

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF PARTICIPATION: PARTICIPATORY RURAL
APPRAISAL (PRA) AND THE CREATION OF A MARINE PROTECTED AREA IN
BAHIA, BRAZIL

RONALDO WEIGAND JR.

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To my grandparents Carlos and Rosa,
my parents Vera and Ronaldo,
and the fishers of Itacaré

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By

Ronaldo Weigand Jr.

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Chair: Marianne Schmink
Major Department: Department of Anthropology

This dissertation is a study of a participatory rural appraisal (PRA) process for the creation of the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré, in the state of Bahia, Brazil, and examined two main research questions:

- What factors influenced fishers' participation in the PRA meetings?
- What factors influenced participation by local people as leaders in the PRA team?

To test 14 explanatory propositions, I adapted action research, a participatory research paradigm concerned both with action to improve local conditions faced by the participants, and with research about the processes that cause these conditions. The most important factor affecting participation in the PRA meetings was politics. Often, fishers did not participate because they were resisting the Extractive Reserve proposal, the local PRA team, or because they opposed some other aspect. My research provides evidence against the proposition that fishers do not participate because they have an individualistic culture, and against the proposition that fishers do not attend PRA meetings if they can

free-ride on the PRA exercise. In Itacaré, all communities eventually attended PRA meetings in good numbers, actively participated in the discussions, and ended up supporting the Extractive Reserve. Attendance at meetings was also influenced by the credibility of the PRA team and by multidimensional costs and benefits related to the PRA methodology (moral, emotional, and informational).

The factors influencing participation within the local PRA team included the pace of the PRA and individual opportunity costs involved in facilitating it. Multidimensional costs and benefits also affected participation; individuals would stay in the PRA team while they felt that their material, political, moral, and emotional capitals were above a certain critical level. The dissertation further shows the importance of internal conflicts in the local PRA team, and shows how PRA, because of its technical need for outside facilitators, can increase such conflicts. Conflicts among insiders may be equally important. The dissertation concludes with a discussion of recommendations for research, PRA practice, action research, and the creation of extractive reserves.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Everybody is talking about participation. Why participation? To some, participation is an end in itself; a human right. In conservation and development initiatives, community supporters and activists defend that local people have the right to participate in any decision process that could influence their lives. Donors, governments, universities, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and community organizations are so interested in participation because it gives legitimacy to development and conservation initiatives, and because it is believed that participation makes these initiatives more efficient and effective.

The word participation may mean different things: How do people participate? Who participates? Why do they participate? How much power do participants have? How do outsiders and locals see participation? How much do they gain or lose by participating (or not)? The answers to these questions (if they are ever asked) influence the legitimacy, the efficiency and the efficacy of conservation and development initiatives.

Participation can take different forms. For example, in the research process, Rocheleau (1994) points out that there are extractive and interactive approaches, and that land users can take different roles, from providing labor, to acting as hosts, informants, evaluators, collaborators, partners, advisors or board members. As in Rocheleau's description, the types of participation can be classified in a one-dimensional scale, such as a "ladder", implying that some forms of classification are better (more legitimate) than

others and “that it is possible, desirable and necessary to move across this continuum to the most intense form of participation, a kind of participation nirvana” (Guijt and Sha 1998b:10); Guijt and Sha (1998) discuss other problems with participation typologies.

To promote participation, a series of methods have been developed, such as participatory rural appraisal (PRA). Participatory rural appraisal is "a growing family of approaches and methods to enable local (rural and urban) people to express, enhance, share, and analyze their knowledge of life and conditions, to plan and to act" (Chambers 1994b:1253). In the 1990s, as participation of local people became an important element towards a more effective, efficient and socially just way to promote development and manage protected areas, PRA became increasingly popular among development and conservation organizations and professionals for use in different contexts (protected areas, indigenous communities, rural resettlements, poor urban neighborhoods, etc.).

However, as PRA scales up, the concern about the quality of participation has increased (Blackburn and Holland 1998). Criticism of PRA is growing, both for its lack of a theoretical basis and its lack of consideration for the complexity of rural communities (Goebel 1998; Guijt and Sha 1998a). To some authors, problems with PRA may stem from its massive use, and from scaling up without proper care, training and understanding of the methodology (Blackburn and Holland 1998). To other authors, the problems with PRA emerge from the methodology itself. For example, Guijt and Sha (1998b) and Goebel (1998) argue that PRA, by emphasizing public expression of knowledge and consensus, may obscure power differences and disagreeing interests in the community (particularly gender-related differences), therefore contributing to the disempowerment of already disempowered groups.

PRA also seems to be applied without consciousness of a theory that explains its success or failure. Chambers (1994b) points out that one aspect of PRA is that it lacks a theoretical basis and is oriented more by "what works" than by "why it works." He argues that the advantage of this approach is that it is practical and related to the field, as opposed to an academic approach. However, if PRA is to evolve in quality, not only quantity, and if we want to avoid a blind search for improvements, "why it works" (and why it does not) should become important, and social scientists should contribute to answer this question. The first question a critical academician would ask is perhaps "what does PRA work for?" What is the goal of PRA? I devote further discussion to the goal of PRA later in this introduction, but for now, I accept Chambers' definition (the goal is to enable local people "to express, enhance, share, and analyze their knowledge of life and conditions, to plan and to act," Chambers 1994b:1253) with an emphasis on planning and action. Participatory rural appraisal's goal is to involve local people in well-guided (legitimate and effective) collective action.

A research opportunity to explore how PRA contributes to participatory practice and collective action opened up to me in March 1999, when I visited the town of Itacaré, located on the south coast of the State of Bahia, Brazil. Itacaré is located in a gorgeous region, with many reminiscent fragments of Brazil's Atlantic rainforest, one of the richest and most endangered ecosystems in the world, and with many paradise beaches that attract thousands of Brazilian and foreign tourists. Tall waves, coconut groves, a tiny but lively night life, action sports opportunities and warm welcoming people acted as magnets for surfers and tourists, whose sometimes overwhelming presence started to change the social and natural landscapes.

Raimundo, the president of the *Associação dos Pescadores e Marisqueiras de Itacaré* (ASPERI, or Itacaré's Association of Fishers and Shellfish Harvesters), was very friendly to me. We were talking at a bar table in Itacaré when he told me that the main problem of the local fishers was the sea-bottom trawling done by *guinchos* (industrial shrimp trawler boats). These boats were equipped with a winch (in Portuguese, "guincho") that enables them to trawl large nets. In most cases, they also had two *tangones*, small cranes from which the nets were pulled. "They destroy everything, kill all fish, even the very small ones," he said. In my later visits, the fishers of Itacaré consistently repeated that same story. Each of these boats trawled two large nets and a smaller sampling net that scraped the sea floor. Shrimp, crabs, fish, stones, corals, algae, and trash were all lifted into the boat. Small fish and other sea life were discarded dead, leaving behind a floating trail of waste and death that revolted local fishers.

In response to that problem, some people in Itacaré were requesting that the Brazilian Federal Government create a Marine Extractive Reserve. An extractive reserve is a government-owned area in which a particular population of extractors is allowed to use natural resources according to the rules proposed by the community and approved by a management council composed of government and nongovernment organizations, which should ensure resource sustainability (Allegretti 1994; Instituto Brasileiro do Meio Ambiente e dos Recursos Naturais Renováveis 1995; Murrieta and Rueda 1995; Nepstad et al. 1992; Schwartzman 1992). Extractive reserves have been widely created in the Brazilian Amazon and along the Brazilian coast, protecting forest, estuarine and marine resources.

Raimundo invited me to promote the development of local community organizational, or institutional, foundations for the creation of the future Marine Extractive Reserve in the fishing community of Itacaré. Based on my previous experience with PRA in the extractive reserves of Rondônia state (Weigand Jr. and Paula 1998), southwestern Brazilian Amazon, I chose to develop that work using a participatory rural appraisal (PRA) approach.

As does much of the PRA literature, I assumed that participation would be more or less a natural phenomenon and that people were willing to participate if just given the chance. Chambers (1994a) relates the success of PRA to a series of "reversals," as follows: 1) of frames (from etic to emic, that is, from the point of view of outsiders to the one of insiders); 2) of modes (from individual to groups, from verbal to visual, from measuring to comparing); 3) of relations (from reserve to rapport, from frustration to fun); and 4) of power (from extracting to empowering). However, in the case of some fishing communities in Itacaré, at first these reversals did not matter because people were not coming to the meetings to experience them. Itacaré teaches us that participation in PRA has a social context, and that promoting PRA is not restricted to its meetings, but is related to the "management" of a complex social reality.

Realizing that PRA does not happen in a social vacuum, this research tries to answer the following questions:

- What factors influenced fishers' participation in the PRA meetings?
- What factors influenced participation by local people as leaders in the PRA team?

Origins and Concept of Participatory Rural Appraisal

Villagers gather around an outsider who invites them to draw a map of their community. They use anything to represent different aspects of their reality; stones, sand,

wood, leaves or any material they are used to. Some people go to the ground, start drawing the contours of the village, the river that passes by, the main roads. Other people start placing trees and houses. Someone draws the church. They argue and ask each other for information. "Where does that guy live?" one asks. "By the river curve," another participant answers. Slowly, the map takes shape. After a while, the outsider asks what the participants see in the map (what are the community problems, what should be done, etc). This is participatory mapping, one of the "PRA tools."

Participatory rural appraisal has been loosely defined, and the label has been used to designate a broad range of research and development work. According to Chambers (1994a:953), PRA "has evolved from, draws on, and resonates with, several traditions." PRA evolved mainly from RRA, or *rapid* rural appraisal, but is also related to activist participatory research, agroecosystem analysis, applied anthropology and field research on farming systems. Rapid rural appraisal (RRA) is a relaxed form of survey in which questionnaires are avoided; it gained recognition as a way to obtain valid information from a community because it is more cost effective, more personal and faster than formal surveys (Chambers 1994a). The difference between PRA and RRA is that RRA is intended for learning by outsiders, while PRA is intended to enable local people to analyze and, often, to plan and to act together. Both "methodologies" share several "methods" such as the use of secondary sources, semi-structured interviews, key informants, participatory mapping and modeling, transect walks, seasonal calendars, and others (Chambers 1994a). According to Kabutha et al. (1991), PRA was first applied in Mbusyani, Kenya, in 1988.

However, there is still confusion about the concept of PRA. Although the name stands only for “appraisal,” the original PRA process, as described by Kabutha et al. (1991), was an adaptation of rapid rural appraisal (RRA) intended to promote action through the creation of a *community development plan* or *community action plan*. As explained by Dr. Richard Ford (personal communication to pra@listserv.uoguelph.ca),

When we put together the concept and the structure of PRA in the mid-1980s, it had two structural elements and three conceptual elements that differed from its parent, RRA. The two structural elements were

1. That the participatory research must lead to an action plan that reflects the community's ranked priorities and how they intended to implement them. In our original handbook we call them VRMPs-- Village Resource Management Plans. Over the years, they have come to be known as CAPs (Community Action Plans).
2. That the community's data, collected primarily through visual instruments, should be organized and recorded in ways that could be left with the community so that local organizations and village institutions could use them for monitoring, tracking, or holding groups accountable for what they had promised to contribute. The data have also served in many communities as useful management tools for community institutions.

The three conceptual elements were

1. That community be the primary initiative taker in solving their own problems
2. That community institutions serve as the primary building blocks for initiating development action
3. That the community institutions be the primary architects in crafting partnerships with NGOS, CBOs, government, international agencies, and private sector organizations

If the methodology contains these five elements, I don't think it makes any difference what one calls it. The main point is that it provides tools for community institutions to play a substantially larger role in planning and managing their own development than under previous methods.

In spite of this, many papers describe only the use of the "PRA tools" (maps, calendars, diagrams), isolated from a process intended to generate community action. In

the *PLA Notes*, perhaps the main periodical about PRA, published by the International Institute for Environment and Development, there are several papers on a "PRA" that does not include community planning or action (Binns et al. 1997; Dirorimwe 1998; Sarch et al. 1997; Townsley et al. 1997).

According to Garrett Pratt (personal communication to pra@listserv.uoguelph.ca),

After having all this time to reflect on what PRA is, I find it most useful to think of the diversity of practices that people label PRA. For example, some people focus on the diagrams, and so would use that to define whether others are 'really' doing PRA or not, i.e., if there is no mapping, it isn't PRA. But other practitioners who say that they are doing PRA argue that diagrams are often or always inappropriate in their work with communities, so they work by simply talking to people, often in groups. But they call it PRA. You also find people saying, 'We did a PRA—first a questionnaire survey and then focus group discussions'.

Some say that PRA is 'a way of life' or a set of vaguely defined 'attitudes and behaviors'. So in that case, they could see someone using diagrams like maps but failing to display the 'correct' attitudes and behaviors, and say, 'that person is not doing real PRA'. But they might count the way a person interacts with their family as PRA if they displayed the 'right' PRA attitudes and behaviors during that interaction. Given the muddle of things that people label PRA, it is very difficult to set boundaries around PRA by naming specific practices that are somehow the 'essence' of PRA.

The other route might be to define it somehow by the purpose it is used for. For example, does the facilitator intend that the use of PRA should lead to an action plan or not? You find people saying that if there is no 'development project' coming out the end of the process, then it is not PRA... Focusing on the purpose of the facilitator as the defining factor for PRA may tend to overplay their determination of the outcomes, as of course the participants actively shape what happens. But it seems that a lot of times PRA is a hit and run data collection technique to serve the project management needs of development organizations, so there isn't much chance for participants to shape the process. Nor is it likely that such a 'purpose' will become the 'official' definition of PRA! ... I have learned not to assume anything when someone tells me they 'use PRA.'

These points summarize the varied impressions of PRA practitioners who participated in an international retreat evaluating the experience of PRA in Kenya (Institute of Development Studies 1999). The imprecise definition of PRA has generated

confusion and has endangered the practices labeled PRA. Any action labeled "PRA" that does not yield positive results in terms of quality of life and community mobilization will create frustration, because:

- The original PRA involved a process in which communities mobilized to improve their situation
- The prestige of PRA derives from the claim that it improves communities.

Confusion about the PRA concept may stem from the origins of PRA. Robert Rhoades' 1990 paper on the oncoming revolution in methods for rural development research suggests that, by the late 1980s, Rapid Rural Appraisal was changing, starting to utilize research methods that were more visual (Rhoades 1990). However, at that time, the same visual "tools" started to be used in Africa by Richard Ford and others to generate community action plans (Ford et al. 1994; Ford and Lelo 1991; Ford et al. 1992; Ford et al. 1993; Kabutha et al. 1991). When their first results appeared to be very positive, participatory rural appraisal gained popularity. Because it was a direct evolution of rapid rural appraisal (a methodology that was not intended to generate community action, but to yield valid, fast and inexpensive information), much PRA is in fact participatory RRA with a new label.

In the early 1990s, PRA was described as a process of diagnosis and planning to generate a community action plan (Instituto de Los Recursos Mundiales and Grupo de Estudios Ambientales 1993; National Environment Secretariat et al. 1991; Odour-Noah et al. 1992). However, by 1994, PRA was already described as "a growing family of approaches and methods" (Chambers 1994b:1253), with several different uses. Thus, there are two concepts of *PRA*: one that emphasizes the *process* and the objective of

community appraisal, planning *and* action; and another that emphasizes the participatory use of *diagrams* in data gathering and raising community awareness.

This second concept of PRA seems to be an appropriation of the PRA label by the RRA practitioners, among them Robert Chambers. To Chambers (1994a), the main differences between RRA and PRA are that RRA is extractive and verbal, while PRA is "empowering" and visual. To him, planning and action are "often" a result; they *are not a necessary* part of the methodology. Those differences can be disputed because

- RRA had already started to use more visual techniques and include local participation even before the PRA label was created and first used in Kenya
- PRA involved, originally, the generation of a community action plan

After RRA established itself as a valid research strategy, it has been criticized and described as extractive and not very participatory (Chambers 1994a). To escape criticism of RRA, concerned RRA practitioners had to differentiate their work. It can be argued that PRA, as a data gathering method, is just a perfected use of RRA, in terms of local participation. This perfected form of RRA, apparently, is today labeled as PRA as a way to enjoy the prestige of this new approach and to escape criticism directed toward old and because "participatory" sounds a lot better than "rapid"! In fact, RRA still exists and is surprisingly common.

However, a PRA research strategy faced some of the same problems of validity that RRA faced. The RRA debates in the early 1980s were mainly related to its capacity to yield valid data. When the concern is to generate valid data and conclusions, PRA data gathering techniques also had to be defended because they started to involve more visual elements and nonstandardized ways of representing data; and because locals started to analyze data. As a research strategy, PRA depended on the knowledge and skills of the

local people. Proponents of PRA research such as Robert Chambers then had to defend the assumptions related to the locals' capacity to know and analyze their reality.

Often, the objective of PRA is described in terms of empowerment. The poor in a community setting are normally empowered by collective action, because the poor are individually weak but can be collectively powerful. However, while the validity of PRA for research has been extensively defended, PRA for community action has had little theoretical discussion.

Definition of PRA

Now, we must choose between the two views of PRA. While the generation of community action does include participatory research, it should involve more than this. In this dissertation, PRA means *a method to involve a group or community in a process of participatory diagnosis, planning and action*, intended to build local capacity for collective action and improve local conditions of life. That is, PRA is a collective planning and implementation process with an empowerment goal.

Is the name “participatory rural appraisal” still appropriate? Because PRA has been used in urban areas, “rural” does not seem appropriate anymore. Because planning and action are often part of PRA processes, “appraisal” is not able to express what PRA is in practice. According to Blackburn and Holland (1998), to reflect this expansion in PRA practices, some practitioners have maintained the acronym PRA, but changed what it stands for: instead of “participatory rural appraisal”, they talk about “participatory reflection and action.” However, apparently this change in terminology is still not complete. To facilitate the dialogue of this dissertation with other papers discussing participatory methods, rather than inventing new terminology, I use the more popular terms “participatory rural appraisal” and “PRA.”

A number of manuals and papers that follow this definition describe how to conduct a participatory rural appraisal exercise (Instituto de Los Recursos Mundiales and Grupo de Estudios Ambientales 1993; National Environment Secretariat et al. 1991; Odour-Noah et al. 1992; Tillmann and Salas 1997). Most publications stress the diagnosis and planning part, while neglecting to address the implementation process. However, there are still several cases of PRA intended to promote collective action.

Collective Action and PRA Experiences

PRA intended to mobilize community collective action was used first in Mbusyani, Kenya, in 1988 (Kabutha et al. 1991). There, self-help achieved several improvements in the production and natural resource conservation. Although the villagers were responsible for most tasks, close collaboration with extension officers and NGOs played a major role in implementation.

Ford et al. (1992) describe a PRA process in Pwani, another village in Kenya where the community organized itself through PRA, good practical results. Razakamarina et al. (1996) describe the use of PRA to establish partnerships between parks and people in Madagascar. By using PRA, communities improved their health, education, production, storage and transportation. A major strategy in the implementation phase was the use of small projects and the advice of outsiders for rapid results. Small projects created visibility for the park and its resources, changed local people's attitudes, and strengthened local capabilities and self-confidence.

Weigand and Paula (1998) describe the use of PRA to generate community development plans for two extractive reserves in the Brazilian Amazon. Participatory rural appraisal helped extractive communities to diagnose their problems, set priorities, plan solutions and implement improvements, helping them to build self-confidence and

change their attitudes toward community organization. More people became involved in community activities. Women, in particular, increased their role and influence in the reserves. As a result, economic alternatives helped to increase male and female income, education and health services were implemented, and the community became more organized toward environmental protection.

Among PRA accounts, Ford et al.(1994) describes the use of PRA to generate a community action plan for a village of pastoralists in Somalia; Bronson et al. (1995) describes a PRA assessment and planning exercise in a community in Vanuatu Islands, South Pacific; and Ford et al. (1993) describes a PRA exercise in a village in Botswana. All these case studies were part of training workshops for local professionals and do not discuss the results of the implementation phase.

Ford and Lelo (1991) evaluating the Mbusyani experience, point out weaknesses and strengths of PRA. Participatory rural appraisal strengths include

- The provision of a community forum for dialogue among community, government, NGOs and other parties
- PRA focus on locally sustainable solutions
- Participatory data gathering and analysis
- Systematized participation

Moreover, PRA builds self-confidence by giving villagers significant accomplishments, and stimulates self-reliance by the awareness that communities need not wait for outside help. However Ford and Lelo (1991) point out that PRA requires strong institutions to mobilize communities; and that local leaders may lack needed management skills. In addition, participation does not eliminate self-interest, and enthusiasm eventually declines. Regarding planning, more precision is needed in the

village plans. In the implementation phase, more guidance and support are required. Care must be taken to avoid perpetuating dependence on outsiders (Ford and Lelo 1991).

Although few case studies describe PRA implementation, the studies just mentioned describe relatively successful processes of community mobilization for action. They share some important characteristics. Implementation starts with small projects that require low external assistance, which helps to build community self-confidence and a sense of self-reliance. These projects take advantage of initial enthusiasm. First successes serve to prolong the enthusiasm. However, outsider support (advice or resources) for implementation increased the chances of success. The process also includes establishing alliances with external organizations. In this way, the empowerment provided by PRA is the result of successful community experiences with implementation of planned changes.

The PRA cases cited above suggest that PRA works in building local capacity for collective action through systematizing local knowledge, creation of consensus, increasing self-confidence and cooperation, and forging effective alliances with outside organizations. If so, PRA implies the following assumptions:

- Communities have difficulty in acting collectively for a given goal
- Their knowledge is fragmented, disorganized, and perhaps not well distributed
- There is little consensus as to the most important problems and the best solutions
- Self-confidence is generally low
- Communities are not inclined to cooperate
- Outsiders may be required to catalyze changes

Research Questions and Explanatory Propositions

My research questions emerged from the literature and from the practical problems of creating the community organizational basis for the Marine Extractive

Reserve of Itacaré. A series of *explanatory propositions*¹ for the research questions (Tables 1-1 and 1-2) were tested through *action research*². In this study, I used action research as the main instrument for testing competing explanations for problems encountered in the participatory creation of the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré (see Chapter 2).

Table 1-1: Research question 1 and explanatory propositions: What factors influenced fishers' participation in the PRA meetings?

EP Number	Explanatory propositions
EP1	Logistics: People participate if meetings are well-advertised and planned for convenient dates, times, and locations
EP2	Culture: Fishers are individualistic and do not participate because of the nature of their activities
EP3	Free-riding: If fishers can benefit from a collective good without contributing, they will free-ride and not participate
EP4	Political aspects: Participation is a political currency and fishers attend meetings strategically
EP5	Multidimensional costs and benefits: Attendance at meetings depends on the participant's consideration of benefits and costs in multiple dimensions
EP6	Urban vs. rural: Attracting participation in urban areas is more difficult than in rural areas
EP7	Previous experience and credibility: Previous negative community experience with projects and outside assistance reduces credibility of the participatory process and participation in the PRA meetings
EP8	Credibility of the PRA team: The credibility of the PRA team and its members influences participation in the meetings

These propositions were generated in a process of dialogue between me and community members. Some propositions are mainly emic, that is, they were proposed by

¹ Instead of “hypotheses,” which refer to the conventional research paradigm, I use the term “explanatory propositions.” Participants (including TG and me), involved in action, discussed one or more explanatory propositions to explain the problems, their causes, and possible solutions.

² The methodological basis for action research is explained in Chapter 2, and the use of action research in this dissertation is described in Chapter 3.

community members, but often find support in the literature, as is indicated later in the text. Others are mainly etic, as they derive from social theory. This research shows that the dialogue between the two can produce interesting and useful local learning.

Table 1-2: Research question 2 and explanatory propositions: What factors influenced participation by local people in the PRA team?

EP Number	Explanatory propositions
EP9	Pace and material opportunity costs: people have to make a living and cannot be exclusively involved in PRA (or leadership) voluntary activities.
EP10	Multidimensional costs and benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participation in the local PRA team is inversely related to the material, moral and emotional costs of leadership ▪ The intensity of this relationship depends on individual interpretations
EP11	Cyclical fatigue of the group: after enduring the costs of leadership, the group may need a break before becoming more active again.
EP12	Credibility of group: participation in the local PRA team depends on whether the objectives of the group are seen as likely or possible.
EP13	Outside facilitators vs. insiders: PRA technical needs preserve decisive power in the hands of outsiders; this may frustrate local people in search of empowerment, reduce their participation or create internal friction.
EP14	Insiders vs. insiders: internal friction may decrease the participation of people who are less involved, committed or empowered in the group.

Research Question 1: What Factors Influenced Fishers' Participation in the PRA Meetings?

PRA is highly adaptable, and its use may vary from location to location, from practitioner to practitioner. If there is a *typical PRA process*, the literature suggests that it involves an outside team that visits a (rural) community and promotes a series of activities aimed at identifying community problems. Some community members may join the outside team in promoting household and group interviews where the PRA tools (mapping, calendars, transects, etc.) are used to systematize local knowledge and create

hypotheses about the community problems. The group interviews take the form of meetings where participation is voluntary.

After problems are identified, PRA meetings are carried out to rank priorities and plan solutions. A community action plan is created, with specific tasks assigned to participants, who start to implement them.

Participation in PRA, takes different forms. The most elementary form is attendance at the PRA meetings. Once participants come to a PRA meeting, they may participate by speaking, carrying out tasks to complete the PRA tools (mapping, diagrams, etc.), analyzing information, or voting in decision making processes. They may also facilitate or coordinate the meetings, and take charge for different tasks planned by the participants. Before a PRA meeting, locals may participate in the PRA team, and decide on meeting topics, dates, places, times and advertising strategies. They may also carry out the necessary steps to organize the PRA meeting, such as preparing a meeting location, and advertising it.

In 1999, I gave a course on community leadership to fishers from Itacaré fishing communities and a course on PRA to a group of local people with secondary education who showed an interest in promoting the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré. The interaction between these two groups, the government agency responsible for the extractive reserves in Brazil, and a regional NGO, resulted in the formation of a group of four to ten fishers (the number varied during the process) involved in the promotion of the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré. This group was named *Grupo de Trabalho pela Criação da Reserva Extrativista Marinha de Itacaré*, or Task Group for the Creation of the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré (TG). In 2000, I returned to Itacaré, and began

fieldwork with a PRA course for TG members. Then, the TG and I organized the PRA meetings, jointly planned meeting locations, dates, times; and invited the people.

However, community participation in the PRA meetings proved difficult in Itacaré. Sometimes meetings had to be cancelled because of lack of attendance. What explains attendance at PRA meetings? Trying to solve the problem, TG members and I identified a series of explanatory propositions, explained below.

Logistics (EP1): People participate if meetings are well-advertised and planned for convenient dates, times, and locations

When a meeting failed, the thought that immediately came to my mind was “why?” and the first explanation was often related to logistics: “did we get the word out effectively? Was the meeting at a convenient time and location?” PRA manuals usually present guidelines for approaching the community and for setting up community meetings where the PRA tools are applied. Participation increases when meetings are well-advertised and carried out at convenient dates, times, and locations. If participation is low it may be because the logistics of the meetings were bad. However, attracting participation may be more complicated than just providing good logistics. This dissertation explores the logistical proposition by examining different attempts to promote participation in Itacaré (action testing, see Chapters 2 and 3).

Culture (EP2): Fishers are individualistic and do not participate because of the nature of their activities

When I started fieldwork in Itacaré, the fishers had their own explanations when the first meetings had low or no participation. The most common was a self-deprecating view that fishers “are just like that”; to them, fishers were just selfish and self-interested or, worse, they lacked interest at all. “Fishers are hopeless,” said a retired fisherman.

Many TG members also agreed with that at their moments of disappointment with the participation of their communities.

In the literature, too, some scholars say that fishers are individualistic because of the nature of their activity, which is described as solitary. Poggie (1980) compares the fishers' perceptions of themselves and of their cooperative managers, and shows that fishers perceive themselves to be more individualistic than they perceive the managers. He argues that fishers, because of the nature of their activity, are very individualistic, and that this individualism is a constraint to the development of cooperatives. Individualism is also reported by Kottak (1992), who conducted studies of social change in a fishing community in northern Bahia, Brazil.

However, there is little consensus in the literature on whether fishers are individualistic or cooperative. Pollnac and Carmo (1980) verify that fishers and farmers in the Azores had similar attitudes: both were not very inclined to cooperation. Nonetheless, McCay (1980) demonstrates that fishers in the New York Bight Region of the American Mid-Atlantic Coast were able to achieve cooperative organization and resource management that is very effective and not individualistic. In addition, Orbach (1980) argues that cooperative action does not necessarily mean a formal cooperative, and that fishers in the Chesapeake Bay are cooperative, despite the failures of local cooperatives. To him, fishers take advantage of multiple forms of organizational arrangements of cooperation that best suit their needs. Moreover, cases in which fishers' cooperatives fail normally involve top-down processes of cooperative creation, with strong governmental influence and paternalistic assistance, such as the cases described by Sabella (1980) in Peru, Poggie (1980) in Costa Rica, and Kottak (1992) in Bahia, Brazil.

Finally, the nature of the fishing activity is not always solitary, nor is it the only solitary rural activity. Farmers often work by themselves in crop fields, rubber tappers work alone in the forest, and herders are often alone taking care of cattle. On the other hand, several fishing modalities demand team work, and longer overnight fishing trips with a fishing crew demand high social skills to avoid fights in the confinement of little boats. Moreover, fishers often share a port and a trading place. Therefore, fishing is not necessarily solitary and should not always determine an “individualistic culture.” This research expected to falsify this proposition by trying to involve fishers in the PRA meetings in Itacaré. The results of such an attempt and a discussion of fishing cooperative arrangements found in Itacaré are used to examine this explanatory proposition (action testing). In addition, cooperation and individualism in the fishing activity are discussed in Chapter 5.

Free-riding (EP3): If fishers can benefit from a collective good without contributing, they will free-ride

According to Guijt and Sha (1998b:1), in community development,

The assumption is that participatory approaches empower local people with the skills and confidence to analyze their situation, reach consensus, make decisions and take action, so as to improve their circumstances... Yet, in many cases where participation has been pursued something is going wrong... Looking back, it is apparent that ‘community’ has often been viewed naively, or in practice dealt with, as a harmonious and internally equitable collective... This mythical notion of community cohesion continues to permeate much participatory work.

If communities are not harmonious, internally equitable collectives, what are they? Communitarian and individualistic scholars have discussed the nature of peasant communities for centuries and perhaps their debate can help us understand fishing communities too. Nonetheless, some might argue that fishers are radically different from peasants. In using theories and interpretations developed for peasants to look at fishers

one has to be careful to consider the degree of differences and similarities between these groups. How similar are they?

Table 1-3 shows different aspects of the two groups. Both groups have a high dependence on natural resources for their livelihoods, but resource management, that is, intentional interference over nature's productivity, is more intense in the case of peasants, and very weak or nonexistent in the case of fishers. Agricultural production requires from peasants that they transform nature, suppressing natural production of the local biota to replace it as much as possible with domesticated plants and animals.

Table 1-3: Comparison of peasants and fishers.

Aspect	Peasant Communities	Fishing Communities
Dependence on natural resources	High	High
Management of natural resources	High	Low
Resource tenure systems	Individual/household areas and communal areas	Communal area/ open access
Predictability of production	Medium	Low
Knowledge of resources	High	High
Isolation	Varies (from village dwelling to isolated households)	Village or town dwelling
Wealth	Marginal	Marginal
Risk	High	High

In Brazil, though, different resource management conditions apply according to the environment and the population pressure. Where land is still abundant, peasants are less intensive about their resource management, practicing slash-and-burn agriculture and, in the case of open frontiers, they can be very destructive about resource use, migrating and establishing new farms when land becomes depleted.

This is similar to what fishermen in Itacaré reported. They told me that fishermen from other municipalities, after their fishing grounds became depleted due to predatory fishing, came to Itacaré, where fish were still abundant. Most of the fishers associated to one of the local fishers' organizations came from another municipality where fish, reportedly, have become scarce due to practices such as fishing with explosives. Although it is argued that, because of the nature of marine resources, fishers are less likely to perceive the link between their own practice and resource depletion, this does not appear to be the case in Itacaré, where the local population tends to reject newcomers and blame them for the destruction of fisheries in other municipalities.

The difference between peasants and fishers is that peasants often can exclude outsiders from using their resources. For Brazilian fishers, however, resources are legally open access, and encroachment of fishing grounds through destruction of mangroves and by industrial fishing fleets have challenged the traditional rules that regulate access to marine resources (Cordell 1989). That is, tappers and peasants can, by modifying their behavior, influence resource conservation, but fishers can not. The creation of marine extractive reserves responds to this issue by "closing" the fisheries and excluding outsiders from the area.

Table 1-3 shows other important differences. One is the predictability of production. Peasants have a medium level of predictability, but fishers face greater uncertainty. Irregularity of production is common among fishers and they have fewer indicators of future production than do peasants. Considering their similar levels of poverty, if peasants present social institutions that act as a safety net (Scott 1976), these

institutions should be even more evident among fishers. Indeed, Cordell (1989) reports exactly that in his research with the fishers of Bahia.

However, still regarding predictability, Cordell (1989:133) points out that, because fishers have to conform with tidal cycles to take advantage of specific fishing spots in the mangroves,

It enables those adept at net casting, the *mestres* (canoe bosses), to monitor closely the behavior, migratory routes and the cycles of fish. Because fish predictably concentrate in certain areas depending on the tide, weather and other natural cycles, seines operations are specialized.

From the discussion presented above, I argue that the categories "peasants" and "fishers" are no more different from each other than the groups that compose each are different from other groups in the same category. That is, different peasant groups may be more different from one another than a peasant group is different from a fishing group. Therefore, if the literature on peasants have any general value across different peasant groups, it should also be useful to understand fishers. There is no reason why peasant theories cannot be applied to fishers, and I use them to discuss participation and collective action among fishers as did Forman (1966), for example, in his study of raft fishermen in Northeastern Brazil.

The timelessness of the debate on the nature of peasant communities in social sciences is illustrated by the response of Russian anarchist philosopher Peter Kropotkin to the social Darwinists at the end of the 19th century. Kropotkin counter-argued the ideas of social Darwinist Thomas Huxley, one the most famous of the Darwin's followers, who published "The Struggle for Existence and its Bearing upon Man" in the journal *Nineteenth Century*. Kropotkin's response, a series of three articles in the same journal, was later published in a book (*Mutual Aid: A Factor of Human Evolution*, 1972, orig.

1914) where he argued that cooperation, or mutual aid, was a force as strong as, or even stronger than, competition in shaping the course of biological and human evolution.

Kropotkin also anticipated the words of James Scott (see below) that the rational individualistic peasant is a product of the state:

Only the wholesale massacres by the thousands could put a stop to this widely spread popular movement [of mutual aid], and it was by the sword, the fire, and the rack that the young States secured their first and decisive victory over the masses of people... The absorption of all social functions by the State necessarily favored the development of an unbridled, narrow-minded individualism (Kropotkin 1972: 195-197).

And writing about the battles fought by communities resisting the state, Kropotkin says that

In short, to speak of the natural death of the village communities in virtue of economic laws is as grim a joke as to speak of the natural death of soldiers slaughtered on a battle field (Kropotkin 1972: 203).

Kropotkin emphasized the harmonious side of communities as a way to oppose the extremely individualistic social sciences of his age, that is, the “teachings of a war of each against all, which are offered to them [the people] under the title of science, but are no science at all” (Kropotkin 1972:222). Another example is the disagreement between Robert Redfield (Redfield 1930) and Oscar Lewis (Lewis 1951). Both authors described the village community of Tepoztlán, in Mexico, but emphasized different aspects of village life. Redfield’s Tepoztlán was harmonious and community-oriented, while Lewis’ Tepoztlán was individualistic and full of conflict. After reading the two accounts, one is left wondering if the difference was due to the time lapse between the two studies, to accuracy of the methods or to the theoretical lenses used by the two researchers.

In southeast Asia, Scott (1976) makes a point similar to Kropotkin’s when he reports on peasant cooperative social arrangements based on a subsistence ethic that

worked not as a product of altruism, but of necessity. These arrangements were enforced by gossip and other redistributive mechanisms that forced patrons to provide peasants with food security. However, the increasing presence of the state reduced the influence of the moral economy on peasant behavior. Scott (1976) agrees with Kropotkin: paternalism, lower dependence on village institutions, repression of local institutions, and expropriation of communal land, all contributed to create a rational peasant, an individual increasingly involved in profit maximizing behavior.

Conversely, Popkin (1979) writes in response to Scott's *Moral Economy* (1976). As Scott did, Popkin (1979) focused on Southeast Asia (Vietnam), but instead of explaining lack of cooperation as a result of the influence of the state, the approach offered by Popkin focuses on factors that make mutually beneficial coordinated action among peasants difficult. To Popkin, whenever collective work can produce collective goods, "individuals may calculate that they are better off not contributing" because an individual can benefit from many collective projects whether or not he or she contributes (1979:24).

These free riders may appear whenever they cannot be excluded from the collective good. To Popkin, peasants were rational self-interested maximizers long before the state. According to Popkin (1979:25) it "is difficult under the best circumstances to organize peasants to provide collective goods." Each individual calculates that it is better not to contribute to the collective project and hopes that others will behave differently.

However, contrarily to what Popkin believed he did, Scott also argued that a particular rationality explained peasant behavior: it was extreme poverty that made peasants risk-averse and made them use and accept the subsistence ethics. The problem

with Scott's argument is not a lack of peasant rationality (to Scott, it is *rational* for peasants to prioritize food security and enforce the subsistence ethics), but that

- He fails to deal with the *free-rider problem*
- He sees paternalistic “protective” institutions in peasant villages as the product of peasant choice and not of domination (there could be other institutions that could be as effective in protecting peasants with *equality* instead of *domination*, but Scott's peasants seem to have failed to develop them)

Democratic, egalitarian institutions and forms of action are a goal of participatory practice, but face the problem of collective action described by Popkin. From an economic viewpoint, there are three problems with participation, as follows:

- Its opportunity costs
- Future benefits are discounted
- Risk of failure.

First, participation in PRA meetings often carries with it material costs (e.g., missed economic opportunities, such as a work-day in their crop field or fishing). This opportunity cost aspect includes part of the logistic proposition (i.e., the opportunity costs of PRA meetings are higher if they are at inconvenient dates, times and locations).

Second, the benefits from participation (such as an Extractive Reserve) may take time to be produced, and participants may discount their future value in favor of present needs. Thus, the opportunity costs of participation feel even higher, compared to its benefits, than they are, and if peasants can obtain benefits from a PRA meeting without contributing, they will.

Conversely, participation can be mobilized by the offer of present benefits, such as food and transportation to the meeting place (logistics, again), in the case of poor populations, which one cannot enjoy without participating, and whose value is not

discounted. Such benefits could at least compensate the opportunity costs of participation.

However, offering present benefits was not always justified or viable in Itacaré. Food was offered only in rural areas, where meetings took the whole day, so as not to create a custom that would increase the cost of participatory activities in the future. Food, transportation and lodging were offered to a few representatives of each community later in the PRA process, when they interacted to produce a joint view of the problems faced by the fishers of Itacaré.

Despite the discounting problem, future benefits can still attract participation if participants cannot free-ride. Any development practitioner knows that the offer of credit or money almost always mobilizes participation, even when it will come in the future, if peasants cannot free-ride (i.e., if receiving the benefit depends on their presence in the meetings). In Itacaré, some fishers also pointed that out: “tell the people that the meeting is for credit to buy boats to see if they will not come! It’s going to be a crowd!” But that was not the case; we were working towards an extractive reserve, a collective good that fishers could enjoy without individual participation in those first meetings, even though collective participation was still important. Only if resource use rights to the Reserve depended on individual fishers’ participation in the meetings (to avoid free-riding), would an additional material incentive be created for participation.

Still, participation would be dependent on the perceived risk of the action. The risk factor predicts that fishers participate more if they believe that the initiative will be successful (credibility). In the case of an extractive reserve, risk perception depends on the fishers’ trust in government agencies, NGOs and community leaders involved in the

process. The higher the risk, the greater is the tendency to free-ride. Opportunity costs, discounting, risk and, therefore, free-riding could indeed be playing a part in the difficulty to mobilize the fishers of Itacaré. I discuss this proposition based on the results of TG's actions, and on the views expressed by fishers in informal conversations and meetings discussing participation problems in Itacaré. In Chapter 5, I also discuss the fishers' arrangements cooperating in the fishing activity, and how these arrangements could influence perspective on participation.

