

Transferring water: a symbol of hope, integration and development?

Analyzing the local implementation process and the political dimensions of an inter-basin water transfer in the North East of Brazil



M.Sc. Thesis by Lisanne van 't Hoff

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Irrigation and Water Engineering Group



WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY
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Analyzing the local implementation process and the political dimensions of an inter-basin water transfer in the North East of Brazil

Master thesis Irrigation and Water Engineering submitted in partial fulfillment of the degree of Master of Science in International Land and Water Management at Wageningen University, the Netherlands

Lisanne van 't Hoff

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Supervisors:

Dr. Edwin Rap

Irrigation and Water Engineering Group

Centre for Water and Climate

Wageningen University

The Netherlands

www.iwe.wur.nl/uk

Preface

During spring 2009, an exciting announcement dropped into my mailbox: the opportunity for a master's student to do thesis research in the North East of Brazil. It immediately caught my attention and I decided to apply. It has been one of those decisions that I will never regret, for it took me on a journey to an unknown, fascinating country, where the local people received me with open arms. It has been a trip of challenges –learning the Portuguese language, trying to understand the local situation– but surprisingly, the fact that I was travelling alone and did the research by myself never felt a huge, impossible challenge. This was because of the help I received in Brazil, in the first place from Andrea Zellhuber, who worked at that time for the *Comissão Pastoral da Terra* (CPT, a pastoral NGO that protects the interests of poor rural dwellers in Brazil) and helped me to get started with the research and brought me into contact with key people. Andrea, thank you for the discussions we had and for helping me to find my way in Brazil, it contributed tremendously to the positive experience I have had.

In the research area I was welcomed by Ticiano Rodrigo, who introduced me to the area. The local population was as I had imagined the Brazilians to be before I visited the country: warm, open, kind and happy people, who immediately made me feel accepted and at home. I especially want to thank Marcelo, Caboco and Dona Rita, Glenda and Aurea, who received me in their homes and made me feel part of a Brazilian family for a while.

I would also like to thank my supervisor Edwin Rap for his critical and useful feedback, and Pedro Jacobi for being my supervisor in Brazil and for helping me to get started with the research. Lastly, I would like to thank all the people back home in The Netherlands who supported me during the writing of this thesis! For me the research has been an amazing experience, from which I learned a lot. I hope you will enjoy reading the result!

Abstract

This thesis investigates the local implementation process of the Project of Integration of the São Francisco River with the watersheds of the Northern North East in Brazil. This contentious inter-basin water transfer project diverts water from the third largest river of Brazil –the São Francisco river– to the semi-arid states in the North East of Brazil.

The opponents of the project argue that the water transfer would not be an appropriate solution from an economical, technical, social or environmental point of view and the project would mainly support large agribusinesses and not the poor population, as the government claims. Also the rights of indigenous people are being neglected, for the project crosses their territorial lands and they have not been involved in the decision making process. Furthermore, cheaper alternatives are available to improve the drought situation in the North East, and the protestors demand that revitalization of the degraded São Francisco river gets priority above the inter-basin water transfer. Lastly, the project would feed the ‘drought industry’ that profits from the implementation of large infrastructural water works to ‘fight the drought’. Big construction companies profit from this, as well as politicians who can present themselves to the population as men who are conquering the drought.

These are just a few of the arguments that are posed by the opponents of the project. The discussion is complex, for there are also politicians, academics and journalists who produce counter-arguments. The Ministry of National Integration, which is the owner of the project, defends it by saying that ‘it will bring a cup of water to the thirsty northeasterners’. According to the ministry, the project will bring development and opportunities to the poor northeastern region and decrease the regional differences caused by the unequal availability of water between the basins and its populations.

So, in spite of the protest movements, which included the occupation of the construction site and a hunger strike by a bishop, the government of President Lula decided to start the construction of the canals by the Brazilian army. This research has focused on the local situation in Agrovila 06, the village where the army and construction companies moved in to start the construction of the eastern canal of the water transfer, and where the CPT –an NGO protesting against the water transfer– has tried to gain support for their protest.

An interface and life-worlds analysis has been carried out in order to obtain a better understanding about how the implementation process of the infrastructural water project is evolving, and why the protest movement did not manage to mobilize the local population sufficiently in order to block the construction. Also, a better understanding is obtained as to why the strategy of the government worked to gain support in the research area. The project offered job opportunities and this was a main reason for the local population to be in favor of the project. However, also intangible aspects were linked to the project by the local population, such as hopes for a better future and solidarity with the population inland.

President Lula visited the research area, which provided an opportunity to investigate how the inter-basin water transfer project is being used politically. The analysis shows that President Lula and his government used the project as a stage to promote their government and policies. Through cultural performance analysis, it becomes clear that President Lula knows how to engage the local population rationally and emotionally, and that this was used for electoral purposes. Linking this analysis to the life-world and interface analysis, shows why the strategy of Lula and his government to gain constant support in the research area has been effective. Moreover, this thesis shows that there is more to large infrastructural water projects than just an economic cost-benefit analysis to make sense of the implementation, for political and intangible aspects are connected to it as well. Politics does not always need to defend a

large infrastructural water project by explaining the economic costs and benefits: nation building, solidarity, integration, hope and progress can be effective arguments to defend a project and convince the people of its relevance.

Resumo

Essa tese investiga o processo local de implementação do Projeto de Integração da bacia do rio São Francisco com as bacias hidrográficas da região Nordeste do Brasil. Este controverso projeto de transferência de água entre bacias direciona água do terceiro maior rio do Brasil para os estados do semi-árido nordestino.

Os oponentes do projeto argumentam que a transferência de água não seria uma solução apropriada do ponto de vista econômico, técnico, social e ambiental e que o projeto suportaria, principalmente, grandes empresas agrícolas e não a população pobre, como o governo diz. Os direitos das populações indígenas também estão negligenciados, pois o projeto atravessa suas terras e elas não foram envolvidas no processo de decisão. Adicionalmente, alternativas mais baratas para melhorar a situação de seca no Nordeste estão disponíveis, e os protestantes demandam que a revitalização do degradado rio São Francisco tenha prioridade sobre o projeto de transposição. Finalmente, o projeto alimentaria a “indústria da seca” que lucra com a implementação de grandes obras de infra-estrutura hídricas para “lutar contra a seca”. Grandes construtoras lucram com isto, da mesma forma que políticos que podem se apresentar à população como aqueles que estão dominando a seca.

Estes são apenas alguns dos argumentos que são colocados pelos oponentes deste projeto. A discussão é complexa, pois há políticos, acadêmicos e jornalistas que produzem contra-argumentos. O Ministério da Integração Nacional, ao qual o projeto pertence, o defende alegando que ‘ele trará um copo de água para os sedentos nordestinos’. De acordo com o Ministério, o projeto trará desenvolvimento e oportunidades para os pobres da região nordestina e diminuirá as diferenças causadas pela desigual distribuição de disponibilidade de água entre bacias e as populações da região.

Portanto, apesar dos movimentos de protesto, os quais incluem a ocupação da construção e uma greve de fome feita por um bispo, o governo do Presidente Lula decidiu que a construção dos canais começaria pelo exército brasileiro. Esta pesquisa focou na situação da Agrovila 06, uma vila para onde o exército e as construtoras se mudaram para começar a construção do canal leste de transferência de água, e onde a CPT – uma ONG que realiza protestos contra a transferência de água – tentou ganhar apoio para seus protestos.

Uma análise de ‘interface and life-world’ foi realizada para obter uma melhor compreensão sobre como o processo de implementação deste projeto de infra-estrutura hídrica está evoluindo e por qual razão o movimento de protesto não foi capaz de mobilizar a população local suficientemente para bloquear a construção. Além disso, um melhor entendimento é obtido sobre a razão pela qual o governo ganhou apoio da área de pesquisa. O projeto ofereceu oportunidades de trabalho e esta é a principal razão para a população ser favorável ao projeto. No entanto, aspectos intangíveis são também ligados ao projeto pela população local, tais como: esperança por futuro melhor e solidariedade com a população interiorana.

Presidente Lula visitou a área de pesquisa, o que proveu uma oportunidade de investigar como o projeto de Integração da bacia do rio São Francisco com as bacias hidrográficas da região Nordeste está sendo utilizado politicamente. A análise mostra que o Presidente Lula e seu governo usaram o projeto como um palanque para promover seus governantes e suas políticas. Através de análise de desempenho cultural (cultural performance analysis), tornou-se claro que Presidente Lula sabe como envolver a população local racional e emocionalmente, e que isso foi utilizado para propósitos eleitorais. Ligando esta análise à de ‘life world and interface’, é possível verificar porque a estratégia de Lula e seu governo para ganhar constante apoio na área de pesquisa foi tão efetiva. Ademais, esta tese apresenta também que há muito a ser considerado além de uma análise de custos e benefícios

econômicos para que a implementação de um grande projeto de infra-estrutura hídrica faça sentido, pois aspectos políticos e intangíveis também estão ligados a isso. Políticos não precisam necessariamente defender um grande projeto de infra-estrutura hídrica explicando os custos e benefícios econômicos: construção de um país, solidariedade, integração, esperança e progresso podem ser argumentos eficientes para defender um projeto e convencer as pessoas de sua relevância.

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Lists of abbreviations, figures, and Portuguese words and terms used

Abbreviations

AMAPIM	Association of the inhabitants of Agrovila 06 of the Ico Mandantes project <i>Associação de moradores de agrovila 06 de projeto Ico Mandantes</i>
ANA	National Water Agency <i>Agência Nacional de Águas</i>
ANT	Actor Network Theory
CHESF	São Francisco's Hydroelectric company <i>Companhia Hidro-Elétrica do São Francisco</i>
CPP	Pastoral NGO that protects the interests of artesian fishermen and is involved in the protest against the PISF <i>Conselho Pastoral dos Pescadores</i>
CPT	Pastoral NGO that protects the interests of poor rural dwellers and is involved in the protests against the PISF <i>Comissão Pastoral da Terra</i>
DEM	Democrats (opposition party) <i>Democratas</i>
IBAMA	Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources <i>Instituto Brasileiro do Meio Ambiente e dos Recursos Naturais Renováveis</i>
MI	Ministry of National Integration, responsible for the implementation of the PISF. <i>Ministério da Integração Nacional</i>
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
PAC	Growth Acceleration Program; investment plan launched by the Brazilian Government to promote large-scale infrastructure projects throughout the country to advance economic development. <i>Programa de Aceleração do Crescimento</i>
PISF	Project of Integration of the Sao Francisco River with the watersheds of the Northern Northeast <i>Projecto de Integração do Rio São Francisco com Bacias Hidrográficas do Nordeste Setentrional</i>
PMDB	Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (coalition party) <i>Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro</i>
PSDB	Brazilian Social Democracy Party (opposition party) <i>Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira</i>
PT	Workers' Party (President Lula's party) <i>Partido dos Trabalhadores</i>
RIMA	Environmental Impact Report <i>Relatório de Impacto Ambiental</i>

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Portuguese words and terms used

<i>Agrovila</i>	Rural dwelling, constructed to provide new housing for the people that had to resettle because of the construction of the Itaparica dam.
<i>Articulação Popular pela Revitalização da Bacia do São Francisco</i>	Articulation of the people for the revitalization of the São Francisco Basin
<i>Caatinga</i>	typical brushwood vegetation of the northeastern region of Brazil
<i>Bolsa Família</i>	Family allowance. The objective of this government program is the social inclusion of families in poor and extreme poor situations by providing financial aid under the condition that they assure that their children regularly attend school and have regular health checkups and vaccinations
<i>Colônia de Pescadores</i>	fishermen colony, which provide the fishermen with various services and information.
<i>Gerenciadora</i>	The manager of the PISF, which is the consortium Logos/Concremat.
<i>Ministério da Integração Nacional</i>	Ministry of National Integration (ministry responsible for the implementation of the PISF)
<i>Nordestino</i>	A person from the North East of Brazil
<i>Pernambucano</i>	A person from the state Pernambuco
<i>Polígono da maconha</i>	Marijuana Polygon
<i>Polígono das Secas</i>	Drought Polygon
<i>Sertanejo</i>	Person living in the <i>sertão</i>
<i>Sertão</i>	The arid backland of the North East
<i>Supremo Tribunal Federal</i>	Supreme Federal Court
<i>Transposição</i>	Literally translated as transposition, referring to the PISF water-transfer
<i>Transposição Não</i>	Name of the campaign of the protest movement against the water transfer

1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction

'A Roman Catholic bishop in Brazil has gone on hunger strike and says he is prepared to die unless a controversial environmental project is cancelled' (Kingstone, 2005).

Dom Luis Cappio, a bishop, was protesting against the inter-basin water transfer from the São Francisco River to four semi-arid states in the Brazilian North East: the '*Projecto de Integração da bacia do São Francisco as Bacias do Nordeste Setentrional*' (PISF). This project is a large infrastructural work, which will divert 63,5 m³/s of water of the São Francisco river to rivers and reservoirs in the recipient states Rio Grande do Norte, Ceará, Paraíba and Pernambuco by building a network of canals. The two main canals, called the northern and the eastern canal, will be 25 meters wide and 5 meters deep and together will be approximately 720 kilometers long. The estimated costs of the project are US\$ 1.5 billion (RIMA, 2004).

The bishop halted his hunger strike when the Brazilian government promised in October 2005 to suspend the project and to enter into a dialogue with the affected communities and social movements in order to find alternatives for the sustainable development of the semi-arid region. However, two years passed and the government did not keep its promise: President Lula announced the start of the construction of the PISF by the Brazilian army. Dom Luis Cappio then went on hunger strike again, in November 2007 (CEAS, 2007). This time it did not influence the decisions of the government, on 19 December 2007 the *Supremo Tribunal Federal* (Supreme Federal Court) decided on the continuation of the construction. Yielding to requests from friends and family Dom Luis Cappio halted his hunger strike (IHU, 2008b).

The hunger strike was a dramatic part of the protest actions held by different entities, organizations, social movements, and (indigenous) communities to stop the construction of the water transfer. An NGO very active in this protest movement is the *Comissão Pastoral da Terra* (CPT). This NGO helped the bishop during his hunger strike and is part of the *Articulação Popular pela Revitalização da Bacia do São Francisco* (Articulation of the people for the revitalization of the São Francisco basin). This movement is protesting against the water transfer together with the campaign *Transposição Não!* (Water Transfer No!) (Articulação Popular pela Revitalização da Bacia do São Francisco, 2010). The following paragraphs will explain why the protestors are against the construction of this major infrastructural water project.

They argue that the project is not the appropriate solution from an economic, technical, social or environmental point of view. According to the protestors, the region has the possibility to instead use locally available resources that offer cheaper alternatives and will better reach the poor, and argue that the Government project will mainly support large agribusinesses and urban areas. Moreover, the São Francisco river is very degraded and the protestors demand that revitalization of the river should have priority over the inter-basin water transfer (CEAS, 2007, IHU, 2008b, Silveira and Araújo, 2007). Another sensitive issue is that the canals of the water transfer pass through indigenous territory, without previous consultation of the affected indigenous people and the national congress. They argue therefore that several rights of the indigenous people have been violated. They also argue that the project is therefore in breach

of the 1988 federal constitution, as well as other national and international judicial decisions. Moreover, the water transfer project is being executed in a region where the people have already been affected by the construction of large hydroelectric dams in the past, which have caused many negative impacts which have not yet been mitigated (APOINME, 2009).

The fact that the army moved in to start the construction of the water transfer raised the anger of the protestors, as this act could intimidate local people and prevent more protest actions (CPT member, 2009, pers. comm.). The use of the army was indeed more a political act than a practical one, for the government wanted to show that further protest would no longer be tolerated (government official, 2009, pers. comm.). It is not the first time that a water project in Brazil has sparked a major controversy. The country has a history of water development projects which have faced major problems during implementation, resulting in corruption, inefficiency and the prolonging of social tensions (Ioris, 2001); especially in the North East, which has a rich history of water projects.

The Brazilian North East is the world's most densely populated semi-arid region (Silveira and Araújo, 2007), recognized by Brazilians as 'the land of drought' and known as the poorest region of the country (Empinotti, 2007). It has always suffered from drought and therefore debates about appropriate solutions for the water shortages are not a new phenomenon (Campos and Studart, 2008). The idea for the water transfer is approximately 160 years old, and since then different proposals had been put forward (Amancio Alves and Santos do Nascimento, 2009). Access to land and water have shaped the patterns of inequality and drought in the North East over the centuries, and the drought maintained the flow of investment and support that fulfilled the interests of the local elites. Therefore, water scarcity which also fed the interdependent relationship between the local and the state power, had to be perpetuated. This system is being referred to as the 'drought industry' (Empinotti, 2007). Opponents of the water transfer argue that this project is feeding the 'drought industry' once more, for construction companies profit again from the drought discourse that is defending the implementation of large infrastructural works. Profits of the 'drought industry' would not only be financial, but also political, "with politicians presenting themselves to the population as men of vision and enterprise, who create progress and employment" (Silveira and Araújo, 2007, p.14). According to opponents, the drought discourse victimizes the region and means that alternatives, including the use of locally available resources, are not looked at. According to them, the North East lacks management and not water (Silveira and Araújo, 2007). The next paragraph elaborates on this drought discourse that the government uses to defend the implementation of the project.

To counter the arguments of the opponents, the Brazilian government –and especially the Ministry of National Integration (MI), which has the responsibility over the project– argues that the water transfer will guarantee access to water for twelve million people and that the project is crucial for the development of the semi-arid North East region. More water availability would be *fundamental* to create more job possibilities in the region, and to increase the chances for socio-economic development. The MI stresses that the implementation of the inter-basin water transfer is essential to provide this water availability. The water transfer would decrease the regional differences caused by the unequal availability of water between the basins and their populations.

To people that protest against the project, the MI answers that they simply do not understand the drought situation in the North East. The MI stresses that it will take care to ensure that the project will have the least possible negative impact on affected communities, and that there will be compensation programs for affected groups (RIMA, 2004, informative flyers and booklets issued by the Ministry of National Integration).

The debate is complex and divides Brazilian society: it divides the political parties, the mayors, intellectuals, small farmers, large landowners, artists, students, and even the Catholic Church (IHU, 2008a). On the one hand, there are academics who say that the project is not necessary and harmful to the environment and, on the other hand, there are other academics who argue exactly the opposite (Neutzling, 2008). The water transfer was also discussed intensively in the Basin Committee of the São Francisco river (Kleemans, 2010). The committee did not allow that the transferred water would be used for purposes other than public water supply and livestock. However, they believed it had been proved that the northern canal of the transfer would also be used for commercial purposes with which they did not agree (members of the São Francisco River Basin Committee, 2009, pers. comm., 5 November).

There is therefore a huge debate whether the inter-basin water transfer will make a positive contribution to the development of the semi-arid North East. As well as arguments that focus on quantitative aspects like costs and possible environmental and economical impacts, there are also arguments that focus on the political aspects of the project. The social movements, which supported Lula and his party PT before he became president, now see him as a ‘traitor’, alleging that he did not live up to their expectations and criticizing him for not listening to their arguments to stop the water transfer (R. Siquiera, 2009, pers. comm.). The opponents of the water transfer believe that the project is infected by political pressures and the interests of big construction companies (Silveira and Araújo, 2007, members of the São Francisco River Basin Committee, 2009, pers. comm., 5 November). Besides, President Lula himself was accused by the opposition of using the project for electoral purposes when he visited the construction site in October 2009, because he was accompanied by his favored candidate for the 2010 presidential elections, together with ministers and other highly placed officials. In this respect, it is important to realize that the North East has been an important electoral resource for President Lula.

Articles about infrastructural water projects often draw on a rational costs-benefit analysis in favor or against the project (Albiac et al., 2003, Brown et al., 2009, Embid, 2003, Ghassemi and White, 2007, Gupta, 2001, Jain et al., 2005, Liu and Zheng, 2002, Tilt et al., 2009, WWF, 2007, Snaddon et al., 1998, Thatte, 2007). This thesis seeks to show that other considerations weigh equally strongly. In order to understand the importance of the project and the discussion around it, it is important to realize that it is not only about the quantitative aspects: it is also about politics, about nation building, about local hopes and dreams, about history and identity and symbolic aspects. This thesis seeks to show that it is not only important to look at the processes that play at the higher level of federal and state politics, but that what happens on the ground matters as much; that processes on the ground influence the implementation choices and that it is necessary to engender ‘constant local support’ to bring the project to fruition.

To illustrate this I have focused on the local situation in Agrovila 06, the village where the army and construction companies settled to construct the Eastern Axis of the inter-basin water transfer project, and where the CPT has tried to gain support for their protest. It is also a village that President Lula visited on his trip to the São Francisco river region.

The next sections describe the problem description, the research objective and the research question formulated for this research. Section 1.3 sets up the theoretical framework of this thesis, and section 1.4 describes the methodology used. Chapter 2 provides more background information on the Brazilian North East, information about the inter-basin water transfer project and an introduction to Brazilian politics. Chapter 3 describes the life-worlds and interface situation in the construction area of the inter-basin water transfer project. Chapter 4

gives an account and analysis of President Lula's visit to the research area, and finally chapter 5 provides the conclusions.

1.2. Problem description, research objective and research question

1.2.1. Problem description

The inter-basin water transfer (PISF) is a major project, surrounded by politics and controversies. According to its promoters it will bring development to a poor region where the people suffer from drought. Against this, there are many other negative opinions, which argue that it will not be a solution for the region, but will have a negative impact on the people and the environment. However, construction has now begun and the CPT does not know what actions the government is taking in the construction areas, and how the local people perceive these actions and react to them. Or, to put it in a different way, it is not known how the actors present in the construction area interact with each other, what the result is on the implementation process, and which factors influence this. For the CPT it is important to know more about what is happening on the ground, in order to decide on future protest strategies and to reflect on their past strategies. (Zellhuber, 2009, pers. comm.). Therefore, the initial question of the CPT to me, was to find out more about these local processes by going to the construction site of the water transfer.

Moreover, the project is said to be used by Lula for electoral purposes and little is known about how projects of this kind are used by politicians to promote their government and its policies and to attract voters. The discussions about large infrastructural water projects often focus on cost-benefit analysis and leave out the other factors that are connected to these projects as well, like the intangible and political factors. As large water infrastructural projects are still being proposed worldwide, it is important to analyze the factors that are linked to these projects and which go beyond an economic or environmental cost-benefit analysis, if one is to better understand the reasons and processes behind their implementation. I hope that through this analysis of the inter-basin water transfer of the Sao Francisco river to the semi-arid states of North East Brazil, this thesis will make a positive contribution to the debate.

1.2.2. Research Objective

This research has the following objective:

To understand the social and political processes that are connected to, and influence the implementation process of hydrological infrastructural projects by analyzing how the Project of Integration of the São Francisco River with the watersheds of the Northern Northeast (PISF) enters into the life-worlds of the local actors, and by analyzing how this project is being used by Lula and his government for political aims, to promote their government and to attract voters.

1.2.3. Research Question

The following research question is formulated to respond to this objective:

How does the Project of Integration of the São Francisco River with the watersheds of the Northern Northeast (PISF) enter into the life-worlds of local actors in the construction area and transform the implementation process and in what manner does the Brazilian government of President Lula use this project politically?

1.3. Theoretical framework

1.3.1. The interactive model of policy implementation

The Project of Integration of the São Francisco River with the watersheds of the Northern Northeast (PISF) is a hydrological infrastructural project that is being implemented by the federal state of Brazil. This research aims to analyze the implementation process. Therefore, it is useful to take a closer look at the interactive model of implementation that is described by Thomas and Grindle (1990). These authors analyze 12 cases of reform initiatives and argue that the process does not follow a linear model. According to the linear model a reform proposal gets on the agenda for government action after which a decision is made and the policy or institutional arrangement is implemented. The implementation is either successful or unsuccessful. The focus in this linear model is on the decision, and not on the implementation, and if implementation is not successful, lack of political will is often blamed and becomes a 'catch-all culprit'. The authors criticize this linear model thinking and argue that not the decision making phase, but the implementation phase is the most crucial aspect of the policy process. The authors state that the process is interactive instead of linear, because reactions to the new policy influence the implementation process and cause the outcomes to be highly variable:

“The central element in the model is that a policy reform initiative may be altered or reversed at any stage in its life cycle by the pressures and reactions of those who oppose it. Unlike the linear model, the interactive model views policy reform as a process, one in which interested parties can exert pressure for change at many points” (Thomas and Grindle, 1990, p. 1166).

It depends on the characteristics of the policy whether the reaction will occur primarily in a public or bureaucratic arena, what kind of conflict it engenders and what resources –which can be political, financial, managerial or technical– are needed to sustain the reform (Thomas and Grindle, 1990).

Long (1989) also argues that 'policy', 'implementation' and 'outcomes' are not separated processes. The policy is continuously being reinterpreted and transformed; by the manufacturers and the implementers. Moreover, the outcomes “often result from factors which cannot be directly linked to the development program itself” (Long, 1989, p. 3).

This thesis makes use of the interactive model of policy implementation to analyze the implementation process of the inter-basin water transfer. So, in line with the argumentation of Thomas and Grindle (1990) on the interactive implementation process of policy reforms, the implementation of this water transfer project might be altered or reversed at any stage in its life cycle by the pressures and reactions of those who oppose it. The water transfer (PISF) has already evoked pressures and reactions from protest movements, and the question now is why these have not had their desired effect –to stop the implementation of the project– and what resources those implementing the PISF have used to sustain it so far. The words *so far* must be stressed, as the project is still far from finished and the implementation process could still be aborted. The interactive model of policy implementation shows that the implementers of policy reforms need to sustain 'constant support' in order to bring their project to fruition. This thesis analyzes the resources used by the implementers of the PISF to sustain constant support for the project.

1.3.2. The politics of large infrastructural water works

During the twentieth century large infrastructural projects were constructed throughout the world to meet the water demands of a growing population. It was the domain of engineers and

government bureaucrats. However, the projects often had significant negative social, economic and environmental effects and poor and indigenous communities often had to bear a disproportionate share of the impact. The World Bank was compelled to change its policy and now demands detailed impact assessments before it approves project funding (Ghassemi and White, 2007). Also the World Commission on Dams (WCD) states that “Dams have made an important and significant contribution to human development, and the benefits derived from them have been considerable” but that “in too many cases an unacceptable and often unnecessary price has been paid to secure those benefits, especially in social and environmental terms, by people displaced, by communities downstream, by taxpayers and by the natural environment” (WCD, 2000, p. xxviii).

Internationally, but especially in the developed world, these negative impacts stirred up protests against the construction of new water projects (Ghassemi and White, 2007). For example in The Netherlands, this has led to an ‘ecological turn’ in water management (Disco, 2002). In developing countries large infrastructural water projects have also met with protest as in for example, India with the construction of the Narmada dams (Routledge, 2003). and in Brazil, where the Regional Commission of Persons Affected by Dams was created to protest against the construction of hydro-electric dams (Navarro, 1994, Rothman, 2001). International NGO’s, like the WWF, also have a critical attitude towards inter-basin water transfers (WWF, 2007) and the NGO CPT is playing a role in the protest against the inter-basin water transfer in the North East of Brazil.

In spite of the protests and the lessons learned from the past, there are still many examples of water infrastructural projects both current and in the recent past. In India for example, the government announced in 2002 a plan for an intra and inter-basin water transfer program involving 30 links between different river basins (Thatte, 2007). Another famous example is the south-to-north water transfer in China that was officially launched at the end of 2002 (Yang and Zehnder, 2005).

Briscoe (2010) sheds his light on why these projects are still being executed. He explains the process behind the WCD, why he thinks this was a dangerous process, and why infrastructure has come back to the center of the development agenda. As the author explains, the WCD was “an attempt to bring stakeholders from all sides of the debate together, to develop a shared fact base and a shared set of recommendations which would ensure (a) that bad dams were not financed or built and (b) that good dams were financed and built without inordinate costs or delays” (Briscoe, 2010, p. 403). However, the 26 Guidelines that were produced by the WCD were rejected by dam-building countries and the World Bank. Briscoe –a former World Bank official– explains why this happened, and thinks that this rejection represents a “positive and long overdue turning point in the governance of development assistance” (Briscoe, 2010, p. 399). He argues that the Guidelines were impossible for countries to implement, and that representative institutions like the World Bank and the private sector left the WCD to the mercies of the anti-dam groups. One argument of the World Bank not to accept the Guidelines, was for example that it disagreed with a Guideline that required “free, prior, and informed consent” for indigenous peoples and thus give indigenous and tribal groups a de facto veto right (Briscoe, 2010, p. 404). The adaptation of this Guideline would, according to the World Bank, “undermine the fundamental right of the state to make decisions in the best interests of the community as a whole” (World Bank, 2003, quoted in Briscoe, 2010, p. 409).

The author is very critical about how the WCD Guidelines came into being, and argues that the WCD was “an extraordinarily audacious process, since it aimed to substitute the legitimacy of the state (elected in most cases, accountable in all) with the will of self-appointed-anti-dam NGOs that are not accountable to anyone except their fellow advocates”

(Briscoe, 2010, p. 409). Briscoe (2010) explains that political leaders of countries during the development phase, have given and do give high priority to building dams. They “have been strong supporters because of the manifest benefits which dams have brought by delivering reliable water supplies, helping produce low-cost food, energy and transport services, and protecting people from floods and droughts (Briscoe, 2010, p. 401).

