!Patagonia Sin Represas! Hydropower Development and the Competing Spheres of Power in Argentine and Chilean Patagonia

Joseph Mac Bell

*University of Mississippi. Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College*

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!Patagonia Sin Represas!
Hydropower Development and the Competing Spheres of Power in Argentine and Chilean Patagonia

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By Joseph Mac Weld Bell

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Approved by:

_________________________
Advisor: Dr. Marcos Mendoza

_________________________
Reader: Dr. William Schenck

_________________________
Reader: Professor Catherine Janasie
Abstract

The central question of this research thesis is: How have public-private partnerships to develop hydropower been shaped by competing forces in corporate, state, and civil society and how have these forces impacted the HidroAysén and the Represas Patagonias projects in Chile and Argentina, respectively? This thesis focuses on the competing discourses of the corporate, state, and civil society, along with their relative strengths, weaknesses, degrees of risk taking and risk sharing, and the level of public and private investment. As of December 2017, the HidroAysén project in Chilean Patagonia has been indefinitely halted, but on the other side of the border the Represas Patagonia project in Argentine Patagonia was recently approved. In this tale of two hydroelectric dams in the Southern Cone region of South America, I argue that there are two primary factors which have impacted and determined the outcomes of each project: 1) the configuration of the public-private partnership that is involved in each project and 2) the strength and scale of civil society and opposition movements. The private-public balance of corporate and state investment confronted by a well developed and transnational opposition movement created a set of factors which stymied the progress of the HidroAysén project; whereas, the public-private balance of corporate and state investment faced by a relatively weak and a predominantly regional and national opposition movement resulted in the approval of the Represas Patagonia project.
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List of Acronyms

PWD Patagonia Sin Represas (Patagonia Without Dams)

CDP Consejo de Defensa de la Patagonia (Council for the Defense of Patagonia)

SCRWD Rio Santa Cruz Sin Represas (Santa Cruz River Without Dams)

AAAAP Asociación Argentina de Abogados Ambientalistas de la Patagonia (Argentine Association of Environmental Lawyers of Patagonia)

PPP Public-Private Partnership (Asociación/Acuerdo Público Privado)

ENDESA Empresa Nacional de Electricidad (National Electricity Company)

APA Asamblea de Vecinos Autoconvocados (Autonomous Peoples Assembly)

CCALR Coalición Ciudadana Aysén Reserva de Vida (Citizen Coalition Aysén Life Reserve)

NPA Administración de Parques Nacionales (National Parks Administration)

EIA Environmental Impact Assessment

BAMA Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area
Chapter 1

Introduction

Background

The HidroAysén project in Chile and the Represas Patagonia project in Argentina represent the tale of two 21st century hydroelectric projects in Southern Patagonia. The proximity of the dams and the regional similarities provide the backdrop to compare these two projects in order to understand the success and failure of hydroelectric dam construction. In 2004, Endesa S.A., the largest electric utility company in Spain, a subsidiary of Enel the Italian energy conglomerate, announced their intention to construct dams in the Aysén Region of Patagonian Chile. In 2006, the company created a joint venture with Colbún S.A. (51% Endesa and 49% Colbún), a Chilean utility company, to create HidroAysén which would build five dams on the Pascua and Baker rivers to generate 2,750 megawatts of energy for consumption in Northern Chile via a 2,000 kilometer power line (Schaeffer 2017: 14; Patagonia Rising 2011). In 2006, after the project’s announcement, a coalition of organizations formed the Coalición Ciudadana Aysén Reserva de Vida (Citizen Coalition Aysén Life Reserve - CCALR), which sought to mobilize local organizations and build a national and international network of support to fight the construction of the dams and the flooding of 5,900 hectares in the Aysén Region (Schaeffer 2017: 15). In 2007 the Consejo de Defensa de la Patagonia (CDP) began to form a transnational network of opposition against HidroAysén which delayed the project for environmental assessment and eventually forced President Michelle Bachelet to withdraw her support (Radovic 2012: 4; Schaeffer 2017: 16). As of November 2017, the HidroAyén project - once supported by both center-left and center-right presidents - is halted and future development depends on the December 2017 presidential election.
In 2008, President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner announced the Represas Patagonia project which would construct two dams on the Santa Cruz River in the Argentine Province of Santa Cruz (Mendoza et al 2017; Télam 2008). The Santa Cruz River is located in the political home of the Kirchner family in the arid steppeland of Argentine Patagonia. Fed by glaciers within the Los Glaciares National Park (PNLG), including the Perito Moreno glacier, Lake Argentino is the source of the Santa Cruz River (Mendoza et al 2017). The Represas Patagonia project is led by an international consortium of companies: the Gezhouba Group (a state-owned Chinese construction firm), Electroingeniería Ferrerya S.A. (an Argentine construction firm) and Hidrocuyo S.A. (an Argentine hydroelectric dam construction and maintenance company) (Represas Patagonia). In the first year of the Mauricio Macri administration (2015-present), the Represas Patagonia project was suspended by the Supreme Court of Argentina until further environmental studies were conducted (Télam 2016). In September 2017, the Argentine Executive branch approved the continuation of construction of the President Néstor Kirchner and Governor Jorge Cepernic dams which form the Patagonia Represas project (Infobae 2017). Both hydroelectric projects share a balance of public and private investment - financial and political - and this thesis considers three fields of power that surround these projects: corporate, state, and civil society.

**Research Question**

The historical narrative of natural resource development, public and private investment, neoliberal and statist governments, and political stability in Argentina and Chile are topics that have received significant attention from social scientists. Since the fall of the military dictators in both countries, domestic energy development and the development of hydropower have been important economic and political topics. The privatization of public goods and the coordination
between the public and private sectors has played a crucial role in the development of each country’s development of hydropower.

The central question of this research thesis is: how have public-private partnerships to develop hydropower been shaped by competing corporate, state, and civil society forces and how these forces have impacted the HidroAysén and the Represas Patagonias projects in Chile and Argentina, respectively? Following the central research question there are a variety of important sub questions: 1) How has the presidential political agenda, in the form of political speeches, shaped hydropower development in Argentina and Chile from 2007-present and 2010-present, respectively?, 2) How has the economic narrative of the participating private corporations changed over time and what role does it play in the development of their projects?, 3) How have the social movements, Patagonia Sin Represas (Patagonia Without Dams - PWD) in Chile and Río Santa Cruz Sin Represas (Santa Cruz River Without Dams - SCRWD) in Argentina, challenged the political and economic discourse and what role have these organizations played in determining the project’s outcome?

These questions guide the inquiry of this thesis between HidroAysén in Chile, currently halted, and the Represas Patagonia project, currently beginning construction, in Argentina. Although there is abundant research regarding the history of hydropower development and water policy in each country this thesis contributes to our knowledge of the different factors that are currently determining the outcome of significant public-private partnerships in the energy sector. This topic is relevant given the changing political discourse throughout the region, the increasingly important role of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), and the growth of social movements. The comparison of these two hydroelectric projects is novel and contributes to the field by studying the Chilean and Argentine projects for the first time together. It also furthers
the research on the Argentine case which has received limited international and academic attention.

In the Argentine case, I argue the public or state component is more powerful than the private sphere creating a *public-private* dynamic; whereas in Chile, private sector influence will outweigh the public component creating a *private-public* dynamic. I argue that the balance of power will inform much of the debate and difference between the two nations and their attempts to construct the HidroAysén dam and the dams on the Rio Santa Cruz. In the end, I argue that the determining factors for the construction of the HidroAysén and the Represas Patagonia projects depends on 1) the amount of state investment in the project, financial and political, and 2) the scale and strength of the civil society and opposition movements in each case.

**Methodology**

The thesis utilizes qualitative analysis to compare two cases of hydroelectric development in Chilean and Argentine Patagonia. The data is analyzed utilizing an emergent design methodology. Themes and characteristics which intersect across sources have been identified from the primary sources to illustrate the differences and similarities between the two hydroelectric projects. Following the introduction in the first chapter and the literature review in the second chapter, the third and fourth chapters are the primary content chapters and are divided into three sections which cover the corporate, political, and social movement discourses.

Chapter Three analyzes the economic, political, and civil society discourses surrounding the HidroAysén project in Chile. Section 3.1 utilizes two primary data sources regarding corporate discourse. The first primary source is Endesa S.A.’s Annual Reports from 2010-2016 drawn from the Enel Generación Chile’s investor relations website. These annual publications catalogue the progress and evolution of HidroAysén. Secondly, I also incorporate information
from the HidroAysén website and publicity campaigns. I conducted a broad analysis of the annual reports, the company’s website, and the television publicity produced by Endesa S.A. I then identified common themes which shaped the corporate discourse surrounding HidroAysén. In order to understand the political framing surrounding HidroAysén, section 3.2 analyzes the annual speeches to the Chilean Congress from 2008-2016 (Bachelet and Piñera presidencies) and an energy development document produced in 2015 by the Bachelet administration. The analysis of these speeches and documents examines the content regarding energy development, energy deficits, water rights, and hydropower. Section 3.3, analyzes the civil society and social movement discourse via an examination of the central PWD website and the central tenets of the campaign.

Chapter Four analyzes the economic, political, and social discourses surrounding the Represas Patagonia project in the Santa Cruz region of Argentine Patagonia. Section 4.1, analyzes the corporate discourse of the project. There are three primary partners associated with the construction of the dams on the Santa Cruz river: The Gezhouba Group (a Chinese construction firm), Electroingeniería Ferreyra (an Argentine construction firm) and Hidrocuyo (an Argentine hydroelectric maintenance firm). Section 4.1 draws data from the project’s central website, social media accounts, and pertinent media sources. Section 4.2 analyzes data from Congressional speeches by former President Kirchner and President Macri along with pertinent media sources and comments from other government officials. I analyzed these speeches and published documents regarding specific references to the Represas Patagonia project along with references to energy development, energy deficits, water rights, and hydropower. Section 4.3, analyzes the data surrounding the organization, campaign, and framing of the opposition movement from the websites, social media, video campaigns, pertinent media sources, and
Facebook pages of the Asociación Argentina de Abogados Ambientalistas de la Patagonia (Argentine Association of Environmental Lawyers of Patagonia - AAAAP) and SCRWD.

I analyzed these data sources in order to identify categories throughout each section. Following the identification of themes and categories in each section, pertinent themes were highlighted in the analysis of the corporate, political, and social movement framing of each project. The primary objective of the emergent design methodology was to identify the similarities and differences between the corporate, political, and civil society discourse surrounding HidroAysén in Chile and Represas Patagonia in Argentina.