Political aspects (EP4): Participation is a political currency and fishers attend meetings strategically

It is often forgotten that when PRA is initiated it is not in a social vacuum. In order to understand why participation is sometimes difficult to mobilize, I propose that we look at it as a multidimensional behavior. Let us accept the previous proposition, that if people can free-ride on the benefits of a collective project and avoid the costs of participating, they probably will. Still, in addition to material costs and benefits, participation has extensions in the political, moral, emotional and informational dimensions, where free-riding is often more difficult (the present explanatory proposition deals with the political dimension, while the next one deals with the last three dimensions of participation).

Participation can be a way to show political support to an initiative, or to influence it in a certain direction, and lack of participation can be a way to show resistance. According to Scott (1989), peasants' resistance is a form of political action that is typically nonconfrontational and anonymous, and can be either material or ideological. Examples of "everyday forms of resistance" are poaching, foot dragging, evading written records, refusal to pay taxes, supplying lower quality products, desertion,

sabotage, dissimulation, and gossip. In Itacaré, when some of the meetings for Extractive Reserve failed, the fishers involved in promoting the meetings said that *the community was telling them* that it did not want the Reserve by not participating. Ironically, this implies that *even when peasants choose not to participate, they may indeed be participating...*

Why was the community resisting the Extractive Reserve and the PRA process?

Several alternative political explanations are possible, such as³

- Fishers predicted losses with the Reserve and did not want to legitimize it
- Fishers did not trust the PRA team and did not want to legitimize it in a leadership position
- Fishers were allied with people opposed to the Reserve or to the PRA team.

In Itacaré, the PRA process and the Extractive Reserve proposal were inevitably linked, because the same people promoting the PRA (the Task Group and I) were also promoting the PRA, and PRA was a strategy to promote the Extractive Reserve among the fishers. Resistance through withdrawal of participation (or of attendance) at the PRA meetings could have been either against the Extractive Reserve or the PRA process itself. However, although PRA had the predetermined goal of creating the Extractive Reserve in Itacaré, there was great room for decision making by the participants in the Reserve proposal. The Extractive Reserve provided a legal framework that allowed exclusion of outsiders and decision making by locals, but the resource use rules and almost every other aspect of the Reserve were defined by the fishers of Itacaré. There was little chance that local fishers would loose with the Reserve, but there were misunderstandings.

³ Task Group members and I gathered these explanations in our interactions with the fishing communities of Itacaré, where some fishers expressed their concerns and opposition to the creation of the Marine Extractive Reserve.

If, on the one hand, nonparticipation of some people may mean resistance, on the other hand, some people may participate to acquire or maintain political influence and leadership. The president of a community association, for example, is likely to lose face and be criticized if s/he does not attend meetings supported by the community. By the same token, someone who aspires to political leadership may come to a meeting to increase his/her *political capital*, that is, the willingness of other people to support him/her in the local political game. Still further, information about the meetings may be important later, as a way to resist the meetings by gossip or planning of strategic behavior.

Trust in the PRA team may be important to avoid resistance. When PRA facilitators approach the community, to avoid the opposition or even legal problems, they often try to obtain explicit or implicit permission from authorities and leaders. If the relationship between the community and its leaders is not harmonious, and is permeated by resistance and discredit, the outside team may face great difficulty to balance between a strategy of avoiding conflicts with community leaders and local authorities, and one that strives to gain community trust and promote community empowerment. Even the term “community” becomes problematic because communities are often made up of factions with opposite interests, and initial alliances established between outsiders and locals may shape the relationship between the community and the PRA team for the rest of the work.

Another aspect is that *meeting locations have political meaning and affect participation*. For example, some community sectors may not come to meetings in certain places, just because *locations may represent their opponents in local politics*. Often,

meetings are planned in places that are convenient to facilitators or local leaders, but are politically compromised. For example, the association's leaders planned my first PRA meeting in an extractive reserve in Rondônia, Brazil, in the largest house in the community because it could accommodate more than 30 people and it was close to the unpaved road that gave access to the reserve, so that we and association leaders could get there easily. It was a nice meeting place, but later we learned that it belonged to a middleman who was perceived as an exploiter of the community. Local people came, but were careful with their words. The middleman became involved in the PRA meetings and affected the rest of the process with his dominance. Only later was the community able to neutralize and overcome his influence.

In addition, participants come to the meetings with their reputations, alliances, antagonisms and resentments. Power relations influence their participation, which can be particularly influential in the case of gender (Goebel 1998; Guijt and Sha 1998b), but extend also to patron-client and racial relations, among others. Participants are not blank sheets over which PRA can write a new participatory history, and dealing with such problems is part of a long-term participatory process.

Multidimensional costs and benefits (EP5): Attendance at meetings depends on the participant's consideration of benefits and costs in multiple dimensions

In addition to the material and political dimensions, discussed above, participation also has moral, emotional and informational dimensions. In the moral dimension, participation may be “wrong” or “right” and it may be prescribed in a particular way, all of which will influence how much people participate. People may feel compelled to participate by their moral values, or simply by peer pressure; or they may feel that participating in a way that challenges authority is “wrong.” These rules need not be

inflexible. Some people say that rules are made to be broken; that is, there are justifications for disobedience.

In the context of participation and collective action, a series of beliefs can develop to explain why the community often fails, and to justify one's lack of participation. The free-rider myth, for example, is the belief that if one participates, one will be taken advantage of, either by the leader of the collective effort or by those who did not participate, but who will benefit anyway. According to this myth almost everyone (but one's self) is self-interested, and leaders are out there to take advantage of their communities. In addition, community views may be that when people participate, they are actually losing, because they are giving for free what they could have exchanged for other benefits from leaders and people who do not participate. The perception that community resources are limited and that any progress of one individual results in loss for other villagers (which is also reinforced by increased competition over natural resources) was described by George Foster (1961) and became known as the notion of the "limited good." In the participation context, since someone gains without contributing, and resources are limited in the community, one who is contributing is probably losing. This can be an important justification for not participating.

In the emotional dimension, different people find different forms of emotional satisfaction from participation. Often peasants go to community meetings to see their *compadres* or friends, and sometimes they go in search of romance or of a soccer game, as I witnessed several times in different communities. In addition, they are more likely to attend meetings facilitated by people that they like. Some people (but not all) enjoy speaking in a meeting, expressing their opinions, or learning new things. Participatory

rural appraisal meetings try to be fun (although sometimes they involve hard analytical work), and give opportunities for self-expression and learning. In this dissertation, I discuss how different emotionally rewarding elements in PRA created additional elements for participation, and how traditional meetings lacked them and often created emotional disincentives.

This is also true in the informational dimension. For example, it is very common that peasants go to meetings seeking information. For people with limited access to information, meetings may be worthwhile just for the sake of the information that is exchanged there. First, information often is not well-distributed in the community. There are people that know more about the past, about fishing spots, about hunting, about the situation of the community association. Community meetings, and particularly PRA meetings, are important occasions to obtain such information.

In addition, information is interpreted through frameworks or discourses, which organize perception. Producing discourses demands considerable intellectual effort and resources and peasants are often dependent on the elite for their discourses, and often use discourses that contribute to their domination.

Participatory rural appraisal meetings can be occasions when alternative discourses are developed, as information about peasant reality is organized in light of both locals' and outsiders' experiences and viewpoints. The empowerment feeling that such discourses may bring to participants can create incentives for further participation. Conversely, if people want to undermine the PRA process, participating may be important to obtain crucial information to do that. All these aspects were observed as PRA meetings were carried out in Itacaré.

Urban vs. rural (EP6): Attracting participation in urban areas is more difficult than in rural areas

As pointed out above, not all the benefits of participation can be obtained by free-riding. This proposition derives from the validity of the last three propositions described above.

For example, emotional benefits of the meetings can only be obtained through participation, and resistance (nonparticipation) in the political dimension has to be compared to the lost opportunity to enjoy emotional benefits. If one does not participate, informational benefits of a community meeting can only partially be obtained, as second-hand information from people that did attend the meeting.

In addition, peasant morals usually prescribe participation and mutual help, although the way in which it should happen varies. Therefore, for a rural community, with limited social and information opportunities, and a pro-participation moral, resistant nonparticipation is more costly than in urban areas.

In urban areas, resistance is more viable, because people have other social and informational opportunities, and because their participation (or lack of it) is less visible and they are less dependent on each other (making moral coercion less likely). Moreover, in order to happen, participation in urban areas has to present lower material costs. Therefore, *attracting participation in urban areas should be more difficult than in rural areas.*

This dissertation compares the difficulty and problems of promoting participation in four urban and three rural fishing communities of Itacaré, and in one district where rural residents came to town to participate with urban residents.

Previous experience and credibility (EP7): Previous negative community experience with projects and outside assistance reduces credibility of the participatory process and participation in the PRA meetings

As pointed out above, the multidimensional view of participation suggests that rural communities participate more readily than urban communities. However, an additional aspect makes this difference even stronger: urban communities are often more experienced with community projects and government assistance than are rural communities. One explanatory proposition derived from this is that the more experienced the community with projects and outside assistance, the lower the credibility of the participatory process; participation in the PRA meetings becomes more difficult.

The experience of peasants and fishers with collective action, community projects and political organization is often negative. More often than not, collective action and community projects have failed, and political leaders have been shown to be corrupt, selfish or simply ineffective. The experience with government help is commonly even worse. If the previous experience was negative, *the more experienced in community projects, political organization and government assistance, the more suspicious of them the community becomes.*

Other factors, such as the paternalistic influence of the state and lower dependence on village institutions, the erosion of institutions for natural resource management and greater pressure on limited resources (Kropotkin 1972; Scott 1976), also contribute to free-rider behavior.

This explanatory proposition was tested in the promotion of PRA in urban communities with and without previous project experience, and a comparison of those with the rural communities where projects were not carried out, and where government assistance was incipient.

Credibility of the PRA team (EP8): The credibility of the PRA team and its members influences participation in the meetings

In PRA, the outside team is supposed to be the catalyst of community action, but locals can take part, too. The credibility of the team and its members may affect participation. Several factors may influence the credibility of the outside members of the PRA team, from the organizations to which they declare affiliation, to their race, gender, class, or behavior. In the case of insiders, in addition to these aspects, the people involved in the PRA team may have popularity problems or suspicious interests. Conversely, they may help the team gain acceptance if they know and are trusted by their community. However, even when locals are trusted by the community, they may cease to be so, as their very involvement in a project may make them suspicious. Other members of the community might wonder why some locals become part of the PRA team.

The free-rider myth combined with the notion of limited good generate antagonism towards local politicians, community leaders, local people involved in the PRA and anyone who seems to be improving their situation. However, a PRA team composed exclusively of outsiders also faces similar obstacles: often, in more experienced communities, outsiders have (or appeared to have) been shown to take advantage of locals. Community experience with outsiders is consistent with its experience with insiders, or worse. Again, we can predict that PRA finds it most difficult to attract participation in communities that are more experienced with “bad” development, failed projects and political manipulation.

In addition, although PRA outside facilitators may try to maintain neutrality over local issues and problems, they may experience further trust problems. In the beginning, community members may try to pull PRA facilitators to their side of issues. However,

when outsiders spend more time in the community, as influence attempts fail because outsiders continue to demonstrate neutrality, local people may create their own interpretation about the outsiders' position. By trying to be neutral, outsiders may face rejection from all the conflicting parties, which may be negative to the PRA process, reducing participation. What happens when PRA practitioners spend more time (longer than the usual one to two weeks) in the community? What are the attitudes of the community towards the outsider facilitators? Can they really mediate conflicts? How neutral can they be? At some point, PRA outside facilitators may have to take sides.

The free-rider myth and the notion of limited good are discussed in light of people's behavior and expressed interpretation of the behaviors of others in Itacaré. Even though these myths can reduce the credibility of the PRA team, its image can be improved if special strategies are adopted. In Itacaré, the credibility of the PRA team proposition is action-tested by an active public image management strategy adopted by the TG to neutralize gossip against it. The neutrality aspect is discussed from my personal experience in Itacaré.

Research Question 2: What Factors Influence Participation by Local People as Leaders in the PRA Team?

Leadership is essential to community collective action and empowerment. However, established leaders do not always work in the best interest of their communities. Forman (1966; 1970) describes how better educated and wealthier fishermen in a fishing village in Northeastern Brazil tried to place themselves as intermediaries between peasant fishermen and the agricultural elite in a fishing community in Northeastern Brazil. Acting as intermediaries, they were able to obtain political favors from the ruling political parties and used those favors to maintain and

compensate the ties that they had with relatives, who enjoyed positions and benefits from their relationship with the intermediaries (nepotism). These ties allow that intermediaries occupy a leadership position, even though they are often socially rejected or ostracized by the community, and even by the elite they serve.

Intermediaries, such as those described by Forman, are likely to exist in all fishing communities. If they do not oppose the PRA process, the types of intermediaries described by Forman are the most likely people to join the process, to continue their role, this time mediating the relationship between the outsiders who are members of the PRA team, and their community. Other community members know and expect this, and become suspicious not only of the intentions of the intermediaries, but also of the intentions of anyone who tries to play a leadership role in the community.

To be effective in promoting change in the community, and not reinforce the current power structure, a PRA process needs to include strategies to select and empower people who are *sincerely interested* in their community *and avoid traditional intermediaries*. Avoiding intermediaries not only contributes to social change but also reduces suspicions towards the PRA process, even though new leaders may look suspicious just because they are trying to occupy a similar position as that of intermediaries.

However, we have to be careful not to be naïve about the notion of “people who are sincerely interested in their communities”; it is not exactly that purely altruistic, honest individuals are empowered against selfish and corrupt people. Reality is not black-or-white, and grey is much more common. In this dissertation, altruistic or sincere leaders are people that, despite their own agendas, are bound by internalized moral norms and

have emotional reward preferences (values) that lead them to avoid using their leadership position primarily for their personal benefit, but instead, make them use the leadership position to benefit the majority of their community, or the poorest, and so on. In addition, altruistic leaders can even be considered those for whom community rewards (honors, etc.) for altruistic behavior are important, and provide them higher status. Their personal interests may sometimes bias their evaluation of the community interest but, once aware of this, altruistic leaders are able to correct themselves.

However, there are some problems with the strategy to promote social change by empowering sincere, altruistic leaders. It is practically difficult (and ethically questionable) to recognize and choose who are the sincere leaders. Democratic election of local PRA team members by the community may or may not solve the problem of finding sincere leaders in the community, but the election process itself may have to be an external intervention whose rules influence the likelihood of who gets elected. Anyway, PRA facilitators interfere in the power relations within the community, with ethical implications. In addition, intermediaries or established leaders may oppose the PRA once they recognize that it represents empowerment of new competitors in the local political game. However, agents trying to promote community development, community organizing or community-based conservation may have to make these tough decisions. Participatory rural appraisal is always a political activity, and hesitation to make choices may lead the practitioner to benefit the already powerful.

When PRA is carried out, often a team of outsiders visits a community, and facilitates meetings and “participatory research tools.” However, locals can be involved

as facilitators and become part of the PRA team, which also can be a strategy to promote their empowerment and leadership.

Local groups of leaders may participate more or less, develop enthusiasm or skepticism, persist or desist. What factors influence participation by local people as leaders in a PRA team?⁴ The participation of local volunteers in the Task Group for the Creation of the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré varied throughout the PRA process, sometimes exceeding ten people, and other times reduced to two to three people. What factors explained such variation? Trying to solve the problem, remaining TG members and I identified a series of explanatory propositions:

Pace and material opportunity costs (EP9): people have to make a living and cannot be exclusively involved in PRA (or leadership) voluntary activities.

Community members have to make a living and cannot be exclusively involved in PRA for too long. Participatory rural appraisal activities compete in time and resources with other activities (such as farming, fishing, working for a job, etc.). If locals become part of the PRA team, the demand on their time is even greater: in addition to the PRA activities that involve everybody else, they may need to participate in PRA training, preparation of PRA meetings (finding a location, providing food and lodging, advertising, buying materials, obtaining support, contacting local leaders, etc.), and systematization of the information (mainly writing reports). In addition, PRA raises community demands, and the local people in the PRA team may become the main reference for supporting the community in the efforts to satisfy such demands.

⁴ The same factors may affect the locals' willingness to become community leaders, and develop activism for some collective objective such as community organizing and empowerment

If the pace at which PRA is carried out is too fast, the opportunity costs may be too high for local PRA team members to afford. If they have to do all the PRA preparations and systematization activities, the costs can be even higher. As the costs increase, the participation of those local team members who cannot afford them decreases. This proposition suggests three possible solutions, which also serve to test it:

- To reduce the pace of PRA
- To compensate locals for the time they spend in PRA
- To have outsiders doing part of the preparation and systematization activities

This proposition was forwarded by two people in the TG, those who first tried facilitating PRA, to explain why other people were not participating so much, and why they themselves were not very enthusiastic about facilitating PRA.

Multidimensional costs and benefits (EP10): a) participation in the local PRA team is inversely related to material, political, moral and emotional costs of leadership; and b) the intensity of this relationship depends on individual interpretations.

However, becoming a local leader in the PRA team involves not only material costs and benefits, but also political, moral, emotional, and informational costs and benefits. When outside PRA practitioners choose strategies that favor equality in the community, with the empowerment of new, altruistic leaders in opposition to traditional intermediaries, these intermediaries are likely to actively oppose or, if they do not have authority, resist.

Although Scott (1989) defined resistance as a political strategy of lowers against uppers, uppers can use the same strategy, often more effectively than lowers, by refusing to cooperate and by gossiping. In fishing communities, uppers can more effectively use gossip because they are often the source of information for lowers; they are supposed to know more, and use this to manipulate the community in the direction they want.

Entering a community with a PRA process may require a balanced strategy to avoid too

much opposition from intermediaries but this, again, has ethical implications. I describe and discuss the effects of such a strategy in Itacaré.

If local people who are sincerely interested in their communities join the PRA team, it may be difficult for them to maintain their participation because, as new people acquire political leadership, intermediaries start to fear their competition for political support and resist them, as pointed out above, by spreading gossip, by sabotaging the participatory process, or by active opposition. Because of the free-rider myth and the notion of limited good, the gossip denigrating volunteers that become involved in PRA becomes credible, even if not true, resulting in political, moral and emotional costs to the local PRA team members. That is, even if PRA costs are reduced by the strategies described in EP9, the problems with participation of local leaders in the PRA team persist. If the volunteers are not after personal material gain, they are likely to lose enthusiasm as they face an increase in personal attacks to their reputation or as they seem to lose friends. In order to maintain their motivation, they have to control their own image or interpret the situation in a favorable light. As pointed out above, the effects of this control are discussed in this dissertation.

Cyclical fatigue of the group (EP11): after enduring the costs of leadership, the group may need a break before becoming more active again.

If the multidimensional costs of PRA activities are too high, a possible consequence is that local PRA team members participate in cycles of enthusiasm and fatigue: they dedicate themselves to PRA or leadership activities up to the point they can afford, and then reduce their activities to recover from the costs of leadership. During their break from leadership activities, these leaders become less visible and not so much a

target of gossip and resistance by traditional leaders. They try to rebuild their moral and emotional capital, and often their political capital.

In Itacaré, TG members presented this proposition with the phrase “*o pessoal tá cansado*” (the folks are tired). After many months of hard work previous to the PRA, the additional costs presented by this new activity were too high. Some people said they needed a break before resuming their participation in the TG.

Credibility of the group (EP12): participation in the local PRA team depends on whether the objectives of the group are seen as likely or possible.

The internal credibility of the group, that is, whether the group’s objectives are seen as likely or possible, may also affect participation. This proposition implies that participation in the local PRA team is directly related to responses from the government and NGOs that increase the credibility of the local PRA team. The likelihood that individual goals can also be attained by the participation in the PRA team may also affect how much locals participate. Participation is not only a matter of balancing multidimensional costs and benefits in the present, but also of investing in the present, expecting benefits in the future.

If people are investing in the local PRA team considering its risks, a different logic is established. When risks are considered low, people who have invested more material, political, moral, emotional and informational resources become more committed to the group, and people who have invested less are more likely to leave the group when its credibility goes down or internal problems happen. If risks are still considered high (credibility is low) when some benefits are attained, people may leave the group while they are winning, just like a gambler might leave a game when he starts to win after a period of losses, to guarantee that he will at least break even at the end. This could

explain puzzling situations when participation goes down just when some victory is achieved.

Finally, in addition to the internal credibility of the local PRA team to achieve collective goals, participation may be affected by the group's credibility to attend individual interests. Group and individual interests are not always in agreement; sometimes they are in opposition, as when a leader trying to maintain his/her leadership ends up creating internal conflict and reducing participation. The same thing can happen between group interests and community interests; for example, while the PRA team tries to monopolize the new role of community facilitators, they may limit the community's opportunities for development and political organization following other ways.

Outsider facilitators vs. insiders (EP13): PRA technical needs preserve decisive power in the hands of outsiders; this may frustrate local people in search of empowerment, reduce their participation or create internal friction

In some cases, as local people involved in PRA rise as community leaders, they may feel limited by the PRA approach. The use of the PRA tools requires knowledge, skills and training that community members may have difficulty mastering. This preserves decisive power in the hands of outsiders and empowers some local people for whom mastering this new language is easier.

Participatory rural appraisal carries with it a potential for stratification that is in contradiction with its participatory rhetoric. For this reason, some local people may stop participating in the local PRA team or, in the case of Itacaré, in the Task Group. This potential for conflict may also create internal friction in the PRA team and even resistance against the PRA approach.

Insiders vs. insiders (EP14): internal friction may decrease the participation of people who are less involved, committed or empowered in the group.

Power struggles may create conflicts among insiders. Some locals may be more able (or less scrupulous) about manipulating the rest of the group, or may control trust of outside sources of support, and use these advantages to maintain control over the group. This can frustrate some members with similar aspirations, particularly if the internal group discourse is one of equality. Disappointed members who are less involved, committed or empowered may just leave the group (to them, the credibility of the group goes down).

Theoretical, Methodological and Practical Significance of this Research

Traditional anthropology looks at cultural systems, first asking a descriptive “what” question and—in some theoretical schools—probing an additional “why” question. In addition to these, I also asked “how to” questions, which are implicit in the research questions described above: *how to promote participation and collective action? How to promote the creation of extractive reserves with greater community participation and empowerment? How to make PRA more effective?* Asking “how to” questions involves some methodological changes in the research process because we do not know *how to* until we *try to* and succeed (failure just teaches us that we were wrong, that is, *how not to do things*; that is, we learn by making mistakes, but we learn even more when we get it right). Because of this, I adopted *action research*, a research methodology that allows for successive attempts and their participatory evaluation. Furthermore, action research allows not only generation of knowledge by the researcher but also learning by the participants, which was necessary to achieve the empowerment of the fishers of Itacaré.

Anthropological research, through action research methodology, participatory design of strategies, and participatory rural appraisal (PRA) were used to achieve desired participation and empowerment results. I argue that the new, PRA-based approach for extractive reserve creation emerging from this research process is more effective and efficient in promoting community empowerment and generating the required documents for the creation of a reserve than the conventional approach normally used by the Brazilian government.

Therefore, the significance of this research involves practical, theoretical and methodological aspects. The research

- Supported the creation process of the Marine Extractive Reserve in Itacaré, which will benefit an estimated population of 400 fishing families
- Provides an evaluation of an approach to extractive reserve creation that is more participatory than the one practiced until now in Brazil, and that can be used in other development and conservation contexts where participation and empowerment is a main concern
- Provides theoretical insights to explain the effects of PRA
- Makes an innovative use of action research and action science concepts, with a strong empirical focus, which enabled its engagement with the resolution of practical problems in the studied communities and the generation of valid, “actionable” knowledge
- Documents a process of extractive reserve creation, how it worked in the field, how community support for it was built, its effects in the political organization of an extractive community and the reactions of other sectors. Despite much writing on the extractive reserves and the great number of reserves created in the last 12 years, this has been underdocumented.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation started with the present Introduction, where I discussed the importance of studying PRA, and the factors that influence community participation, defining research questions and explanatory propositions. In Chapter 2, the foundations of action research, the general methodological approach taken in this research, are discussed. Chapter 3 discusses research design, how PRA was applied, and the methods

used in the research, including data collection and the testing of explanatory propositions, through participatory action.

Chapter 4 presents and discusses the history of Itacaré and its fishers, providing the social and historic context for the research. Chapter 5 discusses individualism in the fishing activity, that is, whether fishers are individualistic and if their activities really lead them to be so. Chapter 6 discusses the origins of the Task Group in Itacaré and how fishers came to be empowered in the local movement for the creation of the Extractive Reserve. Chapter 7 deals with Research Question 1; *what factors influenced fishers' participation in the PRA meetings?* I discuss the problems the TG and I faced trying to mobilize participation of the fishers in the meetings, the explanatory propositions for the problems, and the actions trying to solve the problems, which tested the explanatory propositions. Chapter 8 discusses Research Question 2; *what factors influenced participation by local people as leaders in the PRA team?* The TG had problems maintaining participation of its own members. The attempts to solve these problems served to test the explanatory propositions. Finally, Chapter 9 summarizes the findings and concludes the dissertation. In order to avoid identification of people and organizations when controversial information is presented and discussed, I often avoided giving their names or used pseudonyms.

CHAPTER 2 METHODOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES: AN INTRODUCTION TO ACTION RESEARCH

In this dissertation research, I have been committed not only to its scientific results but also to the empowerment of the fishers of Itacaré and the creation of their Marine Extractive Reserve. I needed a methodology that could generate both reliable research results and local action, and found it in “action research.” Action research (AR) comprises a broad range of approaches and methods. It is not just a methodology. It is also an ideology of research. Among many modalities of AR, participatory rural appraisal (PRA) has received great recognition in recent years and is one of the focuses of this dissertation. Nevertheless, in this dissertation, while the PRA diagnosis process provided data about the community, *AR was used to research PRA itself*.

Most times, action researchers express their commitment to social change, participation and empowerment. Action research’s emphasis on action or on research varies from one extreme, where action is the most important aspect and knowledge generation is secondary, to another, where knowledge is the main aspect and action is secondary (Dick 1993). Participatory learning may be counted as “action” or “research,” depending on the emphasis of the researcher. In this dissertation, action research was intended to allow *generation of knowledge while action was taking place*, and to guide action to successful results.

Main Characteristics of Action Research

Although there are great variations among the several schools of action research and their specific applications, the main characteristics of action research are the following:

Participatory and collaborative. Action research is normally participatory and collaborative, that is, a group of people, the beneficiaries of the research, participate in the definition of the problem and methods, in data gathering and analysis, and in elaborating conclusions. To Friedman (2001) action research involves the creation of “communities of inquiry” within “communities of practice,” that is, the involvement of practitioners in the enquiry about their practices and resolution of practical problems.

Action as testing. Although sometimes the label “action research” incorporates research that is participatory but does not produce action, action is often the means of verification of interpretations generated with local groups (see discussion below). In fact, action can be a testing strategy for explanatory propositions even when the research is not participatory. That is, although it would probably not be labeled “action research,” one can do *action-based* research by him/herself. Still, group processes are richer and more interesting.

Emancipatory. Action research is frequently viewed as a method to produce “emancipatory knowledge” (Reason and Bradbury 2001). This is done by the recognition of local views, by the empowering of local voices, by making participants realize their potential, by “conscientização” (or consciousness raising, Freire 1970). This feature of action research reflects the political stand taken by many practitioners, but researchers must be careful that it does not interfere with the production of *valid* knowledge.

Learning. From the above discussion, we see that action research is a research strategy with action-based verification procedures. Bridging the gap between research and practice and creating communities of enquiry, action research allows participants to learn about their realities. This learning may (and should) lead to emancipation. However, we must consider the difference between a participatory learning process intended for research (to know the unknown), and a process intended to teach (to explain the known to people who do not know). Many cases of “action research” may fall in the latter type, while this dissertation is concerned with the former type.

Action. Producing collective action to transform social realities is part of the political agenda of most action researchers. However, the same distinction made above for learning should be made here for acting. There is a difference between action carried out to change social reality (mobilization, empowerment) and action carried out to verify interpretations of reality (research). Action in many action research interventions is the former type. However, although that is not always the case, an action can be of both types at the same time (as in this dissertation). Thus, we must distinguish between a pedagogic action research (learning the known; mobilizing action) and investigative action research (learning the unknown; using action to test interpretations of reality).

Epistemology for an “Investigative” Action Research: Discovery and Learning

Action should be the core of action research. However, much “action research” does not integrate action as a research strategy, instead using just participatory discussion and sharing of people’s current knowledge to investigate reality. Theories created in such discussions have not been subjected to test until they are put into practice. According to Friedman (2001), testing in action research relates to Popper’s (1959) idea of “falsifiability” (Argyris, 1993: 284, cited by Friedman 2001) in which it is assumed that

all knowledge of reality is partial and indeterminate. “Theories of practice can never be ‘proven’, but they can be maintained as long as they withstand disconfirmation” (Friedman 2001:162). Participants have to formulate their claims in ways that they are open to be proven wrong. In action research, discovering one’s errors is more important than winning a debate (Friedman 2001).

Thus action research is concerned with uncovering reality because it is concerned with changing it. Although there are idealist action researchers, social change objectives of action researchers imply a material world “out there” (an objective reality) that is being changed. However, while no one can claim an ultimate unmediated knowledge of reality, “when people disagree about their interpretations of a situation, they can engage in the process of jointly testing their reality images” (Friedman 2001:162). And testing is done through action.

To Greenwood (1998), the proof that a theory is correct or valuable is if the action planned based on such a theory achieves appropriate results or changes. To Bill Torbet (quoted in Reason and Bradbury 2001:1)

knowledge is always gained through action and for action. From this starting point, to question the validity of social knowledge is to question, not how to develop a reflective science about action, but how to develop genuinely well-informed action—how to conduct an action science.

Friedman (2001) criticizes both mainstream positivist social science and phenomenological and interpretive research. On the one hand, he argues that positivist science often produces knowledge of limited use to practitioners because it requires completeness and precision, observation of causal relations under controlled conditions, and maintenance of distance as safeguard for objectivity. It focuses on means rather than on ends. “Thus, the rules that produce valid positivist explanations of social problems

cannot produce the knowledge needed to do something about them. Applied science fails to bridge this gap because it functions according to the same positivist rules and standards as basic science” (Friedman 2001:160).

First, while positivist mainstream social research often has robust testing procedures, many times those tests are limited to the verification of *association* between variables. Because social research (including anthropological research, and maybe with the exception of some psychological research) seldom involves action and manipulation of independent variables to verify their effect on dependent variables, evidence of causal relationships is often given just by the association and the theory that the tests are supposed to be verifying. Second, once causal relationships are verified, anthropological research rarely tests solutions for the problems found.

On the other hand, Friedman (2001, citing Argyris et al., 1985: 26-8) criticizes phenomenological and interpretive research, pointing out that it has no technical or rational way of coming to agreement over the validity of different interpretations. “Action requires that people make choices among different interpretations of the same particular situation” (Friedman 2001:160). To solve the problems present in both positivist and phenomenological/interpretive approaches, “action science” (a type of action research) builds “theories which explain social phenomena, inform practice, and adhere to the fundamental criteria of a science” (Friedman 2001:160).

Most social research is not involved in promoting change, although explaining it is at the heart of social theory. In fact, the most basic anthropological research technique, participant observation, promotes noninterference as the way to know reality as it is. Interference is often seen as negative. However, some sort of change is likely to reveal

aspects of social reality that would otherwise be hidden from the eyes of the participant observer⁵. Social reality reacts when we shake it so that we can harvest the fruits of research. When we intervene is when the social structure and power relations show themselves. Changing (or co-creating) and knowing the social reality come together.

The most robust tests of validity are those that can be used to predict about universes that do not, as yet, exist. It is such tests that Lewin focused upon when he advised that, if social scientists truly wish to understand certain phenomena, they should try to change them... Creating, not predicting, is the most robust test of validity-actionability. (Argyris 1997)

Argyris (1997) also argues that causality should be central to action research, and makes a critique of the field:

In examining the literature... it is clear that there exists agreement that action research is intended to explain problems and, in many cases, attempt to solve them, through the use of collaboration and participation. [It seems that] the majority of the contributors do not focus explicitly on causality and how it is to be established. Indeed, there is a significant proportion who claims that it is not possible or necessary to make causal claims. Many of those typically decry positivism as being out of date and irrelevant. The same group substitutes a more humanistic approach, subjective, postmodern perspective... Moreover, taking the position that causality is not relevant or testable is itself a causal claim. How can those who decry causality make arguments about more relevant ways to explain phenomena that are, themselves, based on causal reasoning? (Argyris 1997)

Politics of Action Research

The purpose of action research is not to produce academic theories based on action; nor is it to produce theories about action; nor is it to produce theoretical or empirical knowledge that can be applied in action; it is to liberate the human body, mind and spirit in the search for a better, freer world (Reason and Bradbury 2001).

It is common to regard the main distinction of action research from other research paradigms as its politically-oriented character, aimed at freeing the poor and the

⁵ When I was a kid, growing up on a farm in Brazil, my way to assess the *pitanga* berries that were ripe and ready to be harvested was to shake the tree; the ones that fell were ripe and sweet (I also looked at their color). I always think of that when promoting change and “harvesting the fruits” of action research.

oppressed. Action researchers often express their commitment to social change and the liberation of "oppressed groups," to creating a better world. I share the same commitment, but in this section, discuss the dangers of political engagement and how this should be addressed in action research.

Science and academic work have had positive and negative impacts on different groups; thus, what we say in our research reports, what topics we investigate, the methods we choose and the results we obtain are unavoidably political. Foucault (1978) has pointed out that knowledge is power; therefore, any knowledge-generating activity is a political activity, or has political consequences. What we know shapes our behavior, and our research may result in policy and public opinion changes that may affect innumerable people. Knowledge, in the form of technology, may represent new production alternatives that allocate wealth in a different way, empowering some groups and disempowering others. Knowledge that is empowering to a particular group may provide an interpretation of reality that gives incentives for collective action, or that substantiates arguments for favorable policies, for example.

However, if research results are "wrong," that is, if they misrepresent the real potential for empowerment of that particular group, paradoxically the results may be disempowering for the group. The group, "liberated" by action research, may fail, sometimes incurring in terrible losses. This is why I defend the idea that, although researchers should be clear about their political and ethical commitments, politics should not blur the sharp lenses potentially offered by action research, in particular, and science in general.

Action research can and should be used to know what reality is, or better said, to create explanatory models of reality to effectively guide action that results in the desired objectives of the groups involved. Moreover, although I think that some research methodologies (such as action research) are better suited to promote liberation of the oppressed and generate emancipatory knowledge, other research paradigms, even positivism, can also be used to empower and liberate. That is not a monopoly of action research.

Finally, the effectiveness of the method is not restricted to the poor. In spite of the claims of emancipation, more powerful people (such as men, the wealthier in a community, etc.) are more likely to participate and to take greater advantage of the participatory process. These are not extreme examples but show that action research can also be explicitly or accidentally used to empower the already powerful.

Thus, we realize that *action research is a research and action methodology, not a political program to change the world*. If we are committed to social change in benefit of the poor, of the disempowered, then specific strategies have to be adopted to achieve this, and action research can be a great tool.

Diverse Voices, Emic Explanations and *Conscientização*

One important aspect of action research is the recognition of emic explanations and of the diverse voices in the research process. However, emic explanations should not just be accepted, but should be tested in action. The emic can change with local learning, and this is something that makes action research of great value: learning is not the imposition of outside views but is built locally, and tested in action. In addition, if action requires the choice of a particular interpretation, then in action research we have

competing voices or interpretations. These interpretations compete first in the dialogue between different actors, and then in action testing.

Often, however, as pointed out before, action testing is not carried out, and action research takes the form of discussion and dialogues, raising people's consciousness about their problems. Yet, if no testing is done, *conscientização* can also be false.

Conscientização implies an object, a reality of which one can be conscious, knowing that reality, creating a theory about it, a theory that can be the basis for action. Being critical about reality does not always do this. The critical may simply recognize that reality violates their moral values. Deep *conscientização* examines one's own values and how that affects one's perception of the world, creates theories about how the world functions and what the strategies are for change. These strategies are the starting point of conscious action, and only with the results of action can one know the value of the new consciousness, that is, of the new theory to explain past and present life experiences (a theory that also produces future life experiences).

Objectivity and Action Research

I argued that action researchers should strive to avoid that their politics (and that of the participants) distort their findings. On the one hand, researcher and participants must try to be critical of their own interpretations and explanatory propositions. On the other, their explanatory propositions should be testable in action, and disconfirming information should be sought. That is, even though there is no objective knowledge, I believe that there is objective reality, and I do not think that we should just give up objectivity.

As pointed out before, when I discussed the politics of action research, a problem with giving up the ideal of objectivity and value-neutral research is that sometimes

"engaged" research creates illusions about the power and potential a person or a group (which the researcher is willing to favor) actually has. That illusion can help the favorite party to gain power, but can also make it weak and expose it to danger.

Self-indulgence can create weakness. Explanations that make someone feel good and empowered may not work or be useful in practice, and may even lead to dangerous or destructive actions. The researcher and participants should be aware of their intentions and strive for useful, empowering knowledge. However, they should watch out for illusions they may be creating just to justify themselves, their own failures, or to dehumanize other groups. Attribution distortions should be avoided. Because the creation of pleasant illusions may be self-defeating in the long run, taking care with the problem of attribution distortions is what I call "empowering objectivity" in the context of action research.

Objectivity and lack of involvement (or distance) are different things. Action researchers are involved with the realities that they study and try to change. Yet, they should strive to maintain objectivity, that is, to obtain knowledge that can give the basis for effective action.

Comparing Action Research and Research-Only Strategies

Several differences between action research and research-only strategies are shown in Table 2-1. Research-only strategies are more "extractive" and, although their research results may benefit the communities involved in the research, these benefits usually take longer to reach the community and may be just indirect. Action research is more interactive. Participants in AR usually define research topics and analyze data, and this local learning, and the results of action can provide immediate benefits to the communities involved.

Table 2-1: Comparing action research and conventional research.

Research Only	Action Research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Extractive: Immediate benefits to the researcher ▪ Distance ▪ Less emotional stress ▪ Commitment to data collection and research design ▪ All time is dedicated to research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interactive: Immediate benefits to the community and to the researcher ▪ Involvement ▪ More emotional stress ▪ Commitment to community needs and action ▪ Time has to be dedicated to research and action (less time to explore questions, and to write and analyze results)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pre-defined research design ▪ Emphasis on externally valid results ▪ Informants' responses biased by the expectation of how the information will be used or received by the researcher ▪ Little influence on the local power structure ▪ Little confusion about the researcher's role ▪ The biases introduced by the researcher's perspectives and local involvements are often hidden behind a façade of objectivity and distance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adaptive research design ▪ Emphasis on locally useful results ▪ Informants' responses biased by the expectation of how the information will affect the researcher's actions in the community ▪ Greater influence on the local power structure ▪ Activist and research roles are often confused ▪ The biases introduced by the researcher's perspectives and local involvements are often more explicit

In research-only strategies, it is easier for the researcher to maintain distance from local issues, and focus on a commitment to data collection and research design; the researcher can be exclusively dedicated to research activities. In AR, the researcher's time has to be dedicated both to research and action, resulting in less time to explore emerging questions of little relevance for action, and less time to write and analyze results. The greater involvement of action researchers may result in greater emotional stress, which may introduce biases.

Research-only strategies usually have predefined research designs and seek to obtain results that are externally valid. Conversely, AR is adaptive and flexible, and focuses on locally useful results (which may have limited usefulness beyond the research

site). The greater focus on research in research-only strategies potentially provides more robust and comprehensive research results.

However, each approach introduces its own type of bias in the participants' answers. In research-only strategies, the informants' responses are often biased by the expectation of how the information will be used or received by the researcher. In AR, responses are also biased by the expectation of how the information will affect the researchers' actions in the community. Action research may intentionally and unintentionally influence and change the local power structure, while in research-only strategies, such influence is normally unintended. There is little confusion about the researcher's role in research-only strategies, but in action research, activist and researcher roles are often mixed.