What has changed seven years after the WCD produced its Guidelines, is that infrastructure has come back to the centre of the development agenda, in the Bank and outside. The author is content that governments in many countries have taken control again, and are “finding new and creative ways of (a) addressing the very important social costs which are borne by those directly affected by large infrastructure and (b) ensuring that the much larger numbers who benefit from most such investments are not marginalized” (Briscoe, 2010, p. 413).

A less positive view on contemporary dam building comes from Wehr (2004), who makes an historical analysis of state building rhetoric and the fight over water in the American West. The author wonders why many nations in the global South have construction plans for high dams, while the problems with development strategies that were used in the American West are reasonably well known. He argues that the political regimes of the global South use similar rhetoric as the New Deal politicians and dam boosters used, to promote the construction of the dams in the American West. The author wonders whether the outcome will be the same, and thinks that “a deep examination of the first place and time when such projects were justified may help us understand the reasons and effects of their contemporary mobilization” (Wehr, 2004, p. xi). In the conclusion of the book, the author states that

“Nations are using the model of the U.S. West, including the technology and occasionally the same construction companies, to mount a treadmill of production to spur development (...) in short, for overall economic growth. The fact that the U.S. West is facing serious problems with continued expansion has not stopped new development elsewhere. Perhaps it is the ideological denial of any problems by the U.S. planners and politicians that encourages developing nations” (Wehr, 2004, p. 232).

The author argues that the attempts of the developing nations to establish a treadmill of production on the U.S model, do not make these nations less dependent, because of the globalization with hegemonic U.S. power. Therefore, such attempts will likely contribute to a *global* treadmill of production, “with the global South continuing to supply ecological and labor resources to produce for the consumption of the U.S. and the West” (Wehr, 2004, p. 233).

In addition, Wehr (2004) explains how the environmental movement in the U.S gained some success in their struggle against the construction of dams in the mid-twentieth century, but also warns that environmentalists could find their own discourse opposing them, when the promoters of dams use a discourse of ‘improved nature’. This kind of discourse was already successfully used once in the U.S by dam promoters. The conclusion is rather gloomy when Wehr expresses that it is difficult to find and maintain a middle ground between the modernist discourse –that justifies the domination of nature for human economic purposes– and the environmentalist discourse, but that this is our only hope to reach a situation where state action might be more sustainable, environmentally minded and less destructive. Although Wehr recognizes the fact that contemporary local struggles against dam construction have often been successfully neutralized by methods of intimidation, buy-offs and the exercise of political power, Wehr (2004, p. 233) states that “the mere fact of continual struggle in so many locations offers hope of slowing the global treadmill”.

The analysis of Wehr (2004), is interesting, because it shows how people and institutions constructed reality, and how this had real effects on the landscape of the American West. Reviewing other literature on large infrastructural water projects shows that there is often a focus on cost-benefit analysis's in order to make an argument in favor or against the project (Albiac et al., 2003, Brown et al., 2009, Embid, 2003, Ghassemi and White, 2007, Gupta, 2001, Jain et al., 2005, Liu and Zheng, 2002, Tilt et al., 2009, WWF, 2007, Snaddon et al., 1998, Thatte, 2007) For example Tilt et al. (2009) promote the implementation of proper social impact assessments and state that: "By identifying potential impacts in advance of a large dam project, agencies and policymakers can make better decisions about which interventions should be undertaken, and how" (Tilt et al., 2009, p. S249). Also Brown et al. (2009) propose a tool for a costs-benefit evaluation: "To meet the simultaneous demands for water, energy, and environmental protection well into the future, a broader view of dams is needed. We thus propose a new tool for evaluating the relative costs and benefits of dam construction based on multi-objective planning techniques" (Brown et al., 2009, p. S303). The above mentioned sources show that both promoters and opponents of large infrastructural water projects sum up the costs and benefits in order to make their argument. The discussion about the PISF also shows these two sides: on the one side the government states that the project will bring development to the poor northeastern region, and on the other side the opponents argue that the possible gains will not outweigh the social, environmental and economical costs.

However, do cost-benefit analysis always explain why projects are being implemented or not? Researchers that study the politics of water would argue that such a view would be too narrow, for they argue that water resources management is inherently political (Molle et al., 2009, Mollinga, 2001, Mollinga, 2008, Wester et al., 2009). However, this is "not a commonly held perspective and has to be established" (Mollinga, 2008, p. 8). For that matter, this research tries to show that also the inter-basin water transfer in Brazil is political. Before moving on to give examples of articles that analyze the 'politics of water', I will first elaborate on what can be understood as 'politics'.

According to The New Collins Concise English Dictionary (1982, quoted in Mollinga, 2008, p. 8) politics is "the art and science of directing and administering states and other political units". It is also more broadly defined as "the complex or aggregate of relationships of men [sic!] in society, especially those relationships involving authority or power", "any activity concerned with the acquisition of power" and "manoeuvres or factors leading up to or influencing (something)" (The New Collins Concise English Dictionary, 1982, quoted in Mollinga, 2008, p. 8). So, politics does not only concern state actors, but is a dimension or quality in all social processes in which interests of individuals or groups are mediated (Mollinga, 2008). Bijker (2007, p. 115) goes a step further by arguing that "things are thick with power relations and politics", and that "things can be understood only within their social context: they are socially constructed, and shape social relations". Bijker (2007) uses the word politics in a broad sense, "from the micro to the macro scale, that is related as much to the power of humans as to the power of ideas and things" (Bijker, 2007, p. 123).

Flyvbjerg (2003) analyses several megaprojects that have been constructed in Europe and identifies the reasons behind the fact that many megaprojects have poor performance records in terms of economy, environment and public support. The 'performance paradox' is that despite this poor performance, many more and much larger infrastructure projects are being proposed and build around the world. In order to improve the performance, the author argues that risk must be acknowledged much more explicitly and must be managed better, with more accountability, than is the case today. In addition, it is pointed out that the interests and power relations involved in megaprojects are typically very strong –because of the sums of money at

stake, the many jobs, the environmental impacts and the national prestige– and therefore the author also focuses on “how power relations and outcomes may be influenced and balanced by reforming the institutional arrangements that form the context of megaproject decision making” (Flyvbjerg, 2003, p. 7). Although the author does point out the political component that is connected to megaprojects, it does not make a deep analysis of this component. The author mentions that politicians may have a ‘monument complex’ and that “local officials sometimes have the mentality of empire builders”. Moreover, “Economic and political self-interest also exist at the level of cities and states (...) which may explain cost underestimation and benefit overestimation” (Flyvbjerg, 2003, p. 46).

An article that makes a more profoundly analysis of how politics is connected to megaprojects, is the article of Swyngedouw (2007). This article describes how during the Franco regime (1939-1975) many large infrastructural water projects were carried out. According to the author, the ‘ideological-political mission’ of Franco was

“predicated upon national territorial integration, the eradication of regionalist or autonomist aspirations, and a concerted discursive and physical process of cultural and material national(ist) homogenization and modernization. (...) the production of the technonatural material infrastructures of this modernizing programme was predicated upon re-scaling the ‘networks of interest’ on which Franco’s power rested, from a national visionary to an internationalist geo-economic and geo-political imagination, articulated through Spain’s integration in the US-led Western Alliance” (Swyngedouw, 2007, p. 9).

The mission of Franco was to ‘integrate’ the regions of Spain through hydraulic interventions. The hydraulic flows of Spain were geographically reorganized to construct a nationally more ‘equitable’ and ‘just’ distribution of water resources by bringing water from regions with ‘excess’ water to regions with a water ‘deficit’. An image of persistent drought was created to explain socio-economic difficulties and the propaganda machinery of Franco’s regime constructed the idea that the ‘hydrological disequilibrium’ was the most important challenge facing Spain. So, the ‘grand national hydraulic works’ became symbols of integration, nation building and modernity (Swyngedouw, 2007).

Moreover, Franco used the hydraulic works politically by linking himself to the infrastructural water projects and transferring to the Spanish population an image of himself as someone who conquered Nature and took care of his people by building the hydraulic works and in that way brought progress. The grand national hydraulic works would end the drought and misery of Spain and Franco assured Spain that “we are prepared to make sure that not a single drop of water is lost and that not a single injustice remains” (F. Franco, 1959, quoted in Swyngedouw, 2007). This quote fits in what Wester et al. (2009) describe as the ‘hydraulic mission’, which is defined as “the strong conviction that every drop of water flowing to the ocean is a waste and that the state should develop hydraulic infrastructure to capture as much water as possible for human uses” (based on Wester 2009 in Wester et al., 2009, p. 396). The article argues that in Mexico, the hydraulic mission was central to the formation of Mexico’s hydraulic bureaucracy (hydrocracy), which managed to renew its autonomy at different political moments in the country’s history (Wester et al., 2009). Swyngedouw (2007), and Wester et al. (2009) show that hydraulic works are entangled with politics and power relations.

This thesis analyses the visit of President Lula and his entourage to the São Francisco river region and the construction works of the inter-basin water transfer (PISF) in October 2009 as an illustration of how political elements are connected to the water transfer project. Although the research does not focus on the power position of the hydrocracy of Brazil or the different

(political or economical) interests of the donor and receiving states, the analysis of President Lula's visit does provide an insight into the political relations (or the relations that Lula wishes to strengthen). How he connects himself and his government to different governmental institutions, how he copes with the protest against the water transfer, and how he uses the water transfer project as a stage to promote himself and his government and policies, can be analyzed by using the concept of cultural performance.

Rap (2007) provides an example of how the concept of cultural performance can be used. Rap (2007, p. 601) states that:

“As a ritual, cultural performance tries to convince participants of the way the world is. Rather than being an empty or opaque show of form, it is meant to engage people, not only rationally, but also emotionally”.

The article interpreted an election rally as a “cultural performance, which is ‘the show’ that expresses and envisions the cultural, in ways that appeal to the popular imagination” (Munro, 1999, cited in Rap, 2007, p. 596). The analysis of this election rally shows how a situational analysis and ethnography of cultural performance provides an illustration of “culture and everyday organizational life, the role of ritual, and the part that passion plays in politics” (Rap 2007, p. 623).

Another article by Rap (2006), shows how a cultural performance can promote a policy. Through a cultural performance, a policy is interpreted in a certain way. In the case of the Mexican policy of Irrigation Management Transfer, the policy was heralded as a success, because it was promoted as being a success. Cultural performance was important for the promotional events during which the success of the policy-model was performed. The article describes the elements that were important in the promotion of the policy-model. In the same way, the visit of President Lula to the São Francisco region can be analyzed as a ‘cultural performance’ to promote the water transfer. Through this analysis, it can be understood how Lula uses this major technological project as a stage to promote himself and his government to the different local target groups, construction workers and voters.

1.3.3. Intervention, Life-worlds and Interface

This thesis defines the Project of Integration of the São Francisco River with the watersheds of the Northern Northeast (PISF) as being a planned intervention, undertaken by the Brazilian government. This intervention exists of the actual construction works of the canals of the PISF, as well as all the other activities undertaken by the intervening parties in relation to the project (these parties are the army, the construction companies, and the government officials) In section 1.3.1 it was mentioned that this thesis aims to analyze the implementation process of this infrastructural project. Long (2001) argues that in order to gain a better understanding of how the implementation process of an intervention is evolving, a central problem for analysis is “to understand the processes by which interventions enter the life-worlds of the individuals and groups affected and thus come to form part of the resources and constraints of the social strategies they develop” (Long, 2001, p. 31). This section will further elaborate on the concept of life-worlds and the contribution that an interface analysis can have to explore the planned intervention and the life-worlds involved.

Long (1989) explains the concept of life-worlds as used by Schutz and Luckmann (1973). The life-world is:

“a lived in and largely taken for granted world. It is actor rather than observer defined. Everyday life is experienced as an ordered reality, shared with others (i.e. it is inter-subjective). This ‘order’ appears both in the ways in which

people manage their social relationships and in how they problematize their situations” (Schutz and Luckmann, cited in Long, 1989, p. 247).

Ubels (1989, p. 187) adds dimensions to the life-worlds:

“life-world (...) is used to embrace different dimensions of social life. It refers to material-economic dimensions, in terms of production and reproduction; to social dimensions, in terms of relations, networks, groups and organizations; as well as to the cultural and ideological dimensions of people’s lives, in terms of their perceptions, values and ideas”.

Long and van der Ploeg (1994, p.64) connect the intervention and life-worlds in the following way:

“All forms of external intervention necessarily enter the existing life-worlds of the individuals and social groups affected, and in this way are mediated and transformed by these same actors and local structures. Also to the extent that large-scale and remote social forces do alter the life-chances and behavior of individuals, they can do so only through shaping, directly or indirectly, the everyday life experiences and perceptions of the individuals concerned”.

Moreover, doing a life-world analysis, one must realize that the actors have “accumulated knowledge of previous experiences of interventions of various sorts, not only those organized by the state or the agency in question” (Long, 2001, p. 33), which also influences the way in which they deal with the intervention. This holds true for both the ‘intervened’ and the ‘intervening’ parties (Long, 2001). In the research area the local people certainly have past experiences with government interventions, since it is an area where people are resettled because of the construction of hydroelectric dams.

So, in order to understand how the implementation process of the PISF is evolving, this thesis explores the meaning that the project has in the context of the varying life-worlds. In that way it can be better understood why the actors in the research area are acting and reacting in the way they do. Long (1989) states that the concept of interface can contribute to the analysis of the critical points of linkage or confrontation between different groups or social units. The construction site of the water transfer can be conceived as being an interface situation, where an encounter takes place between individuals or groups, representing different interests, resources and levels of power. These encounters do not necessarily have to be face-to-face, for actors that are absent can also influence actions and outcomes (Long, 2001). For my analysis this means that not only is the interaction between the government and the local target groups important to analyze the implementation process of the water transfer, but external actors can also enter the life-worlds of the local actors and shape and reshape their goals, perceptions, interests and relationships and in that way influence the implementation process of the intervention. In relation to this research, non-present actors that do influence the situation could, for example be the NGOs that protest against the water transfer. The cultural performance of Lula also enters the life-worlds of the local actors and influences (or not) their actions and perceptions.

This and the previous sections have introduced the different concepts that form the theoretical framework of this research. I will now summarize how these concepts are interlinked in order to draw a clear picture of how they will be used in the analysis. First of all, this thesis will analyze how the implementation process of the inter-basin water transfer in the North East (PISF) is evolving. With the ‘interactive model of policy implementation’ in mind, it is assumed that the implementers of the PISF have to gain constant support for the project from the people that live in the construction area of the water transfer. In order to gain a better understanding of how the implementation process is evolving and what role the protests have played in this process, the interface at the construction site will be analyzed, as well as how the PISF enters the life-worlds of the different actors and groups present in the construction

area of the PISF. In that way not only can the linkages of the PISF with the material and economic dimensions of the life-worlds be made clear, but it will also show how the PISF links to the social, cultural and ideological dimensions of the life-worlds, giving space to analyze how the PISF links to values and beliefs and feeds the imagination of the actors.

Moreover, through an analysis of the cultural performance of President Lula, it is analyzed how he and his government use the inter-basin water transfer politically to promote the government and the project, and how this cultural performance is part of the strategy to gain 'constant support' for this major project. This analysis can be linked to the life-world analysis, so that it can be understood how and why the strategy of the Lula government is working in the research area. After this analysis, it will be better understood why the government continued with the construction of the water transfer, why this did not lead to continued major mobilizations of the local people in the research area, and how this project is used politically by President Lula and his government. Although this research does not focus on the complex political aspects (such as the power position of the hydrocracy in Brazil, the position of the river basin committee or the hydroelectric company or the interests of the states) the case-analysis of the visit of President Lula and his entourage to the research area can provide an insight into how political aspects are connected to the water transfer.

1.3.4. The Actor Network Theory

During the proposal for this research I chose to use the Actor Network Theory to provide me with conceptual and methodological tools for the analysis. The reason for this was that the Actor Network Theory provides a certain 'view on reality', for it "provides an active role for just about everything" (Dolwick, 2009, p. 43), inasmuch as it implies that non-humans can also have agency. Wester (2008) writes in the following about agency:

"I agree with Steins (1999), who, based on Callon and Law (1995), writes that agency is something that emerges through and in the interactions and associations of humans and things and that 'by themselves, things don't act' (*ibid.*: 485). However, the same can be said of humans, as we are in and of this world. This is not to suggest that humans do not have agency or cannot act intentionally, but that this is always a relational effect".

Actors are interconnected with each other, forming actor-networks, but these connections can also fall apart and form new connections. The theory puts an emphasis on how associations are made and transformed (Latour, Callon and Law, 2003, cited in Dolwick, 2009). Two concepts that are relevant in ANT are the process of 'translation' and 'obligatory passage points'.

"Translation is; 'the methods by which an actor enrolls others. These methods involve: (a) the definition of roles, their distribution, and the delineation of a scenario: (b) the strategies in which an actor (...) renders itself indispensable to others by creating a geography of obligatory passage points; and (c) the displacement imposed upon others as they are forced to follow the itinerary that has been imposed" (Callon et al., 1986, p. xvii).

An 'obligatory passage point' is a mandatory standardized action (Latour, 1988, cited in Luck, no date) and can be defined by other actors in the actor-network. Other actors must pass through the 'obligatory passage point' and if this happens successfully, the actor that defined or controlled the 'obligatory passage point' becomes indispensable and grows in strength (Callon, 1986). This article by Callon (1986) shows that an obligatory passage point does not necessarily have to be a 'standardized action', but can be an actor as well. Lastly, the theory has provided me with the methodological tool of 'follow the actor' which will be explained in section 1.4.2

1.4. Methodology

1.4.1. Field work

In July 2009 I arrived in São Paulo to learn Portuguese and to discuss the research with Dr. Pedro Jacobi, who was my field work supervisor in Brazil at the University of São Paulo. Thereafter I travelled to Salvador da Bahia and discussed the research extensively with Andrea Zellhuber, from the NGO *Comissão Pastoral da Terra* (CPT). She also provided me with booklets and articles written by Brazilians about the inter-basin water transfer, which were useful to get a better understanding of the situation, and she helped me with contacting key persons. I went to Paulo Afonso in the state of Pernambuco where people from another NGO introduced me to the region where the water transfer is being built. Before my arrival in the region it was not clear what possibilities there would be to stay in the construction area. However, when I arrived in the area I met people who helped me to find a place to stay, first in Petrolândia, nearby the construction site of the water transfer, and finally in the village (Agrovila 06) where the army and the construction companies had settled themselves to construct the eastern canal of the water transfer. In Agrovila 06 and its surroundings I decided to do the interface and life-world analysis in order to get a better understanding of the implementation process of the water transfer. Unfortunately, I had not much choice as to where to do this research, for I depended on the availability of transport and contacts, and in the research area it was not safe to travel alone to remote areas further down the canals. Therefore, I decided to stay in Agrovila 06, which was situated nearby the intake of the eastern canal of the water transfer.

In Agrovila 06 I did a qualitative research, consisting of informal conversations and interviews and observations, which allowed me to explore the life-worlds and interface situation. In Agrovila 06 I stayed with a host family and this gave me the opportunity to observe the community and participate in its activities. . It also helped me to establish contact with the engineers, government officials and the military. I stayed in the research area for a total of almost three months, and this helped me to gain the trust of the inhabitants, the military and engineers. I needed some time for this, for the subject was sensitive because of the protests. The engineers showed me the project, but were not allowed to give me any documents. Because of this sensitivity I could not immediately discuss the things that I wanted to discuss. However, by staying in the area and with the people who worked and lived there, I was able to gather a lot of information and to triangulate the information, for different groups and individuals and their literature often made opposite claims. One disadvantage of this situation of staying in Agrovila 06, was that me being there, also influenced the interface situation and it can be difficult under these circumstances to maintain an analytical distance. As Rap (2008) points out, case study research cannot be objective, unbiased, and unprejudiced.

In Tres Marias, where I attained a meeting of the basin committee of the São Francisco river basin, I held four interviews. Because of the sensitivity of the subject, I will not always publish the real names of the people I have spoken to, nor the companies or organizations they were linked to, in order to provide anonymity.

During my stay in Agrovila 06, President Lula paid a surprise visit to the research area. Because it was in October and I already had stayed for some time in the research area and knew company employees and the military, I was allowed to follow President Lula and his entourage during the visit. This gave me the opportunity to do the cultural performance analysis. To supplement my observations, I followed newspaper, television and internet reports on the visit.

1.4.2. 'Follow the actor' and interviewing

In order to encounter and enter the life-worlds of specific actors, I have used an actor-oriented perspective. This perspective “gives priority (a) to identifying the problems and concepts as presented by particular actors, with a view to isolating similarities or differences in social interpretation and cultural values or styles, and (b) to learning something about the types and contents of important social relationships and activity fields that involve these individuals” (Long, 1989, p. 247) Also the method of ‘following the actor’ is useful. Callon (1986, p. 4) explains this method in the following way: “the observer follows the actors in order to identify the manner in which these define and associate the different elements by which they build and explain their world, whether it be social or natural”.

Steins (1999, cited in Wester, 2008) notes that:

“A danger of the methodological device of ‘following the actors’ is that too much emphasis is placed on the agency of individuals and on ‘heroes’ or ‘champions of change’ (or ‘master-actors’), to the exclusion of those who are marginalized and the invisible work contributed by many other actors (Steins, 1999).”

Therefore, one must not only focus on representatives, while the link between the representatives and the constituencies must be established empirically and not be taken for granted, because a representative does not always act in the interests or on behalf of the ones he is supposed to represent (Long, 1989).

Different techniques were used in interviews: informal interviewing in order to explore the research topic and to find out which area was the most interesting to go to and which people were relevant to interview further; and unstructured and semi-structured interviews to go more in-depth and find out more about specific issues. I have had conversations and interviews with people that work for NGOs, engineers, the military, members of the basin committee of the São Francisco river and the local population in the research area.

Besides interviewing, observation has been a very important aspect of my field research as well. Observation can provide very different information to interviews, for it provides more background. It is also needed because there is a “disjuncture between what people say and how they act”. It includes “watching, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching, since everyday life involves visual, aural, olfactory, and physical information” (Rap, power point presentation, 2008). For my research, observation has been very important. For example, when the local inhabitants told me what they thought about the presence of the military and engineers in their village, my own observations were useful to test this information: were there fights, did inhabitants and the military and engineers talk to each other or greet each other?

2. The North East, the inter-basin water transfer and Brazilian politics

2.1. Introduction

In the first chapter, brief background information was already given on the inter-basin water transfer, the arguments of the Brazilian government to implement it and the discussion around it, the semi-arid northeastern region of Brazil and the São Francisco river. This chapter will explore these issues more in-depth before describing the results of the field research. Firstly, this chapter briefly describes the history of the Brazilian North East, the São Francisco river, and the inter-basin water transfer (PISF). Then, I will sketch the arguments the Brazilian government deploys to promote the PISF. Section 2.3 introduces President Lula and his government and provides a brief outline of the Brazilian political system, the electoral politics of the North East and the 2010 presidential elections.

2.2. Introducing the North East and the PISF

2.2.1. The history of the Brazilian North East semi-arid region and its drought situation

The Northeastern semi-arid region of Brazil encompasses the states of Alagoas, Bahia, Ceara, Minas Gerais, Paraíba, Pernambuco, Piauí, Rio Grande do Norte and Sergipe. This area is also known as the *Polígono das Secas*, or the Drought Polygon (Figure 2.1). The government regards this as a needy and drought-stricken area. The Environmental Impact Report (Relatório de Impacto Ambiental – RIMA, 2004) on the PISF, written for the Ministry of National Integration (MI), stresses several times that the Northeast region cannot develop further because of its drought problems, and that it is therefore necessary to solve this problem. However, not everyone shares the opinion of water being the main constraint on development in the *Polígono das Secas*, as was explained in the introduction.

The average precipitation in the Northeastern region is 900 mm per year. However, in large stretches the annual precipitation is below 600 mm (Krol et al., 2004). According to Lima (quoted in Silveira and Araújo, 2007), the rainfall does not exceed 350 or 400 mm per year in the low altitude areas. In the high altitude areas the rainfall reaches 1000 mm (Krol et al., 2004). A major problem is that the rainfall distribution is irregular in space and time. The dry period mostly lasts for 6 months, with extremely low or no rainfall. Annual precipitation amounts show large fluctuations, and droughts recur irregularly and can last for several years. When a severe drought occurs, the local water and food supply systems collapse and the regular functioning of society in the interior is disrupted. This causes societal tension that the government answers with aid programs: rationalization of water and transportation by trucks over longer distances, distribution of food packages and initiation of emergency employment programs (Krol et al., 2004).



Figure 2.1 Drought polygon

Source: <http://educacao.uol.com.br/geografia/ult1694u381.jhtm>

The arid area in the Brazilian North East is the world's most densely populated semi-arid region with 20 million inhabitants, which is about 13% of the country's and 46% of the population of the North East (Silveira and Araújo, 2007). A large share of the rural population depends on subsistence farming, although the rain and soil conditions are not favorable for rain-fed agricultural production. The region has typical brushwood vegetation, known as *caatinga*. There is extreme inequity in the distribution of land in North East Brazil: subsistence farmers generally have small plots and few options and competencies to improve their situation (Krol et al., 2004). The main causes of this situation will be briefly explained in the following paragraphs.

When Portugal colonized the country, Salvador was established as Brazil's capital. However, during the 18th century the North East lost its political and economic power to the South Eastern region because of the development of mines and agriculture. In the 19th century the economic power in the South and Southeast grew further and this stigmatized the North East as having fewer possibilities for development. This position was further aggravated by periods of severe droughts (RIMA, 2004).

Empinotti (2007) gives a nice overview of the developments in the North East over the centuries. She explains how limited access to land and water is the root of inequality and poverty in the North East. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to go into the history of the North East in depth, but several important points will be made. One is the colonial legacy of the region. The patterns of land concentration and power that emerged during the colonial period are responsible for today's reality. Landowners stayed powerful, because

landownership was combined with a blurred distinction between public and private power. In a water scarce region, power is in the hands of groups that have access to it. This situation led to the concentration of and the control over resources. Empinotti adds that water concentration is as equally powerful an influence as land concentration (Melo, 1980; Silva, 1989; Araújo, 2004, cited in Empinotti, 2007).

A second aspect that increased inequality and poverty levels, were the economic development approaches of the government at the beginning of the twentieth century. These had unintended outcomes such as land concentration and unequal access to water, because it was assumed that technical solutions alone, especially dam construction, would promote development. This assumption has been present in development initiatives since 1909. The term *Industria da Seca* (Drought Industry) is used to refer to the system that “improperly used public resources (intended to decrease the drought’s impact) to fulfill the interests of the local *Coronéis* and state political elites” (Calado, 1960, cited in Empinotti, 2007, p. 124). These *Coronéis*, which were local elites¹, used their network of power at local, state and federal level to influence where the dams would be constructed and they also were the first to access rural credits during drought periods. The drought maintained the flow of investment and support, and because of that the water scarcity had to be perpetuated, which also fed the interdependent relationship between local and state power (Empinotti, 2007).

During the 1950s the federal government tried to combine social changes with technical solutions. However, this attempt was neutralized by several factors, which had to do with the Cold War which led to an approach to development which focused on controlling any source of social disturbance, as well as the middle-class’s growing fear of communism. This in turn and in combination with reformist governments led to the implementation of new political and social measures. It also had to do with the local oligarchies who were afraid to lose their assets and pressed the government actors to do away with progressive reforms. In 1964, an authoritarian regime was installed that received support from U.S agencies, the Brazilian middle-class and the Northeastern local oligarchies. With that, the focus on technical development returned. These developments made the region dependent on external support, and although the GNP in the North East tripled from 1970 to 1993, its identity remained tied to drought, poverty and inequality (Araújo, 2004, cited in Empinotti, 2007).

Today, the new Water Law, which came into effect in 1997, promotes a decentralized water management approach. Empinotti (2007, p. 162) argues that this “has the potential to reinforce once more –as has occurred in the past– the unequal distribution of power, which is strongly related to water and land access in the region”.

The region has suffered from drought since its origin and different solutions have been proposed and implemented. In 1877 the region was struck by a drought that lasted three years and caused many deaths. This tragedy stimulated the debate on solutions for the water shortages. Burning oil in the Atlantic Ocean to change the precipitation regime and transporting icebergs from the south pole are examples of proposals that were not carried out. Examples of measures that were implemented are the building of dams, irrigation projects, drought forecasting, the creation of work fronts, the construction of water tanks and the implementation of a new water resources management model (Campos and Studart, 2008). Discussions on finding a solution for the drought problems in this area have therefore continued over a long period. One could wonder what effect this has on the population and on

¹ The term *Coronéis* came into existence in 1831 when the Monarchy system created a National Guard. The *Coronéis*, who were the most powerful landowners, entrepreneurs and traders, were appointed to be the heads of the National Guard and were responsible for political control that was shaped by patriarchal and authoritarian ideals (Empinotti, 2008). To learn more about the power and influence and the consequences of the *Coronéis* system, I recommend to read Empinotti’s work.

politics: after such a long history of trying to find solutions to the drought, it is certainly ambitious finally to attempt to solve it.

