



ISSN 2336-3274 (Print) ISSN 2570-7558 (Online)

<https://edu.uhk.cz/africa>

Peasants, the State and Aid: Rural Development and Poverty in Cape Verde

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Recommended citation:

Couto, C. (2014). Peasants, the State and Aid: Rural Development and Poverty in Cape Verde. *Modern Africa: Politics, History and Society*, 1(2), 87–110. Retrieved from <https://edu.uhk.cz/africa/index.php/ModAfr/article/view/134>



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Abstract

Based on employment-intensive public works, international food aid implemented a model in several countries with varying rates of success. Through the sale of foodstuffs, food aid in Cape Verde originated a “monetized” help system called “cash-for-work”. This system consisted of recruiting workers from rural areas for the construction of infrastructure projects for the conservation of soil and water. Also the construction of roads creates income for rural families, during their free time from the traditional activities such as composting, sowing and harvesting of dry land agriculture. The result was the establishment of a food aid program in Cape Verde through the 1980s and 1990s that represents a combination of several types of programs. These programs intend to guarantee long-term employment as well as the creation of an infrastructure. Therefore it was not a program of emergency food aid. Santiago’s rural production relationship develops alongside the transformation in social structures based on the traditional forms of cooperation of work and mutual assistance. This is in response to developmental actions through the rural development projects. These transformations in the peasants’ social organization refer to the importance of reciprocity in peasant society. In the Santiago case, this possibility is settled by using a device to reduce uncertainty, a kind of shape memory behavior, where collective reciprocity of the social structure, built on peasant institutions, was to maintain a negative relationship with modernizing external interventions. Development/underdevelopment, is the result of the action of economic agents in a precise contexts. The decision of rural economic agents as minimum resource managers is the essential ingredient to the “modernization” of peasant self-management, fostering the co-evolutionary process (progression) of different elements of social design.

Keywords: rural development, poverty, progress, food aid, state, peasants and “work fronts”

Introduction

Over the past decade Cape Verde has set up a scenario of a small African island country that achieved important improvements in the rates of a more favorable and more optimistic macroeconomic stability (Cabo Verde 2008). The decrease in the unemployment rate and a remarkable growth in tourism and the foreign direct investment associated with it, along with a committed effort to improving infrastructure and creating the basis for independent development, are indicators of a “positive” route (Fundo Monetário Internacional 2011).

Good governance and improvements in budget planning and the effectiveness of public expenditure could consolidate a system of action for the physical and financial execution of projects and their capacity for monitoring and evaluation⁵⁵. The commitment of the ruling class with the "central element of democracy is growing" places Cape Verde in an exemplary situation within the current African context.

However weaknesses remain⁵⁶ such as those relating to external shocks and unemployment among women and young workers (Cabo Verde / FAO 2011). The great challenge of the country consists of reducing the "big poverty" that particularly affects disadvantaged rural populations and households headed by single elements⁵⁷ (Cabo Verde 2004). This follows the evolution of peasant family structure and the conditions of their social reproduction. The solution to this problem will allow a new upgrade of the country, the path to an autonomous development?

This article aims to frame the backdrop of international aid for rural development for the period covering the 1980s and 1990s in Cape Verde. By 2004 much of this aid was directed towards the implementation of projects that have imposed assumptions and policies of a Eurocentric root that too often have ignored the complexity of structural phenomena that determined the purse of rural poverty or "big poverty". This type of aid had

⁵⁵ Cape Verde was graduated to middle-income country, with accession to the WTO and has a strategic partnership with the European Union (Cabo Verde 2008).

⁵⁶ Increasing scarcity of rain, scarce resources on arable land, complete energy dependence, over 80% of food consumption depends on imports and high costs of production factors.

⁵⁷ These elements are mostly "single" women who often live with their mothers or grandmothers, they also single women. The phenomenon of matrilocality is particularly important in rural counties of the interior of the islands reaching around 60% of households (Couto 2010).

not provided national leaders and managers with the principle of freedom that, later, the modality of budget support would favor or permit.

In the second half of the 1980s some studies and theoretical contributions of European authors (Bierschenk, Elwert, Kohnert 1993; Crehan, von Oppen 1988; Amselle 1988; Olivier de Sardan 1988) advocate a contextual approach and interactional practice of rural development. The assumptions supported by these authors are: aid donors have images or media myths that represent rural communities as African societies which are still likely to be developed by external intervention. Consequently, these donors ignore the capabilities of these communities to secure their transformation process (Latouche 1992)

What has been important for the development of this perspective is the contribution of a group of researchers led by Norman Long and about a thread that goes back to the so-called Manchester School started by Max Gluckman in the mid-20th century and some of his former students in trying to recover it today. N. Long, a student of Gluckman, proposes, along with his team of Wageningen (Netherlands), an actor-centered approach, in sociability and structured interfaces between the different actors of rural development operations. The different actors define strategies in the context of "episteme" or "cognitive maps" of their own. The approach is interactional and the assumption is that social actors create "room for manoeuvre", filter and condition the external interventions, planned and very mediated (Long and Long 1992).

Refusing the externalist view, linear and deterministic social change, development anthropology moves away from the paradigm of "modernization," taking the peasant communities as a complex system that manages its own transformation by successive creative adaptations that characterize its historical dynamic.

