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# ***Interaction between public policies and local dynamics of family farming in the Portal of the Amazon Territory - Mato Grosso***

**Eric Sabourin**

CIRAD, Umr ART Dev, MUSE – Montpellier– França  
ORCID: [orcid.org/0000-0002-1171-2535](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1171-2535)

**José Alesandro Rodrigues**

Secretaria Municipal de Meio Ambiente e Desenvolvimento Sustentável – Alta Floresta – MT – Brasil  
ORCID: [orcid.org/0000-0002-9263-0696](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9263-0696)

**Patrick Caron**

CIRAD, Umr ART Dev, Université de Montpellier– França  
ORCID: [0000-0002-8494-2243](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8494-2243)

## **Abstract**

Family farming represents one of the main social and economic groups in northern Mato Grosso. Understanding the interaction between public policies and local and regional dynamics that affect this economic sector is of fundamental importance to identify the gaps and problems of political and operational order that hinder the development of the region. This study aims to analyze the local impact and appropriation of public policies related to rural development by family production and social actors in the territory called Portal da Amazônia, which covers 16 municipalities located in northern Mato Grosso. To this end, the classic instruments of public policy for family production (credit policies, technical assistance rural extension and support for marketing or product qualification) are compared with new participatory instruments of public policy (federal government programs that value environmental management and sustainable production). Mainly, their scale of action differentiates these two groups of public policies: the first has a more individual nature, associated with the owner of the plot, and the second has a territorial scope, applied to a group of municipalities. The results show a problematic and deficient application of the classic instruments, particularly credit and technical assistance, which hinders environmental management and encourages unsustainable production practices, although there is potential for diversification of technical assistance and rural extension (ATER). The new territory-based public policy instruments, such as Sustainable Rural Life, have provided important spaces for innovation and farmer organization, as well as greater interaction with local civil society. These new instruments have strengthened the recognition and importance of family production for the region's economy, encouraging it

to seek to improve its production. A strengthened, organized and collectively operating family production is essential for the promotion of rural development based on sustainable production that respects the environment and provides a more equal distribution of income.

**Key words:** Territorial development, sustainability, public policies, family farming, local dynamics, Mato Grosso, Brazil.

### **Interação entre políticas públicas e dinâmicas locais da agricultura familiar no Território do Portal da Amazônia - Mato Grosso**

#### **Resumo**

A agricultura familiar representa um dos principais grupos sociais e econômicos no norte do Mato Grosso. Entender a interação entre as políticas públicas e as dinâmicas locais e regionais que afetam esse setor econômico é de fundamental importância para identificar as lacunas e os problemas de ordem política e operacional que dificultam o desenvolvimento da região. Este estudo visa analisar o impacto local e a apropriação das políticas públicas relacionadas ao desenvolvimento rural pela produção familiar e por atores sociais do território denominado Portal da Amazônia, que abrange 16 municípios situados no norte de Mato Grosso. Para tal foram comparados os instrumentos clássicos de política pública para a produção familiar (políticas de crédito, assistência técnica e extensão rural e apoio à valorização econômica ou à qualificação dos produtos), com novos instrumentos participativos de políticas públicas (programas do governo federal que valorizam a gestão ambiental e a produção sustentável). Esses dois grupos de políticas públicas se diferenciam principalmente pela escala de atuação: o primeiro tem cunho mais individual, associado ao dono do lote, e o segundo tem abrangência territorial, aplicado a um grupo de municípios. Os resultados demonstram uma aplicação problemática e deficiente dos instrumentos clássicos, em particular o crédito e a assistência técnica, o que dificulta a gestão ambiental e incentiva práticas produtivas pouco sustentáveis, embora com um potencial de diversificação da assistência técnica e extensão rural (ATER). Os novos instrumentos de políticas públicas com base no território, como o Vida Rural Sustentável têm proporcionado espaços importantes de inovação e organização dos agricultores, assim como uma maior interação com a sociedade civil local. Esses novos instrumentos têm fortalecido o reconhecimento e a importância da produção familiar para a economia da região, incentivando a mesma a buscar a melhoria de sua produção. Uma produção familiar fortalecida, organizada e atuando de forma coletiva é fundamental para a promoção de um desenvolvimento rural que seja baseado na produção sustentável, que respeite o meio ambiente e propicie uma distribuição de renda mais igualitária.

**Palavras chaves:** Desenvolvimento territorial, sustentabilidade, políticas públicas, agricultura familiar, dinâmicas locais, Mato Grosso, Brasil.

### **Interacción entre las políticas públicas y las dinámicas locales de la agricultura familiar en el Portal del Territorio Amazónico - Mato Grosso**

#### **Resumen**

La agricultura familiar representa uno de los principales grupos sociales y económicos del norte de Mato Grosso. Comprender la interacción entre las políticas públicas y las dinámicas locales y regionales que afectan a este sector económico es fundamental para identificar las carencias y los problemas políticos y operativos que obstaculizan el desarrollo de la región. Este artículo tiene como objetivo analizar el impacto local y la apropiación de las políticas públicas relacionadas con el desarrollo rural por parte de la producción familiar y los actores sociales en el territorio denominado Portal da Amazônia, que abarca 16 municipios ubicados en el norte de Mato Grosso. Para ello, se compararon los instrumentos clásicos de política pública para la producción familiar (políticas de crédito, asistencia técnica y extensión rural y apoyo a la valorización económica o calificación de productos) con los nuevos

instrumentos participativos de política pública (programas del gobierno federal que valoran la gestión ambiental y la producción sostenible). Estos dos grupos de políticas públicas difieren principalmente en su escala de actuación: el primero tiene un carácter más individual, asociado al propietario de la parcela, y el segundo tiene un alcance territorial, aplicado a un conjunto de municipios. Los resultados muestran una aplicación problemática y deficiente de los instrumentos clásicos, en particular el crédito y la asistencia técnica, que obstaculiza la gestión medioambiental y fomenta las prácticas de producción no sostenibles, aunque existe un potencial de diversificación de la asistencia técnica y la extensión rural (ATER). Los nuevos instrumentos de política pública basados en el territorio, como la Vida Rural Sostenible, han proporcionado importantes espacios para la innovación y la organización de los agricultores, así como una mayor interacción con la sociedad civil local. Estos nuevos instrumentos han reforzado el reconocimiento y la importancia de la producción familiar para la economía de la región, animándoles a tratar de mejorar su producción. Una producción familiar fortalecida, organizada y de funcionamiento colectivo es fundamental para promover un desarrollo rural basado en una producción sostenible que respete el medio ambiente y proporcione una distribución más igualitaria de los ingresos.

**Palabras-clave:** Desarrollo territorial, sustentabilidad, políticas públicas, agricultura familiar, dinámicas locales, Mato Grosso, Brasil.

## Introduction

This article addresses the interactions between public policies and the dynamics of local actors in the rural territory of Portal da Amazônia, in the north of the state of Mato Grosso. The results come from a study conducted between 2006 and 2011 within the framework of the Diálogos project<sup>1</sup>. The study responded to two distinct demands. The first refers to the need to systematize knowledge about the application and effects of public policies dedicated to family farming and, in particular, rural territorial policies: the National Program for Territorial Development (PRONAT), the Territories of Citizenship Program (PTC) and the Program for the Strengthening of Family Farming (PRONAF). The second concerns the demands of social and institutional actors involved in rural development in this territory.

The general problem is related to the impacts and effects of public policies on local dynamics and local and regional transformations of family farming (Sabourin, 2002 & 2015; Silva et al, 2009; Grisa et al, 2014; Grisa & and Schneider, 2014; Favareto, 2010; Porto, 2015). The study also intended to point to the challenges of sustainability linked to the implementation of public policies for territorial rural development and support for family farming in the context of environmental controversies in the Amazon Portal.

From the research point of view, the study contributes to answering three questions: i) what is the impact of public and private policies on family farming in rural territories. ii) what are the interactions between actors for the application or elaboration of public policy instruments and their modalities? iii) how to privilege the action of institutions in spaces of dialogue for the construction of sustainable

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territorial development processes recognized by public authorities and private actors or civil society?