However, many of the features of research-only strategies described above are idealized. Threats to objectivity are present in both types of research. Often, researchers' involvement and influence is underreported in research-only strategies. Anthropologists, particularly ethnographers, who often choose to live in a community for a considerable time (several months or years) can hardly claim that after such time they continue to be neutral or objective observers, with no influence in the community. They are participant observers, but are not invisible. After some time, they must develop alliances and relationships, and often develop some type of action. In research-only strategies, the biases introduced by the researcher's perspectives and local involvements are often hidden behind a façade of objectivity and distance. In AR research, generally such biases are more explicit and easier to assess by the scientific audience.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODS

Research Site and Population

Itacaré is located in a tropical, rainy region with annual precipitation between 1,750 and 2,000 mm, well distributed throughout the year, and the annual mean temperature is between 21 °C and 25 °C (Secretaria da Cultura e Turismo 1998), in the southern coast of the state of Bahia, northeastern Brazil (Figure 3-1). The tropical and humid climate created the conditions for a lush tropical rainforest that was in great part destroyed to implement cacao plantations, and later for timber extraction, cattle ranching and small farming. At the time of the fieldwork for this dissertation, the forest still remained in certain areas.

Itacaré was a “beach town” that was not located on the beach, but by the river, close to the river mouth, testifying to its past as a “port town.” Only recently, with tourism development, were some houses built on areas of the municipality closer to the beaches. In Itacaré, the traditional cacao economy was destroyed by years of low prices and witches’ broom (*Crinipelis pernicioso*), a tree disease that made most cacao farms economically unviable. However, tourism was booming.

The municipality had 18,105 inhabitants, according to the preliminary 2000 census data. About six thousand people lived in the town of Itacaré and four thousand lived in the urban district of Taboquinhas. The remaining population lived in the rural areas, in small communities, or in the old cacao plantations.

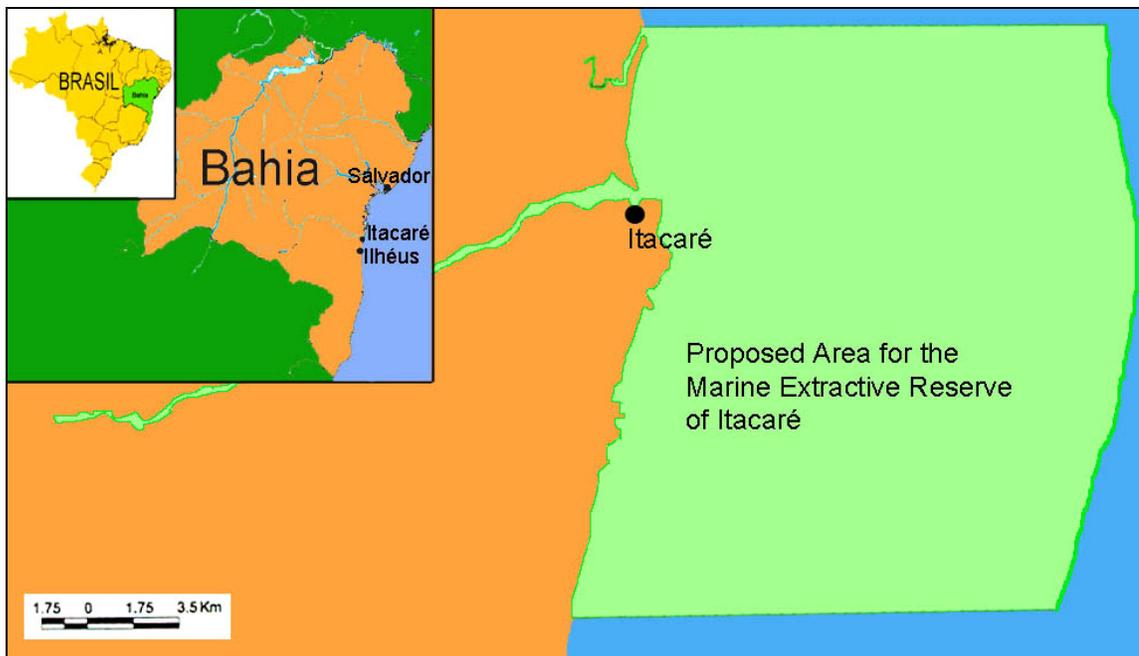


Figure 3-1: Location of Itacaré and the area proposed for the Marine Extractive Reserve.

The fishing population comprised about 400 families, both in the rural and in the urban area. About half of them were families of professional fishers, people that had their main source of income from fishing. The other half, mainly rural, were subsistence fishers. Professional fishers focused on shrimp, fish, crab and lobster fishing. Subsistence fishers caught almost anything. While offshore fishing on motorized boats was mainly a male activity, inshore fishing was practiced by men, women and children.

Research Design

This dissertation's research design evolved in response to local needs, such as the need to create local community organizational capacity for the implementation of the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré, and unexpected factors, such as the difficulty for the Task Group to maintain constant participation in the process, and my increasing involvement with the action of promoting the reserve. Action research, PRA, observant participation and participant observation were the main research strategies.

In order to allow the reader to understand the research design, a description of the research methods has to include some of the action that was promoted in Itacaré, which laid down the research opportunities that I explored. The research design included the following elements:

- An action researcher, PRA practitioner, and observing participant in the promotion of the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré
- Three volunteer research assistants
- Oceanographic researchers
- The Task Group for the Creation of the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré
- Participatory rural appraisal (PRA) exercises in eight fishing communities: four urban, three rural, and one that included both urban and rural fishers

Action Researcher, PRA Practitioner, and Observing Participant in the Promotion of the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré

From my first contacts with the fishers of Itacaré, some methodological trends started to be established. First, I did not start as a neutral figure studying an object detached from me. I was a participant trying to help the fishers of Itacaré create their Extractive Reserve, but I was also forwarding a particular approach to extractive reserve creation. My study depended on that particular approach because it focused on PRA, mainly, and its effects in the community. Second, although I planned to build local capacity for PRA and then stand back and evaluate the effects of the work done by the Task Group with some distance, I started my interaction as a participant in the process. Third, my presence influenced how the Task Group organized and performed their activities. I was their consultant for the Extractive Reserve. Later, I coordinated the PRA process and facilitated the PRA meetings with the help of volunteers and TG members. Thus, from the beginning, I was an *observing participant* of the process, not just a neutral participant observer. I was a researcher who interfered in the local reality and tried to transform it in collaboration with locals, while observing reactions and results.

As an observing participant I had to strive, first, to be an impartial consultant (that is, to avoid influencing the work for the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré in a less beneficial direction just to make the process fit my research needs), and second, to be an impartial observer (that is, avoiding that my stakes in the process and my engagement with the Reserve influenced my observation of the facts).

During the process, this was often difficult. I experienced “evaluation swings,” that is, confusing changes of my view of the process, as different information about other people’s (and my own) behavior became available to me. Immersed in the process, it was often hard to maintain clarity about what was going on. However, in reporting and discussing the data, I tried to be self-critical, evaluate my stakes, the limitations of my observations, and be honest about them. Moreover, while some aspects of reality were hidden from me as an observing participant, I also was able to see some aspects of reality that would have been hidden from a researcher using just a participant observation strategy.

Another factor that has to be considered is my background. I am Brazilian and did not have significant language problems with the fishers, because we all spoke Portuguese, although there were some regional vocabulary differences. Yet, I grew up in São Paulo state, a region culturally different from Bahia. Stereotypes of *Paulistas* (the people of São Paulo) and *Bahianos* (the people of Bahia) reveal some of potential conflicts involved in the interaction between the community and me. *Paulistas* are known as work-focused, not very friendly but serious (or uptight) people, while *Bahianos* (particularly on the coast) are famous for their laidback, fun-loving (often lazy) life style, and their friendliness. However untrue these stereotypes may be, they sometimes shaped

interactions, and sometimes local people seemed to find me too much focused on work, while I found some local people slow and not very committed. For example, it took me a while to slow down and start to arrive at the meetings as late as everybody else. The adaptation was mutual: local TG members gradually started to come to the meetings on time. Other factors also influenced my interaction with the community, such as race (I am considered white in Brazil, while most fishers were of African descent), gender (being a man opened some research opportunities and closed others), and social class (which often created very different viewpoints).

Another aspect is my formal education and professional experience. I have a bachelor's degree in agronomic engineering from the University of São Paulo. This degree provided me a broad range of knowledge. Agronomic engineering students in Brazil study a great variety of subjects, from crops to animal husbandry, from food science to agricultural machinery, from sociology and economics to forestry.

By the end of the five-year course, students are expected to have directed their education towards a specialization. My specialization area was informal environmental education. For two years after graduation I coordinated an environmental education radio program in my college town (Piracicaba, São Paulo state), but also helped in my family's dairy farm, and worked on a short-term consultancy for the state environmental agency and on a food education consultancy for Piracicaba's municipal government.

Then, in 1992, I became an ecology professor at the University of Acre, a state located in the western Brazilian Amazon, where I first had contact with the extractive reserves. Part of my work in the university involved rural communities of small farmers and rubber tappers, with training and support for the implementation of agroforestry

systems. In 1994, I started my masters in Latin American Studies at the University of Florida, and my research focused on the factors that made rubber tappers more conservation-oriented. In the masters' research I used some of the "PRA techniques" for the first time.

When I finished my masters' degree, in 1996, I started work in Rondônia, southwest Brazilian Amazon, as a United Nations Development Program consultant for the extractive reserve component of PLANAFLORO, Rondônia Natural Resource Management Project. My main activity was to develop a participatory procedure for the creation of community development plans, and my previous learning and experience with PRA led me to believe that it could provide a good basis for participatory planning in the extractive reserves of Rondônia.

The experience in Rondônia was particularly rich in insights and questions about PRA. When I started my Ph.D. at the University of Florida, I started exploring these questions in my classes. Due to my background and my fascination with science, I tended to explore materialistic approaches, which are also common in the classes at UF. My background in ecology and ecological economics also created further interest in systemic approaches to explain the behavior of social systems, or in my area of interest, participation in small communities. The discussion presented in the Introduction reflects this interest. It was with this background that I first looked into the reality of participation in Itacaré.

Task Group for the Creation of the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré (TG)

During dissertation fieldwork, the Task Group was the main agent promoting the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré. In 2000, I initiated a collaborative relationship with this group, which was formed of fishers, former fishers now employed in the tourism

industry and a fisherman's wife (she was the only one with a college degree; the rest of the group did not finish high school, and despite some formal education, had trouble reading and writing). They had been involved in the promotion of the Extractive Reserve for about a year, during which they received advice from local technical volunteers and from two staff members of Assessoria Agroecológica (AAE), a nongovernment organization based in Ilhéus, a city located 65 km to the south of Itacaré. These people also interacted with me (via E-mail) during that year and we exchanged information and ideas on how the work should be done.

TG members had a good knowledge of the fishers of Itacaré, and the municipality, but they knew the seat of the municipality better than they knew the district of Taboquinhas and the rural communities. During their first year working for the creation of the Reserve, they carried out meetings in two fishing communities located in the district of Taboquinhas and by the beach of Piracanga, started to interview fishers for a socioeconomic survey to be sent to the government for the creation of the Reserve, and mobilized two enforcement missions by the regional officers of the Brazilian Institute for the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA).

The initial design of the PRA process was that the TG was going to have the assistance of two local technical volunteers, whom I previously had trained in PRA. However, this did not work out. In my first meeting with the TG members, about eight people came and we talked about the challenges ahead. They were unhappy with the two local technical volunteers who had been working with them for the last year. We discussed PRA and its technical needs. They decided that they would carry out the

participatory rural appraisal process by themselves, with my help. TG members would need training in PRA, and they and I decided that I would give a course to them.

The PRA course started with about 18 people, but by the end of the two-week course load, there were about seven, and I was only confident that three people out of that total were prepared to carry out PRA meetings, and only with my assistance. In order to have an effective PRA process in Itacaré, I would have to take a more active role than I had predicted and wanted.

All actions carried out in Itacaré were discussed with this group (or some of its members, when a meeting was not possible). Their decisions greatly affected the course of this research, from my timetable to the methods that were used. They were co-researchers in the participatory process, trying to understand why things that we did were successful or not, gathering data in their own normal life in the community or in the (more structured) PRA meetings. The TG and I discussed together several of the explanatory propositions presented in the Introduction, and this discussion is reported later in the dissertation.

Scientific learning (by me) and local practical learning (by TG members) originated from the same process, but we did not need to agree. While their learning had to stand the test of practicability and perform several functions (from understanding their successes and failures, to justifying their participation; from creating group cohesion to defending them from moral attacks), my learning had also to stand scientific peer scrutiny. As a doctoral candidate, although I had local collaboration, this dissertation is not a collective product. I am the author, and the conclusions expressed here are my own.

Oceanographic researchers

In the PRA process, the TG and I had the collaboration of the Oceanographic Group at the *Universidade Estadual Santa Cruz – UESC*⁶. The researchers who participated in the PRA exercise are listed below:

- Dr. Rubens Lopes – Plankton/ UESC
- M.Sc. Lúcio Figueiredo de Rezende – Physic Oceanography/ UESC
- Sylvia M. M. Susini Ribeiro – Plankton/ UESC
- Dr. Gecely R. A. Rocha – Nekton (fish)/ UESC
- Dr. Mônica Y. Tsuzuki – Aquaculture/ UESC
- M.Sc. Cíntia S. Coimbra – Algae/ UESC
- Alexandre Oliveira de Almeida – Freshwater crustaceans/ UESC
- Erminda C. G. Couto – Benthic animals/ UESC
- M.Sc. Luiz Alberto Mattos Silva – Botany/UESC
- M.SC. Ana Amélia Lavenère-Wanderley – Geologic Oceanography/UESC

Some of these researchers participated in PRA meetings, but all interacted with the communities during field trips to collect samples in Itacaré. Each wrote a report that was later incorporated in the PRA report.

Three voluntary research assistants

Later in the PRA process, it was realized that the TG members would not have the necessary time to dedicate to the PRA, and voluntary research assistants were selected to help us. They were selected among 12 candidates who submitted a letter of application and curriculum vitae in response to an E-mail message that I sent to colleagues in community development and conservation. Three people were selected, as follows:

- Ana Cláudia Mendes Malhado: a recent ecology graduate from São Paulo state, with experience in environmental education (first four weeks of PRA);
- Viviane Menezes Hermida: a recent psychology graduate from Salvador (Bahia state), with experience in community work in a fishing community on the northern Bahian coast (third and fourth weeks of PRA);

⁶ Saint Cross State University, a small regional University located in Ilhéus, which has received investment from the State Government.

- Daniela Maria Barreto Martins: with the same background as Ms. Hermida (sixth and seventh weeks of PRA)

These assistants helped me in the preparation of PRA meetings, note taking and report writing. They also discussed with me the results and provided insights on my relationship with TG. In addition to these three assistants, a number of local and outside people helped in the organization of the meetings, but did not collect data for the PRA. An exception was botanist Ana Maria Argôlo, who, in addition to helping in some of the meetings, wrote a report on the coastal vegetation.

Eight Fishing Communities

Locating (and circumscribing) the fishing communities of Itacaré was not very straightforward. Fishers lived all over town and also in rural communities and in the urban district of Taboquinhas. They were clearly not just one community. There seemed to be several fishing communities overlapping in Itacaré or maybe the fishers were not really a community but only a sector of the larger community of Itacaré. Fishers were linked not only among themselves, but to neighbors that were not fishers, to shopkeepers, to politicians, to traders, to people and businesses of the tourism sector.

Some fishers were fulltime; others were just part-time or fished just for subsistence. Those who were part-time or subsistence fishers were also farmers, public servants, shopkeepers, workers in the tourism sector, and so on. How do we cut the fishing communities out of that complex web of social relations?

“Communities” were used in Itacaré to divide the fishing population in manageable chunks that would result in maximum participation, provide a basis for future action, and at the same time, maintain the number of these chunks as low as possible to maximize the efficiency of PRA meetings. However, like the definition of

ecosystem, there are no clear community boundaries until someone decides what (or who) is in or what is out. Ideally, this decision should be made by community members, that is, by how they identify themselves: there is no community until there is a community identity. However, a community identity may not always exist. In the case of Itacaré, the definition of some of the “fishing communities” was externally done by TG members.

When the TG and I planned the PRA exercise in Itacaré, we had to decide on how to classify the fishers in communities. In the town, we could either have dealt with one large urban fishing community or with separate sub-communities. Thus we had to make a choice. I suspected that if we decentralized the meetings, we would have greater attendance. TG members had their own classification of the fishers into “communities” and so we worked with that. TG members classified the fishers of Itacaré in eight communities:

- Banca do Peixe (urban, mostly professional fishers)
- Forte (urban, mostly professional fishers)
- Porto de Trás (urban, subsistence and professional fishers)
- Marimbondo (urban, subsistence and professional fishers)
- Passagem (urban, subsistence and professional fishers)
- Taboquinhas (urban and rural, subsistence and professional fishers)
- Itacarezinho (rural, subsistence fishers)
- Piracanga (rural, subsistence fishers)

Porto de Trás was easy to identify. These fishers lived in the same neighborhood, had their own political organization, were connected by kin, had their own parties and folklore, and were the exclusive users of the Porto de Trás (or Back Port, name that alluded to the location of the port, on a river curve behind the town). There was a clear community identity.

However, other “communities” were less clearly defined. Forte and Banca do Peixe, for example, were identified not in terms of a region of residence, but in terms of a point of congregation, the respective ports of Forte and of the Banca do Peixe (or simply Banca). Fishers included by the TG in these communities could live anywhere in town as long as they departed from those ports to their fishing trips. This *port identity* often included an affiliation to one of the organizations located in each port: Itacaré’s Association of Fishers and Shellfish Collectors (ASPERI) in the Forte, and Colônia de Pesca Z-18 (Fishers’ Guild – Fishing Zone 18) in the Banca.

In addition, there were fishers who used either port, or even departed from the more distant Havaí river beach, who lived in two neighborhoods: Marimbondo and Passagem. Following the advice of a community leader, when we finally carried out PRA in these neighborhoods, the TG and I considered them as one community, but the opposite could have been done: we could have subdivided them by the streets. The decision to join them together was related to our operational needs rather than to the “true” identity of these communities. Recognizing “communities” was necessarily an analytical and, sometimes, arbitrary exercise considering operational needs and political implications.

From this, it became clear that there were two types of urban fishing communities:

- *Neighborhood communities* (continuous, defined by territory), such as Porto de Trás (Marimbondo and Passagem were treated as neighborhood communities even though their identities as fishing communities were weaker than Porto de Trás)
- *Port communities* (radial, defined by the connection of fishers to the ports), such as Forte and Banca do Peixe

During PRA, we discovered an additional rural community (Campo Seco), which invited us to carry out PRA there too. Thus, rural fishers were organized for the PRA in the following communities:

- Piracanga (on the north coast of Itacaré, including the fishers of nearby Caubi village)
- Campo Seco (on the south coast of Itacaré)
- Itacarezinho (on the south coast of Itacaré)

There were also rural communities by the Contas River, which practiced subsistence fishing in the river, and a group of rural households close to the Tijuípe River. Because of time constraints, the TG decided not to include them in the PRA at that time. The TG visited the communities by Rio de Contas after I finished dissertation fieldwork in Itacaré.

Finally there were the urban and rural communities of Taboquinhas municipal district. The rural fishers of Taboquinhas were first divided in several communities and later grouped again for the practical purposes of the PRA. Later, we tried as much as possible to identify the divisions that “community members” had. They included the following:

- Pé da Pancada
- Rua de Palha
- Os Acaris
- Porto das Farinhas
- Água Fria.

However, this classification was not always so clear; different boundaries seemed to be applied by different people, depending on the context. The definition of each community also seemed to vary over time, as was indicated by stories that some communities were one, then were divided, and then were renamed responding to political needs and population change. The common identity of “fishers of Taboquinhas” was the

most practical and reliable one to organize the PRA for those fishers. Each of the fishing communities of Itacaré had different interests and challenges, as is described later.

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) Exercise

In each community, the PRA team included me, one or two of the voluntary research assistants, TG members, and occasionally, one to four oceanographic researchers. TG members did not participate equally in all meetings. At the time of the PRA exercise, the TG had about eight people. Only one of them had time to participate in almost all meetings. Three others also went to several meetings (one of them liked the PRA dynamics and was actually recruited during the PRA meetings in his community). The other TG members participated only occasionally in the PRA community meetings, but most were frequent in the TG weekly meetings, which evaluated the results of PRA in different communities.

The PRA exercise in Itacaré was carried out in two rounds of meetings in eight communities (see schedule of PRA meetings in Appendix⁷). In urban communities, the first round (for problem diagnosis) took four to six three-hour evening meetings. In rural communities, the first round took one to two one-day meetings. The first-round meetings had the following elements:

- An explanation about the extractive reserve, and the purpose of the meeting
- Cooperative games
- PRA tools

Between the first and the second rounds, community representatives participated in a two-day meeting to

⁷ The communities of Banca do Peixe and Piracanga had PRA meetings prior to this schedule. The follow-up of those meetings was delayed until the dates showed in the schedule due to participation problems in the Task Group.

- Create a diagnosis for the whole area proposed for the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré, including all the communities where PRA was being carried out
- Create a draft of the resource use rules for the future Reserve (“Norms of the Reserve”), which were the focus of the second round.

In urban communities, the second round (for discussion of the Norms of the Reserve) took two three-hour evening meetings. In rural communities, the second round took one one-day meeting. The second round of meetings included the following elements:

- Registration of the fishers for the decision-making process
- An explanation about the extractive reserve and purpose of the meeting
- A review of the diagnosis made in the first round
- Cooperative games
- Reading, discussion, and approval of, or proposal of changes to, the drafted Norms of the Reserve

After the second round of meetings, a general two-day meeting, open to all registered participants, was carried out for a final decision on the Norms.

Explanation about the extractive reserve and purpose of the meetings (first and second rounds)

All meetings started with an explanation about the future Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré, and about the purpose of the meetings. The explanation included a presentation by the TG about the purposes of the group and an invitation to all who wanted to participate. I presented the purpose of the meeting and asked for the group’s consent to report on the information that they provided and on their participation.

Cooperative games (first and second rounds)

After this initial explanation, in the first round of PRA meetings (in each one of the communities) participants were invited to play the “web of life,” a cooperative game that shows the importance of cooperation and interdependence in the relationship between community members, and between them and their environment (Figure 3-2).



Figure 3-2: Web of life game in the community of Banca do Peixe.

The web of life starts with the facilitator asking participants to gather around him, forming a circle. Then, he takes a roll of yarn, and start linking different people in the circle with it. Each person represents a different element of the human ecosystem. After all people are linked by the yarn, a pen is placed in the center of the circle and the group is asked to try to hold it with the yarn, just by the pressure of the yarn forming the web. Then, participants are asked to put the pen inside a bottle placed on the ground (in one of the communities we used a green coconut, after drinking the coconut water), still holding the pen with the web. After several attempts, in which the pen would fall and be placed again in the web, the goal of putting the pen in the bottle was accomplished.

The importance of cooperation and balance between different parties in cooperation to accomplish a collective goal (the betterment of communities, the extractive reserve, and conservation of natural resources) was then discussed with the

participants. Other games were proposed anytime during the meetings when participants looked tired or not very focused on the discussions.

PRA tools

A series of PRA tools was proposed and carried out. Participants created *participatory natural resource maps* on 1 m x 2 m sheets of paper (in communities along the river, the maps reached up to 5 meters long, by 50 cm wide), using markers, sand, sawdust, pebbles, tree and grass leaves, and icons representing different natural resources, fishing practices and other aspects of the fishers' reality. Participants were asked to map the area that they used, which varied from community to community (Figure 3-3).



Figure 3-3: Participatory mapping exercise in Forte community.

In Porto de Trás and Piracanga, natural resource maps were done in separate groups according to gender. Maps were also used to obtain data about the location of

households and infrastructure in two urban communities (Porto de Trás and Marimbondo/Passagem) and three rural communities (Piracanga, Itacarezinho and Campo Seco).

Institutional Venn diagrams were carried out in Banca do Peixe, Porto de Trás, Forte, and Taboquinhas. They started with the facilitators asking the participants to list the organizations that were important to the community, either positively or negatively. Then, participants were asked to rank the power of these institutions, by assigning them paper circles with three different sizes. Following that, participants were asked to place the circles on a 0.8 m x 1 m sheet of paper in relation to a paper circle representing their community, which also had to be placed in relation to a larger circle drawn on the sheet representing the fishing community of Itacaré. This process often raised heated discussions about the government and nongovernmental organizations that influence the lives of the fishers in Itacaré (Figure 3-4).



Figure 3-4: Institutional diagram in Banca do Peixe community (a TG member is facilitating the discussion).

Other PRA tools were used. Historical transects were carried out in the PRA course for the Task Group (focusing on sea resources) and in the PRA meetings of Taboquinhas (focusing on river resources, Figure 3-5). A social pyramid, a tool that I adapted to discuss social inequality, was used in Porto de Trás and Forte.



Figure 3-5: Historical diagram in small groups in Taboquinhas, facilitated by a volunteer research assistant.

In some communities, PRA tools were used in small groups, which later presented the information to the participants that were not in their group. This strategy was used to maximize the information represented in the PRA tools, and to allow greater individual participation by reducing the group size.

After the maps and diagrams were completed, participants summarized the information provided by them, with an emphasis on the problems and on how the extractive reserve could help to solve them. During the process, the voluntary research assistants and I took notes on the discussion in order to write the report later on. Some

communities (Porto de Trás, Itacarezinho and Taboquinhas) had UESC's team of oceanographic researchers facilitating the discussion along with TG members, volunteer research assistants and me. In other communities, the volunteers, TG members and I used that experience with the UESC team to guide us in facilitating the maps and other discussion focusing on natural resources.

Meeting of community representatives to discuss the diagnosis for the whole area proposed for the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré and the Norms of the Reserve

During the PRA meetings in the eight communities, representatives were elected by each community to participate in a two-day meeting to create a diagnosis for the entire area and population that was going to benefit from the Reserve, and to create a draft of the natural resource use rules, or "Norms of the Reserve." On the first day, the representatives of each community explained to the other community representatives the problems encountered in their communities, referring to the PRA maps and diagrams. They verified problems that they had in common and problems that were created by resource use conflicts between communities.

Based on this diagnosis, and on the norms of the Marine Extractive Reserve of Arraial do Cabo (State of Rio de Janeiro), I created a draft of norms that were suggested during the PRA problem diagnosis phase and by the community representatives. On the second day, the norms that I drafted were read to, and discussed by, community representatives, who corrected them and added their own suggestions.

Registration of the fishers for the decision making process

In the second round of PRA meetings, in each community, TG members and I registered the participants for the decision making process. TG members, in a series of weekly meetings, discussed criteria to make a fisher a legitimate decision-maker in the

Reserve. The problem was that the rules of the Reserve were supposed to be decided by the fishers of Itacaré. However, who were the “fishers of Itacaré”? Native fishers believed they had greater right than recent immigrants, and a great number of five to ten-year immigrant fishers also claimed their right to the Reserve. Where was the legitimacy line to be drawn?

After much discussion, the TG arrived at a decision. *To have the right to vote in the community meetings, a person had to be a fisher who had fished in Itacaré in the last two years.* In addition, the fisher had to fulfill one of the following:

- Be native to Itacaré
- Have lived in Itacaré for the last five years
- Have participated in five or more meetings for the creation of the Extractive Reserve

To vote on the Norms of the Reserve, each person had to be "registered," that is, to fill out a form, or have one filled out for him/her, on which the basic data about the criteria described above were collected. All data had to be confirmed by witnesses, to avoid the use of standard documents that could not be trusted because many "fishers" with such documents did not actually fish, and many real fishers did not have fishers' documents. Such witnesses also had to be acceptable decision-makers themselves, and were susceptible to lose their rights if they helped others misrepresent themselves.

A review of the diagnosis made in the first round

To review the discussion of the first round in each community, including the reality of all communities in the future Reserve, second-round meetings used the participatory map created by the Banca, which represented the broadest range, so that a general diagnosis of the entire area could be discussed and information given/returned for the decision about the Norms of the Reserve. The map was exhibited in a place visible to all.

Reading, discussion, approval of, or proposal of changes to the drafted Norms of the Reserve

In the second round of community meetings, the resource use rules for the future Norms of the Reserve were read, discussed, and voted on. The norms that were approved by all communities were considered approved and not discussed again. If a norm was rejected by one community, or if it was proposed by a community after the other communities had discussed the norms, the decision was left to a final general meeting open to all participants.

Finally, in some cases in which there were resource use conflicts between communities, TG decided to hold meetings between the affected communities to decide on the issue by consensus. That is, there would be no voting in such meetings, and all participants had to agree on the final solution. These rules were later reviewed and approved in the final general meeting. This strategy was chosen to guarantee a power balance between the different communities, and avoid manipulation by opportunistic participation in meetings in just one centralized location.

Data Collection: Observant Participation and Participant Observation

PRA was not my only data collection strategy in Itacaré. According to Bernard (1994:138)

Fieldwork can involve two quite different roles—that of participating observer and that of observing participant. By far, most anthropological research is based on the first role, that of participating observer.

Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) discuss the classification of Junker (1960) and Gold (1958), who distinguish the following roles of the researcher: complete participant, participant-as-observer, observer-as-participant, and complete observer. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) suggest that the role of complete participant often involves deception,

and their examples coincide with the examples given by Bernard (1994) in which observing participant researchers take roles that make them similar to the people they are studying.

This was not the case of this dissertation. First, it was clear to the community that I was doing research as much as action, and there was no deception related to my role in the community or in the Task Group. That saved me a great deal of ethical concern. Second, my observing participation involved a relatively new role in the fishing community, as new as was the TG's role. Despite the fact that I was not pretending to be a fisherman, I was an observing participant because my role was that of an activist in favor of the Reserve, just like the TG.

Nevertheless, there were several differences:

- The length of my participation was limited, while the TG would continue to be there
- I did not belong to the community and could choose to leave, while they belonged there and were more limited in their mobility
- I was paid to be an action researcher and did not have other competing activities, while their participation was completely voluntary and they had to find ways to generate income (however, some of the TG members did receive remuneration or compensation during part of their action)
- I was their consultant and was supposed to provide them with orientation regarding the Extractive Reserve and the participatory work, while they had limited knowledge of the details of the required process
- I did not have decision power over the process; I only discussed the options with them, while decisions were made by TG members (but I had significant influence when I was facilitating PRA meetings). Also, I often took notes, moderated the meetings, typed letters and documents for them, and even created a logo for the Reserve (Figure 3-6).

As an "impartial" participant observer, the researcher can more easily concentrate on the research, maintain a certain distance from the object of study, and try to be

objective. However, there is no guarantee of impartiality. On the one hand, the participant observer label can mask implicit involvement and contribution, and cause increased suspicion in the participants. On the other hand, the observing participation strategy carries with it other dangers, such as partiality, lack of objectivity, and worse, difficulty to concentrate on the research. However, in many instances, observing participation is a way to obtain insights from the point of view of the researched. In addition these two different types of observation provide access to different aspects of reality. By trying to mobilize the community with the TG, I saw aspects of the fishing community that I would not have seen if I was just a participant observing. Conversely, some other aspects are hidden from the participant observer; there are tradeoffs in any strategy.



Figure 3-6: Logo of the Task Group for the Creation of the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré.

Every one of us, each TG member and I, was a “thermometer” of effects of the planned solutions, and provided subjective evaluations of what was achieved. These

subjective evaluations were discussed in the group meetings, trying to create inter-subjective evaluations supported by evidence. By providing and discussing their perceptions with me, TG members were a mix of key-informants, research assistants and clients of the research. They too were doing observing participation of the process, when they attempted strategies to obtain fishers' participation, promote the Extractive Reserve and consolidate their leadership.

In addition to my observing participation in TG meetings and in the PRA exercise, I learned a great deal about the reality of Itacaré just by living there during the ten months (September 2000 to June 2001) of my Ph.D. fieldwork, and in the four visits before, one day in March 1999, a four-day and a ten-day visit in August 1999, and one week in January 2000. I became better acquainted with one of the communities where meetings were harder to mobilize. My following field note illustrates how observant participation and just hanging out were important to understand that community:

The *Barraca do Seu*⁸ *Oswaldo* (Mr. Oswaldo's Kiosk) is closed most of the year but is nevertheless, a gathering point for many of the fishers of the Banca do Peixe, the community most associated with the Colônia. The Barraca is a tiny kiosk, built on the center division of the boulevard by the Coroa beach. The lane next to the beach is open to traffic, but the other is closed, creating a protected space where residents would hang out and restaurants would place their tables outside.

However, the boulevard close to Seu Oswaldo's kiosk belongs to the fishers. Large trees shade the sidewalks where they used to lounge, talk to their friends, gossip, and work on net repairs. It has a nice view of the *barra*, where river waters battle sea water in their final destination to the ocean; and of the *Pontal* (a small peninsula on the other side of the river with its beach growing in the direction of Pedra do Xaréu, almost threatening to dam the river), and the north coast. It is also a strategic spot to monitor the wind and its changes, and the movement of boats inside and outside the *barra*. And it is also *my* strategic spot to just hang out, observe fishers, talk to them, hear the gossip, and learn about the past and present of Itacaré.

⁸ Respectful title applied to older men; "mister."

During the day, I use to sit in the shadow of Seu Osvaldo's Kiosk and do as everybody else. At sunset or at night, nearby, the boat ramp that gave access from the boulevard to the river is the spot to relax, and listen to stories of fishing trips and other subjects. "*Apanhar a fresca da noite*" (enjoying the fresh breeze of the night) attracts many fishers. On nights of good weather, they sit and laze on the ramp by the water with stars above their heads and the gentle breeze blowing. I also enjoy the *fresca*, and many times go by myself or to walk my dog by the beach and then sit on the ramp. Sometimes I talk to people, other times I just listen.

Although I became more acquainted with the Banca, walking on the streets of Itacaré it was hard to go anywhere without running into someone who asked about the Extractive Reserve, gave me information and opinions, gossiped about someone else or was just friendly. In this way, I used to run into people of the other urban communities of Itacaré, and occasionally into people from rural areas. As my identification with the Task Group grew, I became "o rapaz da Reserva" (the Reserve guy). I was sought for conflict resolution and demands for action. Normally, I would refer the person to the Task Group for decisions, but would talk and express my opinions anyway.

People also tried to influence me, by gossiping or complaining about other people and organizations, trying to get me on their side. Kent (2000), doing anthropological fieldwork in Itacaré, describes a similar process: he also felt he was being disputed by different sides of the conflict between locals ("*nativos*") and migrants related to the tourism/environmentalism sector ("*os de fora*," or the newcomers), both sides trying to make him tell their side of the story, particularly the case of the newcomers.

In my case, maybe because I was also involved in action, I felt that it was not just a matter of my telling their story, but rather of my acting in a manner that would be advantageous to particular sectors. Unlike Kent (2000), I did not feel that *os de fora* were trying to influence me more than the *nativos*, but just as much. *Os de fora* seemed to see me as a teacher and a source of expertise; in fact I ended up giving a course on

participatory methods to the team of the local Environmental Education Project, mainly composed of newcomers. Some people (locals and newcomers) seemed to believe that I had some strong political influence, an impression that I let them keep, since I believed that it could help the Task Group (more educated people seemed to value most the fact that I was a Ph.D. candidate).

I also participated in public meetings, went to parties and to the beach, shopped in the stores, and went to restaurants. All of this gave me a better feeling of the tensions and issues behind the beach town atmosphere of Itacaré. For example, excellent pizza was served in *Beco das Flores* pizzeria. However, wealthier people used to go there and it was viewed with suspicion by locals (this is also commented on by Kent 2000). I noticed this and felt uncomfortable going to the *Beco* (but sometimes it was hard to resist... the pizza was really good!). And it was the same with certain stores, parties and beaches. I felt that where you hung out in Itacaré said something about with whom you were allied and about your values. I did not always conform to local prejudices in order to assert my alignment with the TG and locals, but I soon became aware of the costs of doing things in ways that were not approved of by locals.

Testing the Explanatory Propositions

Testing the explanatory propositions explained in Chapter 1 involved information gathered by PRA, participant observation, observant participation, group and individual interviews, informal conversations with fishers and other actors in Itacaré, and literature research. In chapters 7 and 8, research questions 1 and 2, and the respective explanatory propositions' action-testing, are discussed; however, in chapters 4 to 6, background information on Itacaré and its fishers, the nature of the fishing activities and the origins of the Task Group will also be used to discuss the research questions.

As pointed out in Chapter 2, action research is broadly defined as a paradigm of research in which clients are involved in cycles of reflection-action-reflection-action that result in learning and change. The value of action in action research is often discussed in terms of its practical, local effects: research activity that produces social results locally. However, in this study, action was conceptualized as a means of verification.

In AR, we believe that the way to ‘prove’ a theory is to show how it provides in-depth and thorough understanding of social structures, understanding gained through planned attempts to invoke change in particular directions. The appropriate changes are the proof (Greenwood 1998:19).

In this research, action was the main instrument for testing competing explanatory propositions for participation problems encountered in the PRA for the participatory creation of the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré. Action during the research process was always based on theory and reflection. The theory (explanatory propositions) was supplied either by me or by locals, who provided their own interpretations of their realities, sometimes during the meetings, other times in informal conversations. Participants (including me), involved in action, discussed the problems and their causes. One or more explanatory propositions were created to explain the problems, and solutions based on such propositions were discussed. Sometimes we had competing interpretations and had to solve the contest argumentatively or by verification, in action.

The rationale for using action as a testing procedure was

- Once the causes for the problems were identified (explanatory propositions), solutions could be planned and carried out
- When the solutions were correctly implemented and there was no improvement in the problems, then the explanatory proposition was rejected. “Improvement in the problems” was discussed in the TG and with members of the community, and includes my subjective evaluation
- If the planned solution worked, then the proposition was corroborated; and proposition and solution became action-based theory

A cycle of theory-action-reflection (Figure 3-7) happened almost every week, when problems were discussed in the weekly TG meetings and planned actions were implemented, and then evaluated again in the next meeting. New cycles of action could persist in the same successful action strategy, resulting in more corroboration to the action-based theory, or in its reformulation. Reformulated action-based theories should account for the past failures and successes of participatory action, and be tested in action again.

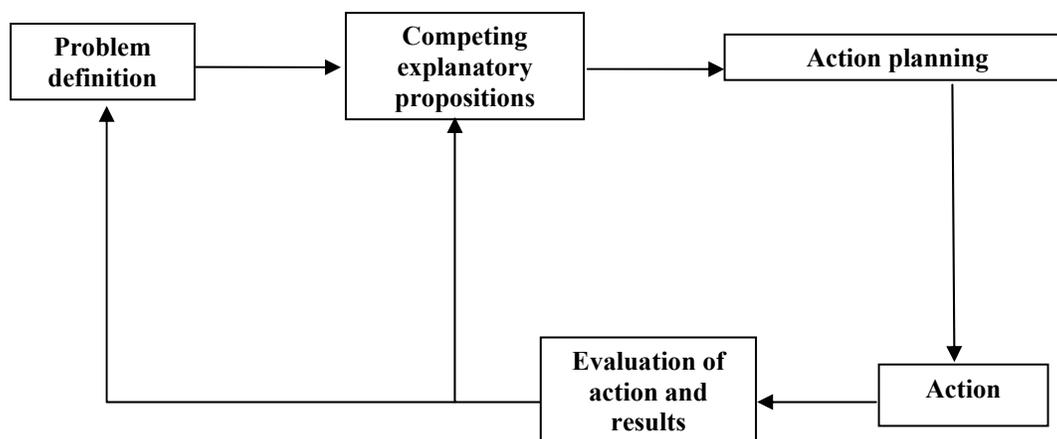


Figure 3-7: Action as a research testing strategy.

