

Chapter 7

The Dynamics of NGO Participation in PLANAFLORO.

This chapter examines the views of NGO leaders on democracy and their role in the political process, especially in their relationship with the Rondônia state government. The chapter also explores the NGO leaders views on the concepts of representativeness, institutional effectiveness and social accountability. In so doing, the chapter addresses the issue of the legitimacy of NGOs in the political process. These concepts will then be put in the context of PLANAFLORO to evaluate the participation of NGOs within the program's governing organs. Finally, the chapter addresses the views of NGO leaders on the role played by the World Bank's management and governmental agencies in the implementation of PLANAFLORO between 1992 and 1995.

The NGO Leader's Views of Democracy

The NGO leaders of Rondônia evidence very different views on democracy, and the role of civil society organizations in the political process (especially concerning their relationship to State institutions). It is interesting that such a small sample of NGOs revealed such a wide range of views about the democratic process and their organizations responsibilities to it. These differences are

also present in the discussion regarding the specific roles played by NGOs in the regional political process.

Nevertheless, a common feature was that most interviewees displayed the belief that the neo-liberal policies implemented by the Brazilian government had left them in a defensive position in the political process both at the regional and national level.

The MSOs

Among the MSOs (i.e., FETAGRO, OSR and CUNPIR), there are important differences regarding their approaches to participation in the democratic process. All three organizations claimed to represent the interests of their member social groups. Moreover, following a pattern identified by Eldridge (1995) in relation to Indonesian NGOs, the political agenda of FETAGRO and OSR included key elements of liberal democratic ideology (e.g., freedom of association, more accountable structures of law and government, more equitable distribution of public resources). The political agenda of CUNPIR also introduced a new element of ethnicity into the political process in Rondônia. However, there are important differences among the leaders of FETAGRO, OSR, and CUNPIR in relation to the scope

of their dealings with State institutions, and the type of mechanisms to be utilized to obtain their requests.

The leaders of FETAGRO¹ displayed an overall skepticism about the possibilities of achieving their goals through dealings with the State. Underlying this view was a supposition that State institutions are dominated by political groups with distinct class interest which would have no compelling reason to be sympathetic toward the so-called popular sectors (i.e., small farmers, rubber tappers and Indians). An outcome of this view is the stated belief that the organization's strategic goals (e.g., land reform, improved marketing conditions, welfare assistance) could not be fulfilled solely through negotiations with State institutions. FETAGRO has also kept its distance from other NGOs. Its leaders have displayed skepticism about the political orientation and legitimacy of most GSOs. Despite declaring that they undertook tactical alliances with other NGOs, especially OSR and CUNPIR, whenever it was possible, the leadership of FETAGRO demonstrated a preference for direct mass action rather than the intermediary styles of advocacy pursued by the FORUM of NGOs to pressure State representatives. FETAGRO has a portfolio of mass action activities that include things such as public

demonstrations, strikes, and political support for the invasion of large farms by landless farmers.

The interviews with leaders of OSR showed that they shared a similar skepticism regarding the extent of actual democratization of Brazilian society (which they deemed to be low), and the possibilities of achieving social justice in foreseeable future. However, the leaders of OSR displayed a more pragmatic view of how to achieve political and material gains in a society that they do not see as fully democratic. This position arises from the distinction made by them about the nature of State institutions, and the different administrations controlling the State apparatus.

Therefore, despite also utilizing direct mass action to deliver its political claims, OSR believes more than FETAGRO in the benefits of carrying out direct negotiations with State institutions to achieve its strategic goals (e.g., demarcation of extractive reserves). In addition, in another difference with the political positions held by FETAGRO, OSR interviewees evidenced less reservation about establishing ties with other organizations of civil society. As a result of that approach, OSR has become fully integrated into the FORUM of NGOs. For example, the local associations of rubber tappers represent the major grassroots linkage among the

¹Interviews with leaders of FETAGRO included not only members of the directing board, but directors of

organizations composing the FORUM. This more conciliatory view of political action may be explained by the fact that OSR has adopted a professional core of external consultants (and most of them are members of Brazilian GSOs) to coordinate most of its negotiations with State institutions. Moreover, OSR has historically associated with other NGOs to develop its political agenda.

The democratic nature of State institutions is a rather secondary element to the leadership of the Indian MSO, CUNPIR. Their position is firmly centered in an overall distrust of the mainstream society (the "white men's society") and its political system. In addition, the historic stewardship imposed by the Federal government on the Indian communities has generated a great degree of distrust towards governmental institutions. The formation of Indian organizations in a form acceptable to the broader political society is seen by the leaders of CUNPIR as a "necessary evil" to pursue the land rights of the Indian communities. As Indian leader Antenor Karitiana pointed out in an interview:

The Indian NGOs serve to defend the communities according to the system of the white people. These organizations were created because our own political system has been damaged by the contact with the white Society. The white people are not killing us with

local unions in Ariquemes, Ouro Preto and Espigão do Oeste.

guns, but through their code of laws. So, we are using the white's political system to defend our interests.²

The representatives of CUNPIR recognize that it is still difficult for most ordinary members of the Indian communities to understand the "white men's society" and its means of political expression. Such lack of understanding is worsened by the poor understanding of the Portuguese language that still persists in most Indian communities³. Nevertheless, despite their limited understanding of the institutional arrangements guiding the workings of mainstream society, the interviewees indicated that leadership of CUNPIR was pursuing increased participation in the political process, especially through the channels provided by the FORUM of NGOs. In addition, Indian communities have increased their presence in mass demonstrations organized by FETAGRO and OSR⁴.