From the point of view of the agricultural actors of Portal da Amazônia, these questions translated into the following challenges: i) how and in what ways can the local dynamics and the initiatives of organized civil society help think about the renewal of public policy instruments?; ii) what are the first effects of the new, more participatory and territorialized public policy instruments such as PRONAT and PTC?

The article examines the interactions between these public policies and local dynamics, with particular focus on the implementation processes of the policies, the content of their instruments and the interaction devices with the population and local organizations, whether normative, participatory or consultation.

Public policies increasingly appear as social constructions, resulting from collective action processes that associate different categories of public and private actors (Callon *et al*, 2001, Dagnino, 2002). In fact, thinking about interactions has become necessary due to the growing segmentation or fragmentation of instruments and norms, as well as the target publics of various policies for the same sector (Avritzer, 2007 and 2009). In Brazil, these various types of public policy design and implementation were promoted, experimented with, and applied in the framework of the national rural territorial development policy between 2003 and 2016 (Sabourin, 2015; Porto, 2015).

The notion of public action allows us to better characterize the complexity of public interventions in the case of rural development in a country like Brazil. Public action corresponds to the set of effects, not necessarily predictable and coherent, resulting from interactions between interdependent institutions, between the agents of these institutions and a number of social actors interested in 'political decisions', and between these actors and the rulers (Lagroye *et al*, 2002). The relationship between public policy and public action is marked precisely by the fragmentation of the seats of power, the possibility of confrontation between policies, and the renewal of the processes of public decision management - consultation, mediation (Dagnino and Tatagiba, 2010). Public actions are more numerous when the state is polycentric or decentralized (Duran, 1999).

In fact, the separation between sectoral public policies and between the municipal, state and federal scales also corresponds to the necessary autonomy of each of the three levels of the State among themselves and of the State in general vis-à-vis the pressures of private interests. However, at the territorial or regional scale, a minimum degree of articulation is necessary, both in terms of the design of the instruments and in terms of the implementation modalities.

By *social dynamics* we understand the processes conducted by more or less organized social groups, through social movements and/or local dynamics, as a function of common practices, rules, norms, associated to common representations and/or values, and through forms of mobilization or collective action (Crozier & Friedberg, 1997; Touraine, 1996).

We consider *local dynamics* the processes of change that take place on a local scale (communities, settlements, districts, municipalities, hydrographic basin, consortia of municipalities) and that, precisely, depend on the environmental, social, cultural and political specificities of the region. These dynamics can involve

economic agents, firms, social groups and movements, civil society and its organizations, political-administrative bodies or local public services.

The hypothesis of this paper is that the design and implementation of specific public policies for family farming result from negotiations between the State and professional farmers' organizations. However, in the case of federal policies, the level of development (national) does not correspond to the level of implementation (local, state). There are therefore different configurations for the implementation of the same policy. The specific hypothesis in terms of the search for territorial sustainability is that there is less risk of a gap between the definition and application of public policy when it has been negotiated, including through conflicts, within regional forums, territorial councils or technical or thematic commissions.

The study was centered around three objects: i) characterize *the local and social dynamics of family farming* (history, actors and organizations, trajectory, representations and main activities); ii) analyze the *classic public policy instruments for family farming* (Credit, ATER - Technical Assistance and Rural Extension, product valorization/SEBRAE - Entrepreneur and Small Business Support Agency); iii) characterize the new instruments of the Ministry of the Environment (MMA) and the Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA) : the National Rural Environmental Management Project (GESTAR), the Program for Alternatives to Deforestation and Burning (PADEQ) and the National Program for Sustainable Development of Rural Territories (PDSTR) of the MDA's Secretariat for Territorial Development.

This work was developed in three stages. The first corresponded to the delimitation of the scope of the study. Meetings were held and visits made to the municipalities of Alta Floresta, Carlinda, Terra Nova and Nova Guarita, all located in the Amazon Gateway. A presentation of the methodological proposal was made to the local technical team and the entities of the Executive Council of Family Farming Actions of the territory of the Amazon Portal (CEAAF) in Alta Floresta and Terra Nova. The second step was to collect secondary data from various governmental and non-governmental institutions and to conduct individual interviews with key actors (technical assistance, farmers, social movements, mayors, secretaries etc.), mainly in Cuiabá and Alta Floresta. The third stage corresponded to the treatment and synthesis of information around the main public policy instruments.

The criteria for analysing the interaction between public policies and local dynamics consisted essentially of the modalities of implementation and application of public policies at the local scale and their modes of appropriation by farmers and their organisations.

## **1 Local dynamics marked by the colonization process in the Amazon**

The results are presented in three subsections: the local dynamics of the territory and the evolution of civil society organizations; traditional agricultural policies and their impact on family farming; and new policy instruments for family farming.

## 1.1 Local dynamics and civil society organisations

### *An agricultural colonization for timber and livestock*

Portal da Amazônia is, above all, a region of private and public settlements with a common history, but with specific limitations and differentials from one municipality to another, precisely as a function of the conditions and modalities of the colonization and settlement system.

In general, the local authorities have not overcome the consequences and sequels of this occupation process, marked by a great lack, not only of infrastructure, but above all, of support services and adapted methods.

Starting in 1978, an already colonizing population from northern Paraná and eastern São Paulo arrived in the Alta Floresta region, aiming to make a fortune and return to the south of the country. Few returned, or did so as poorly as they arrived (figure 1 and figure 2).

The military government's propaganda - "Integrate so as not to hand over" - determined an occupation colonization of the frontier, which was precisely handed over to colonizing companies, such as INDECO in the Alta Floresta region. The first commitment was not exactly with agricultural production, much less with the production of small farmers. What was important was to occupy and open the frontier and at the same time limit conflicts in Paraná with small farmers expelled by the hydroelectric plants. The main activity was therefore the careless exploitation of timber.

Due to poor or badly adapted soils and the choice of badly adapted crops (coffee, cocoa), the initial agricultural project failed and was replaced by the almost immediate alternative of mining from 1979/1980 onwards, but the same extractivist and predatory spirit prevailed.

Small farmers started to increase their production of rice, corn and sugar cane, initially intended for self-consumption, to supply the mines and the cities, in particular Alta Floresta. Between 1980 and 1984, because of the so-called gold boom, Alta Floresta reached a population of 180,000. Today, there are only for 59,000 inhabitants in the municipality.

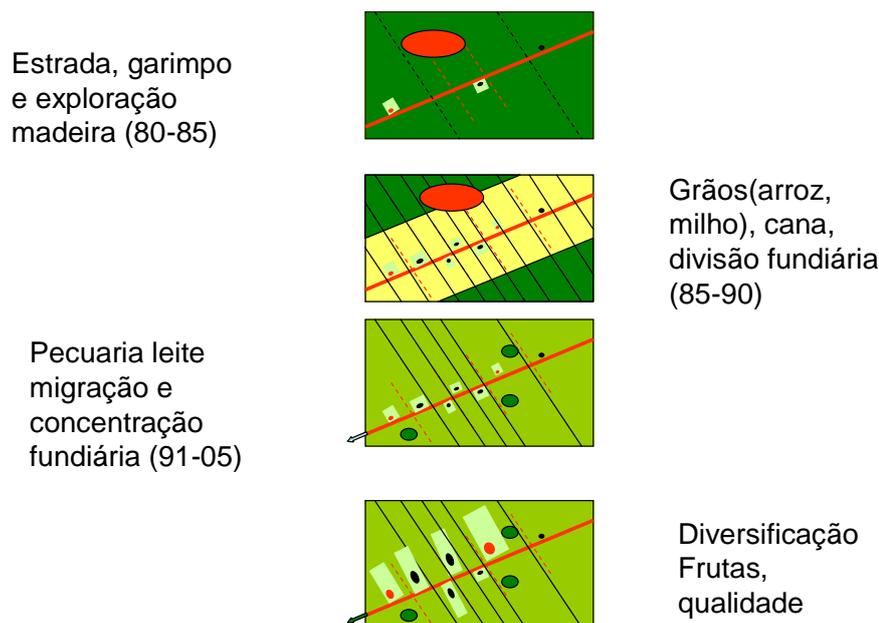
The first agrarian reform settlements took place in 1984 according to the Incra-Cac model (the Cotia Agricultural Cooperative model, implemented by the National Institute for Colonization and Agrarian Reform), a type of model cooperative, with an integrated plan. However, after the failure of the crops due to lack of market (with the end of garimpo), perennial cropping systems were promoted. Priority was given to coffee and cocoa, which have proven to be poorly adapted to the soils of the region. There was also the bankruptcy, due to mismanagement, of the cooperative that assured technical assistance and marketing, in a context of great difficulty in accessing the market. Finally, dairy farming imposed itself as the only way out.

