to the city, configuring a new water front, that was useful for the development of new areas and renovation¹. In addition, in the city of Encarnación and its suburbs, it generated the relocation of 6.854 families. The relocation process was intermittent and it lasted a lot, about two decades, generating a situation in which the population involved attended a process of territorial exclusion (euphemistically called urban renewal). Context in which, the construction of the new coastal front was an official eradication plan to move them to different areas of the city.

The most traditional neighborhoods that were removed were: Mboi Ka'ê, Santa Rosa, Barril Paso, Bernardino Caballero, Carlos Antonio López, Obrero, San José, San Blas and Pacú Cua, among others. In different sections, most of these neighborhoods were characterized by illegality and informality in land use. Some of these neighborhoods were relocated to points more distant from their places of origin and others, although they were resettled in closer areas, nevertheless lost their networks of subsistence.

In general, the displacement of a more integrated urban area to a more distant and isolated one strongly influenced the level of subsistence practices of families. While the place of origin facilitated the development of certain informal activities that the surrounding area has; it reduces (or eliminates) the cost of transport and made possible a wider access to the urban labor market; thus, as the maintenance of the social anchorage in structured social networks according to the prolonged residence time. The most distant location of the urbanized areas of the city demands and potency the creation of alternative activities to cover domestic needs, which cannot be met, due to the lack of nearby services; they increase the cost in transport and even, they affect the possibilities of incorporation into the urban labor market, generated by remoteness to the old sources of employment. Situation that on the other hand also meant having to build new social networks in the new socio-neighborhood context.

In the city of Encarnación, massive relocations were argued in order to greatly alleviate the problems arising from the rapid growth of the city and the increase in urban poverty. From then on, the peculiar characteristic of these eradication processes, are rigorously and consciously planned, investment programs that involved interventions that always progress irremediably over the occupied territory, relocating the poor population in peripheral spaces. However, the accumulated experience in relocation matters indicates that such

processes act by transforming the structure and composition of the family, including the destruction of their internal productive capacities and increasing the lack and vulnerability.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research was based on a socio-economic and labor survey, which aimed to gather information that makes it possible to know critical points of the relocated population, in order to analyze the various situations of vulnerability and exclusion between those segments of the population which were relocated by Yacyretá proyect and that currently live in housing complexes.

For the realization of this socio-economic survey, were taken as an analysis unit to households that were relocated, taking as analysis unit the head of household (or the adult person who was at the time of application of the instrument). It has been made a representative sample of the population settled in each housing complex, both in Encarnación and in its suburbs area Cambyretá.

In the following table, is specified the sample size based on the relocated homes according to housing complex.

Table no 1.Housing complexes and number of cases analyzed

	Housing complex	Number of homes	Sample size
Encarnación	San Isidro	1.661	41
	San Pedro	1.972	50
	Itá Paso	674	17
	Los Arrabales	25	5
	Buena Vista	601	15
Cambyretá	Arroyo Porá	1.504	38
	San Francisco	88	8
Total		6.525	174

Other methodological procedures

For analytical purposes, was articulated the survey with qualitative methodologies based on semi-structured interviews with neighbors. The survey coordinators conducted interviews about problems and needs in socio-economic and health aspects in each of the areas identified for the completion of the survey.

Being, as we said, an exploratory-descriptive investigation, it was decided not to structure the research based on the a priori hypothesis approach, as is usual in numerous qualitative investigations². Anyway it is based on some supposed guides: a- the displacement, generated a state of crisis to a whole set of practices that allowed the subsistence of the domestic units exceeding - in a few cases - their response capabilities, b- so that currently, domestic practices and activities, aimed at satisfying reproductive needs, are conditioned by the specific characteristics of the urban context in which they reside. A situation that would imply strong rearrangements and / or transformation of domestic subsistence practices under conditions of increased uncertainty.

The study had a descriptive scope in combination with qualitative and quantitative methodologies of information gathering. During the development of the field work, it was taken a significant sample of cases (domestic units) for which both surveys and interviews were used. In addition, during the course of the investigation, were conducted observations and group interviews (structured and unstructured) to various informants making use of (anthropological and sociological) techniques for recording and analyzing information.

