

Development, management and international cooperation: a case study of the community development project for the Rio Gavião Region in southwestern Bahia.

Desenvolvimento, gestão e cooperação internacional: um estudo do projeto de desenvolvimento comunitário da bacia do Rio Gavião no sudoeste da Bahia.

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Abstract

The paper aims to understand the major challenges and the limits of development policies with international cooperation in tackling inequalities in local areas of the State of Bahia, from a case study on management of the Community Development Project for the Rio Gavião Region, 1997-2006. The research was carried out following a qualitative approach, configuring single case study. It seeks to understand the management of the development from the actions carried out in the Gavião Project. To meet the research objectives, data collection followed two steps, the first was to collect and analyze secondary data and then to collect from primary sources, with the completion of 15 interviews with key actors in the project and the region. The study of the theoretical pillars is anchored in studies on development and management. Focused on community development, the Gavião Project was conceived and enforced by the Company for Regional Development and Action (CAR), representing the Government of the State of Bahia and by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The results of his research indicate that the challenges of management development programs require an inter-dialogue between the different organizations involved in the project, despite the difficulties of the realities of structural conditions analyzed. It concludes the need to review the principles of management development programs as a form of participative management, inclusive and focused on the empowerment of people.

Keywords: Management. International Cooperation. Development. Pró-Gavião.

Resumo

Este artigo tem como objetivo primordial compreender os desafios e os limites das políticas de desenvolvimento, com cooperação internacional, no enfrentamento das desigualdades nos espaços sub-regionais do interior da Bahia, a partir de um estudo de caso sobre a gestão do Projeto de Desenvolvimento Comunitário da Bacia do Rio Gavião, 1997-2006.

A pesquisa foi desenvolvida seguindo os fundamentos da abordagem qualitativa, configurada como estudo de caso único, no sentido de procurar compreender a gestão do desenvolvimento a partir das ações realizadas no Pró-Gavião. Para atender aos objetivos da pesquisa, a coleta de dados seguiu duas etapas: na primeira, foram coletados e analisados os dados secundários e na segunda, foram levantadas as fontes primárias através de 15 entrevistas em profundidade com atores-chave do projeto e da região. Os pilares teóricos do estudo estão ancorados nos estudos sobre desenvolvimento e gestão.

Paper submitted on October 31st, 2012 and accepted for publication on May 8th, 2013.
This version corresponds to the translated text of the original paper in Portuguese.

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Focado no desenvolvimento comunitário e rural, o Pró-Gavião foi concebido e executado pela Companhia de Desenvolvimento e Ação Regional (CAR), representando o governo do estado da Bahia e o Fundo Internacional de Desenvolvimento Agrícola (FIDA). Os resultados do estudo indicam que os desafios da gestão dos programas de desenvolvimento exigem um diálogo interescalar entre as diferentes organizações envolvidas no projeto, apesar das dificuldades de mudanças estruturais das realidades analisadas. A conclusão a que se chega é a de que se torna necessário rever os princípios da gestão dos programas de desenvolvimento, como uma forma de gestão participativa, interescalar, incluyente e voltada para o empoderamento das pessoas.

Palavras-chave: Gestão. Cooperação Internacional. Desenvolvimento. Pró-Gavião.

Introduction

A major challenge in these early decades of the 21st century is rethinking the relationship between State and society, to face the dilemmas of a development with inclusion and equity.

Since the 1950s, development gained prominence as a public policy agenda and an academic study field (ESCOBAR, 1995; WALLERSTEIN, 2002). From then on, it took multiple meanings and representations, and started being addressed as a polysemic concept (OLIVEIRA, 2001). Thus, the development constructs have been discussed in various knowledge fields, especially in economics and geography, with an emphasis on the definition of differentiated scales to understand the regional, local, and territorial development. This increases the complexity of its multiple meanings according to the size and scale of analysis (BRANDÃO, 2007). However, in the administration field, the development reading still requires greater maturity and reflection. Given the concept's complexity, the starting point is the review of traditional approaches to seek bases providing the rising "development management" subfield with a support.

Historically, the development management or, in a more consensual way, the development management policies and programs underwent several transformations, incorporating the most updated concepts, such as participation and empowerment (MISOCZKY and BOHM, 2012; SOUZA and FURTADO, 2004; TEIXEIRA, 2001). Besides, after several years executing local and integrated development projects, knowledge and experience have been accumulated, something which eventually led to a need for rethinking the management of programs, the development strategies, and the public policies (FISCHER, 2002; FISCHER, ROESCH and MELO, 2006; MELO, SALLES and VAN BELLEN, 2012). However, turning our look to the regional issue, concerned with inequalities and the structural problems of Northeastern sub-regions, even with the apparent advancement of practical and theoretical reflections, one observes that the conclusions of Victor Nunes Leal, written in mid-20th century, in his classic book – *Coronelismo, enxada e voto* [*Coronelismo, hoe, and vote*] – remain updated: "The people's poverty, especially the rural population, and, as a consequence, its civic and intellectual backwardness will constitute a major obstacle to the noblest intentions [moralization of the national public life]" (LEAL, 1997, p. 287).

This way, the paper aims to identify the challenges and limitations of regional and local development policies, funded through international cooperation, in coping with inequalities existing in the sub-regional spaces of the Bahia state countryside. The focus of this study is the southwestern portion of the state, which, as the whole semi-arid northeastern region, is subject to conditions resulting from drought, posing a specific pace with regard to development and dependency.

The paper consists of this introduction, three sections, and the final remarks. The following section discusses the development administration as a polysemic study subfield, subject to multiple interpretations. The following section presents the methodological research procedures. Then, one analyzes the results of the study, discussing the fulfillment cycle of Pro-Gavião, through a description of the project, its conception and negotiation, the features of its design, the management, the socio-organizational dimension, and the conflict and limitations. Finally, there's the final remarks.

Development administration

In the management field, there're few studies on development management, particularly in Brazil. However, it's possible to name a few ones addressing this theme. This is the case of the researches by Alberto Guerreiro Ramos, systematized in *Administração e estratégia do desenvolvimento: elementos de uma sociologia especial da administração* [Administration and development strategy: elements of a special sociology of administration], published in 1966 and reissued under the title *Administração e contexto brasileiro: esboço de uma teoria geral da administração* [Administration and the Brazilian context: outlines of a general administration theory] (RAMOS, 1983); the studies by Fred Warren Riggs, published in 1968, *Administração nos países em desenvolvimento: a teoria da sociedade prismática* [Administration in developing countries: the prismatic society theory] (RIGGS, 1968); in addition to *Reconsideração do conceito de desenvolvimento* [Reconsideration of the development concept] (CAIDEN and CARAVANTES, 1982) and *Gestão do desenvolvimento e poderes locais* [Development management and local powers] (FISCHER, 2002). It's also worth recalling papers such as "Administração para o desenvolvimento: a disciplina em busca da relevância" [Administration for development: a discipline in search of relevance] (MOTTA, 1972); "Administração para o desenvolvimento: a relevância em busca da disciplina" [Management for development: relevance in search of discipline] (MARTINS, 2004); "The new development management" (DAR and COOKE, 2008); and "The future of development management" (McCOURT and GULRAJANI, 2010).

The attempt to construct an epistemological administration basis for development is open to new advances, since there's a vast field for study. Regarding the theoretical aspect, through reinterpretation of classic works on development economics, development sociology, and the administration science, besides the epistemological and methodological grounding. Regarding the practical aspect, through the development of new management models, performance indicators, methods for evaluating programs, projects, and actions, as well as financing models to promote development.

There's no systematized theoretical framework on development administration, thus, in this paper one uses the designation development administration. The term was coined in the post-war period, more specifically in 1950, when one sought to implement programs designed by the Anglo-Saxon thought to combat and/or decrease the significant socioeconomic inequalities existing in some regions. Regarding this, Caiden and Caravantes (1982) state that

[...] development administration owns its origin to this wish of rich countries to assist the poor nations in terms of achieving their development and, more specifically, of meeting the obvious needs of the new States to turn their colonial bureaucracies into social change tools.

In administration, this theory appears as development administration in the early studies by Motta (1972). It's through this transferability process of the administrative rationality that emerges the idea of a discipline to fill in the large gap between the preparation of economic development plans and the administrative ability of developing nations to implement such plans. The discipline is embodied in the public administration subfield and it follows two directions. On the one hand, it constituted a theoretical conceptualization effort, in order to connect knowledge from various areas within the social sciences, to form a body of doctrine to facilitate the explanation of administrative phenomena. On the other hand, it reflected the concern with the applicability of models, techniques, and management tools. Motta (1972, p. 40) warns that "Development Administration as an academic discipline has become a set of administrative diagnoses and prognoses".

The researches conducted within this field excessively valued the management technique aspects and devalued the theorists. Motta (1972) explains that the limitations to the discipline's advancement may be derived from two causes: a) almost all works written on the subject sought to confront traditional and modern administration ways; b) the aim consisted in searching for efficiency (related to decreased costs) and efficacy

(understood as achieving aims) and it didn't cover the concept of effectiveness as a greater pretense of development to promote quality of life for a population.