2.2.2. The São Francisco river, the inter-basin water transfer project and government propaganda

Driving through the North East of Brazil, surrounded by the seemingly endless *caatinga* –the typical brushwood vegetation of the North East– it comes as a surprise when one suddenly faces the broad, slow flowing São Francisco river and see it flow into the unnaturally shaped, but beautiful reservoir lakes that invite you to take a refreshing dive to wash off the dust and escape the heat. This São Francisco river is not ‘just a river’. The local population soothingly refers to the perennially flowing river as the *Velho Chico*, the ‘old man’ in Portuguese. The river has played an important role not only in the history of the North East, but also in the history of the whole of Brazil, since it flows from the center of the country to the North East of Brazil and connects the coast with the interior (Harvey, 2008). In that way, the river has played a large role in the ‘taming of the semi-arid backlands’ during the last five centuries (Ioris, 2001) and because of that is also referred to as the ‘river of national integration’ (Harvey, 2008).

The São Francisco is huge: it is Brazil’s third largest river with a length of 2,700 kilometers and a drainage area that spreads over eight percent of the Brazilian territory. The average annual natural flow of the river is 2.850 cubic meters per second but during the year the flow can vary between 1.077 m³/s and 5.290 m³/s (ANA, no date). It is important for irrigation and hydropower and its water is also used for domestic and industrial supply, dilution of domestic and industrial waste, watering of animals, waterway transport, wildlife preservation, recreation and fishing. A small fraction of the total volume of water is used for freshwater supply and sanitation (Ioris, 2001). The flow is highly regulated by a cascade of six large dams. The power stations generate 10.395 MW of energy (ANA, no date). The Sobradinho reservoir is the largest reservoir with an extension of 320 kilometers and a storage capacity of 34,1 billion cubic meters (CHESF, no date). Also important to mention is the Itaparica reservoir, from which the PISF will depart. When dam construction is involved, resettlement of the local population also becomes part of the story. The resettlement programs have not all been successful. The World Bank even called the Itaparica resettlement project an example of what not to do (Independent Evaluation Group, 2001). Because of the creation of the dam reservoirs, indigenous people also had to move from their lands. The resettlement projects ruptured the social structures in the area, and the compensation has still not been finalized.

In this region, that is full of complexities because of its diverse population, its colonial legacy, and a history of resettlement projects, the government decided to build the inter-basin water transfer project (PISF). The idea for this project dates back as far as 1820. Since then different design proposals have been put forward, but implementation did not begin until the current administration of President Luís Inácio Lula da Silva (2003-present) came to power (Silveira and Araújo, 2007).

The PISF includes the diversion of water from the São Francisco river to other rivers in the states of Rio Grande do Norte, Ceará, Paraíba and Pernambuco. To achieve this, a total of more than two thousand kilometers of canals will be built, including those on dry riverbeds. Canals will be 25 meters wide and 5 meters deep. The main axes of the project are formed by two reinforced-concrete artificial canals which will together be approximately 720 kilometers long. The North Axis project will transport an average volume of 45,2 m³/s through the system. It will have approximately 402 kilometers of artificial concrete canal, 22 aqueducts, 6 tunnels, 26 small-size reservoirs and 4 pump stations to raise the water 165 meters. The East

Axis will transport an average water volume of $18,3 \text{ m}^3/\text{s}$ and will include 5 aqueducts, 2 tunnels, 9 small-size reservoirs and 5 pump stations to raise the water 304 meters (RIMA, 2004). Furthermore, 26 more dams will be built to regularize the distribution of the water (Ministério da Integração Nacional, no date). The water for the North Axis will be collected in nearby the town Cabrobó, and the water for the East Axis will be collected nearby the town Petrolândia, both located in the state of Pernambuco. Both canals depart from the Itaparica reservoir. Figure 2.2 illustrates the layout of the canals and the interconnection with other rivers.



Figure 2.2 PISF project plan

Source: <http://www.integracao.gov.br/saofrancisco/integracao/infografico.asp>

The project will divert $63,5 \text{ m}^3/\text{s}$ of the Sao Francisco River flow which is 3,5% of the total flow of the Sao Francisco River. Or, in other words, of the nearly 90 billion m^3 of water that the Sao Francisco releases into the sea per year, about 2 billion m^3 of water will be captured by the project (RIMA, 2004). However, different sources mention different numbers on the amount that will be extracted. Campos et al. (2008) states that it is assumed that a continual transfer of $26,4 \text{ m}^3/\text{s}$ discharge will take place, and that this can go up to $127 \text{ m}^3/\text{s}$ when the Sobradinho reservoir is full. The article by Silveira and Araújo (2007) states that the *Agência Nacional de Águas*, (National Water Agency, ANA) issued a permit to transfer $26,4 \text{ m}^3/\text{s}$. Information that engineers have given to me, state that the Northern Axis will have a minimum flow of $99 \text{ m}^3/\text{s}$ and a maximum flow of $124 \text{ m}^3/\text{s}$. The Eastern Axis will have a minimum flow of $7 \text{ m}^3/\text{s}$ and a maximum flow of $28 \text{ m}^3/\text{s}$. The information about the flows therefore vary. Estimated costs of the project are US\$ 1.5 billion (RIMA, 2004). Figure 2.3 shows a picture of the reservoir of the first pump station of the Eastern Axis. And Figure 2.4 shows a part of the Eastern Axis canal.



Figure 2.3 Reservoir of the first pump station of the Eastern Axis



Figure 2.4 Part of the Eastern Axis canal

Approximately 12 million people live in the project area. The Environmental Impact Report (RIMA, 2004) explains that the transferred water will be used for various purposes: human and animal use, basic sanitation, irrigation, and fish and shrimp production. It is stated that the water transfer –the implementation of which is the responsibility of the Ministry of National Integration– aims to find a solution to the grave problems caused by the scarcity of water in the region, which in turn impoverishes the local population. Greater water availability is, according to the Environmental Impact Report, fundamental to the creation of more

employment in the region, and to increasing the chances for social and economic development (RIMA, 2004).

The Environmental Impact Report (RIMA, 2004) and booklets and information fliers from the Ministry of National Integration state that the main objective of the PISF is to secure the water availability for the population in the semi-arid Northeastern region, where the water consumption is around 50 liters per day per inhabitant. The project is promoted under the slogan: 'Project São Francisco, water for those who are thirsty'. Because of the water transfer, the population in the project region –urban as well as rural, industries, small and large farmers and all other productive sectors– will be able to use the water from the large dams to generate jobs and income. Consequently, the PISF will increase the quality of life. As the Ministry of National Integration puts it: the PISF will decrease the regional differences caused by the unequal availability of water between the basins and its populations. In this way it aims to integrate the country through hydraulic intervention.

Also, according to the Ministry of National Integration, the PISF can contribute to a decrease of migration from the rural areas to other regions where water stress is less intense. From an economic point of view the PISF can reduce the public expenditures on emergency aid during the frequent droughts. Between 1998 and 2000 these expenditures were US\$ 1 billion (RIMA, 2004). RIMA (2004) further stresses that the PISF is not an isolated project, but will guarantee water to already existing infrastructures such as dams, rivers and aqueducts and it will integrate with existing local solutions to water scarcity such as cisterns, wells and small dams. An information film by the Ministry of National Integration clearly shows how the image of the 'poor, thirsty northeastern peasants' is used to promote the PISF: images of the poor rural people and water supply alternatives that do not work are shown, the PISF project is promoted, and at the end of the movie it is said that the water of the PISF cannot reach the dispersed living people: for them they will provide alternative water resources. The film explains that the PISF will provide the urban areas with water, but images of these urban areas are not shown.

The Environmental Impact Report (RIMA, 2004) provides a whole list of negative social, environmental and economical impacts that the PISF might cause and sums up the measures that need to be taken in order to minimize these impacts. For the resettlement of people that have to move because of the PISF construction, Productive Rural Villages (*Vila Produtiva Rural*, VPR) will be built. Moreover, the report explains that projects will be executed to revitalize the São Francisco river. It concludes that everything has been thought through and that the inter-basin water transfer can only be good for the region. According to the report, the PISF presents a sufficient and structured solution to raise the water availability for a population and region that is suffering from drought. It states that the PISF will bring economic, social and ecological benefits that outweigh the environmental impacts produced by implementation and operation. An information film by the Ministry of National Integration enthusiastically promotes the project and its benefits for the North East. The information that the ministry provides, in reports, information folders and films, stresses that the amount of the water that will be taken from the São Francisco river can be compared to just a cup of water in relation to the total amount of water in the river. The Ministry of National Integration thus sends a message to the people that the PISF will provide a cup of water to the thirsty. President Lula himself stressed this message when he visited the São Francisco region for three days in October 2009. During these visits, Lula was seen to be a major promoter of the project. However, as is already stressed in the introduction, not everyone has the same optimistic opinion about the PISF, which has been the cause of many protests. Indeed, the protest movement argues exactly the opposite: the inter-basin water transfer will *not* bring economic, social and environmental benefits, and is politically driven.

2.3. The Brazilian political system, electoral politics of the North East and Lula

This section gives a short introduction to the Brazilian political system, President Lula and the 2010 presidential elections. It provides background information on the role of the North East in the presidential elections and the link between Lula and the North East.

Brazil is a Federal Republic, composed of the federal government, the states and municipalities. The country has twenty-six states and one federal district. The states have autonomous administrations and their governors are directly elected by the voters. The president of Brazil, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, is both the head of state and head of government, and has been president since January 1 2003.

President Lula has come a long way since his origins as a poor migrant from the North Eastern state of Pernambuco. He is one of the founders of the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT, the Workers' Party, which is considered left-wing) which always had strong connections with the social movements. However, the social movements now feel betrayed by President Lula, because of his failure to listen to their objections to the inter-basin water transfer. As one member of a social movement said: "he used us to get where he stands now, but now that he has the highest position, he does not listen to us anymore".

The president and vice-president are elected on the same ticket by popular vote for a four-year term. In 2006, Lula was re-elected with 60.83% of the votes, beating his opponent Geraldo Alckmin of the *Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira* (PSDB, Brazilian Social Democracy Party). Figure 2.5 below, shows in which states Lula won (the red states) and in which states his opponent won (the blue states). Figure 2.6 shows the results of the second voting round of the presidential elections of 2006. Figure 2.7 illustrates the location of the different states in Brazil. It can be observed that Lula won in all the Northeastern states with 60% or more of the votes, which indicates that the North East is a voting bank for Lula. The only state that Alckmin won with 60% or more was the state of Roraima (with 61.49%) (TSE, 2010). In October 2010 the next presidential elections will be held, in which Lula cannot participate because he has completed the maximum of two successive presidential terms.

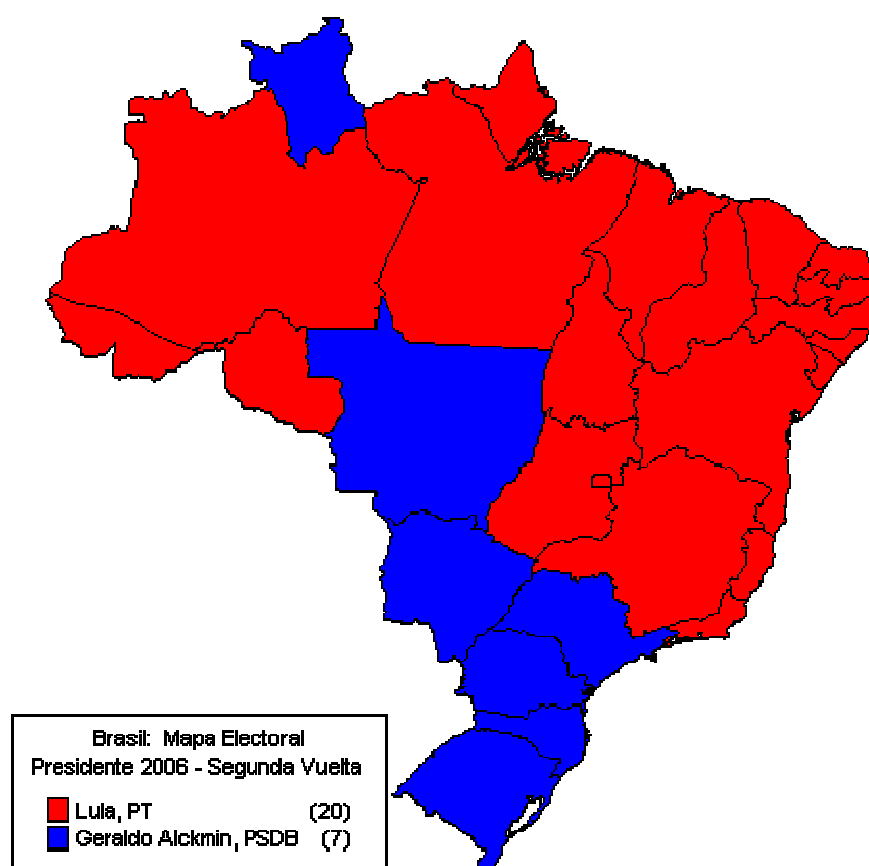


Figure 2.5 Brazil: Electoral map of the presidential 2006 elections, second round.

Lula won in the red colored states, Alckmin won in the blue colored states. Source:

http://electionresources.org/br/index_en.html

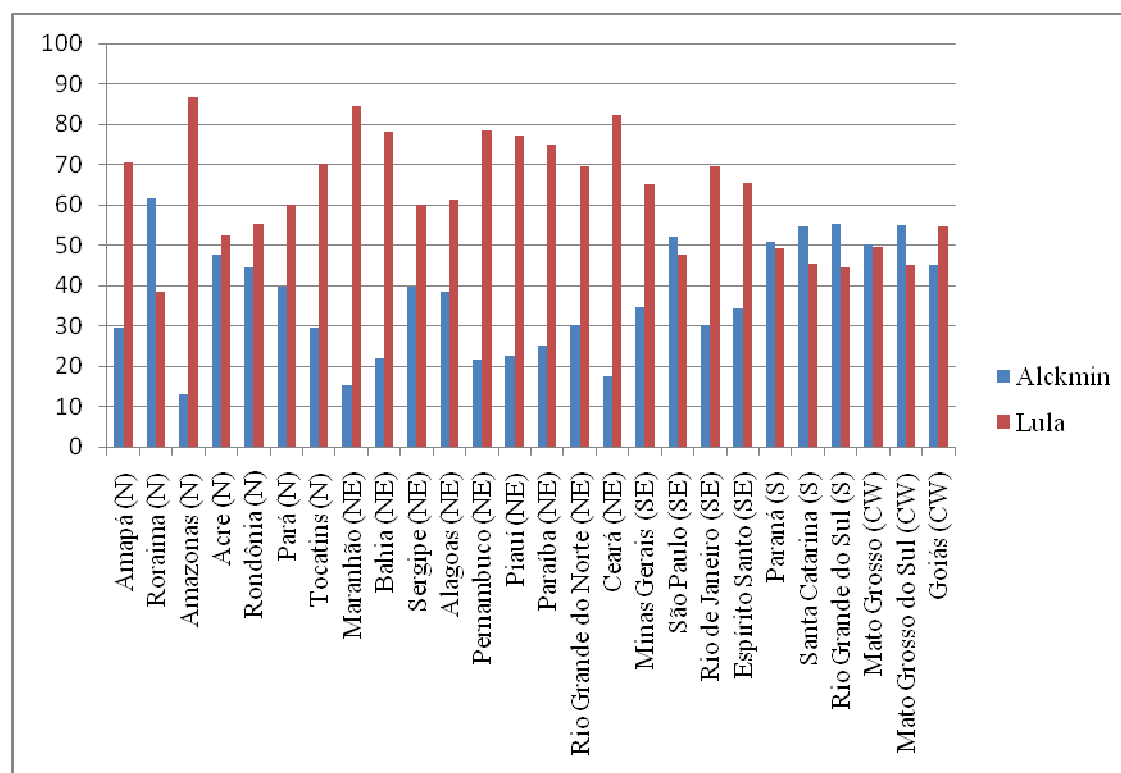


Figure 2.6 Presidential election results, 2006, second round.

N=North, NE=North East, SE=South East, S=South, CW=Central West. Source: www.tse.gov.br



Figure 2.7 Political map of Brazil.

Brazil has twenty-six states and one federal district

Source: <http://www.portalbrasil.net/brasil.htm>

Brazil has a multiparty political system and after the presidential election a coalition is formed and a cabinet appointed by the president. The most important party in the current government coalition with the PT is the *Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro* (PMDB, the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party, which is considered centrist), which was also in the government coalition during the time that the PT was in the opposition. The most important parties in the current opposition are the PSDB and the *Democratas* (DEM, the Democrats).

Lula's government states that it gives absolute priority to combating hunger and poverty. One of the government programs to achieve that is the *Bolsa Família* (Family Allowance) (Presidência da República, no date). Its objective is the social inclusion of families in poor and extreme poor situations by providing financial aid, on the condition that they assure that their children regularly attend school and have regular health checkups and vaccinations. Although an early version of the program was launched by the government of Cardoso (1995-2003), the poor strongly associate the program with Lula (Reel, 2006).

Both the *Bolsa Família* and the inter-basin water transfer (PISF) are part of the *Programa de Aceleração do Crescimento* (Growth Acceleration Program, PAC). This is an investment plan by the Lula government to promote large-scale infrastructure projects throughout the country and to provide tax incentives to advance economic development. Most of the expenditures of the PAC program go to the PISF. According to the World Bank, the PAC contributed to the country's 5.1 % economic growth in 2008 and its quick recovery from the 2009 global financial crisis (World Bank, 2010).

The 2006 presidential elections showed a shift in Lula's support base from the more developed regions to the most backward regions. Zucco (2008), argues that the clear division

in the 2006 election results between poorer Northern states which voted for Lula and the richer Southern states which voted for Alckmin, was not a sign that Brazil was undergoing a process of political polarization between the more developed South and the less developed North. Instead, the author argues that the shift in Lula's electoral base can be explained by the *Bolsa Familia* cash transfer program, which caused a pragmatic response by voters, and by the tendency in the less developed regions in Brazil to vote for the incumbent candidate. Lula has secured high levels of support amongst the poor electorate. This has come at the cost of a loss of support among the middle-classes, but "it is an almost unbeatable strategy from the strictly electoral perspective" (Zucco, 2008, p. 48).

Zucco (2008) furthermore explains that many politicians were willing to make an alliance with Lula because they sensed his electoral strength. Because of this, Lula was able to establish a wide network of local alliances. However, this meant that some local PT sections were not willing to claim exclusive endorsement by the president, even if they wanted to.

Besides the *Bolsa Familia* program, Lula's ability to communicate with the masses is also mentioned as one of the factors that contributes to his success (Zucco, 2008). The analysis of Lula's performance during his visit to São Francisco river described in chapter 4 demonstrates this skill.

Brazilian politics is not free from corruption. On the contrary, many Brazilians complain about this. Several I spoke to, expressed their suspicion that the PISF is also linked to corrupt practices. However, there is no official proof of this contention. A quick look at the website of Transparência Brasil (www.transparencia.org.br) shows that it is not strange that people might think that the PISF project is not corruption-free. On the website reports and statistics about the corruption in Brazil can be found. One of the factors that feeds suspicion is that private companies are allowed to finance the electoral campaigns of political candidates. President Lula himself has been sponsored by construction companies. Several peoples explained that when presidential candidates get elected, they reward construction companies with projects, and give something extra as well. On the governmental website www.tse.gov.br data is available on which persons and companies sponsored which candidate, and for how much. However, it is yet to be proved that the PISF is a corrupt project.

3. Life-worlds and interface in the construction area of the inter-basin water transfer

3.1. Introduction

Before the construction of the inter-basin water transfer (PISF) started, the CPT tried to mobilize the local population in the construction area to protest against the project. Many people participated. Groups of fishermen and farmers took part in the occupation of the PISF in Cabrobo –the location of the intake of the northern canal– and signed protest documents. Mari –an employee of the *Comissão Pastoral da Terra* (CPT) and the *Conselho Pastoral dos Pescadores* (CPP)– said that she visited the communities in the construction area to inform the people about the possible negative impacts of the PISF. According to her, the local population understood the problems that the water transfer could cause. However, when Mari talked with them, they also said that the PISF would provide them with more job opportunities, which they saw of course as a positive development. Other reasons why the work of the CPT to mobilize the people into protest was difficult, will become clear in this chapter.

This chapter focuses on the situation in Agrovila 06 –the village where the army moved in to start the construction of the water transfer and where the CPT has tried to gain support for their protest– and its close surroundings. The aim of this chapter is to show the attitudes and actions of the various actors towards the PISF, and how this influenced the implementation process of the planned intervention. In order to understand these attitudes and actions, it will be considered how the water transfer project enters the life-worlds of the different actors involved in the construction area of the project; which include the affected people, as well as implementers and non-target groups. Furthermore, the concept of interface will be used to explore the intervention and the different life-worlds.

This chapter is written with the interactive implementation model in mind. The situation in Agrovila 06 can be analyzed as an interface situation between the officials, engineers and local people, who lived and worked nearby or with each other. The analysis shows that the implementation process of the project is interactive: the local context and the interactions influenced the choices made by the army to gain support in the area. In Agrovila 06 I did not meet one person who was strongly against the project, but only some people who had their doubts about it. This chapter will show why the strategy of the government was so effective. From this micro situation it can be seen that the water transfer project enters the life-worlds of the local people in all dimensions: the material-economic, the social, cultural and ideological dimensions, which influence the attitudes and actions of the local people towards the PISF, such as job opportunities, past experiences, the image of the government and Lula, values and beliefs, knowledge, and social pressure.

Section 3.2 gives a description of the research area and an overview of the activities of the Ministry of National Integration, the army and the construction companies in the research

area. In section 3.3 the different life-worlds in Agrovila 06 and the interface situation in the construction area of the inter-basin water transfer are described. Section 3.4 describes the life-worlds and interface situation in the Roça Velha community, which is located next to the PISF canal, and section 3.5 describes for the same in a fishermen village, which is a non-target group of the PISF-project, but is part of the interface since it is located next to the São Francisco river and its inhabitants have heard or participated in the protests. Section 3.6 describes the life-worlds of the engineers, MI officials and militaries and the interface with the local population. Section 3.7 describes the view of a CPT employee. Section 3.8 gives the conclusions.

3.2. Description of the research area

3.2.1. Location

The research area is located in the North Eastern state Pernambuco. Both canals of the inter-basin water transfer depart in this state from the São Francisco river. Figure 3.1 shows the location of the two canals. The research is executed nearby the intake of the Eastern Axis (Eixo Leste). This canal departs from the Itaparica reservoir. This reservoir came into existence with the construction of the Itaparica dam in the São Francisco river in 1988. The small town of Petrolândia is about 20 minutes driving from the intake of the Eastern Axis.

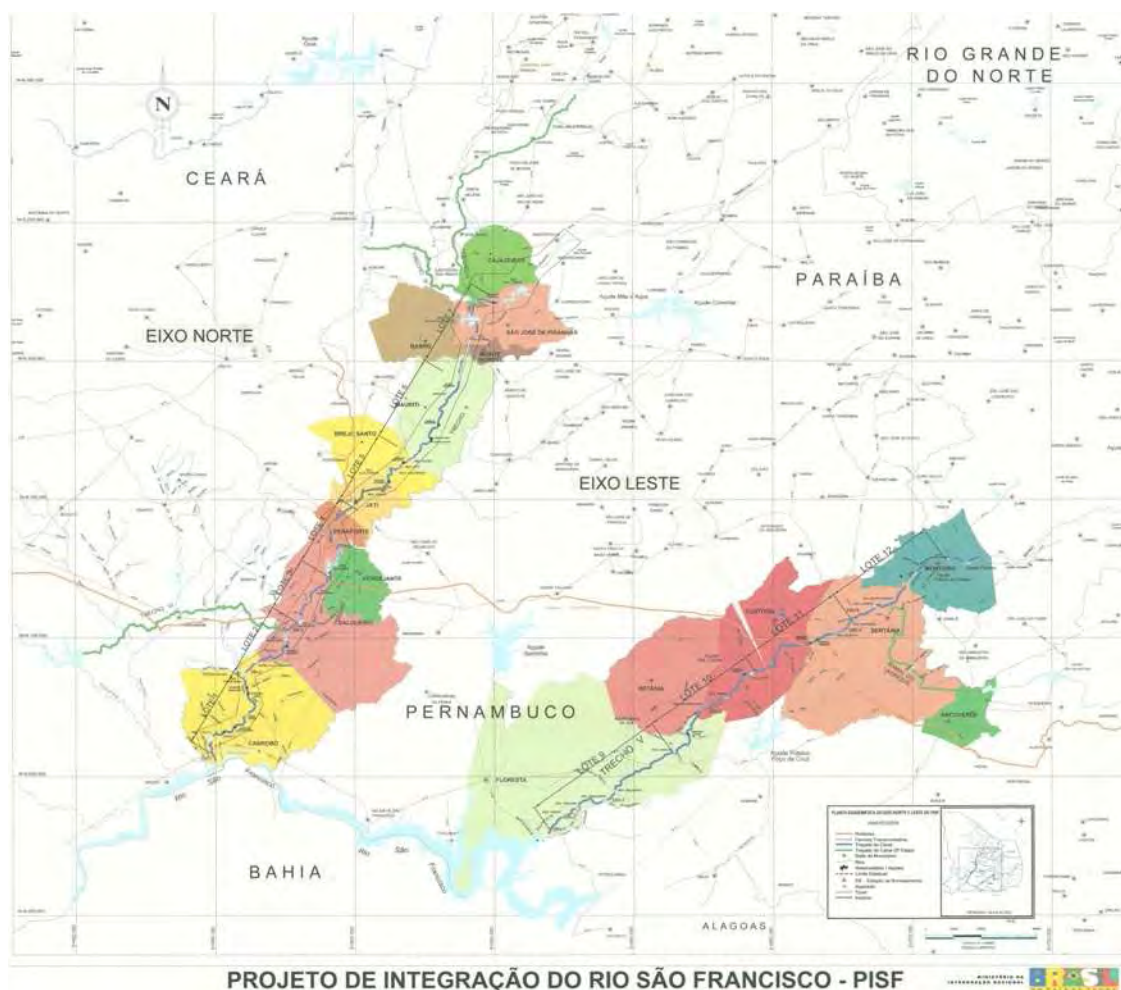


Figure 3.1 Map of the two axes of the PISF project

Source: map provided by the consortium Logos/Concremat

The first part of the Eastern Axis where the research was undertaken is called ‘Lot 9’ (Lote 9). The research has mainly focused on the community of Agrovila 06, which is located in between EBV1 and EBV2 (vertical pump stations). The territory of the indigenous Pipipan is located in Lot 9. Furthermore, a small fishermen village that is located on the bank of the São Francisco river is included in the research, as well as the small inland community of Roça Velha, which is located next to the canal in Lot 9. Figure 3.2 shows the location of Agrovila 06 and the Roça Velha community.

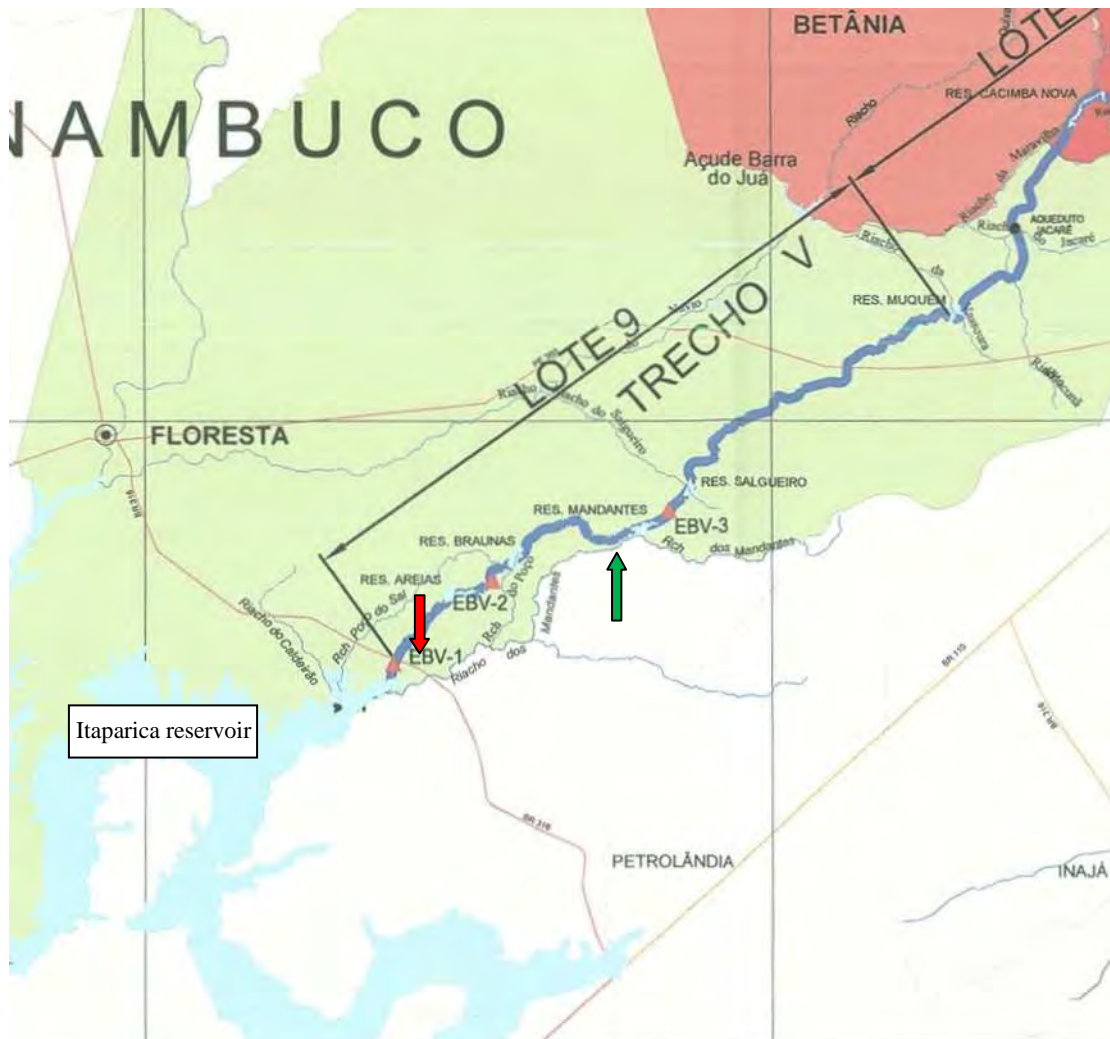


Figure 3.2 Map of the first part of the Eastern Axis (Lot 9).