The dairy specialization of family farming represented, concretely and symbolically, a break with the extractivist model, a more complex form of intensification of capital and family labor, but also of pastures. In a way, it corresponds to a process of settlement of the colonizing front, stabilization of the

agricultural frontier and the permanence of investment in their enterprises by family farmers.

The expansion of milk production was made possible by the establishment of small dairies: Lactivit in Alta Floresta, Primo in Colider, Marajoara in Nova Canaã, in Guarantã do Norte and, finally, Coopernova in Terra Nova, which became a reference for the organization of producers through its actions. Currently, milk production has reached Nova Bandeirante and Apiacás, after the coffee crisis and the end of gold mining.

Figure 1: **Trajectory of the União settlement (municipality of Nova Guarita)** in Duheron 2006



Trajatória de desenvolvimento da Comunidade União, Nova Guarita - MT  
P Caron, 2006

### **Family farming organizations**

Cooperation within family farming is still limited. For example, mutual aid in the settlements was reduced. In a way, this type of collaboration was more important at the beginning of the settlements and was more linked to the tradition with crops than with livestock. The dairies themselves did not foster improvements in organization, except indirectly, through the CMDRs and, more recently, through the GESTAR project of the Ministry of the Environment's Secretariat of Policies for Sustainable Development.

The forms of organisation of family farmers associated with the colonisation process have not had much success. They correspond to the image of the settlers: individualistic and distrustful, dreaming of making money quickly to return to Paraná, without investing in collective action. The associations and cooperatives created by the colonizers or INCRA remained only as formal structures of credit

intermediation or storage, without a spirit of cooperation. Mutual aid was mobilised at first, in the form of exchanging per diems for deforestation, and soon disappeared.

The associations functioned at least to maintain a rice husker in each settlement nucleus, which today in Carlinda is emptied. These organizational structures have not been adapted for milk (transport, tanks or processing). The milk cooling tanks are individual.

### ***The main actors of local dynamics and their strategies***

#### ***The social movements of the Portal of the Amazon***

In the Portal of the Amazon region, there is no social movement on a regional or territorial scale (according to Figure 2). All have a more localized action, and the main organizations are linked to the Catholic Church (Pastoral Land Commission - CPT and Pastoral of Rural Youth - PJR, action of nuns etc.) and the Adventist Church (in the Agrarian Reform settlements and in the new cooperatives).

The settlement system planned for every 5 km a church, a school and a community hall. Today only the churches remain. Many associations functioned only to operate the machine to dehusk the rice. The most historically active movement in family farming in the region was PJR, created more than 15 years ago, with the arrival of more progressive priests, heirs of liberation theology. The Catholic Church strengthened its implantation and its weight by acting, through the CPT, alongside or in defence of small farmers in many cases of land conflicts (Carlinda, Novo Mundo, Guarantã do Norte, Apiacás, Nova Bandeirantes). The initial mission of RYVM, which may explain its relative political freedom, was to work to keep young rural settlers in the countryside. Today, RYM has evolved to defend a renewed peasant project, alongside the MPA (Small Farmers' Movement) and the MMC (Peasant Women's Movement), both linked to Via Campesina.

Today family farmers are more or less represented by three movements that have successively established themselves in the region.

The oldest is the Rural Union (SR) of Alta Floresta, which historically also involves smallholders and has always defended specific projects for family farming, even if it was in a relationship of compromise and alliance with the employer area. The most recent project is the Sustainable Rural Life settlement, a system of farms or condominiums dedicated to diversified family production on the outskirts of Alta Floresta. Therefore, the Alta Floresta SR had the particularity of being a member of the Territorial Council of Family Farming, before the Rural Workers Union (STR) of the same municipality (created later) itself.

This paradoxical example explains the relative weakness of the rural workers' unions linked to the Contag, which were organized at the end of the 1980s until 1995. There is a recent attempt to constitute a union pole. The most active STRs are those of Nova Monteverde, Nova Santa Helena, Nova Bandeirantes and Guarantã do Norte. The federation of agricultural workers of the state of Mato Grosso has a weak image in the region and is accused of easily colluding with the economic and political power of agribusiness.

Figure 2: **Trajectory of Social Movements in the Amazon Gateway**

YEARS	Situation or Events and changes	Social movements	Consequences
1950 /1960	Primary forest, Indians and squatters.	Alta Floresta is a district	Aripuanã Municipality
1973	Indeco Colonization Company Settlement of northern settlers	Church + school Cooperative	Only org. of civil society church and agricultural cooperative
1975			
1978			
1979	PJR Home gold mining Mining boom	Emancipation of the municipality Alta Floresta	Population flows from NE MA and the south
1980			
1988			
1989	Mining decadence Collor Government Gold/\$	Coop COTIA Church, CPT, STR, PJR Land invasion Bankruptcy gold	Start claiming Unemployment, crisis Dollarization
1990			
1993-95			
1997	INCRA/Cotia Settlement		S. Rural and STR
1999	PRONAF	Agri family economic option	More weight from AF/Contag
2000	Sustainable rural development (Gov + International NGO, WWF)	Org new cooperatives Coopernova etc Creation of CMDR's	Home Territorial dynamics
2001/2002			
2003	Unemat Academic Center	Creation of local NGOs : ICV, etc.	Participatory, environmental and agro ecology projects Creation CEAAF
2004	AF/Agroenvironmental ecology		
2005	Gov LULA, MDA, SDT	MPA Via Campesina entrance	Creation Mov. Peasant Women
	Gestar Project	Portal Territory Project and	
	New found land,	CMDRS Support Colider women's association	

Finally, the movements linked to the Via Campesina area are more recent in the region, but have been occupying a growing space. Bringing together the MPA, MST, CPT, PJR, MMC, these movements manage to promote local and regional forums and are active with young settlers. They fight to offer an alternative to the monopoly of EMPAER and private consultants in terms of rural extension and technical assistance for family farming through the Associação dos Pequenos Agricultores Matogrossense (APAM) and with specific projects in cooperation with other entities (Unemat, PJR/FNMA, accreditation for environmental extension around the Cristalino Park, etc.).

The MST (Movement of Landless Rural Workers) is more localized in Colíder and Nova Guarita, through its cooperative of technicians.

The CPT and PJR have a strong presence in seven municipalities of the Gateway, promote an embryonic youth cooperative (with 450 members), and develop partnerships with UNEMAT and NGOs for income-generating projects (Unemat research, Fapemat, MDC). The Via Campesina has a grassroots organization in 10 municipalities of the Gateway through PJR, MST, CPT, MPA or MMC.

### **Other local dynamics**

- *Linked to the action of cooperatives:* From 1994/1995, new cooperatives, by sector or by chain, such as those of milk, were created as a consequence of the bankruptcy of the first cooperatives linked to coffee production, which had generally been managed by private interests, such as Comovi (pasteurized milk) and Coopeverde (Coop Mista de Ouro Verde). Coopernova was the first cooperative constituted from the base, then it was Cooperagrepa's turn. Cooperagrepa is composed of 300 organic producers, distributed in nine municipalities, gathered in 16 condominiums. Each condominium brings together producers of the same product. The guaraná condominium has 14 producers in the municipality of Nova Santa Helena (Vila Atlântica). There are some producers in Marcelândia that are not cooperated and others, in greater number, located outside the study area (Xingu Basin), but comprised in the territory known as Portal of the Amazon in the municipality of Alta Floresta, Guarantã do Norte and Matupá.

- *Linked to the actions of municipal governments:* Among the most active municipal governments in supporting family farming are Alta Floresta, Nova Santa Helena, Colíder, Nova Bandeirante and Nova Monte Verde. In these municipalities, in recent years (since 1997/1998) the creation of Municipal Councils for Sustainable Rural Development (CMDRS) has led to a local territorial dynamic marked by interaction between the municipalities and social movements (in particular the STRs), including through conflicts.