Rural development aid, which has its own cognitive structures and their own channels of communication (Bierschenk et al 1993; Bierschenk 1988; Le Naelou 1995), develops a homogenizing practice (Amselle 1988). This practice makes the creative adaptations and self-processing of the target communities as "contingencies" not predicted in the linear models, "repaired" with purely technological solutions, and yet ineffective. The economic restructuring based on the logic of globalization tends to systematically sterilize local modes of subsistence based on principles of autonomy and self-production. This dialectic between "globalization" and

"localization" economies of self-production (not based solely on peasant farming) covers their needs in essential commodities (material and symbolic) through livelihoods that makes them very little dependent on the organization of the market. These survival strategies or "modes of existence" are poorly understood and valued from the capitalist point of view but are nevertheless of crucial importance to peasant societies (Giri 1995).

The transition model: the eighties⁵⁸

From 1975 (with independence), the Cape Verdean government has institutionalized annual plans setting out actions in the construction of an infrastructure assisted by international food aid (Davidson 1988: 157; Oliveira et al. 1985: 265; Furtado 1993: 111, 156, 158). In 1980, to tackle structural unemployment and underemployment, the government started an investment program-work that in 1986 reached a total employment of 25,000 people. The orientation of these programs attended social and economic development objectives, to create medium and long term structural effects on the national economy (PNUD/BIT 1989: 15, 7).

The principles that accompanied the spirit of the programs *Alta Intensidade de Mão de Obra*⁵⁹ (*AIMO*) were developing the infrastructure of land and hydraulic resources in rural areas, boosting agricultural production and protecting the environment. In short, clearing isolated areas and providing the first works of necessity to the people. The investment work was a way of urgent and interim action intended to incite the workers to build the country, based on the sustainable improvement of their living conditions. A dynamic process that tried to adapt the behavior of social agents to seasonal fluctuations in the surplus of manpower was desired.

Another key objective of the *AIMO* programs was the growth of productivity that would increase the level of income by promoting the gradual use of new technologies, from rudimentary methods. This would stimulate the provision of essential local production through the

⁵⁸ The first two items in this article were taken from my two books (Couto 2001, 2010), from chapters those relate the historical origins of the Eurocentric model of analysis of modern-welfare interventions in the rural fabric from Santiago, which is fundamental to understanding the surrounding of the society / rural community.

⁵⁹ High Intensity of Manpower

development of small commercial and industrial activities (craft), thus overall, an autonomous development (*PNUD/BIT* 1989: 21).

The *AIMO* sector was therefore a "transitional area", a "shock therapy" to create jobs on a large scale that could absorb an unoccupied and underused workforce during the most part of the year. So, one of the fundamental rules was to fix the cost of manpower at 60% of the total cost of the project or program. Therefore, it is a question of intensifying the manpower, given the number of unemployed workers to be absorbed in three types of jobs or activities: i) directly productive work; ii) infrastructure construction; iii) and / or social nature works (*PNUD/BIT* 1989: 8).

Considering the not very encouraging data, from the early eighties, the emergency plans under *AIMO* gave rise to integrated programs in national development, constituting from that date "... fundamental elements of the sectoral plans." (*PNUD/BIT* 1989: 17)

In the first National Development Plan – *Plano Nacional para o Desenvolvimento (PND)*, about 45% of the planned investments was for infrastructure works, the main activity of *AIMO*. The first *PND* provided for the period of 1982-85, preview an increase of employment in *AIMO* sector to 23,000-30,000 workers. First *PND* defined 55 *AIMO* projects in the context of rural development, representing an investment of 3,650 million ECV, 50% of the total investment in the sector. In the second *PND*, *AIMO* projects accounted for 46% of the investment in the sector of rural development. In the late 80s, temporary work remained the dominant form of use of manpower in the countryside. About 83% of women and 72% of men exercised active non-agricultural activities, predominantly in the sector *AIMO*. This sector absorbed 63% of temporary workers, or 31% of total employment, acquiring a decisive role in the country's economic development, integrating an organic form of development policy (Cabo Verde 1992: 5).

The *AIMO* program was exclusively funded by external sources, using resources obtained by food aid (1,430 million ECV in 1986) and by financial gifts (ECV 4140 million in 1986), which represented 80% of the total investment in 1986. This financing consisted in the selling of food provided by international food aid that the Public Company Supply – *Empresa Pública de Abastecimento (EMPA)* traded at prices stipulated by the second National Development Fund – *Fundo Nacional para o Desenvolvimento (FND)*. After the sale the expenses with distribution and

storage were deducted, reversing the net sum for the *FND*, which in turn applied them in the financing of *AIMO* projects.

This system cash-for-work aimed to avoid "behavior of beneficiaries" given to the free distribution of products. In 1989, the advantages identified by the United Nations Development Program/ International Labor Office (UNDP/ILO - PNUD/BIT), were as follows: 1) allows the realization of infrastructure projects, creating jobs at the same time, 2) is a source of employment and income for the poorest social groups; 3) promotes the redistribution of income, 4) avoids the dependence of "food-for-work." (PNUD/BIT 1989: 21)

In 1985, farmers in some communities of Santiago with income levels between 40,000 and 50,000 ECV received from *AIMO* 53% of their yearly income; 36% coming from remittances from emigrant family members. The big dimension of the sector led to problems of financial feasibility and management activities. At that time these problems led to the need for a "conversion" of the work fronts, which means a reset or recast of the objectives and methods as part of an "organization of integrated rural development type community" that should determine the philosophy of future projects (PNUD/BIT 1989: 127).