EBV stands for Estação de Bombeamento Vertical (vertical pump station). The red (left) arrow indicates the location of Agrovila 06. The green (right) arrow gives an approximation of the location of the Roça Velha community.

Source: Map provided by the consortium Logos/Concremat

The next sections provide more information about the above mentioned communities and the actors that are present in the construction area.

3.2.2. Agrovila 06

Agrovila 06 is the village where the army and the companies that construct Lot 9 of the Eastern Axis of the PISF have settled themselves. It is a small ‘one-street’ village with around 300 inhabitants. Figure 3.3 shows a model of the area on which it can be seen that Agrovila 06 is located nearby the intake of the Eastern Axis canal, and that a new dam is being constructed behind the village (called on the map the ‘Res. Areias’). The Eastern Axis takes

its water from the Itaparica reservoir. Also Agrovila 06 inhabitants use the water of the Itaparica reservoir to irrigate their crops. The inhabitants have their own irrigation system: the inter-basin water transfer will only pass their village, and will not provide them with extra irrigation water. The Areias dam will function as a reservoir for the canal, and will not function as an extra water source for the Agrovila 06 inhabitants.

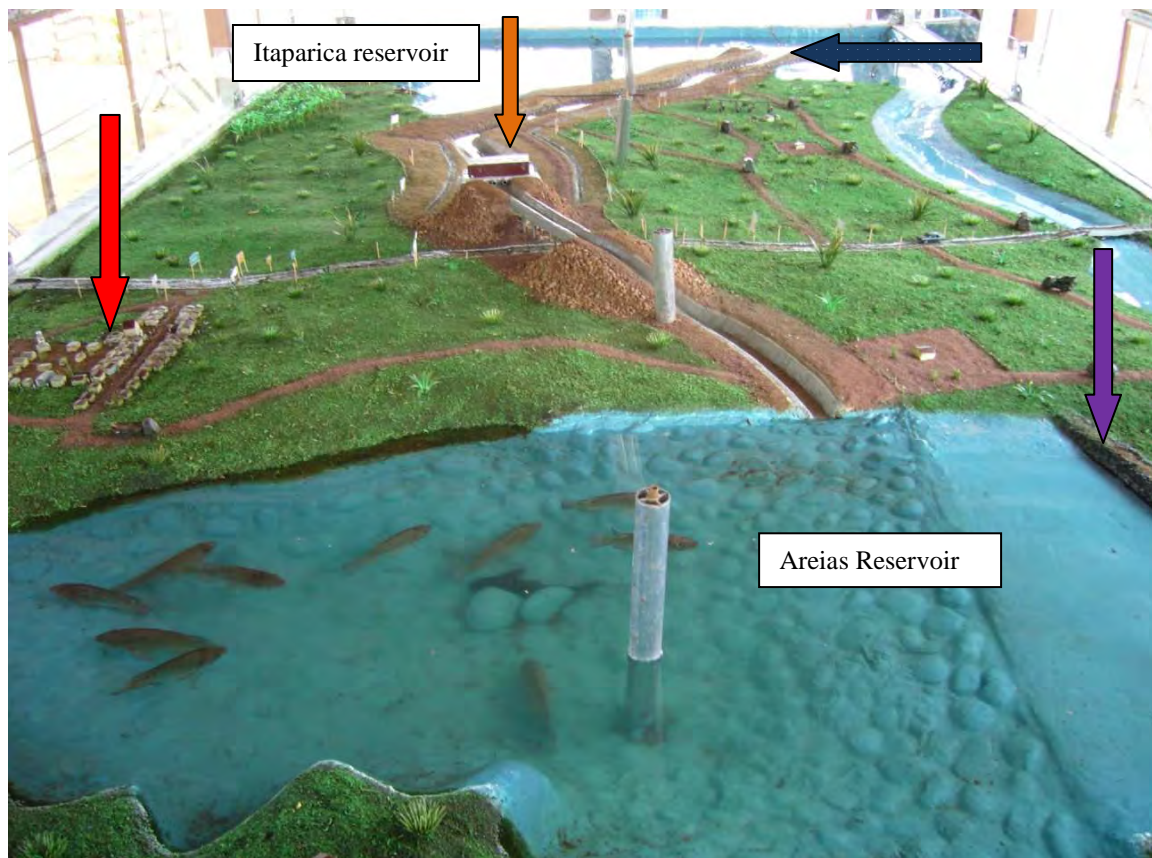


Figure 3.3 scale-model of the PISF Eastern Axis

The intake (dark-blue arrow), the first pumping station (orange arrow), the dam (purple arrow) and Agrovila 06 (red arrow). In reality the position of the dam is a bit different, but also behind Agrovila 06.

The Itaparica dam, which was taken into service in 1988, affected altogether about 8,100 families, or 40,000 people. Of these, about 5,300 families were resettled in rural villages. Because of bad experiences in the past in relation to resettlement programs for the Sobradinho dam, the rural labor unions and other entities united and established a movement that made claims for the resettlement of the rural population. This movement held meetings with the management of the *Companhia Hidro-Elétrica do São Francisco* (São Francisco's Hydroelectric company, CHESF, which implemented the Itaparica project) and organized demonstrations. The most dramatic event was the occupation of the Itaparica construction site by 2000 people that potentially had to be resettled. As a result of these events and negotiations, an agreement was signed in 1986 on a series of parameters concerning the resettlement of rural families. One of these compensation measures was the construction of villages, called *agrovilas*, to give new houses and irrigation plots to the affected people. Another agreement included a monthly maintenance payment until the irrigation systems were completed and proved viable. Today there are still people receiving this maintenance payment because of major delays in completion of several irrigation systems. The World Bank assisted CHESF in the Itaparica Resettlement Project and provided loans (Inspection Panel Report and Recommendation, 1997). A report of the Independent Evaluation Group of the World Bank Group describes which mistakes were made with the implementation of the resettlement project, and which factors contributed to the failure of the project. For example, problems arose because the soils were marginal and needed a lot of input, and the local

population had no experience in practicing irrigated agriculture. The report is very critical and even states that “the costs of this program are extraordinary, and it serves as a model only of what not to do” (Independent Evaluation Group, 2001). It is striking that the compensation programs of the inter-basin water transfer show a lot of similarities with the past programs: for the people that have to move because of the PISF, resettlement villages will be built, called *Vila Produtiva Rural* (VPR, Productive Rural Village). These villages have a different name, but are based on exactly the same model as the *agrovilas*: built a village to resettle people, and give them an irrigation system. The negative past experiences with this concept in this area, does not give a lot of hope that the VPRs will be successful.

Agrovila 06 is one of a total of 110 *agrovilas* that were constructed. The village is part of the Ico Mandantes resettlement project, which falls under the responsibility of the municipality of Petrolândia. However, geographically, Agrovila 06 is situated in the municipality of Floresta. This causes difficulties for the inhabitants of Agrovila 06, since it is not always clear which municipality is responsible for what, which in some cases can mean that they fail to receive help from any of the municipalities.

Agrovila 06 has existed for about 20 years. The resettlement project provided Agrovila 06 with a primary school, a church, water supply, a basic power supply system, health services, and agricultural production and social support. The houses are made of brick and have a better quality than the houses in the old village, which were made of clay and wood. Moreover, the *agrovila* has two small supermarkets, a restaurant and a few bars.

CHESF has compensated the people that had to resettle in different ways. First, some chose to receive only an amount of money for compensation. Second, the people who moved to the *agrovilas* received an irrigated plot. They also received a monthly salary until the plots proved to be productive. Agrovila 06 did receive irrigated plots, but as already mentioned other *agrovilas* are still waiting on the construction of their irrigation systems and their inhabitants are still receiving the monthly maintenance payment from CHESF as compensation.

The two towns closest to Agrovila 06 are Petrolândia and Floresta, which are located about a 20 minutes drive away. Some farmers from the *agrovila* sell their products for a fixed price to the municipality of Floresta. Others sell to intermediaries who visit the *agrovila* to buy the products and sell them on different markets. The inhabitants of Agrovila 06 receive technical help from Plantec, the company that is contracted by CHESF to manage the irrigation systems. Not all inhabitants gain their main income from agriculture. Some work for the municipality, others have a bar or sell clothes or bread. However, there is a general lack of employment. The construction of the PISF therefore offers many other job possibilities.

That the inhabitants of Agrovila 06 now have their own agricultural plots was said to be the biggest advantage offered by reallocation to the *agrovila*. Before that, most people worked on land that was not theirs. One negative point of the reallocation mentioned by many inhabitants was that the village has lost its own identity and that social coherence has gone. As one of the inhabitants put it:

“The people had lived for a long time in the old village; they had their own customs. In the *agrovila* other people came to live as well. This changed social relations and it brought criminality as well.”

This criminality is a big issue in the area of Agrovila 06, for it is known as the *Polígono da maconha*; the Marijuana Polygon. It owes this name to the illegal production of marijuana. Furthermore, the area is known to be dangerous because of the many attacks on cars and buses.

3.2.3. Roça Velha, the Pipipan and a fisher community

The small community of Roça Velha is located right next to the Eastern Axis canal. Following the canal on the dirt road next to it, Roça Velha is about an hour away by car from Agrovila 06. Several people in Roça Velha had to sell their land to the government to facilitate the construction of the PISF canal. In 1998, a public well was constructed that delivers water for human and animal consumption. Before its construction, during periods of drought they were dependent on the water delivery by truck. Since May 2009, the houses have cisterns provided by a government program. The people practice rain-fed agriculture and one man in the village constructed a dam that provides him with water for irrigation. Although the people do not have drought problems since the construction of the well, they hope that the PISF will bring improvements for their community.

Further down the PISF canal the Pipipan community can be found. This community was only visited once and so it has not been a subject of this research. However, several inhabitants of Agrovila 06 are related to members of the Pipipan community, so this paragraph will provide background information on their situation. The Pipipan is an indigenous community that lives nearby the Serra Negra mountain. In the past, the Pipipan used to live on the Serra Negra but had to move when the government declared the mountain to be a nature reserve. The mountain is seen as holy for them and they still celebrate religious rituals there. One of the leaders explained that they have accepted that they cannot continue to live on the mountain and its status as nature reserve protects their holy place as well. The PISF canal will go through the territory of the Pipipan community. However, the process of officially determining the boundaries of the Pipipan territory is not yet complete. The Pipipan community is poor, lacking sanitation, and many are jobless. The village has dirt roads and its inhabitants are dependent on cisterns and a community water well for the water supply. When there is a water deficit, a water truck brings in extra supplies. According to one of their leaders, the Pipipan hope that the PISF will improve their situation. However, the leader fears that because of the PISF they will lose territory and important cultural sites and that they will not get access to the water.

A fishing *agrovila* on the bank of the São Francisco river was also visited. This fishing community is also poor, with many houses made of clay and wood. They receive their water from a small plant that treats the river water. Some fishermen in the village protested against the PISF.

3.2.4. The ministry of National Integration and the project manager

The *Ministerio da Integração Nacional* (Ministry of National Integration, MI) is the owner of the project. MI officials are present in the research area and their job is to supervise the project. Because the ministry does not have the capacity to completely manage the project by itself, it has contracted a consortium to do this. This is the consortium Logos/Concremat, which is called the *gerenciadora*, the ‘manager’ of the project. This consortium deals with the inspection, supervision and construction of the PISF and several employees of the *gerenciadora* were present in the research area. However, I did not get the chance to talk to the project leader of the Eastern Axis.

Moreover, 40 people are required to execute thirty-six environmental and social programs. However, during my field research period, they were still in the process of contracting a company to do this work. In the interim this work is being done by a team from Logos/Concremat. It was not possible to talk to members of this team, as there was no information about when they would visit the research area. The Agrovila 06 inhabitants told

me that they did not know the people in this team, so in the *agrovila* there was no direct interface between these two groups.

3.2.5. The army

On the 11th of June 2007, the army moved into the research area to start the construction of the canal. The army –instead of construction companies– began the construction because of the protests against the PISF. By moving the army in, the government was signaling that protests would no longer be accepted and that the government would continue the construction in spite of the protests. In Brazil it is not rare for the army to help with the construction of engineering works and several other projects have been built by the army. However, an MI official did confirm that in this case the army was moved in to pacify the area because of the protests. The army is responsible for the first part of the canal that will be 5.67 km long and also extend into the dam reservoir. The army contracted another company to do this construction work, called Potipederas. Furthermore, the army is constructing the Areias dam which is located nearby Agrovila 06.

The inhabitants of Agrovila 06 heard for the first time from army officials that the army would settle in their village and that the Eastern Axis of the PISF canal would be constructed close to their village. One woman from Agrovila 06 explained: “I only had heard about the PISF through television, and it was a big surprise that they came to our *agrovila*”. The first time the army came to Agrovila 06, the military informed local people about what it was going to do, and about the inter-basin water transfer project and the possibility of letting their houses to the army. After that, they moved into the *agrovila* with their materials. The Agrovila 06 inhabitants did not protest against the presence of the army in their village. As one woman from Agrovila 06 explained:

“Other people, from outside, protested against the project. However, we didn’t go to protest because we believed what the army had told us: that the *agrovila* would benefit from the project”.

Figure 3.4 shows a picture of the army accommodations in Agrovila 06.

The army embarked on several projects when they settled in Agrovila 06. Environmental education classes were given to the inhabitants and waste bins were placed on the street. It was arranged that the waste would be collected regularly. A statue of Christ was placed in front of the church and they also installed an internet connection, which provided inhabitants who owned a computer with internet access as well. Before the army arrived in the *agrovila*, the inhabitants received their water supply from the Itaparica reservoir. This water was pumped to the *agrovila* and treated by a plant installed by CHESF. However, this water supply was irregular. The army installed a new well which delivered good quality water. Moreover, the army provided emergency transport to nearby small cities. An ambulance post was installed and once a month a doctor came to visit. They also dampened the dirt road of the village with a water truck to prevent dust production, but this was done more regularly during the starting phase of the project. One important factor that changed with the arrival of the army was the safety issue. Due to the presence of the army the safety in the *agrovila* and the surrounding area stabilized. During the night the military stayed in the *agrovila* and a police post was built next to the road from Petrolândia to Floresta to reduce the attacks on cars, trucks and buses.

In Agrovila 06 the presence of the army was obvious. During the day army trucks and cars drove through the village and militaries walked on the street and greeted the inhabitants walking on the street or sitting next to the road watching the people and cars go by. In the small local restaurant and store the soldiers regularly bought a lunch or a snack. In the evenings some played soccer with local boys on the soccer field behind the church. In the local bars soldiers in civilian clothes occasionally sat down for a drink in the evening. They were under orders not to engage in intimate relations with the locals.



Figure 3.4 The army accommodations in Agrovila 06.

The yellow/green board in front of the building gives information about the project. The total cost of the project and the deadline to conclude the project are erased.

I had the impression that the presence of the army did not cause tensions in the village. The village was tranquil and everybody seemed content to go about their own business. There was a box in the army building where people could hand in their complaints or ideas. A soldier did not give a clear answer on whether there was ever anything in the box, and also the denials of *agrovila* inhabitants on whether they had ever seen the box, gave me the impression that its function was more symbolic than real.

3.2.6. The construction companies and the supervisors

At the end of 2008, construction companies moved into Agrovila 06 to start the construction of the Eastern Axis. The consortium of Encalso/Convap/Arvek/Record (hereafter called Encalso) is engaged in the construction of six pumping stations on the Eastern PISF canal. Encalso is accommodated in Agrovila 06 and constructs in Lot 9 three pumping stations, as can be seen on the map (Figure 3.2). The consortium of Canter/Egesa is constructing 54.02 km of canal in Lot 9 and is also located in Agrovila 06. While the army rented local houses, the construction companies built their own accommodation. Figure 3.5 and Figure 3.6 show the company settlements. With the arrival of the companies and the army, the village gained many more inhabitants. Of the company Canter/Egesa, 300 employees live in the company accommodation.



Figure 3.5 settlement of Encalso



Figure 3.6 Settlement of Canter/Egesa.

The settlement of Canter/Egesa are the white houses down the road

The presence of these companies was obvious in Agrovila 06 and there was a lot of direct contact between the company employees and the inhabitants. The trucks and other materials drove through the *agrovila* during the day and the employees were also visible, going to the

little shop or to the restaurant. There were men from outside the *agrovila* living in the company accommodation and every day buses came to the village to bring employees from nearby towns to the construction area. Agrovila 06 inhabitants also found work at the construction companies. Every day groups of men from the region who were looking for a job waited outside the construction company buildings. This made the unemployment rate in the area visible.

One of the biggest direct impacts that the construction companies had in Agrovila 06, besides offering jobs to its inhabitants, was increased traffic and dust. To prevent too much dust, the companies had to wet the *agrovila* dirt road. However, in the beginning this was done more regularly. Furthermore, the trucks of the companies were not allowed to pass through the *agrovila*; but had to take a road that led the cars around the village. However, many cars used the *agrovila* road instead.

Besides the MI, the army and the construction companies, there were also supervisors working in Lot 9. Enger supervised the work of the army and the consortium of Canter/Egesa. Ductor was the supervisor of the consortium of Encalso. The supervisors had to report to Logos/Concremat and the MI about the work of the army and the construction companies. Furthermore, there were other parties present in the research area, such as IBAMA (Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources) whose brief was to control the environmental programs. The organizational structure was rather complex, with many parties supervising and controlling the work. Because I did not have the chance to meet all these parties –partly owing to time constraints but also because of the sensitivity of the issue– I relied on my own observations and the information that the *agrovila* inhabitants gave me about whether there were interface situations with these other parties, either in the past or currently.

There was also an interface situation between the people in Roça Velha and the engineers of the construction companies. Because Roça Velha was located right next to the canal, the engineers sometimes visited this small community. Before the actual construction of the canal began, engineers had also visited the community to take soil samples.

3.3. Life-worlds in Agrovila 06

The previous section described the communities in the research area, the actors that are connected to the construction of the PISF, and the actions of the CPT in the research area. This section describes the attitudes and actions of the actors in Agrovila 06 towards the PISF. It explores the meaning that the project has in the context of the varying life-worlds, keeping in mind the different dimensions of a life-world. The concept of interface will be used to explore the intervention and the life-worlds. First, the life-world of Marcelo –the representative of Agrovila 06– is explored. Afterwards, the attitudes and actions of other Agrovila 06 inhabitants towards the PISF are described, to illustrate how the PISF enters the life-worlds of these people. Thereafter, attention is given to the engineers, the military government officials and the CPT. In this section it will become clear that the PISF connects to the material-economic, the social, and the cultural and ideological dimensions of the life-worlds of the local people. This means that there are many factors that influence the attitudes and actions of the local population towards the PISF and the intervening parties, such as job opportunities, past experiences, the image of the government and Lula, values and beliefs, knowledge, and social pressure. By describing the life-worlds and the interface situation, a better understanding is gained as to why –during the time that I was there– the people in

Agrovila 06 did not oppose the PISF in a significant way, and why not many inhabitants were strongly against the PISF and only small local issues were in dispute.

3.3.1. Marcelo: the representative of Agrovila 06

Marcelo is 23 years old and lives together with his parents in Agrovila 06. He is the representative of the *Associação de moradores de agrovila 06 de projeto Ico Mandantes* (Association of the inhabitants of Agrovila 06 of the Ico Mandantes project, AMAPIM). He was democratically chosen by the members of AMAPIM to fulfill this function. Most of the Agrovila 06 inhabitants are members of AMAPIM. He is also the representative of the church in the village.

Wester (2008, p.26) writes that prominent actors can be seen as “representatives or spokesmen of actor-networks and not solely as individuals (...) and their agency needs to be seen as embedded in actor-networks”. So, I ‘followed the actor’ and drew much information from Marcelo in order to gain more understanding about the interface situation in Agrovila 06. However, I did not only focus on him; I also made observations in the *agrovila* and talked with other inhabitants. After all, as Long (1989) warns: the link between the representatives and the constituencies must be established empirically, and not be taken for granted, because a representative does not always act in the interests or on behalf of those he is supposed to represent.

The following paragraphs provide more information about Marcelo’s background and describe his position in relation to the PISF. Also, the way he acted in his role as representative of AMAPIM, in reaction to the changes in the *agrovila* caused by the PISF activities, are described.

Marcelo and his twin brother are the youngest sons of a family of seven children. There used to be one more daughter and son, but the daughter was killed eight years ago in the *agrovila* by the cousins of her boyfriend, and a son died a few years ago because of a heart attack. Before the construction of the dam the family lived next to the river, in a village near old Petrolândia. The father of the family is a Pipipan and was born on the Serra Negra. Several sisters and brothers live outside Agrovila 06 now, in Petrolândia or in other *agrovilas* nearby, but they regularly come to visit their parents. Two of Marcelo’s brothers work for the PISF. Marcelo finished high school and would like to continue studying. Besides his work as representative of AMAPIM and the church, Marcelo works in the local restaurant.

Being the representative of AMAPIM, it is Marcelo’s task to organize member meetings and defend the interests of the members. Marcelo organized a meeting with the army and the construction companies to discuss questions and issues that troubled the inhabitants. These issues are all local ones: questions about which organization determined the areas where the army and construction companies settled; what are the social responsibilities the companies have towards the *agrovila* community; what knowledge the companies have about the *agrovila* community; the problem of the dust produced by the cars and trucks of the army and the construction companies that drive through the *agrovila* every day, all day long, which causes respiratory and allergy problems for the inhabitants; the fact that several houses have cracks in the walls caused by the explosions detonated by the army and construction companies (which the construction companies deny and refuse to offer compensation for); that the public telephone in the *agrovila* does not support the number of people now living in the village; that the companies extract resources from the area without previous consultation from the *agrovila* inhabitants or organizations; and finally about worries that the community has about prostitution and safety.

So, AMAPIM does not question the inter-basin water transfer project itself. The above mentioned issues were put together during meetings of AMAPIM. Marcelo explained how the meetings of AMAPIM operate:

“During the meetings of the association the people talk a lot; they do give their opinion. But, after the meeting it is me who has to take action. If there is a meeting with people from outside the *agrovila*, the people from the *agrovila* stay quiet and only let me talk. The people don’t take a lot of initiative. Like when I came back from Petrolina, I saw that there was already no water for a few days. I had to arrange that a water truck would come to the *agrovila*; nobody else took that initiative. So, I went to the army to ask for one, and I called the municipality of Floresta to get a water truck over here”.

In this quote Marcelo referred to the situation when the army’s water pump had broken down and the *agrovila* inhabitants did not receive water for a few days.

This passive attitude of the inhabitants frustrates Marcelo more, as the following example illustrates. Marcelo organized a meeting with the bishop of Floresta to talk about the local problems. The only ones present were Marcelo, his father, a woman from the village and a man who accompanied the bishop. When we went to the church where the meeting would take place, Marcelo saw a woman whom he told to hurry up because today would be the meeting with the bishop. However, the woman did not attend. Marcelo complained that the people in the *agrovila* were so passive.

The following quote of a woman in Agrovila 06 shows her attitude towards the meetings and Marcelo and the PISF, which might explain the people’s lack of engagement.

“The PISF is not discussed a lot in the village, there are no conflicts. The people don’t talk about it a lot, maybe only during the meetings of AMAPIM. But, also during these meetings the people don’t talk that much, they just listen to Marcelo. Marcelo knows them, he knows what the people need”.

The next quote shows how another woman literally said that she was not that much interested in the issue:

“In the village the people don’t discuss that much about the project, they only do that during the meetings of AMAPIM. Then, the members are always commenting; there are always positive and negative points. To be honest, I don’t care a lot about this case. The traffic and the dust and the cracks in the houses don’t bother me that much. I’m not that interested, I don’t participate a lot in the meetings of AMAPIM”.

In the following quote Marcelo expresses his frustrations about the attitude of the *agrovila* inhabitants:

“The people in the *agrovila* are not very much against the PISF. I’m more against than in favor, because there is not a lot of space for participation. I don’t like it that the people do not question the project. Like the area behind the army base, where they made helicopter platforms, and the areas where the companies are situated: who liberated these areas to use them for this purpose? The areas that the companies are occupying with their buildings are ours; CHESF put our land under water and gave us land here. The companies should have asked permission to put their company buildings here. But they did not do this; they arrived and made it, without any communication. They say that the PISF will benefit the *agrovila*, and no one questions the project anymore. But, I’m democratic, I’m not going to use my authority for my own goals. The people in the *agrovila* didn’t want to protest, so I didn’t push them. Yes, the CPT has visited the *agrovila*, Mari (who works for the CPT and CPP) went to the houses. However, she had little impact on the opinion of the people. Now she doesn’t come here anymore. The *agrovila* inhabitants are not very critical: they do not read newspapers and therefore quickly believe what the army or companies tell them. The inhabitants are also reluctant to go to an authority if they are unsatisfied with something; they leave it to me to arrange that. Look how it went when the water pump was down”.

These concerns about who gave the area for company accommodation, were not expressed by the other *agrovila* inhabitants. They talked more about the traffic, dust and cracks issues.

Marcelo also explained another worry he has about the PISF, concerning the future water availability:

“The *agrovila* has enough water, and we use the water of the dam reservoir for irrigation. But, in the dry season the mud in front of the pump has to be removed so that the water can still reach the pump. I’m afraid that the PISF will cause the water level to go down even more and that the *agrovila* will feel the consequences. I do not want to be selfish, like some people call you if you say that the water may not go to a region where there is not enough water, but I’m afraid that the water level will go down too much”.

The above quote shows how careful he is when he says he is scared that the PISF will cause a water shortage for the *agrovila* inhabitants, for he does not want to be judged as being selfish. This attitude of not wanting to be selfish is very important for the *agrovila* inhabitants, as will become clear further in this chapter. Because of the values that the people of the *agrovila* seem to have – that they should share– it seems that those who *are* worried, do not dare to express it. One other person who is openly opposed to the PISF, is Marcelo’s father. He also fears that the PISF will have a negative impact on the water availability in the *agrovila*. He hopes that the project will stop because then they will be able to use the water of the Areias dam reservoir that is being built nearby the *agrovila*.

Moreover, Marcelo thinks that the people that come to live next to the canal are mistaken about how they can use the PISF water in the future. Marcelo said that they think that they can use as much water as they want. But, he thinks that they will have to pay for the water and that the water use will be controlled. It is very unclear how the PISF water can be used, because they constantly receive contradictory information from government officials or engineers. Marcelo said that it is important that a government official should come to explain what is going to happen with the PISF water, and clear up the uncertainty. Furthermore, he thinks that the people who have money will have the most access to the water and that the poor/rich situation will not change much. His ideas are rooted in the rumors that go through the *agrovila*, his personal thoughts, and conversations he has had with engineers and people of the CPT in the past.

Marcelo is a son of a Pipipan Indian and he has many Pipipan family members living nearby. He also sometimes visits Pipipan territory. About the Pipipan Marcelo said:

“Their land is not registered. However, the government knows that Pipipan live there and the government wants to offer them compensation for the fact that the canal will cut the Pipipan territory in two. The Pipipan don’t agree with this. If they agree to compensation, they will have to leave the whole area because they are not allowed to live next to the canal. The government does not offer them another area in which to live, so they will be spread over the country. So, the Pipipan are not agreeing and therefore the construction of the canal is being delayed in that area. If the government decides to build the canal without having reached an agreement with the Pipipan, they will probably fight. The Serra Negra means everything to them, it is part of their identity. We have a church, the Pipipan have the Serra Negra. The Pipipan know that if they agree with the offer from the government, they will lose the access to the Serra Negra”.

However, a leader of the Pipipan told a different story which will be described in more detail in section 3.3.3. This leader mentioned that the Pipipan are afraid to fight, and that he did not think they will have to leave the territory or lose the access to the Serra Negra, and will only lose part of their territory. This showed how important it is to verify the information that people give, and that Marcelo bases his ideas on partial information or rumors. For example, the MI does not write in its RIMA report that the area directly next to the canal will be cleared of villages. It does write that the directly affected area is 5 kilometers wide at each side of the canal, and that the total width that is needed for the construction of the canal is 200 meters.

Although Marcelo had certain worries about the PISF and did not always agree with the way the army and companies treated the *agrovila* inhabitants, he was not completely negative about the PISF. He did recognize that many things had improved as well; such as water

availability, the safety in the *agrovila* because of the presence of the army and the increased work opportunities. He himself also profits from the PISF because he works in the restaurant owned by Eliane, his neighbor, who began it after the army arrived. Furthermore, he has two brothers who work for the PISF. So, Marcelo does not complain too much about the project itself, but more about the way it is being executed.