## **2. Traditional agricultural policies and their impact on family farming**

### **2.1 Rural credit**

For the development of family farming in the Portal territory, credit is considered by all interlocutors as an indispensable instrument. The social movements recall how the PRONAF programme (Programa Nacional de Fortalecimento da Agricultura Familiar) was obtained after a long claim by farmers. They also recognize various shortcomings in its application and local and state management, which makes the programme one of the main obstacles to strengthening family farming. In fact, in the region, access to PRONAF and its application still depend largely on the negotiation and coordination capacity of family farmers and their organizations, as shown by some isolated cases of cooperation between the settlers' associations, the STR, the manager of the Banco do Brazil and the municipal government (Terra Nova, Nova Monte Verde).

The main modality applied for family farming in the Portal da Amazônia region is PRONAF A, designed for agrarian reform beneficiaries. Its main

characteristic is that it is limited to R\$ 15,000, divided into two operations (some banks impose a ceiling of R\$ 7,500 per operation), of which 10% (R\$ 1,500) is destined to finance technical assistance during the first four years of the project (instead of 1.5% for PRONAF B, C and D). Farmers do not receive this amount, which is deducted from the project and paid directly to the agencies providing ATER services (EMPAER or another). The new PRONAF lines (Forest and agroforestry, women, youth etc.) are not being proposed in the region by BB or EMPAER.

### **Main problems**

The main limiting factor is the imposition of the type of investment or technical model that the farmer can finance by the local/state credit administration system (state through EMPAER, consultants and Banco do Brasil). In the region, a simple package for family farming has been established since the existence of PRONAF: cows + fences + artificial pasture. This model is often the only one proposed, either because of ease or prejudice.

In fact, it favors the enrichment of local farmers (cases of beef cattle sold instead of dairy cattle), through collusion with bank agents and extension workers. There are even some cases of documented corruption, which are buried in the Public Prosecutor's Office, either because of lack of witness protection or farmers' organizational capacity. The 10% charged to pay for technical assistance services by providers, such as EMPAER, lead to oversizing projects or even overpricing of inputs or equipment.

Mention should be made of the isolated case of the manager of the Banco do Brasil in the municipality of Terra Nova, who is really committed to family farming. In the other municipalities, it is easier to finance the projects of farmers or the beef cattle ranching model for family farmers. The acceptance of contracts and the release of credit were, until now, almost entirely in the power of the local manager of the Banco do Brasil and the State Secretariat for Rural Development (Seder). Since 2006, approval of projects has gone through a state MDA-PRONAF commission.

Even so, only PRONAF modalities A, B, C D, when not only the A (the simplest and with more reduced amounts), are being applied. In the Portal region (as in much of the state), PRONAF diversification exists only theoretically. Until today, the Bank of Brazil has not opened the possibility to access the Forest PRONAF, agro-industrial, for women and for young people. There is no alternative to the monopoly of Banco do Brasil for PRONAF A. The Sicredi system can only apply PRONAF B, C and D.

In a way, among agrarian reform farmers, credit cooperatives have not managed to establish themselves, either because of the bad reputation of the large cooperatives like Cotia or because of a lack of grassroots organization.

### **2.2 Technical Assistance and Rural Extension (ATER)**

The main activity, and one of the sources of funding for public or private technical assistance companies, is the preparation and monitoring of PRONAF projects, particularly PRONAF A, which guarantees 10% of the amounts for the

service provider. The PRONAF implementation deficiencies can be extended to the case of ATER. The deficiency of technical assistance is magnified by three factors: the tradition of welfarism imposed in the agrarian reform settlements, problems in organizing and coordinating farmers, and the monopoly of the State TARE company, EMPAER.

### ***Empaer's Monopoly***

Empaer depends on Seder - MT (Mato Grosso State Secretariat for Rural Development) and has 300 technicians in the Portal region. According to local officials, this number is insufficient to meet needs and the agency itself considers itself lacking in terms of resources. Empaer's priority for the region, in light of Seder's options, is to develop the dairy basin for family agriculture, primarily mobilizing PRONAF, ATER and MDA-SDT resources. Due to the demand and financial interest of PRONAF A, it gives priority to the settlements, as do the other providers that try to break this monopoly.

According to APAM (Association of Agricultural Producers of the North of Mato Grosso), there are 69 settlements throughout the territory, some enormous, such as PA União do Norte, in Peixoto de Azevedo (a former miner), which has 3,500 families.

The MDA also attempted to decentralize and diversify ATER, via networks or via Incra's ATES (Technical, Social and Environmental Advice) program, specific to agrarian reform settlements. However, Empaer created a socio-environmental foundation, Fundaper, to accredit its technicians in ATES under another name. Only two cooperatives of technicians (BR and Plantar) are active in the region and two farmers' organizations began to register for ATES: APAM, linked to the MPA, and the STR of Peixoto de Azevedo.

In the case of ATES, apparently the proposal for technical assistance is better, more diversified. On the other hand, the amount financed to the TAES provider by INCRA depends on the number of families supported and not only on a fee on the loans obtained. In this way, it attempts to uncouple ATER from the project and from credit. TAES should be implemented by project and by proposal, but it is still too early to evaluate its effects and functioning in the region.

In the hope of gaining accreditation in the ATES system, one entry point for TA entities linked to farmers' organizations (BR, APAM, STR) was the provision of TA through extension projects (MMA, GESTAR) or PRONAF Training edicts, eventually in partnership with local NGOs. Like credit, the implementation of TA programs and projects, specifically in the case of agrarian reform, depends largely on the level of dialogue between local farmers' organizations and public services. It depends in particular on the capacity of farmers to mobilize through municipalities or organized civil society, as the examples of Colíder and Nova Monteverde have shown.

Behind the defense of the ATER model is a dispute between APAM and EMPAER via its foundation, Fundaper, to obtain funding from the MDA and INCRA. In reality, the MPA does not act to conquer the land like the MST, it intends to organize and support the settlers based on another model of valuing family farming and rural people. This model is based on a vision of the modern peasant, promoted

by Via Campesina, which associates the search for autonomy (production for self-consumption and market diversification) with the search for quality of life, particularly through the qualification of products (Carvalho, 2005).

APAM has been operating in the region for a short time, through a PRONAF training project, but according to witnesses, it has not yet managed to show an important differential in its concrete actions. From 2007, APAM's TARE activities were taken over directly by Via Campesina Brasil, through contracts with the MDA.

### **3.3 Adding value to family farming products**

The main reference of action to enhance the value of family farming products in the Portal Territory is constituted by the experience of Cooperagrepa (Cooperative of Ecological Farmers of the Amazon Portal). The Cooperative developed actions through the support of the SEBRAE's Sustainable Rural Life (VRS) program, which covers 10 municipalities in the region: Alta Floresta, Carlinda, Garantã do Norte, Marcelândia, Matupá, Nova Guarita, Nova Santa Helena, Novo Mundo, Peixoto de Azevedo and Terra Nova do Norte.

The Sustainable Rural Life project is implemented by Sebrae in Mato Grosso, in partnership with the state government, local governments and various other entities (Cooperatives, NGOs, Banco do Brasil etc.). SEBRAE's support for Cooperagrepa members and condominiums consists of training and management courses and actions for product processing, qualification and certification. Cooperagrepa is made up of family farmers and agro-extractivists. The approximately 300 member families are organized into 32 production condominiums and adopt a cultivation model that allows, in addition to environmental preservation, food production without the use of pesticides or chemical fertilizers and without the adoption of burning, deforestation and monocultures.

Among the products available for commercialization are guaraná powder, Brazil nuts, honey, coffee, molasses, brown sugar, rapadura, chicken, pigs, goats, bread, sweets, milk, fruits and vegetables. These products have attracted consumers in countries like Austria, Germany, Holland, Korea and Japan. In 2005, 24 tons of Brazil nuts, 14 tons of guaraná, 146 tons of brown sugar and 35 tons of coffee were sold to those countries. It is estimated that the sales have provided an increase of one minimum wage in the income of each family.