However, there are confounding factors that may affect action-tests. In action-testing, it is possible that the following confounding factors affect research conclusions:

- **Biased interpretation.** Participants may have biased evaluations of the changes because of their expectations that are either too high or too low, or their interests can be harmed by the findings, so they provide biased or false interpretations.
- **Spurious association.** The intended changes may not be a result of the action intended to test the explanatory proposition. First, this may happen because the problem identified may not be persistent. If the problem is temporary, then the action trying to resolve the problem may be wrongly associated with its solution because the problem would not persist anyway. Second, other factors may be influencing the problem at the same time, and improvement in the problem (or lack of it) may be a result of factors other than the new strategy adopted.

- **Quality of the action.** If actions are not effectively implemented according to the explanatory proposition that originated them, results, or lack of them, cannot be considered evidence in favor or against the explanatory proposition.

In order to be effective, action testing has to look for disconfirming evidence, examine possible confounds, and consider them in a careful discussion about causality during the AR process. In this dissertation this was done partially in the field and partially afterwards, during the writing process.

In my interaction with the Task Group in Itacaré, action-testing cycles were not very structured, and were just part of how the TG worked. Although it was clear to them that I was participating as a researcher, I noticed the similarity of such cycles with action research and did not have to interfere in the group's dynamics to obtain data for this research. Action testing, as a research procedure, was a way to take advantage of the natural situation, the commitments and strategies of the TG, its actions and its need for learning, for a research purpose. Finally, the testing of propositions did not change TG's actions; that is, action testing was never used for its own sake, but only to achieve important meaningful results related to the TG's objectives.

The evidence of action testing gathered through observing participation in TG and PRA meetings was also compared to the evidence gained through participant observation and a literature search on the history of Itacaré (to discuss the social and political context of participation) and on fishing communities in Brazil and abroad (to discuss collective action institutions for natural resource management among fishers). Thus, action testing is not just a mechanical exercise, but also depends on a consideration of other information that corroborates and contextualizes interpretations.

CHAPTER 4 ITACARÉ AND ITS FISHERS

The purpose of this chapter is to contextualize the dissertation in relation to the general characteristics of the fishers of Itacaré and their common history with their region. Some of the explanatory propositions are discussed in light of these general characteristics, but each research question is discussed in more detail in Chapters 7 and 8, where action research procedures were used to test the explanatory propositions described in Chapter 1.

The history of Itacaré is important for us to understand the origins of its inequality and the formation of vertical alliances and vertical identities that prevented the poor from openly questioning or acting to change local social reality. This chapter describes how the local poor became allied to the local elite, forming vertical identities that opposed outsiders and newcomers. I argue that this conflict between locals and outsiders/newcomers prevented a needed horizontal alliance among the poor, and reduced their confrontation with the rich.

At the time of the dissertation fieldwork, tourism was greatly transforming Itacaré, the small town that was the seat of the municipality of the same name. The *município* comprised 730 km² with a paradisiacal coast of small pocket beaches surrounded by coconut trees and tropical rainforest, and a longer beach with some of the last fragments of natural coastal dune vegetation (*restinga*) in the region. About five thousand people dwelled in the town, and the rest lived in the rural zone and in the

district of *Taboquinhas* (about four thousand people). According to preliminary data of the 2000 census, the municipality had 18,105 inhabitants, mostly of African descent, 10,163 of them still living in the rural area, despite the crash of the cacao economy in the previous decade, an event that cost the jobs of thousands of people. Census data for the fishing population are not reliable, but based on my experience of 10 months doing fieldwork in Itacaré, I estimate that about 400 families in the municipality depended on fishing as an important part of their livelihoods, as a subsistence complement, or for cash income.

Indians, Jesuits and Pirates

The history of Itacaré goes back to the beginning of the 18th Century, when Brazil was still a Portuguese colony and Jesuit priest Luis de Grã ordered the construction of a chapel on the site that would become Itacaré. The construction of this chapel involved legends about the choice of the site, which changed from its original location upriver to where it is now. One legend said that São Miguel (St. Michael) frequently appeared in the new site. Another said that it was the statue of São Miguel that mysteriously moved from one site to another by itself.

The Jesuit mission gave rise to the village that became the seat of the municipality of São Miguel da Barra do Rio de Contas in January 27, 1732 (Sócio-Estatística Pesquisa Ltda. 2002), which was renamed Itacaré in 1931 (Itacare.com 2002). In Tupy, the language trunk of most Amerindians of the Brazilian coast, Itacaré means “crooked stone” (*ita*: stone; *caré*: crooked). It adequately describes the geology of the coast, where metamorphic rocks, twisted and broken by tremendous forces in the interior of the Earth, resurface and meet the sea. Although the new name changed the religious name of the town, São Miguel continued to be important as the patron of the town. During my stay in

Itacaré, in the month of January, a festival and a series of religious ceremonies honored the saint.

The village of São Miguel da Barra do Rio de Contas was often attacked by hostile Indians, as is indicated by the legend of a tunnel between the church and the house of the Jesuits, supposedly for emergency escapes. That the Indians were not happy with the Portuguese presence in Itacaré is also corroborated by an earlier description of the coast of Bahia and the Contas River (*Tratado Descritivo do Brazil*) written by Gabriel Soares in the 1580-1590 period and republished in a compendium of historical documents of the Province of Bahia (Silva 1919a):

“There is this *rio das Contas* [river of the beads], which the Indians call Jussiape, that can be recognized by whoever comes from outside [from the sea] because of some fields covered with bush close to the river mouth, where [on the margin] closer to the sea there is a rock, similar to an island, close to which ships of good size can enter, because the canal is deep enough close to that rock. This river comes from very far away and brings more water than the Tejo River [in Portugal], and is navigable for seven or eight *léguas* up river from the river mouth, up to the waterfall, and after it the river is navigable again, because it is deep enough. It is rich in fish and other seafood, with plenty of game and good land, and there are many streams that are good for sugar cane mills (which are not installed because of the Aymoré Indians; and that is why it is not populated), [river] which is at fourteen degrees and a quarter [of latitude south]” (Silva 1919a:230, my translation).

In 2001, the same rock that guided sailors in the past (now named “Pedra do Xaréu”) still guided fishers while going back and forth to the sea. Several fishers told me that the river mouth was becoming narrower, due to the effect of sedimentation, but the currents close to the rock were strong, and that part continued to be very deep, maybe the deepest part in the whole river, according to the fishers who participated in the PRA mapping of the river. Nevertheless, as fishers pointed out in the PRA, and I could observe by myself, upriver, sedimentation due to soil erosion was creating sand banks that threatened navigation. Sedimentation of sand over the mud substratum of the mangroves

was blamed for their death in certain parts of the estuary. The forest on the river margins was gone, leaving the river unprotected against the runoff due to heavy rains. Some of the streams that could have sustained sugar cane mills became only temporary, and the river level became much lower most of the time. Two river dams built upstream for electricity generation were blamed for the changes in the river bed. While they retained sediments, locals argued that they did not let enough water flow to wash away sediments accumulating on the river bed.

There were no more Indians in Itacaré (there were still Amerindian communities in southern Bahia, but not in this municipality), either aggressive or friendly. They were part of the past, together with most of the forest, and species such as *peixes-bois* (*manatees*) and *jacarés* (caimans). The testimony of the past Indian societies that inhabited the region remained mainly in the names of places, flora and fauna, including most fish species, and in the racial look of part of the local population.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, precious stones extracted from the Chapada Diamantina (a mountain chain in the interior of Bahia) were traded or smuggled on the route of Rio de Contas, which linked the town of Rio de Contas (upriver) to the village of São Miguel da Barra do Rio de Contas, either by animals on the “roads” (actually, trails) that ran by the river banks or by boat on the river itself. Legend says that pirates used to hide in the protection of the river, and steal the shipments of precious stones.

“The Violent Land”

Although Itacaré had always had some importance as a port for coastal navigation and exports, its importance and population grew in the beginning of the 20th Century, with the cacao rush, accompanied by struggles for land and massive immigration of drought refugees from the semiarid lands of the interior of Bahia, Sergipe and other

northeastern states. The novels by Jorge Amado “The Violent Land” (“Terras do Sem Fim,” (Amado 1942), “São Jorge dos Ilhéus” (Amado 1944), “Tocaia Grande” (Amado 1984), “Gabriela, Cravo e Canela” (Amado 1963) among others are considered accurate portraits of those beginnings in Southern Bahia when life was worth little, and pioneers made their own law by the force of guns, violence, and falsification of land titles. In the preface of one of his books, Jorge Amado describes his personal experience growing up in the region:

The cacao lands, a region embracing all of the southern part of the state of Bahia in Brazil, were fertilized with blood. They were conquered foot by foot in ferocious struggles of indescribable violence. They were barbarous lands, where banditry and death, implacable hatred and the cruelest revenge flourished... Men had set out to conquer the forest, to clear it and transform the landscape and the economy of a vast area. But those who set out were many, and they went armed. As though there were not land enough and to spare for all, they fought one another, disputing each foot of that humid earth, ideal for the planting of cacao. At the very time the seedlings were being planted, crosses were being set up to mark the spots where the brave had fallen, victims of ambushes or of encounters between hired gunmen... I witnessed encounters of the cacao “colonels,” fights to the death, when bullets whistled through the night in both jungle and cities (Amado 1989:vii).

These pioneers’ hard work cutting down the forest and planting cacao trees (*Theobroma cacao*), and their courage to face violence and tropical diseases were recognized and praised as the explanation for their wealth:

“It was not the effects of foreign arms, it was not the gold from rich purses, it was not the support of strong governments, but the constancy of modest men, the intrepidity of the national worker, whose only capital was their arms, which made [the cacao crop] triumphant” (my translation of the text attributed to Joaquim Araújo Pinho, transcribed in Silva 1919b:289).

The cacao economy created fortunes overnight, mainly in Ilhéus. Itacaré also has the testimony of that wealth, represented by the *casarões* (mansions) in town and in the

old cacao plantations. The owners of large plantations called themselves *coronéis*⁹ and they also “owned” local politics and social life. In the beginning, *coronéis* fought among themselves for the possession of land that was initially not documented. Peasant workers were attracted from the semi-arid region of Bahia and other states, such as Sergipe, with promises of wealth. When they arrived in the cacao estates, the debt-peonage system kept them captives.

The dream of most immigrants, of owning some land and becoming rich planting cacao, was rarely fulfilled. Most died poor in the plantations or served as *jagunços* (gunmen) in the private armies maintained by the *coronéis* in their war for land, fighting Indians and other *jagunços*, losing their lives for promises of land and wealth created by the “golden fruit” (cacao). Later, when the land situation became more stable, the *coronéis* consolidated their power, also controlling the state and the services it provided.

In the cacao region, debt-peonage kept rural workers attached to the cacao estates and small farmers loyal to a particular *coronel*. As discussed by Popkin (1979) in Southeast Asia, patrons in the Brazilian cacao region tried to maintain their positions and exploitative relations in relation to peasants. Their resources were “invested not only to improve the security and subsistence of the client, but to keep relations dyadic and prevent the client's acquisition of any skills that might lead to different balances of power” (Popkin 1979:27). According to Popkin, patrons try to prevent peasants from acquiring literacy and market skills, from developing other commercial and political relations, and from organizing for collective action. Indeed, in the cacao plantations, education was often denied to the workers and their families; and commercial and

⁹ Colonels: Coronel (sing.); coronéis (pl.)

political relations were monopolized by the *coronéis*. Exploitative relations were maintained and cooperation among the poor was not enough to promote social change.

In southern Bahia, the dependence on the *coronéis* may have prevented rural people from openly questioning the unequal distribution of resources and, therefore, from increasing their access to them. In a Marxist sense, class identity unites those who do not have the property of the means of production, against those who have them and use such property to exploit the surplus value produced by the work of those who do not own the means of production. Such an identity could not fully develop among the farm workers in the region.

In Itacaré and the cacao region, as the *coronéis* also controlled the state, their disempowering influence on the peasants was overwhelming. In such an oppressive situation, resistance is the main political strategy left to peasants (Scott 1989). Popkin and Scott are two authors in academic opposition, but both seem to make sense in Itacaré: because peasants could not openly question inequality, they took the alternative strategies pointed out by Scott (1976; 1989): they morally demanded that patrons helped them when they were in dire situations, and they used resistance as their main political strategy.

However, the wealth of cacao growers did not last. In addition to market fluctuations, in the 1990s, the witches' broom (*Crinipelis perniciososa*) disease decimated the cacao plantations in the region. Thousands of rural workers were fired and had to find other occupations, which caused urbanization and emigration. Because the tourism economy had not boomed yet, the only alternatives were fishing and public jobs, adding

competition to the urban population of Itacaré, part of it already involved in fishing activities.

However, the sons and grandsons of the *coronéis*, unchallenged by any rising new economic sector, continued to win their elections based on paternalism and populism among a population of impoverished uneducated peasants, overwhelmed by the speed of the changes. Even though the cacao elite of Itacaré did not have economic power, they maintained political power. They controlled the state, and the material flows to the local population derived from it. There was a potential class conflict regarding the control of the state, but the vertical alliances prevented it from emerging.

In democracy, the control of the state depends on winning elections. In Itacaré, this originated a (sometimes shocking) political economy, in which votes were exchanged for jobs and other small benefits, and chunks of the electorate were controlled by a series of intermediaries, such as patrons, community leaders and directors of associations. These electoral chunks were negotiated in the local political game and were a typical feature of the politics in Northeastern Brazil, known in its more extreme form as the “corral system.” A way to acquire legitimacy and show possible control over a chunk of the electorate was to provide evidence of political support. The ability to mobilize a community meeting, for example, was such evidence and, in the political economy of Itacaré, attendance the meetings acquired value and became a political currency just like other forms or signs of political support.

Colônia de Pesca Z-18

The system of *colônias de pesca* (fishing guilds) was established by the Brazilian government as a framework within which the organization of fishers should take place. The *colônias* are grouped in state federations and a national confederation, and are the

main interlocutors between fishers and the government. They are responsible for the distribution of a series of social security benefits provided by the government, and for documentation functions. Today, the system seems outdated. Instead of being organizations for political representation of the fishers, the *colônias* became parastate organizations that did not represent the fishers with legitimacy.

The Colônia de Pesca Z-18 (Fishers' Guild, Zone 18) of Itacaré, or simply "Colônia," was founded in the 1960s by local fishers, but was not different from the fishers' guilds elsewhere regarding representation. The first buildings, which still serve the fishers, were built by local fishers, such as Ízio, around 25 years ago. The first presidents were also fishers, and the founders were proud to tell me that they "carried stones on their backs" to build the initial installations of the Colônia, which changed little over time. Later, fishers lost their leadership position in the Colônia, and the directors started to come from the traditional cacao elite.

In the beginning, the emphasis of the Colônia was on supporting the fishers. However, it seems that the Colônia had always been involved in municipal politics, as part of the local political economy. Some of the former presidents who were fishers became municipal councilmen, which provided them with a stable income and other opportunities. Nevertheless, the organization was taken over by people who were not fishers, which were associated with the former cacao elite at about the same time the cacao economy crashed, in the 1990s.

The fall of the cacao economy may explain why the fishers lost control of the Colônia. The increasing needs of the urban community of Itacaré for social assistance could be fulfilled by the Colônia, which provided cheap social security benefits, such as

“unemployment insurance,” paid by the government for the periods in which fishing of some species was forbidden (*defeso* periods). The annual contribution paid to the government through the Colônia was lower than the benefits received for the *defeso*, and in addition, provided retirement benefits for people in informal occupations. As a result, an increasing number of people who were not fishers became members in order to have access to social benefits. To the new directors, it was not in their political interest to take too seriously the verification of the activity of membership applicants. Another populist way to politically use the Colônia was the emphasis on low fish prices to the consumer, therefore paying less to the fishers.

To maintain their control over the local population, the traditional elite (then without their economic power) seemingly tried to control local organizations that could provide paternalistic assistance to a population facing deep economic depression. This change in emphasis, which did not represent the fishers and their needs, caused a decrease in the participation of the fishers, who also started to seek the Colônia just for the social security benefits, if at all. They did not trust the directors. However, in the elections, the directors were the ones to control who could vote because only those who paid their dues had the right to vote, and I heard that some fishers were promised to have their debts forgiven so that they could vote for the elite’s candidate.

I observed the process of the elections for the Colônia in 2000, during my dissertation fieldwork. Prior to the election, several candidates were mentioned. It seemed that Cleandro, a vocal member of the traditional elite, was going to be a candidate. Ulysses, then treasurer, wanted to run for president too. Zé Poveira, a fisher with traditional leadership, was also trying to organize a *chapa* (board of directors) to run with

him. And there was Catu, a Task Group member who was encouraged by the community, other TG members and me, to lead a *chapa*. Catu and Ulysses were the most popular, but Catu feared that he would be left alone by the fishers, that participation would not increase under his leadership, and that his work would not be recognized.

Some fishers thought that Ulysses was a good choice because he was a public servant allocated to work in the Colônia by the mayor, so he would have time. There was a lot of gossip about who the next mayor was going to support. After a lot of debate and political articulation, Ulysses put together a *chapa* headed by Fernando (the same president), keeping his position as treasurer, and including the owner of the local trawler boat company whose interests were against all other local fishers, and another public servant member of the traditional elite. To my surprise, Catu's name was included in the fiscal council of Ulysses' *chapa*. All the other candidates did not register their candidacies and Fernando was elected again, but in practice, the fishers said, Ulysses was the president, because he was the one who did the work to provide the few benefits that the Colônia gave to its members.

At the inauguration ceremony of the new board of directors, at the end of 2000, the electoral role of the Colônia became evident. Many of the traditional politicians were present at the ceremony. The master of ceremonies postured and spoke with highfalutin vocabulary and grandiloquence typical of northeastern politicians. Many of the local politicians also spoke with the same tone. As in the novels of Jorge Amado, the more difficult, the more respected was the speech. All the speakers stressed the role of the Colônia in providing cheap fish to the population of Itacaré. Strikingly absent in their

speeches was any mention to the organization's role in providing better prices, social services, social security and, mainly, political representation *to the fishers*.

Most fishers were watching through the room's open windows, standing outside, because the seats were taken by "more important people." When I was invited to speak, I talked about the proposal of the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré and its role in making the lives of fishers better. I stressed the value of the few fishers who were on the board of directors in minor positions, who were also part of the movement for the Extractive Reserve. Nevertheless, the reality was that Professor Fernando was reelected, and for at least another three years, fishers would have to put up with more of the same thing. There would be no change in representation of the fishers because the Itacaré Fishers' Association (ASPERI), the other organization that represented fishers, avoided clashes with the Colônia, tried only to represent its members, and was not so ambitious as to try to represent all fishers.

I have argued that the representation problems of the Colônia originated with the cacao crisis and the practical possibility of the Colônia providing social benefits to people who were not fishers, which increased its political value. As new members became more important, and the directors started to come from the elite, the fishers ceased to participate, focusing only on those specific points of their interest. These conjectures need more confirmation, but today the emphasis on social assistance and low fish prices for the community of Itacaré are some of the factors that discourage participation.

On the one hand, the directors of the Colônia often blamed the fishers for the low attendance at the meetings and the weak response to the attempts to mobilize the local fishing sector. For example, Colônia's directors were embarrassed before visitors such as

the officers of the Coast Guard (Capitania dos Portos, or Port Authority), but instead of politically defending the fishers against the often unreasonable demands made by the navigation codes and officers, the directors stressed a view that fishers are unreliable and not interested in complying with the law. The elite of Itacaré provided the fishers with a discourse that explained their domination; the discourse was that the fishers needed the elite because they were incompetent and uninterested in their organization.

However, although they often incorporated such views, fishers said that the Colônia's directors were not trustworthy. Participating in the Colônia might sound like endorsing them. The fishers used the same political strategies used by the region's peasants; they used resistance. Lack of participation had been a way to resist and, hopefully, decrease the interest of the elite in the organization. However, because many of the members were not fishers, and because the very idea of what a community association should do became distorted in Itacaré, the elite seemed to continue to be able to achieve their political goals using the Colônia.

This brief history of the Colônia undermines the explanatory proposition that fishers do not participate because they are individualistic due to the nature of their activities. Fishers were the founders of the Colônia, and collectively built the complex of buildings that comprise its facilities today. Once upon a time, they participated. However, the fact that fishers started to decrease their participation in the Colônia to avoid legitimization of the traditional cacao elite directors gives additional support to the idea that participation was a political currency, and that fishers used it strategically. If this strategy was not going to work to take control of the Colônia, it still made sense in an individualistic sense, so that fishers could enjoy benefits, though limited, without

working for them. In addition, they could negotiate their support for the candidates to the board of directors in exchange for private benefits. The Colônia materialized the vertical alliances of the cacao region; it could not, and would not, engage in a class conflict to reduce inequality in Itacaré.

Rise of Tourism and Environmentalism

The streets of Itacaré were narrow, except for the entrance to the town and for the boulevard by the river. Although there were some *casarões* (mansions), mainly by the river, most houses were simple, had no lawn, their doors opened right on the street, and they were built wall-to-wall.

However, in the 1990s, tourism increased and some of the houses downtown had been transformed into tourism-related businesses: tourism agencies, restaurants, gift shops, bars and *pousadas* (hostels and small hotels). The architecture of some houses had also been altered by summer residents and newcomers, with a greater use of natural materials such as timber and palm straw. New buildings, particularly, tried to feature a “Polynesian” or a rustic look. However, this metamorphosis, from a traditional agricultural town to a tourism destination, although rapid, was still in its initial stage.

The type of visitors also changed from the 1980s, when most visitors came from Salvador and nearby cities to spend their vacations in summer houses they owned in Itacaré, to the late 1990s and early 2000s, when tourists from Southern Brazil came for shorter periods and stayed in rented houses or *pousadas*. In July and in the summer (December to February) Itacaré was full of tourists. The number of tourists greatly increased with the recent paving of BA-001 state highway, which links Itacaré to Ilhéus, 65 km to the south. Before that, through two dirt roads, one to Ilhéus and the other to Ubaitaba (53 km inland), the access to the town was difficult. During the period of my

fieldwork, the main access road of that time, which links Itacaré to highway BR-101 and the town of Ubaitaba, was still unpaved. However, the state government's plan was to build a road linking Itacaré to Camamu, which would greatly reduce the distance to the state capital, Salvador, from about six hours to just four.

Most tourists in July were surfers who came from the South, from the states of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. They rented houses or stayed in *pousadas*. Many fishers and other locals rented their houses to tourists, staying with relatives or friends, in this period. However, the movement was short lived. In August, most tourists were gone. The town was calm again and the clubs where parties used to happen any day of the week closed. Parties were rarer and happened mostly on holidays.

A great part of the off-peak-season tourists were foreign, who were easily identifiable because they were normally white, contrasting with locals who had darker skin and were mostly of African descent. When I approached or walked by the tourists, I could detect idioms as diverse as English, Italian, French, and Spanish.

Sex tourism was increasing, and prostitution seemed to involve mostly foreigners obtaining sexual services from locals. During my stay, both male and female tourists were explicitly or implicitly looking for locals as sexual partners. The *capoeira*¹⁰ groups seemed to be the setting for hookups between foreign (mostly European) and southern white women and local men of African descent. There was also a house where foreign men used to stay, and where local young women used to hang out. Locals commented that it was a point of prostitution.

¹⁰ Capoeira is a form of martial art developed by the African slaves in the 18th Century, and perfected by their descendents. It is practiced like a dance to the sound of drums and berimbau, a musical instrument made of a steel string tied to a bow.

Criminality was on the rise, along with drug use, and barbarous murders in the rural areas of Itacaré became national scandals. However, Itacaré was used to receiving celebrities. In a single week, I heard that Brazilian TV host Xuxa, the Marinho family (owners of *Globo* Brazilian TV network, the largest in Brazil), popular Brazilian singer Elba Ramalho, and Gustavo Kürten¹¹, a Brazilian tennis player who was number-one in the world at the time, were all in Itacaré.

It was in the summer, however, that Itacaré crowded with all kinds of tourists from all over Brazil. Before, at the end of the low season, was also the time when the town was preparing itself to receive summer tourists. Many houses were renovated, new businesses were started, *pousadas* were painted and repaired. Construction jobs were the first to relieve the hardship of the local population, after several months of low movement of tourists and almost no income. In December, however, the movement of tourists gradually increased and peaked in the New Years' holiday.

In the 2000-2001 New Years' break the narrow streets were jammed with cars and people. Loud music was played everywhere. Most houses that were closed all year were packed with tourists, as were many of the locals' houses. The new businesses were full of customers. A singer and musician of an *axé*¹² band promoted a huge concert that

¹¹ Gustavo Kürten, or Guga for short, attracted a lot of attention as he went twice to the same restaurant, the week after he won the tournament of Rolland Garros. The restaurant doors had to be closed to avoid the crowd and, the second time, Guga opted to escape by the back door of the restaurant and walk through a trail in the forest. It happened that the access to the trail was through the land where my house was located, and I even had to hold my dog while Guga jumped the fence on his way out!

¹² *Axé music* came to be the designator term for a wide variety of rhythms from Bahia, normally associated with Carnaval, one of the most popular festivities in Brazil. The rhythms from Bahia, or "*Axé music*" (this was also the term in Portuguese), previously popular only in Bahia, became popular all over Brazil in the last two decades, and

attracted hundreds of tourists from Salvador. Almost two dozen buses tried to get into town. Some buses were allowed to disembark their passengers and ordered to return and park outside the city limits. Others were simply ordered to return. There was not a single vacant room in the *pousadas*. All available houses were rented. Some people rented their backyards to campers. At certain times of the day, walking down the streets required concentration in order not to bump into people or be run over by a car.

To complicate the situation, hundreds of tons of water lilies were brought to the sea by a recent flood of the rivers in the region. The plants died in contact with sea water and their remains drifted to the beaches and accumulated in one-meter high mounds along the shoreline, where they started to putrefy, stink, and consequently, acted as “repellents” to the tourists. The town had no infrastructure to receive all those tourists, not to mention dealing with the water lily problem, although the tourism sector and the recently elected mayor (who had not yet officially taken his post) did their best to manage what seemed to be an emergency situation. I expected that everyone would be as overwhelmed as I was.

However, when in the crowd I started to find my fisher friends and other people that were involved with business and tourism related activities, I was surprised! They were all laughs and smiles. It was just a big party! After months dead, the town was resurrecting. The people, impoverished by so many months of “drought” (the low tourism season), were happy to cash in with the visitors. The restaurants were crowded. And so were the hotels, supermarkets and stores. Employment opportunities opened up. The

harnessed by a phonographic industry eager for profits, became bestsellers with millions of CDs sold and creating fortunes for some of the musicians, such as this one, who had an estate by the coast of Itacaré.

promise of development seemed fulfilled, with cash flowing in and a recently elected mayor taking his post.

The new mayor's alliance with the tourism sector was expected to change the retrograde municipal government into a progressive and efficient one. Many people were promised jobs during election time, and that too was pleasing many. Soon, many fishers would be employed as night-guards and as life-guards. The payment was low, just one minimum wage (about 100 dollars per month at the time), but it would be reliable and could be combined with other activities. Thus, almost everyone was optimistic and happy.

Power on the Move

In Itacaré, development, tourism and the environment were the same topic. One of the reasons was that many entrepreneurs in the tourism sector were also involved in environmental projects. On the one hand, this made their participation in the environmental debate suspicious, since some of them, when developing their businesses, ended up harming or threatening the environment, or used the idea of environmental protection to favor their business. On the other hand, it made development plans almost always somehow linked to an environmental proposal.

Thus, the most politically active members of the tourism sector were also involved in the environmental projects. After 1993 with the creation of a protected area in the municipality, the *Área de Proteção Ambiental Itacaré/Serra Grande*, which regulated and limited both tourism and agricultural activities in the municipality, and several projects to establish it carried out mainly by an environmental NGO from Ilhéus, the environmentalists emerged as a new political elite, together with the tourism entrepreneurs.

The tourism sector's alliance with the environmentalists was apparent, for example, in the two resorts that opened on the coast of Itacaré with an ecotourism proposal, and in the proposal, espoused by the environmentalists, that the control of access to the beaches be made by the landowners who had lands surrounding the beaches. To the environmentalists, tourist entrepreneurs and newcomers (the new elite in Itacaré), this was the most practical way to limit damages to the beaches with the increase in the number of tourists, and guarantee the quality of the tourist experience and a sustainable development for Itacaré. To many of them, private landowners should even be allowed to charge tourists for access to the beach.

However, according to Brazilian law, the beaches were public and no private interest should be allowed to regulate access to them. The environmentalists of Itacaré were accomplices with the tourism industry in the same philosophy, one that placed the tourism entrepreneur, not the local native population, at the center of development-and-environment-related decisions. Not only this; their ecotourism-based development proposal was elitist. They wanted to limit the access of the poor to the beaches.

With all the booming tourism economy in Itacaré, power was also on the move. The cacao elite, previously economically powerful, were decadent but still dominated local politics.

However, economically, the tourism sector grew in importance. Rumors in the town suggest that the owners of the two resorts recently opened in Itacaré contributed to the campaigns of the two main mayor candidates, each on a different side¹³.

¹³ One resort was locally owned by former cacao planters while the other was owned by southern Brazilians, which may explain the different alliances.

The environmentalists (who often were also involved with small tourism-related businesses) also became politically (but still not electorally) important with the creation of the Itacaré/Serra Grande Environmental Protection Area. Their power consisted in the mobilization of the state and federal government agencies and the justice system to defend the environment, which often conflicted with traditional local politics and angered the local elite and part of the local population.

Environmental initiatives tended to use participatory approaches but were not very effective in achieving legitimacy among locals. Instead, participation frustrated many people, particularly the urban population, and created suspicion towards subsequent initiatives such as the promotion of the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré, and the PRA exercise for its creation.

Instituto Ambiental, a Local Environmental NGO

Instituto Ambiental was the NGO that pioneered environmentalism in Itacaré. I heard several contradictory accounts of how the organization developed, but it seems that it started with significant local participation and then was taken over by newcomers. These newcomers were part of the new elite of Itacaré, a community of people who sought the region hoping for a life in a tropical paradise, refugees from big cities, usually from southern Brazil, who opened *pousadas*, restaurants and other tourism-related businesses in Itacaré. At the same time, the NGO started to acquire a professional outlook, and to write projects to remunerate the work of its members, which often excluded the locals who had no professional education, and caused resentment.

Rumors about the use of the money that Instituto Ambiental was requesting for projects on behalf of the community of Itacaré started to circulate in Itacaré (later, similar rumors affected the Task Group). Together with environmental restrictions promoted by

the group on the timber industry in the area (one of the main economic activities in the municipality in the late 1980s and early 1990s), this caused increased rejection of the NGO in the town. The community accused Instituto Ambiental of taking advantage of the community without sharing the benefits (i.e., the money for the payments for development and conservation professionals) or producing meaningful results in the community. In addition, some of its members were perceived with suspicion because their environmental behavior was contradictory (they did not practice what they preached) and their attitude was considered arrogant.

One example of their problems with the community was that, according to people in Porto de Trás community, Instituto Ambiental wrote a project that was justified by a description of social problems that, Instituto Ambiental supposed, were present in the community, such as criminality and prostitution. The community was deeply offended by such a description. This and some other gaffes by Instituto Ambiental members made the community break with the organization and resist any project it attempted.

During my fieldwork in Itacaré, Instituto Ambiental was mostly quiet. Some of its environmentalists became professionals in the Environmental Education Program of the Itacaré/Serra Grande Environmental Protection Area, a project carried out by an NGO from Ilhéus. Despite some interesting results of this Program, former Instituto Ambiental members brought with them their negative reputation, and naturally made new gaffes. This created a moderate rejection to the Program in Itacaré, in general, with greater problems in some neighborhoods (such as Porto de Trás), rival organizations and the local elite.

This rejection of Instituto Ambiental negatively affected the promotion of the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré because one of the two local volunteers who agreed to work with the Task Group was a former member of the organization. He also worked for the Environmental Education Program of the APA, which increased his rejection by the community, particularly in Porto de Trás. The participation of other Instituto Ambiental members or former members in the initial Extractive Reserve meetings (prior to my fieldwork) was apparently the cause of much political friction in the movement for the Reserve.

When the Task Group was formed, members started to fear that the help of this volunteer was going to create rejection of the community towards the group. This, his political views (which were sometimes considered elitist by TG members), and some mistakes that he made while the TG was promoting the Reserve, made the group reject him, too.

Locals vs. Outsiders: A Discursive Fight

The environmentalists were mostly newcomers who faced moderate to strong rejection by locals. The rejection seemed to be as much a result of culture shock as of a clash of interests. On the one hand, newcomers apparently had adaptation problems in Itacaré due to a frustration of their expectations of living in a “paradise” (which in day-to-day life was not so appealing), and of developing their businesses (the same laidback spirit that first attracted them would later appear as laziness and slackness). Soon, their views of the natives were not so positive anymore. Natives themselves had their own issues of adapting to such a great number of newcomers, who seemed elitist and greedy to them.

On the other hand, the environmentalist struggle was limiting the ways in which locals could meet their subsistence needs and economic interests. It was not only a clash of interests of uppers and lowers, but also a clash between uppers, both traditional and newcomers. The clash between the traditional elite and the newcomers resulted in a dispute for the support of the lower class population, which included the fishers.

Natives to Itacaré fought the environmentalists by pointing out the contradictions between their discourse and their practices (Kent 2000). The critique made by the natives of Itacaré highlighted the bias of the environmentalists' agendas toward their business interests. Another discursive weapon used by the traditional local elite was *nativismo*, the common (and vertical) identity of the locally born in the discrimination against outsiders. For example, *nativismo* favored the hiring of locals for technical positions even when there were better outside professionals available in the job market. It also favored some businesses against others.

Some newcomers were very competent at overcoming these prejudices and establishing good social ties in the community. This was the case, for example, of José of the Senzala Restaurant, who had a friendlier attitude and provided cheap meals for the community. José was also from Bahia, from a different municipality, and that seemed to be an asset in his adaptation in Itacaré; he could understand locals better, and he would not stand out as an outsider so obviously.

However, in agreement with Scott's (1976) moral economy argument, outsiders would always face rejection until they proved that they were morally committed to helping the community, even spending some of their profits in Itacaré. José did so, as did the owner of a larger pousada, who apparently had a good reputation among fishers.

The *nativismo* discourse was more or less institutionalized with the Sons of Itacaré Association. This discourse was a weapon of the local elite against the newcomers, but was convincing to the local poor. The poor were able to use such a discourse to force newcomers to engage in the same paternalistic moral obligations as the traditional elite did, which was illustrated by the case of José, described above: the only good newcomers were generous newcomers. However, it would not originate further social change or empowerment.

In addition to the coercion of newcomers to engage in the local moral economy, *nativismo* had an explanatory value. In the rural areas, with the tourism boom, outsiders were buying large tracts of land by the beach, and pressing the local population to move out. Among the fishers, competition was not only of locals against the new tourism elite, but was also against other fishers, either newcomers or seasonal visitors, and against the industrial fishing sector. Thus, *nativismo* made great sense, even to the poor.

However, it also had drawbacks: when fishers rejected newcomer fishers, such as the members of ASPERI, they also decreased their power as a class or category against industrial fishing, for example, or against the local elite. *Nativismo* allowed a vertical alliance between the local poor and the local backward elite, which insisted on populist politics and had a narrow view of the development possibilities for Itacaré, and prevented the emergence of explicit class conflict.

Again, the traditional elite of Itacaré provided the poor with discourses that could explain their reality but contributed to their domination. Regarding the fishers, the Colônia de Pescadores was an example. It was created by fishers to represent their interests, but with time, other people of the traditional elite took over, spreading the belief

that fishers did not have the capacity to manage their own organizations. In Itacaré, leaders of the Colônia and of the traditional elite, and even some people in the environmental sector, expressed their opinion that fishers were individualist, lazy, backward, and stupid. to justify the lack of participation, local poverty, and the failure of previous community projects. These ideas were incorporated into fishers' views, as many expressed the same opinion to me, lowering their self-esteem and motivation to participate in community projects. Thus, the "emic" explanation expressed by some fishers does not seem so "emic" in the sense that they are generated by the fishers. It seemed to be the *emic explanation of the elite*.

The new elite also did not provide any hope. Uncountable times I heard that the natives were hopeless, backward, lazy and stupid. The discourses supplied to the poor by either the new or the traditional elite would not contribute to their empowerment.

Fishers' Association of Itacaré

The Fishers' Association of Itacaré (Associação dos Pescadores e Marisqueiras de Itacaré–ASPERI), at first glance, seemed an efficient organization, responsive to the fishers' needs. With support from the Government of Bahia, ASPERI's infrastructure included a two-store building with an office, fish store, ice-making machine, and refrigerated chamber. They also had 24 motorboats recently acquired with a loan from *Banco do Nordeste* (a regional development bank for Northeastern Brazil). *Professor Raimundo*, who first invited me to develop community organizing work in Itacaré, led the process to create the association, getting the fishers together, making contacts, creating ASPERI and obtaining support from the government.

However, Raimundo's organization was not as organized as it seemed. According to some of the Association's directors, a couple of months after my first visit to Itacaré,

fishers started to complain that something was wrong with the finances of the organization. Under pressure, Raimundo renounced, and alleging health problems, vanished from Itacaré, taking with him all the documents that could show the kinds of transactions he was doing with Association's money. For the next 2 years, at least, the organization would struggle to balance its financial situation.

The Association's elected secretary, the fisherman called Penguin, assumed the post of president until the next election. During his mandate, I carried out the course in participatory rural appraisal for local technicians and the course in community leadership for the fishers, both with a focus on the Extractive Reserve (more is described on this later in this dissertation). When I came back for fieldwork, Pedro, Penguin's brother, was the new president, defeating his own brother in a disputed election which placed the two brothers on opposite sides of ASPERI's politics.

However, the outlook was much better in ASPERI than in the Colônia. Pedro was a fisher and as far as I could see, did his best to represent and defend his constituency and manage the Association efficiently. Pedro had a traditional and clever (but conservative) leadership style; he respected all established leaders in his community, valued official ceremonies, and attended religious festivities of the Catholic Church. He was less concerned with empowerment and change than with doing a good job in the Association. Avoiding the isolation that could victimize him for being an immigrant to Itacaré, he hung out by the Banca do Peixe, where most native fishers gathered and where the Colônia is located, instead of only by the Forte, where ASPERI is located. He projected an image of stability, maturity, and of a "family man." His wife and son were always present with him in meetings and ceremonies.

Because ASPERI did not intend to represent the interests of all fishers in Itacaré, and because the Colônia did not do that job either, the fishers had no channels to assert themselves politically. Such a channel could be provided by the Reserve movement, through the Task Group. However, Pedro's effective leadership style was different than the main leaders of the Task Group, which included an irreverent single father, a wife who did not have children, single men who were still going after women, and an eccentric peasant who preached care for the environment. It was easier for Pedro to inspire *respeito* (social respect).

Links to a Wider Context

Several of the conflicts and changes in Itacaré did not have local origins. To begin with, the initial occupation of the region by the cacao plantations was driven by the forces of the international market. Its fall was related to a decline in cacao prices, to the arrival of the witches' broom disease at a time when the producers did not have enough capital to fight it, and when the government was cutting support to research organizations due to the neoliberal policies of the 1980s and 1990s. The way out of the crisis in the region was tourism development.

Despite the apparent lack of vocation of the local elite to promote tourism, the state government decided to invest in paving the BA-001 highway linking Ilhéus to Itacaré, and to build a new road between Itacaré and Camamu, in the north, which would decrease the driving time from Salvador (the two-million-inhabitant state capital) to Itacaré from six hours to four. This would be a major impulse in the tourism activity in southern Bahia, generating revenues for the state government. However, building the new road required a loan from the Interamerican Development Bank (IDB), in a new era in

which environmental watchdogs were pressing international donors and financial institutions for environmentally friendly behavior.

Regionally, an NGO from Ilhéus supported by a large international NGO, was able to capitalize on this new pro-environment atmosphere, and developed a leading role in guiding policies as a partner of the state environmental agency, the Centro de Recursos Ambientais (CRA). In Itacaré, the newcomer members of the local environmental NGO were the first to anticipate the changes and the opportunities brought both by tourism and environmental concerns. Some joined the NGO from Ilhéus and strengthened their role in the local politics, and others continued to invest in tourism-related businesses.