**Thesis Overview**

My thesis contains five chapters. Chapter One provides an introduction to the HidroAysén project and the Represas Patagonia project, a description of the methodology, and the thesis’ argument. Chapter Two presents the existing literature on the topic and describes the scholarly contribution of this research. Chapter Three analyzes the HidroAysén project in Chilean Patagonia and the competing fields of corporate, state, and civil society. Chapter Four analyzes the Represas Patagonia project in Argentine Patagonia and the competing fields of corporate, state, and civil society. Chapter Five concludes my thesis and discusses the primary differences between HidroAysén and Represas Patagonia.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter examines the important topics which inform the current state of HidroAysén and the Represas Patagonia project: 1) the history and political economy of Argentina and Chile, 2) water resources development, 3) the use of hydropower in both nations, 4) recent environmental movements, and 5) a global and local perspective on Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). These five topics create an important framework of knowledge surrounding the development of hydropower in Argentina and Chile in the 21st century and how corporate, political, and social discourses have shaped the outcome of these two hydroelectric projects. This chapter reviews the scholarly literature pertinent to each topic before discussing and contextualizing the argument of the thesis.

Chilean and Argentine Political Economy and History

In order to understand the breadth of Chilean history and political economy, it is important to consider three different eras: 1) 1830-1920s, 2) 1920s-1972, and 3) 1973-2000s. After 1830, Chile developed as a stable republican and authoritarian regime under the direction of Diego Portales and was known as an “autocratic republic” (101). Between 1830 and 1870 Chilean stability served as “an example for all the Spanish American Republics” (3). The Constitution of 1833 created an autocratic republic with two primary values which would last until the end of the 20th century: 1) respect for the rule of law and 2) the creation of an honest and efficient business climate through the insertion of Chile into the global market as an exporter.

1 I cite Brian Loveman’s 1979 book, Chile: The Legacy of Hispanic Capitalism, in this section on Chilean political and economic history. The cited page numbers are included throughout the section for further reference.
of raw materials (103). Although Chilean independence was marked by stability and constitutional law, the nation and its economy relied on foreign investments and foreign trade partners, the United States and Britain, that instituted a post-colonial, quasi-imperialist relationship (117).

In the interim years, between World War I and the Great Depression, the divide between the poor working class and the wealthy Chilean elite helped create the first populist party, the Partido Demócrata (164). In 1924, due to increased class tensions and turmoil in Chilean politics, a military officer named Carlos Ibáñez rose to power and installed an authoritarian regime which drafted a new constitution shifting power from the legislative to the executive branch (174-188). After the downfall of the Ibáñez regime, and the tumultuous 101-day period in 1932 with six different governments, Chilean politics would be marked by a traditional left-center-right political spectrum for the subsequent 40 years without any illegitimate or illegal transitions of power (195). The continued dependence on the exportation of raw material, primarily copper, developed the US-Chilean relationship and the failure of import-substitution industrialization created a restless leftist labor force that began to seek a new social order (201). In 1970 the new left-wing coalition named Unidad Popular presented Salvador Allende as president, promising a “peaceful road to socialism” (244). Elected with only 37% of the vote, the Marxist Allende faced near insurmountable opposition from the Chilean electorate, the military, and the United States and within three years the Chilean Congress called for the military to re-establish the “rule of the constitution and the law.”

On September 11, 1973 General Augusto Pinochet and the military junta rapidly and harshly transformed the Chilean political system through a brutal and bloody military dictatorship (261). The military junta established the rule of law through oppressive measures
and modernized the economy by deregulating the markets and slashing government services (268). In 1980, the Pinochet government enshrined its political and economic doctrine in a new constitution legitimizing the rule of the government while also preparing the road for a peaceful transition of power (303). In 1988, the candidate of the Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia, Patricio Aylwin, won with 55% of the vote against Pinochet. The election of the Christian Democrat Aylwin was a monumental moment in Chilean politics, but the transformation wrought by Pinochet and the military junta limited constitutional opportunity for change and imposed the neoliberal political and economic model (311).

In order to understand the breadth of Argentine history and political economy, it is important to consider three different eras: 1) 1830-1914, 2) 1915-1975, and 3) 1976-2000s. Following the battle for independence, the region of Rio de la Plata fell into civil war and conflict until 1829, when caudillo Juan Manuel de Rosas rose to power as the governor of Buenos Aires (Rock 1987: 104). Following the demise of Rosas authoritarian regime in 1852, Argentina quickly transformed into a nation-state. It developed its constitution in 1853, expanded international trade relationships with Britain, and elected Bartolomé Mitre as the first president of the Argentine Republic in 1862 (Rock 1987: 125). Mitre developed the Argentine bureaucracy, the judicial system, and the tax system and most importantly he began the economic revolution that would carry the nation to international prominence by the beginning of World War I. The three key factors to economic growth in Argentina were foreign investment, strong foreign trade of raw materials, and European immigration, all of which expanded and modernized the economy creating one of the richest per capita nations by 1914 (Rock 1987: 166-172).

Following electoral reform in the early part of the 20th century, Hipólito Yrigoyen
assumed the presidency in 1916. As a candidate of the left, Yrigoyen sided with university students and working class trade unions and although he achieved little legislative success his actions worried the military establishment (Rock 1987: 202). In 1928, Yrigoyen pledged to nationalize foreign companies and his anti-imperialist rhetoric threatened the Argentine political and economic order. With the onset of the Great Depression in 1929 and the decline of the Argentine economy his government was overthrown by a military coup d’état in 1930 (Rock 1987: 213). In June 1943 a military junta seized control of the government until General Juan Perón and his coalition of the urban working class and trade unions won the 1946 election. This new political coalition, the Peronistas, aligned the military with urban and working class citizens that sought industrialization, economic independence, and working class development (Rock 1987: 214-232). Perón promised a “New Argentina” governed by principles of “social justice, political sovereignty, and economic independence” with programs and policies for the working class, anti-imperialist rhetoric, and investment in public works, all of which would influence subsequent administrations including Argentina’s military regimes (Rock 1987: 262-266).

The third stage of Argentine history covers the period of time since the fall of Isábel Perón in 1975 in which several presidents sought to reform the Argentine political and economic system while fighting against an unstable economy. In the initial period following the Perón era, the Argentine military held power (1976-1983) and attempted to install a “politics of order” (Romero 2013: 236-239). In 1983, Argentina transitioned back to civilian government under Raul Alfonsin and the subsequent twenty years of Argentine political and economic history was defined by economic crises, efforts to deregulate and privatize the economy, and the implementation of the Washington Consensus (Romero 2013: 254, 285-286). In 2003, with the 2001 economic crisis in the past, Néstor Kirchner won the presidential election and began to
implement a neo-developmentalist and statist approach to the Argentine economy and state (Romero 2013: 327; Mendoza 2017).

**Water Resources**

One of the most difficult aspects of water resource governance is creating functional policies and economic frameworks as surface water is a highly mobile resource and a resource with a high level of variability and uncertainty over periods of time (Bauer 2009: 597). In Latin America, water has often been considered a public good provided by the government, but beginning in the 1970s and especially in the 1980s and 1990s the neoliberal framework and privatization efforts in the region targeted water governance via privatization, marketization, and commodification of water resources (Harris 2013: 20). Physical geography is an important aspect of the water resources discussion as Chile is endowed with a plentiful quantity of short and steep rivers running from east to west; whereas, in Argentina 66% of the country is arid or semi-arid with a relatively small amount of rivers that flow west to east, including in the arid steppe land of Argentine Patagonia (Bauer 2009: 596; Ortega 2009: 1).

From the Spanish colonial period to the mid-20th century Chilean water systems recognized some private rights to water, but in general water resources were subjected to governmental regulation (Bauer 2009: 597). In the late 1960s, with a center-left government in power, governmental authority was expanded over water management as a part of agricultural reform (Bauer 2009: 597). In 1981, seven years after the rise of the military dictatorship in Chile the government created the 1981 Water Code which established water as private property and also a fully marketable commodity (Bauer 2009: 596). The Water Code strengthened private water rights as separate from land ownership, made water freely tradable, and reduced the role of government to regulation under the General Water Directorate (DGA) (Bauer 1997: 641).
Importantly, the Water Code failed to establish the prerequisites for effective water markets by not creating “fees for non-use,” or taxes to minimize speculation of water rights by the private sector (Bauer 2009: 600-601). There are two important outcomes of the 1981 Chilean Water Code for non-consumptive water rights, those that legally do not harm downstream users such as hydropower, that are especially important to consider for this thesis. Due to the law’s laissez-faire framework, non-consumptive water rights have been concentrated in the hands of few owners involved in the electricity sector who have participated in intense speculation and created a monopoly (Bauer 2009: 601-602). After fifteen years of governance by the Concertación (1990-2005), which included much debate on the Water Code, modest yet successful reform was passed to improve administrative practices and establish “fees for non-use” (Patentes por el no use) which have aided in diminishing speculation and encouraging development of water resources (Bauer 2009: 604).

Water resources in Argentina have a unique history. Throughout the 19th and 20th century the national government was the primary actor in establishing the legal framework surrounding water resources and expanding access. The aforementioned political and economic context of Argentina aided in the creation of large state owned enterprises such as Agua y Energía Eléctrica S.E. (Water and Electric Power) in 1947, which developed water infrastructure throughout the nation, including the construction of dams (Ortega 2009: 1). In 1994, the reformed Argentine Constitution assigned the rights to natural resources, including water, exclusively to the twenty-four national provinces of Argentina (Ortega 2009: 1). Although water rights were assigned to the provinces, in the early 1990s the statist approach to development was almost entirely abandoned, and the neoliberal policy imposed by President Carlos Menem (1989-1999) liquidated and privatized state-owned enterprises that included water and power
companies and pre-existing hydroelectric dams (Ortega 2009: 1). In 1993, potable water services and municipal water systems in the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area (BAMA) were purchased by a consortium of international businesses known as Aguas Argentinas S.A. (Azpiazu 2010). In 2003, Néstor Kirchner began to question the privatization of water resources in Buenos Aires due to inadequate services and increasing prices (Azpiazu 2010). In 2006, following several conflicts with the international consortium, President Kirchner rescinded the contract and created the 90% state owned company Agua y Saneamientos Argentinos to manage and supply fresh water in the BAMA (Azpiazu 2010). It is important to recognize that this privatization never reached the level of the Chilean Water Code of 1981 and left far more responsibilities regarding water law to the state, including public ownership of water rights (Ortega 2009: 2). The differing development of water resources in Chile and Argentina is important to understanding the evolution of hydropower in each country.

