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Divisions and identities

A study about the creation of new identities
in the North East of Brazil

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Division and Identities: A study about the construction of identities in the North East of Brazil.

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Abstract

The Valley of Jiquiriça is a symbolic representation of the multiple changes taking place in Brazil, where multiple and diverse dynamics collide. Situated in the Brazilian North East region as a part of Bahia state, the valley is currently going through a territorial division known as Identity Territories. Almost simultaneously, FETRAF (a new Federation of Unions representing Family Farmers) was created in Brazil; dividing itself from the traditional state union and very quickly becoming a meaningful stakeholder in the territory. Lastly, women, for multiple reasons, are occupying more and more spaces in the public sphere, particularly unions.

Combining different theoretical approaches, this thesis explores how the previous events relate to each other and have an impact on the territory dynamics which interact with the historical and structural particularities of the valley. The thesis studies how all this is eventually incorporated, embodied or contested by the different inhabitants of the valley in terms of identity construction and discourses.

KEY WORDS: Territories, gender dynamics, women, unions, identity, territorial approach, new rurality

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INTRODUCTION

“Place continues to be an important source of culture and identity”
(Escobar, 2008: 30)

The understanding of “the rural” is experiencing major transitions in Latin America. Indeed, the term “new rurality” has coined this change of approach towards the Latin American rural world with territorial approach as one of its cornerstones (Pisani 2011; Mann 2012).

Territorial analysis has become a trend in rural development studies in Latin America (Bebbington *et al.* 2008), what Berdegué and Sejtman call "the space turn" (2007) pointing at the importance of space based politics. But what is a territory? Is it an immutable reality? Who draws its boundaries? The construction of a territory presents many parallels with the one of nation-states, from which Yuval Davis says that it is “virtually everywhere a fiction” ... in order “to naturalize the hegemony of one collectivity and its access to the ideological apparatuses of both state and civil society” (ibid 1997, 11), but what about those who live in the territory? Can they not take part on its creation? Pisani, considers both sides in her definition, she says a territory is “a socially constructed area where there are interactions between private, collective and public actors” where “The term rural is synonymous with local territory that contains a prevalence of mixed economies” (Pisani 2011, 7).

Bahia state has served as an experiment base for Brazil with the new territorial division that the valley this study is part of¹ (see image 1), situated in the North East region of Brazil: **O Vale do Jiquiriça**. The reason why I chose this particular territory is that it is an example of an exceptional development in a historically underprivileged region (North East) and with steady growing incomes and higher levels of equity according to the statistical analysis carried out by the NGO Rimisp till the year 2009 (Quan et al. 2011).

New territorial demarcations can influence the way the identity is perceived and articulated.

The valley has gone through new political subdivisions in the last decade, namely it became Identity Territory in 2003 (category created by Bahia state with Federal Funds).

¹ http://www.mda.gov.br/portal/sdt/noticias/item?item_id=7816131 (Accessed in August 2012)

Besides this one, there is also and so far another territorial subdivision: Citizenship Territory (created in 2008).

Thus, the valley is one of the 26 new identity territories within Bahia State. Identity Territory formal definition “is conceptualized as a physical space, geographically defined, generally continuous, characterized by multidimensional criteria, such as environment, economy, society, culture, politics and institutions, and a population with relatively distinct social groups, which relate internally and externally through specific processes, where one can distinguish one or more factors that indicate identity, social, cultural and territorial cohesion” (SEPLAN webpage).

Also, with the purpose of implementing this territorial division, Bahia state created a new organism called “Colegiado Territorial in order to strengthen and get together the different actors in the valley to discuss local initiatives and needs over the municipal levels. The colegiado serves as a new articulator for the needs of the valley at a state level.

The thesis discusses the role of territorial division approach in order to understand the construction of identity within the inhabitants of a valley region of a new territorial division in the state of Bahia, Brazil. A territory can be a factor, playing the role of socio-physical context that helps to define its inhabitants belonging because, as Davis points out, identity is “always situated” (Davis1997, 10).

In order to contextualize these happenings I sketch the political circumstances of Brazil as a whole. On a national level, the coming to power of the Workers Party in 2003 translated into several policies aimed to reduce hunger and regional inequalities (Di Lauro 2009) These measures were achieved thanks to the federal transfers coming from Brazil’s economic booming economy (this is explained in more detail in the following sections).

On the other hand, in order to study the process of identity creations I will focus on the Unions because they seem to play a big part in the valley.

In the state of Bahia another recent actor was consolidated through **FETRAF**’s creation, (Federation of Unions of Family Farmers) the Family Famers. FETRAF resulted from a subdivision of the FETAG². According to Picolotto (2011) there are strong differences

² Agricultural Workers’ Federation: Federação de Trabalhadores de Agricultura

between both federations. FETAG was created much earlier as a consequence of an over-simplification of the category of farmer by the Military Dictatorship in Brazil. FETRAF, on the other hand, has very recent origins (2003) and came out during the process of strengthening and reinforcement of the category of Family Farming by the government. This reinforcement was done by giving family farmers a “political identity” throughout the creation of different organisms centered on their interests (PRONAF and others) and creating laws to recognize and thus visibilize the category of family farmer³. This category was also implemented in a context where grass roots groups and unions prompted discussions about the need to create a specific syndicalism that covered the Family Farming.

Particularities of Brazilian Unions

FETRAF consists of small or medium land owners or land tenants (Deere 2005)⁴. It is important to note that in Brazil, owners of small plots of land can also form unions (Favareto 2005). Despite that this category of Family Farmers has been recently created (Picolotto 2011) and so is the FETRAF. This category of family farmers was previously part of the FETAG. Different historical circumstances, namely the military dictatorship and the green revolution made them join forces and interest with the other workers. When democracy came back to Brazil, the different interests of the groups started to split them up, this culminated in the creation of the FETRAF (Picolotto 2011; Favareto 2005).

Indeed, according to Picolotto (2011) there are strong differences between both federations. FETAG was created much earlier as a consequence of an over-simplification of the category of farmer by the Military Dictatorship in Brazil. FETRAF, on the other hand, has very recent origins (2003) and came out during the process of strengthening and reinforcement of the category of Family Farming by the government. This reinforcement was done by giving family farmers a “political identity” throughout the creation of different organisms centered on their interests (PRONAF and others) and creating laws to recognize and thus visibilize the category of

³ As Abramovay explains “The defense of Family Farming is above all the defense of an ethical value, whose importance cannot be underestimated in a country with Brazil’s degree of landowning concentration” (Abramovay 2008)

⁴ In Brazil, owners of small plots of land can also form unions (Favareto 2006)

family farmer⁵. This category was also implemented in a context where grass roots groups and unions prompted discussions about the need to create a specific syndicalism that covered Family Farming.

According to Picolotto (2011) this idea was at the same time being discussed in the academic world. As a consequence of all this, FETRAF was finally created in 2004, detaching itself from FETAG.

Even if a division was needed leading to the creation of the FETRAF, there are also instrumental reasons for this break up, which does not delegitimize their achievements and demands and even of the need of this division. Their political proximity to the Workers Party and actual government may facilitate the access to economic resources that are not so much limited but rather difficult to access.

In order to narrow down the focus of analysis and because I find interesting the double almost simultaneous creation of categories in the valley, the thesis focuses on FETRAF and the Identity Territory. The reasons for doing this are that firstly, FETRAF according to the data collected seems to have occupied a fast and sound position as an actor in the valley despite its youth.

Also, gender is another factor that the study is including. Do these changes in categories (Identity Territory, Family Farmers) affect women and men the same way? Gender disaggregated data show sometimes hidden dynamics. Favareto for example found that women's participation in unions in Brazil has increased sharply in the last decades (Favareto 2006, 14). Are there similar dynamics within the Identity Territory's creation? This study attempts finally to look at the characteristics that distinguish women's dynamics in the territory and their interaction with identity construction.

Men and Women in the Valley

Women are more or less evenly distributed in terms of size (data from IBGE⁶). However, it seems that women tend to live more in cities or urban areas (52%) than men (47%)⁷.

⁵ As Abramovay explains "The defense of Family Farming is above all the defense of an ethical value, whose importance cannot be underestimated in a country with Brazil's degree of landowning concentration" (Abramovay 2008)

⁶ Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (My translation)

⁷ "According to the IBGE, is considered urbanized area every area village or town, legally defined as urban and characterized by buildings, streets and intense human occupation; areas affected by changes

Dynamics in and out of the territory

“The global is embedded in the local” (Tsing cited in Gezon 2009, 136)

The territorial dynamics of the construction of the Identity Territory of the Valley of Jiquiriça answer to something more than a local demand. They are also a representative of a trend in Latin America, and respond to both local and national needs and demands. The territory is in this way a micro cosmos in which dynamics beyond the local can be observed.