Now, another wider context development was playing a role. The extractive reserve model created in the Amazon by the rubber tappers in the 1980s began to be adapted to marine areas. The environmentalists of Itacaré saw the opportunity presented by the model, and brought the discussion to Itacaré, and the cause was adopted by ASPERI. I was part of a wider context too, as was PRA.

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter discusses the history of Itacaré and its consequences for fishers' participation. In 2001, Itacaré was changing dramatically in a transition from a cacao plantation economy to a tourism economy. Previously, the cacao economy maintained strong inequality and vertical dyadic relations between peasants and landlords. Such a situation forced peasants' participation to develop in a resistance type: *opposition participation* was expressed by *lack of participation*.

This characteristic of peasant life during the good old days of the cacao economy, once such an economy started to decay, may have been reinforced as the *coronéis* lost economic power but kept political power. In a way, the crash of the cacao economy

placed peasants in strategic position in which they could negotiate their support to community leaders, who in turn could negotiate it with politicians. Participation, as a demonstration of political support, became a political currency, and acquired political meaning and value. However, alliances and identities in Itacaré remained vertical and class conflicts remained suppressed.

This chapter also shows how the two elites (the traditional elite of former cacao growers and the new elite of environmentalists and tourism entrepreneurs) competed for the political support of the local population. In spite of that, both groups had negative views of the fishers.

However, the local elite's *nativismo* discourse was able to frame the opposition between the two elites and the poor of Itacaré in a way that preserved the previous vertical alliances of the cacao era. *Nativismo* maintained a vertical identity which prevented fishers from openly questioning inequality and politically organizing to improve their situation. Instead, fishers started to blame themselves for their lack of participation, and used *nativismo* to force newcomers into the paternalistic moral economy of Itacaré. *Nativismo* also increased the suspicions towards environmental projects and worsened the interpretations of their faults by the local community. Communities with such a negative experience would become more suspicious of projects involving participation, more likely to oppose them, and more likely to withdraw their participation as a form of resistance. These conjectures are discussed later in this dissertation.

Finally, these changes in Itacaré were triggered by events that were not local: lower international cacao prices, a plant disease that arrived from the Amazon, tourism

development promoted by the state government with financial assistance from the IDB, environmental regulations springing from global environmentalism, and the proposal for the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré. All these factors, acting together, were affecting how power was distributed in Itacaré, the political profile of community organizations, and the reactions of locals towards community participation.

This chapter suggests that lack of participation in meetings and collective projects in Itacaré was historically related to a resistance against the initiative or to a use of participation as a political currency to acquire benefits. On the one hand, resistance was the only political strategy available to peasants over a long period of time. On the other, a complex system of intermediaries tried to control the voters in Itacaré, and promoted the exchange of political support for benefits. Participation in meetings and collective action was a sign of such political support, acquired a value, and was often conditionally given. The views that fishers were individualistic and uninterested in improving their situation expressed by these intermediaries were just a way to justify their failure to mobilize participation when there was nothing with which to reward individual participants.

In addition, these intermediaries became the established leaders of their communities not because they were likable or charismatic, nor because they were wise and trustworthy, but because they were able to intermediate the exchange of political support for material benefits. In some cases, they were related to people in the elite. In others, they were the only literate people in the community, or the most charming to the elite and external agents. The opinion of the communities about these “leaders” was rarely very positive. The fact that these were leaders without leadership prevented the emergence of any type of strong and legitimate political representation of the fishers.

This corroborates the political aspects explanatory proposition (EP4), which puts forward the idea that the fishers attend community meetings strategically, and that they often withdraw their participation to show resistance against some proposal with which they disagree.

This chapter also points out the importance of the discursive battles, and how identity shaped social conflicts in Itacaré. The *nativismo* discourse, along with negative characterizations of the fishers, was the prevalent explanation available to the fishers for their problems. *Nativismo* framed the views of local fishers, and their previous experience with participatory projects carried out by the environmentalists reinforced such views. Communities where this experience was stronger, such as Porto de Trás, were the most suspicious about participatory projects. In addition, in the Banca, where the Colônia was hijacked by the local elite, suspicions even about locals were common. This supports the previous experience and credibility proposition (EP7); and the credibility of the PRA team (EP8) should greatly influence participation, particularly in these communities (which is shown in Chapter 7). Moreover, Chapter 7 shows that in the rural areas, away from these discursive battles, and where there was little experience with participatory projects, there was much less resistance to the PRA meetings (urban vs. rural proposition, EP6).

Vertical alliances and identities prevented the emergence of vertical conflicts that could lead to the empowerment of the poor. In order to act collectively, fishers needed a horizontal identity, a class consciousness. In chapters 7 and 8, I argue that such identity started to appear in the Extractive Reserve movement and in the communities during the

PRA process. When such an identity started to develop, the motivation to participate in the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré meetings increased.

CHAPTER 5 COOPERATION AND INDIVIDUALISM IN THE FISHING ACTIVITY

This chapter examines participation, cooperation and individualism among fishers by looking at their fishing practices and resource use issues they were facing in Itacaré.

The main purpose is to examine

- The argument that fishing activities are solitary and originate an individualistic culture (EP2, culture proposition)
- The argument that fishers free-ride when they can benefit from a collective good without contributing (EP3).

This discussion is mainly based on the literature, my own observation of fishing practices, and the stories that fishers told me. Action testing of these propositions is discussed in Chapter 7.

The effects of the modernization of the fisheries in Brazil and the relationship between fishers and the state are discussed as a source of mistrust and the context for resistance and individualistic behavior (EP4, political aspects proposition), despite moral norms (EP5, multidimensional costs and benefits proposition). Finally, I discuss how the extractive reserve model created by the rubber tappers in the Brazilian Amazon can provide a context of reduced competition and increased trust to the fishers of Itacaré, and argue that the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré can reduce individualistic behavior.

Is the Fishing Activity Solitary?

My first fishing trip with the fishers of Itacaré gave me insights into their capacity for cooperation. At dawn, just after a rain shower, we set out to sea. *Yuri*, Pedro's boat,

was a typical eight-meter-long boat like others bought by ASPERI. The day before, Lucas, another fisherman whom I had met at the port in front of the Colônia, had introduced me to Pedro, a relative newcomer fisherman from Barra de Carvalho, a town located by the mouth of the Camamu Bay, to the north of Itacaré. Later, in 2000, he became ASPERI's new president; his brother, known as Penguin, was acting president at the time, and Pedro was then the association's secretary. I was looking for the opportunity to go on a fishing trip before I started the two courses I would give to the fishing community and local volunteers in 1999, and was glad that Pedro invited me to go in his boat.

As we planned, I met with him at *Banca do Peixe* (the fish stand or fish market managed by the Colônia), at 5 AM. It was still dark when I walked through the stone-paved deserted streets, and arrived at Banca do Peixe. Many fishermen were there with Pedro, telling jokes, making fun of each other, and talking about fishing trips and the national soccer championship. I noticed the difference between their behaviors during the afternoons, when fishermen seemed sleepy and lazy lounging on the sidewalk under the shade of tall trees, and at that time, just before daylight, when they were so alert.

It started to rain heavily, but it did not last long. As soon as the rain was gone, Pedro, his crew and I left the other fishermen and walked towards the point on the shoreline closest to Pedro's boat. Soon, we were onboard and breaking to the open sea by the *barra* (the confluence between the river and the sea). The sun was almost rising, everything was dark blue, and the big waves breaking by the *barra* made me worry a bit. "Do you get seasick?" Pedro asked me. "I never had that problem," I said. "Most people that come with us for the first time do," he said, as his boat started to sail up and down

the waves that were higher and more defined at that point, still close to the shore. Some waves were breaking not very far from us, some 100 meters, as we crossed them.

Pedro and his crew were friendly and taught me about the sea and about being a fisherman in Itacaré. Pedro told me about the system that they use to locate their nets and fishing spots, triangulating their position using landmarks, such as mountains and trees, as references, which they could sight from the sea, kilometers away. Only people that were able to recognize landmarks and determine their position in the sea in relation to fishing spots could captain a boat¹⁴. Yet, according to Pedro, exposure to sunlight and salty water gradually destroyed eyesight (essential to locate fishing spots).

The rainy weather made that fishing trip even more thrilling. Sometimes, because of the rain, we lost sight of land and I wondered how they managed to know directions and the location of the nets used to catch lobsters. Mamá pointed out to me the tiny floating flags that marked the net, very far away. It took me a while to see the closest one. While the boat approached the flag, Pedro stayed at the rudder, and Mamá and Poca (the crew was composed of three fishermen) went to the front of the boat, and started pulling the net. When the boat was lowered by the wave, they pulled fast, stopping and just holding the net when the boat was raised by the wave, using the force of the wave to lift the net from the sea.

Their coordination was impressive; there was no need for talking. When someone needed help, others attended quickly without being asked. Just looking at each other was

¹⁴ Kottak (1992) disputes this, what he calls an emic version to explain social inequality in Arembepe, on the north coast of Bahia. He argues that captains were just more hardworking people, and that the eyesight/triangulation explanation was used by the fishermen as an excuse for those who were not as successful and as an explanation for social inequality in the community.

enough. Pedro, who controlled the rudder and the engine, sometimes also went to the front to help his crew, and returned quickly to the back to control the engine and the rudder again, and to drain water from the boat. Everybody was busy on the boat but me. I was confused about what to do, and just tried to understand what they were doing and to stay out of their way. What I saw certainly was nothing like a "difficulty to cooperate" on the part of fishers. It was precise teamwork.

The nets were lifted; the catch of lobsters was detangled from the net and thrown on the deck. Together with the catch, lots of spiny shells, useless fish, algae, coral pieces, and trash were brought up and had to be quickly removed from the net. Sometimes a net was stuck in the sea floor, entangled in corals or rocks, and extra effort of men and machine was used to pull it up, breaking the coral, tearing pieces and opening large holes in the net. After harvesting the catch from the nets, which was not very impressive (just a few lobsters), and launching them back in the sea, by 10:30 AM we were heading back to Itacaré, and together the crew started to prepare a *moqueca*, typical seafood dish of Bahia (a small shark in this case), prepared with palm oil, onions, green peppers and tomatoes.

Soon we had in front of us the tricky part where, every year, boats shipwrecked: the *barra*. Waves were breaking to the right, and the rocky shore was on our left. The path of calmer and deeper waters that lead to the river by the *farol* (lighthouse) was narrow.

The boat was slower than the waves and surfed some of them, requiring skill from Mamá, who drove the boat at the time and had to compensate with the rudder against the sudden rotation force applied to the boat by the wave. If the right moves were not made at the right time, the wave could roll us over. When we arrived at the port, we ate the

moqueca with *farinha* (manioc flour), while they joked about the food, the fishing trip and every one of us.

If fishers were individualistic regarding participation in collective projects, it was not due to a supposed “solitary nature” of fishing activities. At least part of EP2 (the link between individualistic culture and the fishing activity) was flawed. Off-shore fishing, as illustrated by Pedro and his crew, was *not* a solitary activity and required a great deal of cooperation, teamwork and social interaction. The fishing trip described above, one of my first experiences with the fishers of Itacaré, made me skeptical of propositions that explained lack of cooperation and participation among fishers as a result of individualism, which were offered later by the fishers themselves. Later trips showed the same sort of cooperation.

However, in Itacaré there were also fishers involved in other fishing modalities. Could some of these modalities be individualistic and solitary?

Urban fishers did not only fish in motorized boats, like Pedro and his crew. Some also practiced inshore fishing from canoes, using line and hook, which could be solitary. Women involved in crab fishing in the mangrove swamps also worked in small teams or alone, but they often lived in crowded neighborhoods, sharing work and cooperating on several occasions.

Some other fishers were involved in *calão* (purse seine net fishing), a fishing technique in which cooperation was a requirement because a large number of fishers used one or more canoes to cast their nets close to shore. One end of the net stayed at the beach with part of the team, while a sub-team used a canoe to cast the net in a semicircle, returning to the beach, where the other fishers pulled the net from the water. In addition

to the team directly involved with the *calão*, many other people helped in hope of obtaining a share of the smaller fish.

Therefore, most fishers of Itacaré were involved in activities that required cooperation and a great deal of social interaction. The importance of cooperation for the success of a fisher not only in fishing is illustrated by Table 5-1, which shows the result of a participatory exercise that I facilitated in Itacaré, before my dissertation fieldwork, in which a group of fishers discussed their main accomplishments and the personal qualities and skills needed to realize them (Weigand Jr. 2000b).

Table 5-1: Accomplishments of the fishers of Itacaré and necessary personal qualities and skills to realize them.

	Accomplishments	Community work	Purchase of a fishing boat	Promoting a party	Fishing	Learning new things	Traveling	Working in a factory	Agriculture	Sewing	Teaching	Handicraft	Buying a house/a freezer	Total
Needed qualities/skills														
Courage		3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	36
Will power		3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	36
Knowledge		3	2	3	3	2	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	32
Physical strength		1	1	2	3	1	1	3	3	1	2	1	2	21
Luck		2	3	3	3	1	3	2	3	3	1	3	3	30
Flexibility/improvisation		3	3	3	3	1	3	2	2	1	3	1	3	28
Agility		1	1	1	3	1	3	2	2	1	3	1	3	22
Resistance		2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	33
Quick thinking		2	1	3	2	3	1	1	2	1	3	1	3	23
Planning		3	3	3	2	3	3	1	3	3	3	3	3	33
Unity		3	3	2	3	2	3	3	3	1	2	1	2	28
Respect		3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	2	30
Dealing with people		3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	36
Listening carefully		3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	34
Responsibility		3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	36

(Adapted from Weigand Jr. 2000b).

Fishers ranked the qualities and skills from 1 to 3 according to their perceived importance. “Unity,” “respect,” “dealing with people,” “listening carefully” and “responsibility” were all qualities related to cooperation. “Union” (the closest concept to “cooperation”) is ranked high for “fishing” and low for activities such as “handicraft” and “sewing”; and ranked medium for “teaching” and “promoting a party.”

Modernization of the Fisheries

Until the 1970s, most of the fishing communities of Bahia had a relative degree of autonomy in managing their resources. Although fishers have always participated in the market, they avoided relying on the state to solve their resource use problems. Even though some fishers were heavily dependent on creditors and middlemen, they were "their own bosses." Fishers said that "*a vida aqui é difícil, mas liberal*" ("life is hard, but free") (Cordell 1989:130). This was true even in serious disputes, when "fishermen feel they have the right to avenge injustice and are not inclined to seek help from police in nearby towns" (Cordell 1989:142). Fishers' use of unclaimed mangroves and sea water for subsistence, their refusal to get help from the state, and development of their own rules of resource use seem to agree with the argument of an *uncaptured peasantry*.

Analyzing peasants in Africa, Hyden (1980) describes how peasants, just like Brazilian fishers, resisted state policies by withdrawal and nonparticipation. Tanzanian peasants relied on the subsistence economy and village democracy. However, there are some differences that make the case of fishers not so typical of Hyden's argument. Peasants in Tanzania withdrew not only from state assistance but also from the market. Fishers in Bahia, though, have always been integrated into the market. Moreover, Hyden's argument is that autonomy is power *when the elite depend on peasants*. However, the relationship between fishers and the elites of Bahia is not one of dependence of the latter on the former, but one of marginalization. Fishers are marginalized and *then* discover some advantages in that position (Cordell 1989). It is not their choice, and it is not because they maintain their identity and self-respect in their relative autonomy (Cordell 1989) that they have much power against Bahian elites. Nevertheless, they can resist and negotiate their political support.

This suggests that, when fishers first did not come to the meetings for the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré, they were refusing to participate in a state-sponsored initiative; they were resisting (EP4, political aspects proposition). They could not trust in the environmental agency responsible for the Reserve (IBAMA). In fact, the regional IBAMA officers were not friendly towards the fishers, either. I heard several accusations that IBAMA officers were authoritarian and violent against the fishers of Itacaré, threatening them with heavy caliber rifles, beating them with the side of machetes, and seizing their nets even when not in use and destroying them without due process. When the Task Group denounced illegal shrimp fishing by the *guincho* boats in the forbidden period, IBAMA also refused to be accountable about what they would do with the shrimp that was seized during the operation. The fishers pointed out these problems in the PRA exercise, particularly in the Venn institutional diagrams (see Chapter 7).

Fishers also had problems with the Brazilian Coast Guard (*Capitania dos Portos*). Due to international navigation laws, also adopted by Brazil, fishers were subject to penalties for not bearing the right safety equipment in their boats. Such equipment, conceived in the context of developed nations, was too expensive for small scale fishers, and if enforcement was strict, would put most of them out of business.

The demands were so unreasonable and enforcement so irregular that fishers did not take them seriously. In addition, the rescue services provided by the Coast Guard were not really useful for the fishers in Itacaré, whose most important safety issue was the entrance to the *barra*, close to shore, where most boats shipwrecked, and where fishers had to rely on each other for rescue because the Coast Guard did not maintain local teams and equipment in Itacaré.

Thus, the opinions of the fishers about these two agencies (expressed in the PRA exercise and in my daily conversations with them) were not very positive. The Traditional Populations Sustainable Development Center (*Centro Nacional de Desenvolvimento Sustentável das Populações Tradicionais–CNPT*) was the social branch of IBAMA, and slowly started to change the opinions of the fishers about the institution. In general, fishers would trust or have a neutral attitude towards government agencies that did not have an enforcement role. This negative experience with government agencies was most common among off-shore fishermen associated with the Colônia and ASPERI, whereas among the fishers of Taboquinhas, where IBAMA was less present, it still enjoyed local acceptance. This corroborates the previous experience and credibility proposition (EP7).

However, additional steps taken by the state, by promoting an increase in the fishing fleet and the adoption of modern equipment, also caused problems for the fishers of Itacaré and elsewhere in Bahia. Until the 1970s, the fishers' monopoly over knowledge about where and when to find fish in the inshore waters gave them a defense against encroachment (Cordell 1989). Yet, the introduction of new techniques, population growth, industrial fishing and environmental destruction of the mangroves started to affect the self-governing system of sea tenure that fishers' networks had sustained for decades. Cordell (1989) reports the beginning of this process and does not highlight much of the possible reactions by fishers other than defenseless or selfish behavior.

Prior to this process of encroachment, traditional systems were maintained through *respeito* (or social respect, a form of social prestige) and sanctioned by reprisals (sabotage, damage to equipment, fights, etc.) and gossip, when people failed to comply.

However, there was already competition. Dissimulation was used against equals, for example, when boat captains tried to get other captains too drunk so they would not go fishing, leaving the spot free for others to use (Cordell 1989).

It is possible that the fishers in Itacaré developed fishing territories such as those described by Cordell (1989) for the nearby region of Valença and Camamu, but I was not able to observe evidence of it, maybe because it was already disrupted by modernization (however, older fishers whom I asked about the existence of territories in the past did not confirm it either). In Itacaré, increases in competition were given by the modernization of the fishery, with new motor boats, which allowed a wider fishing range, replacing sailboats, which previously maintained fishers closer to their home towns. This brought new fishers to the seas of Itacaré, and let local fishers roam farther to the north and south. In addition, in the 1980s, industrial trawler boats (*guinchos*) started to come from other municipalities and even from other states to catch the abundant shrimp of Itacaré. A small shrimp trawling company was established in Itacaré, and during my fieldwork, expanded its fleet from two to four *guinchos*. According to the fishers, during the season of my fieldwork, there were sometimes one to two dozen *guinchos* operating by the coast of Itacaré.

Finally, the crash of the cacao economy in the early 1990s brought an additional contingent of people to the fishing activity. Face-to-face relations were disrupted by a great number of strangers, and the situation was worsened by a second and very short, gold rush: lobster fishing (see below). This situation, where traditional ties were broken, and an increase in the number of fishers and encroachment created increased competition and less control over individual behavior, was apparently the main factor that made free-

riding common among the fishers of Itacaré, particularly in regard to resource use. Fishers could benefit from the fishing resources without contributing to its conservation; so, they would free-ride, resulting in resource degradation. This corroborates the free-riding proposition (EP3).

The Lobster Gold Rush

During the 1990s, fishers in Itacaré discovered the value and abundance of lobsters in their coastal waters. "The town used to stink, so much lobster we caught! Mountains of lobsters!" a fisherman told me, and his story was repeated many times by others. Even though lobster catches were lower during my fieldwork, observing lobster processing when the catch was brought to land was very impressive.

The first time that I saw the processing of lobsters in Itacaré I was shocked by the butchery. Walking by the Banca do Peixe, some fishers called me to take a look at the catch, which was good that day. The fish stand, a 20 square-meter kiosk, open on the sides, with ceramic-tile counters on three of its laterals, was filled with lobsters. In the center of the kiosk, a large block of wood was used as support for processing the lobsters. One man cut the "heads" of the lobsters with an ax. Then two other men separated the tails from the bodies, which were thrown on the floor, still moving for several minutes, blindly crawling and climbing over other lobsters and lobster remains.

I was told that the tails were sold to middlemen who later would sell them to exporters. The bodies were either wasted or had their meat picked by the local women (the waste produced during the lobster golden rush reportedly was an environmental problem). As with any butchery, it was not a pretty sight. I could only imagine what it was like when "mountains of lobsters" were brought to land and processed in Itacaré.

The wealth of lobsters attracted fishers from other municipalities too. "There were so many lobster nets in the sea that one could not find a spot to launch his! Even navigation was difficult!" a fisher told me, because so many nets were in the sea. That amount of competition, and the greater presence of outside fishers, created an environment of lack of trust and suspicion. Thefts became common among fishers, particularly lobster net thefts.

In the beginning, only the catch was stolen, but soon, kilometers of nets disappeared! According to some fishers, stealing nets became an obsession for many. Some tried to be the most daring thieves, while others tried to be the hardest ones to steal from. I was told a story (so unbelievable that it sounds just like a fisherman's tale) by the thief himself. It involved a fisherman who, to avoid having his nets stolen, tied them to his boat. At night, however, when he and his crew were sleeping, the thieves came in another boat and, with their engine off, started to pull the net from the sea. The thieves quietly pulled out the net until their boat was side by side with the other. Everyone was still asleep. Then one of the thieves sneaked into the other boat and untied the net, while the others sailed around it. Then they continued to pull the piece of the net on the other side.

When he told me this story, the thief laughed with satisfaction at his capacity to sneak into the other fisher's boat. "Ronaldo, when he woke up, he couldn't believe it!" For a long time people in the port commented on that daring net theft! Another time, a thief came back from net stealing and had to pretend his boat had never left the port, locking himself in it so that people would not be able to check the temperature of his engine. And a third time, some fishers knew that a thief had dozens of nets with him, and

denounced him to the police. Some fishers went to the police station to accuse him. When he got there, he said he would admit stealing nets if anyone there could deny that they stole nets too. That was the end of it, he said, because "everybody stole." Nets circulated among fishers; some would complain that "their" nets were stolen when they had stolen those nets in the first place! This story may be too colorful, but according to many fishers, almost everybody used to steal nets (some still do)¹⁵. I witnessed some mutual accusations of net stealing, and indeed, no one seemed to be untouchable.

The net stealing practice was evidence of two processes:

- The increasing lack of trust among fishers, which resulted in lack of respect for each other's property
- Possible resistance practice against overcrowding of the sea with nets.

However, these processes could not prevent the *tragedy of the commons* (Hardin 1968) resulting from the lobster gold rush. Lobster catches crashed. Short lived, probably due to resource depletion, lobster fishing in Itacaré began to be replaced by tourism.

However, even today, most off-shore fishers employ great dedication to lobster fishing, spending months preparing their nets¹⁶, and giving great priority to this kind of fishing. Moreover, lobster fishing occurs mainly in the low season for tourism (from May to August; the only month in this period with more tourists was July), presenting little conflict with the new economy.

¹⁵ Inevitably, this reminded me of Malinowski (1950) and the Kula ring, first, because of the circular character of this exchange; second, because a symbolic motivation seemed to be playing a more important role than a material motivation, that is, prestige (being a smarter or more daring thief) was a greater motivation than the value of the nets. I wonder what other aspects of the net stealing in Itacaré could be similar to the Kula ring, but I could not focus on this particular theme during my fieldwork.

¹⁶ Some fishers specialize in making nets, and selling them to others.

Lobster fishing also occurs in a period when shrimp fishing used to be forbidden, thus complementing income for some fishers. In 2001, however, IBAMA changed the forbidden period, causing a clash of interests between lobster fishing and industrial shrimp fishing. As a result, many fishers lost their lobster nets because trawler boats run over them.

Resource Management

According to Cordell's account and definition (1989), sea tenure was present in Bahia. Use rules were enforced by the whole community, and social respect played a major role in maintaining the system. Fishers in Bahia developed customary sea tenure rules that contradicted the national fishing codes, which stipulate that Brazilian territorial waters are open-access resources (Cordell 1989). In the southern coast of Bahia, Robben (1989; 1994) detected territoriality among canoe fishers but not among boat fishers, who competed with and disrespected the territories of canoe fishers. Territories were enforced by threats of physical violence, insults or theft of the intruders' nets. A limited entry system among canoe fishermen reduced overfishing of the shallow fishing grounds.

However, Kottak (1992) studied fishermen in the village of Arembepe, in the north coast of Bahia, and did not describe a system of sea tenure. A restriction on the catch was provided by the secrecy of fishing spots and allowed that some fishers controlled the resource. That is also described by Forman (1966) for the raft fishermen of the coast of nearby Alagoas state, where there was no clear tenure system.

In Itacaré I also could not identify any form of sea tenure, although there was a sense that the local sea should be for local fishers. Perhaps I could not observe sea tenure because most fishers with whom I became more acquainted were offshore fishers (as in

Kottak's and Forman's accounts) and not mangrove fishers (like in Cordell's). In offshore fishing, territories were harder to enforce.

Maybe that could also be explained by the fact that in Itacaré there was high availability of fishing spots and the technology was mobile (e.g., hook and line), conforming to the cases studied by Begossi (1988), where fishing territories did not develop. Begossi (1998) discusses forms of sea tenure in three municipalities of the coast of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro states (southern Brazil), and water tenure among riverine populations in the state of São Paulo and in the Amazon. She concludes that the development of fishing territories by traditional fishermen depends on density of fishers, density of outsiders, diversity or availability of fishing spots, and mobility of technology. Different types (intensity and scale) of sea tenure evolved in the several communities studied. Fishing territories are not expected where there is high availability of fishing spots and the technology is mobile (e.g., hook and line). In Búzios Island (São Paulo state), territories apply for gillnets but not for hook and line, and work at the individual level. In Sepetiba Bay (Rio de Janeiro state), territorial rights are practiced at the community level, and conflicts are related to the intrusion by industrial shrimp and herring trawler boats. In Puruba Beach, there were no territories (Begossi 1998). Begossi (1998) suggests that where there is little diversity and availability of fishing spots, territoriality tends to be at the individual level. The presence of, and competition with, outsiders (increasingly the case in Itacaré) favors the development of community level tenure systems.

Nevertheless, denied the organizational and legal means to prevent competition with outsiders, off-shore fishers in Itacaré could only resist outside fishers through

gossip, social discrimination, and possibly sabotage (stealing of nets). Fishers badmouthed industrial fishing boats and their crews, accusing them of being thieves and of having no concern for the environment.

While some claims may have been true, gossip against outsider fishers seemed to be a resistance tactics. It would not be surprising if fishers were also sabotaging the operations of industrial boats (they claimed that they did not), and indeed I heard threats of that against the *guinchos*. Resistance seemed also to occur by the differentiation between poaching by community members (which might be considered legitimate) and by outsiders (which was considered a crime). Thus, real territories did not exist, but the presence of outsiders was discouraged by a series of resistance practices.

In addition, as in the cases described by Kottak (1992) and Forman (1966), secrecy was common among off-shore fishers of Itacaré and was used against both outside and local fishers. Offshore fishing in Itacaré required the ability to locate the fishing spots where fish concentrated. This imposed three challenges:

- Knowing the location of different fishing spots
- Being able to find them
- Discovering the fish when they are there

Local fishers, because of their experience, deeply knew the sea of Itacaré. However, the skill of locating fishing spots was not for everyone. A fisher needed sharp eyesight and skill to locate the marks on land (trees, mountain tops, buildings, etc.) to triangulate his way to the portion of the sea where there were rocks and reefs that served as shelter for fish. Because most of these rocks were too deep underwater to be visually recognized, fishermen had to confirm the right location by throwing a piece of lead tied to a string. When fishers recovered the lead, they checked sea depth (measured in *braças*,

or the extension of a man's open arms) and examined the scratch marks to identify if the substratum was mud, sand, pebbles, reefs or rocks. The more skillful the fisher in locating the fishing spot, the fewer attempts at throwing the lead he needed.

Skillful and knowledgeable fishers were widely recognized. This talent was not always related to age or experience. For example, I knew of a case of two fishers, father and son, who used to fish together, but only the son was renowned for his ability to locate fishing spots well which his father, more experienced, reportedly never had. Each fishing crew had to include a fisher who was skillful in locating fishing spots, who was normally the boat captain.

Talented outside fishers who did not know the marks were always trying to learn them by following local fishers, who tried to fool them. A fisherman, immigrant to Itacaré, told me stories of how he learned about some fishing spots. In one such story, he approached another boat that was anchored by a fishing spot, and the boat captain tried to avoid revealing its location, moving his boat away. He proudly told me that he was able to find the submerged rock (using the lead) and identify the marks for triangulation on land, taking the other boat's place at that time. Local fishers told me opposite stories, of how they hid the location of the fishing spot by anchoring with longer anchor cables.

That knowledge was valuable and could be sold. In more than one occasion during my dissertation fieldwork, a local fisher was paid by an outside fisher just to take him to some fishing spots where the outsider was diving for fish using compressed-air equipment. This was badly viewed by the community, first, because divers were unfair competition to line and hook fishers, and second, because the local fisher was giving away the secret of the fishing spots.

The local *guincho* owner once told me that the “extractive reserve” of skillful and hardworking fishers was their secret knowledge of fishing spots. However, modernization threatened the monopoly of this knowledge by local fishers. Although no one but the *guinchos* had it yet, GPS equipment was increasingly inexpensive, and soon capital would probably replace knowledge and skills. The “extractive reserve” of traditional knowledge and skills was endangered not only in Itacaré, but also in many other parts of the Brazilian coast where secrecy and traditional talent helped fishers prevent overexploitation.

Competition was also present between local fishers, and was favored by the difference in skills (or “luck”) of different fishers or fishing crews. When fishing offshore using line and hook, a fishing crew could have two types of arrangements: “*linha unida*” (or united lines) and “*linha separada*” (separate lines). In *linha unida* all fishers divided their catches equally after paying the portion of the boat (50%). In *linha separada* each fisher had the right to his own catch after paying the boat. Each fisherman had a different characteristic mark done to the fish with a knife. Some tried to steal from their colleagues by choosing marks that were easy to convert from their colleagues’ marks (e.g., if a fisher used one cut on the tail, the other would use two cuts; then he would surreptitiously try to make the second cut in his colleague’s fish). *Linha unida* was more likely to occur when fishers in the same boat had the same level of ability and effort, a fisherman explained to me.

These two arrangements seemed to be a response to both the insecurity of fishing and the free-riding problem (which corroborates EP3, free-riding proposition). *Linha unida* seems a good system to minimize insecurity due to short term individual “bad

luck” among fishers that have similar levels of skills and dedication. Yet, when fishers tended to free-ride on the catches of others (which would create disincentives for a more successful fisher) *linha separada* was adopted (rewarding the successful fishers and forcing slackers to improve their performance). However, when *linha separada* was adopted, some fishers still tried to free-ride by stealing their colleagues’ catch. There seems to be a potential for an escalating lack of trust in the *linha separada*, which is first implemented to deal with free-riding and lack of trust, and then creates incentives for thefts between crew members, and additional suspicion. Finally, different crews could also steal catches or entire nets from each other.

In Itacaré, competition between different crews was so fierce that fishers even tried to conceal their catches. A fisher told me that they used to lie about at which fishing spot they caught their fish. Because some experienced fishers could guess where the fish were caught (considering the species, the time of the year, the weather, and the time taken during travel), sometimes fishers would hide the catch in the boat until later, for example, not allowing time for other fishers to go to the same fishing spot before the crew could return there.

Thus, there was no sea tenure in Itacaré, although knowledge, secrecy and resistance played a role in defending local fishers from the competition with outside and other local fishers. However, encroachment was occurring.

Motor boats allowed fishers from faraway municipalities to come to Itacaré and compete with locals. Increased competition reduced the incentives for conservation or sustainable use because it often meant giving up a fish of a small size, or not fishing during a certain period, or avoiding the use of a predatory fishing method. “But if I don’t

take the small fish, somebody else will catch it further down,” a fisherman explained to me once.

Moral values regarding conservation were present but they were useless. Individual fishers were in extreme competition and could not afford to give up catches in favor of the future, although they could see the connections between their behavior and the decreasing abundance of their resources.

The situation looked like a *prisoner's dilemma*, where resource appropriators take the least favorable path when they try to maximize their benefit, because the context in which they make decisions (lack of trust) forces them to do so (Ostrom 1990). The fishers' context was so disempowering that, in light of their conservation moral, it even caused low self-esteem: instead of considering their context, fishers started to blame each other and finally themselves.

Many of the fishers I talked to said that predatory fishers were ignorant and selfish. “O pescador é assim” (the fisherman is just like that), “they are hopeless,” they said more than once. The elite also contributed to such prejudices, by formulating and disseminating such notions, as did the directors of the Colônia. The explanatory proposition that fishers do not participate because they are individualistic echoes this view. *The culture explanatory proposition (EP2) does not explain the phenomenon of individualistic behavior; it helps to create it by reducing trust even more.*

The discussion presented above suggests that fishers needed a different context in which free-riding would not be rational. Such a context for resource conservation could be provided by community organization and legal/institutional arrangements that could guarantee the exclusion of outsiders and reduced competition, and prevent their tragedy.

The extractive reserve model promised such a context. However, an effective and participatory Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré was itself a collective good, subject to free-rider problems as much as conservation.

The Extractive Reserves

In Brazil, forest and marine resources, and the people that depend on them, have had surprisingly similar problems. Similar problems have led to similar solutions, such as the creation of extractive reserves, and the experience of traditional populations in the Amazon can be used to shed light on the problems and opportunities of the fishers of the Brazilian coast.

The rubber tappers in the Brazilian Amazon began their political organization in the 1970s, as a response to eviction and destruction of the forest from which they sustained their livelihoods (Duarte 1987). By 1990, they achieved the creation of the first extractive reserves, guaranteeing to some of them right to land and resources, and providing an opportunity to create an alternative development model for the Amazon (Allegretti 1994). Despite the remaining challenges for the extractive reserves (such as generating enough income for locals, with a conservation basis), this was a remarkable case of a traditional population that struggled to maintain and improve their livelihoods in multiple ways and, eventually, was able to achieve new institutional arrangements with the State and conquer a new position in society.

Rubber tappers have faced several threats related to natural resource conservation. Their history involves conflicts with colonists and large ranchers, who cut forest areas on which tappers depended to establish pastures and agriculture. On the one hand, the political and economic power of ranchers and colonization agencies allowed them to evict tappers from their land (Duarte 1987). On the other, colonists, stimulated by the

government, came to the Amazon in large numbers and started to practice unsustainable systems of agriculture, which led to deforestation, failure of many colonists, and their migration in search of new forest areas.

The Amazon rubber tappers had problems that were similar, in their dynamic, to fishers on the Brazilian coast. As did cattle ranching in the Amazon, industrial fishing, such as shrimp and herring trawler boats cause great destruction of the marine ecosystems on which small scale fishers depend (Begossi 1999; Cordell 1989). Bottom trawling boats are estimated to scrape approximately six million square miles a year in the world, an area equivalent to half of the world's continental shelves and 150 times larger than the forest area clearcut every year (Mayell 1998). In the coast of Bahia, Northeastern Brazil, trawler boats came from neighboring states (Cordell 1989), indicating that either the fleet was too large or that resources were already depleted in other states. Moreover, modernization of artisanal fisheries in the Northeast has introduced technology that allows resource overexploitation and favors richer fishers (Cordell 1989). As with cattle ranching development in the Amazon, the expansion of the industrial fishing fleet in Brazil has been subsidized by the government.

In the Amazon, unsustainable agricultural practices have led colonists to degrade their soils and migrate to new forest land, causing deforestation and encroaching on rubber tappers. In Bahia state, decreasing catches and deterioration of moral norms that previously restrained fishers from predatory behavior led to the use of explosives and other technologies that increased the damage to some of the fishing resources even more (Cordell 1989). In Itacaré, local fishers complained to me about the immigration of small-scale fishers from neighboring municipalities where resources were already degraded due

to the use of explosives and overfishing. To the rubber tappers, defense of their right to land and resources was difficult because

- They did not have legal recognition of their claims
- Legal arrangements available in the Brazilian law did not fit their needs, given by the nature of the environment and of the economic activity.

The extractive reserves provided the appropriate legal framework for the defense of their livelihoods. As did the rubber tappers in the Amazon, who were pushed by ranchers and colonists, the small-scale fishers in Itacaré faced encroachment by industrial trawler boats and other small-scale fishers that came from parts of the coast where fish and other marine resources were depleted. Their territory also did not have legal recognition, but the extractive reserves could provide them with an adequate framework to defend their livelihoods too.

As did the rubber tappers, artisanal fishers of Itacaré needed institutional and legal arrangements to prevent such encroachment. Not surprisingly, the model of extractive reserves, has been proposed to defend the livelihoods of artisanal and small-scale fishers not only in Itacaré but throughout the Brazilian coast (Begossi 1993).

The extractive reserve model has the potential to attend to all the principles identified by Ostrom (1990), who provides a comprehensive framework based on game theory. The physical boundaries of the reserves can be demarcated (although in the sea, it is more difficult), and the people who have the right to use resources *have to be*¹⁷ authorized by the local association of users, which *should* receive the use concession from the government. Collective choice arrangements are *potentially* provided by the

¹⁷ The italics in this paragraph indicate the ideal situation, seldom completely achieved.

democratic mechanisms required for the approval of the utilization plan. Monitoring in extractive reserves *can be* accountable because it is done by the users themselves and the utilization plan provides for graduated sanctions.

Building resource management institutions takes time and intensive educational effort, and has been overlooked by the government and nongovernmental organizations that work with rubber tappers. Nevertheless, the success of marine extractive reserves depends on such institutions; that is, it depends on the participation of the fishers.

Summary and Conclusions

This discussion suggests that several factors are involved in making fishers behave more individualistically, or less so. It seems that context plays a more important role than culture in explaining individualistic behavior, and that the presumption that the solitary nature of the fishing activities can explain individualistic behavior is false because fishing activities are not necessarily solitary, and even when they involve less cooperation, in other arenas of their daily lives fishers are still pretty social. Thus, this chapter presents arguments against the individualistic culture proposition (EP2).

I argue that, as much as there was a conservationist moral in Itacaré (which most fishers could not afford to follow), there was also a participatory moral that affected individual behavior, but not enough to make fishers participate in their organizations. Apparently, lack of trust due to an increase in competition and lack of means to prevent free-riders in resource use was overriding moral incentives toward conservation-oriented, cooperative and participatory behaviors. Other factors, discussed in the previous chapter, explain why fishers did not follow their participatory moral in community and political affairs.

This contradiction between behavior and moral took its toll on the fishers' self-esteem, creating acceptance for the elite's view that fishers were just inferior and could not organize for their own interests. An extractive reserve could solve such contradiction if it were able to reduce competition. Many fishers confessed that they practiced predatory fishing, but they would change when the Reserve was implemented. I believe that such a perspective (the possibility to do the right thing) was an important incentive for many fishers to join the Reserve movement once other anti-participation factors were reduced.

Fishers were suspicious of government agencies and initially refused to participate in proposals that involved greater presence of the state in their lives, such as the Extractive Reserve. This was most common in communities where the presence of the state was strongest, resulting in negative experiences¹⁸ (EP7, previous experience and credibility proposition), as is discussed in Chapter 7. Fishers participated by nonparticipation, by resistance (EP4, political aspects). Participation increased as the TG was able to gain the trust of fishers and make fishers trust CNPT/IBAMA (EP8, credibility of the PRA team).