For Motta (1972), there will be advances in development management only if it undergoes a reformulation, i.e.: a) come back to the organizations with the primary aim of development, seeking relevance by means of organizational effectiveness; b) conceive models of more organic, flexible, and participatory organizations; and c) seek an appraising commitment of people within organizations, and not just neutral adherence to bureaucratic rules as a way to achieve results.

In practice, one found out that development administration has evolved just a little bit as a knowledge area within this period, either due to the methodological pathway outlined at its birthplace (and, here, accurately punctuated by Motta, 1972) or due to the importance attributed to the theme development in the 1980s and 1990s. For Martins (2004), in both decades there was a restructuring in the governmental programs of the countries, which shifted their focus from an administration aimed at development to an administration model focused on fiscal adjustment. This management model was ruled by the Washington Consensus guidelines, with a set of liberal policies leading to an economic restructuring and reformation of the States, by reducing public spending, tax reform, deregulation of markets, trade openness, and privatization, among other measures. In fact, the development model which was important and needed in previous decades started being the cause of the external debt crisis in developing countries. Actually, development is the most political of themes. This may explain why, before the 1980s, the developmentalist ideology was needed for the maintenance of systemic order, insofar as there was a need for an alternative to the promises coming from the other side of the continent. This change of paradigm from social justice promotion to tax stability occurred not only in the pragmatic field of governmental programs, but also in the doctrinal field of scientific production in various knowledge areas, among them economics, sociology, and administration, with the justification of implementing the minimal State.

In face of the facts described, there's a need for a State to lead the new development. Regarding this, Bresser-Pereira (2009) reports that, within each nation-State or country, the State is the collective action tool allowing the nation to achieve its aims. For being strong or capable, this state will need, on the one hand, to have legitimacy before the civil society and the nation. On the other hand, its finances shall be healthy and its administration, effective and efficient. The State's legitimacy, in turn, will depend on its democratic nature – since the authoritarian government forms lost legitimacy – and on the ability of this State to promote economic development and increasingly ensure the social rights. For this, the democratic State in rich countries has become a welfare state and in the successful countries at the periphery it has become a developmental state. In both cases, it's a mixed form of economy organization, essentially capitalist, coordinated by the State and having a strong component of State regulation (BRESSER-PEREIRA, 2011).

One stresses that development is regarded in this paper as a polysemic concept which gives rise to multiple interpretations. Development is work out as a process under permanent construction, something which involves a variety of actors, at different geographical scales, going through the power of international organizations, public policies of national States, and reaching the arrangements of local and regional actors, in a coexistence between consensus and conflict, nexus and ruptures, which leads people to the possibility of full autonomy, citizenship, and access to rights, with inclusion and equity in the construction of a world which guarantees human life and sustainability.

Besides the State action, developmental projects have been a concern of some international agencies, something which is usually named in the literature "North-South international cooperation". This cooperation is strengthened since the time when the Point Four was established, a component of the Truman Doctrine, in the late 1940s, but it gained prominence after 1945, when the UN system initiated discussions on underdevelopment and the inequality conditions around the world (LYRA, 2005). Later on, in the 1960s, with the Alliance for Progress, the North-South cooperation got even stronger and became a systematized action of assistance to developing countries, especially in Latin America.

In the subsequent decade, the cooperation got stronger in face of the asymmetries of capitalist production, associated to the critical weather conditions at some regions. The need for creating programs to face the poverty and misery observed in several peripheral regions becomes apparent, especially in Latin America and Africa. Moreover, there's a concern with the serious problems related to drought and famine devastating Africa in the early 1970s, a period marked by a global crisis in the way of thinking of the relation between State and society. Several international conferences discuss the need for reformulating the international policy routes to promote development/growth. To keep the system's order under a bipolar world, constructed according to the logic of social welfare State, as a counterpoint to the socialist State, there's a crucial need for cooperation to face calamity and poverty situations in areas which neither can get into the capitalist development logic nor derive from this logic.

The international cooperation for development between the Northern countries and the Southern ones may be characterized through the diversity of shapes and models. It starts from official aid from developed nations – that's the case of Point Four and the Alliance for Progress –, goes through bilateral cooperation, and reaches multilateral cooperation, characterized by intergovernmental organizations, such as the World Bank and other organizations of the UN system. As stressed by Lyra (2005), there's also non-governmental cooperation when the resources come from Northern non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as the Church, social movements, or even environmental movements.

The response of the international system started in the 1970s, when the United Nations held a series of humanitarian aid operations. One of the most prominent actions under the responsibility of the UN took place in Bangladesh for fighting hunger in the region. Another highlight, within this period, was the action by several developed countries, in cooperation, in the area of Sahel, in Africa, in order to promote humanitarian operations to assist the victims of a prolonged drought. In November 1974, in the World Food Conference, a consensus was reached not only about the responsibility of States with regard to providing the system in crisis with an order, but also about the need to systematize the humanitarian aid and the North-South cooperation. However, Linklater (1996) criticizes this connection form by listing the interdependence conditions and the conformation of speeches in the international organizations action, which, according to the author, try to assist in order to conform and meet the developed countries' interests.

One observes that the cooperation process has changed *pari passu* both the transformations in structure and the national States' role with regard to the new configurations deriving from globalization. Some international institutions, such as the World Bank, played a very marked role and they represent very well these changes which affected the nation States, the economy, and the society as a whole (KRAYCHETE, 2005, 2006). On the other hand, less powerful organisms within the international system gave room for new discussions and advancements in terms of global and national policy, as one can observe in the case under analysis.

Methodological Procedures

The survey was conducted according to the grounding of a qualitative approach to understand the regional development management, through actions performed in Pro-Gaviao. A qualitative research allows understanding and explaining the social phenomenon, such as development management. In this system, "one doesn't seek regularities, but the understanding of agents, what uniquely led them to act as they did" (GODOI and BALSINI, 2010). This choice is due to the researcher's training, with a more critical concern in the face of action taken by the State and international bodies in subspaces within the Brazilian northeast region.

In the administration field, several researches (GODOI, BANDEIRA-DE-MELLO and SILVA, 2010; ROCHA and CERETTA, 1998) have shown interest in adopting more qualitative than quantitative methodologies. This is due to the multidisciplinary nature of administration as an applied social science,

which uses various epistemological sources, such as sociology, anthropology, political science, psychology, economics, and, more recently, history. This becomes more necessary when studying the development phenomenon, given its multidimensional, multidisciplinary, and polysemic features.

For a more complete understanding on the subject, one chose to analyze a complete cycle project, i.e. an *ex post* evaluation. Therefore, this is a study with a historical perspective, since the project was conducted between 1997 and 2006. Vizeu (2007) argues that the historical research should be undertaken in order to make the contemporary Brazilian organizational reality more intelligible and support studies within the administration field. With this, the dialogue between history and administration may also allow a closer look at the peculiarities of organizations and management. Apparently, history can make contributions to the administration through their own theoretical and methodological resources which provide knowledge on the organizational and administrative contemporary realities from a new perspective: the current time's history through the narrative of social subjects (SALAMA, 1992; VIZEU, 2007).

Empirical research has also been set as a single case study (STAKE, 2000; 2007; YIN, 1988) and data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews, documentary analysis, and observation (ROCHA and CERETTA, 1998). According to Yin (2001, p. 21), "the case study allows an investigation to preserve holistic and meaningful features of real life events". This strategy was also chosen because it's well applied to situations where "there's little possibility of control over the events under study and when the focus of interest lies on current phenomena, which may only be analyzed within a real life context" (GODOY, 1995, p. 25). Stake (2000; 2007) highlights that the case study is distinguished because of its particularities, seeking to understand a particular situation, and not because of its ability to generalize, constituting a crucial tool as a research strategy, regardless of the analytical method used.

Following these principles, this study aims to analyze a regional development management case involving international cooperation. Through this study, one seeks to find specific situations and social interactions which allow understanding the advances, challenges, and limitations of the State action in regions with a poor economic and social situation. Godoy (1995) warns that the case study is restricted to one or a few units and that, thus, depth and detail are among its features. Besides, it's believed that the choice of this principle is appropriate, since, as highlighted by Yin (2001, p. 27), the case study's differentiating power is the "ability to deal with a wide variety of evidence — documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations".

To achieve the research aims, the collection of data and information consisted of two steps. In the first, one collected and analyzed the secondary data and, then, there was the collection from primary sources, through interviews.

The secondary data and information were collected through reading of reports, statistics, bulletin, books, papers, magazines, documents, and other printed, magnetic, or electronic publications at the organizations which are implementing the project, the Development and Regional Action Company (CAR) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and partner institutions (COOPERSUBA, SEBRAE, and EMBRAPA).

Having the research nature in mind, the collection of data and primary data was conducted through the application of survey instruments, considering their suitability to the theoretical framework indicated above and the analytical model, which takes into account the actors' role. The survey instrument adopted was a semi-structured in-depth interview.

To obtain greater accuracy when drafting and implementing the survey instrument, one performed some reliability and validity tests (ZIMMER, FERREIRA and HOPPEN, 2007). For these authors, the case study method has specific features with regard to the way how the validity and reliability tests are performed. This discussion is grounded on the concerns of Yin (2001), when the author discusses possible generalizations of the case study findings, something which requires more rigorous study strategies. Thus, in this research, one

used tests aimed to provide it with greater consistency, such as the construct's validity, the internal validity, the external validity, and the reliability.