The GSOs

Interviews with GSO leaders revealed important differences of perspective the roles played by NGOs in the democratic political process, types of relationships with

²Interview by the author, March 05, 1996, tape-recording, Porto Velho.

³In several PLANAFLORO meetings at which I was present during the extension of my field work it was evident that most Indians had a poor understanding of what was being discussed and felt very annoyed by the long speeches made both NGO leaders, State and Bank officials.

⁴The local version so-called "II Grito da Terra Brasil" was organized locally by the three MSOs, and about 4,000 people carried out demonstrations in favor of land reform in Porto Velho during July/1995.

the state and Federal governments; and methods of action.(Table 7.1). A first distinction between these organizations regarding their contribution to the political and economic processes are of perceived function: advocacy versus implementers. This distinction is important, because leaders of INDIA and IPHAE explicitly rejected any direct involvement in political matters preferring instead to claim a more technical role as "problem solving experts".⁵ As Ana Maria Avelar (executive secretary of INDIA) observed:

NGOs were formed to develop models of solutions to problems in which the State was absent or had argued that were no answers. The State alone can not include all the variables of each situation occurring in Society. NGOs make these issues more clear and act to call upon the State to provide answer to these issues.⁶

This predominantly technical view of engagement that did not address reform of State institutions was rejected by

⁵I will be calling this approach "technocratic" for the rest of the chapter.

⁶Interview by the author, July 11, 1995, tape-recording, Porto Velho

Table 7.1 The major characteristics of GSOs approaches to their participation in the political process

NGO	Broader goal to pursue in the political process	Main Role in the Political-Economic Process	Orientation versus State Institutions	Methods of Action
CIMI	A more fair distribution of economic resources by the State.	Provide technical expertise and advocacy for Indian communities.	Critical collaboration	1,2, and 3
CPT	Enhanced public participation in policy-making.	Provide technical expertise and advocacy for peasants.	Critical collaboration	1,2, and 3
ECOPORE	Enhanced public participation in policy-making.	Provide technical expertise and advocacy for environmental preservation.	Critical collaboration	1, 2 and 3
INDIA	Make the State more sensitive to a broader set of social issues.	Provide technical expertise.	Co-operate	1
IPHAE	Provide a higher level of technical expertise.	Provide technical expertise.	Co-operate	1
KANINDÉ	Enhanced public participation in policy-making.	Provide technical expertise and advocacy for Indian communities.	Critical collaboration	1 and 2
PACA	Propose technical alternatives to benefit the grassroots.	Provide technical expertise.	Co-operate	1

(1) NGO networking; (2) media lobbying; (3) direct involvement in grassroots

mobilization

the leaders of the advocacy-oriented GSOs (i.e., CIMI, CPT, ECOPORÉ, KANINDÉ). Leaders of the advocacy-oriented GSOs were quick to point out their skepticism about the willingness of the political groups controlling the State apparatus to democratize their institutions in Rondônia voluntarily. Consequently they held the belief that their technical activities should be complemented by a clear commitment to increase societal participation in the formulation of public policies. Under this approach, NGOs serve to achieve greater democratization of State institutions, going beyond mere technical participation. Edvan Pinto Rios (representative of ECOPORÉ in PLANAFLORO) made the point this way:

The role of NGOs is to discuss the content of governmental policies with the population and to inform them about their rights. NGOs in Rondônia are trying to participate in the formulation of public policies, and looking to contribute positively to the planning of actions for the public sector . We want to induce the State to employ its resources in favor of the entire Society, especially in favor of those who are being disenfranchised in the political process.⁷

The second difference concerns the relation of the NGOs to State institutions. Two basic orientations appeared in the interviews. The first approach -- displayed primarily by representatives of the technically-oriented GSO's emphasized that technical cooperation and services provided to State

⁷Interview by author, July 06, 1995, tape-recording, Porto Velho

institutions were a legitimate and sufficient form of participation in the democratic political process.

The technocratic approach was openly criticized by Ivaneide Bandeira (representative of KANINDÉ in PLANAFLORO) as being conducive to political co-optation by the State. Nonetheless, José Carlos Gadelha (representative of CPT) pointed out that "the evolution of the political process in Brazil required the organizations of civil society to play a more pro-active role in the process of policy-making."

That the position held by Gadelha was incorporated by the FORUM of NGOs and its affiliates is evident in the FORUM's support for direct engagement in dealings with State institutions, especially in the process of policy-making reform. I have chosen to label this approach "critical collaboration", given stated NGO skepticism of the State. Nevertheless, under this approach, NGOs see themselves pursuing opportunities to present a broader political agenda. Moreover, NGOs would not be limited to intervening solely to address the technical aspects of policy-making. In practical terms, NGOs see themselves as establishing alliances with segments of the State institutions that have evidenced openness or commitment to social change.

A third difference among the GSOs regarding their political activity related to their methods of action. The

interviews showed that there were three basic methods of political action being utilized by these GSOs: NGO networking, media lobbying, and direct involvement in grassroots mobilization. All GSO respondents indicated that their respective organizations were involved in some form of networking with other NGOs. However, the understanding of what constituted networking varied in important ways. These variations reflected differences in the political roles of the NGOs and their desired relationship with State institutions. For example, the respondents linked to INDIA and IPHAE saw the issue of networking more as an informal and non-binding form of exchange of information among NGOs. The other GSOs, meanwhile, were attempting to establish common political strategies under the umbrella provided by the FORUM of NGOs at different scales (i.e., regional, national, and international). Nevertheless, this form of networking was seen as increasing their individual organization strength to influence the political situation at the regional level. The respondents of INDIA and of IPHAE rejected this form of networking as too restrictive, and condemned it as reflective of an unwanted politicization of the structures of the FORUM.