With the need for a new philosophy, the focus of concern concentrates on the self-reliance of rural populations and on the increase of work productivity through the stimulation of local communities in the participation of the decision making process and the execution of projects. This means stronger links between local communities and central services and an effective maintenance of the infrastructures created by the population. The promotion of savings and the formation of associative groups within communities are other objectives to be considered (PNUD/BIT 1989: 127). However, the attempt to integrate these activities in the social organization of local communities through, for example, the use of *djunta-mô* (system of mutual aid and reciprocity of the peasant social structure), was not successful. Neither had the *Caixas de Crédito e Poupança* (Credit and Savings Associations) within the work fronts, which imposed on the workers the obligation of a working day discount (Cabo Verde 1989: 98).

The concerns of the leaders at the end of the decade seemed to be based on issues of functionality and productivity in an unaffordable and financially "heavy" sector. The government's attempt was the creation of work teams

geared to the specific nature of the project activities, which means having specialized manpower in the construction of dams and reforestation. Thus the volume of *AIMO* manpower was restricted so that "... in the future we can make job contracts and pay enough money to compensate for being in the front of high intensity of manpower."⁶⁰ For farmers who used the work fronts as a complementary activity to agriculture and who had access, for instance to an acre of land, a line of agricultural credit and other incentives could be established in the future.

At the time there was a decrease in foreign aid which therefore, called for a reduction in workers' 'fronts'. But this unpopular measure has created a wave of protests in Cape Verdean society. From the state's point of view, the potential farmer-workers of the "work fronts" were "misinformed." The slogan was "mutualism" and not "security." In this context, during the second half of the eighties, the need for "conversion" or restructuring of the work fronts and the change of their institutional framework had emerged. Nonetheless it was postponed to the 2nd Republic and this was attempted with greater clarity and political will from the end of the 90s with the National Program to Fight Poverty. However, in February of 1989, the Minister Pereira Silva came forward to explain the situation and the new philosophy of "conversion" of *AIMO*, after some disputes between the Ministry of Rural Development and Fisheries - *Ministério de Desenvolvimento Rural e Pescas (MDRP)* and S. Vicente island workers representatives of the "fronts"⁶¹. At that time there were about 17,000 workers in *AIMO* under the tutelage of *MDRP*. The government had already begun the transition of *AIMO* sector from the emergency programs to the national development plans. Among other problems to solve, change was underway in the organization of various projects, in order to increase the productivity of work and its effectiveness.⁶²

Fractions of Cape Verdean civil society (including the farmers who used agricultural workers) criticized *AIMO*, which they called a "hobby job" organisation although it was recognized by society in general and governmental authorities that were already in possession of data referring to *AIMO* productivity, island by island and the type of work and soils (Silva 1997: 7). The dilemma of the government authorities was how to

⁶⁰ Minister for Rural Development and Fisheries, interviewed by the Cape Verde journal *Voz di Povo* on 1 February 1989, pp. 6-8.

⁶¹ Ibidem

⁶² Ibidem

reconcile the two traditional functions of the *AIMO* sector: the construction of key infrastructural projects for agricultural development and ensuring minimal work to underserved populations, given the inability of agriculture to provide the minimum resources. In fact there was no alternative. The solution, for the government authorities, was to play in two "fields". However, by imposition of donor aid, the efficiency and productivity could no longer be sacrificed in the benefit of *AIMO*'s "hobby job" that guaranteed a minimum income of the rural populations.⁶³

The financing of *AIMO* was from abroad and depended not only on donor requirements but also on the global economic environment itself. In 1988 the U.S. corn production went down by 47%, as the result of two consecutive years of drought. With the consequent reduction in the American food aid, the Cape Verde National Development Fund – *Fundo Nacional de Desenvolvimento (FND)* received less corn, lowering their income considerably. Given these external constraints, typical of the dependence of the country, government authorities tried to pass to the civil society and more specifically to trade unions and representatives of workers' claims, the finding that "the state cannot transform all the peasants into proletarians as the only source of income for farmers."⁶⁴

Thus the government tried to justify the restrictions related to the "conversion" of the *AIMO* sector, in particular the decrease in the volume of contracts. The *AIMO* was used to "buying time" to achieve satisfactory yields in the various activities of rural society, equating the problem as follows:

*"There is now a tendency to make the AIMO worker: they are no longer peasants, they are rural workers; rural workers for temporary become permanent rural workers and rural workers become permanent workers. Workers of what? In what industry? That's what the problem is..."*⁶⁵ In addition to these adverse effects inherent to the internal logic of the *AIMO* system, the constitution of a semi-proletariat migrants away from their means of production and focused at the time in the city of St. Vicente (where the "conversion" of *AIMO* aroused more controversy), came as a