I will then try to depict the political and economic context of Brazil at a regional (North East Region) and national level (Brazil federal level) as perhaps not causes but rather factors that influence the local dynamics of the Valley and that are “embedded” in it.

The thesis concentrates on the shaping of identity of women Family Farmers at the FETRAF focusing on the influence of two main factors that happened at almost the same time: the new territorial division of Identity Territory and the creation of the FETRAF detaching itself from the FETRAF.

I use the concept of gender dynamics according to the definition of Paulson (Paulson et al. 2010) where gender is defined as “a socio-cultural system that norms, and gives meaning and structure to the roles and relationships of men and women in each territory. It influences the construction of social actors and coalitions, in the composition and functioning of the institutions, and the development, distribution and use of tangible and intangible assets in the territory” (Paulson 2007, 5 my translation). These gender roles, according to the above are not static and change with time.

This thesis studies the shaping of identity of women’s Family Farmers, because I believe they differentiate from men’s identity and at the same time interact with each other. Women in the Valley were mostly staying at home until only 15 years ago, now they are many active and part of the unions, and the relationship between men and women changes. Gender is thus a dynamic concept that is historicized and embodied in the daily lives, that means that is determined by the space it moves in. It is subsequently naturalized through different discourses and practices (Paulson 2009).

resulting from development urban, and those reserved to urban sprawl” (My translation) (Medeiros Marquez 2002, 97)

Research Questions

As explained in the section above, my interests involve the identity construction of two realities: the Identity Territory of the Valley of Jiquiriça and the Union Federation FETRAF. The thesis aims to explore as well how the national context and gender dynamics interact with them.

Specifically, how the Territory and the FETRAF are constructed in terms of identity and gender dynamics and secondly how the spatial and time (historical) characteristics of the territory influence these dynamics.

My research questions are:

On FETRAF:

- What is the function of the FETRAF in the region?

On the new territorial division in the Valley called Identity Territories (Territorios de Identidade):

- What is the disparity between the official and local discourses about the Identity Territories project in the Valley de Jiquiriça?

On gender:

- What are the forms of women's participation in the FETRAF? How do they relate to the territorial context?

Relevance of the study

Identity construction is a delicate process where many factors interact. The study tries to put together rather divergent and contested themes: territorial development, unions and gender dynamics, power intersects them all. Whose decision is it to start up a territorial division? Who decides which decisions are worthwhile? How to get a fair representation in the decision making?

In this way, the territorial approach and its relationship with increasing general productivity, is a liberal approach to development that diverges profoundly from the study of women's invisibility in different aspects of their social life held by the postmodern feminist approach. However, it is enriching to put these approaches into

discussion. I am trying to make these different approaches dialogue and see how (and if) they relate to each other.

Contextualizing the territory on a macro and national level

This section first describes the territory to be studied. I contextualize the territory on different levels, namely economic, political, social, both at the regional and national level. As well as illustrate the relationship with the territorial approach and the concept of new rurality.

I also provide a brief description of the territorial division that took place as well as the union division (FETRAF from FETAG). Finally I will correlate this with the women and men differences and general similarities in the territory and in FETRAF.



Image 1: Brazil and its regions, taken from: http://www.aporrea.org/imagenes/2010/10/brasil_mapa.gif

In order to understand the processes in the territory in its full complexity, this section briefly illustrates the situation of the country within different contexts, namely: national economy, national politics, regional inequality and social inequality.

Brazil's economy: unstoppable growth

Brazil has become an “emerging economy”. It has become one of the world’s soundest and fast growing economies in the last years (OECD 2011). Brazil is the 6th strongest economy (in terms of GDP) overtaking UK now in 2012⁸.

There has been, together with the economic growth, a major change in the productivity. Up to 2006 18.8% of the EAP (Economically Active Population) reported to be working in the agriculture sector. By 2007 this numbers changed and now trade and services take the largest amount of population with 18.1%. Agriculture represents now only 6% of the GDP⁹ and agriculture related activities are decreasing (from 28’4% in 1998 to 16’3% in 2009). However, the agribusiness profits and exports were growing until 2011 (IBGE).

Brazil's Politics: Workers Party coming to power

The Workers Party’s (Partido dos Trabalhadores or PT) government and particularly the election of the president Inácio Lula da Silva (from 2003 to 2011) coincided with the previously mentioned notorious economic changes in Brazil as well as social ones. Lula’s successor at the Workers Party (PT), Dilma Rousseff on the Brazilian elections on November 2010 was elected.

Social Inequality in Brazil

Brazil is still a deeply unequal country. Brazil has, despite its fantastic economic growth, one of the highest unequal income distributions in the world. Indeed, Brazil had in 2009 a GINI index of 0.54¹⁰, which represents the number 16 in the world¹¹. Also, in terms of HDI Brazil occupies the number 84, below the regional average¹².

⁸ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-17272716> (Accessed august 2012)

⁹ Source <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35640.htm> (Accessed in May 2012)

¹⁰ The closer to zero the less unequal it is, for example Sweden has 0.25 GINI coefficient and Namibia 0.7433. Source <http://www.indexmundi.com/facts/indicators/SI.POV.GINI> (Accessed May 2012)

¹¹ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2172rank.html> (Accessed August 2012)

¹² The HDI represents a push for a broader definition of well-being and provides a composite measure of three basic dimensions of human development: health, education and income. Brazil's HDI is 0.718, which gives the country a rank of 84 out of 187 countries with comparable data. The HDI of Latin America and the Caribbean as a region increased from 0.582 in 1980 to 0.731 today, placing Brazil below the regional average. <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/BRA.html> (Accessed August 2012)

The economic success and the PT's government translated into federal income transfers in order to reduce (and further on eradicate) poverty in Brazil through differentiated programs like Fome zero (Zero Hunger Program), Brasil Sem Miséria (Brazil Without Misery) and Bolsa família. These programs revolve around subsidies for those whose income is under a specific threshold and are reducing the economic gap and poverty in Brazil¹³.

Symbolically (and despite the class and ethnic differences) Dilma Rousseff is the first woman president of Brazil. In her first speech as president she declared that one of her goals was making gender equality a priority:

"So I am here stating my first post-election commitment: to honor Brazilian women so that this fact - unprecedented until now - becomes something normal and can be repeated and expanded in companies, public institutions, and organizations that are representative of our entire society. I would like very much today for fathers and mothers of daughters to look in their eyes and tell them: 'Yes, a woman can.'"¹⁴

Women became the main beneficiaries of the state and federal policies. So In order to tackle women's issues in particular, different "Secretarias" and specialized departments were created to be in charge of women issues at both state and federal level¹⁵. Particularly to rural women, who suffer from high levels of poverty were prioritized and beneficiaries of many subsidies in the form of mostly credits and technical assistance¹⁶ to promote their inclusion. For example, Bolsa Família prioritizes women as beneficiaries, because they are considered to take better care of the family well being¹⁷ (than men, it is implied). Women are the biggest recipients of these subsidies (93% in whole Brazil¹⁸), particularly women from the North East (adding up to 8.815.593). Furthermore, Bahia State has the biggest number of beneficiaries in the whole Brazil (1.7 million).

¹³http://www.ipea.gov.br/portal/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1891:transferencias-de-renda-reduzem-a-pobreza-no-brasil-&catid=4:presidencia&Itemid=2) (Accessed August 2012)

¹⁴ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-11666013>

¹⁵ See more about them in <http://www.sepm.gov.br/pnpm/iipnpm-espanhol-completo-frente-e-verso.pdf> (Accessed in July 2012).

¹⁶ <http://www.brasil.gov.br/secoes/mulher/desigualdade-de-generos/mulheres-rurais-e-das-florestas> (Accessed in July 2012).

¹⁷ <http://www.mds.gov.br/saladeimprensa/noticias/2011/marco/bravas-mulheres-do-bolsa-familia>

¹⁸ Data taken from http://www.vermelho.org.br/noticia.php?id_noticia=174587&id_secao=1

Official territorial divisions in Brazil

“Most of these regional divisions aimed to reduce inequalities in the country through public policies (...) as the basis for the desired economic growth” (Di Lauro 2009, 2)

Brazil is a federal country, with two main political subdivisions which are Federal and State level. Each state has its own administrative autonomy from the central or federal state which favors very diverse policies depending on the governments of each state.

In order to overcome the regional inequalities Brazil has undergone different geographical divisions in order to improve its management. Brazil was thus divided in the 30s into five geographical regions: Norte, Nordeste, Sul, Sudeste e Centro – Oeste (ibid). Demographically, most of the population in Brazil lives on the South East region where most of the capital is concentrated.