This accuracy was also used to search for construct's validation, using multiple evidence sources, subsequently linked at the collection stage, in addition to the review of preliminary reports by key informants. Regarding the internal validity, one establishes a causal relation, where one demonstrates certain conditions leading to other conditions. IN terms of external validity, in single case researches one uses theory. Reliability was set through the surveyed categories.

Regarding the interview, in accordance with the script by Zimmer, Ferreira, and Hoppen (2007), one performed the pre-test and the pilot test. One also performed a face validation, observing whether the form and vocabulary used in the script were suitable for the respondents concerned.

The interview field consists of key actors, policymakers, managers, and technicians involved in the programs of the analytical unit. The group selection was intentional and the selection criteria were defined having the role played by actors in the project development as a basis. One interviewed actors from organizations executing and co-executing the project, such as the IFAD representative in Brazil; the CAR director; coordinators of the project execution units (PEUs); coordinators of the project support units (PSUs); representatives of the co-executing institutions; representatives of cooperatives and critical actors in the project, working at different social organizations. The interviews were semi-structured, in-depth, and according to the tested script. In total, 15 interviews were conducted.

Development Administration: International Cooperation, Public Power and Society Action through Pro-Gavião Management

Established through a wide experience in designing and managing regional and rural development projects, the Community Development Project of the Gavião River Basin (Pro-Gavião) was conceived and agreed between CAR, representing the Bahia state government, and the IFAD. In its reference document (CAR, 2003), the actors administering the project started from the principle that "inclusion, equity, and the citizens' social promotion is a State duty, as well as the conduction of public policies seeking to remedy the social and infrastructure-based inequalities, in order to improve the quality of life".

In these terms, it was established as a project's priority target an increase in the rural population income at the Gavião River region, based on sustainability and covering an area of 11,718 km². Similarly, its general aim was "increasing the income and improving the living conditions of the poor peasants and the inhabitants of the semi-arid region of the Gavião River Basin, within an environmentally sustainable development strategy" (CAR, 1993).

To achieve the desired aims, the project was spatially delimited to serve communities in 13 towns with low economic and social development levels, within the Gavião River Basin in southwestern Bahia: Anage, Belo Campo, Tremedal, Condeuba, Caraibas, Presidente Janio Quadros, Maetinga, Piripa, Cordeiros, Licínio de Almeida, Jacaraci, Mortugaba, and Guajeru (CAR, 1993). At the time it was deployed, 8 of these towns were among the poorest ones in the state (FIDA, 1995).

The project was executed between 1997 and 2006. Although the negotiations have started in the early 1990s, the official signing of the contract took place in late 1996 and its actual onset happened in the subsequent year, during the administration of governor Paulo Souto. The first phase, executed until 2000, involved the diagnosis of the region. The second step was executed between 2000 and 2006, with a partial evaluation in 2003. Even after termination of the contract, support to the existing actions still remains. This occurs through other CAR covenants, the Program for Fighting Rural Poverty (PRODUZIR) and the Community

Development Project of the Poorest Areas in the State of Bahia (PRODECAR), projects focusing on rural development funded by the World Bank and the IFAD, respectively.

Following the CAR guidelines, Pro-Gaviao is part of a comprehensive regional and rural development strategy of the Bahia state government, executed since the 1980s. This strategy started being prepared with the implementation of CAR (BAHIA, 1983), inspired by a World Bank proposal, in order to connect regional development policies which, then, were put into action in a fragmented manner by various governmental councils and bodies. CAR allowed gathering different experiences, accumulated during the conduction of various development projects with different guidelines, established through different national and international partnerships. Pro-Gaviao was, then, drafted having these experiences as a basis, along with the definitions by its funding partner, the IFAD. CAR was responsible for executing the project.

Pro-Gaviao involved a US\$ 40,000,000 investment. The IFAD participated as a funder, assessor, and co-manager of the project, and the loan provided by it amounted to US\$ 20,000,000 (50%), while the Bahia state government invested US\$ 19.600,000 (49%) and the beneficiaries gave the counterpart of US\$ 400,000 (1%). The cooperating institution, responsible for the external evaluation of the project's implementation, was the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).

Besides the leading organizations, the project's execution leaned on the support by other ones, named partners. Several contracts were signed with them, especially with the Brazilian Enterprise for Agricultural Research (EMBRAPA), the Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service (SEBRAE), the National Service for Rural Training (SENAR), the Bahia Pesca, and the Bank of Northeast Brazil (BNB).

Civil society organizations also participated, through a major partnership with an NGO specialized on the development of alternating rural schools, the Association of Community and Agricultural Family Schools of Bahia (AECOFABA), which already existed when the project was implemented. This NGO is addressed in the project's reports as co-executing, and its connection took three aspects, out of which the first two were regarded as "having strategic value" to achieve the proposed aims: a) operation of three agricultural family schools (AFS) within the project's area (there were 2 schools before the project and 1 more was created) and the possibility of providing the poor children with basic education; b) referral of High School technicians graduated from their schools to the technical field work teams; c) administrative ease for hiring the whole personnel working on site. It's worth observing here that AECOFABA sub-contracted another social organization to take care of the project's execution: the Work Cooperative of the Southwest Bahia State Region (COOPERSUBA) (FIDA, 2003).

The project's actions were subdivided into three major axes: community development, productive development, and access to credit. At first, these components might work in a connected and simultaneous manner, in order to achieve the following aims: increasing the income of small agricultural and agro-industrial producers, as well as of artisans; creating conditions for the sustainable development of communities; and supporting regional education alternatives (CAR, 2006a).

Through these axes, the following actions were undertaken: technical assistance and rural expansion, agricultural credit, strengthening of community organizations, gender equity promotion, validation of appropriate technologies for dealing with drought, support for agro-industrial and artisanal microenterprises, strengthening of the regional educational basis, basic infrastructure provision (such as electric power or solar energy), and increased water storage capacity, through the construction of cisterns, water supply systems, and dams.

By the end of 2006, Pro-Gaviao was incorporated into PRODUZIR, funded by the World Bank, a project which was being executed across the Bahia state since 1996. This change directly alters the organization and methodology of the actions taken, since the management and organizational model start adopting the principles, procedures, and supervision of the World Bank. The contract with the IFAD was terminated and negotiations for another contract started.

Conception and negotiation of Pro-Gavião

The negotiation process for Pro-Gavião was born due to the interest of organizations to act in areas with major economic and social development problems. According to the *Informe de Formulação* [Formulation Report] (FIDA, 1995), the Brazilian Northeast started being regarded as one of the priority areas for its intervention in 1988. The choice of this region and the project's area definition were slowly set, due to the very low economic and social development indicators and a high number of families below the poverty line, living in rural environments with a significant lack of opportunities (FIDA, 1995).

According to the IFAD, the main reason for the organization to act in the countryside of northeastern Brazil and develop Pro-Gavião was the fact that the “*semi-arid is the poorest region of the country, and the main issue was focusing efforts on a specific region [because], despite the limitations, there's a need for focusing on potentiality*” (interview 1). From this perspective, one observes cohesion between the discourse of the IFAD and the Bahia state government on the shortcomings of the assisted territory.

It was the region with the lowest public investment within the state, a completely insulated region without any infrastructure at all. A completely abandoned region. It's clear that there's a power game and there was a political force vacuum, but there wasn't a strong political force to influence the State to define the region (interview 1).

The isolation aspects of the area, related to political and environmental deficits, are also highlighted by the project's coordinator at CAR:

The project's area has always been a marginal area. It was semi-arid, but with peculiar features. A completely unassisted area, almost abandoned by the State and without a strong political representation with regard to the state government [...]. A region with very limited natural resources. It's getting better, going towards the west, with an extremely poor population, but with a development potential. It was a happy choice to assist that region (interview 3).

In the analyzed documents, abandonment, structural weakness, and lack of political and social organization are continually stressed aspects, constituting crucial items for defining the proposal.

The project's area has been forgotten by the institutions of the state and federal governments and it hasn't benefited from the significant governmental investments in roads or infrastructure which took place in other parts of the country. It's expected that the proposed project reverses the history of forgetfulness (FIDA, 1995, p. 11).

One observes that the State action discourse in areas with low economic and social development was part of a context transformation, in the early 1990s, which marks a reset of its “assistencialist” action. There was a spread of local development policies, often exacerbated, as one may see in the analysis by Brandão (2007). Two aspects of these transformations, presented in the paper's theoretical framework, are particularly interesting for setting Pro-Gavião. First, changes stemming from the redemocratization period broaden the debate on reconstructing the democratic environment and the State duties. Within this period, there's also the effervescence of a neoliberal project encouraging increased competitiveness and expanding the market actions, with a democratizing and “participatory” project, for including and empowering people. Thus, in parallel, the neoliberal recipe which will drive the Brazilian State reformation gets stronger, encouraging the creation of development policies with actions focused on the market, in accordance with a public management model focused on results and the search for developing the individual abilities of those who have difficulties to re-enter into the productive chain (ABRUCIO and LOUREIRO, 2002; KRAYCHETE, 2006).