Most GSO respondents indicated that media lobbying was a primary tool to bring their concerns to broader public

knowledge (Table 7.1). They also agreed that free access to the headquarters of major regional and national newspapers, which are mainly located in Porto Velho, had an important place in the process of legitimizing their political actions. Increased NGO access to the press was partially explained by the structure provided by the FORUM of NGOs as a central coordination hub for press oriented efforts. Four GSO respondents declared that their organizations were also utilizing the press to articulate their political views (i.e., CIMI, CPT, ECOPORÉ, and KANINDÉ) to the public.

Finally, GSOs differed in their commitment to organizing grassroots political activities. As previously noted, respondents linked to the more "technocratic" GSOs (i.e., INDIA, IPHAE and PACA) pointed out that their array of activities did not include direct involvement in political activities organized by the MSOs and other grassroots organizations.

A different pattern was found among the advocacy-oriented GSOs. Not surprisingly, respondents for CIMI, CPT, ECOPORÉ and KANINDÉ declared their commitment to building up institutional capacity at the grassroots level as reported by interviewed representatives. All four organizations evidenced some form of involvement in the political actions carried out by the different MSOs and grassroots

organizations. Nonetheless there were important differences among them. ECOPOREÍ, for example, was involved in the process of political organization through a more professional approach. Two members of ECOPOREÍ were hired by OSR to formulate its policies in different matters. For example, the members of ECOPOREÍ were actively involved in the process of forming new local associations of rubber tappers. According to Ivandeide Bandeira, the involvement of KANINDÉ with CUNPIR was much less structured. My field observations suggested that the relationship between the leadership of KANINDÉ and CUNPIR were highly influenced by personal allegiances between its members and some of the members of CUNPIR's leadership. Therefore, the influence of KANINDÉ on the evolution of CUNPIR was not so structured as the ECOPOREÍ-OSR case⁸.

CIMI and CPT, despite their common affiliation with the Catholic church, each have adopted different models of interaction with political organizations in their respective target groups. A basic difference was that CIMI did not have representatives of the grassroots in its decision-making bodies while CPT had. In addition, according to Iremar Ferreira (representative of CIMI in PLANAFLORO), the

⁸In fact during the interviews of March 1996, it was evident that the presence of a German NGO activist (Hubert Gross) was clearly affecting the institutional understanding held leaders of CUNPIR, and steps towards higher organization were being taken by the members of the directive board of CUNPIR .

approach adopted by CIMI expressed a concern for achieving institutional neutrality in its dealings with different Indian organizations. According to Ferreira, CIMI was committed to avoid the high level of indoctrination that previously characterized the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Indian communities. As a result, CIMI centered its interactions with the Indian communities on legal advice and political education.

José Carlos Gadelha (the representative of CPT in PLANAFLORO) declared that his organization had adopted an approach similar to that of CIMI concerning respect for the autonomy of the peasants' organizations. CPT is only interested in serving as a reliable source of support for the peasants movements as a whole. This neutrality, however, was questioned by Walmir de Jesus (a labor union leader linked to the non-clerical sectors of FETAGRO's leadership) on the grounds that he believed that CPT was more interested in spreading its own political agenda. The FETAGRO critics buttress their claims by suggesting that CPT's institutional and financial support favors labor unions whose leadership is linked principally to the Catholic and Lutheran churches⁹.

⁹This view seems to be corroborated by the fact that the State Commission of CPT includes only rural leaders linked to those churches.

MSOs and their Definition of Representativeness, Political Legitimacy and Social Accountability

During the interviews, all NGO leaders were asked to define representativeness and criteria for evaluating their own political legitimacy. Among the respondents linked to three MSOs, both representativeness and political legitimacy were linked to three basic elements:

- participation of current members of a social group in the ongoing activities of the organization;
- the establishment of political agendas reflecting the claims of the social group being represented, and
- the existence of democratic channels through which the grassroots could participate in the different decision-making bodies within each organization.

The representatives of FETAGRO, OSR, and CUNPIR each claimed that their organizations possessed all three of these characteristics. Each, therefore, sought to claim political legitimacy to represent their respective memberships. However, when asked about the degree of representativeness that their organizations actually held, the leaders of FETAGRO, OSR and CUNPIR each provided different interpretations.

Joaquim Carvalho (vice-president of FETAGRO) observed that, despite efforts to formulate policies oriented to benefit all the small farmers living in Rondônia, the

organization could only claim actually to represent farmers who were formally affiliated with the local labor unions. This is an important distinction because while 52,000 families are estimated to obtain their living from agricultural activities in Rondônia (World Bank 1992), the declared membership of labor unions linked to FETAGRO is at most 20,000 individuals (Joaquim Carvalho Ibid.). Different leaders of FETAGRO and local unions acknowledged that several local labor unions were facing serious structural problems which could seriously undermine their political capabilities to stay in direct contact with the grassroots¹⁰. A consequence of this situation was the actual recognition by the interviewees that the ability of FETAGRO's leadership to be held accountable to its grassroots could be jeopardized by the lack of strong labor unions at the local (municipality) level.