Conversely, the knowledge of individual fishers about natural resources was not well-distributed in the communities. For example, the location of fishing spots was not taught to younger fishers; it had to be picked up by practice, trial and error, during fishing trips. It was not given away for free, and some became more skilled than others. This suggests that local knowledge was treated as an economic good, also subjected to free-

¹⁸ Obviously, the experience with the state did not have to be negative; it just happened to be so in Itacaré.

riding, as is shown by the case in which a newcomer fisherman “stole” the secret from his fellow local fisherman. If PRA meetings could provide participants with valuable knowledge, PRA could attract participation (EP5, multidimensional costs and benefits proposition). Finally, if fishers faced internal contradictions because they were forced by their strategic situation to behave individualistically, contradicting their conservation and participation morals, once they learned more about the Marine Extractive Reserve proposal, this also might increase their self-esteem and attract participation.

This discussion of natural resource use by the fishers of Itacaré suggests that fishers’ behaviors related to resource use and conservation, and to participation and collective action, were dependent on individual consideration of benefits and costs in multiple dimensions (EP5), including the material, political, moral, emotional and informational dimensions, and how local institutions structure them.

CHAPTER 6 ORIGINS OF THE TASK GROUP

Before discussing the explanatory propositions in light of the field results, in this section I discuss the origins of the TG, prior to my dissertation fieldwork, which I did not observe directly but which involved my influence. Later, already during dissertation fieldwork, I was able to observe the results of specific strategies to make the TG effective, both in terms of internal participation and of its results in the community, which also served to test the explanatory propositions on which these strategies were based.

Before there was a Task Group and a strong movement towards the Extractive Reserve, there were other people trying to promote its creation. Piecing together different contradictory stories, I built my own account, in which the Reserve was an idea of many. To local fishers, something had to be done about the *guinchos*, whose number increased and the damage caused to local marine resources became noticeable. To the local environmental organization Boto Negro, the idea was to create a conservation area to protect the sea. Grem, a hotel owner, knew of an Extractive Reserve created in Arraial do Cabo, Rio de Janeiro State. He contacted the president of ASPERI at the time, *Professor Raimundo*, and both started to move towards the Reserve. Grem invited the manager of the Marine Reserve of Arraial do Cabo to give a lecture in Itacaré. Boto Negro, Grem, *Professor Raimundo* and others were the first movement for the Reserve, but that movement did not involve significant participation by the fishers.

Courses on PRA and Community Leadership

As pointed out in Chapter 1, in March 1999, *Professor* Raimundo invited me to carry out community organizing work to increase the involvement of the fishers in the process. This work, started with the promotion of two courses, one on community leadership (for fishers), and another on participatory rural appraisal (for people with at least a high school degree), carried out simultaneously in August 1999. My idea was to motivate and capacitate fishers to work for the Extractive Reserve, and supervise a PRA exercise which would be facilitated by “technical volunteers” trained in PRA. To support and guide these volunteers and local people, I invited three environmental NGOs to participate in the course, but only two NGOs participated, and only one really got involved with the cause of the Reserve: AAE, a regional NGO based in Ilhéus.

AAE was composed of social activists with a long history of action in the region. For several years, even before the NGO’s creation, AAE people had worked with agrarian reform resettlement projects and organic agriculture in the region, and seemed strong capacity builders of community leaders. They also had a strong feminist agenda, which seemed useful in the case of Itacaré because some of the poorer fishers were women. AAE’s coordinator and two of its extension workers participated in the courses.

The courses were organized with local help from ASPERI (then led by Penguin, because Raimundo had left), which was able to mobilize support from the municipality, local *pousadas*, the Conservation Institute (an NGO from Ilhéus which had a project in the Itacaré/Serra Grande APA¹⁹; see Chapter 4) and community organizations, such as AMPT and the Colônia. The courses were funded by Italian NGO Terra Nuova.

¹⁹ APA: *Área de Proteção Ambiental* or Area of Environmental Protection

About 20 people participated in the course on “Participatory Rural Appraisal and the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré.” I hoped that, from this pool of people, two or three would be interested in being volunteers for the Extractive Reserve. Implicit in my strategy was the belief that PRA had to be coordinated by technical people, and that fishers needed that kind of help. As the discussion presented in this chapter shows, this belief created a power contest inside the Extractive Reserve movement. Chapter 8 also shows that this belief would later lead to a friction between me and some TG members, and result in participation problems (EP13, outside facilitators vs. insiders proposition).

The PRA techniques were not too hard to teach. The hardest part was to change attitudes, because participants, in their interaction with each other or with fishers, could apply PRA techniques but continued with behavior and body language that seemed authoritarian.

In addition, the importance of intermediaries, local people who try to place themselves between the poor and the regional elite, discussed in Chapter 1 became evident. In discussing Itacaré, I want to expand the concept of intermediaries presented by Forman (1966), and include not only wealthier fishers, but also small entrepreneurs, local politicians, and directors of associations. Intermediaries serve the link between the poor and the regional elite and state powers, and often make their living from this.

In the PRA course, and in the movement for the creation of the Marine Extractive Reserve, many of the participants were intermediaries who had particular agendas: to be elected mayor; to avoid the banning of *guinchos*; to maintain political influence over the fishing community; to work in an eventual project to implement the Reserve; or to influence new environmental projects in Itacaré. These were relatively evident agendas. I

discovered other hidden agendas only later in the fieldwork. As I discussed before, the community expectation that the first people to be involved in a collective project were self-interested intermediaries was justified. It was exactly the case of the participants in this PRA course; they tried to use the creation of the Extractive Reserve as a way to empower themselves, mediating the influence of external agents (IBAMA, NGOs) in the community.

The other course was on “Community Leadership and the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré,” intended for fishers, in order to build their skills and improve their attitudes towards community organization and leadership, and the creation of the Extractive Reserve. This course was given simultaneously with the course for technical volunteers, described above, but at night, in the classroom of the Colônia. The course was advertised by ASPERI and a total of 18 fishers, eight of them women, participated in the whole course. The participants of this course had a greater identity with communities that were going to benefit from the creation of the Extractive Reserve, but some were, nonetheless, a lower class of intermediaries. Ulysses, a public employee allocated to the Colônia, represented the board of directors of that organization. Penguin and his brother Pedro, representing ASPERI, were also present. Bob Marley represented the Porto de Trás Neighborhood Association, and brought with him several members, mostly mangrove crab fisherwomen. There were also two middlemen, who bought the fish in the Banca do Peixe. I was impressed by some of the participants, such as a former school teacher, then owner of a fish store, and who later became one of the most important leaders of the movement for the Reserve and a member of TG. The three AAE people also participated.

This course involved almost no lectures. It was mostly based on games, practical activities and discussion. Several of the games were used in the PRA process a year and a half later, and involved challenges and puzzles that required group cooperation to be solved. Participants of the other course on PRA came to this course to practice PRA tools with the fishers. This was intended to enable fishers to feel their affinity with the possible volunteers, and at the end of the course, they chose a man and a woman from the other course on PRA who agreed to work with them voluntarily.

Our activity in Itacaré caught the attention of Rafael Pinzón, president of CNPT/IBAMA, who came to Itacaré during the last two days of the courses and lectured in the final session of the course on community leadership, in an open talk to the whole community of Itacaré. Pinzón's presence seemed to give credibility to the courses and the proposal for the Reserve. He met with local authorities and established commitments with the community and with AAE, which I introduced and recommended to him, telling him about the NGO's experience with community organization in southern Bahia. He explained that CNPT had a budget for community activities. All AAE, or the community, had to do was to present a short proposal with a small budget by the 25th day of the month before the expense was to be incurred. Itacaré acquired legitimacy and visibility in CNPT/IBAMA, resulting in the promises of further support.

The Movement for the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré and the Formation of the Task Group

These courses were my first action in Itacaré. Such a one-shot intervention was likely to have little impact if not for the design adopted, with local technical volunteers and an experienced NGO supporting the fishers, and the institutional support by IBAMA. Cláudio and other volunteers provided local assistance with beginning work, and later

AAE was often present and advising the fishers and volunteers. One volunteer used to E-mail me every other week, tell me how they were doing, and ask for advice. Based on his messages, and on accounts by TG members and AAE staff, I developed a picture of what happened in Itacaré during the one-year period between the courses and the start of my dissertation fieldwork.

Fishers and volunteers started to meet frequently. Their first task was to develop the questionnaire for the socioeconomic study required by IBAMA, as advised by Rafael Pinzón. Those meetings were pretty popular at first, with about 20-30 participants.

For two months, the fishers that were mobilized by the course on community leadership received assistance mainly from local technical volunteers, who were the key players for the discussion of the questionnaires and for the follow up of the participatory process until October 1999, when AAE returned to Itacaré. Before, AAE's coordinator came with two male technicians; this time, as AAE's person for gender and women issues was taking the lead, the work was going to receive greater emphasis on gender, strengthening the role of women.

As soon as the work of the movement for the creation of the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré started, so did the opposition to it. The previous negative experience of some communities of Itacaré with the work of the environmentalists of Instituto Ambiental and the Conservation Institute fertilized the ground for gossip. The first rumors came from the neighborhood of Porto de Trás: some people there were saying that the Extractive Reserve was a proposal of Instituto Ambiental because former members of this NGO were involved with it. The previous conflict between the outsiders of Instituto Ambiental and the locals of Porto de Trás, and the resulting prejudices and resentments,

started to influence the participation in the Extractive Reserve movement. This eventually led the *marisqueiras* of Porto de Trás to stop participating. Later, when the *marisqueiras* were invited to the course on PRA for the TG, only three came. Their nonparticipation was a form of resistance (EP4, political aspects proposition). In addition to this resistance to the participatory process, the women reported to the TG that they were disappointed by the scant immediate return obtained from so many meetings.

When AAE became more closely involved, this NGO and the local volunteers had sometimes complementing, sometimes competing roles. Conflict arose as local volunteers were used to a professionalized model in which technicians were in charge, and AAE came in with a different practice, of strengthening community members. In addition, some of the local volunteers were employed by the Conservation Institute, the organization AAE considered to be its enemy. In Itacaré, AAE and technical volunteers competed against each other, replicating a previous competition AAE had against the Conservation Institute, which were assisting the communities bordering a conservation area in the region. AAE also had strong ideological disagreement with the Conservation Institute.

The staff of AAE had a historic role in the struggle for land in the region. They assisted the landless in organizing for land invasions, and much of what they did in Itacaré was related to this experience. In the agrarian reform resettlements, AAE identified farmers who had the best potential for becoming community organizers. These farmers participated in courses to “raise their consciousness,” traveled with AAE staff to participate in meetings with other landless farmers and rural workers, and became part of a deliberative council which directed the actions in the communities AAE assisted. On

the one hand, there was a strong proposal to empower the farmers within AAE, involving them in the decisions. On the other, the farmers who participated in AAE were handpicked by the NGO's staff based on their ideological and personal affinity with them. Apparently, the staff of AAE worked together with these selected farmers they trusted, to develop strategies to maintain their political hegemony in the communities. In Itacaré, it was not different.

AAE identified the fishers with the greatest "leadership potential"; that is, people who expressed concern for the community, who were vocal at the meetings and expressed opinions that were considered participatory or community-oriented. AAE started working with them, advising them on how to act politically to gain power in the Reserve movement.

In November 1999, AAE wrote me a message pointing out that my course's division between technical volunteers and community, initially made by me to facilitate teaching/learning, was backfiring. It seemed that local volunteers presumed that they should have the power to decide because they were "*capacitados*" (capacitated) in my PRA course. According to AAE, the volunteers were using their participation in the PRA course as a discursive weapon in the group discussions.

AAE also pointed out that my E-mail communications with one volunteer were creating problems because he used my messages to establish credibility or support for his proposals: "Ronaldo said this..." "Ronaldo told me that..." He was probably just trying to do a good job, but as this was done in a way that created a feeling of competition in the movement, some fishers began to associate me with the technical volunteers' side of the conflict.

While the original idea was that the assistance of local technical volunteers was going to empower the fishers, volunteers and fishers competed with each other in the process. Volunteers used both discursive maneuvers and their literacy skills in a way that reinforced local social hierarchy and maintained their dominance. Conversely, fishers used their legitimacy, as the intended beneficiaries of the Reserve and as natives of Itacaré, and worked hard implementing tasks that technical volunteers mainly helped to plan. As Kent (2000) pointed out for Itacaré, in the local political game, many battles were fought discursively; apparently, this discursive battle involved competency vs. participation arguments.

However, despite the beginning conflicts and power struggles within the group, and the boycott from Porto de Trás, participation in the meetings was on a rise and reached 40 people in December 1999. During this time, the people involved with the promotion of the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré were carrying out the socioeconomic survey of the fishing community. The *capacitados* started to lose legitimacy in the process when they invested time only in creating the questionnaire, and most of the survey was carried out by the fishers. This reinforced the idea that people who were not fishers would always take advantage of the community.

At that time, a consultant from CNPT/IBAMA made his first visit to Itacaré when, I presume, AAE presented to him the conflict that was happening there and started to discuss solutions. In January 2000 I visited Itacaré for a week and participated in a meeting with fishers, volunteers, and the people of AAE. This was when I proposed my research to the fishers, and I learned more about who were the most important fishers in the local Extractive Reserve movement.

In the meeting when I presented my research proposal, participants planned the trip to the Marine Extractive Reserve of Arraial do Cabo, in Rio de Janeiro state. AAE promised support, and the local group formed by fishers and volunteers was able to obtain additional help from several organizations, including the municipality. However, the municipality did not fulfill its commitment to the group, forcing them to collect the money from the businesses in Itacaré, which, as TG members later expressed, raised expectations in the community and created a sense of great responsibility.

The trip to Arraial do Cabo, and its preparations, also created a team spirit among the fishers, which excluded people who were not fishers. TG members later told me they noticed what they found were grave faults in the attitudes of some of the technical volunteers who went with them. Among some of the gaffes volunteers made were phrases such as “I don’t like to work with people,” and excess alcohol drinking.

They were most impressed by the support given by CNPT/IBAMA to that Reserve, and during my initial stages of fieldwork, often mentioned IBAMA’s resident officer in Arraial do Cabo as an example of how powerful, helpful and articulate an outsider could be in the defense of the fishers. Such support reinforced the credibility of CNPT and of the group’s objectives favoring participation (EP12, credibility of the group proposition). When they came back from Arraial do Cabo, several of the fishers were leading the group side by side with technical volunteers. AAE backed up the fishers in the meetings and corrected distortions that the volunteers tried to implement. The travel to Arraial do Cabo gave these fishers the practical experience they needed to argue in favor of the Reserve. They became able to say “I saw it! In Arraial do Cabo it’s this way...” When fishers came back, that leadership was consolidated.

The rise of fishers in Itacaré after their visit to Arraial do Cabo may have resulted from a change in the rhetorical support to their discourses: before that, local technical volunteers used their contacts with me and the IBAMA's resident officer in Arraial do Cabo, and their ease with institutional affairs, to forward their positions. In Arraial do Cabo, the fishers of Itacaré had better, more practical questions to ask, eyes and ears better suited to see and listen to local fishers than the technical volunteers, and were empowered by bringing that experience with them to the debates in Itacaré. The visit to Arraial do Cabo armed the fishers with arguments and information; it built an informational capital which was later used to acquire political capital.

Nevertheless, this increased power of the fishers in the Extractive Reserve movement came with moral costs: local people started to gossip that the group went to Arraial do Cabo for tourism and fun at the expense of the community. I believe that the free-rider myth, disseminated among the fishers, framed local views, explained that people only did things for personal gains, and made the gossip acceptable to many. The volunteers who did not go to Arraial do Cabo and were competing with fishers in the Reserve movement, the people who would probably lose with the creation of the Reserve, and other established leaders trying to resist the rising leadership of the fishers involved with the Reserve were the most likely to spread and believe in such gossip. However, it could have been anyone; there was great pessimism and skepticism regarding community leaders.

The Task Group for the Creation of the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré (TG) was formed in a meeting of the people interested in the Extractive Reserve on February 4,

2000. Before its creation, the Extractive Reserve movement was composed of two groups, which originated from the two courses I gave in 1999:

- *Grupo de Assessores* (the Consultants' Group, or the group formed by the technical volunteers), made up of people who had completed secondary school and who had participated in the course on PRA
- *Grupo Resex*²⁰, formed by fishers, most of whom had participated in the other course on community leadership and organization.

The creation of the Task Group was suggested by CNPT/IBAMA, and was intended to provide a legitimate interlocutor between government and community. Therefore, it was IBAMA's recognition of the fishers that finally institutionalized them as leaders of the Reserve and allowed them to make independent decisions.

The TG initially included six offshore fishers, a rural resident of Piracanga²¹, a rural resident of Itacarezinho, and a woman who owned a fish shop, had a college degree and experience teaching in a school, married to a fisherman. She was a newcomer to Itacaré, but with time sided with the locals. I believe she became part of the fishing community as a result of her marriage to a fisherman, and that she was able to blend in because of her social skills and African racial features.

The technical volunteers continued to support the work, but conflicts continued between them and the TG. AAE conquered the trust of the fishers and influenced the interpretations that the fishers of TG would eventually have of their community and the power disputes they would eventually face.

²⁰ Resex is the Portuguese acronym for *reserva extrativista*, or extractive reserve.

²¹ This resident had a peculiar environmental activism: he collected the trash thrown by the tide on Piracanga beach, transferred turtle eggs to a protected location close to his island, and avoided killing of any kind (so he did not fish anymore; he did not even weed his home garden, a task that was left to his family). He was good at doing his personal marketing.

For former school teacher and TG member, who eventually became part of AAE, this was a deep learning experience. AAE opened to her the opportunity to be involved in the rural women's movement, which made her blossom with lively feminism and strong political positions. In March 2000, she and two shellfish collectors selected by AAE went to the nation's capital, Brasília, to participate in the National Mobilization of Rural Worker Women, when they camped with the women of the movement, shared their drama, and increased her bond with AAE directors.

To the landless rural people of Brazil, camping on the side of the roads, in improvised tents covered with black plastic sheets, was a contingency of their mobilization to occupy land and be settled by the government. However, camping together was also a typical education and identity building strategy of the *Movimento dos Sem Terra* (MST, or Landless Movement), shared by other Brazilian agrarian reform movements. Camping, the landless shared experiences of their confrontation with the Brazilian rural elite, sang songs praising a peasant revolution and the overthrow of capitalism and bourgeois institutions, and learned the discursive support for their organization. AAE shared such strategies, and in their meetings, even in their headquarters in Ilhéus, similar songs were chanted by all participants.

A coincidence of residence location may also have contributed to the formation of a core group within the Task Group in Itacaré. The volunteer consultant, the most people involved with TG (two fishers and a former school teacher) all lived very close to each other, all their homes located within 50 meters of Pituba Street. Although the technical volunteer was seen by the TG as an opponent in the contest for influence in the Extractive Reserve process, I believe that he was also a source of information to this core group,

who learned to use his help. They probably ran into each other almost every day on the street (by coincidence, I too came to live within those 50 meters of street and ran into them almost everyday), so information sharing was very easy. In addition, the personalities of the four people made it likely that they would be very active.

Proximity may have played a major role in creating identity and cohesion among the core group of TG, who often gathered in each other's houses to eat fish *moqueca* and chat. However, the same integration did not include the technical volunteer. Among the several volunteers that took my PRA course, the TG rejected them one by one. Their standards were very high. This volunteer was probably their best shot, but he too was criticized for trying to keep control of the process for himself. However, the TG did not consider that he was learning to do community work just like everybody else, and that he could have improved his practice since he was responsive to criticism. AAE people did have experience in community work and instead of helping him in this process, sided with the TG, and probably helped to increase his rejection. Apparently, the same rejection process happened to other volunteers and, eventually, to me.

In May 2000, AAE warned me that the conflict had increased as the Group empowered itself, taking control of the process. The technical volunteer said he was a professional and wanted to be more than a volunteer; he wanted to be paid for his work. Although he was investing his money and time in the Extractive Reserve, his (honestly) declared intentions created suspicions within TG, not only regarding him but also regarding *me*, because I was his friend and so far implicitly supported him to work with the community. Because at this time I was still in the US preparing for my qualifying exams, I could not see the face of the TG from such a distance. According to AAE, the

TG felt ignored by me in the E-mail interactions between me and the technical volunteer. Indeed I had no idea of their degree of autonomy at that moment²² and thought that the technical volunteer was their main chance to have a PRA. He was smart, articulate and efficient; he was also good at reporting data (in addition, he expressed spiritual beliefs that made me trust him).

Perhaps my view was due to the information I received from him, perhaps it was due to my own framework that placed paid technicians as key players for the PRA process. In any event, later, when I returned to Itacaré, lack of technical people proved to be a strong limitation in the process. How can you produce reports²³ without literacy and (nowadays) computer skills? How to reconcile the need for technical expertise with empowerment of the community? Was I also part of a technocracy that avoided allowing the poor to gain real power over community projects?

TG members, all volunteers, did not accept paid technicians. To them, it was morally wrong and too expensive to hire a technician. When they accepted that payments should be involved for community work, they wanted *themselves* to be paid, not technicians who they thought were just self-interested.

Later, TG members also pointed out to me that other people involved with the Extractive Reserve were just self-interested. In addition to his intentions to be a paid consultant for the Extractive Reserve, this volunteer also proposed that his political party participate in the Extractive Reserve process. The municipal secretary of tourism at the

²² With orientation of AAE, the TG and some technical volunteers were carrying out a series of activities in several communities of Itacaré, such as meetings in Taboquinhas and Piracanga, and environmental enforcement with IBAMA in the ports of Itacaré.

²³ Reports were needed for the paperwork for the creation of the Extractive Reserve.

time, Tiago, decided to use the theme of the Reserve to promote a sports event; the TG saw this as an attempt to take advantage of their work with the community, and manifested their opposition to the event, which never happened. A businessman, who was one of the pioneers of the Reserve idea in Itacaré, was also seen as self-interested when he decided to run for mayor and included the Reserve in his platform. The TG boycotted him and his attempt to include his contribution to the Reserve as part of his campaign (most people in Itacaré, including several TG members, were placing their hopes on another candidate, Jarbas, a doctor who belonged to the conservative Partido da Frente Liberal – PFL, or Liberal Fronts' Party, and who eventually won the election). TG was trying to monopolize and control the Extractive Reserve idea in Itacaré and went so far as to forget the historical importance of initial pioneers in the process. History was being rewritten.

Anyhow, the TG was suspicious of other people, too. The local guincho owner was obviously untrustworthy since his economic interests were clearly against the proposal of a Reserve that would forbid his activity. He was seen by many fishers as a person of bad character, self-interested, a gossip and an exploiter, things that are commonly said about middlemen such as him. Cida, who also took the course on PRA for technical volunteers, did not go to all the meetings and withheld the meeting records (*atas*)²⁴ of the Reserve Movement in a way that seemed suspicious to TG members. They said that she wanted to be able to say she was participating even though she was not going to the meetings, and that she compromised the records by altering them by signing

²⁴ Formal meeting practices, such as *atas*, were derived from the organizational practices of AAE and local technical volunteers.

presence sheets for meetings she was not present. That is, little was left of my PRA class! My lesson was that, due to my lack of knowledge of Itacaré, and the resulting selection process for the courses, I contributed to empower people who later became obstacles to the empowerment of the fishers.

Black-or-White Views

Why was self-interest so evident to TG members? People's actions were seen with such negativity that, after I was there for a couple of months, it was sometimes overwhelming. It seemed that good character was also in extinction. Was this really intense or was it just the frame through which people saw things? Did every one of these people deserve to be seen with such suspicion? Could their self-interest have been combined with community interest? For example, why not try to have every mayor candidate committed to the Reserve? Why not do the same with all political parties? Why not work with the technical volunteers to improve their practice and let them work to raise money to pay for their own services and those of the TG? Why not improve Tiago's proposal, and use it, and the municipal support which would come with it, to popularize the Reserve? The TG's answer was a simple no. To them, these people simply did not deserve their trust. I did not disagree (some skepticism is an important political skill), but it is also true that the TG itself was the victim of suspicion created by the same self-interest framework shared by other people in Itacaré.

Seemingly, this self-isolation was related to both the free-rider myth and the notion of the limited good, widespread in the community (discussed in Chapters 1 and 4), and to the views of AAE, whose influence on the TG was strong. As pointed out above, AAE's practices and views were greatly influenced by their experience in the agrarian reform movement, which is similar to MST, and both are very effective in building new

leadership to mobilize communities. However, AAE saw things in black-or-white terms, which was also said about MST by Navarro (2002).

When I became more involved with AAE, in the first months of my fieldwork, I felt the effects of such black-or-white views when I told them that I was considering giving a course on participatory work to the staff of the Conservation Institute in Itacaré. The Conservation Institute and AAE had difficult relations, and the Conservation Institute's work in the region was mainly criticized because of problems in the participatory process. They invited me to help them improve their practice. The reaction of AAE was first to warn me about the bad intentions of the Conservation Institute: "They want to break the trust between us." "You cannot serve God and the Devil at the same time," one AAE militant told me. Later, when I accepted the invitation to give the course, arguing that I had the right to know firsthand if in fact they were "the Devil"²⁵, AAE ostracized me thereafter.

In Itacaré, in addition to creating suspicions in the TG, this tendency to see things in black-or-white terms placed anyone who had reservations about how the TG was working on "the other side." Progressively, this isolated the TG in the community. TG members seemed to believe they were above good and evil, that they held the truth, and did not take criticism well, although they were very critical of others. Their views justified them, and even I sometimes felt the same way and sided with them.

However, in the beginning of my fieldwork, I avoided being so radical and tried to maintain contacts with the TG's opponents, such as the presidents of the Colônia and

²⁵ The Conservation Institute team I met was not "the Devil"; I found them to be committed people, with basically the same objectives of conservation and development as AAE, and a similar concern for community participation.

ASPERI, and even the local guincho owner, Cida, and others. TG members questioned my behavior and started suspecting my intentions; they did not agree with my unemotional, and maybe dissimulated, practices, even after I explained that my role as a researcher was different. Later, as my identity with the TG grew, and as everybody's stakes in the Reserve became clearer to all, I gave up this neutral strategy, and recovered the trust of most TG members.

Summary and Conclusions

The Task Group for the Creation of the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré was formed with assistance from AAE from the Extractive Reserve movement created by the two courses I gave in Itacaré in 1999. AAE chose fishers and community members they considered to be most interested in the community, and advised them on strategies to gain and maintain power in the Extractive Reserve movement. These fishers competed in the Extractive Reserve movement against local technical volunteers who represented part of the elite of Itacaré. Later, CNPT/IBAMA's recognition established the fishers of the Task Group as the legitimate local interlocutors for the Reserve and the intermediaries/technical volunteers lost their position to the TG and AAE.

AAE not only advised the TG on strategies to maintain its hegemony in the Extractive Reserve creation process but also provided it with political views that shaped their interactions. On the one hand, these views isolated the TG and contributed to the increase in the multidimensional costs of their leadership. The black-and-white views of the TG increased the opposition with established leaders, and worsened internal participation problems (EP13, outsider facilitators vs. insiders, and EP14, insiders vs. insiders). On the other hand, these views created a strong group identity based on

volunteerism and helped the group establish itself as the legitimate interlocutor for the Reserve.

CHAPTER 7
RESEARCH QUESTION 1:
WHAT FACTORS INFLUENCED FISHERS' PARTICIPATION IN THE PRA
MEETINGS?

What factors influenced participation of the fishers of Itacaré in the PRA meetings? When PRA meetings were tried in different fishing communities, the difficulty of achieving good attendance²⁶ varied. Table 7-1 summarizes the results of the attempts to mobilize the communities for PRA meetings.

In urban communities, participation was generally harder to mobilize, particularly in the Banca do Peixe community. However, in Itacarezinho, the first attempt to mobilize the fishers also failed, and attendance at the first day of meetings in Taboquinhas was low, too. With repeated attempts and change in strategies, all communities eventually increased their participation and had “good attendance” at the meetings. What explains the individual results, the changes in the response of individual communities to different strategies, and the differences between them? Table 7-2 presents again the explanatory propositions for Research Question 1.

In addition to these explanatory propositions, the reader might ask what other differences these communities had that could explain their different results. Action research is a particularly useful approach in this case because we do not just correlate these findings, but work in cycles of action and reflection taking into consideration those

²⁶ “Good attendance” was considered to mean the presence of 20-30 people at the meetings in urban communities and more than half of the families at the meetings in rural areas.

differences. In these cycles, accumulating evidence for or against these propositions was considered and analyzed.

Table 7-1: Attendance at the PRA meetings.

Type	Community	Results
Urban	Banca do Peixe	The first two attempts to mobilize the community for the PRA meetings failed. Later PRA meetings attracted 20-30 people in each of the five first-round evening meetings and of the two second-round meetings.
	Porto de Trás	When invited to PRA training, only three women from Porto de Trás attended three or four sessions. Later, PRA mobilized 20-30 participants in each of the four consecutive evening meetings (first round) and about 20 people attended each of the two second-round evening meetings.
	Marimbondo/ Passagem	10-20 participants attended three of the four first-round meetings, but the last evening had to be cancelled. In the second-round, the first attempt failed. In the second attempt, about 20 participants attended the two second-round meetings.
	Forte	20-30 participants attended all meetings.
Urban/ Rural	Taboquinhas	The first day of the first round of PRA meetings attracted only five people. A second attempt had around 25 people. About 30 participants attended each session of the second round.
Rural	Piracanga and Caubi	About 35 participants (almost all of Piracanga and many from Caubi) attended each session of the first and second rounds.
	Itacarezinho	The first attempt failed. In the second attempt, all families (about 15 people) attended the first round and second-round one-day meetings
	Campo Seco	Most families (about 20 people) attended the first and second-round one-day meetings.

The explanatory propositions listed in Table 7-2 were not all conceptualized beforehand. This chapter discusses how they were created and tested in action, and compares the conclusions with the previous discussion on the history of Itacaré, and natural resource management by the local fishers. To discuss the action-testing of each proposition, I present the general characteristics of each community, and the results of participation in the PRA exercise in each one, and how such results changed the strategies to attract participation according to different explanatory propositions. If such strategies were effectively implemented, and resulted in increased participation, the explanatory proposition from which they derived was corroborated. If they failed, the

respective explanatory proposition was rejected. In addition to the participation results in each community, I present the results of participation in the PRA training for the TG members, which was the first action that the TG and I implemented together during my fieldwork, and whose attendance problems resulted in the first explanatory propositions and actions. This discussion is more or less chronologically presented, so that the readers understand the flow of the investigative process and the resulting learning from it.

Table 7-2: Research Question 1 and explanatory propositions.

EP Number	Explanatory propositions
EP1	Logistics: People participate if meetings are well-advertised and planned for convenient dates, times, and locations
EP2	Culture: Fishers are individualistic and do not participate because of the nature of their activities
EP3	Free-riding: If fishers can benefit from a collective good without contributing, they will free-ride and not participate
EP4	Political aspects: Participation is a political currency and fishers attend meetings strategically
EP5	Multidimensional costs and benefits: Attendance at meetings depends on the participant's consideration of benefits and costs in multiple dimensions
EP6	Urban vs. rural: Attracting participation in urban areas is more difficult than in rural areas
EP7	Previous experience and credibility: Previous negative community experience with projects and outside assistance reduces credibility of the participatory process and participation in the PRA meetings
EP8	Credibility of the PRA team: The credibility of the PRA team and its members influences participation in the meetings

PRA Training for TG Members

As the Task Group and I had decided, I gave them a course on PRA so that they would be able to carry out a PRA exercise later, with my orientation. The course was intended to capacitate not only active TG members, but also fishers who had participated in the movement for the Reserve, and others who could be interested in helping. The

course involved the topics listed in Table 7-3, in ten evening sessions, from October 2 to 13. Evenings were chosen because it was agreed in the Task Group that this time would make it more convenient for fishers to attend. The three core TG members were in charge of the organization of the course. They found a classroom available in one of the municipal schools and invited participants.

Although the TG faced participation problems before my dissertation fieldwork started, I focus mostly on what I was able to witness, which started in the training course. On the first evening, we had good attendance but missed the *marisqueiras*²⁷ of Porto de Trás, who did not come. “Why didn’t they come?” I asked. “Lack of interest,” someone said. “I think it is the gossip that is going on there in Porto de Trás,” said someone else. The gossip they were referring to was that Instituto Ambiental was behind the Reserve, that it would not benefit locals. “Maybe the *marisqueiras* forgot, or the message did not get to them...” I said. Two core TG members agreed. “Then, let’s invite them again!” I proposed.

Thus, action research on participation began when we started asking why the *marisqueira* women did not come to the course. Some explanatory propositions, discussed in the Introduction, were introduced, as follows:

- “Maybe the *marisqueiras* forgot, or the message did not get to them...” i.e., logistics (EP1): people participate if meetings are well-advertised and planned for convenient dates, times, and locations;
- “Lack of interest,” i.e., culture (EP2): fishers are individualistic and do not participate because of the nature of their activities;

²⁷ Women that collect crabs, mollusks, and fish in the mangroves; in this case, they lived in Porto de Trás.

- “I think it is the gossip that is going on there in the Porto de Trás,” i.e., political aspects (EP4) (participation is a political currency and fishers attend meetings strategically), or previous experience and credibility (previous negative community experience with projects and outside assistance reduces credibility of the participatory process and participation in the PRA meetings), or credibility of the PRA team (the credibility of the PRA team and its members influences participation in the meetings).

Table 7-3: Contents of the course on PRA for the Task Group

Day	Contents
1 st Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introductions ▪ Objectives and expectations (game) ▪ Extractive Reserves ▪ History of the extractive reserves in Brazil ▪ The participants’ dreams for the Reserve ▪ Community participation
2 nd Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review of the previous day ▪ Participatory methods and participatory rural appraisal ▪ Institutional diagram (Venn diagram)
3 rd Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review of the previous day ▪ Types of participation: mobilization vs. empowerment ▪ Analysis of the institutional diagram
4 th Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Historical diagram of the natural resources ▪ Participatory mapping of the area
5 th Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analysis of the map and of the historical diagram
6 th Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interviews ▪ Common mistakes in Interviews ▪ Practicing interviews ▪ Behavior during the interviews ▪ Homework: describe your day
7 th Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review of the previous day ▪ Review of the problem trees ▪ PRA activity planning
8 th Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ecological transect of the sea of Itacaré
9 th Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review of the transect ▪ Problem tree of the natural resources ▪ Practicing self-presentation
10 th Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ General review ▪ Seasonal calendar

(Adapted from Weigand Jr. 2000a)

We started by testing the logistics proposition, which was the easiest to test, while the others would take more time. TG members were all too busy during the next day, so Ana, a biologist who was also taking the course, went to Porto de Trás to invite the

marisqueiras. She gathered together in a house at least ten women, who used to participate in the movement for the Reserve, and many promised to come. At night, though, only three came to the course (there were about eight *marisqueiras* who used to participate in such activities). Therefore, we concluded that it was not lack of invitation; the logistic proposition was not supported and people did not participate *even* if meetings were well-advertised and planned for convenient dates, times, and locations (although there could be some argument about whether the date, time and location of the course were considered convenient by the *marisqueiras*, we did not have any indication that they were not).

The other two propositions were not tested at the time. However, some political questions emerged. Neither one of the invitations (the one by the TG or the one by Ana) followed the neighborhood's proper channels: they did not involve the Porto de Trás' Neighborhood Association (AMPT). Was AMPT boycotting the Reserve and the TG because of "inappropriate" procedures that challenged their leadership? Were they asserting their "territory" as the organization through which all community work in Porto de Trás had to happen? The answer to these questions came much later, when the president of AMPT told me he was upset with a cultural group who met in Porto de Trás and insisted in not involving his association in its activities. AMPT would not tolerate competition. Therefore, using the proper channels was important, which seemed to corroborate EP4 (political aspects).

By the end of the training, not many of the participants seemed able to use the PRA techniques because most did not endure ten days. Only three participants did, and maybe another two could facilitate PRA if they had a little more training and good

supervision, while others had irregular participation in the course. The same process of inquiry, described above, happened. “Why didn’t they attend more?” “Oh, people are busy...” (EP1, logistics). “There were the celebrations of São Francisco...” (EP1). “If they were interested, they would come!” (EP2, individualistic culture). That is, again the logistics (EP1) and the culture propositions (EP2) were competing among TG members.

After some discussion, we considered that logistics (EP1) probably had an effect, because the course was long, and fishers had other activities in which they had to participate. In addition, the course started to give an idea of how much dedication working for the Reserve could take. It had to include some strategy to build up commitment, which it did not have. The three people who continued to the end of the course were the same who had sustained the process going forward even when most people had deserted. These three people evaluated that the main reason for the low attendance was that other participants did not have the same level of commitment to the process as they did. I did not like this explanation much, because I normally do not like to blame low participation on the participants, but it was clear that there was a subgroup within the TG, who worked much more than others. This is discussed in the next Chapter, where I deal with participation within TG.

However, the São Francisco celebrations could account at least for the low participation of Pedro, ASPERI’s President. São Francisco was the patron saint of the Colônia, and it was Pedro’s responsibility as a community leader to attend all celebrations in order to keep good relations of ASPERI with the Colônia and the Church. That was his justification. However, there was a climate of antagonism between TG members, on the one side, and ASPERI and Colônia, on the other, as discussed in

Chapter 6. The fact that the TG did not consider the celebrations in planning the course is at least evidence of their low identity with the Colônia.

The Task Group was thus politically isolated from the organizations that usually represented the fishers, and was not considering their influence on the community. TG members had moral arguments against the legitimacy of the other organizations in the process. Granted, ASPERI, Colônia, and even AMPT had participation problems, and their practices were often not very democratic. The rise of the TG's leadership created additional competition for political support. Moreover, the union of the fishers for the Extractive Reserve could represent a weakening of the influence of those organizations which depended on the representation of chunks of the fishing population, not all of it.

In my view, as the TG acted too independently from the traditional forms of organization, it was creating resistance and competition for political influence when it was still too weak to face it (EP4). The situation called for a more pragmatic, and less radical, strategy; and I so advised TG members. However, they did not agree with my arguments and viewed the strategy that I suggested as a form of dissimulation and dishonesty, one that they rejected in traditional leaders.

If Pedro avoided participating because of political antagonism against the TG, the political aspects proposition would be supported. We did not get much more information from him than his justification, described above, but before the course he told me that he did not come to the first TG meeting because it was carried out at the house of a TG member. He argued that it was not politically appropriate to hold meetings in someone's house when there were rooms available in the fishers' organizations.

Indeed, the location of the course (in the school, and later changed to a house of a TG member because the school room became unavailable) could have played a role in the participation of some of the traditional leaders. TG members decided to avoid carrying out the course in the Colônia because people from ASPERI might not come (and, I suspected, they wanted to act independently from the Colônia's directors). For the same reason, ASPERI was out of the question. Meeting locations had political meaning that influenced participation. As a result, traditional leaders may have boycotted the course as a strategy to resist the influence of TG members (EP4).

Let us examine again the third proposition of the TG members for the low participation of the *marisqueiras* in the PRA course: "I think it is the gossip that is going on there." The gossip, as we knew it, was that a core TG member had stolen R\$12,000 from a project submitted to CNPT, money which she could not have taken because it was never granted. Different versions appeared in the community, but most of them were concentrated in Porto de Trás.

We could not be sure about who had initiated the gossip, but suspected that a local social scientist had spread the rumor because

- We learned that she had done so in the past with other projects of which she was not a beneficiary
- She had access to information about a project to support the TG work that would have with the same amount of funding, which was still pending evaluation, that had been submitted to an Italian NGO (she often distorted facts to build gossip based on them)

Another possible source of the gossip was the local owner of *guinchos*, who was going to lose the most with the creation of the Reserve. Still, the gossip could also be the work of the directors of Porto de Trás' Neighborhood Association (AMPT), who were criticized by a TG member because she heard complaints about the use of canoes and

equipment that they received as a donation from CNPT/IBAMA. In a visit to Itacaré prior to my arrival, she told me, CNPT wanted to give special attention to the women in that community, and thus held a meeting there to find out what their needs were. Predictably, the community presented a list of needs to CNPT (canoes, fishing equipment, etc).

However, to everybody's surprise, the complaint was that, when these items arrived, AMPT did not let the women use them. Her critique was about this. It seemed a typical case of men appropriating the benefits that were directed towards women, since Porto de Trás had received canoes and equipment from IBAMA/CNPT to help the women collectors of crabs and shellfish. However, later we were told by a TG member who lived in Porto de Trás that the Association was just requesting that people pay their dues before using the canoes. Misinformation went both ways.

