Chapter 8

NGOs participation in PLANAFLORO: Views from the World Bank, State, NGOs and the Grassroots

This chapter presents the views of the State and the World Bank concerning NGO participation in the decision-making bodies of PLANAFLORO regarding issues of political representativeness and participatory effectiveness. The chapter also includes a discussion of the role played by Transnational NGOs in shaping the activities of local NGOs, especially in the process of policy reform for PLANAFLORO, and thereby informs our inquiry into NGO autonomy. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the issues of political representation and social accountability using data gathered at the grassroots level.

The State views of NGO participation in PLANAFLORO

State officials interviewed during this study indicated that several political and technical aspects of PLANAFLORO precluded the development of harmonious relationships between NGOs and State agencies in PLANAFLORO. Political problems were of three types: 1. constraints on national sovereignty by the inclusion of NGOs; 2. lack of political mandate by the GSOs to represent the program’s beneficiaries, and 3. the lack of technical preparation of
most NGO representatives for the negotiation process required by a multiparty process such as PLANAFLORO.

The Issue of National Sovereignty

Emmanuel Casara\(^1\) has suggested that the model of participation designed by the World Bank countermanded the national sovereignty of the Brazilian State. Casara stated his position with the argument that:

given the fact that the State is the official borrower and it is solely responsible for the program’s outcome, the implementation of the program should have been maintained within the State realm... Someone could argue that NGOs are a representative segment of Society. But the fact is that only the State has the popular mandate obtained through democratic election.

Therefore, Casara argued that while a democratic State is accountable to a constituent electorate, NGOs may not represent civil society at all. Therefore, their imposition into regional economic development by the World Bank may constitute an intrusion upon democracy itself. A complementary aspect of the impairment of the State’s mandate was related to the perception that “NGOs were playing the role of local watchdogs for the World Bank.” This perception was enhanced by tactic utilized by the NGOs to deliver their concerns directly to the World Bank

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\(^1\) Vice-Secretary of SEDAM during Governor Piana’s administration and a leading State official in the design of the environmental component of PLANAFLORO. Interview by the author, July 04, 1995, tape-recording, Porto Velho
headquarters in Washington without previously informing the state government. Casara argued that, in some cases, NGOs made their allegations before exhausting the political discussions within the program’s governing organs, and as such, served basically to circumvent and undermine the State’s authority within the program.

Questions on the Political Representativeness of NGOs

The second political element was related to the notion that NGOs lack a popular mandate to participate in the formulation of public policies. Both Emmanuel Casara and Astréa Jordão\(^2\) suggested that State officials were surprised by the World Bank’s position to accept the inclusion of recently created GSOs into the program’s governing organs. According to Casara, State officials expected that only MSOs --which were deemed as having direct representation powers from the grassroots-- and previously established GSOs (i.e., CPT and CIMI) were going to participate in PLANAFLORO’s governing organs. Jordão suggested that the World Bank’s model of participation induced the creation of several GSOs concurrently with the program’s design phase. Jordão added that, given the lack of a clear mandate from the program’s

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\(^2\) Vice-Secretary of PLANAFLORO during the Piana administration and played key roles both in the design and implementation of PLANAFLORO. Interview by the author, July, 1995, tape-recording, Porto Velho
beneficiaries, these newly-created GSOs were actually representing their own organizational interests. Similarly, Casara cited as an example of the contradiction between these NGOs being advocates of beneficiaries and working for their self-interests, the direct involvement of NGOs in the execution of program activities (e.g., the execution by INDIA of the socioeconomic and land tenure studies that led to creation of extractive reserves).

The limits of NGO Participatory Effectiveness in the PLANAFLORO

Jaime da Costa Junior argued that NGO representatives did not enter the program’s governing organs as partners but rather as critics of the actions taken by the State agencies. According to Costa such an approach had important impacts on the character of the coexistence between State and NGOs within the different governing organs. First, it slowed down the learning process required by the multiparty process of negotiation adopted to implement PLANAFLORO. Second, the meetings held by the governing organs became lengthy and unproductive. As a result, unsolved disagreements between NGO representatives and State officials led to extreme positions from both sides which
caused great frustration among participants of both sides. In such an environment, it was very difficult to carry out the negotiation process between the two sides.