Meanwhile, José Maria dos Santos (the president of OSR) presented as a testimonial to his organization's representativeness the fact that all existing local associations were affiliated with OSR¹¹. In this case a

¹⁰ During the field work, in-depth interviews with rural workers leaders included members of the following local unions: Ariquemes, Ouro Preto do Oeste, and Espigão do Oeste. In addition, internal political rivalries (especially in the FETAGRO's directing board) were also seen as a further element hindering the contact between FETAGRO and its grassroots.

¹¹ This claim also presents problems to OSR's claims of representativeness, given that at least 2 local associations (Pimenta Bueno and Ariquemes) had a very reduced membership and were facing the

similar discrepancy surfaced between potential and actual membership: there are an estimated 2,400 rubber tapper households living in Rondônia, but the total declared membership of the local associations is about 600 individuals. However, unlike the FETAGRO's interviewee, José Maria dos Santos did not present the same concerns regarding the possible effects of such a discrepancy for whom his organization could claim to represent. Furthermore, when addressing the overall accountability of the organizations to its membership, Santos cited the participation of members of OSR's directive board in meetings held by the local associations within the communities as a practical demonstration of existing mechanisms to hold leadership accountable to its grassroots. Moreover, information about the activities being organized was also being delivered to the grassroots through a radio program (*Forró no Seringal*) broadcast weekly from Porto Velho.

CUNPIR leaders claimed representativeness on the basis of the ethnic elements used to justify the organization's creation. Among these elements, Antenor Karitiana included: (1) the participation of representatives of all Indian communities in the creation of CUNPIR, and (2) the commitment of the leadership to follow the political demands

desegregation of the local rubber tapper communities. However, interviews of leaders of local associations

formulated by the different communities, and to be in constant contact with the grassroots through periodic visits to the villages. However, direct observations made during the field work indicated that several factors complicated the claims of representativeness and accountability presented by the leaders of CUNPIR.

First, some key informants informally suggested that the absence of a coherent norm of proportionality in the election of CUNPIR's leadership posed a constraint on its internal democracy. Second, the functioning of CUNPIR's democratic structure was being weakened by both relative scarcity and poor management of existing economic resources. Third, the ability of CUNPIR's leadership to maintain continuous contact with its grassroots was diminished by the lack of a strong network of local associations. Finally, as mentioned previously, historic antagonisms between different Indian communities seem also to have played a role in undermining the political unity of CUNPIR. This historical component was reinforced by the conflicting economic interests generated by the involvement of Indian leaders in the timber trade. Disagreements over access to timber resources have fostered divisions among the different communities and raised the question of whether CUNPIR can

from Guajará-Mirim, Machadinho do Oeste, and Pimenta Bueno revealed very strong support for OSR.

represent so diverse a group of Indian communities effectively¹².

GSOs and their Definition of Representativeness and Political Legitimacy

Unlike respondents linked to the MSOs who claimed representativeness to corroborate claims to political legitimacy, most GSO leaders rejected the notion that their organizations had the objective of being representative of a particular social group constituting civil society. Among the several reasons utilized to substantiate the rejection of any claim of representativeness, the GSO leaders included: 1) their small membership; 2) the social heterogeneity of their membership, and 3) their orientation to providing services and institutional support to grassroots organizations.

Nonetheless, all respondents presented some sort of claim to establish the political legitimacy of their organization to participate in the PLANAFLORO process. Further analysis of their responses revealed two basic patterns for claims of political legitimacy among the GSOs.

¹²This sort of problems can be exemplified by a dispute regarding the permanence of a technical consultant as the responsible for the Indian communities of the UNDP team. After weeks of public bickering in the press, leaders of CUNPIR (members of the Suruí and Karitiana communities) were verbally and physically confronted by members of the Gavião, Arara and Zoró communities (all actively

One view was identified among the respondents linked to the service-oriented GSOs (i.e., ECOPORÉ, IPHAE, KANINDÉ, and PACA). In this case, political legitimacy was linked to their ability 1) to produce and obtain funding for technical proposals which could benefit a large number of people, and 2) to carry out practical work among diverse social groups. A second perspective was detected among the responses provided by the church-inspired GSOs (i.e., CIMI and CPT). Both Church-related group indicated that their claims of political legitimacy were supported primarily by their historic involvement with their specific social groups (i.e., peasants and Indian communities) through both political support and service delivery. Luiz Rodrigues the FORUM's executive secretary until March 1996) clarified the context in which the positions presented by the leaders of GSOs regarding representativeness and political legitimacy were formulated. Such positions were developed by the FORUM's leadership within the necessity to diminish the political friction among its membership arising from MSO criticisms of over-representation of GSO positions in the FORUM's internal decisions¹³.

involved in the commercialization of timber) during the General Assembly of FORUM of NGOs held in Ji-Paraná on August 01, 1995.

¹³These differences were clearly exposed when FETAGRO relinquished its membership in the FORUM claiming that small GSOs had the same or greater decision-making power than social movements.

The executive secretary of INDIA,¹⁴ Ana Maria Avelar offered a different, and somewhat conspiratorial view of the issues of representativeness and political legitimacy was offered by . According to her, ongoing discussions regarding representativeness and political legitimacy were created by the State to discredit the NGOs' place in the PLANAFLORO political process. Ana Avelar reported that her organization had decided to distance itself from MSOs (e.g., OSR and its local rubber tapper associations) that characterized the initial years of their activities. Instead, Avelar suggested that the members of INDIA had decided to target the State agencies to provide their expertise¹⁵.