The Valley I am studying is located in the North East region, traditionally more isolated and mostly a primary sector producer (ibid) The North East is also the poorest regions, and it has the highest levels of land concentration in the whole Brazil (data from IBGE¹⁹) with a tradition of “coroneles”:

“A small number of powerful families interrelated with dominant land owners (...) that guaranteed privileged access economic opportunities for themselves, their allies and their social networks” (Meynard 2012, 12).

It is no surprise that a big amount of the previously mentioned federal transfers goes to this region²⁰.

The family dynamics in the region show a family in transformation. It encompasses more single than married women, the highest rate in Brazil of households led by women without a partner²¹, the highest birth rate in the whole Brazil it has nevertheless higher life expectancy of women (than men) (IBGE).

¹⁹ The GINI index for 2009 in the North East region, was 0’542, higher than the national level that is 0’518 (IBGE).

²⁰ http://www.ipea.gov.br/portal/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1891:transferencias-de-renda-reduzem-a-pobreza-no-brasil-&catid=4:presidencia&Itemid=2 (Accessed August 2012).

²¹ <http://www.brasil.gov.br/noticias/arquivos/2010/11/11/percentual-de-familias-chefiadas-pela-mulher-avanca-8-pontos-de-2001-a-2009> (Accessed in July 2012).

Unions and Federations of Unions

In this part I will depict the general union landscape in Brazil and some factors that contributed to it as well as the gender dynamics within them.

Historically, Brazil went through a long military dictatorship (1964-1985), circumstance which, as we will see later, in many ways shaped the actual situation of the country and the Valley of this study in particular.

With the return of democracy the Unions gained a lot of social and political power and presence. A closer look at the Brazilian union organizations shows a dazzling amount of actors that interplay²². I briefly illustrate who they are and how they relate to each other.

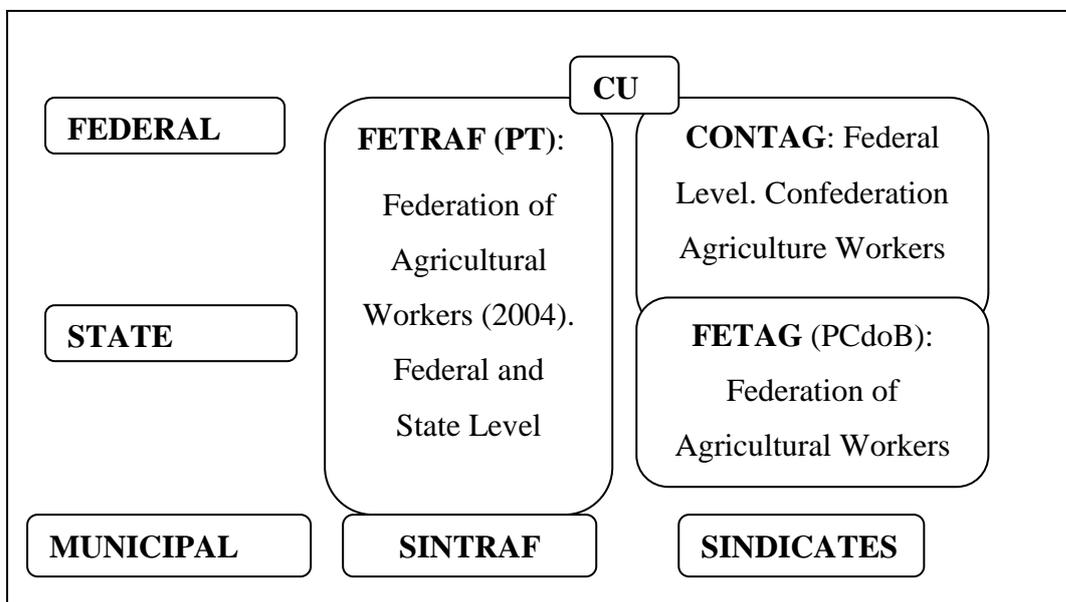


Table 2. Unions in Brazil. Own elaboration

The differences between them are several. An important one is the group of workers they represent. FETRAF represents the Family Farmers, which means the land owners or land renters. Politically, FETAG is closer to the Communist Party of Brazil (Partido Comunista do Brasil or PCdoB) and FETRAF that is politically closer to the Workers Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores or PT).

One of the most remarkable happenings at the Brazilian unions is the increasing amount of women members (Favareto 2006, 14), also taking leading roles. The census shows that in the North East region this is even more so. In 2001 it was the region that registered the highest amount of unions (23%) with more than 60% of their members

²² This is not only my impression, but a fact Abramovay mentions that “at the beginning of the decade there were 27.000 or so such forums in Brazil’s 5.507 municipalities” (Abramovay 2008)

being women from the whole region (Data from IBGE Unions, 2001) The same study highlights as well that the leadership positions were being increasingly taken by women in the North East region in higher numbers than in the rest of Brazil.

This increase of women’s representation stands out particularly in the FETRAF. Examples of this are several: Starting by the name itself, Federation of Workers (Male and Female) of family agriculture²³ choosing to visibilize women land owners, the first elected president of FETRAF was a woman: Elisenda Araújo, from Bahia state. (Favareto 2006, 16).

The Valley of Jiquiriçá

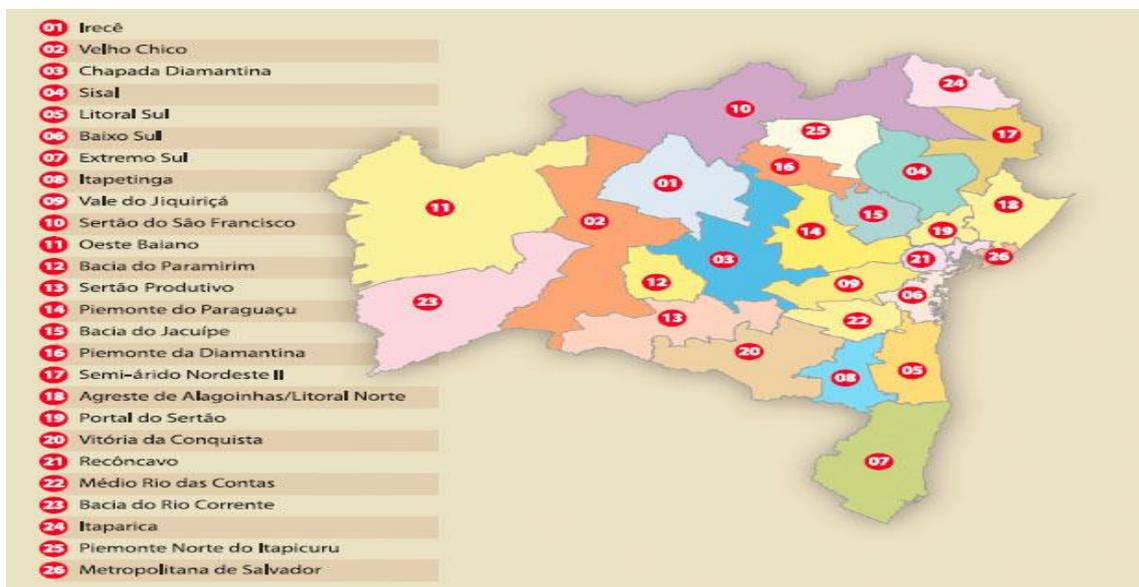
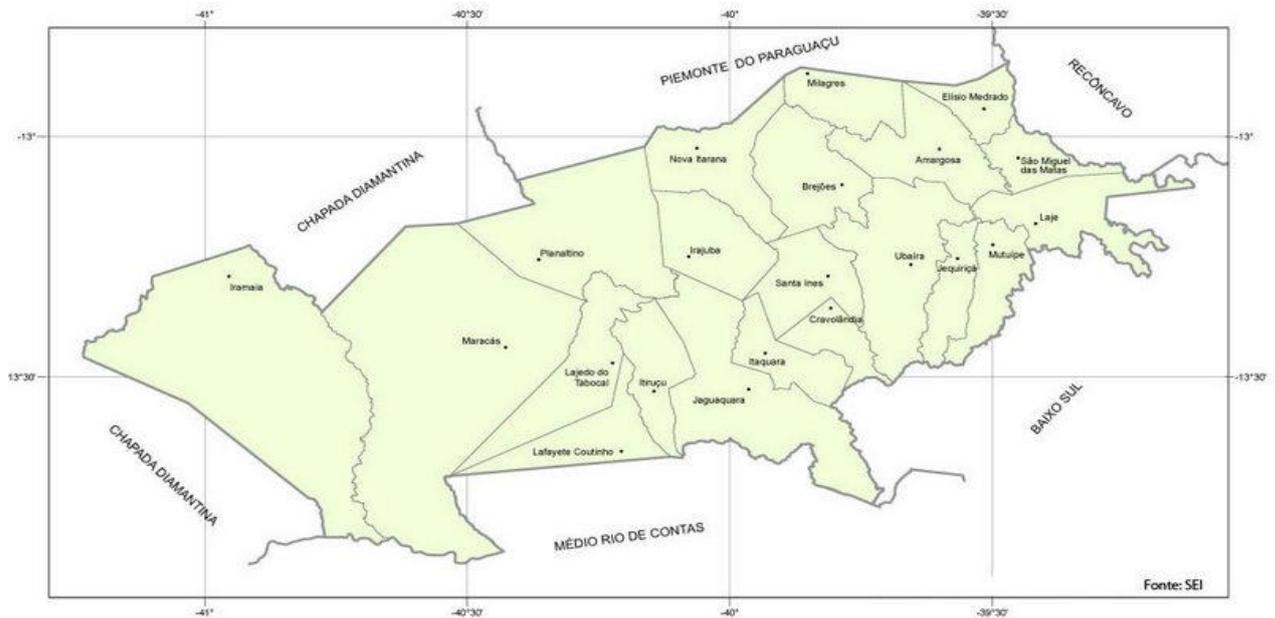