According to Sérgio Lúcio Valadão⁴, a more dynamic operation of the governing organs was also hampered by factors of a more technical nature. First, NGOs lacked an understanding of the technical and administrative aspects regulating the program’s implementation. Second, in comparison to State agencies, NGOs had fewer members available to participate in the different CNPs and in the Deliberative Council. As a result of inexperience and limited staff, NGOs faced difficulties in establishing a consistent level of effective participation the different governing organs constituting PLANAFLORO.

The NGOs’ Positive Contributions

Despite all the difficulties identified in the work with NGOs, State officials recognized that the partnership brought gains to the program. First, it may be asserted that NGO participation resulted in greater scrutiny of the technical details of the program’s components. Sérgio Valadão indicated that before PLANAFLORO most State agencies did not undergo any sort of scrutiny of their operations.

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³Head of the CNP of Agriculture. Interview by the author, August 08, 1995, Porto Velho.
As a result of the interaction with NGOs, State agencies had to adjust their planning practices to become more accountable, especially concerning issues regarding the elaboration of the Annual Operative Plans (POAs). According to Valadão, the enhanced scrutiny caused by the presence of NGOs led to more careful preparation of POAs. Second, the interaction with representatives of MSOs provided better insight into the needs of the local communities, and the versions of POAs tended to be more inclusive and attempted to address more realistic scenarios.

Summary

In summary, leading State officials questioned the political representativeness, institutional commitment and technical skills of the NGOs to represent the program’s intended beneficiaries fully. The interviews demonstrated that the approach used by the World Bank to include the participation of NGOs in the program’s governing organs heightened the discomfort of State officials regarding their own political mandate to execute PLANAFLORO. This is not a secondary issue given that the World Bank negotiates with the State as the main partner in its lending programs. Finally, the interviews also suggested that there were

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different positions within the local State regarding the contribution of NGOs to PLANAFLORO. While technicians were more susceptible to recognize the benefits brought by the participation of NGOs in PLANAFLORO, the politicians and their appointees within the State agencies were reluctant to support the partnership.

The World Bank’s Views on NGO Participation

The following discussion of the World Bank’s views on NGO participation is primarily based on a content analysis of three reports released during implementation of PLANAFLORO. In addition, material in this section has also drawn from an interview with Graciela Lituma, the program’s desk officer at the World Bank’s headquarters in Washington DC.

The World Bank claims to have played a catalytic role in the inclusion of NGOs in both the DC and CNPs (World Bank 1995c, p.45). Nevertheless, after three years of program implementation, the World Bank identified constraints of a political, institutional and technical character as causes

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5 The first document was prepared in July 1995 by the World Bank’s management to respond the request for an investigation made by the Forum of NGOs. The second was released by the management in December 1995 to respond to the Inspection Panel’s support for an investigation of PLANAFLORO, and the third was released in November 1996 and it is the latest report on the status of the program’s implementation.

of the low effectiveness of NGO participation. The World Bank suggested that both the State and the NGOs had a share in the shortcomings that had occurred in the model of participation adopted by PLANAFLORO.

The State’s Weak Commitment to the Participation Process

The World Bank (1996) suggests that a major reason for the lack of efficacy of the model of participation centered on equally shared power in the CD and CNPs was the fact that:

the State government was less than fully convinced that NGOs should have a strong voice in project affairs and thus weakly support the council’s role... CNPs were only consultative and operated without a clear definition of functions or regulations p.6

However, the alleged lack of commitment by the State to strengthen the functioning of the program’s governing organs was not mentioned in the documents released by the World Bank in 1995 (World Bank 1995b and c). In general, the statements contained in both documents regarding the operation of the Deliberative Council and CNPs emphasized them as management organs in which the NGOs had equal participation, “not only in plenary sessions, but also in the discussions of the project components and in field visits (World Bank 1995c, p.46).” Instead, these documents

7The World Development Report(World Bank 1992, p.147) dedicated a small section of its article on
focused on political and technical difficulties experienced by the NGOs participating in the program’s governing organs.