NGO Perspectives on their Participation in PLANAFLORO

The cleavages observed previously in the opening section of this chapter regarding the claimed roles for NGOs in the political process are also present in this section. A first element has to do with the origin and political meaning of the participation of NGOs in PLANAFLORO. Excluding the respondents for FETAGRO and KANINDÉ, all remaining interviewees believed that the official participation of NGOs in the internal decision-making bodies

¹⁴She claimed that long involvement of INDIA's experts in the policy-making process, especially in issues regarding the rubber tappers, was enough to guarantee both representativeness and political legitimacy.

of PLANAFLOORO represented an unequivocal victory for the NGO movement in Rondônia. In addition, there was also generalized belief that such inclusion was a result of the organized efforts of local and transnational NGOs, and not simply a concession by either the World Bank nor the State government.

A different perspective was offered by members of FETAGRO's Board of Directors. According to both Walmir de Jesus and Vandeir Pereira, the participation of MSOs and GSOs should be characterized more accurately as a maneuver by the World Bank to enhance the legitimacy of its economic programs rather than as a real willingness to democratize the implementation of PLANAFLOORO. This evaluation was accompanied by a belief that PLANAFLOORO had little to offer their grassroots within the scope of the program¹⁶. Nonetheless, despite these distinct interpretations concerning the origins and efficacy of NGO participation, respondents were unanimous in their view that their organization involvement represented a hedge against the repetition of the key problems faced by POLONOROESTE. Among those concerns to be avoided in their involvement in PLANAFLOORO respondents listed: the top-down technocratic

¹⁵The consequences of this position will be discussed in-depth in the sections regarding the NGOs participation in the implementation of PLANAFLOORO.

approach utilized to implement the program, the waste of funds through either corruption or poor planning, and the disregard for the social and environmental impacts created by the program's implementation.

This concern to avoid repeating the mistakes of POLONOROESTE in PLANAFLORO was clearly evidenced in the list of roles claimed by MSOs and GSOs in the process (Table 7.2). The objectives displayed by NGO respondents can be split into political (i.e., increased accountability, to "watch-dog" against corruption, and defend the interests of specific social groups) and technical (i.e., influence the technical aspects of the program, and participate in the direct implementation of components) categories. The combination of these claims reflects a FORUM-wide desire to dispel popular perception of the possible hegemony of governmental agencies in the implementation of PLANAFLORO. In most cases, respondents indicated that State hegemony in PLANAFLORO could be kept in check through a combination of internal (e.g., participation in the CD and CNPs, meetings with the World Bank missions) and external pressures (e.g., press releases to the local and national media, networking with national and transnational NGOs) on both the State and on the World Bank's management.

¹⁶Representatives of FETAGRO acknowledged on different occasions that because of such evaluation very

Among the MSOs, respondents for FETAGRO and OSR shared similar overall goals towards their participation in PLANAFLOORO. Respondents for both organizations suggested that they had entered the process to conduct a strong

Table 7.2 Perceived Roles for NGO participation in PLANAFLOORO

Type of NGO	1	2	3	4	5
CIMI	X			X	
CPT	X	X		X	
ECOPORE	X			X	
KANINDÉ	X	X		X	
INDIA	X	X			X
IPHAE	X			X	X
PACA	X				X
Umbrella					
FORUM	X			X	
MSO					
CUNPIR			X		
FETAGRO	X	X	X	X	
OSR	X	X	X	X	

-
- (1) Increase Program's Accountability
 - (2) Act as Barriers to Corruption
 - (3) Direct Defense of Interests of Social Groups
 - (4) Influence the Implementation Process
 - (5) Act as Implementers

advocacy role in both the political and technical realms.

Meanwhile the leaders of CUNPIR (despite declaring solidarity with the claims of other social groups) indicated

little effort had been done to publicize PLANAFLOORO at the grassroots' level.

that their basic objective had been to defend the interests of Indian communities. The answers provided by the GSO respondents indicated that these organizations defined more narrowly their roles in PLANAFLORO. In most cases, these interviewees of their role was restricted to trying to influence the implementation of specific components of the program and to increase its social accountability; especially the need to preclude the occurrence of corruption.

A clear source of tension among the GSOs participating in PLANAFLORO was related to their participation in the direct implementation of PLANAFLORO projects. The majority of respondents (i.e., CIMI, CPT, ECOPORÉ, KANINDÉ) shunned any direct involvement, fearing the potential loss of political autonomy that could undermine their political legitimacy. However, respondents for INDIA, IPHAE and PACA indicated that their direct involvement in the execution of the program was not only ethically correct, but that it would also reinforce the political legitimacy of other NGOs participating in PLANAFLORO. As a concrete development of the view that the participation of NGOs in the direct execution of PLANAFLORO was legitimate, members of INDIA¹⁷,

¹⁷INDIA obtained a contract with ITERON (Institute of Land of Rondônia) to carry out the study that led to the establishment of extractive reserves in Rondônia that did not follow the normal legal requirements and resulted in clear animosity among local NGOs towards its members.

IPHAE and PACA were already providing services to different State agencies, implementing specific components of PLANAFLORO¹⁸.

NGO Participation Strategies in PLANAFLORO

As discussed in chapter 4, the Terms of Understanding¹⁹ for PLANAFLORO established that the composition of Deliberative Council (CD) and Technical Commissions (CNPs) bodies would be based on equal levels of representation for both governmental and non-governmental organizations. The operation of all PLANAFLORO's governing organs begun to operate in June, 1992²⁰.

During my field interviews in July-August, 1995, I asked NGO respondents: 1) to make explicit in which PLANAFLORO's governing organs their organizations were participating, and 2) to analyze their participation in those bodies and the extent to which they had been able to fulfill the roles they had envisaged for their organizations in the process. The next section presents and examines the evidence of participation derived from my key informant interviews.