⁶³ Ibidem

⁶⁴ Ibidem

⁶⁵ Ibidem

result of the same system. This semi-proletariat demanded the application of the law that regulated labor relations and had been approved in the National Assembly but, to the government at that time, this law did not apply to *AIMO* fronts, neither did the social security system, demanded by workers. For the national leaders, the solution for the problem was found through the way of "mutualism", the transfer of responsibility from the work of "fronts" for those interested, according to the philosophy and objectives of an explicit "conversion." From there, the employees of "fronts" who worked in its own field or ground cultivation managed the time of their work as it follows: "When the eldest son cannot go, the mother goes, and if the mother cannot go, the father will."⁶⁶

At that time, the average rates of absenteeism in the "fronts" were around 20%, reaching even 40% in S. Nicolau Island. A "flexible system" as *AIMO* was attempted to be continued, reconciling the possibility of a minimum of productivity with non-removal of the workers from their traditional agricultural and livestock activities or other paid work outside *AIMO*. This "malleable system" supported by external funding decided in a meeting of the Council of Ministers (and therefore not integrated into the general system of labor laws), to build 16,200 dams in Cape Verde from 1976 to 1985 (1,153,200 m³ of masonry) and 20,000 km of stools from 1976 to 1990. (PNUD/BIT 1989)

The European model of transition from agrarian economy was not materializing (Brycesson 1996) and an industry or craft that could absorb the mass of workers of "fronts" didn't emerge in Cape Verde. Even though there was some specialization of these workers, it would not have applicability in practice. The *AIMO* sector tends to feed on itself, pushing the state for unsustainable social security expenditure and unaffordable for the logic of civil servants, who only want to overwhelm the meager state budget. However, the amount of the salary received in the "fronts" of work was vital to the income of rural families.

The agricultural development and population densities in sub-Saharan Africa differ from the nineteenth-century European setting, when market relations were much more widespread. The transition from agrarian to a semi-industrialized economy in sub-Saharan context cannot be understood

⁶⁶ Ibidem

by a Eurocentric model that associates the increase in industrial labor force with the decline of agricultural activity. (Brycesson 1996: 100)

The reuse mechanism *FAIMO*: the nineties

Based on the employment-intensive public works, international food aid was a model that has been implemented in several countries with varying success rates (Belknap and Ferris-Morris 1992: 1). Through the sale of foodstuffs, food aid in Cape Verde led to a monetized system aid called “cash-for-work”. This system consists in recruiting workers from rural areas to build infrastructure projects for soil and water conservation or roads in order to create income for rural households, free time activities of weeding, planting and harvesting of agriculture which was rain fed. This model of food aid, which is basically the sale of donations, has the advantage of solving many problems associated with storage, transport and deterioration of products. In addition, the workers had always shown a preference for cash payments (Belknap and Ferris-Morris 1992: 6)

The sale of donations in products is a type of fee income redistribution extracted from the marketing of products in urban areas, in order to increase the income of poor rural families working in the various fronts of public works. The result was the formation of a food aid program in Cape Verde that represents a combination of several types of programs directed to the guarantee of long-term employment and the creation of an infrastructure. It was not therefore a program of food aid emergency. (Belknap and Ferris-Morris 1992: 4).

Given these assumptions, in 1992 international consultants strongly recommended the continuation of the "mechanism" of employment in work fronts supported by the sale of food coming from food aid and their transformation into salaries of the "fronts". Fronts of High Intensity of Manpower -*Frentes de Alta Intensidade de Mão de Obra*⁶⁷ (*FAIMO*) should then continue in the future as a source that generates income in rural areas, integrating small-scale community projects. Their activities should then provide an increase of household income, even if they belong to

⁶⁷ *Frentes de Alta Intensidade de Mão de Obra (FAIMO)* was the new designation of work fronts, after his conversion in the early '90s with the second Republic.

government programs or inserted in bilateral or multilateral assistance (Belknap and Ferris-Morris 1992: 3, 16).

The international consultants' assumptions were based on the following argument: the larger the amount of food made available by food aid, the more the quantities of corn that would contribute to food security, given the poor country's agricultural production of this grain. The donated corn appears on the market at a price lower than domestic corn, culturally preferred and adapted to traditional methods of cooking. This price reduction is also due to the government subsidization policy that keeps the price of corn from food aid lower than domestic corn. In addition to its anti-inflationary nature, the system was constituted as a mechanism to control prices (Belknap and Ferris-Morris 1992: 3).

But a dilemma arises when the objective is to achieve minimum levels of productivity and substantial increases in agricultural production to offset the investment costs in wages and the removal of manpower participation in the process of modernizing the economy, which could lead to higher economic growth. In this sense, the work fronts were taken more as a measure of welfare than an economic growth strategy. Despite this situation, Food Aid, with its strong focus on Santiago Island, through the WARD (Watershed and Rural Development) / the USAID project aimed in the early nineties to establish a workforce of 97,000 people / month over seven years. The total investment was close to one million dollars per year and over a period of seven years. The strategies defined by the government program (III Plan) to absorb that international aid was based on the philosophy of FAIMO "conversion", in order to get more local participation in the selection of the activities of "fronts" and a greater specialization of the work so that higher levels of productivity can be reached (Belknap and Ferris-Morris 1992: 4).