Image 2: Map of the Identity territories in Bahia (from IBGE)

²³ “Federação de Trabalhadores e Trabalhadoras da Agricultura Familiar” (My translation)



Território Vale do Jiquiriçá

Image 3: Map of **Jiquiriçá Valley**. Source http://www.territoriosdabahia.org.br/includes/mapa_jequirica.php

The Valley is the Territorio de Identidade number nine (see Image 2) and includes twenty one municipalities (see Image 3), it has 21.462km² with a population of 301.682 inhabitants, from which 49,8% are men and 50,2% women (IBGE).

The Valley is mostly the area around the river basin of the Jiquiriçá River and it is also extremely diverse agro-ecologically.

According to Quan this territorial division came out after “a national process of consultation and has a broadly shared social Identity, in order to provide a geographical focus for establishing greater social accountability in policy and planning with the aim of increasing benefits for the rural and the urban poor” (Quan et al. 2011, 3) all in all, “it puts together different municipalities according to some cultural, economic and geographical criteria”²⁴.

Agro Productive Divisions in the Valley and distribution of women and men

Beyond the political subdivision of the Valley as Identity Territory, there are three climatic divisions in the Valley. This corresponds mostly with the agro productive division, in the forest belt there is predominantly Family Farming (Quan et al. 2011)

²⁴ My translation of the author from the leaflet to promote the Colegiados territoriales “Juntos”.

and small plots of land and most of the population of the Valley is concentrated (43'1%) most of which report to live in rural areas (data from IBGE). In the region of sertão (dry regions) properties are bigger and the industrial farming or kettle outweighs the family agriculture. The transition region is a mixture of both: in dry regions there are big properties but rather family properties in more fertile areas (Quan et al 2011; Plano Territorial do Desenvolvimento Rural Sustentable Vale do Jiquirica 2011: 17) In both the dry and transition region lives only 23 % of the Valley and most of them live in urban areas (49%).

In the Valley, the most economically successful area is that of the forest belt that is at the same the area of less land concentration.

Brazil's Dynamics Contextualized

The new ruralism and the territorial approach

Firstly, Echeverri (2010, 10) talks about common features in the farming tradition in Latin America: a “dual” structure in rural Latin America, where there are on the one hand the big or medium land owners and on the other the small family holdings. He also talks about “incomplete technological modernization, low population density, great availability of natural resources and institutional weakness” (ibid).²⁵

Bebbington et al (2007) point out some general trends within Latin American rural development. These are according to him:

- A return to large-scale public and private investment in programs of infrastructural and economic development.
- Ethnic and grassroots politics becoming increasingly important in debates over rural development.
- The relative significance of agriculture in the rural and peasant economy continuing to diminish, and off-farm incomes (including transfers from long distance migration and government programs) becoming ever more important.

²⁵ “Estructura dual (minifundio-medianas y grandes empresas), modernización tecnológica incompleta, baja densidad de población, gran disponibilidad de recursos naturales, debilidad institucional” Own translation.

- In the policy domain emerging rural and social programs offering levels of formal participation unprecedented in the region.
- Processes of decentralization, however uneven and incomplete, giving sub-national governments and local organizations an increasing role in rural development.
- The environmental question becoming increasingly visible, debated, and central to discussions not only of rural development but also of national development and regional integration.” (Bebbington 2008, 2).

Reasons for a territorial approach

Territorial approach has become a trend in Latin American studies and policies. Bebbington (2008) talks more pragmatically about a general decentralization of the state policies in Latin America.

Why is this happening? In fact, Escobar (2008) reminds that the academic work of the previous two decades has focused more on the “global” and its movements like “migration, Diaspora, displacement, etc” (ibid 7), while pretty much disregarding place as a factor, which is, as Gooch says, “the hallmark of modern thinking and nature/society dichotomy” (Gooch 1998, 2) based on Descartes dualism that translated in a disembodied subject.

Escobar questions this irrelevant role assigned to place (ibid 30) and stresses the importance of a return to space because there is a need of “a corrective theory that neutralizes this erasure of place” (ibid). Indeed, Pisani says that the territorial approach as part of the new rurality is a reaction to the sectoral analysis, and hence it includes social, political, agrarian and not agrarian economies (Pisani 2011, 8) and functions beyond the traditional rural/urban dichotomy (Echeverri 2009, 4) studying their “synergies” and relations (Abramovay et al.2007). Also important to note that one of the features of the new rurality in Latin America is a reduction of the relevance of traditional agriculture, which is being replaced by off-farm incomes in which women are taking more and more part in the informal sector (Mann Burckham 2012), a “rising trend” in Latin America (FAO, 22). This last trend coincide with Deere’s (2005) hypothesis of a feminization of the agriculture in Latin America, by this it is understood

as an “absolute increase in women’s participation in the agricultural wage labour force, and/or an increase in the percentage of women workers relative to men in the sector” (Deere cited in Ben, 2009).

Some authors link the territorial approach to a more localized approach to development: Berdegué affirms that economic figures hide unequal levels of development in a nation²⁶. According to this statement, some regions can show positive economic growth and have territories without any growth and vice versa: there may be poor regions where there are areas with positive levels of growth.

Similarly, Svampa (2008, 77 quoted in Nardi (2011, 43) sees this increasing importance of the territory approach as a “way to control and contend poverty” and therefore reinforce the relationship of territories with development.

Jones talks about an “emerging orientation of development towards participation, empowerment and capacity-building represented as a “paradigm shift” in development policy” but she questions whether this represents “a significant challenge” (Jones et al 2004, XiX). And she may be partially right, the land mismanagement is seen by the United Nations (represented by CEPAL in Latin America) as a waste of resources and land. Latin America can contribute in this way to the future problems of food security as it is, following Africa, one of the regions in the world that is able to increase its farming production surface (Echeverri 2010, 10, note at the bottom). The territorial approach is not only a way to improve the management of rural areas, it also responds to economic interests.

The territorial approach and investment answer according to him to a macro strategy within Latin America in order to increase production with views to food security. Echeverri makes a similar summary to that of Bebbington adding connections with economy. He specifically adds two points to justify a different approach to rural development in Latin America, namely:

- 1) The emerging economies increasing incomes and new demands are changing the global feeding patterns.
- 2) Pressure of the bioenergy industry that will change the rural sector in the middle term. (ibid, 12)²⁷

²⁶ Berdegué talk on Sustainable rural development within the Virtual Congress of “Green Economy and Socio-productive Structure” <http://www.congressorio20.org.br> (Accessed May 2012)

²⁷ I assume that bio energy he is talking about the bio fuels, in demand of more and more agrarian land in order to be produced.

And this can serve as an introduction to Nardi's (2011) contribution to the idea of territory (2008): power, economy and culture. She defines territory as the "social (political, economic, and cultural) and physical space resulting from social relationships" (ibid, 42). For Nardi the territory is the result of the different dynamics within the different actors. This last part is similar to the notion of field of Bourdieu, which is not spatially based and field is rather defined as a system of social relations (Bourdieu 1981) where different actors compete for different "capitals" (symbolic, cultural, political, economic, etc). It is particularly important for Bourdieu the "symbolic violence" that those who have more power apply on the others. Whilst for Nardi not only the idea of power but rather the physical delimitations of territory are important. They are not neutral but politically determined, as a form of symbolic violence, by those who have more capital over those who have less. Both Bourdieu and Nardi share the idea of dynamism, these territories are in constant change and struggle.

Bourdieu's notion of field is however not physically grounded, because he puts emphasis on how people perceive and create their world; however he is aware of the physical constraints that he represents by the notion of field.