¹⁸Interestingly enough, Willem Groeneveld who provided an interview as IPHAE's key informant has left the organization to integrate the staff of consultants in the Porto Velho office of DHV.

¹⁹Signed by both State government and NGOs was in June, 1991.

²⁰Until 1995 PLANAFLORO decision-making bodies included the CD and the CNPs of Agrarian, Indian, Infrastructure, and Environment. In 1995, the CNP of Zoning was added to the structure.

The Local Approach and its Perceived Limited Efficacy

Most NGO representatives were dissatisfied with the results of their participation in the CD and CNPs. A first line of criticism was directed to former governor Oswaldo Piana and his administration whom NGOs representatives unanimously believed was not sincerely interested in allowing a real functioning of the bodies created jointly to run PLANAFLOOR. In addition to what was perceived as a lack of political willingness by the Piana administration to implement the agreement, the respondents observed that functioning of the CD and the CNPs also had been plagued by repeated occurrence of administrative problems and that they lacked real decision-making power in the program's implementation.²¹

Among other facts cited was that the allocation of program funds usually did not follow the decisions taken by either the Deliberative Council or the CNPs, and that decisions were instead taken based on the Piana administration's political priorities (Iremar Ferreira Ibid.). This perception was further enhanced by the decision of governor Raupp to remove the financial management of

²¹ The most common problems listed by the respondents were: lack of proper preparation of meetings, delays in notifying NGOs representatives about when meetings would be held, delays in delivering documents needed for technical analysis by the NGOs representatives.

PLANAFLORO from the "*Secretaria do PLANAFLORO*" (SEPLANAFLORO) -- the Secretary of PLANAFLORO-- to the "*Secretaria de Planejamento*" (SEPLAN) -- the Planning Secretary. Because of this institutional arrangement, SEPLAN had the final decision on the allocation of funds, despite not having direct participation in the program's technical preparation.

Moreover, clear animosity was displayed by most governmental technicians towards the NGO representatives who tended to respond in the same fashion. According to Iremar Ferreira (representative of CIMI) this dysfunctional environment caused most meetings held in 1992 and 1993 to become very polarized and, as a result, agreements between the two different sides were rare.

The NGOs' Internal Weaknesses

A second line of criticisms, however, is directed towards the FORUM's NGOs themselves. A first factor addressed by most respondents was that NGOs were not institutionally prepared to participate in the process (i.e., NGOs lacked infrastructure, personnel and technical expertise). Most respondents repeatedly pointed out that, because of their faulty institutional capacity, NGOs failed fully to utilize spaces which had been created for them in

the program and that their technical contribution often was of a poor quality when it occurred.

My content analysis of the minutes²² prepared by the CNPs of Agrarian and Indian Issues (Table 7.3) regarding the participation of representatives of governmental agencies and NGOs tend to corroborate these evaluations. In the CNP of Agriculture the participation of NGOs was only effective in 1992 and 1993, and they faced even greater difficulties to participate effectively in the Indian CNP²³. Moreover, the minutes for both CNPs indicate that discussions were centered on the approval of POAs (Annual Operative Plans)²⁴. Several NGO leaders suggested that predominance of POAs in CNPs' activities had two major drawbacks. First, NGOs did not have any control of the POAs' design which was entirely done by the governmental agencies. Second, according to Iremar Ferreira (representative of CIMI in the Indian CNP), the technical preparation of POAs by governmental agencies was always behind schedule. As a result, there was very little time for a critical analysis of its contents by NGO representatives. According to Iremar Ferreira of CIMI, NGO representatives often felt compelled to approve the closed

²²Minutes are legal documents prepared by the CNP's secretary that describes discussions and decisions occurred an ordinary meeting of that governing organ. Despite having made contacts with secretaries of all CNPs, I only obtained access to the minutes of these two CNPs.

²³This situation seemed to be repeated in the CNPs of Environment and Infrastructure.

packet presented by the governmental agencies because otherwise they would risk blame for the lack of implementation.

A second and important factor raised by different respondents was the perceived lack of a common agenda among the NGOs to guide their respective participation in PLANAFLORO. Joaquim Carvalho (vice-president of FETAGRO) suggested that the NGOs lacked a common response for the

Table 7.3 Number of meetings held by Normative Program Commissions in which the State or NGOs had the majority of votes, votes were tied, or meetings lacked quorum

Year	Agriculture				Indian			
	State	NGOs	Tied	Lacked quorum	State	NGOs	Tied	Lacked quorum
1992	6	0	3	0	9	0	0	0
1993	6	0	5	1	8	0	3	5
1994	12	0	1	0	4	0	0	0
1995	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Total	25	0	9	1	22	0	3	5

type of economic development projects being presented by the governmental agencies. Similarly, Luiz Rodrigues (the FORUM's executive secretary) acknowledged that the organization's work commissions gradually became adapted to

²⁴ POAs are basically composed of a list of activities to be undertaken by governmental agencies in a given component, each lists the total of funds necessary to implement it.

the internal structure of PLANAFLORO. Therefore, the FORUM's commissions were left incapable of producing a common agenda to guide NGO participation in the program.

Meanwhile, Mara Carneiro²⁵ indicated that NGOs also made tactical mistakes, especially in the selection of the CNPs in which they should participate more intensively. For example, while most NGOs had selected representatives for the CNPs of Environment and Agriculture, the CNP of Infrastructure was left with a robust majority of governmental agencies in which IPHAE was basically the sole participating NGO. According to Carneiro, it was a clear mistake given that the bulk of the funds spent during the initial three years of PLANAFLORO were heavily concentrated in POAs prepared by the CNP of Infrastructure.