III. RESULTS

In the city of Encarnación, the relocated inhabitants were occupying a narrow margin that limited the coast of the Paraná River and large urban creek. The area was made up of popular neighborhoods with informal constructions: Mboi Ka'ê, Santa Rosa, Barril Paso, Bernardino Caballero, Carlos Antonio López, Obrero, San José, San Blas and Pacú Cua, among others. All of them settled on a surface characterized by stony, large slopes and waterlogged soils. The fundamental characteristic of these urban lands was their low market value; in addition, they were predominantly occupied by "illegal" settlements (that is, by people who have built homes without permission on private and / or public properties).

It is important to note, that this very low-income coastal population was characterized by a precarious and sporadic labor insertion in the vicinity of the area; so that the labor activities developed by these inhabitants combined several circumstances that highlighted the low qualification of the workers and the high incidence of "black work" (informal work). En that sense, that population had as its main occupation; brickwork (where instability is traditional in Paraguay); the provision of services to the urban area; the domestic service and the

realization of a wide variety of informal activities included in the “changas” system (temporary jobs paid on piecework).

Figure no 1. Map of Encarnación and location of urban neighborhoods affected by Yaciretá.

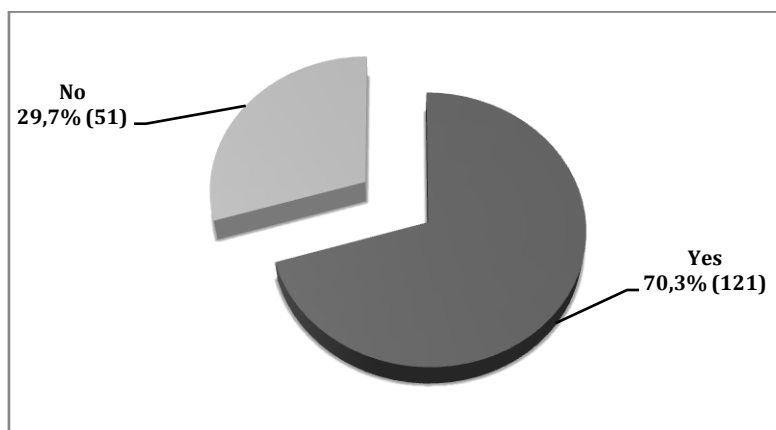


It is worth noting that “a large part of this poor population” from its beginnings grew simultaneously articulated to the sectors bordering on higher socio-economic strata. From there on, arises another very particular characteristic of that local population: “the plot of relations socially linked with the possibilities of space”. There they mainly carried out work activities, working either as domestic servants (washers, cooks, babysitters etc.) and in the case of men doing work related with the construction (masonry, electrical plumbing, gardening, painters, etc.) and other activities of maintenance and repair of homes. In addition, the old commercial circuit (Zona Baja) was a source of resources and jobs for street and informal sales.

The first relocation experience in the city begins in 1994 and then continues intermittently between 1999 and 2003, the relocation process being more intense between 2008 and 2010. One of the most traumatic consequences of relocation has been the loss of the identity of the neighborhoods, and in the economic aspect the breakdown of subsistence strategies and unemployment.

As can be seen in figure 1, approximately 30% of the heads surveyed were unemployed at the time of the survey implementation. Although it is important to note that, among the employed persons there is a heterogeneity of work situations, many performed intermittently and informally (62%), in jobs characterized by the modality of changas in domestic service, masonry, street sales, etc.).

Graphic no. 1. The head of household do you currently have a job?



In general terms, the relocated population residing in these housing complexes has been characterized as being families with a high level of poverty and vulnerability: Innumerous members, low income, high level of unemployment, etc. These main problems of the domestic economy are related to the recurring difficulties of instability of monetary income. On the other hand, the repeated complaints and demands of the resettled population are widely disseminated, from dissatisfaction with some characteristics of the houses, on resettlement sites, irregularities in the provision of services, to general discomfort for the responsibility that the new life legal imposes: payment for water and electricity service, transportation, taxes, etc. Unlike its previous way of life, the change implied the increase of a new expense structure.

Table no 2. Carrying out self-productive activities at home.

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Accumulated percentage
Valid	No data	3	1,7	1,7	1,7
	no	119	69,2	69,2	70,9
	si	50	29,1	29,1	100,0
	Total	172	100,0	100,0	

Table no 3. Type of self-production.