Based on this situation what seemed evident was the strong dependence of various economic sectors of the country in the values of future food aid. Otherwise, the absence of food aid would make world market prices reappear, of course inaccessible to the purchasing power of poorer consumers. Given the precarious situation resulting from the structural deficit in agricultural production, approximately 10% of the consumption needs of grain (Cabo Verde 1992); any change in the amounts of food aid threshold would condition the survival of households. The supply was guaranteed by the country's food aid and imports, but the delay in sending

aid or the reduction of their original values, increased the volume of commercial imports with unforeseen consequences in their balance of payments. The tendency was to reduce food aid that had been registered since 1991 (Cabo Verde 1994: 11, 28).

One should admit that this dependence would have immediate implications for peasant survival strategies and in the broadest sense, for rural Cape Verdean society as a whole which is not independent of an integrated system of food aid and its "mechanisms" such reuse *FAIMO*. It was, after all, a substantial source of income for household heads in the rural universe from Santiago, given that the work in the "fronts" could represent approximately 50% of their total annual income.

The institutional framework for external intervention

In the early 90s there were several meetings reflecting about the need of *FAIMO* conversion (see Pina and Silva 1992; Lima 1990) that have joined technicians from MPAR and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport - *Ministério das Infraestruturas e Transportes (MIT)* and also the mayors of various municipalities of Santo Antão Island. In addition to these institutional entities that at that time employed workers from *FAIMO*, council members, local officials and the central union participated in these meetings (Pina and Silva 1992: 17).

The objective was to characterize the situation of *FAIMO* at that moment through *MIT* and the Municipal Councils which employ a large slice of the population. The necessity of conversion was discussed as well as the way it should be and the role of the municipal government and the private sector in this process. At that time about 50% of the working population of the island depended on a place in *FAIMO* and technicians who prepared the report of the meeting were aware of the expression of the phenomenon on the island, feeling as it follows: "*Fronts High Intensity of Manpower (FAIMO) is a legacy of the past. At more or less historic fights for the survival of a good percentage of the population (dry alarming) even the Portuguese resorted to the creation of jobs in order to prevent various disasters. 1831 seems to be the year in which they rehearsed the first work fronts. After the end of World War II dramatic famines ravaged the islands to start requiring a forestation programs fronts. In years 50 and 60 numbers have been significantly decreased by a relatively rainy period ... /*

... *Being a process that drags many years (nearly a century and a half) is natural and understandable that is very rooted in the mentality of much of the population especially in rural areas most in need.*" (Pina and Silva 1992: 18) Thus the *FAIMO* phenomenon was diluted in the broader sense, which tracks the evolution of the archipelago historically subjected to severe cyclical droughts and famines. The Colonial Office used to activate various devices of food aid in emergency situations (disasters with brutal cuts in population) beyond the colonial device of forced and compulsory labor for the other former colonies, but politically organized and planned another nature on this Fronts High Intensity of Manpower (Oliveira et al. 1985: 264). These droughts and disasters in the archipelago and forced emigration were phenomena widely described and studied by historian Antonio Carreira throughout his extensive writings (Carreira 1983, 1984).

The *quinzenas*⁶⁸ ("fortnights") had the highest expression in the late 60s when the great wave of emigrants to Portugal rose considerably, as well as the flow of people between islands and mainland Portugal, remittances and the lack of manpower for public works that were beginning to be felt. The *quinzena* was a response to the persistence of drought and therefore only in the early seventies began to be continuous and not fortnightly, as had always been characteristic of the emergency action and not a structural measure expected and planned for a standard situation of the archipelago.

The fronts of work had come in a confrontation with the private sector, itself fighting for its own manpower, especially the construction that was preferred by workers, they looked for these fronts of the state, a "paradoxical behavior taking on account the thinness and delayed salaries" (Carreira 1984: 18). But the paradox is best explained not only because the "fronts" release the workers part of the day to do other economic activities, but also because the salary is guaranteed even if it is paid several months later. So it constitutes an endorsement to the store from which increasing depends the livelihoods of rural families.

Thus the work fronts or *FAIMO* are as the conductor when it concerns the levels of labor productivity and salaries in the private sector construction. The preference for work fronts were considered by public opinion as a

⁶⁸ The *quinzenas* - "fortnights" - were employed interchangeably by different families and in times of crisis they were 15 days without receiving wages.

"cultural event", a habit of thought or action, an 'institution' built in perfection, in the logic of not putting all the eggs in one basket by diversifying economic activities and minimizing the risk of the randomness of weather factors. This logic of a minimum resource management and an uncertain economy, the preference on the work front, is of an absolute rationality, especially as the "sun time" (6-7 am to 12-13) permitted the possibility of activities or tasks related with the animal husbandry, the nuclear activity (which generates accumulation) of existence of the rural Cape Verdean families. Workers could double their salary working in the garden of a neighbor or working in the city of Praia, for example, but that, would not give them two key factors: i) an expected and guaranteed salary over a relatively long period ; ii) and free time available for maintenance of diversity of self-sufficiency. The fundamental objective is to ensure the degree of plasticity of livelihoods in the face of great uncertainty in the mode of existence of the peasants.