Perception is then important for Bourdieu and this is a relevant link between territory and identity. For Bourdieu it is important how people construct their reality and interpret it; now with new territorial demarcations the new delimitation as well as the reality changes for those who are in the territory. Agrawal reasons similarly, he says that "the success and effectiveness of these two strategies of decentralized regulatory rule depend also on shifts of the subjectivities of those undergoing regulation" (Agrawal 2005, 17).

The Public and the Private Sphere: Ideas and Consequences within a spatial analysis

The importance of space goes hand in hand with a gender analysis and it affects women specifically. In Escobar's case women have a role "in creating a sense of belonging to the territory and shaping the social group, since men are often away" (Escobar 2008, 241).

For him, the use of spaces is “deeply gendered” (ibid) and it is necessary to be acknowledge and study in order to articulate a gender discourse (ibid). Traditional feminism made a valuable contribution distinguishing between the public and private spheres, as the construction of the boundary between them is a “political act in itself” (Davis 1997, 80). Yet I have chose Pateman’s definition of them (1988 cited by Davis 1997, 79) who understands the private sphere as the family domain where “women are primarily located” (ibid). Traditionally this division has entailed a gender tasks division. Considering the two main spheres as fields of power, the well-known feminist slogan that “the personal is political” brings to light the importance of studying the private sphere (home) in order to understand fully the gender dynamics in a territory and at the same time breaking with one of the foundations of the liberal thought, the dichotomy of private and public (Alcantara 2011, 5). The gender dynamics maybe totally different in one and the other, and also influence one another.

Considering the space or the context when observing the dynamics can show different realities. Sustainable farming tasks in the rural world have complementarity on the public or productive sphere. Whilst the “familial spaces” (ibid), or the private sphere that I referred to before, may lack any complementarity.

Conceptualization

There are different concepts used in the thesis helping to understand the area I am studying.

- **Rural Unions** refer to groups of people with specific interests; this may be workers or may be owners or renters of small plots of land (family farmers).
- **Environmental**

Since the thesis discusses the government strategies to make changes in the region that will entail more sustainability in the territory, I will use the concept of environmental in Agrawal (2005): applied to the creation or production subjects family farmers as environmental subjects and as members of a new territorial delimitation. In this way, I see that this cultural state policies category is similar to the soft way of implementing the regulations through decentralization policies that happened in Agrawal's Kumaon. That is, a less costly way to implement state regulations by creating subjects who internalize and embody those regulations.

- **Gender Dynamics**

As previously mentioned, I will use Paulson's definition of gender dynamics.

According to Escobar there are three levels of analysis in order to understand how the gender discourse is articulated:

- 1) "Explicit articulation of a gender dimension"
- 2) Strategies and positioning that constitute a challenge to the existing gender relations, even though they are not articulated.
- 3) "Daily practices that disturb "gendered cultural patterns, thus politicizing gender relations" (Escobar 2008, 237).

- **Identity**

"To understand regulatory rule it is necessary to examine how rule is experienced by those subjected to it" (Agrawal 2005, 18).

Identity is a slippery concept to define, that has different factors to consider. It is not a homogeneous category, there are many identities (one can be a woman, a worker, a daughter, a mother and so on) and most importantly, they are changing constantly depending on time and context, they are "profoundly historical" (Escobar 2008, 203).

Identity is hence not a stable neither a homogeneous concept. Davis, too, points out the homogenous nature of identity as well as its instability: “the mere need to construct every human being as either male or female is historically-and therefore culturally-specific” (Davis 1997, 9). Escobar adds that they are always “inside an economy of power” (Escobar 2008, 203). These power relations, according to Kabeer, “help to shape not only whose interests prevail, but also how different groups perceive their interests” (cited in Jones 2004, 95).

In the thesis I understand categories as generators of identities. Also, the very categories that form identities are not homogeneous either. Since “the self is always situated” (Davis 1997, 10) the definition of the category of women, to begin with, is highly problematic. Because, as again Davis reminds: “not all women are oppressed and/or subjugated to the same extent, even within the same society at any specific moment” (ibid) and considering the importance of space it will change depending on the different studied places. It also correlates with many other categories, such as race, class, age, nationality which should not be ignored. Escobar puts it differently, he says, that “identities are dialogic and relational, they arise from but cannot be reduced to the articulation of difference through encounters with others”.

By identity however, I mean something different to Escobar (ibid 10). In the case of this thesis, ethnicity is not at least verbalized as a factor²⁸. However, the Colombian Pacific region that Escobar describes is similar to the one I studied in the North East of Brazil, in the sense that both areas (the Colombian Pacific and Bahia State) are predominantly the black regions of both countries. Maybe it is less important in Brazil or simply this “white privilege” as Escobar puts it (ibid 20²⁹) is more outspoken in Colombia than in Brazil.

Yuval Davis says that the construction of Identities requires a “myth of common origin and common destiny” (Davis 1997, 43). According to Davis, “identities are specific forms of cultural narratives which constitute commonalities and differences between self and others” (ibid). In other words, they define who is a member of the group and

²⁸ It would be very interesting however, for a future study to focus on this invisibility of the racial background, which even if it has not come up in the study it does not mean that is not there and plays a role. However, due to the length of the thesis it will not be addressed in detail here. It is worth nevertheless mention an illustrative data on how gender equality is reaching further than race in Brazil: “Only one of the 38 members of Ms Rousseff’s cabinet is black (though ten are women)” (Source <http://www.economist.com/node/21543494> Accessed in July 2012)

²⁹ By which he means “the defense of a Eurocentric way of life that worldwide has historically privileged white peoples at the expense on non-European and colored peoples” (Escobar 2008, 20).

therefore who constitutes “the other” what is also known as “identity politics or narratives” (ibid, 44). By doing this, the differences are “naturalized” (ibid, 11). Identity is “constructed through every day practices at many levels” (Escobar 2008, 203), it is a dynamic product that has however its rules which are created but also expressed through their practices. In order to distinguish which one is correct Davis talks about the figure of the “body guards” (Davis 1997, 23) or “Gate Keepers” (Connell 2005) is created (through people, institutions and norms) who are in charge of putting the theory in practice, so to speak, and say who is part or not of the group or category. These “rules” tend to be different for different members of the group, for example, women and men: “On the one hand, women, like men, are members of the collectivity. On the other hand, there are always specific rules and regulations which relate to women as women” since women are usually constructed as not only the “biological” but also the “cultural reproducers of the nation” (ibid 116). There is of course difference within the category of “women”, considering class, ethnicity, etc. However, very often, women tend to be given the task of the “body guards” of culture “they are responsible for transmitting it to the children and constructing the home in a specific cultural style” (ibid 116).

Identity has another dimension according to Escobar in political situations, such as the Unions that I am studying. It “involves ethical commitment by activists” (Escobar 2008, 203), they are mostly oriented to achieve specific/s goal/s.

Escobar also mentions that different identity theorists promote different uses of the identity. Thus Realist Constructivists argue that a specific set of interests resides behind identities. Cultural Constructivists accept that identities are “products of shared signifying practices but tend to treat culture itself as a given” (ibid, 207). Also, Political Constructionism places ideologies as the source of identities. Lastly, Radical Historicism believes that ideologies are the product of the “working out of inequalities at the level of consciousness and culture” (ibid).

Two final points worth mentioning related to identity are that first, the conditions that promoted the creation of the identities may be different from the ones that are maintaining it and finally identities are based on the individual interpretation/perception of their importance (Ibid, 207-208), they are highly subjective.

Family Farmers and women family farmers are understood, contested, interpreted, defined and negotiated differently depending on the actors that interplay and the historical context.

METHODOLOGY

This section aims to explain the reason why I chose the territory and the topic and how I carried out the research; also, the methods I applied during together with the characteristics and problems of the fieldwork with their limitations in practice and the bibliographical research.

Why the Valley of Jiquiriça?

This thesis is based on the results of my internship in the NGO RIMISP within the RTD (Rural Territorial Dynamics) research. RTD stresses the importance of the concept of territory in order to study the situation of different rural areas of Latin America.

The territory of study is in this way one of the 19 territories in Latin America that, according to statistical analysis carried on by the team of RTD, experimented high growth index up till 2009 (see RIMISP website).

How?

My ontological approach is somehow constructivist and positivist. That is, on the constructivist side “reality is constructed by each person” (Russell 2002, 3) but at the same time beyond the understanding of the person as I would like to be able to explain the person’s beliefs beyond his/her own individual interpretation (more related to positivism) (Ibid).

The research was qualitative through semi structured interviews but the discourses and data provided were contrasted, when possible, with statistical or official data and in a case of observation with the practices and asking about the household duties in the family.