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Accumulated percentage
Valid	homemade bread	16	9,3	9,3	9,3
	chipa				
	Vegetable garden	21	12,2	12,2	21,5
	Chicken breeding	5	2,9	2,9	24,4
	Others	8	4,7	4,7	29,1
	No data	122	70,9	70,9	100,0
Total		172	100,0	100,0	

Although about 70% of respondents have stated that they do not carry out self-production activities, however, the dimension analyzed is key to understanding the livelihood strategies of the families in question. It is often interpreted that many times the irregularity and unpredictability of labor income are compensated, in part, by indirect income catchment strategies such as the development of food self-production activities. The latter, take on significant importance, insofar as they appear as a mechanism that helps to alleviate the unfavorable situations of those families that fail to obtain sufficient cash income, as to buy in the market, the basic subsistence products.

Currently, 29% of relocated families complement monetary income with some type of productive household activity, whether through the cultivation of small home gardens; the raising of chickens or, the elaboration of homemade bread and other foods made based on flour. Resources that are destined for domestic consumption, but also occasionally for sale.

Table no. 4. Is the production activities for sale or consumption?

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Accumulated percentage
Valid	Sells	13	7,6	7,6	7,6
	Consume at home	29	16,9	16,9	24,4
	Others	4	2,3	2,3	26,7
	No data	126	73,3	73,3	100,0
	Total	172	100,0	100,0	

The percentage of families that turn to the sale of self-production (homemade bread, chipa, generally) is very small (7.6%), but significant at the same time, since it allows to see the complementation of income. It is important to point out that the families that have turned to the realization of such activities work in their own gardens: they have fenced a portion of land; fertilized the land and, planted the different species of vegetables (onions; parsley; cabbage; tomatoes; lettuce; carrots; zapallos; etc.).The fact of having large varieties of vegetables in the gardens, is seen by the relocated as a great "economic contribution", since it allows them to obtain part of their diets without the need to acquire those products in the market, which They achieve minimum monetary savings that lead to the purchase of other goods.

On the other hand, with regard to health, State assistance is a critical situation, not to say absent, because 67.4% of respondents say they "never" receive assistance from the State's social programs, at margin of aid that EBY has brought relocated families at the time of the relocations. In the opinion of some neighbors only sometimes in an isolated and discontinuous manner (21.5%) they claim that are usually assisted.

Table no 5. Where do you go to attend?

		Frecuency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Accumulated percentage
Válidos	Encarnación Central Hospital	92	53,5	53,5	53,5
	Health post in the area	39	22,7	22,7	76,2
	Private clinic and / or sanatorium	34	19,8	19,8	95,9
	Traditional Medicine /	2	1,2	1,2	97,1
	Others				
	Does not attend	4	2,3	2,3	99,4
	No data	1	,6	,6	100,0
	Total	172	100,0	100,0	

Currently, 22.7% of the households surveyed have members attending the local health post or neighborhood health center. However, beyond the equipment and coverage of services provided in the neighborhood, a significant number of households: 53.5% attend the central hospital of Encarnación, promptly to attend those medical specialties that not provided by the health center of your neighborhood or, which lends in an insufficient way. While 19.8% of the households surveyed have members attending a clinic and / or private sanatorium, these homes have medical assistance coverage and are usually affiliated with a social work or medical insurance.

IV. DISCUSSION

The mechanisms of relational insertion in the neighborhood and the growth of domestic self-production are, in general, defensive practices in the context of uprooting and vulnerability increased by the relocation process. The reconfiguration of the domestic organization, emerges as a means to get ahead of the turbulent economic and social conditions. The impact of the displacement processes has unleashed great social and economic difficulties on the affected households; as a result, some transformations in the domestic organization began to "become visible", as well as various modalities of responses to the growing situations of vulnerability caused by forced displacement. The multiplication and deepening of the deficiencies, as a result of the compulsory relocation has generated a "flexibility" at the level of the domestic organization according to the hardness of the circumstances.