**Hydropower**

Many factors have contributed to the evolution of hydropower in the region, but there are several characteristics that are important to understanding hydropower development. Hydropower has high fixed costs (long and expensive construction that requires major capital investment) and relatively low variable costs (low maintenance costs) when compared to other forms of energy production (Bauer 2009: 608). In the last two decades, hydropower projects have been a crucial part of Argentine and Chilean development due to increased demand for energy, energy crises, and attempts to minimize carbon emissions (Bauer 2009: 584). The geographer, Carl J. Bauer, notes three global trends that are determining the reality of hydropower development: 1) climate change (a frequent argument for increased use of hydropower), 2) privatization and markets (a catalyst for private development), and 3) ecosystem
services (an argument for the alternative use of land) (Bauer 2009: 586-587). These three trends are important when analyzing the development of hydropower projects in Argentina and Chile.

There are three distinct phases of hydropower development in Chile. In the first, from the 1940s-1960s the Chilean government boosted national electrification by creating the Empresa Nacional de Electricidad (National Electricity Company - ENDESA) in 1943 which developed transmission lines and small and medium sized hydropower projects (Bauer 2009: 611-612). Between the 1960s-1990, ENDESA continued as a state-owned enterprise and built large dams in central and southern Chile, but in 1982 the military dictatorship passed the Electric Law restructuring the national electricity sector and privatizing ENDESA (Bauer 2009: 614-615). In the third stage of hydropower development from 1990-present, hydropower rapidly expanded in Chile due to increased energy demand and the influx of private capital to the energy sector (Bauer 2009: 614). In 2010, hydropower accounted for 35% of electricity in Chile (Coviello et al 2012: 14).

During the third period of hydropower development in Chile several important events occurred including the sale of ENDESA from Chilean owners to Spanish owners which complicated the dynamics regarding energy independence and development of natural resources (Bauer 2009: 614).
During the Menem administration (1989-1999) in Argentina, an increase in the importation of Argentina natural gas decreased the reliance on hydropower in Chile, but the subsequent crash of the Argentine economy in 2001 renewed development of hydropower (Bauer 2009: 628-629). In 2005, the approval of the Water Code Reform and the Ley Corta II created higher prices and long-term price stability for investing electricity companies (Bauer 2009: 637). These two laws increased price stability and imposed “fees for non-use,” which spurred sale or development by increasing the cost of speculation, renewing the development of Chilean hydropower.

The last 100 years of Argentine history have focused on strong social and economic growth and since the mid-20th century dams have played an important role in the development of regional economies and national integration (Ortega 2009: 1). Under the leadership of Perón, the state-owned enterprise, Agua y Energía Electrica, was created in Argentina in order to promote the electrification of Argentina and the development of dams around the country. The impetus for these projects rose out of the developmentalist strategies of the Perón administration which identified energy self-sufficiency as an important characteristic for the Argentine state (Mendoza et al 2017). Following decades of developmentalist strategy and large state financing of hydropower projects, the neoliberal government of Carlos Menem (1989-1999) transformed the energy market by privatizing state water and energy companies which effectively ended construction of dams and hydropower projects (Mendoza et al 2017; Recalde et al 2015: 7). The economic crisis experienced during the Fernando de la Rúa presidency eliminated the opportunity for hydropower development. Following the 2003 election, Néstor Kirchner reemphasized the importance of hydropower (Recalde et al 2015: 10). During the presidency of Néstor Kirchner (2003-2007), Argentina experienced 8% average GDP growth which increased demand for energy prices. Néstor Kirchner and his successor, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner
(2007-2015) both sought to increase the supply of energy, maintain low prices, and develop more national sources of energy production (Recalde et al 2015: 11). These two administrations implemented their neo-developmentalist strategy by nationalizing privately owned water and energy companies and promoting GENREN, a renewable energy program (Mendoza et al 2017). By 2010, the Economic Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean reported that 35% of the electricity generation in Argentina came from hydropower (Coviello et al 2012: 7).

In recent years the Kirchners have fast-tracked various hydropower projects, including the Represas Patagonia project to build two dams on the Santa Cruz River in Southern Patagonia (Mendoza et al 2017). In conclusion, the issues of hydropower development and water governance are importantly intertwined and changing therefore presenting new political and economic opportunities.

**Environmental & Social Movements in Chilean and Argentine Patagonia**

During the Chilean dictatorship, environmentalism flourished as one pillar of the broader opposition movement (Schaeffer 2017). Following the election of the first post-dictator president, Patricio Aylwin, the environmental movement was subsumed into the goals of the
Concertacion which maintained the neoliberal economic framework and perspective on natural resource extraction (Silva 2016: 951). The neoliberal economic framework governing Chile often marginalized – socially, politically, and economically – its southern regions, including the region’s environmental movements. Chilean Patagonia is marginalized in terms of its population and remoteness which have combined to create a culture of self-reliance and solidarity (Silva 2016: 955). This culture of self-reliance and geographic isolation in Southern Chile is essential to understanding social and environmental movements. Common explanations of the social movements in Chilean Patagonia stress that “the Patagonian identity is the base of the social movement” and that the shared cultural traditions of the fishermen and gauchos in Argentina and Chile create more commonalities than with their respective Northern citizens (Radovic 2012b: 5).

The strong regional identity of Southern Chile inspired opposition movements in the post-dictatorship era in Chile that are crucial to understanding the success of the Patagonia Sin Represas (Patagonia Without Dams (PWD)) movement. The most important predecessor to the PWD movement was the opposition to the Barrancoones coal power plant near Punta Choros in 2010. The proposed construction of this plant inspired the creation of the Movimiento por la Defensa del Medio Ambiente (Movement for the Defence of the Environment (MODEMA)) and Chao Pescao (Goodbye, Fish) which utilized traditional opposition strategies along with social media to inspire action (Schaeffer 2017). In 2010, the project was briefly approved, but eventually postponed by President Piñera after 2,000 people took to the streets of Santiago (Schaeffer 2017). The success of this movement was momentous in Chile as it recognized the power of opposition movements to impact presidential decision-making.

Although the free market economy and the political tendencies of post-dictatorship
governments in Chile generally ensured the advancement of projects, the lessons learned from
the Barrancones movement inspired the success of the PWD movement. In 2006, ENDESA, an
Italian owned conglomerate, and Colbún, a Chilean utility company, announced HidroAysén
mega-dam project which would build 5 dams on the Baker and Pascua Rivers along with a 2,300
kilometer transmission line to Santiago and Northern Chile (Radovic 2012a: 2). In 2007,
organizers founded the Consejo de la Defense de la Patagonia (Council for the Defense of
Patagonia (CDP)) (Radovic 2012a: 2). The CDP organized a coalition of actors who created a
broad agenda for the Aysén Region and included the PWD campaign. The PWD campaign can
be understood as “multi-scalar, operating locally, regionally, nationally, and globally” with a
common goal of halting dam projects in the Aysén Region due to the threat hydroelectric
megaprojects posed to communities, land ownership, the environment, and regional culture
(Schaeffer 2017; Silva 2016: 947). The success of the PWD campaign can be found in its plan to
combine local, regional, and international opposition with social media awareness and legal
battles by integrating local and regional activists, environmental organizations, religious figures,
regional business leaders in tourism and the fisheries, and politicians (Schaeffer 2017; Silva
2016: 950). In 2010, the government delayed the project for further environmental evaluation
and eventually in 2014 the HidroAysén project was rejected by the Comité de Ministros
(Committee of Ministers) (Schaeffer 2017). Although the project is currently halted there is the
possibility of a renewed effort following the 2017 Chilean presidential election.

In order to understand the opposition movements against the Represas Patagonia project
in Argentina on the Río Santa Cruz, it is necessary to consider the Chilean history of social
movements. The shared Patagonian culture creates an important base for the opposition
movement against Represas Patagonia, but there is limited academic research on the
environmental movement surrounding the Represas Patagonia project. The neoliberal economic framework in Chile is distinct from the neo-developmentalist administrations of the Kirchners in Argentina which supported state owned enterprises and development (Mendoza 2017). An important predecessor to the movement against the Represas Patagonia project is the 2002-2004 conflict between local groups in Esquel, a city in Argentine Patagonia, and the US mining company, Meridian Gold, regarding the development of a gold mine (Walter et al 2014: 18). The economy of Esquel and the wider region was based on agriculture and tourism due to its proximity to the Alerces National Park (Walter et al 2014: 18). The development of the Meridian gold mine was estimated to increase the provincial GDP by 4.6%, but the use of cyanide in the gold mining process was expected to impact the health of the community and environment (Walter et al 2014: 18-19). The potential for human and environmental damage catalyzed the organization of the Asamblea de Vecinos Autoconvocados (Autonomous People's Assembly (APA)). Their rallying cry of “No a la mina” (No to the mine) organized a coalition of 600 local community members along with specialists in chemistry, geography, medicine, journalism, law, and education in order to lobby against the development of the mine (Walter et al 2014: 20). The most important success of the APA campaign was the transnational reach of the movement as local minority and indigenous groups, national environmental organizations, and international organizations such a Greenpeace participated (Walter et al 2014: 21). The example of the Esquel conflict with the US Meridian gold mine illustrates the successful coalition which was created to halt the development of the gold mine in Argentine Patagonia.

The Represas Patagonia project was fast-tracked by the Kirchners and is located in the Santa Cruz province, the political home of the Kirchners (Mendoza 2017). The project has been billed as sustainable, necessary to meet energy demands, and good for Argentine energy
independence. Following the victory by PWD in Chile, an anti-dam movement was born across the border (Mendoza et al 2017). The Patagonian Association of Environmental Lawyers (AAAAP) and Santa Cruz River Without Dams (SCRWD) have created a coalition that combines lawyers, environmentalists, activists, outdoors adventurers, and community members. The direct inspiration for the Argentine movement was found in the shared Patagonian identity, but the movements have experienced different levels of success that are important to examine in order to understand the constraints facing social and environmental movements in Argentine and Chilean Patagonia.