Guaraná, brown sugar, molasses, coffee and Brazil nuts are already certified by Ecocert Brasil (a French institution operating in the area of organics). Other products are in the process of certification, among them chicken, cassava, milk and its derivatives. In 2005, a brown sugar agroindustry was set up in the Estrela do Sul community, in Alta Floresta, 765 kilometers from Cuiabá, which brings together seven properties of rural producers, with a total of 40 people involved. The agroindustry's installed capacity is 500 kilos of brown sugar per day and the condominium has 13 hectares of planted sugarcane, spread over the lands of the seven partners.

This is the Cooperative's second agroindustry of its kind; the first was installed in Nova Guarita. The production of the eight condominiums involved in the sugarcane chain was 200 tons of brown sugar and molasses in 2005.

### **Interaction between the VRS programme and local organisations**

Initially, between 2001 and 2003, Cooperagrepa was an association. The cooperative was founded on 20 August 2003 and started receiving support from Sebrae's Territorial Development Project and, soon afterwards, from the Sustainable Rural Life Program. It had an investment of R\$900,000 for the first two years.

The notion of Portal da Amazônia as a territory emerged in part from this territorial development project. In a difficult economic and social situation, cooperation between Sebrae-MT and Cooperagrepa member farmers has focused on supporting the processing and marketing of products identified with local or regional family farming and agroecological production.

According to those in charge of the Cooperative, Sebrae-MT has shown itself to be understanding and open. For example, it lets the Cooperative choose advisors or consultants in a way to avoid the marketing-only conception of certain consultants: "Generating an entrepreneurial way is not bad, but the quality of human values is marginalized.

### **2.3 The new instruments**

#### **GESTAR, Rural Environmental Management**

This program of the Secretariat of Policies for Sustainable Development of the Ministry of Environment was initiated in 2005. The principle of this instrument is to support collective dynamics to improve the management of natural resources and support development initiatives through diagnostic and training activities and a participatory methodology for building partnerships.

"Seeking to establish a comprehensive framework of the territorial reality in focus and seeking to locate and understand the socio-environmental problems in a cause-effect relationship, GESTAR advocates the construction of Rural Environmental Management Plans-PGAR (...) GESTAR, from the early stages, supports the implementation of practical activities related to solutions to identified problems, activities that systematized and problematized collectively will guide the development of PGAR " (MMAA-SDT, 2005).

The GESTAR project in the Portal da Amazônia Territory is being carried out in partnership with the ICV (Instituto Centro de Vida) along five lines of action:

- 1) *Improvement of the management of institutions and organizations of the Territory* : mapping of the institutions of the territory in a qualitative and quantitative way, which generates a database strategy.
- 2) *Development of Associativism and Cooperativism / Dairy Basin Program* : The activities of diagnosis and planning of the Dairy Basin and rural and cooperative education have generated new projects: ecological management of pastures/PADEQ; acquisition of two milk cooling tanks, milk marketing group.

3) *Sensitization, Mobilization and Awareness*: support to events such as the III Ecological and Cultural Festival of the Waters of Mato Grosso and Waters of the Amazon; Seminar on Sustainability of Milk Production in the Amazon; exchanges with other territories.

4) *Institutional articulation* with Prefectures and Territorial Councils, construction of a territorial network. Support and effective participation in the CEAAF, guiding the construction of the identity of the Portal of the Amazon territory.

5) *Socio-environmental communication and information gathering and dissemination*

The evaluation of local actors and family farmers is very positive, particularly due to the new partnership and study-training-action methodology, inspired by the principles of action research. "At first it was a project that came kind of top-down, but for the methods used, it was good".

The question posed by the project animators (ICV) is: how to continue the project? How to ensure ownership of the results generated?

In addition to the new education actions focused on young people, the proposal is to carry out a follow-up (monitoring) of some of the CMDRs in the Territory, to ensure an evaluation of the process and a benchmark for the continuity of local and territorial dynamics:: i) reflective look at the methodology and its effects; ii) follow-up and survey of indicators of the activities of the CMDRS; iii) constitution of a basis for environmental education.

Some of these proposals could enter into cooperation with the Dialogues Project. The national responsible for the GESTAR programme cites the richness of the partnership and the activities carried out in the Portal. He also mentions the idea, under discussion at the MMA/SDS, of a timely monitoring system of the GESTAR activities. In the last phase of the project on the Portal, ICV conducted a series of environmental education activities for young people.

### **The PADEQ programme**

The Project Alternatives to Deforestation and Burning is part of the Demonstrative Projects Subprogram of the Sustainable Development Secretariat of the Ministry of Environment (Agro-extractivism Department). PADEQ's thematic lines are "recovery of permanent preservation areas and legal reserves" and "fire-free production practices".

The projects executed by ICV and IOV (Ouro Verde Institute) in Portal da Amazônia correspond to the second line and are focused on pasture management and, in particular, ecological management without fire to support dairy farming. They function based on the animation of different local committees around environmental education actions and demonstrative projects

The general objective of the actions of PADEQ in the Portal of the Amazon is the structuring of a mechanism for social participation for discussion, development and implementation of environmental management practices. It includes two specific objectives: a) the consolidation of a formal or informal organization for community environmental management and b) the implementation of 20 demonstration units focused on pasture management, recovery of riparian forests and degraded areas and biological control of the leafhopper.

The themes of awareness raising, training and action are related to reforestation and the fight against deforestation, and the demonstrative actions, the control and organic management of pests, green manure etc. The participatory method is organised over a period of two years. It comprises a diagnosis that includes a historical review (three months), training activities (workshops, courses and exchanges for six months), the structuring of demonstration units (12 months) and finally a three-month participatory evaluation phase.

The leaders of the Portal projects (ICV, IOV, Apam) situate the action of PADEQ in a perspective of transition to agro-ecology, already engaged by Cooperagrega. It is about saving external inputs and valuing the biological activity of the soils. Besides Nova Guarita and Carlinda, new projects in settlements were presented (Santa Helena). As in the case of GESTAR, the teams raised the question of the continuity of the interaction process between government public action and farming communities. Possible mechanisms include the preparation of individual (PRONAF) or collective (via PDA, PDSTR/PROINF, BB-DRS) production projects.

### ***Support for territorial development of the Portal of the Amazon***

The support to the Portal da Amazônia territory corresponds to the implementation of the main instrument of the MDA-SDT policy, the PDSTR (National Program for Sustainable Development of Rural Territories), created in 2004.

Since 2005, the program has supported a series of territorial workshops to constitute and implement territorial councils. This territorial council or assembly may begin in the form of a Commission for the Implementation of Territorial Actions (generally called CIAT), charged with articulating the various actors of family farming and the rural world to draw up a Territorial Plan for Sustainable Rural Development (PTDRS).

In the case of the Amazon Gateway, this committee was called the Council for the Implementation of Family Farming Actions (CEAAF).

Figure 3: Territories supported by SDT (MDA, 2005)

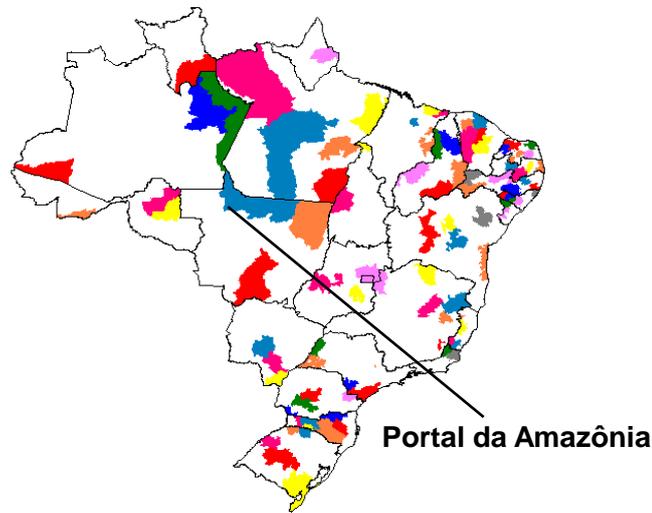


Figure 4: Map of Portal da Amazônia territory (ICV, 2006)



In the case of the Portal territory, the Executive Council of Family Farming Actions, CEAFA, is composed of three instances: the Plenary Assembly of the Territory, which brings together 59 institutions (figure 5), the Steering Nucleus and the Technical Nucleus, which are supported by a senior technician hired by SDT/MDA to assume the role of territorial articulator. The Plenary of 59 institutions is responsible for decisions and defining actions. The Steering Nucleus provides political support and coordinates the actions defined by the Plenary. The Technical Nucleus assumes the technical support (transformation of decisions into specific projects).