In this sense, the transformations imposed by the relocation process have led to a chronic situation of lack and uprooting that, strengthened and reoriented the reorganization of domestic roles based on the search for income, that is, the means (monetary and non-monetary) necessary to reproduce and sustain a devalued style of consumption. As new limitations emerge, the objectives, criteria and decisions that reorient the modalities of reproduction become crucial: who goes out to work; who is unemployed; who goes to school; who is looking for some alternative source of income; among other issues of vital importance. This practices mean a permanent rearrangement of the distribution of the responsibilities of each and every member, in order to maintain and reproduce the domestic unit.

In this sense, with the advent of compulsive displacement many domestic units have not only changed in their structure, but also in their composition and behavior, as a result of the deep socio-spatial change, that has caused the loss of important sources of work and the fissure of the stable socio-family networks of sociability in which they were inserted. Such changes not only had an impact on the labor dimension, but also on the same domestic organization of the groups. In this sense, the uprooting reigning and the widespread neighborhood discomfort, highlight the growing situations of vulnerability to which the relocated are subjected. In other words, exclusion processes characterized by a “culture of the aleatory”.

Thus, among relocated people, domestic groups largely reflect a particular modality of “strategic organization”. In this sense, the structure of the domestic group constitutes not only an objective of the strategies, but precisely an instrumental component of these strategies³. Faced to the specific situation of the relocated process and the increased vulnerability, the families develop a diversity of strategic responses; responses that aim to sustain subsistence and reproduction.

Currently, the precarious conditions and poverty, in which the affected people are immersed, force the domestic units to generate new organizational modalities and maximize the establishment of instrumental relations, such as the generation of networks of intra-community and clientelistic relations with influential individuals⁴. These networks of relationships valued among the poor constitute a “social capital”: the set of means and strategies (relationships and sociability techniques, practices, and rationalities) that an individual or family have in very unequal levels of profitableness and depending on their position within the framework of environments or fields relational.

In a context of increasing vulnerability and poorness, the deployment of a set of strategic practices by relocated domestic groups is prioritized as a necessary instance to guarantee the reproduction and continuity of certain living conditions. In this sense, strategies emerge as organizational (and relational) models adopted at the domestic level, for the solution of the growing problems of vulnerability to which the deprived sectors are exposed. According to this perspective, the situation of lack and poverty of certain social sectors is vulnerable from the conditions of fragility and insecurity. The forced displacements “tending to throw them” towards the field of exclusion, act at the same time as triggers for the development of various strategies.

There are numerous researchs that suggest that the fundamental problem of relocations is inextricably linked to the survival of the most depressed sectors: such processes act deconfiguring the vital framework in which the individuals and families affected are involved⁵. The work of Bartolomé (1985), carried out in the city of Posadas, points out that within the framework of relocations, housing as such would not be the most directly affected goods, but precisely a set of crucial variables for the population's vital strategies; thus the impact of the process would put a whole survival system in check, consisting of the conjunction of resources, procedures for access and exploitation of these and until interpersonal networks that were instrumental for the working of the previous system. Relocation causes a complex plot of disturbing effects that are concentrated mainly in the domestic level of reproduction: it is within the homes where the impact is generated and, where in fact the necessary domestic readjustments and readjustments will occur, to escape the situations of increased uncertainty unleashed by the relocation processes⁶.

Relocation processes generally impact negatively with greater force on the most vulnerable groups. Vulnerability that indicates a risk of losing certain conditions of existence, as a result of successive economic and social uncertainties; uncertainties that in the current coyuntura are enhanced by the growing exclusion generated by the dominant development model in the region. In Paraguay, on the other hand, the consequences of forced displacement are exacerbated from the effects of neoliberal policies: precariousness of the modes of insertion in the labor market; drop in real income; cutting social policies, increasing urban socio-spatial segregation, etc.; situations that enhance the intensification and deepening of the deterioration of the living conditions of the affected populations.

Recessive policies imply not only the reduction of social expenditures, but also the notable decrease in productive investment in cities, and consequent unemployment and underemployment; trends that in fact lead to the exacerbation of marginality and socio-spatial segregation. The increase in poverty and inequality acts to reinforce the processes of segregation and social exclusion that already exist. In this sense, the result of such changes is manifested in fragmentation; in the individualization of social processes; economic and social diversification and informalization; the polarization of the urban territory and of the social practices that develop

in it; also of the conflicts that occur between the different social groups. All these situations sharpen the division between a "low city" of producers and a "high city" of consumers; resulting in what has been called "a relatively benign apartheid society"⁷.