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)

Public-private partnerships (Asociaciones/Acuerdos Públicos Privados - PPPs) have been widely used for decades around the world as a means of promoting economic development and infrastructure development. A PPP is a contractual agreement that implies shared ownership and responsibility between a public agency and a private company who pool resources and share risk and reward in order to create the efficient production and provision of goods and services (Akintoye et al 2015). Although the definition for PPPs is broad there are five general characteristics that exist among all types of PPPs: 1) PPPs involve two or more actors, one public and one private, 2) in PPPs each participant is a principal and can bargain on its own behalf, 3) PPPs establish long-term and stable relationships among actors, 4) each actor brings something to offer to the agreement meaning that a transfer of resources must occur, and 5) PPPs imply shared responsibility for outcomes including risks and benefits (Akintoye et al 2015). The utilization of PPPs as a financing and development mechanism has grown due to changing economic, social, and political conditions along with budgetary constraints in many developing nations (Akintoye et al 2015). The recognition of infrastructure development as an integral part
of economic development has catalyzed the use of PPPs which generally develop projects more quickly and efficiently. The general goal of PPPs around the world is to overcome preexisting public sector limitations such as a lack of capital and a lack of public sector capacity, resources, and specialized expertise (Akintoye et al 2015).

In Latin America, the earliest reference to private financing in public sector infrastructure projects is from the 1970s when the World Bank participated in these financing models. The most common forms of PPPs in Latin America have been: energy generation, pipeline developments, mining developments, toll roads, waste disposal, and telecommunications (Akintoye et al 2015). Although the first PPPs in Latin America began in the 1970s a great boom occurred in the 1980s and the 1990s with the privatization of the generation, transmission, and distribution of the electricity sector (Coviello et al 2012: 5). The traditionally public good of power and electricity generation, transmission, and distribution increasingly became a good provided by the private sector as national governments became responsible for regulating the energy and electricity sectors (Coviello et al 2012: 5). In the 1990s private companies supplied 3% of telecommunications and electricity and almost no water services. By 2003 the situation in these same three sectors was transformed as 86% of telecommunications were supplied by private companies, 60% of electricity, and 11% of water services (Coviello et al 2012: 29). With increasing demand for energy in the early 2000s, PPPs have been identified as the best way to overcome the challenges of financing large energy projects, such as hydropower, which are characterized by costly initial investments, complex construction, and relatively low short-term economic returns (Coviello et al 2012: 5).
The World Bank Group has developed resources and models for understanding PPPs. The scale (see Image 3) illustrates an increasing amount of private sector participation moving from left-to-right along the diagram. HidroAysén is a project with a maximum amount of private sector participation as the water rights are owned by the international conglomerate and all financing will be provided by the private sector. However, it is important to consider the Chilean state’s active role in supporting HidroAysén and the political capital that was involved in the initial stages of the project. The Represas Patagonia project in Argentina involves the concession of a public good, being water, to a set of private companies and a long-term low interest loan from the Chinese government to the Argentine state in order to develop the hydroelectric dam. PPPs have transformed development by creating a new and dynamic tool for economic development that can balance public and private risk. As Latin America has long suffered from a dearth of capital, the nascence of PPPs has permitted the expansion of infrastructure throughout the region while improving the distribution of goods and services.
**Thesis Argument**

The thesis argues that 1) the balance of public and private leadership and 2) the strength and scale of civil society resistance in each hydroelectric development plays a significant role in determining outcomes in the face of civil society organization and resistance. In the Chilean case, HidroAysén, involves the complete privatization of water resources and the private financing of the project, therefore creating a *private-public* dynamic. Due to the creation of a strong opposition coalition, the Chilean state no longer had the desire to support the project. In Argentina, the Represas Patagonia project, divided the role of ownership, financing, and shared future benefits between the Argentine state and the Sino-Argentine business conglomerate creating a decidedly *public-private* dynamic. The stronger level of state backing and shared risk taking, therefore created a greater willingness to resist civil society pressure.

Beyond the balance of public and private leadership, the strength and scale of civil society resistance and green social movement played a significant role. The transnational organization that developed around the PWD movement greatly enhanced the prominence of the Chilean activists and played a crucial role in undermining the project’s success. On the other hand, the relative lack of solidarity in the Argentine opposition movement, as it largely remained a regional and local movement, limited the success of the SCRWD movement.

**Scholarly Contribution**

Mendoza et al 2017 only look at the dam projects as part of the development of “eco-regionalism” and the green economy in Southern Andean Patagonia. I consider why these two dam projects have suffered different fates. My research suggests that political party is less important to understanding development outcomes, as well as corporate efforts. Instead, the key factors are the strength and scale of green social movements and the degree of public investment.
in the PPP. My research additionally suggests an expanded definition of PPPs which should also consider political involvement as a form of public sector participation and risk.

Rather than a simple analysis of public and private relationships, my research shows that to understand the success or failure of PPPs relies on a triadic analytic framework that includes: 1) corporate actions; 2) state actions; and 3) civil society and social movements. The thesis focuses on both the competing discourses of these three, but also their relative strengths, weaknesses, degrees of risk taking and risk sharing, and the degree of public and private investment.

**Overview of Chapters Three & Four**

In Chapter Three, the analysis of the corporate, state, and civil society discourses regarding HidroAysén highlights the *private-public* dynamic that exists between private corporations and the Chilean state and the importance of a transnational and well-developed opposition movement. The effective organization and broad reach of the CDP stymied the hegemonic corporate and political narrative that argued for the development of HidroAysén under the guise of energy independence, clean energy development, and escape from a national energy deficit.

In Chapter Four, the analysis of the corporate, political, and civil society discourses regarding Represas Patagonia illustrates the *public-private* dynamic that exists between private corporations and the Argentine state. In the case of Represas Patagonia, the primary opposition organizations, the AAAAP and SCRWD, struggled to create a transnational and well-developed opposition movement failed to halt the project. Due to the fact that the project was financed and partially built by the Chinese, therefore involving political and economic investment from the
Argentine government, the Macri administration was unable to eliminate the Kirchner initiated project.
Chapter Three analyzes the corporate, state, and civil society framing of HidroAysén from 2007-2016. This time period was chosen in order to incorporate center-left and center-right state narratives regarding HidroAysén. The international conglomerate developing HidroAysén owned the water rights and intended to privately fund the project illustrating the dominant private sector, but it is important to recognize the political investment as a form of public investment in the balance of the Private-Public Partnership (PPP). Chapter Three argues that the private-public balance, the lack of monetary investment and risk for the Chilean state, and the strong civil society and transnational opposition movement exemplified by Council for the Defense of Patagonia (CDP) and Patagonia Without Dams (PWD) combined to halt the development of the HidroAysén project.

Corporate Framing

This section will analyze the Annual Reports published by the investor relations website of Enel Generación Chile, the HidroAysén website, and the company’s publicity campaign in order to understand the corporate framing of HidroAysén. The corporate discourse surrounding HidroAysén exhibited four primary framing tools: 1) Chilean energy independence and sufficient energy supply; 2) the economic and environmental efficiency of HidroAysén; 3) the social benefits that would be derived from HidroAysén for the Aysén Region and for Chile; and 4) a renewable energy discourse, which focuses on the environmental benefits surrounding hydropower.
A primary theme displayed on the HidroAysén website is the importance of HidroAysén for the energy independence of Chile and the creation of an adequate energy supply for the nation. According to the HidroAysén website, the project will be “contributing to Chile’s energy independence by using a clean, renewable, and Chilean resource, such as water” (HidroAysén).²

The three pillars of the HidroAysén campaign - “Clean, Renewable, and Chilean” - are presented via the project’s website, corporate records, and televised commercial campaigns.³

Additionally, a television commercial campaign highlighted all three of the HidroAysén tenets and poignantly attempted to capitalize on the fear of energy deficits. The commercials showed energy blackouts occurring at the most inopportune time, for example during a football match, along with the text: “if Chile does not double its energy going forward, in 10 years it [the energy system] will function poorly. No one source of energy is sufficient by itself” (Publicidad HidroAysén 2 Publicidad 2010).⁴ The commercials produced by HidroAysén’s campaign illustrated that a failure to construct the dams in the Aysén region would lead to energy shortages and blackouts, at the most important times and in populous areas. In the end, it is clear from an analysis of the HidroAysén website and the television commercials that HidroAysén attempted to

² “Contribuyendo a la independencia energética de Chile al utilizar un recurso limpio, renovable y chileno, como es el agua” (HidroAysén)
³ “Limpia, Renovable, Chilena” (HidroAysén)
⁴ “Si Chile no duplicaría su energía desde hoy, en 10 años más funcionará a medias. Ninguna Fuente de energía por sí sola es suficiente. HidroAysén, Chile con Energía” (Publicidad HidroAysén 2 Publicidad 2010)
capitalize on the fear of future energy deficits and the dependency on foreign imports in order to create support for the project.

Another important aspect of corporate framing employed by HidroAysén was that the project would serve as a symbol of efficient energy production in terms of quantity produced and land required. In 2010, the ENDESA Annual Report stated:

The HidroAysén project is submitted as the most important hydroelectric initiative ever filed in Chile, given its efficiency and contribution to the country’s energy matrix. The power plants will have a mean annual generation capacity of 18,430 GWh, which represents 35% of Chile’s total 2009 consumption. The total impoundage area — considering all 5 plants — will amount to only 5,910 hectares, equivalent to 0.05% of the Aysén region. (Endesa Chile 2010 Annual Report: 114)

This statement from the 2010 Endesa Chile Annual Report illustrates how a primary focus of Endesa and Colbún was to demonstrate the potential efficiency of the project. It is useful to understand this statement as it highlights a type of cost-benefit analysis regarding project efficiency, which illustrates the widespread benefit for Chilean energy production and the energy hungry regions of Northern Chile, while minimizing the impact on the land in the Aysén region.

Similarly, the HidroAysén website illustrates the production of HidroAysén relative to the amount of land used when compared to solar and wind power.
These pieces of evidence drawn from corporate statements and the HidroAysén website illustrate how the relative efficiency of hydroelectric power in producing energy when compared to solar and wind energy was an important aspect of the project’s framing.

In order to garner support for HidroAysén, Endesa and Colbún highlighted economic development, job growth, and cheap energy as key benefits from the project. In the 2010 Endesa annual report, HidroAysén stated that on average 2,260 jobs per month would be created with peak creation of 5,000 jobs during certain phases of the project highlighting regional job growth (Endesa 2010: 115). The promised economic development by HidroAysén is a key component of the corporate framing as the Aysén region is one of the least developed regions in Chile.