This way, it's worth observing, here, that the reset of the State's role in a globalized world, associated to the financial crisis discourse, creates both the need for support from international organizations for funding and constructing policies and the endogenous development solutions, with local development programs and actions aimed at the unassisted communities. The CAR actions, funded with resources from the World Bank and the IFAD in the projects PRODUZIR and Gavião, respectively, corroborate the analyses by Kraychete (2006) and other globalization critics (MISOCZKY and BOHM, 2012; PEREIRA, 2010; VIEIRA, 2003). These authors believe that the "assistencialist" programs, especially those for fighting poverty, don't contradict the liberalizing wave principles, prioritizing their investments in infrastructure, production, and social policies which meet the "basic needs" of those with difficulties for entering into the productive market.

The second aspect highlighted in the context analysis is the Northeastern political moment, marked by a wave of left-wing governors, impacted by the 1988 Constitution and the prospects for political change in development programs. According to an interview with a CAR coordinator:

The projects undergo a remodeling exactly in this line, with greater participation and transfer of services directly from the State to the community associations. There's a whole discussion in this regard and these projects are just born incorporating these changes, this participation element. This was a phenomenon throughout the Northeast, since in that context Waldir won the elections in Bahia; in Pernambuco, Miguel Arraes won the elections; then, you had a change in the entire Northeast, or at least in the 3 or 4 main Northeastern states. You have political forces which were historically in the opposition reaching power positions. And this discourse starts materializing itself, it involves participation, increased democracy, increased people's participation in these projects (interview 3).

In addition to political changes in the Northeastern governments as a whole, pointed out above, there's a re-discussion of the regional and rural development programs, as one can see in the theoretical framework. Magalhães (2000), for instance, highlights the strength of the World Bank in the redefinition of programs and the impact of the governors' experiences when visiting the Solidarity Project, in Mexico, in the mid-1990s, observing the effects of policies for direct transfer of financial resources to the communities.

In the case of Bahia, even with the return of Antonio Carlos Magalhães to the government, in 1991, and the continued Carlist hegemony until 2007, there remained the discussion line which was predominating throughout the Northeast. It was precisely within this period that the discourse of participation and international cooperation for development programs was expanded, in order to address the major social and economic problems in the semi-arid region of Bahia. These actions were put into action through new contracts with the World Bank (PRODUZIR) and Program for Municipal Administration and Urban Infrastructure Development (PRODUR) and the IFAD (Pro-Gavião).

However, the setting process of Pro-Gavião didn't occur in a consensual and rapid manner. Several proposals were prepared until a regional/rural development project was delimited to the Gavião River Basin. The first proposal included 20 counties bordering the river; it was prepared during the Waldir Pires administration (1987-1989). This first form wasn't accepted by the IFAD, due to bureaucratic issues of the Brazilian government and the international organization's priorities. As it was seen later on, in 1992, the FAO's Investment Center promoted a General Identification Mission of the IFAD, which reviewed the early works of the fund and included the initiative among its priority projects in Brazil. Thus, it restarted, during the Antonio Carlos Magalhães administration (1991-1994), a preparatory work conducted by a CAR's local team and a new IFAD's mission, which visited Bahia in 1993 (FIDA, 1995). Despite the advances in studies, only in the Paulo Souto administration, in 1995, the project was agreed and the contract was signed by the fund and the state of Bahia, under the guardianship of the Brazilian federal government.

One notices that Pro-Gavião wasn't a priority project for any of the organizations involved. For the IFAD, the importance of acting on Bahia and the northeastern Brazil wasn't clear, yet, in the early discussion. This gradually happened when one realized that, although Brazil is a semiperipheral country, the poverty and inequality level in Northeast is too significant within the Latin American context, and that a project of this nature, then, would provide the agency's actions with visibility. Along with this aspect, the strength of the "drought industry" became crystal clear, and it put the sub-region's population in a situation of dependency on "assistencialist" actions to access basic services, such as water. This constituted, in the late 1990s, a clientelist policy in which the water truck went through the streets in exchange of political power maintenance, according to the patterns described by Leal (1997).

Thus, on the part of the state of Bahia, there already was a practice of executing development projects which softened the huge regional needs and, in parallel, met the political interests of the groups and subgroups in power.

The technicians and critics of CAR report that the huge organization project has always been PRODUZIR, as it assists 417 towns within Bahia. However, one of the company's representatives points out that PRODUZIR was "a large business desk, widely used to ensure interests, so that CAR was always full of politicians at the elections time". Therefore, the proposal of an integrated and territorially delimited project wasn't warmly received by the organization, mainly because the target region had no major political force which could lead to streamline the negotiation process. The new project was regarded as an experimental model, as a good opportunity to obtain external financial resources, but without the increased eases provided by PRODUZIR. Observing the governmental reports, Pro-Gavião only gained more prominence since 2003, when its actions became visible, causing real income gains and improved local living conditions. Since it wasn't regarded as a priority, the project's design was free to go a little further in certain points, without neglecting the interests of the IFAD and CAR.

The final proposal coincided with the IFAD's interests of investing to improve the living conditions of the poorest families in the rural Northeast Brazil and the State's intentions to achieve a sub-region with one of the worst social and economic indicators within Bahia. The preliminary studies aimed at designing a community development project in 20 out of the 100 poorest towns in the state, covering several micro-regions in Bahia, as it has already happened in other projects developed by CAR with support from international institutions. However, the final version of the project was delimited to 13 towns in the Gavião River Basin, before the Anage dam, spatially concentrated on the micro-regions Southwest and Serra Geral. This subspace was named "poverty polygon", due to its abysmal indicators.

According to the project's managers, there was neither an overt political intention to define the project's site nor pressure from the local authorities; it was defined through the terrible social indicators from that subspace. For the managers and policymakers of CAR, major decisions were always in charge of the technical team which carried out the studies and defined the project, along with technicians from the very CAR, IFAD, and FAO. But, in fact, there was no participation of the local community due to the fragile political connection and the lack of social capital, as shown in the interviews presented above.

According to documents by CAR (1993), few institutions acted on the area defined by the project. Among them were CAR itself, with actions of PRODUZIR to provide small farmers with improvements, the Bahia's Agricultural Development Company (EBDA), SEBRAE, Universidade Estadual do Sudoeste da Bahia (UESB), and small branches of Banco do Brasil and Banco do Estado da Bahia. The main local institutions were the city halls, responsible for executing almost all social services, such as public health care, primary education, and maintenance of the infrastructure network (road, water, and electric power), funded almost entirely through direct transfers from the federal government. The main producer's organizations and NGOs were the Rural Workers Union, an agricultural cooperative, community associations, and two agricultural family schools; all of them were regarded as "financially fragile and limited in scope". This demonstrates that the project was fully designed according to the top-down model, i.e. with no participation of the assisted communities.

However, the alleged neutrality in the region's choice was challenged by critics of the project, who indicated that there were clear interests in an increased State action in that space, giving a response to the major social development problems and, at the same time, meeting the expectations of local political actors, especially mayors and assemblymen connected to the political aims of former governor Antônio Carlos Magalhães. In different reports (such as the interviews 5, 8, and 13), there're passages indicating that the project was "armored" by the government to assist specific and less politically organized communities, not allowing controversial actors to participate in the project's definitions and the assessment meetings held by the IFAD.

Therefore, in terms of the discussion process for conceiving and designing, the project involved a lengthy negotiation between the organizations involved. For the general coordinator, "*the development projects prepared by CAR require an extensive and lengthy agreement between components and targets to be conducted, since, with the signing of the loan contract, the agreed items are effectively claimed*" (interview 3). This concern with the agreed goals was associated to the problems occurring in other contracts already executed by CAR, although the experience with the IFAD was a new element in the organization.

According to the IFAD in Brazil, the whole process is negotiated meeting the interests of the organizations involved and respecting the country's sovereignty, in its various deliberative instances: "for the IFAD, it's entirely clear that the design and implementation of public policy is an exclusive task of the country" (interview 1). According to this discourse, there seems to be no conflicts in the preparation, especially when one observes the following excerpt from an interview:

The construction of methodologies is a joint effort. Before this, the project's design is developed together. The IFAD's role is reading, understanding, and studying what the governments want [...] There can be no conflict [...] it's always possible to find the converging points, and this easily happens in Brazil (interview 1).

However, the CAR's reports show that the negotiation process is complex, requiring a connection between the various proposals of the organizations involved, many of which posed by the IFAD. The IFAD's principles shall be guaranteed in order to achieve the loan. These principles embody an ideology which permeates most of the official organizations for international cooperation. Thus, one notices that the whole project was constructed to meet the government and the funding agent's interests, with approval by the federal government, which participates as a mediator in the loan agreement. One doesn't observe an interest in the participation of local actors in the discussions to design the project.