Nonetheless, Graciela Lituma recognized that political problems related to the operation of the program had caused the NGOs not “to see themselves as part of the project”. This situation had ultimately led to a great level of frustration among NGO representatives. Furthermore, according to Lituma, frustration over the results of participation had contributed to a decreased sense of shared ownership in the program which further undermined the NGOs’ commitment to the successful implementation of PLANAFLORO.

The NGOs’ Lack of Political Representativeness

Regarding the issue of political representativeness, Lituma (Ibid.) indicated her belief that “the NGOs do not represent the entire Society. NGOs rather are only a small portion of Rondônia’s society.” In its documents, the World Bank repeatedly questioned the representativeness of NGOs participating in PLANAFLORO. The World Bank suggested that “NGOs do not faithfully represent well-defined constituencies (World Bank 1995b, p.31). In addition, the Bank also questioned the extent to which NGOs were being held accountable by the program’s beneficiaries.

PLANAFLORO to praise the participation of NGOs as representatives of local communities’ interests.
As an example of this lack of accountability, the World Bank indicated that only three NGOs (i.e., the MSOs -- FETAGRO, OSR, and CUNPIR) had an established system to allow direct representation of beneficiaries in the program’s governing organs (World Bank 1995b and c). The World Bank argued that the lack of internal participatory mechanisms had resulted in “lack of accountability and consistency” by the NGOs (World Bank 1995b).

The NGOs’ Institutional and Technical Weaknesses

The World Bank also identified institutional weakness and technical inexperience of NGOs as important barriers to their more efficient participation in the program’s governing organs (World Bank 1995b, p.31). The World Bank also suggested that NGOs needed to “assume greater responsibility for project success and strengthening their institutional capacity will foster this.” However, it is interesting to note that, in contrast to the PLANAFLORO investments made toward improving the institutional capacity of governmental agencies beginning in 1993, funds for enhancing NGO’s institutional capacity only began to be released directly to the Forum in the middle of 1995.

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8Information provided by Luiz Rodrigues de Oliveira, the FORUM’s executive secretary. Interview by the author, July, 1995, tape-recording, Porto Velho.
The World Bank’s New Model for the Participation of Civil Society Institutions

Based on its assessments of the limitations of NGOs to represent broader societal interests being affected by the implementation of PLANAFLORO, the World Bank indicated the necessity to redefine the composition of the program’s governing organs by 1996 (World Bank 1995b and c). Among the reasons for such reorganization, the World Bank cited: 1. the lack of preparation by most NGOs to participate in the program, 2. the increased complexity of the program’s management resulting from the participation of a large number of NGOs, and 3. the need to incorporate representatives of the private sector as a means to reduce their opposition to PLANAFLORO.

During the mid-term review of PLANAFLORO carried out by the World Bank in June 1996, a seminar was held in Porto Velho to discuss a new model for the participation of civil society organizations in the program’s governing organs. This seminar included representatives of local NGOs, national and transnational NGOs\(^9\); FIERO and FAERON

\(^9\)Representatives of Friends of the Earth/Brazil and OXFAM/UK even signed the final document produced by the seminar (World Bank Press Release No. 96/67/LAC).
(representing the private sector), and the state and Federal government.

The model proposed by the World Bank during this seminar presented important changes in the model of NGO participation in PLANAFLORO. First, the NGOs participating in the Deliberative Council and in the CNPs would be reduced to only FETAGRO and the FORUM of NGOs. Second, the new organs included representatives of two organizations linked to the private sector (i.e., FIERO and FAERON). The idea of including representatives of the private sector in the program’s governing organs had faced criticisms even within the World Bank. The Inspection Panel (World Bank 1995a, p.25) criticized the idea of incorporating the private sector in the program’s governing organs, because it could result in the:

- inclusion of representatives of the parties behind illegal logging, burning and other anti-zoning activities. The less sophisticated and poor representatives of the Project’s intended beneficiaries could be outmaneuvered, lose their trust in the Bank and further distance themselves from the Project.