Why was the gossip credible both ways? On the one hand, to the leaders of Porto de Trás (who needed to defend their positions from attacks), gossip that morally affected a TG member who was criticizing them (and competing with them for political support) seemed advantageous. The recent history of the community with the NGO Instituto Ambiental increased local suspicions about community projects (see Chapter 4) and made the gossip credible. The problems with environmental projects carried out in the municipality by Instituto Ambiental and an NGO from Ilhéus created an environment favorable to this gossip even outside of Porto de Trás. The history of the region (where the poor have been oppressed and taken advantage of), the notion of limited good, and the free-rider myth, also justified the credibility of such gossip. Different information acquired different value (or credibility) according to whether they fitted the general discourses that were used to explain reality. On the other hand, to the core TG member,

the gossip that men were taking advantage of the women by controlling the canoes donated by CNPT was credible because she expected this to happen, given her new feminist education with AAE.

First-Round PRA Meetings

Piracanga and Caubi

The beach of Piracanga was located on the north coast of Itacaré. This portion of the coast, between Itacaré and Piracanga, was surprisingly pristine. Coconut plantations replaced most of Bahia's coastal native vegetation, but those six kilometers were an exception with a very typical coastal dune (*restinga*) ecosystem. The Piracanga River varied in volume according to the tide. Its delta was always changing, as the river meandered the *restinga* and formed mangroves.

Batista's house was located on a former mangrove island at the mouth of the Piracanga River, occupied about 30 years before by another family who planted coconut trees, the first coconut grove to the north of Itacaré. From this island, one could see the white-sand beach and the sea on the other side of the river, and enjoy the gentle breeze so typical of the Bahian coast. For four years, Batista had lived there with his family. Batista was a member of the Task Group, and his island was the TG's base for working with the Piracanga community.

The TG decided to hold PRA meetings for the participants from the Village of Caubi and from Piracanga together on Batista's island. I have never been to Caubi, but the descriptions by Batista made me imagine a small village, maybe 50 to 70 households, practicing agriculture, wage labor in the rubber plantations, and subsistence fishing.

On mangrove islands of Piracanga, four families lived in huts, whose walls and roofs were made of palm straw. These families planted home gardens and cooperated to

fish in the sea in front of Piracanga beach, sharing a raft to get to deeper waters and launch nets. However, they only practiced subsistence fishing. Other dwellers of Piracanga lived in wooden houses on small farms, where they planted coconuts, watermelon, manioc and other crops, or worked as wage laborers for weekend farmers. They fished only for subsistence.

Living conditions in Piracanga, in spite of the paradisiacal beach, were harsh. Sanitation was precarious, and most of the water sources were contaminated with parasites and/or with salt water. Parasites, combined with low agricultural productivity and low income, apparently caused undernourishment in some of the children. Most people in Piracanga were illiterate or nearly so. Almost no children went to school. There was no electricity and no telephone.

To worsen the situation, there were land conflicts in Piracanga. The mangrove islands were being claimed by a couple of newcomers, who were not fishers but people who pursued a hippie-like lifestyle, farming and selling handicrafts for a living. Later, a second group started to claim property over the islands and try to evict the fishers. A municipal councilman and other people started to pressure the four families to leave the islands.

However, the islands could not belong either to them or to the local families because they belonged to the state. They were "áreas de Marinha," federal public land adjacent to the sea and estuaries, up to 33 meters from the highest tide.

The conflict between the hippies and the families living on the mangrove islands created suspicions, not towards the promoters of PRA (the TG and me), but among the participants. To Batista, the hippies were just pretending to be cooperative. As he

expected, later in the process of ER creation, the hippie couple became opponents of the community, not allies.

Other conflicts in Piracanga involved a weekend farmer, who ordered the cutting of a mangrove area and the construction of a boardwalk over the Piracanga River, which restricted navigation on the river, and the use of the sea in front of the beach. The PRA map in Piracanga also revealed a conflict between fishers of Piracanga, who used rafts and nets to fish in the sea in front of the community, against urban fishers of the Forte, who used to trawl for shrimp there, and according to the fishers from Piracanga, ran over their nets with motorized trawling boats. Forte fishers in turn accused the fishers from Piracanga of stealing their nets cast by the beach.

In Piracanga, the attendance at the first round of PRA meetings was good, but special effort was needed to invite people to come. Noticing that people were late, Batista proposed that he and I strengthen the invitations, walking through the community and inviting each family again. He told me he had invited people, but maybe they needed a new invitation. "They forget," he said. It was the logistics proposition (EP1) again. We could invite the people of Piracanga, but Caubi was too far away. So, Batista and I visited the farms. I explained the purpose of the meeting after Batista introduced me to each family. As a result, soon after we returned to Batista's island, people started to arrive and we had good attendance in the afternoon. On the second day, participants came earlier, and no extra effort was required.

Evidence of Piracanga's capacity for community cooperation was shown on the second day of the first PRA round. Someone arrived with the news that there was a wildfire threatening a farm in the community. All men were requested to help and they

improvised a fire brigade, but the women could still go on with their meeting. Later, the men returned and we all continued the meeting. This event undermined the individualistic culture proposition (EP2).

This first round of PRA meetings in Piracanga did not support the proposition that fishers are individualistic, and that a lack of participation is the result of their culture (EP2). It seemed to support the logistics proposition (EP1), because community members responded to the new invitation, and there was a possibility that Batista was not so effective in getting the word out in his first invitation. However, if Batista was effective in doing the first invitation, it seems that people responded to the second invitation because *I* was with him. “*Santo de casa não faz milagre*” (a saint image kept at home, that is, one’s own saint image, cannot make miracles), says a Brazilian proverb.

Why not? There were several possible explanations why Batista was perhaps not able to perform his miracle in Piracanga; these explanations were not tested, but can be discussed:

- The community did not trust that Batista would have enough influence to bring about a meeting to discuss the Extractive Reserve (related to EP8, credibility of the PRA team)
- Batista was not effective in explaining what the Reserve or the purpose of the meeting was (EP1, logistics)
- Participants were impressed that an educated outsider, who looked more powerful than they were (me), was participating, and they might have expected some sort of benefits, such as money, information, etc. (EP5, multidimensional costs and benefits proposition)

The first conjecture was not likely because there was a meeting about the Reserve in Piracanga before, carried out by the TG, with assistance of AAE and other volunteers, which had good attendance then. I believe that the second conjecture also was not likely

because Batista was indeed good at explaining the idea of the Reserve (I saw him doing it). Thus, I believe that the third conjecture is the one that can better explain why fishers started to attend after my invitation: they were after benefits (information about the Reserve, money, etc.). However, this explanation is only required if Batista had really tried to invite everyone, which he said he did, two days before the meeting.

In any event, by the end of the first meeting day, participants noticed that there would be no money or credit being distributed, but they came again on the second day, arriving early. TG members facilitated all the discussions on the first day, so I believe that participants were not so much influenced by my presence in the meeting. On the first day, participants had the opportunity to talk about their problems, and expected that their voice would be represented by TG members in further discussions about the Reserve. They were willing to give their political support to the TG so their voice would be heard (EP4). In addition, everybody had a nice time on the first day, and participants seemed happy to be back on the following morning (EP5), which supports Chambers' (Chambers 1994a) "reversals."

In conclusion, Piracanga provided evidence against the individualistic culture explanatory proposition (EP2). Evidence against (or in favor of) the logistics proposition (EP1) was not so clear because we do not know whether or not it was just a second invitation that mobilized participants or whether it was my presence and the possibilities that participants thought I represented. Participants seemed to value the role of the TG representing the interests of community according to what they said in the meetings, and were willing to politically support the TG (EP4). All the other propositions were left standing, even though the evidence was not conclusive for the free-riding proposition

(EP3). Finally, the isolation of Piracanga seemed to leave it apparently uncontaminated by the gossip going on in town. Piracanga was forgotten even by the traditional leaders of Itacaré. In Piracanga, Batista was the one who performed a leadership role, and he was with the TG, not against it.

Banca do Peixe

Banca do Peixe was the community where it was most difficult to obtain attendance at the PRA meetings. It was a *port community* (see Chapter 3); the *banca do peixe* (fish stand or market) was a place around which offshore and inshore native fishermen gathered and was part of the Colônia's infrastructure, which also included a chapel and a classroom, right next to the port of the Banca. The chapel was used on commemorative dates, such as the day of *São Francisco* (Saint Francis), the patron saint of the Colônia. The classroom was used by the municipality for elementary school classes, and by the Colônia and the TG for meetings and courses.

The three buildings were located side by side on the boulevard by Coroa beach. In the central division of the boulevard, there were benches and several kiosk bars. Two of them closer to the Banca were places where fishers and others played cards, gambled and talked about local politics and the lives of others. The benches in front of the Banca were used by the fishers, where they sat and observed the sea on the other side of Pontal, interpreted the weather, talked about fishing, soccer, community politics and, of course, the lives of others. These benches were also used by some merchants and boat owners to chat, gossip, and discuss politics, very similar to what is described in Jorge Amado's novel, "*Gabriela Cravo e Canela*" (Amado 1963), for the *banca do peixe* of Ilhéus, in the first half of the 20th Century.

The Banca was located at the end of the Coroa beach closer to the sea, where the river curve created a protected spot to anchor boats and canoes. In front of the Colônia, the sandy beach turned into mud, with some tiny mangrove trees. On the river bank, tall jackfruit trees gave shade to boat repairing activities. At low tide, the retreating water laid most boats anchored in front of the Banca on the exposed sand or mud.

The ramp that gave access from the boulevard to the beach and the river, and the kiosk bar of Seu Osvaldo, were located on the left side of the Colônia. His bar was closed much of the year, but nonetheless the space was the preferred spot of many fishermen. There they talked, repaired their nets, observed the weather and the waves in the *barra*, and napped. At night, the ramp was another popular spot. Many fishermen used to go there to "*tomar a fresca*," that is, to enjoy the breeze of the night, lie on the ramp, talk or sleep. For many, the Banca and its surroundings were more than a public space; they were an extension of their homes and of their boats. Fishers who had fished all night often had trouble sleeping in their tiny homes during the day, where their families could disturb them. It was quieter by the port. All of that could change soon, because the state government had plans to renovate the whole boulevard and make it more attractive to tourists.

The Banca was the community with which I became most familiar. Most people in the TG were from the Banca. I lived in the same part of the town as most fishers of the Banca, and used to run into them in the streets more often than the fishers of other communities. The Colônia was the most conspicuous form of organization of the fishers, and the habit of fishers of hanging out by Osvaldo's kiosk or by the benches in front of the fish market made them easily accessible to me. I would just do the same: sit there

under the trees, start a conversation with some of them, or just stare at the sea until someone started talking to me. The extractive reserve, obviously, was our favorite topic of conversation. However, we also talked about changes in nature, the past of community organization, and the customs of the fishers, speculating if there was any chance that fishers could become empowered by community organizations. Most of their evaluations were not very optimistic.

This community comprised about 100 fishers; most of them were born in Itacaré and were second or third generation fishers in the municipality. In my conversations with them, I noticed that they identified themselves as "nativos," and opposed both outside fishers and the newcomer fishers of the Forte. They were recognized by the rest of the fishers of the municipality as the experts in the sea of Itacaré, because they knew all the fishing spots in the sea and all the fishing techniques. Their knowledge of the sea allowed them to practice hook-and-line fishing and I wondered if their greater dedication to this modality, instead of shrimp fishing, was related to its possible better cost/benefit ratio. Outside and newcomer fishers were rarely involved in hook-and-line fishing because they did not know the sea of Itacaré well. This was verified in the PRA, comparing the natural resource maps created by the participants in the Banca (mostly natives) and in the Forte (mostly newcomers); the map created in the Banca was very detailed, with greater emphasis on the fishing spots, while the map created by the Forte fishers focused on the mud substratum used for shrimp fishing.

The PRA natural resource map created by the fishers of the Colônia (Figure 7-1 shows the drawing that I did based on the map) identified 26 underwater fishing spots in the sea of Itacaré. They comprised submerged rocks, reefs, and cliffs. It also showed the

Figure 7-1: Natural resource map created by the PRA participants of Banca do Peixe.

Banca fishers had resource use conflicts with the *guincho* boats and with divers that fished using compressed air breathing equipment. However, some of its fishers snorkeled in the reefs close to the shore for fishing, which became a major issue in the PRA meetings. Most fishers wanted to create an untouchable area where these fishers used to fish, called “the nursery” or the “coral gardens,” and recognized the destructive effects of divers in the area (reportedly, coral harvesting by divers had already destroyed a great part of the beautiful coral formations). To them, protection was important not only to restore fish populations but also to increase the underwater tourism value of the sea of Itacaré.

The fishers of the Banca were primarily commercial. They “sell the good fish and eat the bad,” as one fisherman put it, that is, they sold the first-class, expensive fish, and consumed the second-class, cheap fish.

Most of the Banca fishers lived in the central (and better) part of the town. Some of the fishers had motor boats that, unlike ASPERI’s, were acquired with their own resources, and not financed by the bank. Their wives were involved in their own businesses, worked for the municipality or in stores (because Banca do Peixe was a port community, it was a community of men, mostly, with women and children linked to the Banca by the participation of men in their daily activities around it). Thus, compared to other fishing communities, these fishers were relatively wealthy. Most of these fishers had lighter skin than the (often poorer) fishers from Porto de Trás or Passagem, although most also had some African racial features.

Because most of these fishers used the fish stand of the Colônia and motor boats (which required registration in the Port Authority for which the Colônia was an intermediary), they tended to be more involved in the Colônia. Many paid the monthly contribution to the organization and received social security benefits. However, they had a long history of antagonistic interaction with government agencies, which made them skeptical of them, skilled at cheating them, and resistant to any change.

These fishers, along with other members of the Colônia who were not fishers, were important in electoral terms, both in the organization and in the Municipality. Thus, they also had had the experience of having the Colônia be targeted for electoral purposes. In addition, they were involved with the debates about the changes in Itacaré, discussed the increasing power of the newcomers related to tourism and environmentalism, and accepted *nativismo* (see Chapter 4) easily. Maybe for these reasons (that is, previous experience, EP7), it was a particularly difficult community to promote community organizing and to sell the Extractive Reserve idea in the Banca, even though most members of the Task Group belonged to this community.

The institutional diagram of Banca do Peixe (Figure 7-2) showed that these fishers saw themselves at the center of the whole fishing community of Itacaré. Their main problems were with agencies that had a repressive role, such as CRA, IBAMA, and to a certain extent, the Port Authority.

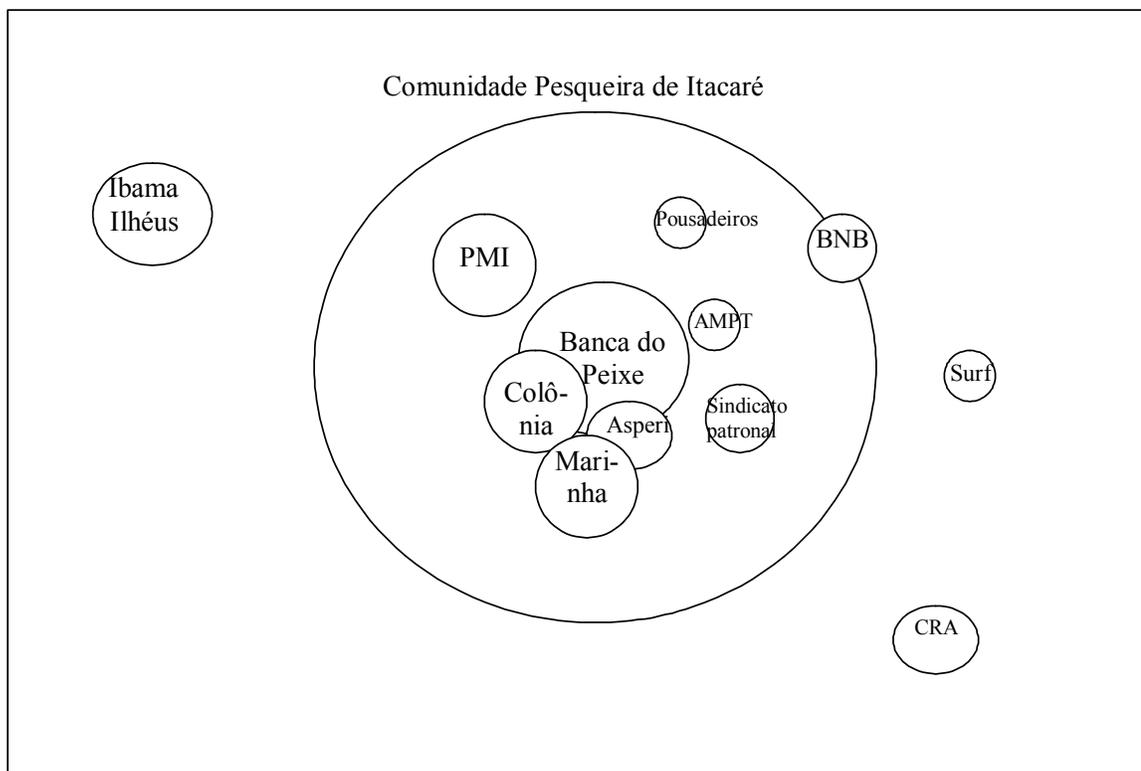


Figure 7-2: Institutional diagram of Banca do Peixe. Key: IBAMA Ilhéus = Brazilian Institute for the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (Office in Ilhéus); PMI = Itacaré Municipal Government; Pousadeiros = owners of pousadas (small hotels); BNB = Bank of the Brazilian Northeast (a regional development bank); AMPT = Porto de Trás Neighborhood Association; Surf = Itacaré Surfers' Association; Colônia = Colônia de Pesca Z-18 (the local fishers' guild); ASPERI = Itacaré Fishers' Association; Sindicato Patronal = Rural Landowners' Union; Marinha = the Navy, i.e., the Port Authority or Brazilian Coast Guard; CRA = Bahia's State Environmental Agency; Banca do Peixe = the community of Banca do Peixe.

The Colônia was placed at the margin of the Banca community, revealing their concerns. According to them, even though fishers receive some social security support through the Colônia, they are not well informed of their rights. Directors were not close to the fishers and were not seen as representation channels for their needs. According to PRA participants, the participation of fishers in the Colônia only happened for selfish motives, such as obtaining credit (EP3, free-riding proposition). There was a debate on whether it was better to have a fisher as a president of the Colônia: some people argued

that fishers were not capable, based on the past experience; others argued that a fisherman could do a good job as long as he had the good advice they were having at that moment.

Banca fishers, unlike the fishers of Porto de Trás, did not have a local organization to represent them exclusively. The Colônia was supposed to represent all fishers in Itacaré and neighboring municipalities, not only the fishers of the Banca.

Finally, PRA participants discussed ways in which fishers should trade their fish. At that point, the Colônia maintained an infrastructure that served mainly middlemen, particularly two men who had kin ties with Ulysses, the treasurer of the organization. New installations were proposed with the middlemen's needs in mind, and the new directors expressed a view that they should "*terceirizar*," that is, open spaces for private entrepreneurs, as if the Colônia were a government institution that should follow a neoliberal philosophy. This was opposed by the TG and other fishers, who defended a cooperative, instead, to bypass the middlemen. Such a strategy was followed in the Forte, by ASPERI, and was in course in Porto de Trás, by AMPT, which were not cooperatives in the formal sense, but associations which tried to act as if they were cooperatives.

As pointed out above, the Banca was the community where obtaining attendance at PRA meetings was most difficult. Twice the TG and I failed to attract participation at the PRA meetings, which had to be canceled. Why was it so difficult? The first explanatory proposition, as usual, was logistics (EP1): were the meetings well advertised? Were meeting place, dates and times convenient?

One year before, when I gave a course on community leadership to the fishers of Itacaré, in the same place and times, and for five consecutive evenings, it enjoyed

reasonable participation from the fishers of the Banca. This time, location and times were the same, thus probably convenient, and there was no indication that the dates were not convenient. One of the attempted meetings had a short rain shower before it, but this still was not a reason for such a little response. The question was whether or not the meetings had been well advertised. In the second attempt, I got involved in advertising to make sure it was done, and in spite of this, just three people came to the meeting.

We had a TG meeting to discuss the situation. A fisherman complained that Banca do Peixe, his own community, just complained about everything. Another agreed, “It seems that fishers don’t want the Reserve.” Catu theorized: “Only a minority does not want the Reserve. You have to understand that fishers in general want the Reserve, but they are waiting, as they always do: the fisher waits for the fish to bite the bait, he waits for the right tide, and he waits for the storm to pass.” To Catu, waiting was in their culture (EP2); being passive was sometimes an important strategy for survival when utilizing resources, and this was also extended to the social and political arena. A fisherman complained about what he saw as hypocrisy of the fishers. “They tell you one thing and among themselves they say another!” According to him, fishers wait so they can blame others, in this case the Task Group, for the failures. Another fisher agreed with Catu, that the fishers want the Reserve but do not work for it. This reasoning is also consistent with the free-rider argument.

After some discussion in the meeting, it became clear to all that there was a group trying to destroy the fishers’ motivation for the Reserve. Someone quoted Zé Filho, a fisherman who supported the Reserve, who said “the Working Group says one word in favor of the Reserve and they [some fishers interested in creating suspicions] say ten

words against it.” Zé Filho was just realizing that the Reserve was going to benefit him. Catu hypothesized again: “the Extractive Reserve is the best, but it takes power away from ASPERI and Colônia, and that is why it bothers them.” A fisherman agreed, and mentioned as evidence that when they talked about the creation of a cooperative, which would take some of the role ASPERI is playing now, the president of ASPERI was against it.

In this discussion, TG members presented several of the propositions to explain fishers’ participation in Itacaré discussed in this dissertation. To some, fishers were individualistic, while to others, waiting was in their culture (EP2). Many TG members believed that fishers were free-riding in their efforts (EP3), and that free-riding was somehow justified because fishers were still suspicious of the Reserve (EP4). Such suspicions were justified both in terms of the fishers’ culture (EP2) and of their past experiences with community organization (EP7). In the discussion, the political aspects of participation became apparent (EP4). First, many fishers still believed that they would lose with the Reserve, listening to verbal attacks by the sectors that could lose from it. These sectors were not just comprised of the industrial fishers but also of traditional leaders in charge of the fishers’ organizations. Because of its potential to change how power was distributed in Itacaré, the Extractive Reserve proposal was facing several forms of opposition from people that were benefiting from the present power relations, and for whom the Reserve represented a threat.

In the case of the Banca, the ones who were most threatened by the Reserve were the Colônia’s directors, particularly a director whose relations with TG members were already strained, and who spent his days by the port, where he could spread his opinions

about the Reserve to other fishers. Nevertheless, his opposition was not necessarily just an attempt to defend his position; in one of the meetings about the Reserve he revealed that he misunderstood who was going to set the rules for the Reserve. He alleged that, when we said that “the community was going to decide,” he assumed it was the whole community of Itacaré, not just the *fishing* community²⁸. If it was the whole community, he said, he feared that the environmentalists would take over the process. Thus, he was resisting the Reserve because of the previous experience he had had with the environmentalists (EP7). He was advising the community to boycott the process as a way to resist the creation of the Reserve (EP4).

To overcome such opposition, the TG had to clear things up with such opponents, providing information about the Reserve, and acting with them, not against them. In addition, it had to make information about the Reserve reach the community, and reduce opposition.

In spite of all these propositions discussed in the TG meeting, I believed that PRA could still attract participation. On the one hand, I did not believe that fishers were individualistic by nature or culture (EP2). On the other, my experience with PRA suggested to me that participating in the meetings could be pleasant and rewarding (EP5). I proposed that we try once more, changing the meeting time and location to late afternoon, outside the classroom where we had tried previous meetings, right on the

²⁸ At the time, the new law regarding the National System of Conservation Units, SNUC, was not implemented yet; with its implementation, the rules are not set just by the extractive community and IBAMA anymore; they are decided by a “management council” in which, “when possible,” community and government organizations have equal power.

street. This would allow us to attract fishers by “hooking” them through their curiosity.

My following fieldnote accounts for the experience:

On November 16, 2000, I went with M. to the *Banca* to hold the PRA meeting to create a participatory map of the Reserve. We were disappointed to find out that a course for fishers was being carried out by the Port Authority in the classroom. M. said it was better not to do our meeting until the other one was over, even if ours was going to be outside.

When the Port Authority course ended, I had lost sight of M., but proposed to F. that we started the map. He did not want to. “Fishers are like that, they only care for these things,” he said, referring to the card playing that was going on in a kiosk bar. He seemed disappointed with his audience. “Our work is fun too,” I replied. He resisted and I finally said, “If you are not in the mood to do the map, fine, but I am.” I took the material to Osvaldo’s kiosk and opened two large sheets of paper on the ground and glued them together, making a working surface of about 1.5 m x 1 m and attracting the curiosity of some fishers that were close by. As they approached me to see what I was doing, I explained, and asked someone to start drawing the coast, but nobody dared to. I decided to draw the coastline based on a satellite image I had with me and asked for their directions.

They started to tell me where the rivers were, and the names of the beaches. There was a discussion on whether there was a river in one of the beaches, causing an argument between fishers. A tense atmosphere, typical of many meetings with the fishers of the *Banca*, was established. They yelled at each other, and argued about who had better knowledge of the region... I asked about the rest of the elements we could represent, like fishing spots, reefs, etc. No one moved to contribute. I placed a pile of pebbles on the paper (to represent the fishing spots), sand (to represent the beaches) and sawdust (to represent the mud), and asked them to use that to build the map.

Slowly, Mamá and then Jeneca started placing the pebbles on the map marking fishing spots. After they reached an agreement over the position of the map elements, they glued them to the paper. Other fishers started to participate and I stepped back and let them do it. More and more fishers approached the map. They argued about the location and names of different fishing spots, but now in a much friendlier manner. Always lighthearted, Jeneca brought his joy to the meeting; they joked and laughed. By the end of the exercise, 23 people had participated and some of the most stubborn opponents of the Reserve, such as Seu Cortez, changed their attitude. Seu Cortez was a retired sailor and fisherman, grandfather of a new generation of fishers. He used to argue with me that the Reserve was not going to go anywhere: “You don’t know these folks! Fishermen are a race for which there is no hope!” However, during the meeting, he approached the map slowly, even gave us some suggestions, and by the end, smiled and said that this was what he wanted, that the fishers should understand what the Extractive Reserve was. He never again argued with me about the fishers’ inability to manage the Reserve.

They worked on the map for more than an hour, discussed some of the resource use problems and only stopped when it got too dark.

The action of doing the map tested the explanatory propositions about fishers' participation in the Banca meetings. There was almost no advertisement for the map, but time and location worked in attracting more than 20 people (Figure 7-3 shows the crescent interest generated by the participatory map).

The PRA mapping technique made the meeting enjoyable, attracting and keeping fishers involved for as long as we had enough light to work. This showed that the problem of low participation was with the strategies and not with the participants.

The logistics (EP1) and the individualistic culture (EP2) propositions could not account for both the failures and the successes in attracting good attendance in the Banca so far. As fishers participated in the participatory mapping exercise, they started to understand the Reserve better. Asking them about their knowledge and opinions worked to increase their trust in the TG and in the proposal for the Reserve (EP8). Participation attracted more participation, both because of curiosity and because of trust. All of these reduced the resistance to the Reserve (EP4).

Moreover, increased participation started to change the minds of older fishers about themselves. The emic "genetic" or "cultural" explanation for low participation of the fishers in community organization ("fishers are hopeless," EP2) started to lose ground, making free-riding and resistance less logical for individual fishers.



Figure 7-3: Participatory mapping in Banca do Peixe.

The follow up of the mapping exercise described above happened three months later, a period in which the Task Group faced internal participation problems, and interrupted their actions in the community, and then started to reorganize itself (which is discussed in Chapter 8), and after PRA was carried out in Porto de Trás (see below).

From the first day, we repeated the same strategy used above. The meetings were held on the street, in front of the Colônia. The fishers who were friendlier to me and more sympathetic to our work were the first to arrive to the circle of chairs placed outside, in front of the Colônia's classroom. Putting the chairs outside was very unusual and even I was a bit concerned about the adequacy of blocking a street lane with the meetings. When I expressed my concerns, a TG member was emphatic: “this street is ours! If we can’t use the street for a meeting then we might as well give up for good!”

Normally, the meetings happened inside, and shyer fishers did not come or stayed outside looking through the windows. This time, it was different. The chairs were there, outside on the street, as an invitation, maybe as an intrusion, maybe morally compelling people to participate. Some fishers were still shy. One said he was going home to get a shirt. I took my shirt off and said he did not need one either. They were used to people that claimed authority using formality. We did the opposite. We did not want authority; we wanted participation. I believe that many understood our message and saw the difference. He stayed and, soon, other fishers approached the circle of chairs and took their seats.

To reduce political resistance of the leaders of Colônia (EP4), this time we asked a director of the Colônia to open the first meeting (January 29). A TG member and I agreed that if we did not compete with him, we would obtain participation faster, and the

community was going to express their concerns about the mistakes of the Colônia (the TG did not have to do it). The strategy worked. Instead of receiving criticism from the TG, the directors of the Colônia had to listen to the critiques from their own constituency. The PRA meetings provided the occasion for the community to present its demands to its leaders (EP4).

A TG member coordinated the institutional diagram in the third Banca do Peixe PRA meeting in the second PRA attempt (Figure 3-2). Circles representing organizations started to be placed on the paper, leading to a disputed discussion. The discussion of the Colônia, however, was the most controversial. Fishers passing by stopped to see what the discussion was all about, and when they identified that the Colônia was in question, many stayed and contributed their critique. The group grew larger; everyone wanted to give their contribution. This was certainly a strong counterevidence to the claims of the Colônia's directors and even members of the Task Group that fishers were not willing to participate (EP2), that they lacked interest, and was evidence in favor of the political aspects of participation (EP4).

At a certain point, I interrupted and asked them whether they wanted to continue discussing the Colônia (which would imply an additional meeting), or if they wanted to continue the exercise with other organizations. Enthusiastically, they decided that discussing the Colônia was more important and agreed on an extra meeting. Skeptical, I wondered if they would come again, confirming their interest.

They did. The additional meeting happened the next week (February 6) with great attendance, after we carried out meetings in Itacarezinho (described below). The participants listened to the reading of the previous meeting report and discussed the

issues point by point again. This time, the president of the Colônia was present to respond to the criticisms and account for his administration.

In the last meeting (February 7), participants continued discussing the role of the Colônia and the fishing community. When they were satisfied with the discussion about the Colônia, they were invited to return to the institutional diagram, and finish it with the discussion of the remaining listed organizations. In the institutional diagram, IBAMA/Ilhéus was placed far distant from the community of Banca do Peixe. The fishers complained that the regional office of the Brazilian environmental authority in Ilhéus did not treat them with respect, and used unjustified force and violence in the enforcement missions in Itacaré. The state environmental authority, the Center of Environmental Resources (CRA) was also placed far from the community, because of the conflicts created during the implementation of the Environmental Protection Area (APA) Itacaré/Serra Grande. The two organizations that represented the fishers (Colônia and ASPERI), even with problems, were placed closest to the community of Banca do Peixe. AMPT, the association representing the fishers of Porto de Trás, was also considered to be close to the community.

The Port Authority (Marinha) was placed close to the community, despite the dissatisfaction the fishers had with the often rough treatment they received from enforcement officers. However, they argued that it was for their own good and safety, since the action of enforcement officers was intended to make fishers use the safety equipment required by law. The municipality (PMI) and the hotel owners (pousadeiros) were not so close to the community, but they provided jobs to the community. The Sindicato Patronal (the Landowners' Syndicate) sometimes offered support to meetings,

and for this reason, was not considered to be too far from the community. Therefore, while some organizations were closer to the community, the institutional diagram shows an antagonistic relationship between the Banca fishers and the environmental authorities.

The discussion in the Banca, in spite of the difficulties, was very rewarding for TG members and me. It was pleasant to observe fishers express their criticism of the faults of the Colônia, which we all knew, but which could never be expressed publicly because of lack of a specific forum. Evidence of immediate response by the Colônia's directors to the criticism received was that they made a first-aid kit available to all the fishers, as it had been in the past. It was a small response, but it was there.

From the results of action-testing in the Banca community, we can conclude the following:

- Fishers do not automatically participate when the appropriate logistics are provided
- Fishers are not individualistic, but whether they free-ride or not depends on the context
- Participation is political; fishers were not participating because they were resisting the creation of the Extractive Reserve (which is an additional motivation to free-ride). They started to participate when they realized that the Reserve was beneficial to them, and when PRA meetings became channels for political expression, and not for cooption
- There were multidimensional costs and benefits of participation: a) the first participants to come to the meetings were the fishers who were emotionally closer to TG members; b) because the meeting was promoted outside, it put some moral pressure on people passing by to participate, and c) the meeting location created curiosity about what was being said in the meeting (informational benefits)

Banca do Peixe was more suspicious and resistant to participate in the PRA meetings than Piracanga. This was so apparently because it had previous negative experience with the “participatory” projects promoted by the environmentalists and with state agencies, such as IBAMA and the Port Authority (see Chapters 4 and 5), which the

community of Piracanga did not have. In addition, Piracanga was rural, and the Banca was urban. To the people of Piracanga, information and social interaction (and even political expression) provided by the PRA meetings were more valuable than to the people of the Banca. Finally, as pointed out before, because Piracanga was rural, its isolation left it uncontaminated by the gossip and resistance going on in town.

Porto de Trás

Porto de Trás was an urban neighborhood in the town of Itacaré, composed of 114 households. There was only one paved street, which gave access to the community. The other "streets" were not really streets, but walkways in the midst of high grass and open sewage canals, with pieces of lumber as improvised bridges over the stinking watercourses. The infrastructure was very precarious. The main problem was the lack of a sewage collection system. Most houses did not even have toilets. Water and energy were available but many people did not earn enough to pay their bills, and were cut off by the utilities companies. There were a number of clandestine electricity connections, but there was no telephone line in the community. Most houses were very simple, built wall-to-wall, with doors opening right on the street.

Porto de Trás was described by its people as a "village": most residents were African descendants born in the neighborhood; there were few newcomers; and even marriages were normally between community members, not with outsiders. The community maintained its folklore through annual parties and cultural events such as the "*bicho caçador*" ("hunter beast," or possibly, "the hunter and the beast").

The *bicho caçador* was a play performed by three community members, one dressed as the hunter and the other two dressed as the beasts, accompanied by a large band playing drums and singing drums. The three characters danced, portraying a fight

between the hunter and the beasts, celebrating a lost era when the forest and the beasts were abundant, and hunters were scared of them. The *bicho caçador* paraded all over town. The people of Porto de Trás would take their play to the households of the wealthy, who had the obligation to invite people inside and contribute money to the party (AMPT would also raise money before the party). It was considered prestigious to receive a visit by the *bicho caçador* troupe.

After the party had received contributions from all the prestigious people in the community, it headed back to Porto de Trás, where the ending of the play would finally be revealed: either the hunter would kill the beasts (the common ending), or the beasts would kill the hunter (the ending that I saw). Then people would stay and dance all night to *samba de roda* music. Such a party required considerable cooperation and planning, an evidence against the individualistic culture proposition (EP2). Organizers had to raise money beforehand, make costumes (which involved natural fibers collected from a forest kilometers away), and set up the decorations. The people of Porto de Trás were also recognized for their *festa junina* (June party, normally in honor of St. John), which attracted people from all over town.

Most people, both men and women, in Porto de Trás were fishers. The mangroves, they said, were their “bank.” When they needed money, they would go to the “bank,” and get some crabs and fish. Fishing for crabs in the mangroves (*mariscar*) was seen as an undignified activity by many, and many hesitated before admitting that they were *marisqueiros* or *marisqueiras*. This is understandable because fishing for crabs in the mangroves involved walking in the mud, sinking into it to their knees or thighs, cutting their feet and legs on oyster shells attached to mangrove roots buried in the mud,

reaching with their arms up to their shoulders inside crab holes in the mud, and often rubbing their faces on the mud while crabs were defending themselves in the holes, piercing the capturer's hand. Covered up to their necks in mud, fishers tried to avoid getting their clothes all dirty and often performed these activities naked. Thus, "going to the bank" was not very prestigious to them; it was a sign of their poverty.

During the PRA, participants mentioned 35 common names of fish species, six crustaceans, six mollusks, five snakes, nine birds, and six mammals associated with the mangrove ecosystem. They also cited 15 fishing techniques. Most of the fish caught by the community was for subsistence; the surplus was sold in the town by the children.

However, as they increased the commercialization of their catches, the abundance of fish and crabs was decreasing. Trash brought by the river accumulated in parts of the mangroves, which also suffered alteration by human settlements. Certain parts of the mangrove had been cut and converted into coconut plantations. Conflicts involved mangrove areas and river margins that were claimed by farmers along the river. These areas were public (*áreas de Marinha*, or Navy lands), but some farmers prohibited extractors to collect crabs and other fauna there.

With the development of tourism, a growing number of people started to work for the *pousadas* and restaurants, as cooks, waiters, maids, and night-guards. Others would perform temporary jobs in construction and some of the men recently had been hired by the municipality as night-guards. During the PRA, a group of young men was very skeptical of the Extractive Reserve. "Tourism is the future," one said, "Fishing will never give us anything; it never helped my dad get out of poverty."

In the PRA institutional diagram (Figure 7-4 shows my drawing based on the diagram created by participants of Porto de Trás), participants cited 17 institutions that affected their lives. The large circle represented the whole fishing community of Itacaré. They placed the circle representing Porto de Trás on the edge of the large circle, and placed the Colônia circle far from the fishing community, showing that they did not feel included in the policies aimed at fishers and that they were not happy with the Colônia. Other institutions were perceived as more helpful, such as IBAMA (which gave them canoes but also had a negative repressive side), *Prefeitura* (the municipality, which hired many of them recently) and mainly their own Association. Instituto Ambiental was placed on the other side of the diagram due to their past conflicts. People were unhappy with most organizations.

During PRA, a “social pyramid” exercise was proposed to help participants of Porto de Trás analyze their situation in society. According to the participants, Porto de Trás was among the poorest neighborhoods in town, socio-economically below boat owners, fish traders, hotel owners, and medium farmers, who were perceived as below the municipal government, the resorts and the state government.

The neighborhood had one kiosk for community use, where meetings were carried out and a television set was available for use of the community members. According to the president of AMPT, known as Bob Marley, 80% of the families were members of the Association, which had 80 members, although just a few paid their dues (R\$ 2 per month, or about US\$ 1 at the time) regularly. This estimate of the number of members of AMPT was probably an exaggeration because it was easy to find families that were not members

of the Association. AMPT, among other functions, maintained and managed a set of six canoes that were used for fishing in the mangroves.