Finally, Ireomar Ferreira (CIMI's representative) suggested that the intensive workload imposed by participation in the program's governing organs had caused negative impacts on his organization's ability to continue its work at the grassroots level. Similar concerns were expressed by respondents linked to the three MSOs (i.e., FETAGRO, OSR, and CUNPIR).

²⁵Representative of IPHAE in the CNP of Infrastructure. Interview by author, March 06, 1996, tape-recording, Porto Velho.

The Internationalization of PLANAFLORO: Building a Coalition with National and Transnational NGOs to Pressure the World Bank

The perception among NGO leaders that they were not effective partners in PLANAFLORO generated a major development after the end of 1993. The FORUM started to assume a more prominent role in lobbying activities aimed at both the governmental agencies and World Bank management. As a result, control of NGO participation in PLANAFLORO became more concentrated in the FORUM's internal structure. This control occurred either through the executive secretary -- which included external consultants -- or through the working commissions. The different documents developed by the FORUM lobbying for changes in the implementation of the program are a good example of the results of this phenomenon. Despite being signed by most of the NGO representatives participating in PLANAFLORO, most documents were prepared either by the executive secretary or by hired consultants. This trend was further enhanced by the better financial conditions granted to the FORUM by funding obtained from different transnational NGOs (e.g., WWF/Sweden and OXFAM/Brazil) and by location of its headquarters in Porto Velho which permitted the FORUM's leadership to be in

direct contact with both government and World Bank officials.

After 1994, transnational NGOs²⁶ --whose funds and networking capabilities greatly exceeded those existing among the local NGOs-- became increasingly involved in the affairs of PLANAFLORO both directly and indirectly. Examples of direct participation in the local affairs of PLANAFLORO included participation of WWF/Brazil in the COMAI (Independent Committee of Evaluation of PLANAFLORO), as well as the participation of members of OXFAM/UK and Friends of the Earth/Brazil in a meeting held in May, 1996 in which local NGOs, State government and World Bank officials agreed on a new format for PLANAFLORO.²⁷ Moreover, the national and transnational NGOs also have been actively involved in PLANAFLORO indirectly. First, WWF/Brazil and WWF/Sweden have provided institutional support to the FORUM (i.e., funds and policy guidance) which was clearly reflected in the request for an investigation of PLANAFLORO delivered to the Inspection Panel of the World Bank in June, 1995 (Luiz Rodrigues de Oliveira Ibid.). Friends of Earth/Brazil was not only instrumental in the preparation of that document but also in publicizing its delivery to the Panel in both

²⁶National NGOs include Friends of the Earth/Brazil, OXFAM/Brazil, WWF/Brazil. Transnational NGOs include EDF, CIEL (Center of International Environmental Law), OXFAM/UK, and WWF/Sweden.

²⁷ This agreement will be further discussed in the concluding section of this chapter.

the national and international press and also on the internet. Second, transnational NGOs, especially OXFAM/UK, lobbied the Board of Directors of the World Bank to approve the request for an investigation of PLANAFLORO.

Direct participation of national and transnational NGOs in PLANAFLORO seems to have had several consequences for local NGO autonomy. First, it seems to have strengthened the internal political cleavages observed among local NGOs. For example, leaders of FETAGRO and INDIA -- despite their very distinct political profiles -- shared a similar view regarding the role occupied by the FORUM in PLANAFLORO. According to these leaders, the FORUM had become an autonomous entity with a self-designated political agenda defined mainly by the interests of national and transnational NGOs. Second, there were indications that transnational NGOs acted to maintain local NGO involvement in PLANAFLORO. It was a fact that, despite the clear animosity of most NGO leaders towards the continuation of NGOs' participation in PLANAFLORO, FORUM's leadership showed no inclination to withdraw from the process. Representatives of transnational NGOs acted to persuade local NGOs to maintain their participation in the project. It was done either through direct staff visits to Rondônia or by continuous long-distance phone calls and correspondence.

Despite denials by the FORUM's leadership of the involvement of transnational NGOs in the direct formulation of policies for PLANAFLORO, I obtained a copy of a fax from WWF/Sweden to the executive secretary of the FORUM where it was stated that the FORUM ought to pursue a set of actions which WWF/Sweden perceived as necessary to improve the participation of local NGOs in PLANAFLORO. Moreover, leaders of FETAGRO stated they were constantly contacted by the official from WWF/Sweden urging them to have a more conciliatory approach towards the FORUM. Third, the direct involvement of transnational NGOs transferred the political pressure on the World Bank's management from the local level to the Bank's headquarters in Washington DC. It was clearly demonstrated in the mechanisms adopted by the NGOs to present the request for an investigation of PLANAFLORO. Therefore, the alliance with transnational NGOs was perceived by the FORUM's leadership as a tool to provide more leverage for the participation of local NGOs in the decisions affecting PLANAFLORO's execution. The standing or salience obtained by PLANAFLORO in the national and international press was cited as an indicator of the relative success of this strategy.

In addition, there was a more complex effect of this cooperation with national and transnational NGOs. Most

respondents recognized that NGO participation in the program's governing organs had lost its initial priority. Luiz Rodrigues (the FORUM's executive secretary) recognized that the NGOs were not pursuing the initial model of participation (e.g., throughout 1995, most CNPs had rarely met) which they deemed as inefficient. Rodrigues suggested that negotiations with the Rondônia state government and World Bank officials were following a more informal path where the FORUM was the NGOs' leading interlocutor.