Nevertheless, at the end of the seminar an agreement was signed between the different political segments there represented. This agreement contained two basic elements. First, the acceptance by the NGOs of the new model of participation proposed by the World Bank. Second, a
reallocation of the remaining balance of the program’s funds. According to this new allocation, the NGOs obtained the guarantee that US $ 22 million would be spent in the community-based projects (World Bank 1996)\textsuperscript{10}.

This new format seemingly simplifies the program’s management while reducing organized opposition to its implementation. However, this new model does not seem to address the problems of political representativeness and social accountability towards the program’s beneficiaries.

**Summary**

The World Bank’s analysis of the problems involving NGOs’ participation in PLANAFLORO raises serious questions about the arguments that initially provided support for their involvement in the implementation of economic development programs. In addition, the World Bank also recognized the importance of the commitment of the State for the achievement of successful involvement of civil society’s organizations in the management of such programs. However, this recognition does seem to have resulted in an option for greater popular participation in the continuation of PLANAFLORO. This limitation is clearly expressed in the new

\textsuperscript{10}The remaining US $ 49.9 million were reallocated among the following components: environmental protection: US $ 13.0 million; agro-ecological zoning: US $ 17.3 million; technical assistance: US $ 4.7 million; road paving: US $ 11.3 million, and project administration: US $ 3.6 million.
model proposed by the World Bank and adopted during the mid-term review held in Porto Velho. Finally, similar to what occurred within the local State, the World Bank did not have a monolithic position regarding the contribution of NGOs to the PLANAFLORO process. While the Bank management seemed to be very uneasy about the participation process, the documents released by the Inspection Panel tended to corroborate most of the NGOs arguments regarding the difficulties surrounding PLANAFLORO.

The Influence of Transnational NGOs in Rondônia

The influence of transnational NGOs in the process of policy-reform in PLANAFLORO raises important issues regarding the political autonomy of local NGOs. All representatives of transnational NGOs declared that their organizations were involved in projects being executed by local NGOs in Rondônia (Table 8.1). However, differences appeared in the scope of their activities (Table 8.2).

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11 Despite insistent contacts, the Center for Transnational Environmental Law (CIEL) and the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) never returned the survey instrument. Nonetheless, the following organizations provided answers: Friends of the Earth (FOE)/Brazil, OXFAM (Brazil and UK), WWF (Brazil and US).
Table 8.1 Transnational NGOs Participating in PLANAFLORO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>NGO</th>
<th>Position Title of Interviewee</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roberto Smeraldi</td>
<td>FOE/Brazil</td>
<td>Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telma C. Branco</td>
<td>OXFAM/Brazil</td>
<td>Program Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patricia Feeney</td>
<td>OXFAM/UK</td>
<td>Senior Policy Advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Buschbacher</td>
<td>WWF/Brazil</td>
<td>Program Director/Brazil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulf Rasmusson</td>
<td>WWF/Sweden</td>
<td>Tropical Forest Advisor</td>
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</table>

OXFAM is more involved in institutional grassroots development. Meanwhile, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) -- represented in Rondônia by its Brazil and Sweden sections -- is involved in a broader scope of activities that include funding for institutional grassroots development\(^{12}\), environmental conservation, and technical assistance and project development. All of these organizations plus the FOE/Brazil argued that they are providing policy and programmatic advice to local NGOs regarding their participation in PLANAFLORO.