Furthermore, Marcelo is frustrated about the way the army and companies treat the complaints of the *agrovila* inhabitants. During my stay in the *agrovila* I witnessed how Marcelo tried to convince the army and construction companies to do something about local issues that bothered the members of AMAPIM about the PISF, mentioned in the first paragraph of this section. To achieve this, Marcelo approached different actors, but these interfaces did not change the behavior of the army and construction companies. Finally, when traffic increased because of the closing of another road by the army, the *agrovila* inhabitants that worked for the construction companies warned Marcelo and they had decided to protest and block the *agrovila* road. As a result the army and construction companies agreed to a quick meeting. Marcelo called the bishop of Floresta, the social assistant of the Ico Mandantes project and the representative of the rural workers union to help him to strengthen his case. After hearing the demands and complaints of Marcelo, the army and the companies explained that he needed to go to the MI to resolve the issue, This was new to him although he had had many such meetings with them in the past. Marcelo had never contacted the MI before, because he always thought that it was possible to resolve the problems locally with the other parties.

There was therefore an interface situation between the *agrovila* inhabitants, the military and the company employees, but this did not help Marcelo to resolve the issues that the *agrovila* inhabitants were coping with. At the end of my stay an MI official did contact Marcelo by telephone in reaction to the road block and subsequent discussions, but no meeting was arranged before my departure.

From the above observations it can be concluded that the PISF enters the life-world of Marcelo in different ways. First of all, the PISF provides him with a job in a restaurant that came into being because of the construction of the PISF. His family members also work for the PISF construction companies. Furthermore, the fact that the army and the companies came to Agrovila 06 gave Marcelo many more issues to care about in his role as representative of AMAPIM. Although the people seem largely passive, Marcelo feels that he has the responsibility to defend their rights and they seem to trust him. As one woman said: “Marcelo knows them, he knows what the people need”. He uses his social networks to make the case of AMAPIM stronger; like the bishop of Floresta, the social assistant of the Ico Mandantes project and the representative of the rural workers union.

The father of Marcelo is Pipipan, and because of that Marcelo feels connected to this community as well. He worries about the rights of the Pipipan community, but because he is not a Pipipan leader he does not take action to defend these rights in the way he defends the rights of the *agrovila* community.

Moreover, the cultural and ideological dimension of the life-world of Marcelo seems to play an important factor in how he thinks about the PISF. The values that he has about sharing, clashes with his fear that the PISF might cause a water shortage for the *agrovila*. The community also has these values about sharing, and therefore it can be used as a cultural pressure in favor of the PISF, because no one wants to be seen as selfish. Moreover, protesting against the PISF also means denying a (possible) job to your neighbors or family.

Marcelo also has many perceptions and ideas about the PISF and the destiny that its water will have. These perceptions and ideas are shaped by the gossip, the information the CPT provides and by the stories of the engineers and military. It worries Marcelo that the water might not come to those who really need it. In the next section it will become clear that more people share this worry, but that it doesn't provide enough reason to be opposed to the project.

3.3.2. Agrovila 06 inhabitants

This section describes how the water transfer project (PISF) enters the life-worlds of the *agrovila* inhabitants. The sub-sections will highlight how the people relate to and connect to the project. By describing this, the attitudes and actions that the people have towards the PISF and the intervening parties will be better understood. It shows how the people react to the direct impacts of the PISF and the increased work availability, and the important role that Lula plays in their life-worlds. The section shows that the idea that people have about the PISF does not necessarily have to be shaped by facts, but that gossip, past experiences, values, ideas and beliefs, all play an important role in how they act and react in relation to the PISF. This section sheds light on the interface situation in Agrovila 06, and what influence it has on the implementation process.

Direct impacts of the water transfer project in Agrovila 06

Most people I spoke to did have a problem with the dust and the traffic situation which was bad for the children, the elderly and people with allergies and which also made the houses dirty. Moreover, the issue of the cracks in the houses caused by the explosions was something that the people were unhappy about. A few mothers expressed worries about their teenage daughters with so many men from outside living in the *agrovila*, although there had been no serious incidents so far. However, the people who talked about these problems did not appear to be really upset or seriously worried. All the people I spoke to were happy with the improved water situation, the increased safety thanks to the presence of the army and the job opportunities that the PISF offered. The people always seemed to be more happy with these positive changes, than unhappy with the negative changes. They did mention that it was a pity that the army did not help them as much as during the early stage of the project. They liked the first colonel more than the captain who was now in charge. However, all praised the fact that the army was there, because they had improved the water and safety situation a great deal. They therefore experienced the interface with the army as positive and the interface with the construction workers had not seemed to have caused any problems. The next quote of a Agrovila 06 inhabitant gives a good illustration of this:

“The arrival of the army in the *agrovila* was a nice surprise, we knew that we would benefit. The colonel was a good person; he did a lot, he helped for example with transport to the city. Now it became less, because now there is another captain in charge. When the colonel was still here the waste was collected more frequently. But I like them very much, I like the lieutenants. The army has a good impact in the *agrovila*. Especially the water situation improved and the security issue as well. There have been no problems yet with the men who work here”.

Furthermore, the inhabitants mentioned that the PISF was not much discussed in the village and that it did not cause conflict in the *agrovila*. Also my observations confirmed that there were not many discussions about the PISF and that the project did not cause tensions between the inhabitants. If discussions were held, it was about the impacts of the PISF in the village, and not about being in favor or against the PISF itself.

Work availability

As already mentioned in the previous section, the PISF offered job opportunities for the *agrovila* inhabitants. One special case is Eliane. She was often mentioned by the *agrovila*

inhabitants when they explained the positive impacts of the PISF on their village. Eliane is a woman living with her husband and three teenage children in Agrovila 06. When the army arrived to start the construction of the PISF, Eliane was very poor. However, she saw the opportunity to earn some money and she borrowed fifty reales from Marcelo to buy ingredients to make snacks for the military. On the same day that the army began to work, Eliane went on her bike to the soldiers to sell them snacks. Eventually she started to run her own little restaurant. When the companies arrived, Eliane made a deal with them to provide lunches for their employees. At the time I arrived in Agrovila 06 this had already stopped because the companies had hired a professional caterer. However, there were always soldiers and company employees in her restaurant who came to buy a lunch, snack or a soda, so her business was still doing well. She invested in buying more chairs and tables for the restaurant and large fridges. She also built a new kitchen. Furthermore, she has a car and a computer with internet connection through which she did a business course. Figure 3.7 shows a picture of Eliane's restaurant.



Figure 3.7 Eliane's restaurant

So, Eliane managed to benefit a great deal from the PISF and this is apparent to all the other *agrovila* inhabitants. She said that when the PISF project is finished and the situation reverts to what it was before the PISF project started, she will not want to stay in the *agrovila*. If she has the opportunity to go to a city, she will go because that offers her more business opportunities and better education for her children. Although she is not negative about the PISF and recognizes that it has brought many opportunities for her and the local people, she is not happy with the dust and the traffic in the *agrovila*. She is also not sure whether the PISF will bring water to those who really need it, or that only the rich will profit from it again. However, she does trust that President Lula has the best intentions for this project.

Eliane explained that when she was making lunches for the construction companies, many *agrovila* inhabitants came to her to ask whether she could arrange a job for them in the companies. In this way she functioned as an intermediary between the companies and the

agrovila inhabitants. During the research period, many men from the *agrovila* were working for the PISF which ensured that people would welcome the project. As one man expressed it:

“I work for Encalso for one year and two months now. Before that, I worked as laborer on the land of someone else. I didn’t earn well with that. In this one year and two months, the financial situation improved more than it did in the last ten years”.

His wife explained:

“If the work on the PISF is going to be finished, my husband does not want to work on the land again; he will look for a different job because we do not want to go back to the situation how it was before. If my husband will have to go to a different place to find work, I will travel after him”.

According to another male inhabitant, the work opportunities that the PISF offered were a reason for some people to change their opinion about the project into a positive one:

“I think that some people that first were against, changed to being in favor since the construction works started. Many people have work now; before the PISF started the situation was worse. Now people have money to buy a car or a motor”.

The work opportunities provided by the PISF brought about a lot of face-to-face contact between the *agrovila* inhabitants and the company employees. It is interesting to note that although the *agrovila* inhabitants were working in these companies, they apparently did not manage to influence the company behavior that caused the traffic and dust problems. It could have been that they did not think that it was a big problem, or that they thought that it was not their task to try to change it, or maybe they did try, without having any effect.

Values and beliefs and the image of Lula

The values and beliefs that *Nordestinos* have about sharing the water, the goodness of God and the intentions of Lula, in combination with their perceptions about the bad water situation in the Northeast, play an important role in shaping the attitudes and actions of the local people towards the inter-basin water transfer project. This shows that it is important to explore how the local interactions are affected by factors that lie beyond the interface situation itself, as Long (1989) points out. Furthermore, the lack of knowledge about the water situation of the São Francisco river is also a factor which causes people to have a ‘wait and see’ attitude. This section highlights several quotes to illustrate these aspects.

When the Agrovila 06 inhabitants were asked about the possible consequences of the PISF for the São Francisco river and the water availability for their village, they often said they were doubtful, or that they did not have an opinion. Occasionally one expressed his/her worries. It was very noticeable how people always carefully formulated their worries: if they said that they were worried about the water availability, they immediately also said that one cannot be selfish, that it would benefit the people inland that really need the water, and that it is in God’s hands. Or, as one woman said: “I’m not afraid that the river will dry up; I think they will have to manage it well, no?” This quote shows the trust that the woman has in the engineers and the government to manage the project. Also, some inhabitants said that the project was already very old and therefore had been thoroughly thought through and that the engineers knew what they were doing. One woman who did not have an opinion about this issue explained:

“I don’t know whether the project will be harmful for the river, we will only know that when the project is done. How can you know who speaks the truth, there are researchers in favor and against the project”.

Regina, an Agrovila 06 inhabitant who is in favor of the project, formulated her opinion about it in the following way:

“I’m in favor of the project, I’ve never been against. You have to share the water, water is so important. It would be selfish if you do not want to share the water. Last week we had no water for some days, and look how difficult that was. Some people are afraid that the water of the

river will deplete. I don't think that this will happen. God is good. Everybody needs water. I wouldn't be in favor of the PISF if it would only benefit the rich. But this water will be for the rich *and* the poor. The only disadvantage of the project is the big cars that are passing by all the time".

Regina's husband asked me whether I had been to Paraiba, which the PISF will provide with water. He said that the water situation was very bad there and that they need it. He himself had not been there, but he had heard about it. Also Regina had heard about the bad water situation in Paraiba through television. Regina said that she hoped that the canal would be finished when President Lula ends his term, because she did not believe that the next government would finish the canal if that government were not PT (the party of Lula). She explained:

"There are people who think that Lula was a bad president. I don't think that. I will always vote for Lula, and I will vote for the PT again. Lula did a lot for the poor, in my opinion he did. He started the PISF and built many cisterns".

She was referring to a government program to build cisterns for poor people in the rural areas.

Furthermore, Regina mentioned the bishop's hunger strike. She believed that the bishop had lied about his hunger strike. She said that she had seen on television that he ate fruit at night. She also mentioned that Lula had talked about the bishop in the speech he gave during his visit to the *agrovila*, which seemed to be one more reason to believe Lula instead of the bishop.

Another Agrovila 06 inhabitant, Francisco, expressed the need to share the water and he was not positive about the hunger strike.

"I've always been in favor of the project. The people who live further away from the river need the water. I don't think that the project will harm the river; the river has enough water. The bishop who did a hunger strike lives like a frog in the middle of the river. You can't deny water to people who need it. I really hope that the project will be finished and that the water will arrive to the people who need it, so that they can plant watermelon and other agricultural products".

This man was enthusiastic about Lula:

"All this time the project lay in a drawer, but now a *Pernambucano* decided to execute the project. Lula is a good president, he has visited the *agrovila* recently!"

This trust in the government and Lula is shared by more people in Agrovila 06. Another woman, who runs a bar in the village, passionately explained:

"I like Lula, he is a president who cares about the lower classes, especially about the people in the North East. He knows how much the *Nordestinos* suffer. I give him a ten. I believe what he said about this project and for what he is; he has good intentions. He is someone who wants to help, who wants to improve. But we don't know about the people around him, whether they have the same good intentions. It is already a very old project, it is already talked about for two hundred years or more. And none of the presidents had, how do you say, the courage to do what Lula is doing now. No other president had the courage to move it forward. And Lula did it. The courage of a 'hot' *Nordestino*".

An *agrovila* woman whose husband is working for the PISF, said:

"I love Lula, because he has done a lot of good things, and he thinks about the poor. The *bolsa familia* (family allowance) has helped a lot of families. However, some people can make misuse of the *bolsa familia*; they are satisfied if they can buy food every day and do not want to work anymore".

However, she was not certain to vote for the PT again in the next presidential elections. She said that her vote would depend on the parties' programs. On the question whether she thought that the water will arrive to the people who need it, she was thoughtful:

"Well, some people say that the water will arrive to the people who already have enough water, other people say that the water will arrive to the people who really need it. People from outside

came to tell that the water will be for those who already have enough. We had meetings with people from outside. Especially with this one woman...Mari (from the CPT and CPP). She came here to tell us about the project and how it would not benefit the right people. But I do not think that Lula would do such a thing: that the water of this canal will only arrive to the people who already have enough. We did not have water here for some days, and that was not a good situation. Imagine the people that live here in the region inland and always have too little water. They have to walk for a long time to get water and bring it back on their heads. I saw documentaries about this on the television. And I lived in Arcoverde (inland town in the state of Pernambuco) for six years, and I know that the water situation is bad there. Many times, when the reservoir was dry, we did not have water and then we had to buy water from a water truck. I learned to economize on water and still have the habit not to spill water. For example when I wash my clothes I wash them with soap powder, because this requires less water than to wash them with a piece of soap because then the water keeps running”.

The examples above are just a few of the many examples of what the people in Agrovila 06 have said about Lula, which shows how strong his status apparently is amongst them. I did not meet a person in Agrovila 06 who expressed him/herself negatively about Lula. Even Marcelo, who argued that Lula betrayed the social movements by not listening to their arguments against the inter-basin water transfer project, still thinks that Lula is the best president they have had so far.

The above examples show the perceptions that people have about the drought in the areas the PISF will serve. The people believe that the water situation there is bad, and that it would be selfish to deny them the water of the inter-basin water transfer project. Furthermore, Lula’s strong image came forward in the quotes. They rather believe Lula and his good intentions than a woman from the CPT who says that the water will only benefit the rich. This shows that there has been an interface between the *agrovila* inhabitants and protesters against the PISF (directly or indirectly) but that this has not influenced the locals to oppose the PISF. This section has shown that their values and beliefs and their image of the government and Lula all played a role in shaping their opinions about the PISF. Mari (from the CPT and CPP) explained that the government knew well how to influence the opinion of the local people by using their values and beliefs about sharing, which will be described in section 3.7.

Past intervention experiences and attitude towards authorities

Past experiences were also an important aspect that shaped the attitudes and actions of the Agrovila 06 inhabitants and their perceptions of the government and of the PISF project. Francisco –an Agrovila 06 inhabitant– told the story of the *agrovila*; that they were moved there because of the construction of the dam and that they had negotiated with CHESF to receive the houses and an agricultural plot as compensation. He said that their lives had improved as where before they had to work as employees on somebody else’s land, now they have their own land to work on. He hoped that the PISF project would bring as many benefits to the people inland as the CHESF project had brought to them. Furthermore, he explained that his whole house had shook during the period when there were nearby explosions. But, he believed that once the project is completed in that area the houses would be renovated. He had not been told that would happen, but that was what he believed. As he put it: “If they caused damage, they will have to repair it, right?” Furthermore, he was the only one in the *agrovila* that I met who did not complain about the dust situation:

“I don’t mind the traffic, I think it is very beautiful! Before the project started there was no traffic at all. Now there are big cars passing by all the time and I like it a lot, I like the movement. I don’t need the television, I just sit outside and watch all the cars and people passing by! I don’t mind the dust that is produced by these cars. The only complaint I have is that there are living now 2000 more people in the *agrovila*, and that there is only one public phone. I am wondering when people will think about this fact and put another public phone in the *agrovila*. When the first colonel was here he made the plan to put more public phones, but it was never realized”.

As well as the fact that Francisco does not mind the traffic and the dust, the above quote illustrates another issue: his attitude to wait for others to take action.

Explaining this passivity, Marcelo, the Agrovila 06 representative, said that the people in the *agrovila* were accustomed to receiving help from the government. He told me how Francisco's brother had received a piece of land from CHESF, but that he did not use it to cultivate anything. He received a salary from CHESF and did not want to work. They all received a salary until the land would provided enough to make a living. When CHESF stopped paying for Francisco's brother's salary, he went to court to prove that his land was saturated and unsuitable for production, because he had been planting vines on it. But, according to Marcelo, he had not tried to make his land productive.

Furthermore, as already became clear in 3.3.1, Marcelo explained that the inhabitants are reluctant to face up to authority. If they are dissatisfied with something they leave it to Marcelo to arrange. This was also the case with the only family in the *agrovila* that experienced negative consequences of the PISF other than the dust, traffic and cracks. They were compelled to move out of their house that stood on their agricultural plot, because the house was extensively damaged by the explosions. Their agricultural plot was six kilometers away from Agrovila 06 and a social assistant of the PISF project had told them that they would get money to compensate for the fuel that they had to use for transport to their plot. These compensation payments, however, only lasted for three months. They have now been living in Agrovila 06 for one year. The family said that many chickens were stolen and that some animals had died because they are not living close to their land anymore. They explained that the social assistant was very nice, but that she lost her job when she was in a car accident that she had caused. She was not replaced and now they do not know to whom to go with their complaints. They did go to the environmental engineer of the army, who said to them that she had sent an email to the MI and had not received a reply. They did not try to contact someone from the MI in Agrovila 06 "because every MI official is responsible for other things". The father of the family asked whether I could ask Marcelo if he could inform them if Marcelo would meet with someone of the MI in the *agrovila*. This is one more example of the passive attitude of the *agrovila* inhabitants. It shows how in this situation there was no interface between the family and the MI officials, despite the fact that MI officials were present in Agrovila 06. However, as the family also explained, it might be that it was not the responsibility of these MI officials to take care of the compensation measures. There was an interface between the army and the company environmental engineers, but this interface did not help the family to get better compensations for the loss of their house.

3.3.3. A Pipipan agrovila inhabitant

This section introduces a Pipipan leader, Valdimir, who stays in Agrovila 06 but also has a house in the Pipipan territory. His story illustrates how the PISF enters his life-world, and how his beliefs contradict his actions. Section 3.2.3 introduced the indigenous Pipipan community. In that section, it is explained that the community is very poor and that the PISF canal will go through the Pipipan territory, which is located nearby the holy Serra Negra mountain. The territory is still in the process of official registration.

Valdimir is a Pipipan who returned to the Pipipan community in 2006. He was not born in the Pipipan territory. He explained that there always have been some Pipipan who stayed in their territory, but that many moved to live elsewhere. About six years ago the Pipipan who had migrated elsewhere began to visit their relatives nearby Serra Negra again in search of their roots. Before Valdimir became a leader of the Pipipan he had a built up a lot of experience with social movements through his work for a labor union. He now has a family and he has a

house in the Pipipan territory. However, during the week he stays in Agrovila 06 in a house belonging to his relatives, because of his work at the Encalso administration.

Valdimir thinks that the inter-basin water transfer is a good project, but only if and when the Pipipan are guaranteed their water rights. So far, the Pipipan have not yet been guaranteed use of the PISF water, and their territory is not yet officially registered which was a precondition set by the *Supremo Tribunal Federal* (Supreme Federal Court) before the construction of the PISF could start. Valdimir is afraid that the land on which the PISF canal will be built will not be recognized as Pipipan territory, and that only the areas next to the canal, or indeed only at one side of the canal will be demarcated as their territory. He fears that the canal will cross their territory and that they will not be able to use the water. Furthermore, he wonders why the project needs to be so large, as he knows other, smaller, projects that were successful in bringing water to the people.

Furthermore, Valdimir disagrees with the way different governmental institutions had negotiated with the Pipipan. The Pipipan had received a guarantee that they would get new houses and a medical post as compensation. However, during the time of these negotiations, Valdimir was not a Pipipan leader and he wished that they had asked for more. In his opinion the construction of good houses and a medical post should not be seen as compensation, but as a responsibility of the government not dependent on the construction of the PISF.

Moreover, according to Valdimir the Pipipan are afraid to put more pressure on the government for more guarantees. He had explained to the Pipipan that it is not necessary to be afraid and that the government would negotiate and not start a fight. During the period he was involved in the social movements, he realized that negotiations with the government could be fruitful. They had negotiated re-settlement as a result of the Itaparica dam. However, on this occasion, he cannot move the Pipipan to make their voice stronger and demand more. He told me how the Truká –another indigenous community affected by the PISF– did protest more vigorously. He made a sad impression when he said that the Pipipan are not like that. Valdimir explained that despite the insecurities about the water rights, the Pipipan are very hopeful that they will benefit from the PISF and that they will be able to use the water, which also makes them reluctant to object to the construction.

So, despite his disagreements with the government over compensation issues, and his fears that the Pipipan will not have access to the water and that their territory will be divided in two, Valdimir continues to work for the PISF. He explained this contradiction as follows:

“I work for Encalso. I rather say that I work for Encalso than that I work for the PISF. I have my ideals, but I also have my necessities. I have a family. Right now, my necessities weigh heavier than my ideals, so I decided to work for Encalso”.

This example illustrates the contradictions inherent in the relations between locals and the PISF. Valdimir decided that his necessities were more important than his ideals. Later, I asked Marcelo whether there were more Pipipan working for the PISF. Marcelo said that there were around five more, and he defended them by saying that they needed the work, and that it was very hard to find work in the area.

3.4. The Roça Velha community

The small community Roça Velha has only been visited twice, but it is interesting to mention the findings here because these people are in a different situation to the Agrovila 06 inhabitants. Roça Velha is located right next to the Eastern PISF canal. Several inhabitants

sold part of their land to let the PISF canal pass. The army and the construction companies are not located in the village, but the inhabitants have had several encounters with engineers and MI- or other government officials.

Several meetings had been organized to explain the project to Roça Velha inhabitants and to elaborate on the procedures to value and buy their land. Representatives from several governmental institutions were present at these meetings. One inhabitant, Manoel, remembered that there had been three meetings in total. At the first two they had been told that they could use the PISF water for human and animal consumption and irrigation, and at the third meeting they had been told that it was not sure whether they could use the water for irrigation as well. Manoel said that it was explained that they first had to see how much water the canal could tap from the river, and that they would then decide whether there would be enough water for irrigation as well.

Manoel no longer understood how they could use the water because every time the government officials had explained it differently. He also wondered how it would be organized and administered. He spoke to the engineers of the construction companies now and then, but he said that they do not know much more about it either. Despite this, Manoel is positive about the project “because you have to be positive in life”. Two of his sons work for the PISF, so his family also benefits from the job opportunities it offers.

Furthermore, Manoel sold part of his land to the government for the PISF project. The government let the price of the land depend on its productivity. The price of productive land was three times higher than the price of unproductive land. Manoel sold his land for the price for unproductive land but he now regrets that decision because companies are now extracting materials from it which makes it productive for them. Manoel said that also other Roça Velha inhabitants were unsatisfied with the price they had received for their land. Manoel did receive the money, but his father and his brother in law were still waiting for their payments.

Four other inhabitants of Roça Velha that I spoke to were all positive and hopeful about the PISF. One inhabitant expressed the hope that a lot of things will improve when the canal is completed. He said that he can use the PISF water for domestic use and irrigation, and believed that Roça Velha would grow. According to him everyone had received compensation for their land. He also explained that one couple had to move and received a lot of money and a much bigger house in return. That this inhabitant – Manoel’s neighbor– said that everyone had received compensation while Manoel stated that some people were still waiting for it, might show that the inhabitants do not discuss the issue a great deal.

Another woman told me how the village had suffered more during the drought when they had no public well and no cisterns. She said about the PISF:

“I hope that it will be a richness, that it will improve a lot for us. Every time things improve more and more for us. A lot of people said: ‘this project is going to improve a lot for you’. We hope it will be so. I heard this from the people that talk with the engineers that work here”.

The above quote shows how past experience –the construction of the public well and the cisterns– contributes to this woman’s positive attitude to the PISF. Furthermore, hope informs her attitude. The visit to Roça Velha showed that the people based their hopes and beliefs on little information that was sometimes even contradictory.. However, hope and positivity seemed to be dominant in their attitude towards the inter-basin water transfer project.

3.5. The Fishermen

The fishing *agrovila*, where around 60 families live, was visited for one night and one day. However, this short stay did provide interesting details that will be outlined in this section. It shows how the opinions in one village can differ and how many people do not base their opinions on facts, but construct their arguments on their own observations and thoughts. Moreover, this section shows how social pressure can be a factor that determines the people's behavior and actions.

Maria and her husband are a couple with two children who live in the fishing *agrovila*. Neither are against the inter-basin water transfer project. Maria does not believe that the river will dry up, and believes that the people of the PISF area need the water. She occasionally went to the *Colônia de Pescadores* (a fishing colony, which provides the fishermen with various services and information) and during these sessions someone would sometimes explain about the PISF. She did not get any information about the PISF from the government or via the television.

Maria's husband explained that most people in the village are in favor of the PISF, and that it is not much discussed in the village because the people are busy with their jobs. According to him, the people who live in the *sertão* need the water, and everyone has to share. He neither believed that the river would dry up because he thinks that the amount of water to be taken by the PISF will be controlled. He is not afraid that the PISF would harm the river, because after all, the canal would transport water and not fish! Besides that, he argued that the project was already very old, so that they had enough time to think about it and ensure its success. Lastly, he said that some claimed that only the rich would profit from the PISF. However, he argued that if the rich would profit, so would the poor.

Although Maria and her husband were in favor of the PISF, her husband's brother was against it. He had gone to a meeting organized by the government where several people explained the positive and the negative sides of the project. Based on the information he received during this meeting, he decided to oppose it. He also received information from the *Conselho Pastoral dos Pescadores* (CPP, an NGO that is involved in the protests against the water transfer project) and went to protest against the PISF. The reason for his opposition is because he believes that the people downstream will suffer. He explained that the sea already enters the river at the mouth, and that this situation will worsen with the construction of the PISF. Furthermore, he mentioned that the river already has fewer fish and that the PISF will cause a further decline in fish stocks.

Another woman in the fishing *agrovila* said that there are quite a few people in the village against the project because they are afraid that the river will dry up. She herself is not afraid of this. Five more men to whom I spoke in the fishing *agrovila* were against the inter-basin water transfer because they were afraid that it would harm fishing. They also explained that during some years there is no electricity when the water level is very low. They did not believe that the PISF will stop extracting water from the Itaparica reservoir in a dry year. These men received information about the project from the *Colônia de Pescadores*, but none from the government. They explained that some people are afraid to say that they are against the PISF, because they do not want to cause conflict, as several inhabitants work for the PISF.

This short description of the situation in the fishermen *agrovila* gives a good impression about the way how the PISF enters the life-worlds of the fishermen. The issue is not much discussed but this can be because the people do not want to cause conflict as several inhabitants work for the PISF. The people have their own ideas and thoughts about what damage the PISF can cause to the river and the fishing. This is shaped by what they see for themselves, during the

low water level in the dry season. Or, they think that the PISF will only transport water and no fish and that the water flow will be controlled. The CPP provides information about the PISF that opposes the project. However, I did not meet many people in the village that were against the inter-basin water transfer project, so the interface with the CPP does not significantly influence their opinion. Even in one family the opinions can differ. For example, it is interesting that the man who had a brother who was opposed to the PISF, is still in favor of it. He has his own views on the effects of the PISF and who will profit. He stressed that many people in the *sertão* need the water and that one has to share. Lastly, the argument that the project is already very old and must have been thoroughly thought through also came back into the argument –a factor that seemed to weigh with some of the people in Agrovila 06 as well.

3.6. The MI officials, engineers, supervisors and the army

This section introduces several engineers, supervisors and MI officials who work in the research area. It describes their activities and how the PISF and the local people enter their life-worlds. Unfortunately, because of the sensitivity of the project, MI officials were especially unwilling to give information about the project. On one occasion a MI official was willing to explain more about the project, when another official entered the room and reminded his colleague that he could not give me documents. Also the engineers had instructions from the MI that they could not provide me with any documents. The first conversation I had with an engineer began with the remark that the engineers were not allowed to give interviews, but that an ‘informal chat’ was OK. This situation made more in-depth interviews with MI officials impossible. Moreover, the officials that were most interesting for me to talk to were not always present. The people responsible for the social communication stayed in Salguiero and Brasilia. Therefore, I was dependent on my own observations and on information from local people to figure out the activities of the MI in the research area.

The reason why the MI was so cautious was because the project had been subject to so much critics and protests. The MI was aware that there was a movement in Europe that tried to raise more awareness about the negative impacts of the PISF and were therefore cautious to give information to researchers. When asked whether it was possible to visit a resettlement village, an MI official replied:

“You need to make an official request. We need information about where you come from, with whom you have had contact and in which context you are doing this research. We need this because we are responsible for the people who visit these villages. It is a sensitive project, and we do not allow everyone to go to these areas”.

So, the MI official literally said that they did not want that foreigners who supported the international protest to visit the area, and she did not deny that it was a sensitive project.

At the São Francisco Basin Committee meeting in Tres Marias I had a conversation with José, an official of the Ministry of Integration (MI) who is involved with the implementation of the project. He works in Brasilia but came from the North East state Paraíba. José explained why the PISF is such an important project and gave the familiar reasons: to complement the water in the regions with little rainfall, and to guarantee water in the regions where the rainfall is very unpredictable.