In terms of social benefits, HidroAysén attempted to assuage fears regarding the benefits of the project being derived by the energy intensive northern regions of Chile. An important example of this strategy can be seen in a television commercial produced by HidroAysén which portrayed local residents of the Aysén region and the benefits they would see from the completion of HidroAysén. The commercial used the idea of community “support” and growth in order to illustrate the regional social and economic benefits of the project, by stating:

In support of the SME [small and medium sized enterprise] of Matías doubling its production, in support of the San Juan Sporting Club illuminating their multi-field complex, in support of the Hernán Marina Correa School lighting its computer lab, in support of a better quality of life, more opportunities, and cheaper energy in Aysén. In support of energy that Chile needs to develop. In support of a clean, renewable, and Chilean energy. HidroAysén, Chile with energy. (HidroAysén b 2011)

This television commercial illustrates how HidroAysén framed the development of the hydroelectric dams as having wide ranging regional benefits including the growth in local

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5 “A favor de que la PyME de Matías pueda duplicar su producción, a favor de que el Club Deportivo San Juan ilumine su multi-cancha, a favor de que la Escuela Hernán Marina Correa encienda su sala de computación, a favor de una mejor calidad de vida más oportunidades y energía más barata en Aysén, a favor de la energía que se necesita para el desarrollo de Chile. A favor de una energía limpia, renovable, y chilena. HidroAysén, Chile con energía” (HidroAysén b 2011)
business production, the provision of cheap regional energy, increased capacity for leisure activities, and improved education facilities. These benefits take advantage of the reality of the Aysén region which is a isolated - socially, politically, and economically - from the rest of Chile.

Another important component of HidroAysén’s framing was the notion of hydroelectric energy being a “clean” energy or a “green” energy that would not only assist in meeting Chile’s increasing energy demands, but also increase the supply of renewable energy within the nation.

HidroAysén capitalizes on the clean aspect of hydroelectric power by highlighting the decreased CO2 emissions associated with hydroelectric power. Often the clean energy discourse of hydroelectric power is related to energy independence and the decreased need for fossil fuel imports. This framing tool is illustrated on the HidroAysén website:

The HidroAysén project will replace 16 million tons of CO2 emissions, equivalent to the emissions of the entire Chilean automobile fleet for one year and it's installed output - 2,750 MW - is equivalent to 7 thermoelectric plants. On the other hand, the energy of HidroAysén will permit up to a 20% reduction of greenhouse gases that are emitted in our country today, which in reality imports more than 50% of consumed energy in the form of petroleum, gas, and coal, all of which makes us dependent on the availability and prices of these inputs on the international market. (HidroAysén)

This section of the website is meant to illustrate the “clean energy” aspect of HidroAysén. The clean energy discourse is utilized as a framing tool throughout the HidroAysén campaign and it importantly attempts to limit environmental concerns. Within these analyzed sources there are clear themes of national development, energy security, and marginal environmental benefits which illustrate the private-public balance in the development of the project and the lack of state financial involvement.

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6 “El proyecto HidroAysén reemplazará la emisión de 16 millones de toneladas de CO2, equivalentes a las emisiones de todo el parque automotriz de Chile en un año y su potencia instalada -2,750 MW- equivalen a 7 centrales termoeléctricas. Por otra parte, la energía de HidroAysén permitirá reducir hasta en un 20% el volumen de los gases efecto invernadero que hoy emite nuestro país, que en la actualidad importa más del 50% de la energía que consume en forma de petróleo, gas y carbón, lo que nos hace dependientes de la disponibilidad y precios de estos insumos en el mercado internacional.” (HidroAysén)
Political Framing

President Michelle Bachelet (2006-2010 & 2014-present) and former President Sebastian Piñera (2010-2014) both initially supported HidroAysén until Michelle Bachelet withdrew her support for the project the year before 2014 election. The political framing employed by Bachelet and Piñera highlights three primary arguments in support of HidroAysén as identified in annual speeches, government publications, and relevant media sources: 1) the need to combat the impending Chilean energy deficit, 2) the importance of energy independence, and 3) the “clean” or “green” energy aspect of hydropower. Although the general political discourse included these three elements, in 2013 Michelle Bachelet withdrew her support of the project due to increasing civil society pressure and the lack of state investment in the project while still maintaining the general narrative on hydroelectric development.

Over the course of Michelle Bachelet’s two presidencies (2006-2010 & 2010-2014), Bachelet argued for the expansion of Chilean energy production. Included in Bachelet’s rhetoric was the development of hydroelectric power, especially in the Southern regions of Chile. In Michelle Bachelet’s 2008 annual address to the Chilean Congress she stated:

In order to grow we need more energy. We cannot give ourselves the luxury to not take advantage of our resources for electric generation. And we can do this even less in an era of climate change, where all countries should promote less contaminating energy sources, such as hydropower. (Bachelet 2008)\(^7\)

This segment of the speech highlights the narrative of the Chilean energy deficit and the need to diversify the energy matrix in terms of renewable energy resources. Bachelet argues for hydropower as an effective tool to develop clean energy resources and also to increase the capacity for electricity generation within Chile, mirroring the corporate framing.

\(^7\) “Para crecer necesitamos cada vez más energía. No podemos darnos el lujo de desaprovechar recursos en generación eléctrica. Y menos podemos hacerlo en una época de cambio climático, donde todos los países debemos promover las fuentes menos contaminantes, como la hidroelectricidad.” (Bachelet, 2008)
Similarly, during his presidential term, Sebastian Piñera was an avid supporter of energy development in Chile and backed HidroAysén. Piñera continued the political discourse that favored the development of national energy resources and framed the development of hydropower as a clean energy choice and a cost-effective manner in which to develop Chile’s energy resources. In Sebastian Piñera’s 2011 annual address to the Chilean Congress Piñera stated:

My responsibility is very clear with regards to the environment, but I am also very clear of my responsibility to development! Chile is a country rich in water. And water is clean and renewable energy. It does not produce contaminated emissions nor greenhouse gases. Despite access to hydro generation, in the last fifteen years 106 thermoelectric plants have been approved, the majority of which [are powered] with coal or oil, with high levels of contamination and without necessary environmental safeguards. It is enough to see what is happening today in Ventanas or Mejillones. But furthermore, hydroelectric generation is more cost-effective. (Piñera 28, 2011)

This 2011 speech by Piñera highlights how the primary political discourse surrounding hydropower development was shared by both presidents. Bachelet and Piñera highlight hydroelectric energy as a key factor for Chilean economic growth, environmental responsibility, energy independence, and the cost-effective energy production. This discourse reflects on the notion that HidroAysén was presented by Bachelet and Piñera not only as an energy project, but also as a panacea for development, independence, and a stagnant economy.

During the 2014 presidential campaign, Michelle Bachelet met with the representative of the Aysén region, a fierce critic of the dam, and a prominent ecologist who offered support to Bachelet in exchange for firm opposition to the HidroAysén project (La Tercera). The change in perspective from Bachelet illustrates the change in public perception created by the PWD

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8 “¡Tengo muy clara mi responsabilidad con el medio ambiente, pero también tengo muy clara mi responsabilidad con el desarrollo! Chile es un país rico en agua. Y el agua es energía limpia y renovable. No produce emisiones contaminantes ni efecto invernadero. Teniendo acceso a la generación hídrica, en los últimos quince años se han aprobado 106 plantas termoeléctricas, la mayoría de ellas a carbón o petróleo, con los mayores índices de contaminación y sin los debidos resguardos ambientales. Basta ver lo que está ocurriendo hoy en Ventanas o Mejillones. Pero además, la generación hidroeléctrica es más económica.” (Piñera 28, 2011)
movement and also the lack of state investment in the project. Due to the fact that state investment in the project was little more than public goodwill, Bachelet was able to easily withdraw support when presented the opportunity to increase political control. Although Bachelet changed her opinion on HidroAysén, she maintained a positive discourse surrounding hydropower by stating in 2016 that it is important “to reconcile hydroelectric development with environmental variables, social dynamics, and the cultural values of the territories” (Bachelet 2016: 638).

Additionally, in July 2017, the Bachelet government published “Energía 2050” [Energy 2050] proposing various measures regarding Chilean energy development. The Energía 2050 document produced during the second Bachelet administration opens a window into the administration’s perspective on hydropower.

The advantages of hydroelectricity are related to energy independence, flexibility, regulation capacity and the additional services which it [hydroelectricity] hands to the electric system favoring the incorporation of other renewable sources. For all that, it can be added that hydroelectricity can create a reduction in the impact of greenhouse gases. (Energía 2050 2017: 72-74)

In this statement, the ability to achieve energy independence and also minimize the emission of greenhouse gases illustrates an aspect of the modern political narrative surrounding hydropower development in Chile. Accordingly, it is important to recognize that although HidroAysén has been delayed due to opposition throughout the country and the political system, the discourse of the center-left and center-right administrations of Bachelet twice and Piñera once, respectively,

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9 “...Compatibilizar el desarrollo hidroeléctrico con las variables ambientales, dinámicas sociales y los valores culturales de los territorios.” (Bachelet 2016: 638)

10 “las ventajas de la hidroelectricidad que tienen relación con la independencia energética; la flexibilidad; la capacidad de regulación y los servicios adicionales que entrega al sistema eléctrico favoreciendo la incorporación de otras fuentes renovables. A todo ello, se suman los aportes que la hidroelectricidad pueda hacer a la reducción de gases de efecto invernadero.” (Bachelet 2015: 72-74)
have promoted the development of hydropower throughout Chile and will continue to do so into the near future.

**Social Movement Framing**

The 2004 Endesa announcement of HidroAysén catalyzed the formation of opposition groups. Since 2007, the CDP via the PWD campaign has been the focal point of the organized opposition movement to HidroAysén in the Aysén region. This section will analyze the civil society discourse surrounding the project by presenting the information from the campaign’s central website. The campaign has three primary components which crystallized the coalition against HidroAysén: 1) the creation of a broad social movement comprised of local, regional, and international actors focused on local and national direct action and traditional legal opposition; 2) the creation of a broad coalition of actors via the common bond of Patagonia, the pristine Patagonian environment and the services it provides, and a shared sense of Patagonian regionalism; and 3) the identification of the environmental impact associated with the construction of the HidroAysén dams and the 2,000 kilometer transmission line designed to carry energy to Northern Chile. The combination of the strong transnational network and the privatized nature of the project allowed for the civil society to denounce state and corporate actions eventually paving the way for the Chilean state to withdraw support from the project in which the state was minimally invested.