My methodology will use triangulation in order to put together the data from the interviews and the one got from academic research and statistical analysis. Triangulation “entails using more than one method of source of data in the study ...in order to cross checking findings deriving from both quantitative and qualitative research” (Deacon et al. cited in Bryman 2004, 275)

The way the thesis developed and the research for it is quite unorthodox. When I arrived to field we had to examine the role that FETRAF and FETAG were playing as a social coalition in the territory so in this sense the research did have a previous hypothesis and

it was therefore deductive since we were in the “confirmatory stage” of the research (Russell 2002, 464). However when it comes to the gender part it was purely inductive, since there were no previous hypothesis as to what were the dynamics taking place as it had not been studied before by the NGO, and doing an “in vivo coding” (ibid) the words women and participation came out constantly on the interviews.

I then used the same interviews to carry out my thesis answering other type of questions, which are related to the previous research but with a different focus. The study was therefore deductive in the sense that I had the material already and was interested in the gender dynamics but the identity and territory part came out as I was reading more literature about it and became relevant for the analysis.

Discursively, as explained before, there was a constant allusion to the relevant place women played on the Unions but it was not clear how this happened nor why, and also to what extent that dynamic could be generalized to the rest of the Valley outside the Unions control.

It was then that I started a statistical research and then a literature research to see if this was reflected on some part of the literature. The identity part came out as a consequence of reading literature related to gender and I started to question what the role of women Family Farmers was, since it seemed like a new construct created by the state through the unions. Putting all together made sense and I tried to see what role played gender, identity, territory in defining the dynamics there and in between them.

Spatiotemporal frame of phenomena and research activities.

I adjusted my research period to that of the study applied by RTD, namely 10 years, from 2000 until 2009 with some data available from 2010 from the IBGE that recently came out.

The fieldwork was carried out for three weeks in the month of October 2011 in the Vale Do Jiquiriça, state of Bahia. In particular, it focused on the municipalities of Mutuipe, Santa Inês, Cravolandia, Amargosa, Ubaira, Laje, Irajuba and San Miguel das Matas, also in Salvador at the MDA of Bahia. And the data and media search took place before and after that.

❖ **Primary data**

Due to the time (we could only stay for two weeks) of the study most of the research is based upon a series of semi-structured interviews (25 to be precise) carried out during the RIMISP team study of the impact of unions in the territory of the Valle do Jiquiriça (in different municipalities), where I took part. In addition to these (as the other part of the team could only stay for a week), I carried out on my own several unstructured individual interviews in the Municipality of Santa Inês, a different part of the territory where we had not been earlier where I had contacts and the Unions were not so strong as in the other areas previously visited with the team. Besides individual interviews a group interview and a participant observation was carried out in one of the settlements of the same municipality (Palestina settlement).

The interviews were carried out in the original language (Portuguese) which entailed consequences on the results: I understand the language but my ability to speak is more limited so I could not go as in depth as I would have liked due to this language limitation. All the time we were escorted by key informants related to the local university or to technicians responsible for a specific area and none of them could speak any English or any other language besides Portuguese. The first sampling of interviewees was carried out relying on a key informant (a university professor of the region) who elaborated a schedule with relevant actors in the union world, either taking part in it or knowledgeable enough. We thus followed her criteria and judgment in the core of the interviews. After that, I was interested in getting in touch with another part of population that was not so much involved and thus not so much positive about the impact and role of unions in the territory, that is why I chose Santa Inês, that is mostly urban, and also as it turned out I interviewed some members from some rural settlements.

The interviews were all recorded but not transcribed due to the language barrier, we did get a transcription of the notes of our key informant and I transcribed some interviews that I considered more relevant (five to be precise).

❖ **Secondary data**

I used, as extensively as possible, academic literature related to territorial and rural dynamics in order to understand the context where these events took place and the interpretation of them from a Latin American context.

Identity ties these events to the Masters literature since it seemed a concept that was constantly coming up on the interviews as well as the gender analysis in order to understand the constant statements on the interviews were women took active part in all the newly created categories.

Besides the fieldwork period I carried out a bibliographical and internet search of statistical and historical data on the government and especially IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics).

Problematizing the methodological research

There are several methodological issues in the study. I will mention the two major ones: One of them refers to the “conceptual variables”, as Russell Bernard puts it (ibid, 35); particularly the concept of Union was blurry from the very beginning of the research. Mostly it was due to lack of research and planning, however this was tried to be mended afterwards. So the “conceptual definition” (ibid) of unions (rural unions in this case) in the region makes reference to several things and groups of people at the same time.

Firstly, I had several assumptions that I had to revise about what both I and they (the interviewees) understood as Unions and syndicates (see conceptualization for definition)

Secondly, I was not aware (and neither was the team I was with) of the complexity of the rural union landscape and the multiplicity of actors, and sometimes duplicity of roles. Something that was very clear for the interviewees and that was however extremely complicated to grasp for us. We tried to tackle this issue by limiting the research to specific group of actors, thus defining the “operational definition” (sic) of the research, the Federation of Workers, naming, FETAG and FETRAF.

The other big methodological problem involves the validity of the results and the generalization of them. As it has been mentioned, the territory’s climatic and geographic division creates three territories in one, with very different dynamics. For spatial difficulties, most of the interviews were carried out in the forest belt and the intermediate part of the territory, leaving the dry land or “sertão” without representation in the research. Up to which point the results could be generalized to the whole territory are not so simple. There are two reasons for generalization: it can be argued that the

socio economic dynamics could be similar to those of the dry land of the intermediate area but of course that cannot be taken for granted; and more powerfully, reason is that the area is both the less inhabited and the most urban (however is one of the biggest areas), leaving little place for rural unions and not representing a big proportion of the social dynamics of the territory.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Identity Territories: discussing territorial approach

Escobar says that any construction of identity is “profoundly historical” (Escobar 2008, 203) and built in within a system of “power relations” (Kabeer cited in Jones 2004, 95). In this way, the creation of the Identity Territories subscribes the general continental trends that Bebbington et al (2007) mention: such as, decentralization politics, rise of public investments and of programs that promote local participation and increasing consideration of the environment. The reduction of traditional agriculture is also a tendency in the Valley, where most of the population is urban (Quan et al. 2011).

All of these trends represent the term “new rurality” and answer to a new approach of development more participatory, inclusive (Jones et al. 2004) that consider the locals and let them participate in the decision taking. There was an interest of the PT government to change the approach to development, as one of the MDA members said:

“In that process where Lula’s government arrives in 2003, a new territorial organization was wanted, that could be dialogued ... the logic of development had to change, from the bottom up, not top down. So that's the process that characterizes all that construction”.

(Group Interview MDA).

But why is this a concern all of the sudden? ³⁰

Identity Territory division according to the website of its main articulator, SEPLAN, responds to somehow vague criteria, here is the definition:

“The territory is conceptualized as a physical space, geographically defined, generally continuous, characterized by multidimensional criteria, such as environment, economy, society, culture, politics and institutions, and a population with relatively distinct social groups, which relate internally and externally through specific processes, where one can distinguish one or more factors that indicate identity, social , cultural and territorial cohesion”³¹

There are many concepts in this definition that leave plenty of space for individual and fairly different interpretations. Many questions related to conceptualizations: What are specific processes? Identity? Where and how to draw the line between one territory and

³⁰ Agrawal’s book *Environmentality* (2005) has similarities with this aspect. It explains the shift of the state forest policy making in the province of Kumaon in India, from highly violent control and regulation to a slow dissolution of “the boundaries between the state and the community” (Ibid, 91) by community regulation, what Foucault calls *Governmentality*.

³¹ From SEPLAN website <http://www.seplan.ba.gov.br/mapa.php> (Accessed July 2012)

the next? The division was made through participatory methods (Quan et al. 2011) but it is not explained anywhere how it was actually made, was it by participants? Was it through representatives? And who elaborated the questions?

“In that process of reaching Lula the government in 2003, wanted a new territorial organization that could dialog. A federative pact was established between municipal, state and union. To be able to talk, considering that municipalities were opposed to that joint, between the city, state and union needed to be cut. So that it would generate a space for democratic dialogue” (Group Interview MDA).

The federal state has a lot to do with it. There was in reality a big gap in the competences, from the state level (Bahia), to the municipalities that would be the only following administrative category. This left a big gap to manage competences and regional/local particularities between the Bahia state administration and the municipalities.

This is perceived or justified by the members of the Ministry as the reason why the territorial subdivisions were made. But what about the social demands? The divisions answered also to a social demand and the “political act” as Davis (see literature review). The institutions in charge of supervising the territories (Colegiado Territorial) would act as an economic intermediary in order to get the federal and state transfers avoiding the problematic of the municipalities with their power struggle and power concentration, typical of the region, known also as municipalism:

“When people talk about municipalism, in municipal councils the majors dominated the boards. They have lost the effectiveness because the components of civil society were the friends of the prefect and there FETAG unions did much the role of "amiginho" (friend) accepting the decisions. Municipal councils did not work, did not understand the perspective we had, then the participation of society in a democratic opening atmosphere; the aspiration is to deepen democracy and participation”. (Group Interview MDA)

The literature about Identity Territory (Echeverri et al. 2009; Mann 2012; Bebbington et al. 2008; Abramovay et al. 2007) presents it as an example of this new type of new rurality, and the participatory and decentralized form of making politics that is setting an example in Brazil itself³².