In fact, what is observed through the IFAD's guideline documents (FIDA, 1995; 2003) is that the main points raised by the organization end up being included in the project, demonstrating its intervening power in the negotiations, such as the gender and participation actions, adapting them to the current conditions within their operating environment. What's significant, here, is thinking about the extent to which these interventions are positive, i.e. whether they add innovations to the national public policies, meeting the longings of local communities not observed by the State, or whether they show to be negative, i.e. pose socio-organizational solutions through the market, without giving room for innovative empowering community actions. In other words, this involves thinking whether the actions undertaken represent a defense of hegemonic positions in the international system or a space for counter-hegemonic thought.

Regarding the proposal's setting, one realizes that the project wasn't restricted to the creation of infrastructure and access to basic rights such as water and energy, as it had hitherto been happening in projects aimed at the countryside of the state of Bahia. The data collected from documents and interviews show that Pro-Gavião was conceived through a cumulative experience of other regional and rural development projects, especially for maturing small farmers support programs, promoted by the World Bank, as indicated in the studies by Carlos Miranda and analyzes by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) about the development programs in Northeastern Brazil.

In the mid-1990s, the Northeast starts reviewing the development programs, gradually incorporating advances into the discussions and practices of previous experiences, both local and international ones. At this historical moment, PAPP was among the most affected ones. According to Miranda and Costa (2006), the “renewed PAPP represents the onset of the first decentralization movement and a strengthening in the participation of civil society”, something which leads the regional development projects to focus on integrated programs for fighting rural poverty. This transformation expands the responsibilities of States with regard to management, by strengthening the decentralization actions and the expansion of mechanisms for community participation in the execution of projects. In another converging line, the project Integrated and Sustainable Local Development (DLIS) gains momentum, introducing new action dimensions (SEPÚLVEDA, 2006; SILVEIRA, BOCAYUVA and ZAPATA, 2002).

As one may observe in the documentary analysis of Pro-Gaviao and in the conducted interviews, its design and planning are included into this context. It appropriates the discussions observed in Northeastern Brazil, associating them to the experiences of international bodies for integrated and sustainable development, prioritizing the improvement of living conditions among the unassisted populations which can't get into the productive model of a new globalized economy. This way, Pro-Gaviao shows a few elements in which there's room for the pursuit of community autonomy and participation, presenting counter-hegemonic actions, especially on advances in political connection to some communities and in the educational process of AFS, which become possible due to a strong movement of the Pastoral Land Commission. However, there's a great fear that such autonomy generates a power which puts into question the current political structure, mainly the local power bases.

It's also quite visible the new methodological guideline coming from the IFAD's experiences around the world, by creating a spatially delimited project, with integrative features different from those which had been observed in the state of Bahia so far. CAR's projects always tried to assist the larger number of towns it could, unlike the IFAD, which systematized a spatially delimited action within some territory. This feature is highlighted in the interviews by various actors as a major breakthrough. They stress that the project was set up with an innovative design with regard to the time it was conceived, allowing the connection of various components:

The design was excellent, the project focused on actions in research, teaching, rural expansion, credit, addition of value through microenterprises, associativeness, cooperativeness. The actions were coordinated, integrated, and funded by a single State institution. This provided the project with flexibility (interview 9).

These listed points are clearly observed in the IFAD's agenda (FIDA, 2007a; 2007b), which includes and emphasizes gender issues, the participation and inclusion of young people searching for the self-sustainability of projects and the continuity of actions, something which, however, isn't always achieved in the implementation of proposals. This agenda has become increasingly globalized, through the action of international bodies, since they don't act only as funding banks, but as development agencies, defining methodologies and guidelines for the national policies. It's possible to relate this behavior to the analyses of these bodies' role, as undertaken by Pereira (2010) by studying the World Bank's action as a political, intellectual, and financial agent, when capturing the elements of a democratic action.

The new features set up in the components and the methodology of Pro-Gaviao induce many respondents to argue for the project as a new milestone in the development activities undertaken by the state of Bahia and CAR:

This project was the best one I've worked with so far, because it was connected to five pillars – basic infrastructure (dams, cisterns, water supply systems, solar energy, and electric power), diffusion of technologies within the semi-arid region, community organization, agricultural credit, and addition of value (gristmills, distilleries, honey houses, brown sugar) (interview 4).

However, through the testimonies of critical actors operating in the region, not all aspects involved in the project are regarded as being positive (interviews 13, 14, and 15): “*the definition of communities wasn’t very clear and met the political interests of mayors [...] The mayors, assemblymen and representatives appropriated the great work constructions, such as dams, electricity, hours of tractor use, and purchase of animals*” (interview 14).

The critical actors interviewed argue that the Bahia state government, under the Carlist guidance, preserved their interests and those of their partners at the expense of groups which had a more advanced discussion in terms of social issues and political tendency. For these actors, the local political and social connection gained momentum with the fight for the dam in the late 1980s, primarily connected through the Pastoral Land Commission, constituting associations with a critical thought with regard to the State policies. For them, there was an “armoring” in the formulation and execution of Pro-Gavião, something which hindered a more effective participation of organizations with a contrary political tendency, such as Universidade Estadual do Sudoeste da Bahia, which was managed by members of Partido dos Trabalhadores (interview 10). The communities and organizations which had a contesting or opposing action with regard to the local officials, particularly the city halls within the region, complain they have been neglected when compared to other communities related to the political representatives.

Key features of the project’s design

One of the starting points for an analysis of a program with the whole cycle, *ex post*, is the observation of its formulation process and the consequences of this configuration in the project’s execution. The strategic lines for designing pro-Gavião were set through the following actions: first, “the strengthening and/or creation of rural organizations for providing peasants’ participation with grounding and improvement” (FIDA, 1995). According to the documents, this was the most general strategic guideline of the project, which inspired all actions of the proposed intervention. Then, one highlights “the importance attributed to the relation between development and women in the rural environment”, “the decreased risks related to drought”, and, finally, “the agricultural production development” (FIDA, 2003).

Through these strategic lines, one designed the specific aims, reinforced by the documents: i) support for peasants’ participation and the development of their organizations; ii) funding and technical support for the construction of small irrigation works at the properties; iii) improvement of social conditions and the local infrastructure, contributing to the education of young people by building new schools and granting scholarships, constructing cisterns for domestic use, road construction and rural electrification programs; iv) improvement of agricultural and non-agricultural income of families through training, extension, and support to marketing and credit. One observes, at first, that priority actions are highlighted in the discourses of democratization and decentralization of public action.

The project’s organization became possible through the Project Execution Unit (PEU), equivalent to a regional office, but located in Salvador. PEU consisted of the following team: 8 professionals and technicians, 2 secretaries, and employees of CAR. Besides, there were a field team with 32 technicians and 7 administrative assistants. The PSUs were located in the towns of Anage, Condeuba, Licínio de Almeida, Presidente Janio Quadros, and Tremedal (CAR, 2006b). The team responsible for the execution was interdisciplinary, it involved various specialties related to the areas of productive and social development.

Development management in Pro-Gavião

The analysis of development management aspects of Pro-Gavião starts from the principle that management, as a social fact, depends on the connection of the various institutions and actors involved in the process (FISCHER, 2002; FISCHER, ROESCH and MELO, 2006). Thus, one of the first relevant points is the role and connection of the organizations in project's management.

Regarding the IFAD's action, the discourse observed in the interview, as indicated above, involves dialogue and cooperation. Effectively, the project's execution was designed by the CAR's team, through PEU, which, according to its original proposal, would be a local regional office, but it was put into action as a central office settled in Salvador. The management of components was conducted by CAR's technicians, grouped into the aforementioned PSUs. The IFAD fully played the role of monitoring and controlling, with support from the UNOPS. Respondents reveal, comparatively, that the IFAD's presence was more effective than the follow-up of projects provided by the World Bank, since there was a direct interference in various operational aspects of the project, from the definition of the technical team to the activities which should be performed (interviews 4 and 7).

These interferences reflect on the methodology adopted in the project, and it's possible to realize that, at various times, there was cohesion between the government and the IFAD's discourses. At other times, however, the agency determined the pathways which should be outlined to suit its interests.

The IFAD's participation in the project conception was critical, because, perhaps, if there wasn't a requirement from the funding agent, the project would be focused on the discourse, such as other CAR's projects, and it couldn't be put into action. The IFAD is a body working as a commercial bank, but it's a development agency. There's pressure, there's a very large countries' forum. These gender, environment, participation issues aren't only put into the contract, but its oversight process effectively requires that the project covers it. There's not only a contractual requirement, but the whole oversight process... This is required, it's asked. There's no way to avoid answering to this, there's no way to prevent reacting to it (interview 3).

These interferences indicate that the project management differs from that observed in other projects conducted by CAR, due to an inter-scale relation between the local and international organizations. Representatives of social movements state (interviews 13 and 15) that willingness to participate in certain discussions and the inclusion of more contesting communities only happened when there was direct interference by the IFAD with regard to CAR. This occurred, especially, at times of evaluation and monitoring put into action through visits by the international teams, something which promoted a counterpoint to the local officials' longing for appropriating the actions of this project.