On the question of why the present government has decided to implement the PISF, when no other government had attempted it, despite the fact that the idea was conceived many years ago, José said that the political decision took courage which no previous president has had.

Why is this project so important for Lula? “Because the president is from the Northeast, so he saw the water need. He knows the necessity”. Furthermore, José explained that individuals – and not organizations– protest because they do not know the project and do not know the Northeast. He stated that “everybody has a right to water and those who live in the Northeast, do not have water”. All these answers could have been prompted by political correctness (he seemed to have memorized the MI arguments well), but at the same time, José did seem to be convinced of the importance of the PISF.

As it seemed better not to get too much on the radar of the MI in order to figure out their activities, the next paragraph is based on information provided by Agrovila 06 inhabitants about the MI.

According to the inhabitants of Agrovila 06, not one MI official came to the *agrovila* to give them information about the project. When the project started, a female official of the MI was responsible for the social communication in the construction area. One inhabitant who came in contact with her because he had to move out of his house, explained that she had only worked there for about three months and was fired afterwards because she had caused a car accident. She was not replaced by someone else. Although MI officials were working in Petrolândia and visiting the companies regularly, the *agrovila* inhabitants did not know them and I had never saw them in the *agrovila*.

An environmental engineer of one of the construction companies seemed to have more contact with the *agrovila* inhabitants than the MI officials. He was responsible for the environmental programs and explained that only six of the 36 environmental programs were being executed because. This was due to the fact that the *Gerenciadora* had not yet contracted a company to execute these programs which in turn resulted in an under capacity to execute them all. The program of ‘Social communication’ –that was one of the 36 programs– was not mentioned by the engineer as being one of the six. However, he explained that he had contact with the local people, and that they had distributed folders among the *agrovila* community and employees on which they could write down their doubts and complaints. These could be placed in the same ‘idea and complaints’ box that the army had. The engineer said that the people were not dissatisfied and that they had not received any serious complaints. Marcelo knew this environmental engineer because he had talked with him about the dust and traffic problems, but he had never seen such a folder or box. It seemed that this procedure, like the army’s was more symbolic than real: “look, everybody can hand in their complaints if they want”.

It was said that there was another environmental engineer, but it was not possible to meet with him as he remained for most of the time in Salgueiro. That the engineers and MI officials responsible for the social communication stayed more in Salgueiro than in the *agrovila* area already says a lot about their interaction with the local people. The fact that the woman who had been a social assistant for three months was not substituted also shows that social issues were not top of the MI’s agenda.

All the engineers, militaries, supervisors and MI officials that I spoke to seemed to have memorized the PISF information folders provided by the MI. All of them explained that the project was very important because it would bring water to a very dry region and that the amount of water that would be taken from the river was going to be very small. They explained the water shortage in the region and argued that the Northeast was going to benefit greatly from the PISF. The engineers I spoke to all seemed to be genuinely proud of the project. Often, when they showed me the canal, they said: “é muito bonito não!?” (it is very beautiful, no?!). However, the engineers also spoke –without me asking– about the fact that it

is also a sensitive project and that people had protested against it. The engineers did not understand this. One engineer explained:

“First, I was against this project. But, when I learned more about the environmental programs that are also part of this project, I changed my opinion. Now I’m in favor of the project and I want to help to realize that the environmental programs are not only going to exist on paper. The expenditures for the environmental and social programs are much higher than the expenditures for the water-transfer; it might be up to three times higher. Many people will benefit from this project. Of course, also big landowners will benefit, but indirectly a lot of other people will benefit as well because it will generate jobs. Like every project this one will disadvantage some people, but because of the growth of the cities next to the canals and the compensation directed to the affected local people, the benefits will prevail. How many people are working for this project? Many people can benefit from the jobs that the project provides. There was a bishop who went on a hunger strike against the project (he laughed). Furthermore, protestors occupied the construction works of the Eastern Axis. You cannot justify that a group occupies a public work which serves a public goal”.

During my first conversation with him, he denied that the canal would cross indigenous territory. Later he said that he did not know about it. In the second conversation, he said that he had looked at it, and explained that the canal will pass close to Pipipan territory and that there were environmental and social programs for them. About the compensation measures in Lot 9 he said:

“I think that the compensations that the people receive are well organized. Some dwellers had to move out from their houses because of the cracks caused by the explosions. These persons were brought to villages and after the work is finished in their residence area, they move back to their lands where new houses will be built for them by the government. Yesterday I was in the village where a family got a nice house to live in as compensation for the fact that they had to move out of their old house. Transport is arranged for them so that they can go to their land. Many people in that village now say that they also have cracks in their houses because of the explosions, because they want a nice new house as well”.

The above quote confirms what Marcelo, the Agrovila 06 representative, had said about the construction companies denying that the cracks in the houses are caused by the explosions and their refusal to offer compensation. Moreover, the claim that transport had been arranged for the family who had to move out of their house proved not to be true. The family, however, did not know to whom to go to with their complaints and thought that they needed to contact someone from the MI. They did not mention this engineer who is responsible for the environmental and social programs, and who argued that the local people were looked after and did not have anything to complain about. Of course, this could have been a politically correct answer, but because of the way he defended the project and thought about the benefits for the local people, he did seem to be sincere in his belief that they should not complain and instead be happy that the project was being built where they live.

The engineers who were not responsible for the environmental and social programs, but for the construction of the canal or the pump stations, explained that the project was important and that it would bring water to the people who live next to the canal. As one engineer, who came from the state of São Paulo, expressed it:

“In Colorado a similar project was implemented. First, Colorado was one of the poorest states in the United States. Now, it is one of the richest because of the water transfer project. I hope that the PISF will have the same good effect on the development of the Northeast”.

This shows that he was receptive to the information the government provided, in MI booklets and movies about the water transfer project in Colorado.

A geologist, who knew people from Roça Velha, said that they were ‘very good people’ and that they will receive water from the PISF. Another engineer believed that the local people would benefit the most from the PISF. According to him it is a very good project. He came from the state of São Paulo and before he arrived in the North East was unaware of the

situation there. He explained the differences in Brazil, that the south is rich and the north is poor; that the south has a lot of water and that the north is dry. He said that the project was very good for the people who live there, because it was a very dry area and it would bring water to many houses that do not now have access to water. Furthermore, he explained, the farmers did not have water either and that they too would use the water of the PISF. When we drove through Agrovila 06, he made a comment about the inhabitants: “They sleep, eat, sleep, eat...they sit in their hammock and wait for the time to pass; they do not care about work”. When I explained that I stayed with a family in the Agrovila 06, he was very surprised and even more surprised when I said that they had an internet connection which showed me how little he knew about the *agrovila* inhabitants. When we drove through a piece of land that had not yet been deforested for the construction of the canal, the engineer explained that the owner of the land had not yet received money for his land and that he would not agree to deforestation until he had received it. The engineer said:

“He is going to be the largest beneficiary; the owner of the land. Because the water will pass here for him. He does not need to go to the São Francisco river anymore to look for water. It will be here. But there is a lot of ignorance, a lot of ignorance. This is not good, because he is going to receive water, and he first wants to receive money for his land. First money, then water. Crazy”.

He explained that bureaucracy was the reason the owner had not yet been paid. Only one man, who worked for Encalso, explained that unfortunately the people who have to move from their land because of the construction of the canal, are not always going to get access to the PISF water. He also explained that the canal will be protected so that not everyone will be given access to its water. This suggests that those engineers, who seemed to be sincerely convinced that all the people next to the canal would receive water, might not be well informed. It also points to the cause of confusion amongst the locals, who told me that the engineers and MI officials always said different things about the future water use.

During the starting phase of the project, only the army was in Agrovila 06 and had a great deal of contact with the inhabitants. The Agrovila 06 inhabitants liked the colonel of the army, because he did a lot for them. He gave them a statue for the church, arranged the waste collection, installed the well and provided them with emergency transport to the city. This could have been a strategy to gain support among the local people. However, as the next captain did less for the local people, one wonders whether it was part of official strategy or a personal response. As one soldier said, rather disapprovingly “he acted as if he was the mayor of the *agrovila*”. It could have been that this soldier simply did not recognize the actions of the colonel as a political tool.

The military had quite a lot of contact with the local people. During the time that the first colonel was there, they were obliged to live in the *agrovila*. Only later did they move to Petrolândia. However, it seemed that, despite this, the army did not know much about the local inhabitants. When I told a military engineer about my trip to the Pipipan territory, she first did not know about whom I was talking. It took some time before she said: “Ah yes...there are some indigenous people living more inland no?”

Furthermore, the army grew tired of Marcelo’s complaints and which seemed to be the reason they once denied the use of army water truck when the well pump broke –information which had been given to me by other soldiers. These examples show that there is an interface between the local people and the army, but that the local people cannot change the behavior of the army or always get from them what they want.

This section has illustrated the contrast between the life-worlds of the engineers and MI officials and the life-worlds of the Agrovila 06 inhabitants. The attitude that the engineers have towards the PISF and the local people explains why they do not understand local

complaints. Moreover, they do not seem to know much about the day to day reality of local life. There was social interface between Marcelo and engineers and the army, but he had a hard time drawing their attention to problems and changing their behavior. There was also not a lot of information provided by the army/companies/MI to the local people. This caused insecurity, but it also kept their hopes and ideas high about what improvements the PISF could bring to the people in the *sertão*.

One aspect that the engineers and militaries did share with the local people was the belief that the people inland live in a situation of misery and water poverty. Engineers I spoke to believed that the PISF would bring water to these people. On this issue there was an interface between them and the Agrovila 06 and Roça Velha inhabitants, and this also helped to shape the (positive) opinion of the local people about the PISF. However, as Marcelo and Manoel (the Roça Velha inhabitant) mentioned: the engineers often said contradictory things about future PISF water use, which created confusion. But, this confusion also left space for the hope that the PISF would at least benefit the poor in some way.

3.7. The CPT

This whole section draws on information provided by Mari who works for the CPT. It provides an insight into how a protestor against the water transfer (PISF) explains the situation and the actions and attitudes of the local people and the government. In this section it will become clear that the CPT was very conscious about the factors that made their attempts to mobilize the local people against the PISF difficult. Although there was an interface with the local people –the CPT visited the communities– the work of the CPT was not sufficient to form a ‘block of resistance’ against the PISF. Mari mentioned many of the elements discussed in earlier sections and explained how they did not make the protest work of the social movements any easier. Mari cited the local situation, the compensation measures of the army, past experiences with the military regime, and local values about water sharing and how the government had exploited these values in its promotion of the water transfer, as factors that negatively influenced the work of the CPT and positively helped the work of the government. The following paragraphs elaborate on these factors, as explained by Mari in an interview conducted after my return to The Netherlands on 26 April 2010.

Before the army arrived to construct the water transfer, the CPT visited the region of the São Francisco river and explained to the communities the problems that the project would cause in that region. The field work consisted of making the situation clear to the people, using as a basis the impact the Itaparica dam had already had on them. The Itaparica dam was used as an example of how the government deals with this kind of large project. Many families in these *agrovilas* are still waiting for the compensation the government had promised to them at the time of the construction of the Itaparica dam. The people that had lived next to the river, before the Itaparica dam was built, were moved to the *caatinga* –in areas where they were not accustomed to live– and were given lands for irrigation that did not have the quality they needed for cultivation. Moreover, the people were not used to practicing irrigation. The result was that the land was soon degraded. The government did not fulfill all its compensation promises with the result that the local people suffer from shortages.

According to Mari, the local people expressed their opposition to the PISF when she visited the communities of the Ico Mandantes project of which Agrovila 06 is part. “They stated that they did not accept the PISF and would not support it. In 2005, when the army arrived for the first time in the region to undertake the first topographic researches, they went to Agrovila 03.

The army experienced the resistance of the communities because the boys in the army, who were all very young, created problems by getting too involved with the local girls. This created a very strong antipathy, not only in Agrovila 03, but also in the other *agrovilas*. When the army returned in 2007, they went to Agrovila 06 because that was the most strategic place to establish themselves in relation to the army's construction sites".

This second time, the army was prepared to persuade the communities and the government used the army to address local concerns. The army commander had prior experience of these situations; he put the soldiers under strict discipline, and set about addressing local opposition. This program was not confined to Agrovila 06, but included all the communities in the area. It was basically the task of the army to first fulfill the basic needs of the communities. The army went to all the *agrovilas* to visit the schools and give lectures and organize football matches and implement compensation measures. So, there was an intensive political attempt to convince the local people and gain their trust.

Agrovila 06 was the village in the Ico Mandantes project that suffered most from bad water provision, and indifferent health and education provision, because the *agrovila* is situated on the border of two municipalities (Petrolândia and Floresta) neither of which assumes responsibility for Agrovila 06, which leaves the people of Agrovila 06 in an insecure situation. The first thing the army did when it arrived was to dig a public well for Agrovila 06. By addressing some of their needs, this action keeps the communities dependent on military investment and on the construction of the PISF canal.

Furthermore, Mari explained that when the army arrived in Agrovila 06, they rented several houses. Some families that had moved to the nearby cities returned to the *agrovila* to look for work. Concern about the future tends to decline when there are larger immediate needs. So, when a bit of money flowed into the community, the people changed their attitude towards the project to a more positive one. Even those who did not believe in the project thought that it was a good thing that it brought work opportunities and facilities that they did not have before.

Even the indigenous Pipipan that live in Agrovila 06 and who had quite a clear position against the PISF, were also convinced because the army took care of their security problems. The Pipipan explained to Mari that the army was looking after the school, the church, the street; taking care of their lives. So, the army was facilitating improvements to their lives. The government had used an intelligent strategy to convince all the communities. When you live in a region where there are not a lot of jobs and what you receive is not sufficient for the survival of your family, the first thing that the people see is the work opportunity. As a result, even those who had been against the PISF, said that the construction could provide them with jobs.

Mari explained that the field work of the CPT was not sufficient to create a stronger resistance in these communities. This was caused by many factors. Firstly, during the time that the CPT was doing the field work, the families had a clear idea about the problems that the project could cause because the Itaparica dam had left them with a lot of shortages. On the other hand many families still receive a monthly salary from the government to survive. This has created many people, including the youth, who are not accustomed to work and they were more easily convinced by the army. The older families who experienced what it is to lose your land and identity were a bit more resistant and understood the situation better. Younger people, however, lacked this experience, so they did not form a protest front with which they could resist the investment by the military. The government also exploited the needs of the local people, as was mentioned in the above paragraphs, and promised them education, healthcare,

water supply, and credit to invest in seeds. The CPT had feared that with the arrival of the military the process of persuasion would be easy for the government.

Secondly, the people in the region still had memories of the period of military rule when the army was very present. The elderly, especially, know exactly what the presence of military means in these regions. The decision of the government to start these construction projects with the army was very intelligent. The army did the persuasion, but the people also remembered life under the military regime. The presence of the army during the construction of these large projects is a big tool that the government uses to immediately establish discipline in a region in order to construct the large projects. The PISF is not the only project in which the army is involved; there are various other ones. When several companies decide not to further participate in a project, the government has the army execute it instead.

Thirdly, Mari explained that a very strong characteristic of a *sertanejo* is solidarity. Solidarity is very important in a region that is disadvantaged by harsh living conditions. The drought was part of the folk imagination and the families had a dream of a better place. The government used the drought as an instrument for negotiation in order to construct large infrastructural projects. The government played with the imagination of the people and the identity of the families. The PISF is the most recent example of the drought industry. The large projects are a way to convince the people that they could have a water miracle, or in other words: that the projects could solve all their problems. Water is something very sacred to the people who live in the semi-arid region, and the government used the solidarity of the people in its strategy to convince them.

When the government started to talk about the PISF, and when the riparian people said that they did not accept the project because the river was already dying, the government said that they were selfish because they wanted water only for themselves. So, the government interfered with something that is very serious and sacred for the people, which is solidarity. The idea of sharing is very strong in the Northeast, where the people even share when they themselves are needy and hungry. The government used these sentiments they exploited with the popular imagination, and with things that are sacred, like water. As the *Nordestinos* say: 'you can't deny a cup of water to anybody'. These people are not against giving water to people who need it.

According to Mari, it can be very powerful when you exploit the spiritual values of these people and their popular religion. The government knows this, above all the government of Lula knows this. As *Nordestino*, Lula knew exactly with what he was doing. He knows the people. The needs of the people are easily met through compensation measures, money and jobs. On the other hand there is also the inner life of the people, the spiritual, the religion, and the belief that you cannot deny water to nobody. All these factors made the work of the CPT and protest mobilization more difficult.

Mari ended the interview, however, with the remark that many people are now dissatisfied because some had been fired and others were still waiting for their salary. They had to strike in order to receive their pay. Some people who received money for their land so that the PISF could pass were also questioning the situation. Moreover, families are now starting to realize that the army and construction companies had used strategies to convince them, while their problems continue. There were, however, not enough dissatisfied and questioning people to form a protest front against the PISF. Moreover, the situation has now reached a point which it cannot be turned back. The communities no longer have any opportunity to fight a process which is already well underway, so, they have become compliant. The local people are

dissatisfied, but at the same time they cannot take action against this situation. Next to that, the social movements are paralyzed and lack further strategies to fight.

3.8. Conclusions

This chapter has shown that the situation in Agrovila 06 can be analyzed as an interface between the actors present in the construction area of the inter-basin water transfer (PISF), which include the local people and the army, the construction companies, the MI and the CPT. The analysis has shown that the strategy of the army has been a reaction to certain interactions in the past. The strategy of the army was not the same in 2005 as in 2007, and this was the result of the experiences in 2005 and the protest of the social movements in the construction area. The government realized that the trust of the local people had to be gained, and they used the army to resolve that issue. In that way, the analysis shows that the implementation process of this project is interactive, and that the local situation does matter, as local context and interaction have influenced how the implementation process evolved.

This section point out the elements that can explain why the CPT protest lost ground in the research area and why the strategy of the government to gain support for the project has been successful. Many factors influenced the attitudes and actions of the local people towards the PISF and the intervening parties, such as job opportunities, past experiences, the image of the government and of Lula, values and beliefs, knowledge, and social pressures. In order to understand the interface situation better and the attitudes and actions of the local people towards the PISF, the next paragraphs will point out in how the PISF enters the life-worlds of the actors in the construction area of the inter-basin water transfer.

For many people in Agrovila 06, the positive direct impacts of the PISF and the arrival of the army and construction companies outweighed the negative short term and insecure long term impacts. Positive impacts were perceived to be the construction by the army of a water well, the increased safety situation and the work availability that the PISF offered. This work availability was a factor in bringing about social pressure in favor of the PISF, because the people wanted to avoid conflict with neighbors who found a job at the PISF. Negative short term impacts were at the time of research only minor ones according to the inhabitants, such as the traffic, the dust, cracks in the houses and too few services (such as public telephones) for too many people. One family in Agrovila 06 had suffered larger negative consequences because of the construction of the water transfer. This family lost their house and was not satisfied with the received compensation. However, the members of this family did not know how to improve their situation.

So, the Agrovila 06 inhabitants did not show a strong opposition against the water transfer and when the construction of the PISF had began, they did not influence the local implementation process to any great extent. This could partly be explained by the attitude that the local people had towards authorities: they were reluctant to take initiative and to face up to the authorities to claim improvements, as Marcelo –the representative of Agrovila 06– explained and which I too observed. However, when the inhabitants had had enough of the dust situation, they did manage to organize and to block the Agrovila road. Unfortunately, this action did not change the situation significantly.

Moreover, values and beliefs and the perception of the local people about the government and Lula also influenced the positive opinion about the PISF. The local people had strong values and beliefs about sharing the water, which was also confirmed by Mari, the CPT employee,

who said that solidarity was an important characteristic of a *sertanejo*. This was used by the government to convince the local population in favor of the project, as will become more clear in the next chapter as well. Moreover, the local people showed huge trust in Lula and his good intentions. That the PISF was already such an old project, gave the people the idea that it was well thought through, and they praised Lula for the courage to finally implement it.

Past experiences with government interventions also shaped the *agrovila* inhabitant's opinion about the project: although the dam constructions ruptured the social structures and many people had to be reallocated, several people in the *agrovila* thought that their lives had improved because of the better houses, own piece of land and provided salary. Hope was a strong factor that sustained the belief that the project would be good for them and the people inland. It is interesting that this hope was often based on partial information: the people were never really sure about what the project would bring them or what the impact on the river might be. They based their opinion on occasional chats with engineers, gossip, what they had seen on the television or had heard at meetings with the CPT or CPP.

Not only the analysis of the life-worlds of the local people, but also the analysis of the life-worlds of the intervening parties and their interface with the local people explains the course of the implementation process. This analysis shows that the interface with the local people did influence the attitudes and actions of the intervening parties, but not always to the benefit of the local people. The intervening parties did not understand the complaints of the locals, or at least thought that their complaints were exaggerated and that they should be happy with the benefits that the water transfer project brought to them. The analysis of the life-worlds of the intervening parties has shown how the assumptions of these parties about the local population, the drought situation, the government and the PISF itself, influenced their actions and attitudes towards the PISF and the local population.

The non-target group of the fishermen also had mainly a positive opinion about the PISF. One would think that the arguments that the CPT and CPP used against the PISF would have appealed more to this group, because they were more directly dependent on the river than the Agrovila 06 inhabitants. However, also in this group the positive hopes that the PISF would improve the situation in the *sertão* prevailed above the fear that the PISF would do harm. The value of sharing was important, and people based their opinion on whether the water transfer would harm the river on information provided by the CPP and their own observations. They did not receive official information from the government and just like in Agrovila 06, the people based their opinion on partial knowledge. Besides that the people did not know a lot about the project, several just trusted it 'because it was already so old'. Furthermore, just as in Agrovila 06, social pressure played a role in this village to be in favor of the water transfer, because several people in the *agrovila* and surroundings were working for the project.

Therefore, several of the same elements as in Agrovila 06 could be observed in the fishing *agrovila*, despite the fact that here there was no direct interface with the army and construction companies or the MI. There was occasionally an interface though with the CPP, but this did not influence everybody in the village to be against the project. Even within one family, some members could be against and some in favor, without arguing about it. This could be a sign that the people gave a low importance to the PISF, or, that the issue was very sensitive and that the people wanted to avoid family conflict. Another way to explain this situation could be that the water transfer project was far removed from the daily reality of their lives to provoke extensive discussion.

In Roça Velha, the community that is located inland next to the PISF canal, it could be seen that direct benefits and hope were the main factors that influenced the people's opinion about

the project. This shows that not only material, or cost-benefit consideration are involved matter. Several people had sold their land where the PISF had to pass, but not all of them had received the compensation at the time of visiting. There was an interface with the engineers who worked on the canal and who told the people that they did not know exactly how the water would reach Roça Velha. There had been meetings with government officials, who every time had told the inhabitants a different story about the usage of the PISF water, leaving the inhabitants confused. However, the people remained tremendously hopeful that the water transfer would bring good and they did not protest.

The government chose a good area in which to start the construction works and settle the army and construction companies: work opportunities were low, there was a lot of criminality and violence, and there was a lack of public services such as medical posts and access to clean water. Although the situation in Agrovila 06 was worse because of its location on the border between two municipalities, the whole region suffered from these deficiencies. This situation meant that the government could easily satisfy the local people by bringing in the army to provide improved services and more security. According to Mari, the history of the military regime and the consequent past experiences of local people with the army, contributed to the fact that the local people did not protest when the army moved in to start construction.

The promise of new work availability was probably the biggest factor that caused the local people to be positive about the project. As Mari mentioned: some people did believe that the PISF could have a negative impact on the river, but the hope that the PISF would improve work opportunities and spur development weighed more heavily. This was also expressed by the Pipipan leader, who provided a clear example of how someone's opinion and actions do not necessarily have to be in harmony with each other. This leader struggled with his doubts about the project on the one hand, and the positive short term impacts and the hope for a better future on the other. It was hard for the CPT to reach and to convince the people, at least before and during the first phase of the construction of the PISF, because at that time the people hoped for a job or had one. That the availability of work played a major role in how the people thought about and reacted in relation to the PISF, was stressed when, after my departure from the research area, the local people went on strike in protest against sackings and the non-receipt of wages. However, as Mari expressed it, by then it was too late to stop the project.

The above analysis showed that the people based their opinion on their own direct experiences. The arguments that the CPT came up with to protest against the PISF might have been too removed from their reality as they focused more on the long term material costs and social impacts (that the PISF would have a bad impact on the river, that it would only benefit the rich, and that there were cheaper solutions available). People were worried about the impact of the PISF on the river, but at the same time they saw that the river had enough water during the wet seasons. The government's propaganda that *only a small portion* of the water which otherwise would flow to the sea would be diverted to those who needed it, undermined the arguments of the CPT. This, together with the other factors explained in the above paragraphs, made it difficult for the CPT to convince the people to protest against the water transfer.

4. President Lula's visit to Pernambuco

4.1. Introduction

In October 2009, President Lula made several trips to visit or inaugurate governmental projects. One of these was a three day visit to the São Francisco river, where he visited projects of the PAC, including the PISF. He gave interviews and speeches, visited the construction works and even did the lottery to determine in which new houses the people who had to be moved would be re-housed. The press was present, the speeches were broadcast on television, and during the next few days, several pictures of President Lula walking in the PISF canal in between laborers and ministers could be admired in the newspapers. President Lula did not come alone to the PISF; he brought with him several politicians. One of them was minister Dilma Rousseff, said to be his favorite candidate for the 2010 presidential elections. Lula himself cannot be re-elected because he has had his maximum two successive terms. With the elections in sight, these visits were labeled by the opposition as electoral campaigning outside the campaign period and they delivered a complaint to the *Tribunal Superior Eleitoral* (TSE, Superior Electoral Tribunal). However, Lula countered these accusations in the media by saying that the opposition was 'just jealous', because they did not inaugurate projects.

During this three day trip I had the opportunity to witness his visit to Agrovila 06. Agrovila 06 is the small village where the army and construction companies settled to construct the first part of the Eastern Axis of the PISF. The aim of this section is to analyze how President Lula used the PISF as a stage to promote his government's policy and projects, and as a stage for electoral campaign purposes. The visit to Agrovila 06 will be analyzed in detail, but other elements from the other visits to the PISF that support the analysis will be included as well. The section considers the visit of Lula to be a 'cultural performance', a show through which Lula tried to engage his audience rationally and emotionally. This chapter analyses this cultural performance and points out the different elements that are characteristic of it. It illustrates how Lula promotes his government and the PISF by symbolically connecting himself to the PISF, and by engaging the people rationally and emotionally. By doing so, he broadcasts a message of hope, integration and progress. In doing this on the scene, he confirmed his relations with various political alliances and economic and electoral groups by demonstrating the benefits that the works will provide them. The whole cultural performance can also be seen as one of the tools by which the government tried to gain constant support for its policy and projects.

Section 4.2 describes the cultural performance; the visits of President Lula to the São Francisco river and the PISF. This section is divided in sub-sections that describe the activities and observations of the visit each day. Section 4.3 provides a sub-conclusion and points out seven elements that are characteristic of Lula's cultural performance.

4.2. Account of the visit of President Lula to the São Francisco river

In October 2009, Lula made a three day trip to the São Francisco river to visit several PAC projects, including the PISF. This trip was not an isolated event, because Lula had during the whole month of October visited several more governmental projects. This section gives an

abstract of the visits on the 14th, 15th and 16th of October to the São Francisco river and the Northeast, and describes in detail the visit to Agrovila 06 on the 15th of October, which I had the chance to witness. Lastly, a note will be given on the role of the press during these visits and the reaction of the opposition to these events.

4.2.1. Visit on the 14th of October 2009

Buritizeiro

On 14 October 2009, Lula visited the revitalization works of the São Francisco river, part of the PAC program, in Buritizeiro in the state of Minas Gerais. The newspaper *Diario de Pernambuco*, stated that an electoral dispute between the government and the opposition marked the beginning of the visits to the São Francisco river. Buritizeiro is governed by the PT and the president would also visit Pirapora, governed by DEM (the Democrats, which are in the current opposition), but that visit had been cancelled. When the governor of Minas Gerais, Aécio Neves (from the PSDB party, also in the opposition) heard about this change, he decided not to be present at the event in Buritizeiro and communicated this by telephone to the president. However, on the airport Aécio Neves did meet the president where he had a conversation with him and was pictured with him (*Diario de Pernambuco*, 2009a), which could have meant that he did not want to dissociate himself totally from the president and wanted to profit from the media attention that the visits to the São Francisco received. At the airport Aécio Neves, also explained how much Minas Gerais is investing in the revitalization of the Velhas river which flows into the São Francisco River, which, as he mentioned, is as much as the federal government is investing in the revitalization of the São Francisco river (*Diario de Pernambuco*, 2009a).

In Buritizeiro the president gave a speech of fourteen minutes for the local people. The CPT gave me the message that around fifty people had tried to protest against the PISF in Buritizeiro, but that their pamphlets and banners were taken from them the moment that they went to listen to Lula's speech. Some protestors were denied entrance to the area by the military police and the municipality guards. This shows that the government wanted to control who could have contact with the press and what would be shown on the television, for the speeches of Lula were being broadcast.