³² http://www.mda.gov.br/portal/sdt/noticias/item?item_id=7816131 (Accessed August 2012)

But this perception is different according to many of the inhabitants of the valley who have different opinions of the project or of its physical representative and territory articulator in the valley, the Colegiado Territorial:

“There is a territorial collegiate each area and they get to talk, as is happening in the Valley Jiquiriça (...) is the great synthesis of the historical claims that the territory has to promote movement” (Group Interview MDA).

“It’s a failure because it does not have economic resources” (SINTRAF member 1).

“The civil society takes part, however, the political power does not participate (partisan politics in the Territory is based on patronage. The formation of the Colegiados aims to disrupt this practice, that is why the mayors do not participate” (SINTRAF member 2).

However, the Identity territorial division is instrumentalized acknowledging its practical or potentially practical benefits.

“It brought many gains as policies began to be collective and it allows distribution of incomes. They also get: agricultural equipment, the Training Center of Family Farming / Jiquiriçá” (SINTRAF member 1).

Identity Territories project has a major limitation on an extraterritorial level:

“The territorial unit is not recognized at the federal level, we try to arrange with territorial public consortia formed by federal authorities ... and are trying to do with each territory that political representation” (MDA group interview).

If there is no political recognition outside the local level it is no wonder that the interviewees spoke about the need of changing into becoming a Território de Cidadania because of higher access to resources:

“The members want the TIVJ (Identity Territory of Jiquiriça Valley) to become Territory Citizenship (since with Territory’s identity they only receive funds from MDA and Citizenship all the ministries help with funding)” (Technician EBDA).

But also in order to achieve it they would have to construct themselves somehow differently, namely as a poorer territory in need of assistance. Since Citizenship program works with poor territories, and culture identity is not so important.

In this way, a hypothesis could be that the territorial identity of the inhabitants of the Valley is constructed or at least very much intermediated by the subsidies or credits they can get access to. Valley of Jiquiriça is still poor (which is one of the main arguments held by those who want the Valley to be declared Território de Cidadania).

Indeed, from 2004 between 90-95% of the rural population receives the federal “Bolsa Familia” (Quan et al 2011, 18), assistance that is aimed to those who have an income below 180 R\$ (75 Euros). Bolsa Familia entails very little money in reality: 70R\$ per month (around 30 Euros) for those families without children and 170 R\$ per month (around 70 Euros) for those with children. But in poor rural economies this little money makes a whole difference.

The Federal Transfers play a special role in identity formation, the use of it changes depending on the purpose. For some it is a symbol of poverty. For example, in the dry region of Santa Ines the major explained that the greatest money input in the municipality came from the “Bolsa Familia” as a reason to explain why the area was poor and in need of more subsidies.

Gender dynamics: Women in Federations of Unions. Situation.

“On the one hand, women, like men, are members of the collectivity. On the other hand, there are always specific rules and regulations which relate to women as women”
(Davis 1997, 37)

There is between the interviewees a perception of an increasing amount of women in Brazil that seem to have leading roles at the Federation of Union:

“Along the years there has been an increase in the process of women representation in entities” (Group Interview at the MDA).

“In the sindical and social environment there is an increase of women participation and their specific demands” (Group Interview MDA).

“It is very interesting the emergence of women in all senses, it is the most promising of it all. Women got to conquer spaces in FETRAF, FETAG. It is something that is emerging. Ten years ago there were higher numbers of men...in most of the associations women are the majority at the moment” (CPT Bahia).

Using the three levels of analysis that Escobar mentioned in the previous section, in the Valley the first level (discursive) is clearly achieved, the gender discourse has been incorporated into the FETRAF discourse, and there are many examples of this that I mentioned before, name, women department. However, how this is translated into the daily individual practices of their members is difficult to see, or there are no specific data about it.

Subsidized women

Many subsidies addressed to tackle poverty have women as the main recipients. For example, as I said before, Bolsa Familia, the biggest subsidy in the region is given to women if possible. Other subsidies promote credits, technical education. Some intend to promote cooperativism in women family farmers.

A case of this in the valley is the PAA (Programa de Aquisição de Alimentos: Program of Food Supply) is a program stipulating that 30% of the food that arrives to the schools must come from local family farming, particularly women producers cooperatives.

According to many interviewees the program was fantastic because it provided an income to those small family farmers since it guaranteed a demand and a fair price.

“PAA was important for the city, some producers received R \$ 4,500.00 in 2010”
(Agriculture Secretary).

The problems arose when the payments did not arrive on time³³. In some parts of the valley there was a 6 month delay in the payments to the farmers.

As an EBDA technician explained:

“That depends on the planning, the government generally does a planning and then is three years.... and when there is a very large resource demand and resources are always less, in November, October no more resources!” (EBDA technician).

On a legal basis, in Brazil women are granted, at least on the paper, political representation. Particularly since the instauration of the law of “cotas” (*number 9.100 /1995*) that makes that 30% of the state organizations positions are to be taken by women. This is thoroughly applied on the departments or institutions recently created (like the Colegiado Territorial) but it is not so much followed by the old civil institutions, from which rural unions are part of (Alcántara 2011, 35-36).

Unfortunately, that is not the first time that the speech differs from the practice in Brazil. Deere (2005) describes how 20 years had to pass between a constitution that granted equal access to land of men and women, and its actual application.

“Participation can serve many interests” (Jones 2004, 94).

³³ It is the Federal State (through a specific ministry: MDS³³) the one in charge of doing the economic transfers or, basically, the payments to the farmers.

Does women's participation in unions and Federations transform their demands? It seems that not always, or the results are not yet to be seen. Many of the interviewees (including women) said that there was not much difference.

“Whilst participation has the potential to challenge patterns of dominance, it may also be the means through existing power relations are reproduced”
(Whyte cited in Jones 2004, 94).

And how this is reflected in the daily practice (the other two levels that Escobar talks about) is more difficult to see. However, many agree on the fact that the basic household activities is still done by women.

“Women's dual shift, keeps on being the same, which keeps house, cooks, cleans and cares for the well field or in domestic work, is still a reality in all territories”. (Group Interview MDA).

When asking women from settlements (outside unions) about their daily duties, many said that in the countryside the duties were complementary and at home men helped. But when asked specifically, who was in charge of the cooking, children and general household duties, all said that it was them (women). But they all participated in the meetings of farmers. This is a symbol of a contradiction between the private and public sphere, and even participation itself is not really a symbol of engagement or interiorization of the discourses.

“The number of participatory institutions has increased notoriously in the last decade in Brazil” (Schattan et al 2007, 460).

There is also a contrast between the official discourse of participation and how it is really taking place. In the cities, there is more participation, as shown in the Union Study (IBGE). However, in the countryside in the union meetings the discourse is not interiorized, as a woman Family Farmer said

“Someone told me that women do not have to miss meetings Sometimes you see that there are women who do not want to participate but they have to go” (Women Family Farmer 2).

This coincides with Escobar's need to study both discourses and practices (ibid, 2005) in order to understand the depth of the gender dynamics transformation. However, the changes to promote women's participation are very recent, the effects will take time. The fact that the private sphere gender dynamics is not discussed on the agenda of FETRAF does not mean that it is not going to happen in the future.

FETRAF and Family Farmers Identity

"Most of the non-collegiate actors are unions and rural associations because Family Farming is the strategy" (Group Interview MDA).

"It is important to recognize how these strategies and their effects on flows of power shape subjects, their interests and their agency" (Agrawal 2005, 98)

In the recently created category of Family Farmers, the FETRAF functions as a strong tool to reinforce the "identity" of the Family Farmer. Not only by situating it historically (when it was created, see website) but also creating "the myth" (See Davis in the section above) of its creation and of the group by stressing its differences with others. That is the case of FETRAF, homogenizing differences with other groups (the FETAG in this case) and also similarities between the members (like common interests and needs).