Within the context of such processes, cities are more fragmented and segmented: the popular neighborhoods are not socially or territorially integrated fully into the urban structure of the city; Thus, different areas of cities are increasingly beginning to objectify territorial segregation due to social inequalities. Therefore, the slums in general are peripheral and difficult to access, they are hidden neighborhoods for the sectors that inhabit the modern centers of the city. Stigma marks and transforms these places into symbolically walled social spaces, that specifically indicate a clear boundary between those who are part and are beneficiaries of developed modernity (those included) and those who are excluded from it. These sectors are mostly immersed in the context of an illegal city, as they cannot access both the land market and the housing market, due on their situation of economic, social and political exclusion. In this sense, this whole process of deterioration leads to a loss of the right to urban space, as Oscar Oszlak points out, (1991: 24):... the right to space entails various externalities closely linked to the location of housing or economic infrastructure, such as education, recreation, the source of work, health care, transportation or public services. (...) Therefore, the right to urban space must be understood, *lato sensu*, as a right to enjoy the social and economic opportunities associated with the location of the home or social activity. Losing or suffering the restriction of that right may mean, in addition to the eventual physical uprooting, the deterioration of the conditions of material life in each of the dimensions in which externalities related to spatial location existed⁸.

Many studies⁹ maintain that currently the new spatial organization of cities, at a socioeconomic conjuncture unfavorable to the urban poor, consolidates precarious and "illegal" forms of habitat, such as villas; settlements of poverty, ghettos; etc. Process that generally accompanied by compulsive displacements (in the context of the increase and expansion of speculative urban investment) tends to concentrate the poorest sectors in new urbanizations, in new neighborhoods established on the margins of the city, located on the periphery, unleashing new problems and new challenges for the affected populations. In this direction, the new urbanization guidelines are effectively oriented towards the generation of an increasingly dualized or polarized city, creating "a city for the rich" and a "non-city for the poor". Thus, the new socio-spatial configuration of the city, that establishes the geographic concentration of poverty and the accumulation of different types of marginalization in "relegation territories", begins to constitute survival spaces for the "excluded"¹⁰.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The neighborhoods of destination, are constituted as a social space loaded with lacks, generated from a set of eradication decisions that have implied for its inhabitants, the loss of the right to urban space and precariousness in their living conditions. Process that takes place within the framework of turbulent socio-economic conditions. The authoritarian and eradication policy imposed "from above" was established as an "exogenous and alienating" force, that has tended to throw displaced sectors into the field of exclusion and privation: uprooting and loss was not just an environment neighborhood, but in a lifestyle family; of practices and activities aimed at earn a living.

In this sense, the old sources of work of the relocated ones, which were in fact functional and productive in a relocation pre context, currently lost that significance in the new neighborhood environment; Some even became inconvenient, precisely because of the spatial distance that separates the housing complexes from the urbanized areas of the city (in terms of the urban labor market). So, the loss of social capital and the lack of work, together with the lack of "possibilities" to access an job, is accompanied by the increase of a new structure of expenses: they now live in remote areas; poorly communicated; with scarce and expensive services; that increase their isolation, their exclusion. Analyzing the processes of compulsive displacements, in terms of "social exclusion," it could be said that the population relocated today, have the peculiarity of being "doubly excluded": to the traditional situations of privation and social exclusion, it is added a drastic territorial exclusion; which implies having to live under conditions of increased uncertainty and greater vulnerability, which make their condition of poor come of more perpetual.

In this context of uprooting and poverty, the actions of the affected sectors do not constitute spontaneous responses to domestic privation, but an attempt to build self-response practices to the uncertainty of their living conditions; to the problematization and awareness of the growing situations of isolation, vulnerability and poverty to which they are forced to live daily. Therefore, it is necessary to emphasize that the various strategies developed by the domestic units do not imply a unilinear, homogeneous and necessary sequence for all relocated domestic groups. It is really about various organizational practices and modalities deployed by the different domestic group to ensure their subsistence and alleviate the growing situations of vulnerability to which they are exposed day by day.

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