During Lula's speech the dignitaries who had come with him sat behind him on the stage. In the middle of the row sat Dilma Rousseff, the president's Chief of Staff since 2005 who also runs the *Casa Civil*². She also belongs to the PT and was mentioned as the person most likely to succeed Lula. Behind Lula sat Ciro Gomes, who is federal deputy. He was minister of the *Ministerio da Integração Nacional* (Ministry of National Integration, MI) during the period 2003-2006 and was the one who put the PISF project together. He is member of the *Partido Socialista Brasileiro* (PSB, the Brazilian Socialist Party). At the time of the visit, there was speculation in the media that Ciro Gomes would be a candidate for the 2010 presidential elections as well³. Ciro Gomes has been a presidential candidate before in 1998 and 2002. Besides many other political activities, he has also been governor of the state of Ceará, which will receive water from the PISF. Ciro Gomes's brother, Cid Gomes, is now governor of Ceará.

² As the Minister of the Casa Civil she is responsible for the *Programa de Aceleração do Crecimento* (PAC, Program of Accelerated Growth) of which the PISF project is part of.

³ In October 2009 it was not known yet, but now it is known that Dilma is the official presidential candidate. Ciro Gomes does not participate in the 2010 presidential elections.

Lula began his speech by greeting the people (who he named his *companheiros*, his comrades) who had come with him. First, he greeted Dilma, then the others present; Geddel Vieira Lima (PMDB), the minister of the Ministry of National Integration and pre-candidate for the governorship of Bahia; Marcio Fortes, the minister of Cities; Franklin Martins of the Secretariat of Social Communication; Jaques Wagner (PT), who is the governor of Bahia; General Enzo Peri, the commander of the Brazilian army; federal deputies Ciro Gomes, Leonardo Monteiro (PT) and Reginaldo Lopes (PT); Padre Salvador, the mayor of Buritizeiro by whom he wanted to greet all the other mayors present; João Machado from the *Agência de Águas* (National Water Agency, ANA); the state deputies of the region; Tadeu Mariano, city counselor and president of the Câmara Municipal de Buritizeiro; and all the press that was present. By introducing these persons explicitly, Lula showed how he is politically supported by various levels and government institutions. During his speech, Lula received applause from the audience several times.

After the introduction of the people he had brought with him, Lula continued the speech by saying:

“First, I want to tell you that in our original plan to make this trip, there wasn’t a political rally planned, it was planned that we would visit the works, because we want to give a sign to Brazil and to the world. First because this project...it was first thought about in 1847, still during the time that S. Pedro was the Brazilian emperor. This project, almost 200 years after, did not manage to move forward, because we had many governors with two faces, who promised to execute the project in one state and didn’t do it, and promised not to execute the project in another state”.

Saying this, Lula seemed to be reacting on the fact that Aécio Neves had decided not to come to Buritizeiro because Lula had cancelled his visit to Pirapora. By saying that a political rally was not planned, Lula argued that Aécio Neves’s action was unnecessary, and that it is the opposition that describes it as political rally. The above quote shows as well how Lula emphasizes the historical aspect of the project.

Barra

After the visit to Buritizeiro, Lula and his entourage went to Barra, in the state of Bahia, which is a donor state for the PISF project. Barra is also the place where the hunger striker, bishop Dom Luiz Cappio lived. As a newspaper commented: “this time he was not there to protest” (Diario de Pernambuco, 2009b). In Barra, Lula gave a short speech of five minutes. In this he again first introduced the people that had come with him. He explained what river revitalization works and sanitation projects the government was involved in and that he thought that “bringing a cup of water to those who do not have water” is the right thing to do. Moreover, he promised the people that he would return to Barra when he is no longer president, and that he would ensure that the revitalization works would be completed, so that the people would have the certainty that the government would live up to its promises. By saying this, Lula showed his commitment to the project.

After his short speech in Barra, Lula embarked on board a ship to see the revitalization works and erosion processes on the margins of the São Francisco river. By showing these revitalization works, Lula wanted to calm the critics that say that the water transfer project will harm an already degraded river (Batista and Moura, 2009). Afterwards he flew to Xique-Xique and from there he went to Arcoverde in the state of Pernambuco to continue to Custódia. There, the committee visited ‘Lot 11’ of the PISF, where the construction works continued during the night. Lot 11 is situated in between the municipalities of Custódia and Sertânia, in the state of Pernambuco. The group spent the night in the camp of Lot 11. There were also fifty beds available for the press that was traveling with the caravan. The newspaper ‘Diario de Pernambuco’ wrote that the president by staying overnight in Lot 11 showed that

he can do something that had been unimaginable till then: “to bring water to the *sertão*, where waiting for rain is like hoping for a miracle” (Moura and Batista, 2009).

The governor of Pernambuco, Eduardo Campos (PSB), reacted to the Opposition’s accusations that the visit was electoral campaigning, and was quoted in the *Diário de Pernambuco*: “I think that this is a territory of celebration for a government that has its eyes on the Northeast. We had fewer than two thousand people working for this project, and now it provides work for eight thousand people. Lula’s visit is a big opportunity for the people to get to know this project”. By saying this, “he made it an issue to get rid of a possible electoral taint to the visit of President Lula to the São Francisco works” (Moura and Batista, 2009).

4.2.2. Visit on the 15th of October 2009

Custódia

On the morning of the 15th of October, President Lula gave interviews to radio stations from the states that will benefit from the PISF project. By doing this, he emphasized to the electorate in these states that they will benefit from the PISF, and he connected himself to the project. Afterwards he watched a presentation about the PISF and the revitalization works.

In Custódia he gave a speech of sixteen minutes to the workers of Lot 11 and the population of the region. Again, he began his speech by saying that it was not part of their agenda to hold a public act or rally, “because we are visiting the construction sites of the São Francisco canal. But, as well, we cannot waste the opportunity to spend a little word on the workers who are responsible for the magnificent work that is being realized here”. And then he introduced the people who had come with him. Lula thus emphasized again that he only wanted to visit the canal, and that –although it may have seemed a political rally– this was not the intention because he just wanted to show to the people who the persons were that were responsible for the realization of the project. In that way he connected his political allies to the PISF and the benefits that it would bring to the Northeast, and the PISF functioned as a stage to show that.

In his speech Lula mentioned the global economical crisis, and emphasized the jobs that the inter-basin water transfer project is creating. He also described the drought in the region where the PISF canals will go to, and how this project will improve the situation in the Northeast, and “make the country more equal and more just” with which he stressed the ‘integration’ aspect that the canal would fulfill: it will help the Northeast to integrate with the rest of the country.

Moreover, Lula explained in his speech why the press was present:

“I asked comrade Franklin Martins (minister of Social Communication) to invite the national and international press to see the project, because when we only talk about it, we don’t have an idea about the dimension of the project. When you arrive to your homes and talk about the work that you are doing, the people will not believe you. Yesterday, I could see with my own eyes the competence of the Brazilian engineering and the Brazilian workers. For that I invited the foreign press to come together, they were visiting this region for I think two or three days, because I think that this is one of the biggest projects that is being executed in the world today. Only a similar thing happened when president Roosevelt picked the poorest region of the United States, called the Tennessee Valley, and turned this region into a productive region”.

The PISF project is a project that the people can *see*, they see that the government is investing in their region and they feel the direct consequences by the increased work opportunities it offers. In this way, the PISF is a very concrete project that Lula can use to promote his government. However, Lula needed a visit like this to put the project more into the spotlight, because it is located far away from large cities and if the media would not give attention to it, the people would not know that a big project is being built in the middle of the *sertão*, like

Lula himself also emphasized in the above quote. By the above quote, Lula also gave the spectators a feeling of pride, that even the international press was present to see this great project, and a feeling of hope, by comparing the PISF with a successful similar project in the United States.

Furthermore, Lula mentioned the opposition against the PISF:

“I would like to tell you the following: who is not from here, who doesn’t live here, you see it many times on television...there was a bishop who even did a hunger strike to prevent us from executing this project. Now and then there appears a movement in São Paulo, in Salvador, in Rio de Janeiro, against us making water. They do not have knowledge. Really, they do not have knowledge about the good work that this project is doing (...). Now, I cannot allow the poor people to die from thirst and hunger, die from thirst and hunger in the Northeast, I cannot. If we do not take care, the principal animal in extinction in this world is going to be the human being, because the FAO is confirming for who wants to see it that we have 1 billion poor people in this world being hungry, 1 billion. Or in other words, it is not a small thing, and it is not because of lack of technology, it is not because of (in)capacity to produce. It is because when we want to do a project like this, those who take breakfast, lunch, dinner, drink cold water the whole day, are against us doing this project”.

By the above quote, Lula tried to play into the sentiment of his spectators and engage them emotionally. He basically said that the ones that are against the project, allow that the people in the Northeast die from thirst and hunger. During the whole visit to the São Francisco river and the inter-basin water transfer project, as well as afterwards in the media, Lula did not avoid to talk about the criticism that the projects and his visits received, but fired the criticism back instead. By doing so, he showed his authority and gained credibility as a political leader.

Finally, at the end of his speech, Lula again mentioned how old the project is and emphasized that *he* is the one that executes the project, because he knows how it is to live with water scarcity. In this way he connected his own person to the water transfer project:

“This project is already being thought about since 1847, the emperor Dom Pedro II wanted to do this project. I am talking about more than 200 years. And I decided to do it. Maybe, not because I would be engineer and would know; it is because I, with seven years of age, carried a jar with water on my head and I know the sacrifice”.

Agroville 06

After the visit to Custódia, President Lula and his entourage went to the municipality of Floresta to visit Agroville 06 and the PISF construction works. Agroville 06 is the small village where the army and construction companies settled themselves to construct the Eastern axis of the PISF canal and where I stayed as well. The days before the president’s visit it was unclear to the *agrovila* inhabitants and to me what he exactly would do in the village and whether we would have the opportunity to meet him. The inhabitants were excited that the president would come, but also thinking that it would probably be a quick visit and impossible to see him, because of the scarce information they received about the visit. Some inhabitants were suggesting that they maybe should make banners or welcome the president with music, but in the end nothing was organized. Marcelo, the representative of the *agrovila* inhabitants association, explained that it was a pity that the communication about the president’s visit had been so bad, because otherwise they would have organized something. Before the 15th, the engineers and soldiers could also not tell me whether it was possible to meet Lula. However, on the day itself it turned out to be that I was allowed to be close to the president and go to all the places that he would visit, because army engineers I knew brought me along with them. This section gives an account of that day.

President Lula visited the *agrovila* together with a group of ministers, governors and army officials to see the construction works of the Eastern PISF canal. Again, Dilma Rousseff and Ciro Gomes were present. The press arrived before Lula in the *agrovila*. They arrived all

together in a small bus and installed themselves behind the fence that was set up at the first location that Lula would go to. This was a scale-model of the first part of the canal, which was made by the army. Large photo and video cameras were brought along to record the happening. The press was with a group of at least twenty people. There was local press but also national press from São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro and even international press. They installed themselves behind the fences next to the scale-model and waited for the president to arrive, as Figure 4.1 shows.



Figure 4.1 The press is waiting at the scale-model for President Lula to arrive.

Lula and the rest of the committee arrived around midday with three helicopters. Especially for this event the army and the construction companies had constructed three helicopter platforms where they could land. The president walked the small distance between the helicopter platform and the model; the president in front with the other dignitaries behind him.

When the president arrived at the scale-model a colonel explained to him what could be seen on the model and what the army is constructing. The president stood in the middle: at his left side stood minister Dilma (who was said to be his favorite candidate to succeed him) and at his right side stood the minister of National Integration; minister Geddel Vieira Lima. The other members of the group stood on the other side of the scale-model and on the opposite side stood the reporters whom were making photographs and films. This part of Lula's visit was also broadcasted on television, and by placing Dilma and Geddel next to him, Lula probably wanted to stress the positive relation he has with them and make sure that the people would associate these ministers with him. Besides the dignitaries, several employees of the companies that were working on the PISF were present. Figure 4.2 shows President Lula and the two ministers at the scale-model.



Figure 4.2 At the scale-model.

From the left to the right: minister Geddel, President Lula and minister Dilma.

During the explanation of the colonel the president laughed several times. One time the president laughed because the colonel said “we are excavating 5 million cubic meters earth from this part of the canal; which is a much smaller number than the number of Corinthians supporters (a soccer club from São Paulo of which Lula is a fan)”. Also minister Geddel made a joke that made the president and the other spectators laugh. This joy-making caused a relaxed atmosphere. It contributed to the image that Lula wanted to transfer to the audience and media of this trip being a ‘celebration’ (As Eduardo Campos said, quoted in section 4.2.1, that the Northeast is a territory of celebration for a government that has put its eyes on this region). Furthermore, by this joy-making they probably wanted to transfer to the people an image of a government that gets along well with each other, and especially that of a president that gets along well with his ministers and other dignitaries.

At the end of the explanation of the colonel they applauded. Then, the president gave a look at the information boards that stood on the sides. These boards gave information about the environmental programs of the project; for example about the animals that can be found in the area and about the activities of the army in the agrovila (like waste collection and hair cutting of the agrovila inhabitants). The atmosphere was very relaxed; people chatted with each other and laughed.

As can be seen on Figure 4.2, President Lula was not formally dressed: he was wearing a light kaki colored blouse and the same military hat that the military was wearing especially for that day. Minister Dilma was also wearing this hat and trousers with an orange colored top and a necklace. The other members of the delegation were also informally dressed with blouses with short sleeves, trousers and no ties. By this way of dressing they connected to the population of the Northeast, that was their audience that day. Lula also identified with the army by wearing the military hat.

After the visit to the scale-model, the committee went into cars to visit the reservoir where the first pump station will be built. Next to the road in the agrovila stood some people that had put up banners with texts as ‘Barragem de Itaparica deixou Índios Tuxá sem terra’ (the Itaparica dam has left the Tuxá Indians without land). With the construction of the Itaparica dam several indigenous communities had to move from their ancestral lands and the dam inundated the cemetery of an indigenous community. Also, there was a community that had put the question why the president spent so much money on a new project while they were still waiting on their compensation of the Itaparica dam. The protestors were not making any noise, they were standing on the side of the road and they did not block the road. This could have been because they were impressed by the presence of the army, or, maybe they were not very much against President Lula, as the newspaper *Diário de Pernambuco* (Duarte, 2009) wrote:

“‘Since 23 years the Tuxá people is a people without a territory because of CHESF. We came to give our message to the president’, said the chief of the Tuxá tribe Raimundo Nonato, bearing a protest banner against the state-owned energy company. Some hours later, and a lot more smiling, the Indigenous people accompanied the speech of the president with a lot of applause. Another group of farmers from Belém do São Francisco, who informed to have the same problem with the federal government because of the creation of the Itaparica dam, also did not support the protest very much. ‘There haven’t been another president like Lula’, said the retired João Rodrigues dos Santos, 70 years, who lived on a small island in the São Francisco river, which submersed in the 1980 decade”.

This is the only thing that this newspaper wrote about the protest. The newspaper wrote mainly positively about the visit of Lula, so the objectivity can be questioned. However, the above quoted observation of the newspaper confirmed my own observation of a quiet protest as well. Figure 4.3 below shows several groups with their protest banners that were protesting in Agrovila 06.



Figure 4.3 Protestors in Agrovila 06

Several groups protesting in Agrovila 06 against the fact that they still did not receive compensation from the Itaparica dam.

At the first pumping station the president received an explanation about the pumping reservoir and again the press stood behind a fence. The visitors were all standing under a white tent that was put up at the location for the event. This visit was very quick. When the president walked down again, the press spoke to several people; one of them was the governor of Pernambuco, Eduardo Campos (Figure 4.4). On his way down the president went on the picture with several militaries.



Figure 4.4 Interviewing Eduardo Campo, the governor of the state Pernambuco

The delegation went to the first part of the canal where the constructors were working on the lining of the canal. Again an explanation was given to the president and his committee. Most of the press was not present at this visit because they were taking their positions at the location where the president would give a speech afterwards.

When the group went back to the *agrovila*, a crowd of people was standing in line to enter the area from where they could watch the speech of Lula. The people that had stood with banners next to the road were not standing there anymore. The audience consisted mostly of employees of the construction companies and there were also some *agrovila* inhabitants that did not work for the construction companies and a few indigenous people that were dressed traditionally. Especially for the occasion a stage was put up on the terrain of the construction company Canter/Egesa on which Lula would give a speech. A large poster hung on the side of the stage (Figure 4.5) with a picture of reforestation activities on the margins of the São Francisco river and the text 'Projeto São Francisco. Um rio melhor, um rio para todos' (Project São Francisco. A better river, a river for everyone). Which shows that the government and Lula wanted to stress that they think about the revitalization of the river. On the opposite site of the stage the press had taken her position (Figure 4.6).



Figure 4.5 Poster on the side of the stage where Lula would give his speech.
The text on the poster is saying says: Project São Francisco. A better river, a river for everyone



Figure 4.6 The crowd, the press and two militaries; ready to listen to Lula's speech

President Lula came on stage and gave a speech of twenty minutes. The group of ministers, governors and other dignitaries stood behind him on the stage. Lula had memorized the speech for the biggest part and only used a small crib sheet that he held in his hand. He had a microphone in his other hand and walked from one end of the stage to the other, talking to the spectators. Sometimes he made a little joke and the audience, as well as the dignitaries on the stage, had to laugh. In the next section I translated interesting parts of Lula's speech⁴ and comment on it.

Lula began with saying that he found it important to first introduce the people who had been very much involved with the project. He said that when his government was installed, a lot of state governments were discussing the project and that he had asked his vice-president José Alencar to take care of the project. But, the governments of the states of Bahia, Piauí, Sergipe and Alagoas stayed quiet because;

"the people had called themselves the owners of the river. In other words, the river passed there, the water is going to fall into the Atlantic Ocean, the water is going to the sea, so we would like to take a little bit of this water to give to the driest region of the country, which is the semi-arid northeast and make possible that the people would have water to drink and have water to grow little animals, to make little irrigations".

By opening like this, Lula immediately stressed the importance of the project, and labeled the states that were first against the project as being egoistic.

Lula continued by telling that he gave another function to José and that the project changed hands to Ciro Gomes whom put the project together. Lula explained that Ciro Gomes became deputy candidate and that after the elections Geddel became minister (of the ministry of National Integration) and gave continuity to the work. Geddel allocated João Santana to work on the project:

"This companion, to be honest, is the master of these works here. And what is the interest? The interest is to help the state of Ceará, a part of the state of Pernambuco, because in the other part the river São Francisco passes on the side of Petrolina, Rio Grande do Norte and Paraíba, which were the most effected states, right? So, we decided that we would do this work. It was a fight that you would not like to imagine, we faced people who didn't have an idea about what the Northeast is, people who didn't know what drought is, people who didn't know, who didn't have the smallest notion...to see a mother taking her son and a water can and walk six kilometers, seven, eight kilometers, or paying something for the supply of the water truck when they pass, and if there is no money there is no water, and the person sees his calf die, his goat die, and his cow already died, and the children cannot take a bath, cannot wash their clothes. The people don't have an idea about this, it is necessary to have lived there to have clarity about what drought is in the Northeast. So well, we overcame all the obstacles for this project".

By saying this, Lula criticized the people who were against the project, and labeled himself as the winner who had won the fight against these critics. He vividly described the drought situation, and in that way engaged the people emotionally in his speech. By saying that it is necessary to have lived that drought situation, he stressed that *he knows better* than the critics against the PISF what the Northeast is needing.

Lula mentioned that this was the first time that he was visiting the project. He said that they went the day before to Minas Gerais and to Bahia;

"we went to the city of that bishop that did a hunger strike against the project. Unfortunately, he wasn't there, because I don't have anything against him, I would've visited him, but he wasn't there. And so, now we are here, in Floresta. I came to Floresta, you see mayor, in 1980, founding the PT. I came in an old Brasília, lent by Humberto Costa. When –I was telling to Eduardo– when we returned, around midnight, the car punctured the oil tank and we spent the whole night on the roadside, waiting for a car, a truck or a bus to pass. A truck passed and we

⁴ Lula's grammar use is not always correct. I tried to catch this in the English translation. Furthermore, Lula is often using diminutives, which in the Portuguese language means to write 'inho' behind a word. However, in the English translation this would mean to write before many words 'little' or 'small', so I have left this aspect out of the translation because it does not have the same effect in English as it has in Portuguese.

went on top, to be able to arrive at our destination. If it would've been today, with the canal, I would go swimming, but at that time you had to walk".

In this quote Lula named the bishop who did a hunger strike and weakened the bishop's protest because Lula mentioned that now the bishop was not there to speak with him. Furthermore, the president again connected to the Northeastern people by quoting how he visited Floresta and ended up next to the road because of the breakdown of his car.

Lula introduced the other dignitaries that had come with him, explained their positions and made little jokes. By doing so he again made sure that his audience understood and saw his political support and alliances.

"I also want to show to you, here is our beloved Cid Gomes, who is the governor of Ceará, a state that is going to benefit; the comrade Ciro Gomes, to whom you were already introduced here; and our mayor of Floresta, the mayor of Jatobá and the mayor of Itacuruba. Raise your hand so that the people can see the two mayors. Our comrade Dilma Rousseff, who is the Chief Minister of the *Casa Civil*, and our comrade Geddel; and our Zé Machado as well, who is the president of the *Agência Nacional de Águas*, better known as ANA; and our comrade Franklin Martins, who stands over there, Franklin is the minister of the *Comunicação Social*, he doesn't like to appear here up front, I don't know why. Well, I also want to introduce the directors of the consortium Canter-Engesa, for which a lot of you work. I want to introduce our general Enzo who is the comrade that started the work here. Today, we have the army working for a lot of projects in Brazil. Here, Eduardo, it is important to say that when we were installed, in 2003, we wanted to give a small project to the army, and that we discovered that the Engineering Battalion of the Army was bankrupt, it didn't have trucks, it didn't have machines, it didn't have anything. Today, a lot of businessmen complain that the army is doing a big project, that it is a large builder, and that it is competing with them. But let me tell you one thing: we use the army in a lot of projects".

By mentioning the good work of the army, Lula showed that he is proud that his government has put the army to work again in construction works. In this way he defended the presence of the army, and counter argued the protestors that were against the PISF and the presence of the army.

Lula continued his speech by stressing how much jobs the project is providing to the people of the Northeast. Lula engaged his audience emotionally by giving them a feeling of pride and a feeling of being part of the booming economy of Brazil:

"So, I always thought that the most sacred thing...I don't know how you are feeling here, but seeing these people dressed in overalls gives me the conviction that you are working, earning a salary that might not be the best in the world, but maybe it is the best that you have earned till now, a lot of you learned a profession, therefore, when this projects finishes, for sure there are going to be other projects, because Brazil is not going to stop anymore. One of the things that we asked to the employers was that they would contract the workers of the region. Because, a lot of times in the past, this happened: the companies came from São Paulo, contracted employees from São Paulo, brought them here, and so the workers from São Paulo kept gaining and the workers from here sat down on the corner or in a bar, waiting for God to deal with it".

Moreover, Lula explained the snowball effect that the project has on the local economy and stimulated the imagination of the people by explaining what you can do with the money you can earn. He made jokes about drinking, talked slang, and in that way connected himself to the local people, letting them know that he knows that everyone likes a beer now and then:

"The moment that we start to contract people from here, what happens? There is a revolution in the city, because there the bars start to sell more, everybody, now and then, likes a beer, no one is made of iron, right? I was saying beer for not to say 'caninha'⁵ (the spectators laughed). So, the restaurants start to sell more, the street vendors start to sell more, the people start to improve their houses. A short time later, the people are thinking about buying a car. Isn't it for this that we want to be born, to grow? It is for this, and to improve our lives. A father taking his wife and his son in the morning to the supermarket and buy everything that there is to eat, not

⁵ Caninha is slang for an alcoholic drink.

needing the basic basket of the government, but buying, choosing the best. Because the poor need to learn to like the better things. We cannot be satisfied with the minimum, we always have to fight for the maximum, this is our objective during our stay on Earth. So, when I see you with this overall, I'm extremely happy because I know that you are working. There are 8 thousand workers and till December there will be 10 thousand workers working for this project. I think that there was never before a company that had 10 thousand workers working in only one project in the Northeast. They are people from the army, people contracted by the army, various consortiums of companies, and I, therefore, am extremely happy".

Another important element of the speech of Lula was the emphasize he put on the necessity that the Northeast has to *integrate* with the rest of the country by developing quicker to level with the rest of the country. He stressed other projects and activities that the government was doing in the Northeast to achieve this. By doing so, he promoted the policies of his government:

"The second thing that I think is important, is that you have clarity about the fact that we took the decision that the North and the Northeast of the country, which were always the most backward parts of the country, would develop quicker in order to match with the most advanced part of the country. Or in other words, to improve the education in the Northeast, to invest in professional formation, to take care for the youngsters in the universities, it is here in the Northeast that we are expanding the universities, it is here in the Northeast that we are building more technical schools, because it is necessary that we take down the backwardness. All of you need to fight that your children will have more opportunities than you had, all of you. It is a moral obligation while we are father. We cannot be satisfied when our son is the same or less than we, he needs to be better. For this, he needs to study. And for study there are two commitments: the government has to build the schools and the parents need to pester the child, because they know that the young boy is also a rascal. He gets hold of a girlfriend and if he can date instead of studying, he goes. Woman and man, it is not only about being a rascal. So, I think that when we manage to get the children to study, this Northeast is going to give a jump of extraordinary quality. And this work here, you are constructing a work that is going to benefit at least 12 million people in the Brazilian Northeast. We don't want to see more people with suitcases at the coasts, going there and here when there is drought. Sometimes begging for help, and sometimes, also the state doesn't have anything to give and the people take a rock from one side, put it on the other side, take it from that side, put it on the other, and nothing happens".

Although the critics used it as an argument to be against the project, Lula did not seem to have problems with the costs of the project because he mentioned it explicitly in his speech. He turned the argument around, by saying that it is the best investment ever because it will bring clean water to the people who do not have that now:

"So, this project here is a very expensive project. Here, more than 6 billion reals are being invested. It is a canal of more than 600 kilometers long. Maybe, I don't know if there is a canal of this size, but it is a canal. And we are doing this with the conviction that it is the best invested money, because we know the final result: which is that the people are going to have that what can't be missed by the human body, which is clean water, treated, to drink, and they are not going to drink water from the reservoir, muddled, full of snails".

He continued by stressing again his connection to the Northeast and that *he knows* how bad the water situation is. By repeating this several times, it must have had a convincing effect on the audience that Lula has good intentions to improve the situation:

"When I lived in Garanhuns, we took water from the reservoir, there was the horse shitting on one side, peeing on the other, the cow, the goat, and we took the same water to drink. There was no choice and there was no filter, we brought that water in a jar to the house and put it there in another jar to let it settle, and when it had settled it had muddled with the color of your overalls. We took out the water from above with a mug, till it would almost hit the mud at the bottom, from there we took it out, put it in another place, located a sack of flour like this...(...) and it stayed in one meter of clay under water with snails, with slug, with leeches, with everything. It is this water that still a lot of people have to drink in the Brazilian Northeast today".

Lula stressed his mission to make the country more equal, and engaged the emotions of the crowd by promising them a feeling of ‘complete citizens’ and more self-respect. Furthermore, he connected again to the people by saying that he is proud to be a ‘pernambucano’ (someone from the state Pernambuco).

“So, it is not possible that a country can be right if there is a part of the country that is treated unequally with the rest of the country. We don’t want to take anything from any state. What we want is to make this country more equal like you are doing. When you are in your house and you have two, three or four children, and if there would be one more weak, one more ill, it would be that one that you would treat. In the world of animals, if there is a weak one the mother kills it. But the human being doesn’t do that. If there would be a human being that is more needy, we would treat it with more care, we would give that one the best beef, the best plate of rice, so that the ‘animal’ is supported. Isn’t it like this? It is like this, and this is what we are doing here, or in other words, it is preparing the people of the Northeast to transform themselves in complete citizens, citizens of the first class, citizens that are going to be looked at like Brazilian citizens and not like ‘those northerners’. You don’t know how many jokes I hear about the nordestino (someone from the Northeast), and how many fights I made because the people called me ‘baiano’ (someone from the state Bahia). Because in some parts of the country, everything is baiano. There is no pernambucano, no maranhense, everything is baiano. And being pernambucano, and pernambucanos are very proud, I don’t admit to be called paulista (from São Paulo), nor baiano, nor carioca (from Rio de Janeiro), I want to be pernambucano and I want to be called pernambucano”.

Besides the project itself, Lula explained as well about the global economic crisis and how much money was spend to save the banks. He stressed that the message from Brazil to the world is that the crisis is not going to have a very large impact in Brazil, and that it is going to end there first. He mentioned how many things Brazil is producing, and also stressed the role of the women: that if they work and spend their own money, they also contribute to the economic growth. Then, he stressed how he had suffered in his childhood and sometimes ate just anything, even a hummingbird, because of hunger. So, again, he stressed that *he knows* the poor situation and that he is going to do something about it, which can be read in the next quote:

“So, I think that how I went through this during my childhood and how I know that there are still a lot of people going through this, we have to do something about it. I felt this on my skin, I have the moral and political obligation to believe that the future generations don’t have to go through what I went through, nor where you went through. The fact that you are working is one more extraordinary thing”.

Lula put the project in a broader perspective by explaining that the ultimate goal is to prevent out-migration from the Northeast to the cities by making the Northeast attractive for investments which will be brought about by the PISF. By telling this, Lula appealed to the imagination of the people by picturing how the PISF can contribute to the development of the region on the long term:

“A part of this project is going to be finished in 2010 and the other part is going to be finished later, because 70% is going to be finished, but in 2011, 2012, the whole canal will be inaugurated, with water running up and down and the people helping the small ones, we are always helping those who need it most, so that the Northeast will transform into a strong attraction for investments. Then the people of the Northeast don’t have to leave their native region anymore to go live in a shantytown in São Paulo, or in Rio de Janeiro. He has to live well and on his own land. When he wants to go to São Paulo, he goes there to go out, to be a tourist. It is this that we are aiming for”.