The main instrument of the CEAAP to articulate territorial actions and mobilize resources beyond the PROINF funds (MDA) is the elaboration of the Territorial Plan. The option of the CEAAP Technical Core for an extremely participatory approach, which uses the definition of the Plan more as a process than as a product, provided for two workshops per municipality. The main local methodological reference was the holding of municipal workshops in the framework of Agenda 21. However, the size of the territory and the distances limited the multiplication of local workshops. The process was carried out between June and August 2007 with one workshop in each municipality and four micro-regional workshops. There was a final validation meeting of the plan for the whole territory in June 2008.

Figure 5: Composition of CEAAP (GESTAR, 2005)

Orgãos Públicos	Sind.Trab Rurais	Prefeituras	Movimentos Sociais	EMPAER	Cooperativa	ONGs
Incra	Guarantã	Marcelândia	Movimentos Pequenos Agricultores	Apiacas	Coopernova	ICV
Ceplac	Peixoto	Nova Guarita	Comissão Pastoral da Terra	Sta Helena	Cooperagrega	IOV
Unemat	Nova Bandeirantes	Monte Verde	Sindicato dos Trabalhadores de Ensino Público	Alta Floresta		Inst. Floresta
Banco do Brasil	Carlinda	Novo Mundo	Comitê Pró-regularização Fundiária BR-163	Matupá		Funam
	- Sindicato Rural de Alta Floresta	Nova Canaã				Fiesum
		Paranaíta				

Coordenação CEAAP – Núcleo Dirigente	
TITULAR	SUPLENTE
Incra - Guarantã	Incra – Colider
Jose Dolce	Dalva
STR Guaranta	STR Peixoto
Gilmar	Antenor
Pref. Marcelandia	Pref. Novo Mundo
Marcelo	Antonio
CPT Colider	M.P.A
Joao Buzatto	João Carlos
Cooperagrega	Coopernova
Domingos	Lourival

Núcleo Técnico
<b>EMPAER:</b> Cleber (Apiacás), Maurílio (Alta Floresta) e Domingos C. (Sta Helena)
<b>UNEMAT:</b> Prof. Norma (Colider), Prof. Ostenildo (Alta Floresta)
<b>CEPLAC:</b> Carlos Davi (Alta Floresta)
<b>IOV:</b> Alexandre (Alta Floresta)

**16 Membros do CMDRS**

### The creation of spaces for discussion and definition of projects

The Portal of the Amazon is a territory designed by few actors, not yet assumed by the entire population of the region. However, it is the object of public recognition and support by various ministries and public agencies (MDA-SDT, MMA and GESTAR, SEBRAE, the Ecological Economic Zoning planning area of SEPLAN Mato Grosso, regional MT and SEDER) and civil society organizations (NGOs such as ICV, IOV etc.), social movements and municipalities that participate in CEAAP. The projects elaborated on the basis of articulations between these public, private and collective entities can determine a good part of the evolutions of agriculture and

the economy of the region, but these cannot be restricted to the limited financing of MDA's PROINF (an average of R\$ 500,000 per year in investments).

The institutions participating in CEAAF mention positive points. In the beginning, there was an eagerness on the part of the municipalities, as well as the organisations, just to bring projects and raise funds. Today, in addition to pressure from the MDA, there is an interest in developing collective infrastructure and a need for change is beginning to be perceived. For some representatives, the SDT's support mechanisms were well articulated, even though insertion at the grassroots level could and should be improved.

The majority of the representatives also raise less positive aspects. Because of the diversity of institutions and interests, some speak of the CEAAF as a cat's bullet, with meetings that took place in a difficult and conflictive environment. The emergence of conflicts in itself is not bad, on the contrary. The major problem lies in the great difficulty in making decisions within the CEAAF because, after the inclusion of the CMDRS and NGOs, in addition to the municipalities, the true representatives of the family farmers end up being in the minority. On the other hand, in most cases the municipal executives participate, above all, to raise funds from PROINF, when these funds should serve as a basis for articulating larger projects.

Among the elements to overcome or improve are cited by the councilors themselves: jealousy, fear, mistrust, and lack of transparency, as well as the need to build a vision and an identity about the territory and the collective interest. The CEAAF participants have two proposals to overcome the difficulties. The first is to raise awareness or inform the grassroots (the population does not even know of the existence of the programme and the CEAAF) and to learn to think together through the planning exercise (PTDRS).

The second refers to the need to return training workshops to their goal of strengthening the capacities of family farmer organizations. Often they serve only to allow traditional or unavoidable leaders (of the SR or STR) and technicians to take over the new discourse. To this end, the Technical Nucleus is investing in youth training, environmental education and public policies. Diverse initiatives underway are cited: Agenda 21, PRONAF, capacity building between PJR, MPA and IOV, the actions of Unemat, particularly in Colíder, and the activities of Coopernova and Cooperagrepa.

### ***First projects, impacts and evolution of CEAAF***

The first projects selected and submitted to the MDA PROINF through CEAAF were not differentiated from the previous PRONAF Infrastructure projects and maintained a local or municipal character (warehouses, milk coolers, tractors etc.), with the allocation of equipment to the agricultural secretariats and Empaer (vehicles and computers). Only two projects have a more inter-municipal character: the Family Farmer Training Center, built in Colíder (managed by the Portal Intermunicipal Consortium), and the composting unit in Nova Santa Helena, whose management was entrusted to the local cooperative (Cooperflor).

The Territorial Plan for Rural Development of the Portal of the Amazon was finally drafted by the CEAAF Technical Center and takes up the diagnostic elements

of the propositional study (2005) and the main proposals of the municipal and micro-regional workshops (land title regularization, rural education, recovery of degraded areas, health and support for processing and marketing of products).

Faced with the extension of PDSTR and the federal insertion in the field of rural development, the state government tried to circumvent the territorialization policy by creating competing devices or policies through the Consortia of Municipalities. Thus, in 2007, within the Portal Territory, two consortia were created to aggregate resources for the sustainable development of family farming production chains.

The Intermunicipal Consortium for Economic and Social Development of the Teles Pires Valley, composed of six municipalities (Alta Floresta, Apiácas, Carlinda, Nova Bandeirantes, Nova Monte Verde and Paranaíta) prioritizes the milk, fruit farming and beekeeping chains.

The Intermunicipal Consortium for Economic and Socio-Environmental Development of the Amazon Portal brings together 11 municipalities (Colíder, Garantã do Norte, Itaúba, Marcelândia, Matupá, Nova Canaã do Norte, Nova Guarita, Nova Santa Helena, Novo Mundo, Peixoto de Azevedo and Terra Nova do Norte), around the promotion of the production chains of milk, fruit farming, fish farming, beekeeping and sheep farming.

The advantage of these consortia, compared to rural territories, consists in having an official legal entity that can administer public funding. The two consortia have focused their efforts on supporting family farming production chains, which should complement the actions of CEAAF and MDA, rather than constitute competition. The first activity financed was a mechanized patrol for maintenance of unpaved roads in the 15 consortia in the state of Mato Grosso.

The federal government responded to various criticisms of the segmented and poorly territorial nature of PDSTR's support for the single family farming sector by promoting the Territories of Citizenship programme. In 2008, 30 of the rural territories supported by PDSTR were chosen to be "Territories of Citizenship" and thus could benefit from an integrated and coordinated intervention by the other 18 ministries involved in rural development. This was the case of the Portal Territory of the Amazon.