The PEU's coordinator stresses that pressure from local politicians has reached a point at which there was a need for preparing a document of the IFAD. This document stated that any investment made outside the communities assisted by the project would be paid by the State. The pressure started increasing, especially when the project gained visibility, since 2001, and the document was very important at times of internal discussion of actions (interview 3). Even so, there're reports that the huge works – dams, electric power supply, and larger investments, such as purchase of animals, among others – were directly or indirectly appropriated by local politicians, mayors, and representatives, as well as people they personally support and the program's technicians. These facts are discreetly addressed, since they aren't clear in the surveyed sources, but they can be observed when it's reported that a whole team of the office in Condeuba (PSU) was fired by a determination of the IFAD and the CAR's PEU. This was a major challenge indicated by managers of the project.

The partner institutions' role was another challenge highlighted by managers of the project. According to the main actors, there wasn't an effective partnership with institutions such as EMBRAPA and SEBRAE:

What happened was a service provision contract [...] it was expected that at the end of the project the institutions continued to support the actions undertaken, helping to maintain the communities. What happened was that, when money came to an end, the organizations moved away from the region. This isn't a partnership (interview 6).

SEBRAE's work, for instance, is widely criticized due to its focus on urban actions for inclusion into the market, especially in the defense of entrepreneurship, while CAR and EMBRAPA had a look towards the rural environment. This caused various conflicts with regard to the socio-organizational models which should be put into action for the communities. Moreover, a large amount of resources was made available for actions without effective results and various commercial plans weren't effectuated.

Other organizations are highlighted during the project's execution. One of them is AFS and its association, which represents one of the most advanced points with regard to training, knowledge improvement, and empowered communities. With an alternating education project, associated to teaching through practices in the rural environment, it's possible that learning becomes differentiated and makes people aware of the local problems. Several leaders of communities were trained according to this education model. For some respondents, *"what saved the project in the early paralysis years was the AFS and its outstanding results for spreading the agricultural techniques, many of which were and are continually used"* (interview 13).

Regarding the participation of local communities, the official discourse is revealing. According to the testimony by the CAR's director (interview 2), the organization's aim has always been geared towards *"concentration of actions in ventures promoting fight against rural poverty and rural development and improvement of the quality of life of poor communities in the countryside, prioritizing, above all, projects involving infrastructure and generation of employment and income"*. However, despite praising the learning provided by Pro-Gavião, the economist stresses that *"one can't deliver everything at hand; one must require some kind of return. Not given for free is valued and recognized"*. This indicates the perceived guideline that there was a need for greater connection, or other compensation form, so that local communities in the project kept their results for a longer time.

About the same participation aspect, the general coordinator comments:

On the other hand, I wouldn't say coincidence, but a set of very interesting forces, the project's team has always adhered to this discourse. The CAR's internal team. The core coordination team always agreed and tried to make the project possible, always trying to ensure this issue, these new elements, in order to provide it with practical concreteness, the way how to transform this... Thus, community associations bring cooperatives into the project, ensuring advice. That is, I think this combination is a requirement of the financial agent and a responsive team able to make these participation opportunities possible; I think it was crucial for a successful project (interview 5).

Considering what has been said, some aspects become noticeable in the incorporation of participation and associativeness for managing development projects. Participation isn't regarded as a governmental priority, but it's an adaptation to changes in a democratic State for which Brazil was heading to in the early 1990s and, in CAR, there was the possibility of incorporating advances, even under a Carlist government. On the other hand, there was the "funder requirement" for setting the agenda, something which indicates that participation has become a concern of international bodies in a changing world, allowing, in face of the full effervescence of neoliberal policies, significant social advances.

This also occurs with regard to the development management which has different practices in the managing, bureaucratic, and patrimonial State. One sees that public management moves towards its reformulation, in search of a State model focused on results and action effectiveness. One realizes, however, that the patrimonialist and clientelist practices persist, especially when moving into spaces with a lower political maturity. Although there were advances in the creation of more bureaucratic control mechanisms and the

monitoring of used resources, the “assistencialism” observed in the drought policies persists, creating a continuous dependency on the public and political power on the part of communities and low-income individuals.

This concern was already observed in the early documents of the project, which called attention to the care needed with regard to the effects of clientelism, as one can observe in the preparation report from May 1995, whose contract is still being designed:

A bad tradition of local governments in Northeastern Brazil has been the granting of official favors, according to the personal support policy; this is commonly referred to as clientelism. It isn't unusual that the powerful mayor dominates an entire region, with the tacit support of stronger allies acting on the state level, for the benefiting the rich and powerful people to the detriment of a beneficent and rather incorporating kind of rural development (FIDA, 1995, p. 12).

Regarding this aspect, development actions should predict this kind of practice which, naturally, might occur in a region lacking resources and, particularly, political awareness. However, soon after, the same document relativizes practice, by stating that “with the emergence of more modern and socially conscious mayors, this feature of the political panorama has gradually changed” (FIDA, 1995, p. 12). However, this change isn't observed in the various interviews conducted with managers and actors involved in the project, and it's verified that mayors seek to capitalize, especially on major infrastructure projects, such as bridges and dams (interviews 10, 13, and 14).

Besides, it's a relevant fact that respondents state that a part of the actions was appropriated by local and regional political actors. This way, it's interesting to notice that the main politician personally benefiting from the region's support basis, the former state assemblyman Clóvis Ferraz, was elected four times in a row, reaching the presidency of Bahia's Legislative Assembly during the Paulo Souto administration, exactly within the period when the project was in progress. Besides, this politician, born in a city assisted by Pro-Gaviao (Tremendal), was a CAR technician when the project was conceived and he became an assemblyman in the year the contract was signed. Nevertheless, all respondents from CAR emphasize that he didn't participate in the discussions and definitions of Pro-Gaviao.

These execution problems were indicated as limiting factors for rethinking the IFAD's provision of financial resources to the state of Bahia. The persistence of political problems and poor training of local communities, both in terms of political connection and association, led the new contracts with the IFAD to move on to other spaces.

According to the CAR's Director, the program's discontinuation took place due to political reasons. It was due to the Paulo Souto administration's interest in assisting other communities that the project wasn't continued. The project change caused a delay in the onset of another program (interview 4).

Respondents point out not only a paralysis of CAR after the program, but also a loss of political power on the part of agents in the sub-region. The change in state government may also reflect this, as, since 2007, the state is under the administration of Partido dos Trabalhadores. Thus, “CAR started being rethought by the new management, although some projects continue acting the same way as before. There's greater concern with the rural communities” (interview 4). With the change of government, there was an alignment of local powers with the state power holders, but the political structure is still without effective transformations. The various vote-buying and cassation processes indicate the maintenance of traditional practice.

Socio-organizational dimension in development management

Pro-Gavião was designed for assisting a subspace, in the broadest possible way. According to the IFAD's director in Brazil, the territorial section is "*intended to prevent disconnecting the projects due to limited resources. It has to do with the amount of resources and the project's impacts. It's better to actually assist a small area than getting lost in a large one*". Therefore, the project's actions focus on community and production development.

In terms of the community development under analysis, Pro-Gavião recorded, within its execution period, 210 assisted communities, distributed as follows: in each community a community management committee (CMC) was constituted, consisting of the various local social groups. Out of these committees, two representatives were elected to the Municipal Development Council, where one discussed and prioritized the demands which would be met by the various governmental bodies, including CAR (FIDA, 2003).

However, there are many kinds of criticism to the municipal councils' role, because they were put into action only in the two final years of the project and they underwent great influence from the city halls.

Who was in charge of the municipal councils were the mayors. There wasn't much space for the community representatives... There was also manipulation on the part of the CAR's technicians, who posed certain actions. What actually worked were the discussions within the community. There, we debated local issues (interview 13).

The communities enabled further discussions because they developed neighborhood committees to discuss specific problems. Among them, there were the maintenance and conservation works, problems related to the environment, social control over the report of expenses, and the analysis of production issues and microenterprises:

I believe we've contributed, a lot, as when we arrived there were no community organizations in the region or they were too tied to the government. And, further, I believe we provided these associations with greater citizenship, even with the implementation of councils (interview 7).

The surveyed data highlight that the organizational process implemented in the project led to an improvement in the living conditions of the population and the "strengthening the families' self-esteem and women's general situation" (FIDA, 2007a). However, the very oversight of Pro-Gavião by the UNOPS believes that most communities had weaknesses with regard to the organization and management of project's equipment. They failed to obtain empowerment and support ability to ensure the continuity of the organizational process. Even though, there were interesting connections. The most influential actors were invited to help in discussions in different communities, something which allowed a better territorial coordination between some communities: "*we attended other meetings to help the team... Often, CAR didn't warned about the IFAD's visit, but we came to know and acted arguing for our interest*" (interview 14).

Although the discourse on the community development primacy had been highlighted in early documents of the project, its execution hasn't demonstrated this, since the committees and councils were only implemented in the final biennium of the contract (2004-2006). According to the final report of the project (CAR, 2006b), "there wasn't a correspondence with regard to the strengthening of local organizations and the encouragement to a broad community participation". This was a major limitation in the project management, given the advances observed in the literature review (DAGNINO, 2004; MAGALHÃES, 2000; MIRANDA and COSTA, 2007) show that participation and empowerment are essential not only to the project management and control, but the maintenance of activities after the end of funding and the removal of major organizations.