One of the primary components of the opposition campaign against HidroAysén was the creation of a broad and all-encompassing narrative and discourse surrounding the CDP’s campaign. The campaign, organized with the overarching slogan of “Patagonia Sin Represas” [PWD], brought together social actors in a campaign against the construction of dams throughout Patagonia with a special focus on HidroAysén. According to the PWD website, there are 71
organizations that “have joined in the defense of Patagonia under the ‘Council for the Defense of Patagonia [CDP]’” (Quiénes Somos). Upon examination, 23 of the 71 organizations or approximately 32% are environmental and activist organizations from outside of South America (Quiénes Somos). The quantity and global reach of the organizations served as an essential aspect of the PWD movement as the negative components of HidroAysen were broadcast globally and local organizations received international support. This mobilization therefore not only capitalized on local participation, but also engaged activists throughout Chile and the international community, increasing the prominence of the CDP and the PWD project.

Another important aspect of the broad reaching campaign established by the CDP was direct action marches throughout the country. In 2010 and 2011, marches throughout Chile against HidroAysén were common and in May of 2011, a march in Santiago attracted 30,000 people, according to Chilean newspapers (Sandoval 2011). The large number of protesters attracted to PWD marches throughout the country and the abundance of organizations, nationally and internationally, that joined the PWD movement is important as it highlights how the opposition movement created a coalition with a collective narrative that was far greater than just the Aysén region.

The second component to the PWD movement was the notion of a regional Patagonian identity and the preservation of a pristine natural landscape. These factors were trumpeted via social media and campaign posters published by the CDP. The notion of the shared Patagonian identity between Argentina and Chile has been discussed by Radovic and Mendoza who highlight the similar socio-cultural traditions and economic opportunities based on geography and relative isolation in the sparsely populated Patagonian region (Radovic 2012: 2; Mendoza et al 2017). As the opposition coalition crystallized against the HidroAysén project, the campaign
developed the “Aysén Reserva de Vida” (Aysén Reserve of Life) to unify regional and environmental interests against the hydroelectric project. The Strategy for Regional Development (La Estrategia de Desarrollo Regional) includes the notion of a Aysén Reserve of Life and delineates the movement’s goals and ideas regarding regional identity and economic and social opportunities.

The Aysén region aspires to be a decentralized region and to obtain a high quality of life, sustained by high and equitable economic growth, based on conservation of environmental quality and territorial integration. (La Patagonia / Aysén Reserva de Vida)\(^\text{11}\)

The goal of the Aysén Reserve of Life is therefore not traditional economic growth, but a form of economic growth and development which supports the region, the environment, and the various stakeholders who live throughout Patagonia. A major aspect of the Regional Development Plan is the support of the tourism industry and the benefits that it can bring to Aysén without relying on resource extraction. In the end, it is important to track the development of the narrative that the PWD campaign created via their website and publications. This regional identity is then used to create a vision for the development of the region which with the support of the national and international actors mentioned above helped to create a strong opposition movement with an alternative vision for regional development.

Another key component of the opposition movement’s success in creating the Patagonian identity was highlighting the pristine environment. A series of posters were created by the CDP campaign that established the unblemished and vulnerable natural beauty of the Aysén region.

\(^{11}\) “la Región de Aysén aspira a ser una región descentralizada y a obtener una alta calidad de vida, sustentada en un crecimiento económico alto y equitativo, que se fundamentará en la conservación de la calidad medioambiental y en la integración del territorio.” (La Patagonia / Aysén Reserva de Vida)
These two posters created and distributed by PWD illustrated the raw beauty of Chilean Patagonia and placed electric distribution lines through the image in order to illustrate the jarring reality of HidroAysén. These images are important to the creation of a narrative which supports the beauty of Patagonia and seeks to preserve that beauty in the name of regional development and autonomy.

A third component of the CDP’s strategy was the investigation and publication of the environmental impact produced by the construction of the HidroAysén dams and also by the 2,000 kilometer power line. The presentation of the environmental impact of the project aimed to strengthen the environmental discourse surrounding HidroAysén and counter the corporate and political discourse which suggested that hydropower is a “clean” and “renewable” energy. The PWD campaign highlighted the environmental impact of HidroAysén in two distinct areas: 1) the construction of the five hydroelectric dams and 2) the impact of the construction of the 2,000 km
transmission line. The PWD movement states numerous negative environmental and socio-cultural impacts due to the construction of dams including the loss of aquatic biodiversity, loss of fisheries, and ecosystem services provided by the river. The website highlights the loss of forests, natural habitat, and the accumulated negative impact on the quality of water (El Problema / Impacto de las Represas). In terms of socio-cultural impacts, the website highlights how HidroAysén would aid in the disintegration of local communities due to inadequate mitigation programs, the displacement of three communities and 3,837 residents, and 70% of productive land within the region (El Problema / Impacto de las Represas). These arguments illustrate how the PWD coalition attempts to create a narrative surrounding the protection of the pre-existing natural land and also the preservation of cultural traditions and local economies.

The second important aspect regarding environmental impact is the construction of the 2,000 km transmission line from Aysén to Santiago. According to the PWD website the transmission line would consist of 5,000 towers at 50 meters tall, with 400 meters between each tower in order to transmit the 2,750 megawatts produced by the HidroAysén dams (El Problema / Impacto de las Torres). According to the PWD website:

> Transelec, one of the world’s principal construction companies of these monstrous high tension lines admitted in a recent presentation that ‘no one in any part of the world likes to see high tension cables and even less so when they pass through your property.’ In the case of the south of Chile, many experienced tourists have signaled that the defacement of Patagonia would definitively separate them from these landscapes. (El Problema / Impacto de las Torres)\(^\text{12}\)

This phrase fits directly into the narrative that the PWD movement created surrounding HidroAysén, which is one of reckless development that will irreversibly damage regional

\(^{12}\) "Transelec, una de las principales empresas constructoras de estas monstruosas líneas de alta tensión del mundo reconocieron en una presentación reciente que ‘a nadie en ninguna parte del mundo le gusta ver los cables de alta tensión y menos que pasen por su propiedad.’ En el caso del sur de Chile, muchos turistas experimentados han señalado que la desfiguración de la Patagonia los alejaría definitivamente de estos parajes.” (El Problema / Impacto de las Torres)
development goals regarding ecotourism and the preservation of natural beauty. In the end, the CDP highlighted the local, national, and international coalition opposing the project, crystallized the notion of a Patagonian heritage and the preservation of Patagonian nature and culture, and showed the environmental impact of the dams and how these impacts would inevitably harm the self-determined regional goals of ecotourism and the preservation of natural lands.

**Conclusion**

In the end, the analysis of the corporate, political, and social movement discourses regarding HidroAysén and the project’s eventual failure sheds light on the respective narratives and the *private-public* dynamic. In this case, the strong organization and transnational reach of the CDP stymied the hegemonic corporate and political narrative that supported HidroAysén with framing focused on energy independence, clean energy development, and escape from a national energy deficit. The strong social movement directly attacked the political and corporate narrative and increased national and international awareness on the environmental and social damage of the project. The strong private nature of the HidroAysén project naturally limited state support which when faced with strong opposition quickly withdrew support for the project. Therefore, the strength and scale of the CDP movement along with the lack of state investment in the HidroAysén project allowed for the opposition to control the narrative and eventually halt the HidroAysén project.
Chapter 4

*Argentine Patagonia & The Represas Patagonia Project*

**Introduction**

Chapter Four analyzes the framing of the Represas Patagonia project by corporate interests, political forces, and the social movements since 2010. The Represas Patagonia project differs from the Chilean HidroAysén project as the type of public-private partnership (PPP) involves significant public investment - financial and political - therefore creating a public-private dynamic in terms of the project’s development. The Represas Patagonia project is financed by a long term low interest loan from the Chinese government which the Argentine government will pay back over time (Represas Patagonia). Chapter Four highlights three primary reasons for the success of the Represas Patagonia project: 1) corporate and political discourses which emphasize public benefits from the project; 2) a high level of state investment - financial and political - which creates important incentives for the project’s success; and 3) a weak social movement coalition that failed to create a strong transnational movement against the hydroelectric development.

Image N° 8

Location of the Represas Patagonia proposed dams in the Santa Cruz region (TiempoSur 2015)
**Corporate Framing**

This section analyzes the corporate discourse surrounding the project by reviewing the project’s central website, social media accounts, and pertinent media sources. Represas Patagonia focused on four primary benefits in order to frame the corporate narrative: 1) Argentine energy independence; 2) regional development and the growth of tourism; 3) the notion of hydropower as a clean energy solution minimizing the impact of global warming; and 4) the important Sino-Argentine relationship and the shift in geopolitical power in post-Kirchner Argentina.

Represas Patagonia presents the construction of the two dams as a path towards increased energy output and Argentine energy independence. According to the project website “the Néstor Kirchner and Jorge Cepernic dams will provide energy for more than 2 million inhabitants” (Represas Argentina).

Image N° 9

![Project Banner on the Represas Patagonia website](image)

The dams will produce 1,740 MW, which represents 8% of national energy consumption at maximum consumption (Represas Argentina). The dams will not only provide energy for more than 2 million inhabitants, but will also be a symbol of national energy produced for Argentine citizens. The Santa Cruz region is sparsely inhabited and often overlooked by the federal government in Buenos Aires making the construction important for the development of the...
Patagonian region according to Represas Patagonia. Additionally, the names of the dams represent an important homage to Kirchnerismo and especially the late Néstor Kirchner invoking nationalistic sentiment and development in the name of political leaders (Represas Argentina).

A 2015 Represas Patagonia commercial employed the slogan “Generation for growth, our energy for the country,” which was also used in social media campaigns by the company (Represas Patagonia 2015; Represas Patagonia (@patagoniarep)).

This slogan illustrates national energy independence as a marketing tool for defining the Represas Patagonia project. Argentine energy independence is an important topic politically and Represas Patagonia understands the importance of energy produced within the country. In the end, this tweet frames the dam construction as an economic and political boon.

The Represas Patagonia website presents the regional development and the growth of local industry as important factors in the construction of the two dams.

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13 “Generación para el crecimiento, nuestra energía para el país” (Represas Patagonia 2015; Represas Patagonia (@patagoniarep))
This project will permit the development of agricultural, livestock, and commercial industrial ventures. The availability of energy in the region will permit the creation of metal, gas, and fishery industries, among others. They will also take advantage of the bodies of water created by both dams for the implementation of recreational activities and tourism ventures. (Represas Patagonia)\textsuperscript{14}

According to the Represas Patagonia website, the dams will aid in local development and increase tourism throughout Santa Cruz, providing economic benefits to the entire province. Represas Patagonia claims that the project will directly create 5,000 jobs and 1,500 indirect jobs while increasing the productive area of Argentina by creating new business opportunities and growing the local economy (Represas Patagonia Comunicado). Highlighting the importance of this hydroelectric dam project for local development and regional tourism illustrates the corporate discourse which promotes local, regional, and national benefits of dam construction in Santa Cruz.

