

NET-MAP FEEDBACK

Project Title: Network mapping and visualization of conflicts and opportunities for developing Jequitiba's Forest Settlement Project – Candeias do Jamari/RO (*"Mapeamento de redes e visualização de conflitos e oportunidades para o desenvolvimento do Projeto de Assentamento Florestal Jequitibá (PAF Jequitibá) – Candeias do Jamari/RO"*)

Location: Candeias do Jamari – Rondônia. Brazil.

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Author: Roberta Amaral de Andrade –12th semester student of Forest Engineer at "Escola Superior de Agricultura 'Luiz de Queiroz' - Universidade de São Paulo" (Brasil).

Contacts: betinha.amaral@gmail.com

1) Introduction

I've tried Net-Map toolbox in my college final project, which is a simple project developed by students at the last semester of Forest Engineer career. The main goal of the final project is to put students face to face to field reality, usually in something the student wants to work with. Since I've always wanted to work with communitarian forest management, I thought this would be a great opportunity to test my social investigation skills and learn more about social networks.

2) Investigation

The investigation took place in a forest settlement project (PAF) and the main goal was to visualize difficulties and opportunities in developing the area through sustainable natural resources management. A forest settlement project is a category type of land tenure created by Brazilian Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform (INCRA) which has specific rules, including the enforcement of communitarian resource exploration through the constitution of associations to respond legally for the community.

3) How Net-Map was used:

Net-Map was used as individual interviews with key actors, included in both governmental and non-governmental institutions. At one side, governmental employees involved in the process, and on the other representations of social movement, associations and habitants from the surrounding, totalizing 10 interviews.

a) *Question:* The question made was "Who are the actors involved in PAF Jequitibá's development process?". The term "development" was defined as a gain in incomes and infrastructure, transportation, health, environmental, education and culture quality. Actors were

divided in: government; organized groups inside PAF; organized groups outside PAF; and people/non-organized groups.

b) How are they linked: the links used were: information (only information related to PAF); command; financial support; and other types of supports.

c) Their objectives: divided in four as well:

- institutional/political issues: when the actor moved towards personal gains for him/her or his/her institution;
- social: when moves were supported by the idea of improving social organization and aspects in community living;
- environmental: actions directed to environmental gain;
- economics: actions directed to production and generating incomes to community.

d) Influence towers: influence was defined as “the capacity of an actor to change decisions make related to PAF”.

4) Working with Net-Map:

The principal difficulty when working with the tool was the “spaghetti bowl” that formed many times. This fact often made not only the interviewee confused but myself as well. Maybe the links defined were not appropriate. Confusion was created also because the mapping was institutional. Institutions are composed by people, and there were times that we didn’t know if we were talking about the person inside the institution that was related with PAF or the institution itself. It had occurred, for example, that the individual and institutional objectives were different, and some links referred to individual and other to institutional actors.

A interesting issue about the mapping exercise, in my opinion, is that all the interviewees had a clear idea of what was happening about actors relations. This fact made all maps very alike and because of that also, the exercise became more a source of information to my investigation than a reflective and discover exercise for interviewees. Thinking about the reasons, I think they can vary (without being exclusive) since problems in “Step 1 – Preparation” - where my inexperience could lead me to confused ideas of where actually I wanted to get with the investigation – to power relations between government and community. It became clear that government institutions were leading all the process (some of them also hiding information, but this information appeared in talks outside the mapping exercise). The other thing I realized was that, even defining “development” previously, during the interview both the interviewees and I (even knowing that I should get stacked at the

planning I had made before, in the preparation of my investigation), focused in a definition that was more related to advances that should occur to take it away from the “stuck point” it was. That made me think about how important was, to work with this tool, knowledge/expertise in communication, since defining words and concepts are essential.

In a general way I found Net-Map tool similar to Venn’s Diagram, but as I never actually had work with it - just know it from theory - it’s hard to say exactly where the difference between them lays. Also, as I didn’t had the experience to lead the process, because it was my first time using the tool, and even because the mapping exercise didn’t bring new information to interviewees (in my case study) mapping was a little bit tiring sometimes; and so, I still have curiosity to see how it works when it really flows, especially in group mapping.

Anyway, I wanted to express my gratefulness to you, Eva, for sharing your work and responding to questions about it, contributing to change experiences.

Best regards,

Roberta Amaral de Andrade