In terms of *productive development*, a great emphasis was attributed to technical training activities, dissemination of knowledge, improvement of local productive chains: “*The project was excellent, it trained the technicians and farmers and broadcast coexistence technologies to the region; it diffused more productive cassava varieties; it diffused techniques for sanitary, reproductive and feeding handling of cattle*” (interview 9).

The interaction between organizations is indicated as crucial in the diffusion of new technologies and education experiences in the rural environment. The most prominent instruments for these actions were the learning technology centers (CATs), producing knowledge directly at the farms. One developed 280 productive CAT groups, where technical assistance was provided and validation of technologies appropriate to the semi-arid conditions were performed, something which was undertaken through the actions by EMBRAPA. Regularly, there were two monthly technical visits to the communities with CAT, particularly geared towards producers assisted by rural credit operations.

Concerning the diffusion of technology, we promote various technologies in partnership with EMBRAPA. Agricultural credit boosted the technologies transferred in training. I believe we invested a lot, millions of reais, in the region, besides the addition of value in several regions (Piripa, Licinio, Tremedal, Condeuba, etc.) (interview 4).

In this component, one realizes that the partnership with EMBRAPA was significant with regard to the results achieved. The project had the participation of EMBRAPA Semiarido and EMBRAPA Mandioca e Fruticultura. The CATs facilitated the implementation of technologies and techniques for dealing with drought, focused on local vocation and livestock or plant activities (current or potential), to regional development, prioritizing the adoption of low-cost technologies, simplified and having a low level of losses (CAR, 2006b; EMBRAPA, 2004). These actions allowed meeting the aims of increased income among the communities assisted, by promoting the productive organization for future commercialization. According to EMBRAPA (2004), “the average income of the properties assisted by Pro-Gavião grew about 24%, [...] a significant growth, mainly because it’s registered in an area where the rural population is among the poorest ones within Bahia” (EMBRAPA, 2004).

Over the project’s execution time, one evaluated various technologies in collective areas managed by researchers and producers. Technologies presenting a better performance gained rapid spread and ensured an increase the properties’ income. A consequence of this strategy was the emphasis on animal production. Within the period studied by the Project Gavião, the average animal production value had grown 39.5%. At that time, crop production decreased about 27%. Thus, the area with pastures registered a 55.4% expansion. Other grasses, such as leucaena, palm, and pigeon pea, have grown 1,300%, 134.6%, and 15.5%, respectively. The study also found out that the average number of workers hired by the producers who receive technical guidance from the project had grown about 173%: from 0.25 man/day/year to 0.69 (EMBRAPA, 2004).

Besides the aspects involved in the development of new technologies appropriate to the caatinga environment, the CATs provided an effective participation of local communities, since all technicians providing properties with technical assistance were from the region.

An important thing was that all agricultural technicians were children of farmers from the region. This social capital is in the region. Besides having reinvested a lot of money in agricultural schools [...], I deployed one in Anage. I’m proud to have participated in this successful project (interview 6).

Several gains are reported, mainly in the implementation of new technologies applied and adopted to the cassava, forage, and management of different kinds of livestock, cultivation of vegetables, aquaculture, water resources management, processes for preparing post-harvest, etc. In this regard, it’s noteworthy that the set

of knowledge and skills distributed and acquired during training is a key issue in project management. Here also comes to scene the role played by the AFS, a teaching model aimed at the rural environment, through the French experience and closely linked to the Catholic movement, especially with the Pastoral Land Commission.

In the component productive development, a strong action was aimed at the “Program for Modernization of Microenterprises within the Gavião River Region”. Since the second half of 2000, a series of actions for the implementation of microenterprises with an emphasis on the development of commercialization and management was deployed. However, the term found in the documents is “business management with a community nature” (CAR, 2006b, p. 22). Here, one expresses, more significantly, the organizational model proposed for these communities and a difficult coordination between different organizations. Through the participation of SEBRAE in development activities and training for management, the business component gains strength to the detriment of community principles and a social management with encouragement for what has also been named “microentrepreneurship”, following the prescription of appreciating an individualized and competitive effort. This aspect can also be observed among the strategic actions of this modernization program, such as the implementation of “market and commercialization strategies for new products and traditional community products” (CAR, 2006b), in the adoption of “business plans” and in the Microentrepreneur and Craftsman Support Fund (FAMA). Thus, there’s a clear lack of connection between these organizations: on the one hand, the technicians of CAR and the IFAD proposed an approach specific to the rural environment; on the other hand, however, SEBRAE followed the trend of an entrepreneurial competitive management, in order to develop individual skills for entering into the market.

Following the focus on market inclusion, besides the microenterprises developed during the project’s execution (28 microenterprises), difficulties in the commercialization of agricultural industries have been solved through the creation of cooperatives, regarded as “a viable economic and financial sustainability alternative” (CAR, 2006b, p. 24). Through the main productive chains prioritized in the project, four cooperatives were implemented, representing the main advancement in the territorial connection, as they sought constituting a commercialization network operated by a business center. The cooperatives created were the milk cooperative (COODELEITE), sugarcane (COODECANA), honey (COOPMEL), and cassava (COOPERMAN). COODELEITE supplies *dulce de leite*, through three microenterprises located in the towns of Mortugaba, Tremedal, and Guajeru.

The program was important because we’ve learned to work in association and advised to create a cooperative for selling our products. First, we started selling in free markets and, now, we’ve delivered products to CONAB, from the federal government (interview 12).

COODECANA produces derivatives, such as *cachaça*, and it has six processing units, besides 118 cooperative members in the towns of Condeuba, Piripa, Mortugaba e Licínio de Almeida. COOPMEL has two units for processing and producing derivatives. COOPERMAN had, at the end of the project, 109 members, improving the life of 480 families, with 242 producers supplying raw material (CAR, 2006b). Even the critical actors stress the positive aspects of the productive development component: “*one of the most important things of Pro-Gavião was the possibility of technical improvement and training of manpower. In Anage, the honey issue was successful and it’s there up to this day*” (interview 13).

Conflict between the productive development and the community development dimensions

The testimonies indicate that, among the program’s components, productive development, community, and credit, the productive issues always came first. When discussing the productive and community dimensions of projects, the IFAD’s direction believes that “both areas are important, [as] one seeks a balance between productive and community development” (CAR, 2006b). For the agency, putting the actions into practice depends on the government’s interests: “*when the IFAD participates, it’s a partnership. Then, the*

government can set only one of the axes. Each project is a reality. Currently, with the 12 million from PRONAF, credit wouldn't be an axis" (interview 1).

However, from the practical standpoint, productive development actions stand out with regard to community development. The participation actions were always in the background on production issues, and the last components put into action in the project after a lot of pressure (interview 15). CAR was very concerned about creating associations to have access to credit and implement productive actions for accessing the market and improving income.

According to the partial report (FIDA, 2003), it would be necessary to strengthen the development of community peasant associations and the effective participation of its members. This would happen through the promotion of activities for: a) the territorial integration of communities – local and regional – enabling them to participate in the municipal committees and the set of various projects which were executed in the area; b) the expansion of actions to most community families now included into the project; c) various actions in the productive development field, post-harvest and commercialization, especially suitable for collective action. Effectively, these actions only happened in the final years of the project, since 2004, after great pressure from the IFAD in order to provide the community aspect with greater relevance in the project. However, it's exactly this factor which continues to be regarded as a limiting point in the Gavião River Basin reality.

Another important aspect was the gender issue. Among the guiding principles of the IFAD's project and the actions, women's participation is relevant in decision-making processes. According to the IFAD, women's importance is crucial within a region characterized by very adverse environmental conditions, where they perform tasks such as water supply and household heading in face of the temporary migration of men to the big cities. Several actions have been undertaken in order to provide women from the assisted communities with the opportunity to express themselves and participate in discussions. According to the coordinator of PSU (interview 4), there was strong pressure from the project's controllers so that women could participate in the meetings of the development councils. In addition to participation, it was essential that women expressed their opinion during meetings. However, in the respondent's opinion, this participation was very difficult, due to the local culture and the low education level of these women. Even with these difficulties, a space for their discussion was fostered.

However, to really understand how the gender component was addressed during the project, it was noticed, in the interviews and documents, a conflict between the project's coordinators and a team from Universidade Federal da Bahia (UFBA), which was hired to address the issue. The group from UFBA proposed a more liberating action by local women, but the proposal wasn't accepted by the project's coordination, something which led the group to be cut off from the actions of Pro-Gavião. According to the interview of PEU's coordinator, the main reason for the conflict was lack of a language specific to the rural environment, appropriate to the cultural profile of the region. In fact, one can grasp from this conflict that the search for a development model isn't a search for autonomy and an actual empowerment of people, but the conformation of better life conditions, in a minimalist manner and particularly focused on the market's pathway.

The environmental issue, observed in the discourses of Pro-Gavião documents, seems to be that with the lowest relevance, although some interviews reinforce the aspect of concern with the environment, especially in activities related to the treatment of waste from the processing of cassava in gristmills. However, given the project's scale, it's possible to say that this wasn't a priority component.

Among the actions implemented for fighting poverty in the rural environment, the project's managers emphasize the nutritional improvement of families. This became possible due to the increased availability of drinking water at home, both in terms of quantity and quality. Other nutritional improvements may be originate from a larger volume of food derived from the countryside and a larger amount of milk, as a result of a differentiated handling of livestock. There's also an emphasis on growing vegetables as a way to ensure food security.