In regard to this rationality it was not surprising that, at the time of the meetings to reflect on the conversion of *FAIMO* (1992), more than half of Santo Antão Islands population depended on *FAIMO*, leading the authors of the report to conclude that the task to be undertaken is to culminate in a process in which all civil society would be converted (Pina and Silva 1992).

Under pressure from the expectation of a decrease in international aid the state of Cape Verde in the early 90s, one had to face the contradictory situation of having to improve working conditions in *FAIMO*, pressured by workers requiring more social benefits. As a result the "fronts" became more attractive than before. At the time civil society was told that the country should find an alternative employment sector, since the State could not support the *FAIMO*s gigantic scale. After the decline of the productivity of *FAIMO*, labor costs became too heavy (Lima 1990:18). At the end of the 90s National Program to Combat Poverty in its "Framework Document" states: "*The PNLP is not welfare. The PNLP assumes the principle that one can only escape poverty through their own efforts. PNLP should create opportunities, and empower the poor to take advantage of them. Hence the participation of the poor on their empowerment to assume their own development is the cornerstone of PNLP.*" (Cabo Verde 1997: 2)

Poverty in Cape Verde was, and still is, markedly a rural phenomenon. For the period 1995-2004 statistical sources indicate that 37% of the population

was below the poverty line - 43. 250 ECV / year (World Bank 1994, 2005). Most of these poor (62%) living in rural communities are very poor (54%) and its higher expression (51%) are women (Cabo Verde 2004: 31). In the framework document (Cabo Verde 1997) of the National Program of Fight Against Poverty – *Programa Nacional Contra a Pobreza*, (PNLP) - is assumed as a "structural" phenomenon linked to the "weakness of the productive base" that cannot generate enough jobs to absorb the manpower surplus, further aggravated by a natural population growth "above the real possibilities of the country":

"In rural areas, the weakness of agriculture in the grip of numerous constraints requires that the vast majority of the rural population has to look for survival in non-agricultural activities and particularly in FAIMO. ... / ... Families headed by women are usually numerous. In addition to women, poverty is particularly limited to certain groups that are not mutually exclusive, namely the so-called "vulnerable groups", FAIMO workers and the unemployed." (Cabo Verde 1997: ii)

It is thus firmly clear that at a national level the phenomenon of poverty emerged from the *FAIMO* sector through their typical employees who are usually women-headed households, young working population unemployed and "vulnerable" groups. Therefore the conversion of *FAIMO* in "view of fight against poverty" emerged as an important strategy policy measure defined by the PNUD (UNDP) program in the fight against poverty. The *FAIMO*, which have "helped to alleviate the problem in rural areas" and constituted a "reservoir" of rural poverty and "a relatively easy and safe way to focus on the poor" is however, subject to a conversion (Cabo Verde 2002: 5). The objectives set under the National Program of Fight against Poverty – Executive Resume (Cabo Verde 1998), will then be the following:

"i. Gradually promote the integration of FAIMO workers into circuits for employment and economic self-employment through vocational training, creation of income generating activities and micro-enterprises, increasing agricultural productivity, etc...

ii. Promote the effective disengagement of the state and the municipalities of direct execution of works to the benefit of the emergence of small micro-enterprises, contractors, etc...

iii. Extinguish FAIMO progressively as the social security system and implement a more efficient and productive system of public works for employment." (Cabo Verde 1998: IV)

Based on the intentions of the program, the conversion was directed to the "construction of a local economic structure" through a system of "public works jobs to" more effective and worry-free social security. *FAIMO* workers were asked to be integrated in the economy for employment and self-employment, and also for the creation of an "institutional framework". This new institutional framework just created and operated a private agency to "act as owner of the work delegated projects entrusted to it by state and municipalities under the public works programs for employment." (Cabo Verde 1998: IV)

The creation of the Cape Verdean Agency for the Promotion of Employment and Local Development – *Agência Cabo-verdiana de Promoção do Emprego e do Desenvolvimento Local (AGECABO)* inspired by the *AGETIP*⁶⁹ model that existed in other African countries and aims to build a "new dynamic local economy, structured around secondary centers fully infra-structured" (Silva 1997: VI; CPPF/UNOWA 2004). Thus has begun, at this time, the modality of the budget support⁷⁰. The launch of bases for the local economy and rural *PLNP* was intended by then, the mechanism of *AGECABO* that by signing contract programs, transfers of state funds for the infra-structure of cities and towns, "disengaging" the State of typical jobs *FAIMO* and causing the extinction of the latter. Consequently the new framework aims to convert the financing of the "traditional" *FAIMO* to create "a modern and dynamic local sector," diversifying the type of projects to be funded, focusing on the implementation by local entrepreneurs and supporting the municipalities in the restructuring of their own services as development objectives. The performers of the works (companies, associations, NGOs, small

⁶⁹ Agence d'Exécution des Travaux d'Intérêt Public (AGETIP) – Executing Agency for Public Interest Works. Started first in Senegal the concept consisted in delegating the delivery of public works construction activities to a new non-government entity. AGETIP has been replicated in fifteen countries (Benin, Chad, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Togo, Burundi, Djibouti, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Republic of Guinea, Central African Republic, Congo and Gabon. These agencies are linked in a network called AFRICATIP (CPPF/UNOWA 2004).