\(^{12}\)WWF has provided funds for the strengthening of the institutional capacity local associations.
Table 8.2 Nature of Transnational NGOs involvement with local NGOs in Rondônia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of Involvement</th>
<th>FOE/BR</th>
<th>Oxfam/BR</th>
<th>Oxfam/UK</th>
<th>WWF/BR</th>
<th>WWF/SW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grassroots Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Conservation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Assistance and Project Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Reform in PLANAFLORO</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Intervention of Transnational NGOs in PLANAFLORO

A thorough evaluation of transnational NGO intervention in PLANAFLORO is, unfortunately, precluded by the lack of factual evidence. Nevertheless, the respondents for WWF/Brazil and WWF/Sweden acknowledged that their collaborative initiatives with Brazilian NGOs in Rondônia were motivated by a desire to influence policies related to PLANAFLORO. An insight into WWF’s scope of intervention in Rondônia is provided by a posting in the web page of WWF international (http://www.panda.org/lop/lop_br.htm) which contains a summary of funding and policy objectives being pursued by WWF in Rondônia, especially in PLANAFLORO. The activity workplan for 1996 included the following items:

1) to increase functioning of commissions within the FORUM, 2) to monitor and contribute to the elaboration of PLANAFLORO’s POAs, 3) to strengthen the alliance between rubber tappers, Indians and small farmers by supporting coordination between the groups and facilitating involvement of the “Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Terra” (MST), the Movement of Landless Rural Workers and FETAGRO in the work of the FORUM, and to focus work of the FORUM on issues of common concern to small farmers, Indians, and rubber tappers (e.g., land rights and demarcation, education, health) [author’s emphasis].

These lines of intervention (especially the objective of securing a strengthening of the FORUM’s commissions and contributing to the elaboration of POAs) seem to respond to an overall objective of WWF to increase its own political
leverage in PLANAFLORO via FORUM. Moreover, it is interesting to note that the WWF clearly advocates the reintegration of FETAGRO into the FORUM. Luiz Rodrigues, the FORUM’s executive secretary, was much more circumspect about such efforts and denied the existence of any concrete step to reintegrate FETAGRO in the name of a supposed respect for each organization’s autonomy. Rodrigue’s position probably reflects his awareness of the fact that FETAGRO’s leadership regarded WWF’s attempts to reintegrate that organization with the FORUM as an invasion of their political autonomy.

Meanwhile, OXFAM/UK and FOE/Brazil seem to have centered their activities in Rondônia on supporting institution-building within the FORUM. They also declared to have lobbied both the World Bank and the Brazilian Federal government to obtain changes in the implementation of PLANAFLORO. However, both OXFAM and Friends of the Earth were instrumental in two important aspects of NGO participation in PLANAFLORO. First, FOE was a co-signer of the request for an investigation of PLANAFLORO presented by the FORUM to the Inspection Panel of the World Bank. FOE not only provided funding to prepare the document but also publicize it. Second, both OXFAM/UK and FOE/Brazil were co-signers of the Terms of Understanding during the mid-term
review of PLANAFLORO that changed the model of civil society involvement in PLANAFLORO.

There is no concrete evidence that the intervention of Transnational NGOs had direct impacts on diminishing the autonomy of their local counterparts. However, their presence in the process seems to have created a set of expectations that affected the participation of local NGOs in PLANAFLORO. First, it introduced another layer of participants in the process of PLANAFLORO. This additional layer served basically to remove the sphere of negotiations from being purely located in Porto Velho to the headquarters of the Bank in Washington DC. Second, it provided financial and institutional leverage that local NGOs needed to increase their pressure on both the State government and World Bank management. However, as discussed previously, given the option to center financial and institutional leverage in the FORUM, it also seems to have resulted in internal tensions within the local NGOs.

The Results of the Participation of Transnational NGOs in PLANAFLORO

All transnational NGOs survey respondents indicated that the inclusion of NGOs induced greater popular participation in the implementation of PLANAFLORO, and also
conduced to greater effectiveness of environmental conservation in Rondônia. These answers reflected a more positive evaluation than those observed among the majority of local NGO leaders. However, it is necessary to point out that the limitations surrounding the process of participation was analyzed from the following angles: 1) the costs of participation, and 2) the internal problems of local NGOs to participate effectively in governing organs of programs similar to PLANAFLORO.

The Opportunity Costs of Participation

An important issue was raised by respondents from OXFAM/UK and WWF (Brazil and Sweden) which involves the opportunity costs of participation. According to all of them, participation can bring social and economic costs to those NGOs involved in the process. Moreover, as Feeney stated, it may even be more costly for local communities and NGOs who “have opportunity costs if not actual financial disincentives” to maintain their participation. Similarly, Robert Buschbacher (WWF/Brazil) suggests that the process of participation requires a lot of resources (i.e., staff time and money) for NGOs “effectively to take advantage of the opportunity to participate”.