The NGOs views on the role played by the World Bank in PLANAFLORO

As discussed in chapter 4, the World Bank was very influential not only in the decision to allow the participation of NGOs in PLANAFLORO, but it also generated the model of participation adopted by the program. Nevertheless, the World Bank's management (especially the members of its staff directly involved in the field operations in Rondônia) was portrayed by most NGO representatives, at best, as an unreliable partner in their efforts to influence the execution of PLANAFLORO.

A first major set of problems was related to what NGO representatives perceived as Bank management's lack of real commitment to enforce the execution of PLANAFLORO according

to design. NGO representatives suggested that a major political problem was that the Bank's management seemed to treat PLANAFLORO as an effort to make-up for the negative effects of POLONOROESTE. Because of that, management had displayed a very lenient attitude toward the continuous lack of progress in the implementation of PLANAFLORO by governmental agencies.

A second set of problems involved the relationship between governmental agencies and NGOs in the program's governing organs. According to most NGO representatives, the World Bank missions showed a consistent tendency only to listen to the State's side. According to Iremar Ferreira (representative of CIMI) NGOs only began to be directly consulted after a letter sent by the FORUM to the Bank's Board of Directors in June, 1994 denouncing the problems occurring in the program's implementation. This preference demonstrated by management was taken by most NGO representatives as a demonstration that their participation was only a smoke-screen by the World Bank to enhance its political legitimacy with the tax-payers in the developed countries, especially in the United States.

Regarding the most important challenge presented by the NGO movement to the Bank's handling of PLANAFLORO, most respondents indicated that the Bank's management willingly

played an important part in preventing an investigation of PLANAFLORO as requested by the NGOs. Management's efforts were seen as yet another demonstration that the participation of civil society in PLANAFLORO represented rather cosmetic than effective changes in the Bank's implementation of its sponsored projects.

Conclusion

Charlton and May (1995) suggest that the insertion of NGOs into the policy and program cycles of governments and their donors is useful to these organizations. Charlton and May argue that such an insertion allows NGOs to strengthen their roles as policy mediators and service providers. The results of NGO integration into PLANAFLORO's governing organs, and in some cases in its implementation, seem to indicate that simple insertion is no guarantee that NGOs can successfully play those roles. An initial problem is that NGOs entered the process with different conceptions of what their roles were going to be. Second, there were clear institutional weaknesses among the NGOs. They lacked financial stability and skilled staff to carry out a thorough participation in the program's governing organs. As result, NGOs faced structural difficulties to follow the daily activities of PLANAFLORO, which remained mostly under

the State's control. Third, most NGOs (both MSOs and GSOs) did not establish reliable mechanisms of accountability about their participation in the program for their target clientele. The situation was especially precarious for most GSOs because the bulk of these organizations did not have any formal mechanism of contact with the grassroots (the exceptions being CIMI and CPT). However, to a certain extent, it was also true among the MSOs. The MSO leaders also recognized that their organizations had only weakly engaged their membership in discussions about PLANAFLORO. In the case of CUNPIR it reflected that organization overall institutional weakness. In the cases of OSR and FETAGRO, however, the causes of poor accountability seemed to be located in the differential strength of local unions and associations.

The institutional weaknesses were further enhanced by the different political evaluations among the members of the NGO sector on what were precisely the roles for their respective organizations in PLANAFLORO. An important element of differentiation was the decision to become directly involved in the execution of the program. As discussed previously, the service-provider GSOs (e.g., INDIA, IPHAE) were clearly pursuing executive roles in the program. The service-providers rejected the notion adopted by most of the

other NGOs that the major role to be occupied was one of the advocacy and policy-making. The institutional weakness of individual NGOs also led to growth in the influence of the FORUM of NGOs in the decision-making process of PLANAFLORO. The fact that the FORUM obtained funds and policy guidance from national and transnational NGOs raised its institutional capabilities, and transformed the role played by the FORUM from simple networking to a more normative one. This evolution resulted in a self-imposed alienation of NGOs that did not agree with a more prominent role for the FORUM in the process (e.g., FETAGRO, INDIA and IPHAE). Finally, the fact is that the FORUM did not itself have any direct mechanisms of accountability with the grassroots (the FORUM itself depends on its affiliates to establish this type of interaction). This limitation further hampered the possibilities of raising the awareness among the program's beneficiaries over the problems faced by the NGOs in PLANAFLORO. Moreover, it seem to have contributed to the emergence of NGO leadership elites via FORUM and PLANAFLORO. Therefore, NGO participation in regional development worked to further distance NGOs from their constituencies.

Finally, most NGO leaders expressed a belief that their participation had suffered from a lack of institutional commitment from the State and the World Bank to the

partnership professed by PLANAFLORO's governing organs. Interestingly, the interviews revealed two different types of frustration. A first type was directed against the State. Most NGO leaders deemed the State as the major obstacle to their participation because of its supposed unwillingness to accept a greater policy-making role for NGOs in the program's governing organs. Second, NGO leaders believed the Bank unduly lenient towards the State's lack of commitment to both the program's execution and NGO involvement in the process. Regardless of the extent of the political difficulties, there are indications that this relatively low level of trust served to slow down the process of institutional learning for the NGO sector. Most NGO leaders acknowledged that delays in the process institutional learning served to make more difficult their participation in PLANAFLORO's governing organs.