He ended the speech by saying thanks to the people and the entrepreneurs who made the project possible, and he thanked the teachers because it was the Day of the Teachers. He gave the audience a feeling of pride and being special by saying that they were more citizen than before, because they had learned a profession and in that way could be part of the progress in Brazil:

“Therefore, people, thank you very much, from the bottom of my heart, to the entrepreneurs for their disposal, for the commitment, today it is the Day of the Teachers, congratulations to the teachers of this country. And I want to thank you, because I see from your faces the happiness.

Today you are more citizens than you were before, because a lot of you have learned a profession. I went to the shipyard together with Eduardo Campos...to take a sugarcane cutter and transform him into a welder is a revolution, it is a revolution. A citizen that stops squatting down in the corner of a bar, to work as a welder is a miracle. This is what happened with you.

So, my comrades...There, operator of the excavator. So, this is something, this is a revolution that is happening in Brazil, the businessmen are realizing that it is cheaper for them to train their own employees. They make a little investment, they train the workers, and in short time he is qualified to work, earning a little bit more and taking care of his wife and the children.

A big hug, people, that God blesses all of you and we are going to work so that this country is going to move forward”.

After the speech, Lula went down to the side of the stage to be closer to the audience and talk with some of them. Then, Lula went backstage and a few people from the agrovila were allowed to go with him. He let them take pictures and talked with them. Eliane, the owner of the restaurant in Agrovila 06, was one of them. Later, she said that it had been very exciting to meet Lula because she was a big fan of him. By this cultural performance of talking to the local people and letting them to take a picture with him, Lula showed how accessible he is for the people.

During the speech of Lula I was standing backstage from where I could see Lula as well. At the end of the speech Ciro Gomes came backstage and started to talk to me. He asked me where I was from, and whether I already had a picture together with Lula. I said that this was not the case, and that I would like to have one. When Lula –after meeting the crowd downstairs– came backstage, Ciro Gomes introduced me to Lula and Lula shook my hand after which Ciro Gomes made a picture of us. Lula made a joke by asking whether I already could speak Portuguese and that the best way to learn Portuguese was by having a Brazilian boyfriend. This accessibility to make pictures and his joke-making confirmed the previous observations about these performances.

Lula and the rest of the committee went for lunch and after that they flew away again with the helicopters. On the street there were still some women standing from the Tacaratu community, holding banners and claiming that they had lost their houses because of Lula's fault. They were not protesting against the canal, but complaining that they still felt the consequences of the building of the Itaparica dam and that they had lost their houses, roots and history. That there were not people protesting against the PISF, could have been caused by the fact that the protest was blocked in Buritizeiro and that the protestors did not want to come again, or that in this area the people were less willing to protest.

After the speech there were not a lot of people on the street. The audience had mostly consisted of employees of the companies that worked on the PISF; so from Floresta, Petrolandia, the agrovila's and from other Northeastern places. When the event was over I wondered together with some agrovila inhabitants about why such a small amount of people had come to the agrovila to see the president. We figured that transport might have been a problem and besides, it was a normal working day. Also the fact that there was lack of clarity about how the visit would look like could have been a reason why not that many people from outside the companies and agrovila had come to see the president. When I talked with one woman from the agrovila who said to be a big fan of Lula, she told me that she did not go to listen to the speech because she did not want to be in the strong sun for such a long time. Nevertheless, the visit of Lula was broadcasted on television and the news also paid attention to it. So, for the government, the media must have been the main channel through which they wanted to transfer the message of Lula about the PISF and the revitalization works.

After his visit to Agrovila 06, the president and the rest of the committee went to Cabrobó, where the first part of the Northern canal is being constructed, to spend the night there.

4.2.3. Visit on the 16th of October 2009

Cabrobó

The 16th of October, President Lula visited the construction works of the Northern Axis and of a dam, and gave a speech of twenty-seven minutes to the PISF workers. This took place in Cabrobó, the town where the protest against the inter-basin water transfer had taken place and where the Truka live; the indigenous people that are against the PISF because it is constructed nearby their territory. Again, Lula greeted the persons that had come with him and the audience.

Thereafter, Lula began to explain how proud he was of the Brazilian army that they were helping the country so much by doing construction projects. He explained that the government can now always execute the projects –also when there are no companies willing to construct– because the potential of the army is recuperated now. In this way he defended the fact that the army is constructing the canal; something that was criticized a lot by the protestors against the project, especially in Cabrobó where the army and protestors met.

The same elements that could be identified in the previous speeches came forward in this speech as well. Lula explained that he knows the drought problem in the Northeast by vividly describing his own experiences as a child. He explained that you cannot refuse water to people who need it and mentioned that the project is already very old. He said that he is proud to be a ‘pernambucano’ and that *he* took the decision to execute this project. Furthermore, he did not avoid to talk about the criticism against the project, and mentioned that the function of the opposition is to complain, and that his function is to work. Moreover, he knew how to connect again to the *nordestinos* by joking and talking about drinking and soccer:

“I was the first to buy a color television. You would not believe, Eduardo Campos, in 1974 I bought a television to pay in 14 parts, of Sharp, colored, to see the World Cup, and Brazil lost from Poland with 2 x 0, of some Cruyff, which bend Brazil...we had bought...from Holland. We had bought some cognac to drink, for the victory, and we had to drink it for the sadness and the defeat. The drink descended more bitter, boiled and burned the transfer canal from the mouth to the place where it has to go’.

One other thing that came strongly forward in the speech, is that Lula stressed the importance of education and how he managed to get out of his poor situation to become president. He stressed that everyone has to be part of politics and check upon the politicians whether they do what they say they do in the propaganda. He explained that for this reason the press was present, so that everybody could see what they are constructing in the Northeast. Lula must have given the *nordestinos* the feeling that finally there is a government that has thought about them. He visualized the magnificence of the project by saying that if the American astronauts would go to the moon again, they would not only see the Chinese wall but also the canal of the São Francisco. Lula ended his speech by mentioning the names of the politicians who had helped to make the project possible: Eduardo Campos, Ciro Gomes, Dilma Rousseff and Zé Alencar. Also, he said that they are not only realizing the dream of a president or a government, but that they are realizing the wish and hope of decades and decades of a people as well.

Vila Produtiva Rural

After the speech in Cabrobó, Lula went to the *Vila Produtiva Rural* Junco. A *Vila Produtiva Rural* (VPR, Productive Rural Village) is a village that is constructed for the people that have to move because of the construction of the PISF. Through lottery it is decided how the houses

will be divided amongst the new inhabitants and President Lula spontaneously decided to do this lottery himself on that day. Seeing parts of that lottery and reading the report of that day makes clear that Lula made a show out of it. He made many jokes and animated the people. With this action, Lula showed again how close he stands to the people. That Lula executed the lottery symbolized the connection between Lula and the project: Lula is dividing the houses, *he* is the one that made this project possible.

Mauriti

His last visit that day was to the construction works of the Northern Axis canal in Mauriti, in the state of Ceará, where he gave a speech of twenty minutes. In this speech Lula stressed that Brazil cannot only develop in some regions, and that the Northeast should develop the same as the rest of the country. He explained the education projects that the government is executing in the Northeast, and how the process went to implement the PISF. Lula expressed his annoyance about the fact that the construction was paralyzed for nine months because it had to be researched whether a stone on the construction side in Cabrobó was an antique Indigenous hatchet. Lula explained that it costs a lot of money when a work like this stops for nine months. He said: “it is us to blame that this happened, because we made the laws to regulate this”. He continued by explaining other ways in which a project can be paralyzed and expressed his pride that his government conquered all these problems, even the bishop in hunger strike.

Moreover, Lula mentioned Eliane (the owner of the restaurant in Agrovila 06) and how she had managed to start her own restaurant because of the PISF, which showed the opportunities that the project is bringing to the region. At the end of his speech, Lula explained again that only if you do not know how it is to live with water scarcity, you can be stupid enough to be against a project of this magnitude that is going to benefit a lot of people in the country. He said that the opponents of the project do not need to talk bad about them on the television, because then they need to come to see the project. “When they come, they will kneel and offer apologies, because this project will be one of the redemptions for the Brazilian Northeast”.

The speech in Mauriti was more focused than the previous speeches on the fact that it was difficult to start and execute the project because of the laws and regulations and protests. It looks like Lula wanted to prevent that the people in Mauriti would start to believe that the project would never finish, and that it would have been a false promise that it would bring them water.

4.2.4. The press and the opposition

In the newspapers throughout the country attention was given to the visit of Lula to the PISF and the São Francisco river, and his speeches were broadcasted on television. Besides the speeches, Lula gave interviews to radio stations and newspapers as well. Also the ministers and governors that had traveled with Lula had given interviews to newspapers or radio stations. The newspaper *Diário de Pernambuco* showed large pictures of Lula standing in the canal with his safety cap waving in the air. The newspaper gave attention to the visits, quoted Lula and wrote down quotes of local people that expressed their hopes and happiness about the project. Also some people that had their doubts that they would benefit from the project were quoted, but overall the tone was positive. Other newspapers, like the newspaper of São Paulo ‘*O Estado de São Paulo*’, focused on the critique that the opposition gave about the visits.

The main critique of the opposition was that Lula did campaign making outside the campaign making period, and that he used government money for this. Especially the fact that Dilma

was next to him during the visits annoyed the opposition. However, Lula backfired the critique of the opposition by saying things like:

“The men are angry that we are inaugurating projects. It is the first time in my life that I see someone being nervous about this. I, when I was in the opposition, I was angry because there was nothing to inaugurate” (Diario de Pernambuco, 2009e).

In the same article, the reaction of an opposition member was given as well, who criticized the trips of Lula to the PISF and Lula’s critiques to the opposition and the controlling organs of the government that found many irregularities in the PAC projects.

So, the visits were discussed extensively in the newspapers: the event was analyzed and speculations were made. The press did not only analyze Lula’s behavior, but also the way Dilma and Ciro Gomes behaved during the trip, and speculated about their possible presidential candidature. The press also described the ‘show’ of Lula, for example the *Diario de Pernambuco* (2009d) had the headline on the first page: ‘O show de Lula’ (the show of Lula) with a large picture of Lula standing in the PISF canal and waving his cap in the air. This newspaper also wrote about how the language use of Lula appealed to the poorer part of the Brazilian population:

“With the discourse that is used to speak to the most humble voters, Lula highlighted that the Northeast is having more results in education, in investments, and that these results are bound to large numbers” (Diario de Pernambuco, 2009c).

The way Lula speaks is famous in Brazil; there is even an author that has written a ‘Lula language’ dictionary.

In the newspaper ‘O estado de São Paulo’ (Moraes, 2009), Rodrigo Maia, the president of the DEM (opposition party), admitted that it is difficult to make opposition against a president who is so popular, but said that the opposition should put the problems of the government every time on the image of Lula. He said that he knows that it is difficult to criticize someone who has a positive valuation of eighty percent, but that it is their duty to lower this rating to at least fifty or sixty percent, by showing the problems of Lula’s government and showing how the management mistakes are the responsibility of the president. He furthermore said that it is difficult though to decide on a strategy for this, since they did not have a presidential candidate yet. As protest, the opposition did deliver a complain to the *Tribunal Superior Eleitoral* (TSE, Superior Electoral Tribunal) that Lula was doing campaign making outside the campaign-making period.

4.3. Conclusions

The previous sections show that the analysis of the performance of Lula during his three day visit to the São Francisco river and the Northeast point out several interesting elements. Through the cultural performance, Lula engaged his audience rationally and emotionally and connected himself to the PISF and the Northeast. The PISF functioned as a stage for Lula to promote his government, and to broadcast a message of hope, integration and progress to his audience. The cultural performance was used for electoral campaign making, but also to promote the PISF itself, and connected these two elements for Lula.

Firstly, Lula connected himself strongly to the PISF by many times emphasizing that *he* was the one that executed the project after so many years that Dom Pedro had come to the idea of it. Lula made sure that the audience understood that *he knew* the drought situation in the Northeast out of his experiences during his childhood, and that he therefore wanted to execute the project to end the misery. He mentioned that he saw it as his own moral and political obligation “to believe that the future generations don’t have to go through what I went

through, nor where you went through”. In this way he promoted himself and his government for the audience. Also by his cultural performance as a ‘showman’ during the lottery of the VPR houses, Lula connected to the PISF in a way that must have appealed to the Brazilians that love television shows.

Secondly, Lula brought several dignitaries as well so that the people would also connect these people to the PISF and associate them with Lula. By bringing these dignitaries, Lula showed the electoral alliances he has with various levels and government institutions and with that he showed his political power. He wanted that the people would associate these people with him, and especially with Dilma; the probable presidential candidate. This was an electoral strategy. Dilma and Ciro Gomes were many times close to Lula, so that they were seen together and taken on the picture together. The way Lula handled the people he had brought with him –by mentioning their names, introducing them to the public, calling them ‘comrades’, asking them small funny questions during the speeches– he made optimal use of the stage of the PISF to introduce his political alliances to the public, or to show that he ‘could be friends with everyone’, even with mayors that could be members of opposition parties.

Lula also showed that he was connected to the army by wearing a military hat himself, by inviting high army officials to join the event and by mentioning how proud he was on the army that they were constructing the great PISF, through which he defended the presence of the army in the construction area. This was a clever way of Lula to counter the criticism of opponents of the PISF about the presence of the army in the region. Instead that the army would bring fear to the region and be an oppressive instrument, Lula explained that Brazil should be proud on the capacity of the army to construct projects.

Thirdly, Lula connected to the local people by the way he dressed, the way he talked and by telling his own experiences from when he lived in the northeast. He talked to the local people in a way that appealed to them, by giving them the feeling that he knew their situation. He used Brazilian cultural aspects for this, by talking about situations like drinking, the breakdown of a car, family, love and women, and soccer. In his performance, he integrated these Brazilian cultural aspects. Many times the audience had to laugh because of the things he said. Lula also identified with the local people by mentioning many times that he was proud to be a ‘pernambucano’ when he was in the state of Pernambuco. Moreover, Lula showed how accessible he is by after his speeches going to the audience to talk with them and give some of them the opportunity to take a picture with him. Furthermore, the way he told the stories of local people that he had met, he must have given the local people the feeling that he was listening to them and caring about them. The joy-making that was part of the whole performance also served to connect to the people, and to broadcast the message that the government of Lula can get along with each other as well, which probably served the electoral strategy purposes.

Fourthly, because the PISF is located far away in the Northeast, in the middle of nowhere, Lula needed a visit like this to *show* to the rest of the country what the government is doing there. The PISF is a very concrete project that Lula could use to promote his government, but therefore he needed to go there to put it in the spotlight. Also for this reason, Lula had brought so much press with him that could record the happening.

Fifthly, Lula engaged his audience emotionally by giving them a feeling of pride. He stressed many times the fact that he was happy to see that they had a job, and that they could be part of the progress in Brazil. He transferred a message of hope. Lula said that they turned into complete citizens by working and being part of progress. He also engaged his audience rationally by stressing how many jobs the PISF is creating, directly and indirectly, and how

they are also part of that. Lula cleverly transferred the message that the PISF is a magnificent project, by bringing the international press with him and comparing the project with the Colorado river project and the Chinese Wall. As the Colorado river project, the PISF would bring development to a poor region as well, and as the Chinese Wall, it would be possible to see the PISF from the moon. In his performance, Lula showed the greatness of Brazil: a country that was not much affected by the global economic crisis and that will continue to move forward. He stressed that the PISF will take care that the Northeast will not stay behind in these developments.

Sixthly, Lula stressed that the Northeast has to grow equal with the rest of the country. The PISF is a symbol for this integration. Literally, it links the poor Northeastern regions with a river that will bring them water and therewith development; it is not something abstract, but something that can be clearly visualized. Lula used Brazilian values to stress this integration by explaining that a family also takes care for the weakest child by giving him the best that is available. Lula explained that the government is doing this with the Northeast as well. Here, a parallel can be drawn with the hydraulic mission of Franco that Swyngedouw (2007) describes. Franco promoted his water projects as projects that would make the country more 'just' and 'equitable'.

By the visit itself Lula showed as well that for the government the Northeast is important, that it is not a forgotten region. In this way the visit and the project could also be seen as an integration of the Northeast in the national politics. By going to the region, the press was talking about the Northeast, the opposition was forced to say something about it as well, and the newspapers were writing about it; negatively or positively.

Seventhly, Lula criticized the opposition, and in that way showed his credibility as a political leader and his authority. He showed that he was not afraid to challenge his opponents. Lula could have made the choice to remain silent about the protests, but he chose not to do that and in that way strengthened his own position because there were no protestors or opposition around to argue with him directly. Lula stressed many times how egoistic it was of the protestors to be against the project, because "you cannot deny water to those who need it". In this way Lula also engaged the people emotionally, because he mobilized a feeling of guilt and obligation to share. Andrea and Mari (of the CPT), explained that it is an important cultural value of the *Nordestinos* to share with those who have less; it is really not done to deny a glass of water to someone who is thirsty. This was explained in section 3.7. In that way, Lula used the Northeastern culture in his performance to convince the people of the necessity of the PISF.

One strong argument against the opposition of the PISF that came forward many times, was the criticism of Lula that the opponents did *not know* about the drought situation, that they were people that had access to enough water and that they had not the right to deny water to others and try to block a project that they had no idea about what good it would do. He, on the other hand, *did know* the drought situation and was therefore the right person to execute the PISF and say that it is a good project.

All these elements show how Lula used the PISF as a stage for electoral strategies and for promoting the PISF and his government to his audience through a cultural performance. He engaged the people rationally and emotionally and broadcasted a message of hope, integration and progress. In doing this on the scene, he confirmed his relations with various political alliances and to his main electorate by demonstrating the benefits that the works would provide to them. In his performance, Lula used several cultural aspects, Brazilian symbols, to link to his electorate. The cultural performance was used to promote the PISF, and at the same

time to promote his government and other policies. A cultural performance is an interpretation of a situation. Lula 'sold' the PISF to his audience as a success, and in that way gave a positive interpretation to the project. The PISF was a very useful project for this purpose, because as a engineering project, it was something that Lula could *show* to his audience. This cultural performance can also be seen as one of the means by which the government tried to gain constant support for its policy and projects.

5. Conclusion

This research has aimed to answer the following research question:

How does the Project of Integration of the São Francisco River with the watersheds of the Northern Northeast (PISF) enter into the life-worlds of local actors in the construction area and transform the implementation process and in what manner does the Brazilian government of President Lula use this project politically?

The analysis of the implementation process of the water transfer in and around Agrovila 06 – the village where the army and construction companies settled to construct the Eastern Axis of the water transfer– has shown that the government used a very effective strategy in order to receive local support for the construction of the water transfer. The local situation transformed the implementation process, for the strategy of the army had changed in 2007 with reference to 2005. In 2005, when the army arrived in the construction area for the first time, they did not have a convincing strategy yet, and the soldiers created antipathy among the local population for their involvement with the local girls. Additionally, the local population had their doubts about the water transfer project. The protests of the social movements delayed the implementation of the project and this was also the main reason why the army came to the area to start the construction. In 2007, the army was more prepared and came with an intelligent strategy to convince the local population and gain their trust. The local population had large immediate needs, for they lived in a violent area that bared the negative impacts of the construction of the hydroelectric dams in the past. Especially Agrovila 06 had a lot of needs, for this village was situated in between two municipalities and often did not receive assistance from either of them. This analysis of the implementation process shows that it is an interactive process indeed, and that it is important to gain constant support for the project, for else it can be delayed, changed or stopped. For that matter, the theory of Thomas and Grindle (1990) on the interactive model of policy implementation proved to be a useful tool for this research in order to analyze the implementation process and gain a better understanding of what was happening and why.

The analysis of how the project enters the life-world of the various actors in the construction area has been very useful in order to understand why the protest movement did not manage to stop the implementation process of the water transfer by mobilizing the local population more. The analysis has shown that the water transfer was connected to every dimension of the life-worlds of the local population. It connected to the material-economic dimension, because it provided many more job possibilities and investments of the army. It also connected to the social dimension, because the job possibilities it offered brought about social pressure to be in favor of the project. Lastly, it connected to the cultural and ideological dimension of the life-worlds, because it connected to their imagination –the hope for a better future– and to their value of sharing water with those who need it.

The government used this characteristic of solidarity of the local population for their convincing strategy. When the riparian people disapproved with the project, the government started to say that these people were selfish and that they wanted the water only for themselves. My analysis has shown that the characteristic of solidarity is very strong among the local population –they often mentioned that they did not want to be selfish and that they wanted the lives of the people inland to be improved– which made this convincing strategy of the government very powerful. Moreover, the drought history of the Northeast and the discourse of the government that its problems could only be solved by solving the drought

problem, and that the drought problem could only be solved by constructing the water transfer, were also powerful tools of the government to convince the Brazilian population of the need to implement this project. The status of the São Francisco river as being the River of National Integration (Harvey, 2008) was used by the government by making the promise that the canals of the water transfer would integrate the Northeast with the rest of the country by bringing development. For the people inland the water transfer represented the hope for a better future. Although they often received very little information on how they could use the water of the canals, they still expressed the hope that it would improve a lot for them.

The analysis of the life-worlds of the intervening parties and the interface with the local population, showed how the actors of the intervening parties were also thinking about the project in this way: that it would be a solution for the drought situation in the Northeast and that it would improve the lives of its population. The actors of the intervening parties often did not understand the complaining of the local population about issues like dust, traffic, or cracks. Therefore, attempts of the local population to influence the practices of the army and construction companies in the research area did often not bring about the desired changes. There was an interface situation between these parties, but the life-worlds differed sufficiently which caused that the local population did not have influence on reducing the negative direct impacts that the construction of the water transfer brought along. However, these negative direct impacts did not outweigh the positive above mentioned factors and perceptions and did not mobilize the Agrovila 06 population to protest.

The concepts of life-worlds and interface were very useful to gain and order all the data used for this research. The concepts proved to be valuable in order to better understand the local situation; it gave me the tools to try to bring some structure in the chaos of a real life situation. Although it is sometimes tried to add more and more to certain concepts in order to let them cover as much as possible of the real world (compare Long (1989) with Long (2001)), I think it is never possible to try to catch everything of a real life situation by analyzing it in a certain manner. However, the concept of life-world and interface made me aware of the elements that can be present in people's lives and can influence the situation in a certain way, and this helped me a lot in my research. The concepts also made it possible for me to try to understand the different perspectives of the actors present, and to try to understand the factors that influence these perspectives. Although research can never be complete or unbiased, I think the used methodology was –because of the above mentioned reasons and the possibility to live with local people in the research area– a good choice in order to analyze this situation. One difficulty at the beginning of my stay was to gain trust among the local people, and to dare to ask more sensitive questions. At the end of my stay I felt that the people trusted me. It is always difficult however to be completely sure that people tell you what they think, and not what they think that you want to hear, especially when they see –or hear from others– that you also talk with the military and the engineers.

Chapter 4 described the cultural performance of Lula during his three day visit to the construction area of the water transfer, which has showed the political dimension of the project. The analysis made clear that Lula and his government used the project politically, for Lula used the project as a stage to promote the government, and to broadcast a message of hope, integration and progress to his audience. Moreover, the project was used for electoral purposes, for Lula brought along his favorite presidential candidate and other political actors. These actors, such as ministers, governors and mayors, also profited from traveling along with the caravan for they showed the alliance they had with the current government and President Lula. The Northeast is the voting bank for President Lula, so it was very strategic to give this performance in that area.

Coming from the Northeast, Lula knew very well how to connect with the local population. The analysis of the cultural performance has shown that Lula connected to all the aspects that are mentioned in the life-worlds analysis above as well: work availability, the local values of sharing, and the hope for a better future. Lula gave the local population a feeling of pride by stressing that the project was very large and providing them with work possibilities. Lula stressed that the water transfer would bring development to the Northeastern region, and that the Northeast had to grow equal with the rest of the country. Through this cultural performance, Lula engaged his audience rationally and emotionally, and connecting the cultural performance with the life-worlds analysis shows that Lula knew how to do this very well. Also, Lula's popularity among the local population –which came forward very strong in chapter 3– contributed to the impact that Lula's cultural performance had.

Lula introduced the water transfer as *the* solution to resolve the large poverty problems of the Northeast. It will resolve the drought situation, integrate the Northeast with the rest of the country, decrease the regional differences in water availability and bring development. The water transfer project functioned as a symbol for all these aspects. Lula made his audience believe that *he* is indispensable, because *he* made it possible that the water transfer is being executed right now, after so many years that other governments discussed it but never implemented it. Here, a lot of parallels can be drawn with the analysis of Swyngedouw (2007) on the ideological-political mission of Franco. Also Franco made the 'grand national hydraulic works' as symbols for integration, nation building and modernity. There can also be drawn parallels with the 'hydraulic mission' as described by Wester et al. (2009): Lula stressed that it was a waste that water, that could be very well used elsewhere, was flowing to the sea.

Often, literature focuses on cost-benefits analysis in order to make arguments in favor or against large infrastructural water projects (Albiac et al., 2003, Brown et al., 2009, Embid, 2003, Ghassemi and White, 2007, Gupta, 2001, Jain et al., 2005, Liu and Zheng, 2002, Tilt et al., 2009, WWF, 2007, Snaddon et al., 1998, Thatte, 2007). This research has shown that it is important to move beyond cost-benefit analysis, for many other aspects are connected to it that influence people's behavior and perceptions. The analysis has shown that the water transfer is connected to political, economical, historical, cultural and symbolical aspects. People did not only base their opinion about this project on cost-benefit analysis's. Also the popular imagination of the local people about what the project would bring to them and the hope it represented, influenced their behavior and perceptions about the project. This research has shown how difficult it can be to protest against a project that means a lot to people in many different ways. And when there are short-term benefits involved for the local people, like job possibilities, protesting against it becomes even more difficult. Moreover, Lula's popularity in the research area made it even more difficult for the protestors to convince the local population that they should protest; they rather kept hope that their hero Lula really had the best intentions, than to believe opponents of the project that these were false promises. Because of all these aspects, it is hard for me to give a recommendation to the CPT.

Reviewed literature did not give a satisfying answer to the question why large infrastructural projects are still being implemented today, while the problems that such projects can cause are well known. Flyvbjerg (2003) only mentions that political power play is part of the process, but does not analyze this in-depth. He explores the problems of megaprojects and suggests practical solutions. However, he has a focus on European countries, and the solutions he suggests might be difficult to implement when a country does not have a well functioning democracy and government.

Wehr (2004) analyzes the rhetoric used by U.S. politicians and dam boosters in the twentieth century to justify dam construction, in order to better understand the reasons and effects of their contemporary mobilization. While the Brazilian state building rhetoric to argue in favor of the PISF shows similarities with the state building rhetoric as used by the U.S. politicians and planners, I question whether this automatically means that the Brazilian government had the same intentions with building the PISF as the U.S. politicians had back then with building the dams: it only shows that the state building rhetoric can be effective, but the reasons behind using it, and the effects of using it, might be different.

Moreover, Wehr argued that “perhaps it is the ideological denial of any problems by the U.S. planners and politicians that encourages developing nations” (Wehr, 2004, p. 232) to continue constructing dams. However, I think this is a rather thin argument; it implies that perhaps projects like the PISF would not be implemented, if the U.S. planners and politicians would admit that their past projects are causing problems. This research has shown that there are so many factors connected to the PISF, that I doubt whether a change of attitude of U.S. planners and politicians would really make a difference. Moreover, I think that one should argue carefully when saying that nations of the global South will continue to remain dependent in many ways, even if they try to establish their own treadmill of production on the U.S. model, as Wehr (2004) argues. After all, Brazil is a booming economy country, and the fact that the Brazilian government is financing the PISF by itself, already should make one wonder about whether Wehr can state this in such a generalizing way.

Briscoe (2010) states that the global political economy is changing. He argues that infrastructure is not a ‘sunset industry’, but is regarded again by many as fundamental for development. Also he is happy about the fact that “governments have taken control again”, and that anti-dam movements and developed countries are having less influence on what kind of infrastructure projects nations can build. Briscoe (2010, p. 413) states that governments “are finding new and creative ways of addressing the very important social costs which are borne by those directly affected by large infrastructure”. This research, however, shows that this remark might be a bit too enthusiastically stated: it shows how local people became dependent and passive because of past projects, and the irony is that because of these past experiences the people do not protest against this new project, but are being made dependent on it again, while this project is unlikely to give them better lives; the project will move on, jobs will be lost, leaving negative social and environmental impacts behind. In that way, the cycle of creating more dependency and passiveness keeps on going. The project is not finished yet, so only time will learn what the results will be. Having seen what is happening on the ground, the compensation program plans –which are based on the same models that proved to be unsuccessful in the past in the same area– and the area’s history, do not give me hope though that Brazil is one of those countries that addresses in a sufficient way the social costs which are borne by those directly affected by infrastructure. This research has shown that we are not there yet, and that discussion and research about why and how large infrastructures need to be build, and what effects they have –on the short and long term– remains important. It has shown that the question whether transferring water fulfills hopes, integrates a country and spurs development, is answered in many different ways by many different actors and that the outcome may be highly insecure.

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