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The Limitations of NGO Participation

Participation in PLANAFLORO’s governing organs was criticized for different reasons. One issue was the model of participation itself. Patricia Feeney of OXFAM/UK indicated that the model of participation was flawed in nature, and it had breaks of continuity at times. A second issue was the supremacy of political over technical aspects. Robert Busbacher of WWF/Brazil suggested that potential good technical good input from NGOs was subject to an overwhelmingly political decision-making process by the State. Buschbacher also indicated that there was a strong tendency (by the World Bank) to use NGO participation as “window dressing.” Finally, Roberto Smeraldi of FOE/Brazil indicated that participation should happen at the earliest time of a program, and not later when it is taken to fulfill some need for remedial action.

The NGO Weaknesses

Telma Castelo Branco (OXFAM/Brazil) and Patricia Feeney (OXFAM/UK) provided hints into important potential limitations surrounding the intervention of local NGOs in PLANAFLORO. First, Castelo Branco suggested that the FORUM should think about establishing stronger roots in the interior of Rondônia to allow a greater participation of
civil society in the implementation of PLANAFLORO. Similarly, Feeney suggested that “more thought has to be given by NGOs to the mechanisms of participation.” Both suggestions seem to indicate that existing channels were not sufficient. Meanwhile, Patricia Feeney raised another important question which is the issue of NGO autonomy in the process of participation. Feeney indicated that “more care has to taken to avoid NGO co-optation through some token of participation”.

**Summary**

Transnational NGOs seem to be playing important roles in the shaping of policies within PLANAFLORO. Transnational NGOs represent a counterpart to the World Bank’s prominent role in Rondônia’s economic development. Moreover, the influence of transnational NGOs in the policy-making of PLANAFLORO and in the internal dynamics of local NGOs demonstrate that they, to a certain extent, distort local NGO autonomy. Not surprisingly, the criticisms of transnational NGO leaders regarding the process of NGO participation in PLANAFLORO are directed to the State, and more especially, to the World Bank. Yet, like State and World Bank officials, the representatives of transnational
NGOs acknowledged that local NGOs had faced internal difficulties to carry on their participation in PLANAFLORO.

**The Impacts of NGO Participation at the Grassroots Level**

From the previous discussion, it is possible to ascertain that a major objective shared by all institutional actors involved in PLANAFLORO was the increased democratization of the program’s decision-making process. In this regard, NGOs were expected to be effective tools for the direct delivery of information to the grassroots and to present the requests of their constituencies. Therefore, establishing whether these specific roles were achieved or not may provide a direct way to examine the issues of representativeness and social accountability.

**The Strength of Local Associations: Rubber Tappers**

The information provided by the local leaders reflected their different situations in terms of the institutional and political strength of their associations. Chico Preto of ASM and Adonias Macurape of ASGM indicated that their

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13 Material for this section was drawn from the following interviews: Adonias Macurape, treasurer of the “Associação dos Seringueiros de Guajará-Mirim”, the Association of Rubber Tappers of Guajará-Mirim (ASGM). Interview by the author, tape-recording, Ji-Paraná, August 05, 1995; Chico Preto, president of the “Associação dos Seringueiros de Machadinho do Oeste”, the Association of Rubber Tappers of Machadinho do Oeste (ASM). Interview by the author, tape-recording, Porto Velho, July 18, 1995, and Olimpio Gomes Siqueira, president of the “Associação dos Seringueiros e Soldados da Borracha de
organizations were carrying out their activities normally and that their grassroots organizations, the “Núcleos de Seringueiros”, the Nucleus of Rubber Tappers were organized and operating at the community level. On the other hand, Olimpio Siqueira (ASSPB) declared that, after years of confrontation with cattle ranchers for the control of the territory forming the Rio São Pedro Extractive Reserve, his association was in complete disarray.