At first, the announcement that all the federal funds supposedly destined for the 16 municipalities of the territory would be added together caused some confusion among the councilors. In reality, most of these funds already have their destinations tied up and few can have their application negotiated within the CEAAF. However, the CEAAF should be expanded to incorporate representatives from new sectors (health, education, transportation, tourism, etc.). Despite the insistence of the MDA and the Casa Civil, which manages the Citizenship Territories Program from top to bottom, the CEAAF of Portal da Amazônia has managed to postpone this recomposition of the council and, even so, receive an increase in the PROINF allocation (R\$ 1,500,000 for 2008). However, tied to this specific support from PROINF are new requirements from the MDA-SDT, which intends to finance only projects of a territorial or at least inter-municipal dimension and nature?

### 3 A difficult and disrupted territorial interaction

The results of the study and the analysis of the interviews and proposals of the main family farming actors in the Portal Territory allow us to synthesize a series of lessons around three explanatory lines:

- i) in the case of family farming, it is impossible to separate the analysis of public policies from that of local social dynamics, which is also true for their implementation;
- ii) the Portal Territory of the Amazon suffers from a series of factors that limit a more favorable and efficient interaction between public policies and local dynamics;
- iii) the territorial approach to rural development may constitute a pertinent strategy for the construction of public action, but it is not sufficient.

#### 3.1 A relationship between the implementation of public policies and social dynamics

Since the colonization phase, a first generation of general or agricultural public policies, today considered as more traditional, were applied in a unilateral manner. However, these policies were never thought out, designed and implemented based on the specific nature of family farming or small-scale production, as they were called at the time. Therefore, they could only fail, with rare exceptions.

A second stage corresponds to the implementation of agrarian reform settlements by INCRA in collaboration with the CAC (Cotia Agricultural Cooperative). Even if there were flaws in its conception or adaptation, the biggest problem of this colonization and agrarian reform policy was precisely that it was never really applied. To this day, the biggest problem still lies in the lack of land title regularization and the lack of technical support and adapted training.

In a third phase, with the creation of PRONAF, specific credit and TARE instruments for family farming appeared, but they are still being applied, to this day, mainly according to modalities that strengthen the dominant economic and political powers: the large cattle ranchers, the public banks and their managers, the TARE services.

The expansion of dairy production was precisely one example of the coincidence of opportunities between family farmers (mostly in settlements) and these dominant interests. On the one hand, family farmers, in order not to abandon their plots, need a regular cash flow. Milk production, even for a very low wage, provides a monthly income, adding value to family labour that is not directly remunerated. On the other hand, it can be implemented in deforested areas easily turned into pastures.

Public credits from the Constitutional Fund of the North (FCN), from Proclera for agrarian reform and then from PRONAF allowed farmers to sell crossbred cattle, even if they were not dairy breeds, at very good prices, through economic and political alliances with the local managers of ATER services and banks. It worked the same way with the input firms, with packages for planting pastures, buying fences, feed, etc.

Recent public policy instruments specific to the valorisation of family farming products, such as the Food Acquisition Programme (PAA) of MDS-Conab-MDA, barely reach family farmers due to a total lack of information and adequate mediation. Until 2006, Conab in the region only purchased rice and corn from large producers. From 2007, with the PAA dissemination project carried out at the Portal by the Colíder Unemat, stock formation contracts (advance purchase) and direct purchase from the farmer began to be negotiated, specifically through Cooperagrepa.

Specific public policies reach family farmers when there is a local capacity for the organization of family farmers capable of accessing information or negotiating the application of resources. This generally occurs through intermediaries of civil society: politicians, churches and NGOs or rural social movements (CONTAAG-STR, MPA, MST), which demonstrates the close relationship between the implementation of public policies and social dynamics.

In a context of social fragility, precariousness, weak state presence or monopoly of state power in the hands of a socioeconomic category, those who occupy the space and have a local presence with marginalized farmers lead or guide the positions of this class. This explains the decisive role of the churches in the settlements and the historical role of the Catholic Church with the CPT and the PJR in the region.

There is an evolution in continuity, as young people trained by the progressive church (as was the case in the past, with part of the PT) now occupy leadership positions in farmers' movements and organizations (MPA, Cooperatives).

The participatory process of formulation of programs or public policy instruments should, in theory, through the engagement of local organizations, confer greater viability to the implementation of these policies. In reality, it was only possible to verify this tendency for the GESTAR and PADEQ programs, since CEAAF has not yet produced a plan capable of defining original projects.

### **3.2 Factors limiting the interaction between local dynamics and public policies**

#### ***State absent or captured by certain sectors***

Although the colonization front of the Portal is now relatively stabilized, there continues to be illegal appropriation of public property and natural resources, particularly along the State's border with Pará, where the environmental preservation projects are concentrated. Illegal occupations and invasions continue to occur on Federal lands or in conservation units or indigenous lands, generally by loggers and ranchers and even by financial companies.

On the other hand, the legal establishment of family farmers and their access to the means of production (credit, ATER etc.) are paralysed by enormous delays, if not conflicts in the land regularisation process. Some of these problems cannot be resolved, mainly because of political differences between the federal, state and municipal governments.

In the case of the Portal da Amazônia region, the state government shows little enthusiasm for the MDA-SDT project and supports a parallel structure, the Intermunicipal Consortium for Economic, Social and Environmental Development, which brings together six municipalities. Activities are concentrated on support for

the milk and fruit-growing chains (pineapple) and, in a second phase, poultry farming and biodiesel. In fact, an important part of the MDA-SDT funds intended for the CEAAF of the Portal Territory and transiting through the state government were directed to chain studies in other regions or to this inter-municipal consortium.

In the case of the application of more traditional federal agricultural policies such as credit and extension, a clear reformatting of the state instruments or productive models supported can be perceived: only beef or dairy cattle breeding and, more recently, fruit farming. Despite the diversification of PRONAF, the existence of new modalities, including credit for forestry and agroforestry activities, was not even publicized in the region.

### ***Institutional and organizational constraints of family farmers***

The origin of family farming (colonization) and the nature of its implementation (imposition of collective settlements) associate two characteristics that are not very favorable for coordination and organization processes: the strengthening of pioneering individualism in search of rapid enrichment and dependence on support measures of an assistentialist and technocratic nature.

Traditional organizations (first generation cooperatives and unions) have these characteristics. They fail due to excessive individualism on the part of the leaders or the grassroots, or they survive, but adapting or bowing to the model of welfarism and paternalism. Thus, family farmers' organizations end up being co-opted by some political or economic power.

The new generation of organizations under construction (the new cooperatives, APAM, rural youth movements, etc.) is attempting to break with this dependency and is therefore led to assert oppositional positions: ecology and the environment versus the immediate exploitation of natural resources; economic diversification, collective entrepreneurship, and qualification to oppose assistentialist or paternalistic dependency.

These new organizations seek to affirm human and ethical values (solidarity, equity, justice, trust, responsibility). The lack of references in the political-administrative or entrepreneurial fields emerge from the pastoral action of the Catholic or Evangelical churches. In the case of CPT and PJR there is an alliance with producer movements linked to Via Campesina (MST, MPA, MMC).

There is always the risk, in this environment of little autonomy for family farming and a great need to create or strengthen positive identities, that these new alliances (churches or NGOs) will become new guardianships. But this risk seems to be limited for two reasons: i) the results obtained by these alliances in defending the rights of small farmers and, in particular, the settlers (in a context of violence and impunity as in Marcelândia, Matupá, Nova Guarita); ii) the maintenance or promotion of human and ethical values: citizen spirit, political and collective participation, equity and solidarity, responsibility towards future generations and natural resources.

The representatives of these new family farming organizations, generally children of small farmers who have gone through technical schools or university, are active within CEAAF, although still in the minority in terms of voting. If they manage to show results, it will be precisely in terms of project development and

management. In fact, the territorial device may be a space for the administration of public action, but not of politics, because its representatives are "co-opted" into the CEAAF and have a technical legitimacy, but they do not all have the same legitimacy of political or social representativeness.

### **3.3 The territorial approach: a sustainable alternative?**

The negotiation and management of sustainable territorial actions and projects are based on the implementation of interaction mechanisms between public policies at different levels of government and the collective action of rural people through territorial development councils.

The interest of the approach is precisely to contribute to the implementation of spaces for dialogue between local organizations, civil society, municipalities and public services. The inclusion of local dynamics of priorities, specificities and initiatives of local actors should be facilitated and, at best, result in decision-making that allows the release of resources and the realization of their projects.