FETRAF chooses then to ignore the struggles (and hence commonalities) against the big land owners demanding a land reform. "The cultural construction of otherness are dynamic, full of contradictions ... in different situations the collectivity boundaries may include some "others" and exclude others" (Davis 1997, 47) thus the former other for the family farmers were the Militar Dictatorship and the Big Land owners and the actual one includes also the land workers that take part of the FETAG. Also, a big part of the members of FETRAF are small land owners, but not all of them, some still rent their plots of land to the big land owners (Deere 2005)³⁴. But this is however not part of the

³⁴ Are the big land owners a problem in itself? According to a member of the CPT this "was not a problem 40-50 years ago, but it started to be when the so called green-revolution began at the end of the 60s promoted by the Military Dictatorship. It was then that the Catholic Church (inspired by the Liberation Theology) through their CEB started to mobilize the farmers, as "a reaction to the capitalist model that was entering the countryside". The correlation of this three factors is also described by Favareto (2006, p. 4-6). The church did play an important role promoting the activism, especially in the North East region, promoting religious encounters that provided a space to discuss the multiple economic problems of the farmers (Favareto 2006 p 6). The CPT member I interviewed talks even about a particular

FETRAF (at least not the fundamental) demands anymore. Actually, on the interviews it was repeatedly expressed how FETRAF and FETAG live on a constant struggle for power on a local level. The unions of some municipalities subscribe to one or the other and the members sometimes to both, which provokes conflicts. This fight may be related to the “scarcity of resource access” (Jones 2004, 98) that was repeatedly implied by the different technicians in charge of the access to subsidies:

“The government provides resources, but the bureaucracy is too large and the resources are never enough” (Local Agriculture Dept).

The FETRAF also functions as the “border guard” paraphrasing Davis (see Davis in section above) saying who can and cannot be part of it by using and “naturalizing” specific actual similarities and ignoring previous ones with other groups, they are hence situated historically

“If a farmer wants to buy a car, the staff here would imply that he is not a family farmer only because he bought a car but I would like to know who it is that says that a family farmer cannot develop must remain always the same, in and cultivating the field to eat?” (EBDA Technician).

This quote indicates a preconception of the farmer, how it has to be, and what can and cannot do (Escobar 2005). This is done by limiting the access of subsidies for those who do not subscribe to their demands, naming, for example, buy a car.

The agrarian reform has actually not been really implemented in the whole Valley. When asked at the Ministry (MDA) they said that there is officially no more intention to divide land in the valley because of the settlements movement (people taking land without the owner’s consent, the state mediates to allow this to happen).

”The process of occupying the land, does not allow official land reform in the valley” (MDA group interview).

The demands of the FETRAF may not always represent all the groups that are part of it.

Romeria (Land Pilgrimage) that generated the creation of the first union of workers in Bahia.CITA. This type of Land Pilgrimages revolving around a particular political issue that concern Brazilian farmers still takes place. Only more adapted to the current problems. Such us the fight against genetically modified seeds in the south region (Peschard, 2009).

Contradictory discourses

Land concentration in Brazil remains extremely high (even if it is going down) as also does the GINI coefficient. PT got to join together many people from many different political perspectives, also the big land owners seem to be satisfied with the government, which is highly contradictory since its pro poor social policies are a trade mark of the government. Is this identity creation of the Family Farmers then really a challenge to the status-quo? This situation has similarities to Jones talking about the success of “mainstream sustainable development due largely to the compatibility with technocratic, managerial, capitalist and modernist ideology” (Jones 2004, xxi).

Some land reform has been implemented, but there is still much left to be done. The big change came rather from federal transfers to those (people and territories) with less income through different types of subsidies/programs and/or granting access to credits for those in need (farmers, women, minorities).

The government has, as a consequence, become a big contributor to social change, and, as a consequence making those in need (many of whom are rural women) absolutely dependent, not on a private company but on the government itself. Can this be held in the long run? What if the federal transfers do not come? However, given the fact that in many other places the NGOs are the ones in charge of supplying support because of a lack of state intervention (Jones 2004, 96), the opposite case does not seem so unappealing as an alternative way of dealing with inequalities, but it is necessary to be aware of its weaknesses. In the valley, the technicians in charge of intermediate to get the funds say that is embarrassing as the promised subsidies do not arrive or arrive with six months delay, what makes many farmers disappointed and some even give up on any state subsidy.³⁵

³⁵ Are the big land owners a problem in itself? According to a member of the CPT this “was not a problem 40-50 years ago, but it started to be when the so called green-revolution began at the end of the 60s promoted by the Military Dictatorship. It was then that the Catholic Church (inspired by the Liberation Theology) through their CEB started to mobilize the farmers, as “a reaction to the capitalist model that was entering the countryside”. The correlation of these three factors is also described by Favareto (2006, 4-6). The church did play an important role promoting the activism, especially in the North East region, promoting religious encounters that provided a space to discuss the multiple economic problems of the farmers (ibid). The CPT member I interviewed talks even about a particular Romeria

CONCLUSION

The new dynamics of the Valley of Jiquiriça are provoking changes whose impact on people's everyday life and identity constructions is to be evaluated in time. Territorial approach through the Identity Territories project seems to be grand on the official level but faces difficulties related to lack of economic funding that delegitimize their functioning and its role. Many see the need of moving to the other classification naming Citizenship Territories in order mostly to get more resources, even if this means that they have to construct themselves as poor and in need. It seems that Identity Territory has rather served as a tentative step towards a new way of making politics in the valley, by promoting dialogue between the different actors. However, a lack of speed in the bureaucratic sphere in order to recognize the new demarcation again takes away legitimacy and power to act. This problem of slow response is similar to the intention to promote women participation, which fails if it is not properly implemented.

However, FETRAF, may be also successful by the state's will to transform the balance of power in the territories, embodied by the rooted "coronelism" and "municipalism" as well as previous men's predominance on all aspects of political life. The different actors interviewed observe the reality according to their interests and positioning, it is therefore difficult to talk about one identity, but rather multiple identities when approaching different individuals and aspects. Maybe identity is not even much about how people call themselves, cause that is also very contextualized, it would be more about the contrast between what they say, the daily practice and the meaning they give to what they say.

It is not a major conclusion that these categories are far too new to create a long lasting impact defined through their identity construction. They are rather instrumentalized and utilized according to their needs. They do relate to each other but rather as a symbol of the changes that the territory and Brazil as a whole is experiencing.

(Land Pilgrimage) that generated the creation of the first union of workers in Bahia. This type of Land Pilgrimages revolving around a particular political issue that concern Brazilian farmers still takes place. Only more adapted to the current problems. Such as the fight against genetically modified seeds in the south region (Peschard 2009).

CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

On the other hand, the thesis opens new questions that could be researched in the future and due to space constraints were but superficially mentioned. The territory needs to discuss the strategies in order to reach these goals as the sustainable rural development is another aim intended through the Identity Territories project (Quan et al. 2011), namely, to reach a “sustainable rural development with poverty reduction” (From Plano Territorial do Desenvolvimento Rural Sustentable Vale do Jiquirica, p.21)³⁶.

How to reach productivity and sustainable rural development? The Identity Territories project faces many challenges coming from the character of the project: participatory, productive and rurally sustainable. The project highlights the inherent contradictions within such projects that need to balance carefully between productivity and sustainable development. Sustainable development is a multifactor concept that includes the environmental, social but also the economic/productive side. New research questions open: And how is rural sustainable development defined in the project? How to reach productivity and sustainable rural development?

³⁶ One unexpected consequence of this division is a better and more localized environmental management since at the beginning of 2011 it was approved by RTD a technical support program in order to prepare the territory for the Territorial and Sustainable Rural Development in the Territorial (Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial para el Desarrollo Rural Sostenible (PNDRS) (See DTR website).

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CPT - Comissão Pastoral da Terra- Catholic Church's Pastoral Land Commission

CEB - Comissão Eclesiásticas de Base - Ecclesiastic Based Commission

CUT – Central Única dos Trabalhadores – Central Workers Union

CONTAG – Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores na Agricultura –National Confederation of Agricultural Workers

COLEGIADO TERRITORIAL - Territorial Board

EBDA- Empresa Baiana de Desenvolvimento Agrícola- Bahian Agricultural Development Company

FETAG - Federação dos Trabalhadores da Agricultura - Agricultural Workers' Federation

FETRAF – Federação dos Trabalhadores e Trabalhadoras na Agricultura

Familiar – Family Farming Workers Federation

INCRA – Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária – National Institute for Colonization and Agrarian Reform

MDA – Ministério do Desenvolvimento Agrário - Agrarian Development Ministry

MST – Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra – Landless Rural Workers Movement

PT – Partido dos Trabalhadores – Workers Party

PRONAF – Programa Nacional de Fortalecimento da Agricultura Familiar – National Program for the Strengthening of Family Agriculture

SEPLAN – Secretaria do Planejamento- Planning Department

SINTRAF – Sindicato dos Trabalhadores e Trabalhadoras na Agricultura Familiar – Family Farming Workers Union

TERRITORIO DE IDENTIDADE - Identity Territory

TERRITORIO DA CIUDADANIA - Citizenship Territory

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