Zacharias Lindahl\textsuperscript{14}, a Swedish marketing expert working as consultant for OSR, corroborated the overall content of the interviews of the local leaders. However, Lindahl indicated that most local associations were still facing financial difficulties and were too dependent on a few individuals to operate.

The fragile institutional situation of local associations seems to have undermined any real possibility of the OSR to establish a sustainable contact with the rubber tapper communities. Therefore, it reduced the chances of this social group to have an effective participation in the decision-making process of PLANAFORO.

\textsuperscript{14} Interview by the author, tape-recording, Porto Velho, July 16, 1995.
The Level of Information about PLANAFLORO

The leaders of local associations recognized that their constituency had a very poor knowledge of PLANAFLORO’s objectives. Chico Preto of ASM explained that the leadership of local associations was too preoccupied with other practical issues (e.g., creation of marketing structures for rubber, grassroots mobilization against illegal loggers) to be able to educate their constituencies on PLANAFLORO. Similarly, Zacharias Lindahl suggested that only a small fraction of the leadership of the associations understood the objectives of PLANAFLORO, while the majority of the community had very little knowledge of the program and its objectives. Chico Preto argued that education about PLANAFLORO was also difficult because ordinary rubber tappers had very little trust in the program. Such lack of trust was caused by the perceived lack of interest of governmental agencies to protect extractive reserves. Ultimately, the incapacity of the OSR and its local associations to raise the level of information about PLANAFLORO left the rubber tapper leadership without the social leverage which they needed to obtain concrete concessions from the State government.
The Strength of Local Associations: Indians

The presidents of the Karitiana and Suruí associations, Orlando Karitiana and Celso Suruí, argued that their associations were under extreme economic difficulties to continue their work at the grassroots level. Pio-Cinta Larga indicated that “Pamaré”, the Indian association organized by the Cinta-Larga people, was basically paralyzed for the same reasons. Furthermore, these interviews seem to indicate that problems of understanding of the role of the associations persist at the community level. Orlando Karitiana suggested that a primary challenge for his organization continued to be getting the recognition of members of his community. Therefore, despite the existence of grassroots organizations, their reduced number and overall institutional weakness left CUNPIR without channels of communication with the communities.

The Level of Information about PLANAFLORO

Indian leaders unanimously recognized that their communities had, at best, a very poor understanding of

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15 Material used in this section was drawn from the following interviews: Orlando Karitiana, president of the Karitiana association. Interview by the author, tape-recording, Porto Velho, July 11, 1995. Antonio Garcia Karitiana, chief of the Karitiana people. Interview by the author, Porto Velho, August 24, 1995; Celso Suruí (president of the Suruí association), Henrique Suruí (general chief of Suruí people), and Pio Cinta-Larga (chief of the Cinta-Larga people). Group interview by the author, Porto Velho, August 08, 1995.
PLANAFLORO. Henrique Suruí indicated that this problem was exacerbated by the overall lack of understanding among ordinary Indians of the mechanisms regulating the mainstream Brazilian society. Like the rubber tappers, Indian leaders emphasized that a lack of perceived concrete results made their efforts to inform their constituencies about PLANAFLORO even more difficult.

**Small Farmers**

The survey of individual small farmers was carried out in the region around the municipality of Ouro Preto do Oeste because of two major factors: 1) the local labor union is often cited as the most organized in Rondônia, and 2) the majority of FETAGRO’s board of directors are linked to that particular labor union.

**Types of Affiliation**

Table 8.3 shows the basic types of affiliation to grassroots organizations among the farmers surveyed in this study. Small farmers declared three basic types of affiliation status: a) membership in the labor union and in cooperatives, b) membership only in cooperatives, c) lack of membership in any form of grassroots organization.
Table 8.3 Status of Affiliation of Small Farmers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Affiliation</th>
<th>Number of Farmers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labor union and cooperatives</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only cooperatives</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Individual Farmers’ Knowledge on PLANAFLORO