⁷⁰ From 2004 multilateral organizations begin to channel direct financial assistance to the state budget of the beneficiary countries. It creates more favorable conditions for a more efficient budget management and better adequacy of resources to policy objectives, increased autonomy of decision makers (Cape Verde 2004: 81).

contractors, etc...) are then required to employ the number of local workers by a "jobs program"(Silva 1997: 29, 34).

These are therefore the principles of action that under the National Program to Combat Poverty define a new institutional framework for implementing the system cash-for-work coupled with monetized food aid. Thus, the mechanism *AGECABO* was required to determine not only the elimination of the negative aspects of the organization and productivity by *FAIMO*, but also to determine the extinction of state intervention in the labor market for the implementation of public works for employment, which constituted a real social security system (Silva 1997: 30). The *AGECABO* intervention areas were the environment (conversion projects of soil and water), the construction of public infrastructures, training for the "employment and self-employment" of the projected workers and the establishment of credit lines to finance the individual initiatives of those workers, the creation of micro-enterprises.

The 1991 government program has framed the *FAIMO* mechanism in Municipalities for road construction (delegated by the former Ministry of Infrastructure and Transportation) and within the first conversion of *FAIMO* at the National Institute of Agricultural Engineering, for the implementation of projects of Soil and Water Conservation.

Municipalities were to receive thousands of employees, former employees of the Ministry of Public Works, but "without a minimum of structures framing techniques, without the Municipal Development Plan and therefore no programs and no projects." (Silva 1997: 38)

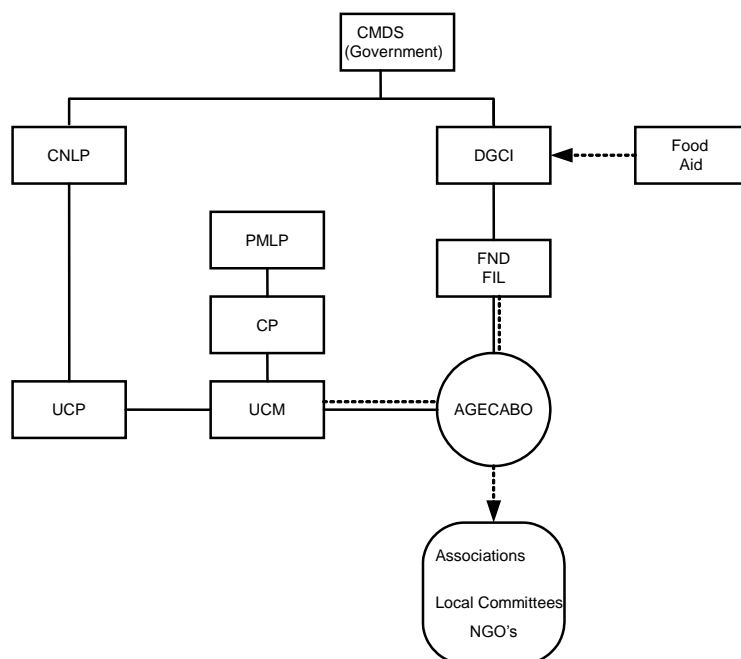
This institutional framework, used an instrument or mechanism that, by its nature, aimed to meet the needs of entrepreneurial issue of the rural, agricultural or not, embarrassed by the competition of the State in the labor market. On the other hand, this mechanism takes into account "the needs and views of donors who are, essentially, the *FAIMO* funders" in respect of new institutional models to ensure financial independence and effectiveness of social policies. The *AGECABO* mechanism follows, therefore, the *AGETIP* (Executing Agency for Public Interest Works) model that existed in several African countries and constitutes a mechanism used in the context of accompanying measures of the structural adjustment programs with the objective of minimizing social costs (unemployment) of these measures. These agencies are non-profit private

units who "run" through works of public interest from business and labor, work place and on behalf of the State:

"It [AGETIP] recruits consultants who prepare the studies, the tender documents and supervise the work. It launches competitions, appreciates the tenders, awards works and signs the contracts. Oversees contracts, pays the contractors and takes care of final acceptance of works."(CPPF/UNOWA 2004: 41)

This model was one of the instruments of *PNLP* which joins the framework convention that regulates the partnerships between the government and a forum for cooperation and development, program contract established between the Government and the municipalities and civil society organizations at the micro credit level and the Fund for Support to Local Initiatives – *Fundo de Apoio às Iniciativas Locais (FIL)*.

Institutional Framework of the *PNLP* (2005)



The coordination and management of the *PNLP* depends on the Council of Ministers for Social Development – *Conselho de Ministros para o Desenvolvimento Social (CMDs)* which outlines the policy guidelines for combating poverty. There is a National Commission to Fight Poverty – *Comissão Nacional de Luta contra a Pobreza (CNLP)* which is supported by a Programme Coordinating Unit – *Unidade de Coordenação do Programa (UCP)*. At the municipal level the Commission Partners – *Comissão de Parceiros (CP)* coordinates the Municipal Program for the Fight against Poverty – *Programa Municipal de Luta contra a Pobreza (PMLP)*. The Commission brings together key partners from the local context and the management and follow-up is ensured by the *PMLP* Municipal Coordination Unit – *Unidade de Coordenação Municipal (UCM)* that connects to the central level, with the *UCP* that coordinates the National Program (Cabo Verde 1988, 2002).