Represas Patagonia also employed the notion of hydroelectric power as clean energy in order to promote the project. According to Represas Patagonia, the construction of the dams will “substitute the importation of non-renewable fossil fuels,” “substitute imported electric energy in times of maximum demand,” and reduce “the greenhouse effect” (Represas Patagonia). Hydropower as a clean energy is often associated with a self-sufficient energy supply, according to Patagonia Represas, and is promoted on the company’s website and social media in various forms.

\textsuperscript{14} “Esta obra permitirá el desarrollo de emprendimientos agrícolas, ganaderos e industriales. La disponibilidad de energía en la región permitirá la creación de industrias metalúrgicas, gasíferas, pesqueras, entre otras. Se aprovecharán también los espejos de agua generados en ambas represas para la realización de actividades recreativas y emprendimientos turísticos.” (Represas Patagonia)
The use of clean energy rhetoric when discussing the construction of the hydroelectric dams is important as it is an additional layer in the corporate framing of the Represas Patagonia project. This corporate framing presents the two dams as an environmentally responsible initiative. Additionally, this post implies that the economic growth produced by the dam construction will also mean a new future of sustainable growth for Argentina which will be remembered in the name of two Peronista politicians: Néstor Kirchner and Jorge Cepernic.

Perhaps the most interesting corporate framing strategy utilized by Represas Patagonia is the development of the Sino-Argentine relationship via commercial integration. The Represas Patagonia website highlights the Chinese government’s role in financing the project and the prominent role of the Chinese state-owned construction firm, Gezhouba Group, illustrating the PPP and the geopolitical connections. Represas Patagonia displayed the importance of the Sino-Argentine relationship in the construction of the dam on its social media account and the public benefits of a new international relationship with China.
On February 1, 2016, Represas Patagonia posted a picture stating: “the Chinese ambassador said that he hopes the @patagoniarep [Patagonia Represas] is constructed following the scheduled plans.”

Similarly, Represas Patagonia stated on Twitter “we developed as a company within the framework of the Asociación Estratégica Integral Argentino-China [Argentine-Chinese Comprehensive Strategic Association].” The notion of the improved Sino-Argentine relations indicates an important shift from the traditional North American and European allies which Argentina has maintained for more than a century. The Represas Patagonia project therefore could be one important piece of a larger geopolitical shift throughout the Americas which more readily accepts Chinese investment.

15 “El embajador chino dijo que espera @patagoniarep se construyan según los planes previstos.” (Represas Patagonia (@patagoniarep) (c))
16 “Surgimos como compañía en el marco de la Asociación Estratégica Integral Argentino - China… Integración.” (Represas Patagonia @patagoniarep (d))
In the end, Represas Patagonia utilized the four framing tools of energy independence, clean energy development, regional growth, and improved geopolitical ties to promote the development of the Néstor Kirchner and Jorge Cepernic dams on the Santa Cruz River. These discursive tactics frame the major dam construction project as a catalyst for economic development, energy autonomy, and political power in Argentina, while at the same time carefully avoiding the role of foreign capital and environmental degradation.

**Political Framing**

This section analyzes the political framing during the Kirchner and Macri administrations by examining annual Congressional speeches, government press releases, and pertinent media sources. Throughout the center-left Cristina Fernández de Kirchner administration and the first two years of the center-right Mauricio Macri administration, both governments discussed the Argentine energy crisis primarily referencing energy deficits and the need for energy self-
sufficiency. This nationalistic discourse regarding energy production defined political debate regarding the construction of the dams and promoted the Patagonia Represas project as essential for Argentine development. In the 2014 opening address to the Argentine Congress, President Fernández de Kirchner stated:

We have to definitively warn Argentines that there will not be autonomy, independence, or sovereignty without energy to address our industries, to address our study of technological development, to not hinder the process of industrialization, [and] in order to continue to be competitive. (Kirchner, 2014)

In 2014 Kirchner warned Argentines about the harm created by energy dependence and framed the energy debate and the recent proposal for national energy development as a push for “autonomy” and “independence.” The self-sufficiency and independent Argentina arguments resemble closely the framing created by the consortium in control of Represas Patagonia, which urged national energy development. In 2015, Kirchner’s annual address discussed the Argentine energy deficit due to a lack of nationally produced energy:

Simply due to the fact that we have entered into an energy deficit, by the way, we lost our fiscal surplus due to energy importation and this is not a loss because we spent more, but because we had to import more energy for industry, for your house, for your air conditioning and for everything new that we have had to plug in. (Kirchner 2015)

In these speeches Fernández de Kirchner argued that the energy deficit is a grave problem for Argentine people and industry and that the need for energy self-sufficiency is not only for the pursuit of sovereignty and independence, but also to establish a higher quality of life. These arguments of foreign energy dependence and a mounting energy deficit illustrate Kirchner’s framing of the Represas Patagonia project on the Santa Cruz River.

17 “Los argentinos tenemos que advertir definitivamente que no podrá haber autonomía, ni independencia ni soberanía posibles si no tenemos energía para solventar nuestras industrias, para solventar nuestra investigación en el desarrollo en tecnología, para que el proceso de industrialización no se detenga, para seguir siendo competitivos.” (Kirchner, 2014)

18 “Simplemente por la necesidad de que habíamos entrado en déficit energético que, dicho sea de paso, perdimos el superávit fiscal por la necesidad de importar energía y no hay una pérdida porque gastamos más, sino porque tenemos que importar más energía para industria, para tu casa, para tu aire acondicionado y para todo lo nuevo que han tenido que enchufar.” (Kirchner 2015)
Following his election victory in 2015, the center-right President Mauricio Macri was initially hesitant to support the project, but eventually adopted the narrative employed by Kirchner. When Macri was first elected, he made an important change to the leadership of the National Parks Administration (Administración de Parques Nacionales - NPA) (La Opinión Austral). In 2015, Macri appointed Eugenio Breard and Emiliano Ezcurra as the president and vice president, respectively, of the NPA. Macri also transferred the NPA from being a part of the Tourism Ministry (Ministerio de Turismo) to the Ministry of the Environment (Ministerio de Medio Ambiente) (La Opinión Austral). These changes indicated a significant reversal Represas Patagonia as Ezcurra is a former Greenpeace employee and more recently the director of an Argentine environmental non-profit which actively campaigned against the Represas Patagonia project (La Opinión Austral). Not only was the change of personnel an indication of Macri’s new perspective, but changing the NPA from the Tourism Ministry to the Ministry of the Environment signaled a fundamental change in the perspective that deemphasized extractive use and signaled greater attention to conservation of public lands. In a similar vein, Macri entertained, separately, Yvon Chouinard and Cristine McDivitt (wife of the late Doug Tompkins), two international figures dedicated to conservation at the presidential mansion (La Casa Rosada) both of whom expressed their opposition to the dam (Cassese 2017; Riggi 2017). Although the advancement of the Represas Patagonia project was not altered by these meetings, both highlight the shift that occurred in the Macri administration and illustrate the willingness of Macri to consider conservation instead of the extractive use of public lands.

Although Macri made changes to the NPA and visited with international conservation figures, the political framing of energy and the development of national energy sources
maintained its course as Macri declared the energy deficit a principal problem facing Argentina and its people. In Macri’s inaugural congressional address, Macri stated:

We will begin with energy. Today our country has an energy deficit. This is to say that we have passed from a country that generates more energy than we consumed to a country that needs to import its necessities, or part of its necessities. This places an enormous pressure upon our fiscal resources and creates foreign dependency. (Macri 2016)

Macri’s speech highlights the energy deficit that faces Argentina and the dependency on foreign nations and energy imports in order to create a consistent energy supply in Argentina. In April 2016, the newspaper *TiempoSur* reported that Macri’s Secretary Energy Planning stated, “the Santa Cruz dams are two projects that we are watching… we have taken 30 days to revise the projects and discuss them with China because we need these dams in order to supply part of the energy of our country” (TiempoSur 2016). These comments are illuminating because the Macri administration initially attempted to take a different path regarding the Represas Patagonia project by changing leadership at the NPA and downsizing the amount of turbines to be installed in order to minimize the environmental impact (*La Opinión Austral*; Riggi 2017). Although Macri made these changes and likely feared building these dams as a monument to the Kirchner political legacy, the role of the Sino-Argentine relationship played a significant role in determining the outcome of the dams (Riggi 2017). In the end, withdrawing support for the Represas Patagonia project and the associated funding from the Chinese government also meant sacrificing future loans and other previously planned projects throughout Argentina (Riggi 2017).

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19 “Empecemos por la energía. Hoy nuestro país tiene déficit energético. Eso quiere decir que pasamos de un país que generaba más energía que la que consumía a uno que debe importar sus necesidades, o parte de sus necesidades. Esto pone una enorme presión sobre nuestros recursos fiscales y nos genera una dependencia del exterior.” (Macri 2016)

20 “las represas de Santa Cruz son dos proyectos que estamos mirando… Nos tomamos 30 días para revisarlo y lo conversamos con China porque necesitamos esas represas para suplir parte de la energía del país.” (TiempoSur 2016)
In conclusion, the corporate and political discourses which frame the Represas Patagonia project are similar in their shared utilization of exogenous factors to encourage the construction of the project. Both discourses highlight energy independence and the energy deficit as major issues in modern Argentine society and claim that the Represas Patagonia project will mitigate foreign energy dependence and national energy deficits. Additionally, the participating corporations and government officials describe the project as a boon to the local economy. Interestingly, the political discourse surrounding the project focuses on energy independence rather than environmental benefits, demonstrating the nationalistic and public benefit based rhetoric utilized to garner support for the project.

**Social Movement Framing**

This section specifically analyzes the organization, campaigns, and framing of the opposition movement by the Asociación Argentina de Abogados Ambientalistas de la Patagonia (Argentina Association of Environmental Lawyers of Patagonia - AAAAP) and Río Santa Cruz Sin Represas (Santa Cruz River Without Dams - SCRWD) through the organization’s respective websites and Facebook pages, social media and video campaigns, and pertinent media sources. The campaigns waged by the AAAAP and SCRWD, respectively, highlighted three primary issues: 1) the lack of transparency regarding environmental permitting; 2) the creation of a coalition of social actors fighting against the construction of the Patagonia Represas project; and 3) the impact of the project on wildlife and biodiversity in the region.