A first set of questions in the survey revolved around the farmers’ knowledge of the nature of political representation within PLANAFLORO. Only 14 farmers (12%) declared to understand PLANAFLORO as a regional development program. In terms of representation within the program, a total of 37 farmers (32%) responded that they knew about the existence of small farmers’ representatives in PLANAFLORO’s governing organs, but only 11 farmers (about 10% of the total) were able to identify FETAGRO as the organizations representing their interests. Meanwhile, only 18 farmers (16%) had participated in any sort of meeting to explain the program’s objectives (Table 8.4).
Table 8.4 Participation in Meetings to Explain PLANAFLORO

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sponsor</th>
<th>Number of Farmers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FETAGRO</td>
<td>07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMATER</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHURCH GROUP</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BANCO DO BRASIL</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In terms of overall knowledge of PLANAFLORO, only 1 (0.8%) declared to be well informed about the program’s contents, 14 farmers (12%) declared to be regularly informed. Not surprisingly, 46 farmers (40%) declared to be poorly informed about PLANAFLORO, while 48 farmers (42%) declared to be totally unaware of issues related to the program. This poor level of information about PLANAFLORO among farmers in the Ouro Preto region is even more striking if membership in the labor union is taken into account. Among those who indicated membership in the labor union, a total of 33 farmers (51%) declared to be involved in some sort of organizational body within the labor union. It is also interesting to notice that 5 of those farmers served in
leadership roles on the STR’s board of directors, and 3 were leaders of FETAGRO. If level of information was the sole means of establishing the legitimacy of FETAGRO’s claims to represent its affiliates in PLANAFLORO, these results would indicate a great weakness in the claim. However, when farmers were asked to formulate their major requests for PLANAFLORO, their stated priorities resemble the agenda followed by FETAGRO within the program’s governing organs. For example, farmers cited as their top request increased access to credit for agricultural production, followed by improvement in health and education services in rural areas. Meanwhile, the rehabilitation of roads, a priority for the State, came in a distant third place.

If the results found in Ouro Preto are representative of Rondônia’s reality, there is a clear paradox in the internal situation of FETAGRO. On the one hand, FETAGRO and its local unions have not effectively informed their constituencies about the PLANAFLORO program. On the other hand, FETAGRO established a priority (i.e., increased access to credit) that is in accord with the requests emanating from the grassroots. Moreover, it also shows the difficulties surrounding the assessment of the broader political impacts caused by the inclusion of NGOs in economic development programs.
Summary

The information provided by this survey among small farmers indicates that existing grassroots organizations did not play a meaningful role in enhancing the awareness of MSO constituencies about the objectives of PLANAFLORO. These results also seem to indicate that there was an important gap between the regional leadership of NGOs and their constituencies. A gap widened by the opportunities for elite formation within these NGOs presented by PLANAFLORO.

Conclusion

The views arising from the State, the World Bank and the transnational NGOs regarding the participation of local NGOs in PLANAFLORO show the existence of an intricate web of issues surrounding the relationship among these different actors in the process. An important element revealed in the analysis of their views is that there was a persistent lack of trust by the State and the World Bank in validating the participation of NGOs in PLANAFLORO. This lack of trust seems to have undermined the chances of a more cooperative partnership.

Similarly, while State and World Bank officials were critical of the practical contribution of local NGOs to the
process. The State and the World Bank concentrated their criticisms on the lack of representativeness and institutional capability of local NGOs to participate in the process of policy-reform of PLANAFLORO. Meanwhile, transnational NGOs saw this contribution as positive and focused their criticism on the model of participation which they deemed as insufficient. However, it is interesting to note that all these institutional actors converged to approve a new model of civil society participation in PLANAFLORO. This new model, however, did not enhance the involvement of the grassroots in the process nor did it incorporate the positive elements identified in the participation of NGOs in PLANAFLORO.

The lack of engagement of the program’s beneficiaries is demonstrated by the data gathered at the grassroots level. The data showed that intended beneficiaries (i.e., rubber tappers, Indians, and small farmers) of PLANAFLORO were mostly unaware of the status of its implementation. This lack of awareness among PLANAFLORO’s beneficiaries reduced the participation of civil society in the program.