Poverty and "progress"

From a "developmentalism" and "modern-welfare" perspective, poverty is the cause of phenomena such as *FAIMO* aimed at ensuring food security through employment. So given the lack of land in all rural areas, this has no solution to get an income.

The *FAIMO* have been considered at institutional level, as one of the most effective means of direct assistance that the state provides for the poorest, being taken as the basis of a social security system. On the other hand, rural families gave priority to a wage from *FAIMO* when experiencing difficulties in access to food. For the institutional level, the time occupied by peasants in *FAIMO* "seems to be more profitable and safer" than the craft or the maintenance of domestic agricultural production structures. However, if it can be said that most family farms "rarely yields enough to reach the annual consumption of an average family of six people" (Silva 1997: 23, 20), then the heads of these farms "generate the poorer and the poorest rural," define strategies and rational logic in an uncertain economy: "*The increases in salaries, retirement pension and needless for discipline, attendance and productivity, make FAIMO attractive (especially those of the Chambers) for certain classes given the possibility to leave them to organize their working time in sense of multiplicity.*" (Silva 1997: 28)

We could perhaps say that the poverty of rural households derive from the Cape Verdean imbalance between the population and resource base, based on low productivity agriculture in ecosystems far from an equilibrium, with severe restrictions on water and fertile soils and on outdated technology. Agriculture involves almost all the peasants at once in the domestic cycle and the fact that it was frequently not self-efficient in products such as cereals and therefore does not ensure the subsistence of a household. The overwhelming majority of Cape Verdean rural households are rain fed agriculture because it opens a cycle of home maintenance. This livelihood is based on the transversality of multiple activities, not putting all the eggs in one basket, diversifying sources of income and resources, on the basis of complementarity and the logic of minimum resource management (Couto 2001, 2010). Following this logic, the accumulation of small herds of animals is the right term, just in time or in the "short time" of the various cycles of subsistence.

The logic of survival focuses on the core of the rural Cape Verdean "mode of existence" consist of "food" of people and livestock, which requires objective complexity of the livelihoods framework. Food production on average covers 10% to 15% of the dietary needs. The very low and uncertain wages permanently install a "hunger" for currency and low technology creates a widespread dependence on the external environment. Access to "inputs" implies lags for the renewal and maintenance of imported elements.

The "leitmotiv" of projects, activities and programs of community development / rural Cape Verdean societies, "cash-for-work" or public works, can only constrain the peasant "mode of existence", to internalize the fundamental role of economic freedom of the agent or manager of household minimum resources. It would condition (if meeting the rural livelihood strategies) the technological context (the availability of inputs), the financial context (the availability of credit) and educational context (the availability of training) in order to catapult the householders to several innovative platforms (micro irrigation) in rural areas of Cape Verde

It is important to remember that rapid economic growth in the 90s was accompanied with new entries in the purse of poverty due to the stagnation of the agricultural sector⁷¹. This originated increased poverty, especially the

⁷¹ Throughout the 90s the poor increased from 30 to 37% and the very poor increased from 14 to 20% (Cabo Verde 2004: 20).

"big poverty" in rural communities whose plasticity derives from non-employability of the unskilled assets, the mass of the rural with low education, single women with children or young people seeking their first job. The phenomenon requires deep knowledge of peasant culture and his co-evolution and adaptability to the external interventions of the international aid for rural development (Cabo Verde 2004).

From this perspective of rural communities' organic "progress", the decision of rural economic agents as minimum resource managers is the engine ingredient of "modernization" of peasant self-management, fostering a co-evolutionary process (progress) of the different elements of the social organization. Assuming that is not sustainable *ex ante* the determination of the behavior of farmers, as managers of minimum resources, but it's more "realistic" *a posteriori* the conditioning of action of these managers, a constructivist perspective suggests the development of more educational value and the possibility of continuous evaluation of the projected path.

Conclusion

Over the 80s and 90s, practices aimed at the welfare of rural society /community of Santiago Island in Cape Verde have failed to achieve the objectives that were proposed, the desired progress or economic transition or the reduction of poverty. These changes required the effectiveness of the scheme "work fronts", the Eurocentric and deterministic device of social engineering in the service of that international aid for rural development or food aid or structural adjustment. This paradigm assumed the possibility, for example, of transplanting western-type associations in the social peasant organization. The fallibility of such models in the search for increased productivity and more local self-subsistence generated dependence and less adaptability of rural livelihoods. Often co-evolution is identified by social engineering as a form of stagnation and underdevelopment.

Food Aid, State and peasants are three entities engaged more in an "epigenetic" process of change in course (progression) and less a "geometric" process of a desired change (progress). Mediated by the State, the external interventions of Food Aid produced impact on social structure of rural communities and in their livelihoods and autonomy. The *leitmotiv*

of this process was the device “cash-for-work” or “work fronts” that have transformed the Food Aid in a “factory” of artificial jobs and formal peasant associations, imposed by the project, and their “machines”.

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