The biggest impact on food security was achieved through the incentive to cultivation and processing of cassava. This product is among the axes of food consumption and family economy within the region. It also sought to increase the farm's income, encouraging the expansion of livestock herd and the increase of its productivity. A broader concept of food security, of paramount importance to this region, is the notion of water security, i.e. the capacity of households and communities to ensure the provision of water for a basic minimum consumption by all members, at all times. In this aspect, the project has achieved its greatest impact and greatest extension (CAR, 2006b).

Therefore, it's observed that the socio-organizational actions proposed for communities adopt a model dominated by productive actions, rather than an actual community development. A widespread solution is always the pursuit of a higher family income, focused on inclusion actions within the traditional economic market, and it wasn't observed in the interviews a concern with issues such as agro-ecology, permaculture, or solidarity economy. According to CAR (interview 3), these models started being discussed in new projects, prepared after the experience of Pro-Gavião.

Limitations and challenges of managing Pro-Gavião

According to CAR (2006b), the most limiting aspects which have influenced on the project's effectiveness, comparing the efficacy and costs of achieving the goals, are related to managerial issues. Among them, there's a delay in the implementation and length of the first phase. More than three years were spent in activities for diagnosing and defining the team, without showing effective results of action in the region. Managers indicate that the project, at first, wasn't a CAR's priority and its coordination wasn't committed to meet the IFAD's requirements. This reality changed since 2001, when a new team started coordinating the program. However, until 2003, the project wasn't fully accomplished, yet. Thus, many actions have been undertaken in a haste in the final years of the contract.

Because of these barriers, there were delays in the implementation of some components highlighted by the IFAD as important, such as microenterprises and commercialization of agricultural, agro-industrial, and artisanal production (CAR, 2006b; FIDA, 2003). This may be indicative of difficulties for the continuity of project's activities, as well as the permanence of weaknesses of the local supply chains. The problem related to the coordination's location, far away from the project's area, has always been highlighted as a factor which hindered a more effective action in face of the early problems. The IFAD recognizes the weakness in their monitoring and follow-up systems (CAR, 2006b), something which led to changes in the action undertaken by the new covenant with the state of Bahia, which receives a direct oversight by the agency.

Having the project's key aim as the departing point, which was increasing the income of rural communities, improving the poor peasants' living conditions, observing the requirements of an environmentally sustainable development, it's clear that the concern with income was the most prominent element among the analyzed data. It indicates that the project's bias was highly focused on the productive developing, and the community development got structured in a complementary way, in the sense of creating associative conditions aimed at ensuring results in terms of productive improvements. Even though, the community connection effects caused the emergence of critical capacities and new local leaders. However, this is a residual effect not prioritized by the program, which was more concerned with creating hegemonic actions than giving room to a challenge to the current productive and organizational practices.

From the perspective of improving the living conditions and coping with regional inequalities, taking into account the poor conditions within the assisted region, it's known that significant improvements in the training of rural workers took place, access to water (through the construction of cisterns and dams), adding to this the permanence of cooperatives. However, these improvements weren't enough to structurally transform the assisted region. Many investments in infrastructure haven't had a direction to ensure its continuity, getting lost after the project's completion, as it's the case of solar energy projects.

If the project's aim was improving the extreme poverty situation in the region, the results are positive, because these indicators were accordingly reduced, although they aren't significant given the dire condition in the region. The sustainability of intended actions after the project's termination didn't take place as expected by the managing organizations:

Among the 210 communities assisted by the Project Gavião, a few more than 60 continue working in a coordinated way with significant gains. That is, less than 30% of the assisted communities were able to keep the gains deriving from the project's fulfillment (interview 4).

Even expanding access to water and despite having taken to significant productive improvements, the results of Pro-Gavião were limited, in face of the amount of resources used. The minimum number of communities which managed to keep the gains provided by the project demonstrates that the sustainability of actions remains a point to be thought through and it needs to be improved. It isn't reasonable that an action undertaken for a reasonable time, nearly a decade, with significant investments with regard to the region's profile, was unable to keep its outcomes in the long run, leaving communities dependent on a continued, direct and indirect, action by State agents. Furthermore, one observes that the region's political and social structure have barely changed due to the project's results, because, on the contrary, there was a perpetuation and strengthening of the power in force. What actually happens is a change in some elements which control local politics, without reducing inequality and poverty in the region. There's a need for evaluating why an action with such magnitude achieved only minimal and punctual results, although it had so many positive aspects behind its conception, as well as the connection of organizations with a huge power to act. The experience of Pro-Gavião, with its successes and limitations, should be used to improve the action undertaken by participating organizations. Above all, there's a need to mature the study on development projects management involving international cooperation, in order to obtain more significant and perennial gains, with actual transformations in the assisted communities.

Final Remarks

The primary aim of this paper was understanding the challenges and limitations of development policies, with international cooperation, to cope with the inequalities in sub-regional spaces in the countryside of the state of Bahia, by means of a case study on the management of the Community Development Project of the Gavião River Basin (1997-2006). The starting point was the assumption that the development problem isn't the State's lack of interest in regional issues, but the kind of political action and, especially, the management model of the programs and projects applied to the region (BRANDÃO, 2007; FISCHER, 2002; FISCHER, ROESCH and MELO, 2006).

In fact, there's a State's direction in the way for assisting the less favored regions; in the case of Bahia, above all, those experiencing the worst outcomes of a lengthy drought. However, although they have clear aims to eliminate poverty and improve the quality of life in these locations, the proposed projects only line the actual causes of this poverty and this low human development index. Among other reasons, this takes place because the actors and organizations responsible for such initiatives don't directly face the structural problems, although they're widely known and diagnosed.

The results of this research show that the development projects management can bring great lessons on the challenges which must be faced to eliminate current inequalities in the countryside of the state of Bahia, especially in the semi-arid regions. On the other hand, they also reveal the structural limits of a joint management between organizations and local communities, often unable to overcome the challenges posed. Cooperation and international funding represent a stimulus for intervention projects. However, they make the management of development projects more complex, by establishing an inter-scale power relation (BRANDÃO, 2007), usually asymmetric, in the fight for ensuring that the interests of the various actors and

organizations involved will be met. These interests involve both international vision, which poses certain development policy agendas, and the disputes within the State, whether among the organizations participating in the project or between the local powers and the assisted communities.

Concluding this analysis, there're more uncertainties than certainties with regard to the challenges and limitations of the project under study. Given the deep shortcomings identified in the execution of development projects, there're doubts with regard to the State's ability to promote policies directly addressing the structural problems of poor rural communities. Without these effective policies, the regional imbalances will never be solved and development will keep being enjoyed by a few ones.

A major imbalance of Pro-Gavião is the extreme value attributed to the productive development action, to the detriment of other components. This is verified in interviews and documents involving the project, when there's a great emphasis on the results of productive training and improvement, such as the CATs. One found out that productive issues have a greater visibility and receive more publicity, since they present immediate results in terms of increasing the population's income, a fact which becomes more explicit through the action by SEBRAE, a partner in the project, focused on the development of entrepreneurial practices spreading a socio-organizational logic of microenterprises aimed at market access. Such action is in conflict with the perspectives from other partner organizations, with other points of view on the rural environment.

Community development, on the other hand, is clearly placed in the background in the project management process. In this regard, emphasis is given to the strengthening and the creation of associations and cooperatives, in order to formalize the communities and provide access to credit. Connected to the productive issues, this showed to be a strategy with no sustainability, as some of the associations ended up disappearing. Cooperatives, in turn, had the most consistent results and remained operating until the completion of this study. Thus, the participation discourse, always present, since it's encouraged both by the IFAD and CAR, hasn't fully materialize. The IFAD documents reveal a concern that the participation becomes effective, as a very important aspect of community development, with a strong emphasis on gender issues, encouraging female participation in community discussions. However, the results show a great difficulty for turning discourse into practice. Similar results were shown in the studies by Bebbington and Kothari (2006).

Community councils, for instance, were only put into operation in the last years of the project, after 2003, due to a strong pressure from the IFAD's partial assessment report (FIDA, 2003), and, then, they were put back under the control of municipal administrations. The interviews reveal substantial advances in the community councils of only a few cities, where one managed to achieve a more political and less technical discussion level. Even in these cases, when the project came to an end, there was a disconnection which resulted in the transformation of the community councils into municipal councils, using the methodology of the project PRODUZIR, funded by the World Bank, where mayors have the power to lead discussions.

The major challenge to be faced in the development projects management is putting the participation discourse into practice. There's no doubt that the makers of these projects realized the need for empowerment of local actors and they incorporated the participation perspectives, both in the conception and in the management and social control of the project. However, from a practical point of view, there's still a long way to go until the participation instances are actually effected as an open space for discussion and autonomy of individuals. There're studies (MIRANDA and COSTA, 2006, 2007) indicating the difficulties of an effective exercise of citizen participation, both in urban and in rural spaces, where the education and training conditions are still poor. There's a need for turning the management pathways into dialogued connection forms, involving all the projects' participants, from their conception to the assessment of results.

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