Until now, priority is being given (at least temporarily) to projects in favor of family farming, as it is the most marginalized segment. In fact, in a region like Portal da Amazônia, despite this voluntarism, it is not evident to break this asymmetry (of information and decision-making power).

#### ***Design difficulties***

Decentralization cannot be achieved by decree. It is not enough to create spaces for dialogue open to farmers' organizations if they do not have the means to develop and defend their projects. In the case of territorial councils, rather than the intervention of the municipal and state executives, it is the fragmentation of family farmers' representations that reduces their capacity to act.

One of the difficulties of PDSTR also comes from its ambition to associate territorialization of development, deconcentration or decentralization of the State and popular participation in the same process. However, these are three categories of instruments and approaches that are very different and independent, which do not naturally work together and, because they do not depend on the same plan, do not reinforce each other in an obvious way.

#### ***Operational difficulties and prospects***

A series of difficulties arise from the intermediation of MDA studies and resources by third parties. Legally, PROINF resources can only be released through state and/or municipal governments. Methodological support, due to the lack of staff at the MDA, is outsourced to consultants. In the case of the Portal Territory, there was some discontinuity during the first two years, due to the successive change of consultants and, in 2007 and 2008, due to delays in payment of the salary of the local coordinator.

The elaboration of the diagnoses and plans depends on MDA funding systems outsourced to external consultants, paid by intermediate products (meetings and reports) and not by task or result (final product).

The creation of municipal, territorial and regional councils to discuss investments for family farming can constitute an achievement when it actually allows the representation of projects and interests of different categories of rural development actors and, first and foremost, of farmers in all their diversity. The very process of establishing this representation and building their capacity is a step forward, marked by positive achievements in terms of learning, building local skills and institutional strengthening. It can lead to gains in space, power and autonomy for marginalized groups, but it can also strengthen the position of traditional and paternalistic leaders who adapt to new discourses without changing their strategy.

It is undeniable that the territorial approach favors a process of emergence and formalization of new social demands. It allows regional, ecological and ethnic diversity to be taken into account. It also opens possibilities for the conquest of new spaces for negotiation between public and private actors, which corresponds to the objectives of the Dialogues Project.

## Conclusions

The conclusions are divided into two interconnected and complementary items. The first deals with the potential for sustainable innovations in the Portal Territory of the Amazon in terms of interaction and complementarity between public policies and local dynamics. The second presents some recommendations for actors and decision-makers.

The first transformation of the institutional and social environment that is taking place in the Gateway region is in itself a potential innovation in terms of public policy instruments and methods. It is the recognition of the future of family farming as an alternative for more sustainable development from a social and environmental point of view, but also from an economic point of view. After the successive gold, coffee and now timber crises (price reductions, bankruptcies, the Curupira scandal and new legislation), the region's economy came to a halt, and the various sectors of the local economy (banks, commerce, services) began to discover that they now depend, above all, on strengthening family farming and the settlements.

The studies of the Dialogos project (MDA-Olival, 2006; Duheron, 2006; Poppe & Sabourin, 2006), show that the new forms of use of space and resources, the new forms of valorization of these resources and their products provoke transformations of a spatial, social, economic and political nature, that is to say, advancing between three pillars of sustainability. This is the case of the new territorial units constituted by agrarian reform settlements, but also ecological reserves and indigenous lands. Once consolidated, these spaces of activity (or preservation) lead to the emergence of new territorial units under construction, such as the dairy basin around the settlements or the peripheral areas of ecological parks. In these areas there is a transformation of activities and even a redefinition of roles and powers, eventually with the formalisation of a territorial project.

At the same time, along with the new public policy instruments of the MDA, the MMA, and SEBRAE, spaces for dialogue have appeared that should be occupied and activated by family farming players, especially producer organisations. For example, around the creation of conservation units, such as the Juruena National

Park in Apiacás, or the Cristalino Park in Novo Mundo, new activities such as ecotourism and agrotourism appear, which, together with agro-ecology initiatives and product qualification and certification, raise economic expectations and therefore support from economic and political sectors.

One of the most important innovations for avoiding opportunistic recoveries and illusions is the construction of a territorial identity and shared projects for family farming and the management of natural resources. This identity-building depends, in turn, on promoting a positive image of family farming and, above all, of agrarian reform settlements. These conclusions are in line with the analyses of Sabourin (2002) and Porto (2015) regarding the necessary flexibility of the construction of territorial projects around an identity that can be geographical, social, historical, productive or political.

In addition to disseminating the first successes, such as those of Coopernova and Cooperagrega, it is essential to subsidize and encourage all initiatives that contribute to a self-revaluation of the image of the family farmer among the settlers. One of the strategic innovations of the interaction between social movements and new public policy instruments is precisely the fact that they have favoured methods and approaches that focus on strengthening the competencies of youth and the rural base through information and education. Training comes later, as a complement, and not in the first place.

This recommendation meets the concerns of the MDA and MMA in implementing monitoring (and timely evaluation) mechanisms for programs such as PDSTR and GESTAR. The local actors and responsible for the Portal's GESTAR project have expressed interest in monitoring the activities of the CMDRs of some of the municipalities involved. The same principle could be applied to CEAAF, if it is of interest to its leaders.

Another proposal discussed recommends subsidizing and promoting articulations or regional thematic networks around policy instruments implemented by mixed entities (public, private and collective), as is the case of GESTAR, PDAs, ATER, ATES and support to territories. For example, the strategy of the MDA-SAF is to give priority to the establishment of regional networks of ATER in order to become less dispersed and more representative interlocutors of state and federal services. This strategy is essential if the entities linked to support for family farming in the territory want to carry weight, including with the MDA, instead of acting in isolation or competing with Empaer's public ATER.

Finally, among the instruments of public policy of state nature, the Ecological and Economic Zoning of Seplan-MT was transformed into an instrument of law by the State Assembly. Therefore, it will be pertinent to follow its relation or interaction with regional and local dynamics.

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**Eric Sabourin**. Dr em antropologia e sociologia. CIRAD, Umr ART-Dev. Cargo. 73 Rue J F Breton, 34398 Montpellier, França. E-mail: [eric.sabourin@cirad.fr](mailto:eric.sabourin@cirad.fr)

**José Alesandro Rodrigues**. M. em Biodiversidade e Agroecossistemas Amazônicos. Secretaria Municipal de Meio Ambiente e Desenvolvimento Sustentável de Alta Floresta. Diretor de Desenvolvimento Sustentável. Av. Pioneiro Valdir T. Oliveira, 305, CEP 78.580-000 Alta Floresta - MT - Brasil. [josealerodrigues@gmail.com](mailto:josealerodrigues@gmail.com)

**Patrick Caron**. Dr em Geografia. CIRAD, Umr ART-Dev. Vice-Presidente Universidade de Montpellier para Relações Internacionais, MUSE. 163 rue Auguste Broussonnet, 34090 Montpellier, França. E-mail: [patrick.caron@cirad.fr](mailto:patrick.caron@cirad.fr)

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## CONTRIBUTION OF EACH AUTHOR

Conceituação (Conceptualization): Eric Sabourin

Curadoria de Dados (Data curation): Eric Sabourin, José Alesando Rodrigues, Patrick Caron

Análise Formal (Formal analysis): Eric Sabourin, José Alesando Rodrigues, Patrick Caron

Obtenção de Financiamento (Funding acquisition)

Investigação/Pesquisa (Investigation): Eric Sabourin, José Alesando Rodrigues, Patrick Caron

Metodologia (Methodology): Eric Sabourin, Jose Alesando Rodrigues

Administração do Projeto (Project administration): Eric Sabourin

Recursos (Resources)

Software

Supervisão/orientação (Supervision): Eric Sabourin

Validação (Validation): Eric Sabourin, José Alesando Rodrigues, Patrick Caron

Visualização (Visualization): Patrick Caron

Escrita – Primeira Redação (Writing – original draft): Eric Sabourin, José Alesando Rodrigues, Patrick Caron

Escrita – Revisão e Edição (Writing – review & editing): Eric Sabourin, José Alesando Rodrigues, Patrick Caron

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