An important aspect of social movement opposition to the Patagonia Represas project in Argentina was the establishment of two organizations: the AAAAP and SCRWD. The AAAAP was founded in 2011 and has continuously attempted to halt the construction of the Cepernic and Presidente Kirchner dams on the Santa Cruz River via the judicial system. The AAAAP argues
that the lack of sufficient EIA violates Argentine law and must be fully completed before the commencement of construction by Represas Patagonia. In December, 2014, the AAAAP announced a legal action against the Argentine federal government:

The AAAAP through its President Doctor Mariano J. Aguilar, has begun the federal environmental injunction process, before the Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation, with the purpose of the suspension of dam construction planned for the Santa Cruz river named Cepernic and Presidente Kirchner, as the dams lack an environmental impact assessment and local consultation. (AAAAP 2014)21

This statement accurately shows how the AAAAP sought to attack the construction of the Represas Patagonia dams by initiating a legal battle. Although the legal efforts waged by AAAAP recognized the environmental risks of the hydroelectric dam project, the argument was of course crafted around the lack of EIA and the need to conduct such a study. This legal battle continued until September 2017, when the Represas Patagonia project was approved by the Argentine Government (Resolución Conjunta 3-E/2017). The work of the AAAAP, although successful in delaying the Represas Patagonia project, failed to halt the construction of the dams.

The social movement that arose in opposition to the Represas Patagonia project was the SCRWD coalition. The SCRWD coalition sought to mobilize organizations and people against the Represas Patagonia project. The organization’s efforts began in 2013 and the campaign was built around five goals:

1. Save the Hooded Grebe.
2. Avoid the impact of the dams on the Perito Moreno Glacier.
3. Call for energy with a lower environmental and social cost.
4. Defend the true development of Santa Cruz and Patagonia which does not depend on dams.

21 “La AAAAP por intermedio de su President Doctor Mariano J. Aguilar, ha iniciado un amparo ambiental federal, ante la Corte Suprema de Justicia de la Nación, a los fines de operar la suspensión de las obras de represas programadas para el Río Santa Cruz denominadas Cepernic y Presidente Kirchner, toda vez que las mismas carecen de estudio de impacto ambiental y de consulta vecinal.” (AAAAP 2014)
5. Protect the last glacial river which runs freely from the mountain range to the sea. (“Home” Río Santa Cruz Sin Represas)\textsuperscript{22}

These five goals highlight biodiversity and wildlife protection as framing strategies to resist dam construction. Environmental protection is the central aspect of the social movement campaign as four of the five goals focus on environmental and wildlife protection. Additionally, there are 21 reported member organizations that make up the SCRWD opposition movement (“Home” Río Santa Cruz Sin Represas). The groups that comprise the organization are primarily from Argentina with several supporting groups from Chile and South America. An important point to consider is that the AAAAP was not listed as a member organization on the SCRWD website, indicating the lack of a unified opposition coalition that existed in Chile (“Home” Río Santa Cruz Sin Represas). Although the simple absence of the AAAAP on the SCRWD does not explain a fragmented coalition, it is important to consider that the PWD campaign in Chile overtly recognized and unified all organizations and stakeholders involved in the opposition. This aspect of unification regardless of the chosen method, whether it be a legal injunction or direct action opposition, illustrates the power of the PWD movement and the relative weakness in terms of unification of the SCRWD movement.

The most prominent aspect of the opposition campaign organized by SCRWD focused on the environmental and ecological costs associated with the Represas Patagonia project. The SCRWD campaign produced a video to communicate the beauty of the Argentine Patagonian region and describe the impact of the Represas Patagonia project. The main theme of the video was aligned with the first goal on the SCRWD website: saving the Hooded Grebe.

\textsuperscript{22} “1. Salvar al Macá Tobiano. 2. Evitar el impacto de las represas en el Glaciar Perito Moreno. 3. Reclamar una energía con menor costo ambiental y social. 4. Defender un desarrollo real de Santa Cruz y de La Patagonia que no depende de las represas. 5. Proteger al último río glaciario que corre libre de la cordillera al mar.” (“Home” Río Santa Cruz Sin Represas)
In our opinion, this project means power generation at any cost or sacrifice. The Hooded Grebe is a native species of the Province of Santa Cruz. Their global populations do not exceed 800 individuals and all of them, at a certain point of their life cycle, depend on the estuary of the Santa Cruz River. The world must know that building these dams will mean the definite extinction of the Hooded Grebe, Patagonia’s emblem, off the face of the earth. ("Killing the river, Santa Cruz dams at any cost. Trailer" 2017)

This excerpt of the video illustrates how the SCRWD campaign is seeking to create opposition to the project based on the negative environmental impact and the expected devastation of the Hooded Grebe population. In the end, the Hooded Grebe is perhaps not the most inspiring reason to build a long-term and international campaign.

The weak nature of the opposition movement in Argentina clearly limited the efficacy of the opposition coalition, given the lack of over unification between the AAAAP and SCRWD. Although the campaign seeks to highlight the movement around environmental protection, the inability to mobilize large numbers of organizations and groups of people locally, nationally, and internationally limited the impact of the opposition movement against the Represas Patagonia project. The civil society and social movement were unable to scale up opposition, generate mass protests in Buenos Aires, or increase international recognition. Moreover, the Represas Patagonia project did not threaten the same kind of picturesque alpine wilderness that exists in Chile. Instead, there was the devalued arid steppe environment of the Santa Cruz River which failed to inspire the necessary scale and strength in the opposition.

**Conclusion**

In the end, the competing corporate, political, and social movement discourses regarding the Represas Patagonia project sheds light on the public-private dynamic that exists between corporations and the Argentine state. Although the Macri administration appeared to change the federal government’s course on hydroelectric development and especially the Represas
Patagonia project, eventually the economic and geopolitical ties between Argentina and China played a major role in forcing President Macri to accept the continued construction of the project. In the case of Represas Patagonia, the primary opposition organizations, the AAAAP and SCRWD, struggled to create a transnational and broad coalition like the opposition movement which formed against HidroAysén. The lack of a national and international network along with a strong and unified plan limited the success of the environmental opposition in Argentina and failed to resist the political and economic forces advocating for the dams. The public-private nature of the investment in the project and the strong role of the Argentine government in the PPP strengthen the explanation of the failure of the opposition movement and explain how the Macri administration was handicapped in its ability to end a monument to Kirchner era development.
Chapter 5

Conclusion

This thesis is the tale of two nations and of two hydroelectric dams. The HidroAysén hydroelectric project is at a standstill although Endesa has maintained their water rights in the Aysén region. On the other side of the Andean mountains, although the first years of the Macri administration appeared hopeful for opponents of the Represas Patagonia project in the Santa Cruz region of Argentine Patagonia, in August 2017 President Macri’s administration confirmed the approval of the Represas Patagonia hydroelectric project.

The underlying question of this thesis has asked about how public-private partnerships to develop hydropower have been shaped by competing corporate, state, and civil society forces and how these forces impacted the HidroAysén and the Represas Patagonia projects. Following a careful analysis of the competing corporate, state, and civil society discourses in both cases, my research suggests that two primary factors determined the success or failure regarding the development of these two hydroelectric projects. The thesis argues that 1) the balance of public and private leadership in each case and 2) the strength and scale of civil society resistance in each development played a significant role in determining the outcome of hydropower development.

In Chile, the neoliberal nature of the economy and the private-public balance of power in the HidroAysén development minimized the political and financial risk of the state and therefore made it easier for the Chilean president to withdraw support from a highly controversial project. In addition to the lack of state involvement in the project, the opposition movement – founded the Council for the Defense of Patagonia (CDP) and the Patagonia Without Dams (PWD) campaign – capitalized on the privatized nature of Chilean water rights and natural resource
development and galvanized support for a strong and transnational campaign. The opposition coalition created local, national, and international domains of support that publicized and so far has won the fight against the HidroAyén project.

In Argentina, the Kirchner family attempted to create a legacy for Kirchnerismo by entering into a public-private partnership with the Chinese government for the construction of the Represas Patagonia project. The Represas Patagonia project displayed a far different PPP model compared to that of Chile in that the balance was public-private in terms of investment and resource dedication. The Represas Patagonia project not only involved the capital of the Argentine government, but also represented the future of Sino-Argentine relations and an important shift in Argentine geopolitical relationships. The previous commitment to the project combined with the weak opposition movement to the Represas Patagonia project failed to build a unified coalition around a set of people and ideas that could inspire national and international support. The AAAAP and the SCRWD coalition sought legal injunctions against the project and hoped to inspire support by highlighting endangered species. The lack of inhabitants and communities in the Santa Cruz region played a role in limiting the human opposition to the project and forced the opposition coalition to focus on less salient arguments. In the end, the key differences between the public-private configuration of the two projects and how much state investment existed combined with the success of the opposition coalitions in creating a broad network of engaged actors played an important role in determining the outcome of HidroAysén and the Represas Patagonia project in Chilean and Argentine Patagonia, respectively.

This thesis contributes to our understanding why HidroAysén in Chile and the Represas Patagonia project in Argentina have suffered different fates given their proximity and numerous similarities. My research suggests that political parties and corporate discourse played less
important roles in determining the success of each project. Instead, my research finds that the
two key factors are the strength and scale of the civil society and the opposition movement in
each country and the degree of public investment involved in the project and the PPP. This thesis
also suggest that is it important to critically examine the definition of PPPs as exclusively
involving financial investment in risk; instead, it offers the consideration of political investment
as an added component in understanding the complex agreements being used for economic
development throughout the region.

Currently, it is important to continue to follow the development of HidroAysén in the
Chilean presidential election. If center-right candidate and former president, Sebastian Piñera, is
elected then it will be important to track the political framing surrounding hydropower
development in Chile and the actions of the CDP. In Argentina, given the recent approval of the
Represas Patagonia project, it is important to follow the environmental impact of the Santa Cruz
river dams and whether the environmental damage will galvanize a more robust social opposition
movement going forward. I believe that another important question to ask is regarding PPPs in
the energy sector throughout Latin America. An area for future research would examine the
success of PPPs upon the balance between public and private engagement. Additionally, an
important future area of research will be attempting to understand a wider range of social
movements in Chilean and Argentine Patagonia given the shared regional attitude and
marginalized populations throughout the region.
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