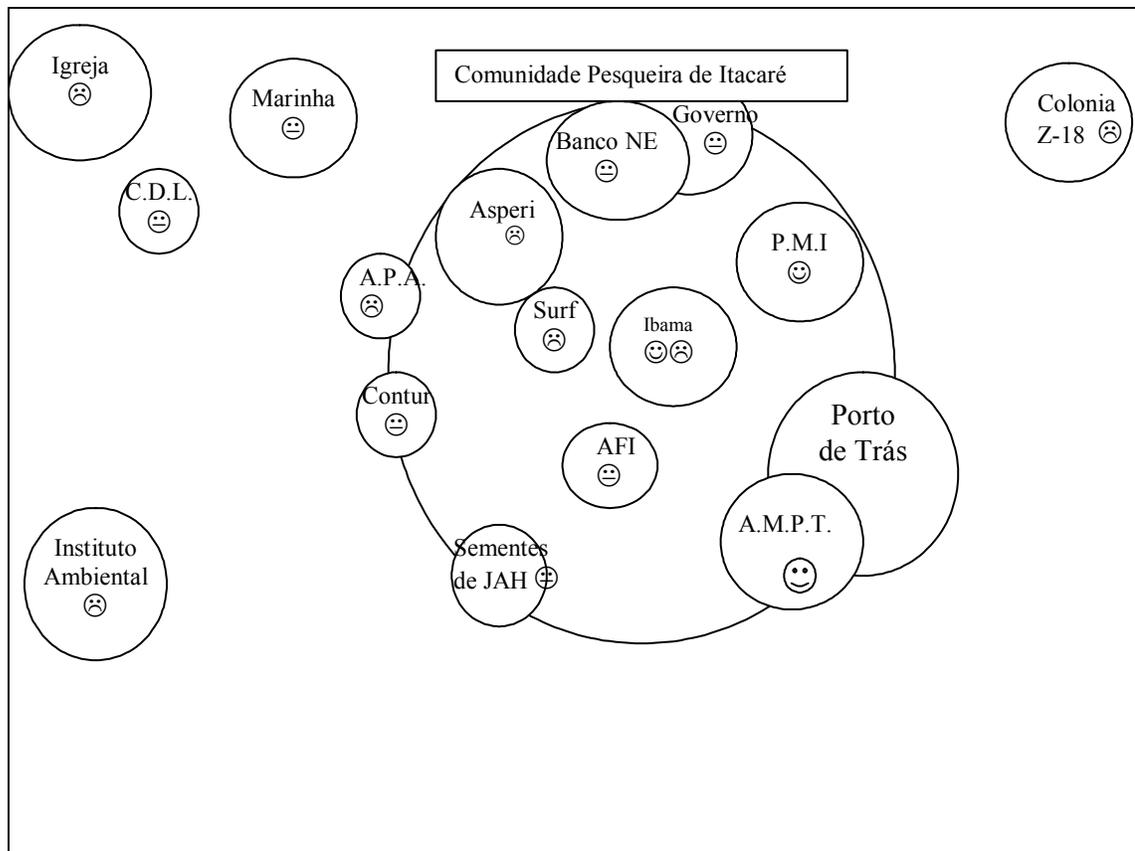


Figure 7-4: Institutional Diagram of Porto de Trás. Key: Igreja = Catholic Church; Marinha = Brazilian Coast Guard; Colônia Z-18 = Itacaré Fishers' Guild; CDL = Itacaré Business Bureau; Banco NE = Brazilian Northeast Bank; Governo = State Government; ASPERI = Itacaré Fishers' Association; APA = Environmental Education Program for the Environmental Protection Area of Itacaré/Serra Grande; Surf = Itacaré Surfers' Association; IBAMA = Brazilian Institute for the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources; PMI = Itacaré Municipal Government; Contur = Municipal Tourism Council; AFI = Sons of Itacaré Association; AMPT = Porto de Trás Neighborhood Association; Sementes de Jah = dance and musical group based in Porto de Trás; Porto de Trás = the community of Porto de Trás.

The PRA meetings in Porto de Trás showed that they perceived their place in the fishing community to be marginal and that their main form of political representation was their own association, AMPT (although there were conflicts). To them, they were among

the least empowered communities in Itacaré. As pointed out before, the people in Porto de Trás were negatively influenced by the gossip about the TG members, with whom there was an underlying conflict. Carrying out PRA meetings there without the consent of AMPT's directors would face great problems and opposition (EP4). However, slowly, the position of AMPT started to change once TG was able to account for all the money they received (and did not receive) to develop community work in Itacaré, and as we identified one source of the gossip creating conflicts between the TG and AMPT (EP8).

We identified Arnaldo's strategy when Itacaré received the visit of CNPT's marine extractive reserve consultant. During the visit of the CNPT consultant for marine extractive reserves, the consultant and I went to Porto de Trás to investigate the canoe situation (described before). There, we learned that more gossip was going on. The vice president of the Association, who still did not know me, said "Arnaldo said that someone named Ronaldo said that we are making wrongful use of the canoes..." "Well, I am Ronaldo! And I haven't said this, but only that in many projects that I saw where participation is not included, money is wasted" More gossip! However, now we knew the origin: Arnaldo owned a trawler boat company and was interested in blocking the creation of the Extractive Reserve. "You know, Arnaldo doesn't want the Reserve..." I said. "Yes, we have to take care not to believe in everything he tells us," the vice-president said.

In Itacaré many of the people who had privileged access to information were part of an elite group that had interests in opposition to the rest of their community. Arnaldo was intelligent and well informed, thus an important asset for the fishers when they wanted to understand things that needed information from outside. However, he made his

living from exploiting fishers and had an interest in preventing the creation of the Reserve. Empowerment, in this case, involved the awareness of the interests behind every bit of information received, so that its credibility could be judged. After that episode, and other conversations in which we clearly identified to the fishers that Arnaldo was unreliable as a source of information about the Reserve or community work, the gossip problem was greatly reduced (EP8). We seemed to have identified one important source of gossip and opposition in Itacaré.

Another source of suspicion in Porto de Trás was their previous negative experience with the NGO Instituto Ambiental (EP7). Because a former Instituto Ambiental member was previously working with the TG as a volunteer, people in Porto de Trás became suspicious of the TG. When that volunteer stopped working with the TG, the suspicions were lowered.

A final event explains the change in attitude by the directors of AMPT. A petition to forbid trawlers in the sea of Itacaré was passed in the community, and was able to collect 300 signatures in two days, showing a good response. This attracted the interest of the president of Porto de Trás Neighborhood Association, who started to attend TG meetings right after the signed petition was sent to the government.

I started to suspect that there was a kind of “critical mass” for participation, that people might start to participate when they saw a lot of other people doing that, too. However, a TG member argued that AMPT’s president began to participate as he realized that AMPT would not obtain the same level of support from CNPT/IBAMA they had before. Indeed, his participation in the TG meetings was always focused just on the interests of his community, and it seems that he hoped that PRA would yield a project

with which he could obtain funding for his community. After his first appearance in a TG meeting, he told me that there was a cultural group competing with his association in Porto de Trás. He also told me that he would oppose any initiative in his community if it did not follow the proper channels, that is, if it did not recognize AMPT's leadership in the neighborhood. When the TG invited the *marisqueiras* to participate in the PRA course months before, they did not talk to him first. To me, that was evidence that the course was boycotted by Porto de Trás because the TG had not obtained the consent and support of AMPT (EP4).

In the PRA exercise, the situation would be different. AMPT's president was present in the TG meeting and agreed to support the meetings. On the evening of the first meeting, the pavilion built by AMPT was ready, allowing a bigger meeting protected from the rain that was common at that time of the year. Attendance was good, even though the meeting started one hour late. "This is how the people are around here," someone reassured me; "they only come when they can see some movement."

The following three consecutive meetings also had good attendance, by both men and women. There was great cordiality and friendliness towards the TG and me. The last meeting day was my birthday, and a local lady made me a cake to take home. During the meetings, Gilmar, a fisher who also took tourists for trips in the mangrove, became very interested in working with the community for the Reserve. We invited him to the TG meetings and soon he became a motivated TG member.

However, some community members who opposed the AMPT's directors did not come to the meetings, including the young men of the cultural group AMPT was trying to control, and some other people who told me they were not satisfied with the directors of

AMPT. Again, this was evidence that nonparticipation was a form of political action. The same type of power struggle played out between leaders in Itacaré and the TG was played out within their own communities. Some people were influenced by them, or were willing to give them their political support; others resisted them. The main way to resist was to withdraw participation (EP4). Conversely, many of the people who went to the meetings were relatives of the directors, which suggested that kinship ties could also be influencing participation.

The evidence from Porto de Trás supported some of the same conclusions derived from the PRA meetings in the Banca (the ones that linked participation to political factors, EP4). However, as the Banca PRA meetings did, Porto de Trás meetings provided evidence against the culture explanation (EP2): fishers were not individualistic. The previous experience of Porto de Trás with the environmentalists made them more suspicious of participatory processes but this was not a problem during the meetings because AMPT was supporting them. The TG had recovered its credibility in the community.

Itacarezinho

Itacarezinho was a paradisiacal beach on the south coast of Itacaré, where a new resort was established. The fishing community was decreasing its population by outmigration, and now consisted of only five peasant households, which sold coconuts and other produce, performed temporary agricultural wage labor, or worked for the new resort, and also practiced subsistence fishing using rafts by the reefs close to the shore. Their houses were built of timber or *taipa* (a wooden structure filled with mud), covered with wooden tiles or palm straw. An interesting aspect was the property system for coconut trees: the ownership of coconut trees was independent of the ownership of land.

There was a “very good” school, which included even high school classes through distance education. Locals said that it was the best school in the municipality, and it was not located very far (just a 15-minute walk). However, there was no treated water or sanitation, and electricity was available only to the richer landlords.

In the past, Itacarezinho was a village. The trail that linked Itacaré to Ilhéus, following the telegraphic wire, known as the *Estrada do Telégrafo* (Telegraph Road), passed through the village, which was a resting post for travelers on foot or horseback. The trail was also known at that point as Rua da Linha (Line’s Street), the same name it still had both in Itacaré and in Ilhéus, at the telegraph line’s arriving streets.

With the highway, even before it was paved, Itacarezinho lost importance. Before, the community even had an outpost of the Colônia de Pesca, which later became practically unknown to locals. In the past, there was a soccer field, where people from Itacaré came to face locals in dispute tournaments. Today, soccer is still an esteemed tradition in Itacarezinho, but the field was destroyed by new landlords, and locals have to play by themselves on the beach, or compete in other locations. Landlords also destroyed the local cemetery.

In Itacarezinho, there were two classes of conflicts. One was related to land. Most people did not have documentation of the land they used, and with the tourism boom in Itacaré, the land they had occupied for generations was sold by previous landlords to newcomers who started to press the local community to move out, using threats and even violence. One of the landowners participated in my first PRA course. The other landowners were an environmentalist of Instituto Ambiental, the owner of the resort located in Itacarezinho, the owner of a small farm and a famous band leader who was

blamed for the destruction of a *jangada*²⁹ port in front of his farm. All of them had seafront properties and wanted the gate locked, arguing safety reasons. One way used by the landlords to press the community to accept cheap offers for their removal from the land was building a gate on the entrance to the dirt road, by the highway, some three kilometers away, and locking it. The landowners controlled the key to the padlock.

The lock seemed to be a strategy to make the lives of the local families more difficult, thus pressing them to leave (this was a typical strategy of large landgrabbers in northeastern Brazil). Explicitly, the landowners said it was to protect the beach from rising criminality. However, to the new resort, it was useful to maintain the “desert beach” look of Itacarezinho, which allowed it to profit from high-class tourists. On several occasions before the PRA, the community acted together, vandalizing fences and installations of the landowners, which was evidence of a capacity to work together and cooperate (evidence against EP2).

The second class of conflicts was related to the sea. Locals complained that fishers from Itacaré used nets that harmed turtles and corals, and competed with local fishing methods (diving and hook-and-line fishing from rafts). This community did not have prior experience with community organization sponsored by projects, and did not have a reason to be skeptical about it.

It was a rural community under pressure, and had great incentives to accept any outside help they could obtain. However, if participation was promoted in accordance with the local landowners, the TG and PRA would face great difficulty and resistance when trying to mobilize the community of Itacarezinho.

²⁹ Traditional raft used by fishers of the Brazilian northeastern coast.

Among TG members, José was the only one who knew the community of Itacarezinho more closely. José used to live right by Itacarezinho beach, on the top of a hill facing the ocean. Catu, Ana Cláudia and I arrived early in the day that he told us the community would be ready to meet. We cooked rice and beans for the meeting that was supposed to happen at the house where he lived, the very house owned by one landlord who used to employ José on his farm before he became employed by the resort! We cooked and waited, but no one came.

Something was wrong, but we did not know about the land problems yet. In the afternoon, José came back from his job in the resort. He introduced me to the fishers that were finishing a soccer game on the beach, and we invited them to come to the meeting the next day. They hardly gave us any attention. I had the feeling that it was going to be difficult to do the PRA there and, on the next day, went with José to invite the community door-to-door. This was when I heard of the land conflicts they were having with “landowners” who had “acquired” those lands in recent years. The landlord on whose farm José lived, and used to work until recently, was one of them. We were proposing a meeting on enemy territory (and we were actually sleeping there)! Meeting locations had political meanings.

*Dona*³⁰ Maria, an older lady, cried when telling me about her problems and I told her we could discuss them, too. “I ain’t gonna come there,” one of the fishers said, “If you want, we can meet here.” Later we learned that José also faced low acceptance by the community. Again, low participation was a form of resistance (EP4). Itacarezinho taught us to be careful about meeting places and the first contact with people in the

³⁰ Respectful form of treatment for women; Mrs.

communities. Both things were often problematic. The best meeting places were often associated with the “wrong people,” that is, people who were using their better position (better income, education, etc.) to control political and material resources that could benefit the community but did not because they are intercepted by these intermediaries.

José was one of the intermediaries. He was modest, and just a little better off than the other members of his community, but he was smart enough to understand how he could use his rural, community-oriented image to obtain personal benefits, and had built an extensive net of contacts with entrepreneurs and professionals involved in community development in Itacaré. He also had good intentions, I believe, and wanted to help the community; but people were suspicious of him. Since we were unaware of all of this, he made all the arrangements so the meeting could happen. The suspicions against José also created difficulties, corroborating EP8, the credibility of the PRA team proposition.

We brought the food and met by the home of a local young fishermen and surfer who was leading his community in resisting the “landowners.” Most people in the community came to the meeting and participated in mapping their area, telling us about the conflicts, and mapping the marine resources they used. Four professors from UESC came to the meeting and helped to elucidate information related to the local ecosystem.

Itacarezinho corroborated the explanatory proposition that participation is a political currency, and that lack of participation is a form of political resistance (EP4), and provided evidence against the idea that lack of participation is a result of a supposed individualistic culture (EP2), and that logistics is enough to attract participation to a meeting (EP1). Once political problems were resolved, the community participated enthusiastically. Itacarezinho was in much need of help to negotiate their land problems.

These were the great motivating factors for the meeting. Kin ties in the community (they were all relatives) also may have helped people to get together and cooperate.

Participation involves multiple dimensions (EP5). The PRA experience in Itacarezinho supports the proposition that mobilizing participation of rural communities and communities with little experience with participatory projects is easier. In Itacarezinho, fishers' organizations, such as the Colônia and ASPERI, were practically unknown. The community had very little experience with community organizing and projects.

Campo Seco

Campo Seco was a rural community that practiced fishing only for subsistence and which also had access problems, like those experienced by Itacarezinho, but not to the road. Their access to the traditional trails that led to the beaches and fishing spots on the coast line, used by fishers for generations, was limited by new landowners.

The community of Campo Seco was composed of 17 households in small farms (around 0.8 ha each) where families grew cacao, coconut, dendê (oil palm), cassava and other crops. Houses were very simple: the walls were built with *taipa*, and the roofs were made of palm leaves or asbestos tiles. They had no bathrooms, sanitary equipment or electricity. Subsistence fishing was done from the shore or on rafts. Crabs were collected in the mangroves.

In the PRA, participants mapped their community, showing the areas of mangroves and the beaches where they fished. In addition to lack of access to the beaches, they complained that their traditional access to Itacaré, the *Estrada do Telégrafo*, had been closed by São José Resort. The *Estrada do Telégrafo* allowed only the traffic of animals and pedestrians, and closing it doubled the distance to Itacaré, from six to twelve kilometers, making it more difficult to be reached by foot, horse or mule.

A community member, known as Chapéu Branco, (or White Hat) ran for the municipal council but was not elected. Chapéu Branco was present at the meeting in Itacarezinho, and invited us to Campo Seco. He said that the organization for the Reserve, such as that we were working to build in Itacarezinho, could present solutions for his community, too. When we arrived at his house, he was away in the mangrove, but soon arrived and started to mobilize the community. He sent out a boy to call his neighbors, and soon people started to arrive; we had good attendance.

The ease with which the community was mobilized in Campo Seco again undermines the individualistic culture explanatory proposition (EP2). It supports the proposition that rural communities and communities with little experience with participatory projects mobilize more easily (EP6). In Campo Seco, fishers' organizations were practically unknown. In addition, the community had very little experience with community organizing and projects; the PRA meetings were the first meetings in which many of the people participated (EP7). Finally, Campo Seco had a specific issue in which the people wanted to be politically represented: access to the traditional trails (corroborating EP4).

Taboquinhas

Taboquinhas was located 30 km from the town of Itacaré, one hour inland by bus, on the right bank of the Contas River. It still had little influence from the tourism boom in Itacaré and the remains of the cacao economy were very visible: large houses and ruined warehouses in the town; and mansions in the old cacao plantations where trees agonized with witches' broom disease. However, prior to the paving of state highway BA-001, the road to Ubaitaba, which passed through Taboquinhas, was the main link between Itacaré

and the major roads of Bahia. With the change, transit through Taboquinhas was reduced, and so was its commercial movement.

Taboquinhas had a significant urban infrastructure, such as a market, schools, a municipal club, and representatives of the municipal government. However, there was no high school, and students who wanted to attend one had to travel to Itacaré. There were no banks, either.

The fishers of Taboquinhas lived both in the town and in rural communities and villages such as Pé da Pancada, Rua de Palha, Os Acaris, Porto das Farinhas and Água Fria. In several of the rural communities, there was a tradition of local cooperation to improve them (evidence against the culture proposition, EP2). Some people said there are up to 200 fishers in Taboquinhas and the rural communities combined.

The number of fishers in Taboquinhas greatly grew in recent years due to the cacao crisis. However, locals still knew very little about the organizations related to the fishers, such as the Colônia and ASPERI, although there was great interest in obtaining fishers' documents. Previously, some people promoted meetings in the community on behalf of ASPERI, collected money from locals, and promised to send the documents, but no return was given to the community. Because of that, the community was a little suspicious about subsequent meetings (this was the only negative experience with community projects I could detect in Taboquinhas, and corroborated EP7).

Taboquinhas' PRA institutional diagram discussion showed that the fishers' organizations did not assist these communities well. Locals also did not know what the roles of different institutions were. However, their view of IBAMA was not contaminated with resentment because there was little environmental enforcement there.

Taboquinhas' fishers cited the names of 42 fish or crustaceans that they utilized for subsistence or for sale, 16 types of birds, 20 mammals, 12 reptilians, and three amphibians. They mentioned six fishing methods, used either from the riverbanks, canoes, or when diving. Resource use problems ranged from overexploitation and competition with outsiders, to a decrease in water quality due to the two river dams upstream, and to lack of documentation. The fishers of Taboquinhas also practiced agriculture, worked as wage laborers, or worked for the new tourism company, which promoted rafting trips on the Rio de Contas' whitewaters.

The PRA meetings there were aimed at both the rural and urban community simultaneously. As in Itacarezinho, the first meeting day failed. Apparently, this was due to logistics (EP1): our contact in the community did not advertise the meeting. We used that time to walk upriver with five fishers and Alexandre, a researcher from UESC specialized in freshwater crustaceans, and to learn about the fishers' reality. The facilitating team was formed by me, Viviane, Ana Cláudia, Batista and Catu. We walked by the trail on the riverbank, climbing rocks, walking on the edge of a canyon and talking to fishers on the way, and collected specimens by the Fumo waterfall.

Apparently, our walk worked to mobilize the community, corroborating the logistic proposition (EP1), that if the appropriate logistics are provided, people participate. The next day, participation was surprisingly good, even though the meeting was carried out in a school, which could have intimidated some people. However, participants were suspicious at the beginning because two years previously a similar meeting collected money for fishers' documents and no result was shown to the community. We explained that this meeting was not collecting money and was not related

to that previous meeting. This past negative experience with a participatory initiative was not enough to discourage participation to the point that a meeting would have to be cancelled. We had good attendance, though I do not know how many people would come if their past experience had been positive. Taboquinhas was uncontaminated by the suspicions generated by the environmentalists in Itacaré, and it was considerably easier to mobilize meetings there (corroborating EP7). The conclusion from Taboquinhas was that the individualistic culture proposition (EP2) was not valid here either, because the meeting had good attendance, even on short notice.

Forte

On one end of the Praia da Coroa, there was the port of Banca do Peixe. On the other, there was the port of the Forte. The Forte neighborhood, by the river, had a good port, and a number of different fishing related businesses were located there. The Fishers' Association (ASPERI) congregated 24 boats, and about 36 members, and additional crew members, who supplied it with shrimp and fish. Four middlemen were also located in the Forte. Joel, of *Marlin* fish shop, recently came from Valença, a town located about 100 km north. He was very kind and community-oriented, and revealed himself as a conservationist in the discussions about the Reserve. Janjão was less friendly, but with time also approached the meetings, and seemed in favor of the Reserve. Rui, a small merchant, tended to buy the discarded catch of the industrial trawling boats (*guinchos*), but also maintained a bar frequented by fishermen, close by ASPERI. Arnaldo, the local owner of trawler boats, also bought fish and shrimp from smaller boats, playing the role of both boss and middleman (Arnaldo also participated in my first course on PRA and the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré). Finally, there was one mechanic who fixed all kinds of motors and took care of all the fishing boats' engine problems.

Cida, who participated in my first 1999 PRA course, had a large house in the Forte. Cida was an ally of both Arnaldo and Professor Fernando. In the elections for the Colônia, she was in Fernando's group and, apparently, in permanent dissimulated opposition to the Task Group. Fernando, himself, also lived in the Forte, and so did Arnaldo. Therefore, most of the local elite related to the fishing community concentrated there, and from there they articulated their politics.

Outside *guinchos* and smaller boats used the port of the Forte to dock. They came from Ilhéus, Valença, Barra de Carvalhos, and even from farther away, from the states of Sergipe and Ceará (to the North) or from Espírito Santo (to the South). Local fishermen accused some of the outsiders of stealing their nets in the sea, and things from their boats. I had little contact with them, but most seemed hardworking fishers subject to harsh working conditions. The comments of local fishers seemed to be part of their resistance against encroachment.

The Forte was also a port community, but fishers hung out there less frequently than by the Banca. These would drink in Osvaldo's bar, sit in front of ASPERI, talk with other fishers on docked boats, or play cards with Janjão. Others just arrived there, supplied their fish or shrimp to ASPERI or another intermediary, and left. Some people, particularly women and children, used to come from other communities to fish around the Forte, but one could not say that they really belonged there. In one of the houses, women used to peel shrimp for sale.

Because it was a passage point and the location of ASPERI (which had the only ice machine in town), the Forte was a strategic "community" for any community work related to fishing. Maybe that was why elite figures related to the fishing communities

concentrated or arose in the Forte. The fishers in the Forte had a different organizational experience from that of the Banca fishers. The association had problems, but it had much greater legitimacy. After Raimundo left, Penguin and, then, Pedro were both fishers and leaders concerned with the community. The association promoted monthly meetings, and provided visible services to its members.

The Fishers of the Forte also had community organizing experiences elsewhere, before coming to Itacaré. Most came from the region between Barra de Carvalhos, Barra de Serinhaém and Valença, whose history was not related to the cacao economy, and where fishing cooperatives had been attempted before. In these fishers' places of origins, the fishing community also had organizational problems, but such previous experience allowed, in Itacaré, the emerging leadership of Pedro and his brothers (Pedro had three brothers who were visibly involved in community organization). Finally, because the Forte congregated some fishers who also worked for the *guinchos*, there was much less consensus on the issue of whether or not *guinchos* should be allowed to fish in the Reserve during the PRA discussions.

The Forte did not have a covered meeting place like Porto de Trás or Banca. For the PRA meetings, we wanted to be visible, and repeat the strategy used in the Banca, so we decided to do the meetings under the shadow of a tree in a square by the river. The view was beautiful, a refreshing breeze blew from the sea, and everybody going to and coming from the port or ASPERI had to pass by there. In the first meeting in the Forte, Pedro was already setting up the meeting place when we arrived. As the audience grew, the meeting started with the introduction of the facilitators, which now included me, Ana Cláudia, Viviane and the Task Group. To answer questions about the concept of

extractive reserve, Catu used the example of the Marine Extractive Reserve of Arraial do Cabo, which he had visited with other TG members.

Attendance at the meetings was good in all of the four days of this first round in the Forte. It was as if the participation problem did not exist. This likely was because we chose a meeting location accepted by the community and Pedro was a legitimate leader with whom we had affinity, which minimized resistance. However, Pedro's brother, Penguin, who supported the work for the Reserve in 1999, and some fishermen associated with him, did not participate. He and some other fishers were politically opposing Pedro, and just walked by and sat on the curb close to ASPERI. In achieving participation, the right alliances had to be made, considering tradeoffs between the quality of the allies, their power and influence in their communities, and their opposing parties. However, Penguin's refusal to participate in a project he had contributed and supported in the past was evidence of the political aspects proposition (EP4); he was resisting.

In the last meeting, participants said that all fishers were starting to believe in the Reserve and in the possibility of its creation. As credibility increased, the perceived risk of participation decreased, and so did the tendency to free-ride (EP8).

I believe that the credibility of the Reserve proposal was a result of the high level of activity of the TG, with PRA having good attendance in several communities. This created a sense of reality, and good participation in one community helped to attract participation in others, particularly the ones located in the town of Itacaré. Rural communities seemed unaffected by either successes or failures of the Extractive Reserve movement in other communities.

Marimbondo/Passagem

Marimbondo and Passagem were the names of two neighborhoods of Itacaré, located near the same long street that started by the Praia da Coroa boulevard. Marimbondo was better structured. Most streets were stone-paved, and there was a nice square around which the residents gathered and the children played. Several businesses, such as *pousadas*, stores, and bars, were established on the main Marimbondo street. Yet, Passagem had very precarious infrastructure, and only the main street was paved. Some of the dwellers of this neighborhood used to live downtown, but sold their houses to tourism-related businesses. Growing social problems, such as drug use, were worrying some of the PRA participants.

The sanitation conditions in these two neighborhoods were critical. Many households had toilets but they rarely had sewage systems. Water streams that once provided people with water, leisure, and fishing opportunities, were so polluted that all fish were gone. Before the growth of the neighborhood and the pollution of the streams, one location was used for bathing, and was managed by the community, with different areas allocated for the use of men and women, and an area used for laundry.

Many of the households in these two neighborhoods were fishing families with many different strategies. Some fished in the mangroves, using canoes, collecting crabs, casting nets or practicing hook-and-line fishing. Others went on fishing trips with the fishers of Banca or Forte, in motorized boats. Still others participated in *calão* fishing. Some people were also involved with the tourism economy, taking tourists on their boats or canoes to the waterfalls located on streams upriver, and to trips in the mangroves.

As pointed out in Chapter 3, the TG and I followed the advice of a community leader who resided in Marimbondo, and considered the two neighborhoods as one fishing

community. It was not very good advice. Passagem was considerably far from Marimbondo, and although we alternated places between Passagem and Marimbondo in the first and second rounds of the PRA exercise, only a few fishers of one neighborhood came to the meetings in the other neighborhood.

The first round of PRA meetings in Passagem had good attendance. The community leader helped to mobilize the community and several people came. However, by the end, there was a discussion about the proposal that the Reserve include the area of 33 meters next to the riverbanks, which was opposed by some of the participants who owned land by the river. The next day (last day of the first round), attendance was considerably lower. We never knew if that was a result of resistance to the proposal (EP4) or just that it was Friday night, and not a convenient meeting time, even though participants the night before had agreed to meet on Friday (EP1). At the time, the TG and I thought that it was probably the meeting time, but we were not sure. Anyway, PRA in the community of Passagem/Marimbondo did not add any contradictory evidence to what was found in the other communities.

Second-Round PRA Meetings

In the second round of PRA meetings in each community, the strategies that worked in the first round were repeated. Almost all meetings had good attendance, which corroborated the interpretations of the action tests of the first round. However, the second-round PRA meetings in Marimbondo/Passagem had problems. The first evening meeting had to be cancelled because it was advertised for the wrong date, as the result of a mistake by a TG member. The meeting was rescheduled and the location changed, resulting in good attendance in the community.

Other than this difficulty, we verified that participation was even more enthusiastic in the second round than in the first round. There were three factors that apparently caused this increased enthusiasm:

- **Positive participatory experience in the first round.** People in different communities reported that PRA meetings were different from anything they had seen before. Meetings were fun and relaxed. The alternation between PRA tools, group discussions and cooperative games contributed to respectful interactions between among participants. Several TG members reported that PRA made community members feel that their opinions were respected, and that they had a voice as never before.
- **Increased credibility of the Extractive Reserve and of the TG (EP8).** Apparently, there was a synergy between the positive responses in different communities. Around town, people started to ask for more meetings, and the level of activity created a sense that the Reserve was on its way. In addition to a decrease in the intensity with which gossip about the TG spread in the community, a sign of credibility was that we were never questioned about the honesty or the legitimacy of the decision making process for the Norms of the Reserve.
- **Concern that free-riding would not work.** In the second round, the registration process for voting seemingly gave the impression that people had to participate in order to benefit from the Reserve. One of the criteria to be a valid decision maker included participation in more than five extractive reserve meetings (suggesting support for EP3).

The second-round PRA meetings also provided evidence in favor of the proposition that promoting participation in rural communities is less difficult than in urban communities (EP6). While meeting times in urban communities had to be “convenient” and avoid interference with other activities, even leisure, the second round in rural communities included meetings on weekdays, and during the daytime, with full community participation both in Campo Seco and in Itacarezinho (in Piracanga the second round was on a weekend).

Explanatory Propositions Tested in Action

Table 7-4 summarizes the results of the action tests of the 8 explanatory propositions for Research Question 1 in the first-round PRA meetings in eight

communities, which work here somewhat as “replications.” Due to so many factors that are different in each community, such “replications” have to be interpreted in light of the overall context of each community, which was done in the previous discussion.

There was strong evidence against the propositions that assert that low participation was caused by an individualistic culture among the fishers (EP2) or by free-riding (EP3), refuted in all the “replications” and in eight of the nine “replications,” respectively. Political aspects were important in five of the nine “replications.” The multidimensional costs and benefits of participation were corroborated in six of the nine replications. The urban vs. rural difference in the difficulty of mobilizing participation was corroborated in six “replications” and refuted in one. The previous experience aspect was corroborated in seven of the nine “replications.” The credibility of the PRA team was clearly an important factor affecting participation in three “replications,” but probably was important in the other replications, when credibility was already established and was not a problem whose proposition could be tested. Below, these results are discussed in more detail.

The logistics proposition (EP1) was refuted in the PRA course, in Banca do Peixe and Itacarezinho, where even though the right logistics were present, there were attendance problems that caused cancellation of one or more PRA meetings. The right logistics seemed important in Taboquinhas and Forte. The action test of EP1 was not conclusive in the other communities, but in the second-round PRA meetings, and by the end of the first round, when many of the problems related to the other propositions were already solved, just good logistic seemed to work. The individualistic culture proposition (EP2) was refuted in all communities because all eventually had meetings with good

attendance. The discussion presented in Chapter 5, on participation, cooperation and the fishing activity, further shows that there is nothing inherently solitary in the fishing activity to justify an individualistic culture.

Nevertheless, that discussion also showed that fishers did free-ride in the fishing activity, and believed that others would do it, too. This belief was both their justification and their motivation to free-ride in community affairs, but proved to be false in the PRA process.

Table 7-4: Results of the action tests for the explanatory propositions for research question 1.

EP	Factor	PRA course	Piracanga	Banca do Peixe	Porto de Trás	Itacarezinho	Campo Seco	Taboquinhas	Forte	Marimbondo/Passagem	Total Score
1	Logistics	0	0	-	0	-	0	+	+	0	0
2	Culture	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-9
3	Free-riding	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-8
4	Political aspects	0	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	+5
5	Multidimensional costs and benefits	0	+	+	+	+	0	0	+	+	+6
6	Urban vs. rural	0	+	+	+	+	+	0	-	+	+5
7	Previous experience	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	+7
8	Credibility of the PRA team	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	+3

Key: plus sign (+) = corroboration, minus sign (-) = refutation, zero (0) = not tested or not conclusive, * conclusion through observation, not action test.

There was strong evidence against the free-riding proposition (EP3) and the individualistic culture proposition (EP2) during the first-round PRA meetings, since fishers participated in all communities even though they could not be excluded from the future benefits of the Reserve. However, the second-round PRA meetings, which included a registration process, seemed to attract some people just because of the registration, which some fishers suspected that could later be used to define who would

have the rights to the Extractive Reserve and who would not (some fishers from other municipalities wanted to participate at this point). EP3 was falsified not because fishers would not free-ride when they had the chance, but because participation involves costs and benefits that are not material, for which free-riding is more difficult (EP5, multidimensional costs and benefits proposition).

This is also shown by the evidence in favor of the political aspects proposition (EP4) corroborated where and when participation was most problematic (Banca do Peixe and Porto de Trás) and in four other communities. On the one hand, lack of participation was often a resistance strategy, as in Banca do Peixe, Porto de Trás and Itacarezinho. On the other, political representation for some specific issue, as in Piracanga, Itacarezinho and Campo Seco, seemed to be a strong motivation for participation, even greater than the Extractive Reserve itself. In the Forte, the political support from ASPERI for the Reserve and the PRA exercise probably helped the PRA meetings, while people opposing ASPERI did not participate in the meetings, but only observed from a distance, which supports EP4. The test of EP4 was not conclusive in Taboquinhas and Marimbondo/Passagem. Taboquinhas did not have a noticeable political issue, and this shows the limits for the test of this proposition: it was not easily falsifiable. However, in Marimbondo/Passagem the meetings were more difficult to obtain attendance in the second round, when the local leader started to oppose the TG, which suggests support for EP4.

The multidimensional costs and benefits of participation proposition (EP5) was supported mainly by the Banca do Peixe and the Forte meetings, where the fact that meetings were carried out outside, in a visible location and in the hours where most

people were coming back from fishing, supports the idea that attendance was obtained by the dynamics of the PRA methods, which people could observe and decide whether they wanted to attend the PRA meeting or not on the spot. The fun nature of the PRA activities seemed to be a strong motivator. In Itacarezinho, kinship alliances seemed to be important, and in Piracanga, locals were emphatic about their enjoying the PRA techniques. Throughout the PRA meetings, participants seemed surprised by the amount of information they could represent and learn through the PRA tools, and seemed to enjoy participating. EP5 is also corroborated by the rejection of the individualistic culture and the culture free-riding propositions, when participation was mobilized: first, if lack of participation was not related to culture, later success in mobilizing participation was probably not so either; second, without culture to explain the change, we are left with individual appraisal of costs and benefits of participation. However, if only material costs and benefits were important, the free-riding proposition (EP3) should have been supported; not only because it was not supported by the action tests but also because EP3 was refuted, EP5 is corroborated.

The proposition that attendance is more difficult to mobilize in urban than in rural communities (EP6) was corroborated in all communities, except in the Forte, which involved little mobilization problems (political and credibility aspects were not a problem there; so, this counter-evidence is not very important).

Taboquinhas, because it involved both rural and urban fishers, did not provide conclusive evidence regarding this proposition. Because this proposition was based on the validity of the multidimensional costs and benefits proposition (EP5), the corroboration of EP6 also gives indirect support to EP5.

The previous experience proposition (EP7) was corroborated by all communities (except by the Forte), because participation was easier to mobilize in communities that did not have previous experiences with community projects. However, rural communities did not have such experience, and their greater ease to be mobilized for the PRA meetings could have been related to the fact that they were rural (EP6, discussed above). Let us compare, then, the urban communities of the town of Itacaré with the ones from the town of Taboquinhas.

In Taboquinhas, where there was little previous experience with community participation, development projects and government agencies, participation in the meetings was much less difficult to be achieved, and people expressed less suspicious about the participatory process in general than in the urban fishing communities of the town of Itacaré. However, it is not possible to control for the inclusion of rural fishers in Taboquinhas when we discuss this difference.

Being cautious, we should not jump to any conclusion regarding this proposition, although my observation of Porto de Trás and Banca do Peixe (and my experience elsewhere) suggests that previous experience is an important factor affecting the credibility of participatory projects. In addition, mobilizing participation in the second-round of PRA meetings was considerably easier than in the first-round, suggesting that the previous positive experience of the first-round already contributed to change in the community perception of participatory processes.

EP7 was also corroborated by the credibility problems faced by the TG and me in different communities. They were stronger in communities that had problems with previous negative experience with outside assistance or participatory projects (Porto de

Trás and Banca do Peixe). The credibility of the PRA team proposition (EP8) was corroborated in Banca do Peixe, Porto de Trás, and Itacarezinho, and the results were not conclusive in the other communities because credibility was not an issue at the time or in the community, due to the strategies previously adopted.

The credibility of the PRA team (EP8) and the political aspects (EP4) propositions were related: political resistance to the PRA was more likely when the credibility of the PRA team was lower. Both propositions were less corroborated when the issues related to them were resolved, but credibility was more difficult to conquer where the previous experience of the community with community leaders and initiatives was negative (EP7). In addition, the political aspects proposition (EP4) also includes the idea that people participate in meetings to support a leader or proposal they agree with.

The PRA exercise made evident common and opposing interests that were sometimes concealed in Itacaré, and was able to create the common identity of local (not necessarily native) small-scale fishers whose interest was to create the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré and work together with fishers from other local fishing communities.

As PRA progressed, the problems of different communities identified in previous meetings were shared with the other communities in the next meetings. The first effect of identifying resource use conflicts was that locals could see how their problems were related to their lack of means to defend themselves from encroachment. However, the discussion made evident that most communities, in addition to conflicts with outsiders, had important conflicts with the wealthier sector of Itacaré. A rudimentary class identity was created and had the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré as the main instrument for its defense. It was not just natives against newcomers; it was the poor against the rich, the

fishers against the sectors that had always oppressed them. Participatory rural appraisal helped the fishers to identify their enemies: industrial fishing companies, landowners, big tourism businesses. At the same time, fishers expressed solidarity towards the rural workers employed by the landowners, fisher workers employed by the industrial fishing companies, and employees of the tourism businesses.

This opposition was taking the form of class conflict more or less in a Marxist sense; that is, a struggle between a class of exploited people (fishers, rural workers, urban workers, small farmers) and capitalists (landowners and tourism entrepreneurs). It temporarily loosened the typical structure of vertical alliances and identities of the cacao region in Itacaré, and started to create horizontal alliances and identities in its place. However, this process could not be too radical; small boat fishers still worked for a boat owner, even if he was a fisher and went on fishing trips with them. Often, the interests of boat owners and boat captains were in opposition with those of their crew, but PRA in Itacaré rarely touched on this issue.

This conflict of interests could break the identity necessary for implementing the Reserve and had to be left for a second moment (I noticed the contradiction but, as it did not surface, I did not try to bring it up³¹). Conversely, the identity created in the PRA process seemed to be an additional incentive to participation, because the Extractive Reserve process was starting to empower the fishers, particularly in the struggle for land and traditional trails in Itacarezinho, Campo Seco and Piracanga. The PRA meetings contributed to a strengthened “fisher identity,” which the community discussions

³¹ I am not sure about the ethics of this decision, but considering the tradeoffs, it seemed the right thing to do at the time.

consolidated with an opposition between the fishers, on one side, and the traditional and new elites of Itacaré, on the other side. This new identity attracted fishers to confront these elites. Confrontation seemed to create motivation to participate (which supports not only the political aspects proposition, EP4, but also the multidimensional costs and benefits proposition, EP5).

More importantly, fishers started to show solidarity towards the communities against which they had resource use conflicts. In addition to the meetings for each community, the second round included meetings about controversial issues, such as the creation of special protection areas within the Reserve, which included participation by more than one community. The first of these meetings discussed the areas of Itacarezinho and Campo Seco. Only two people representing the urban fishers that could be affected by the new rule came to the meeting, which was on a weekday, in Itacarezinho. The meeting location was chosen because there was always an urban bias in most participatory decisions in Itacaré, where meetings were usually planned to be in town; as a result, decisions did not benefit rural people. In this case, the TG wanted to balance such power differences. Without many representatives, even though there had to be consensus to arrive at a decision, the conclusion in Itacarezinho did not please those who did not participate. In the next meeting, on a Sunday, in Piracanga, the urban fishers came in great number, and walked six kilometers along the beach to attend the meeting. They arrived at a consensus that pleased both sectors, urban and rural. Apparently, this was evidence that preventing free-riding was important to increase participation (EP3, when urban fishers learned that they could lose if they did not participate, they started to come, even to distant locations).

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter discussed the factors that affected participation of the fishers of Itacaré in the PRA meetings. Several explanatory propositions were tested in action as PRA progressed and strategies were reformulated. EP1 (logistics, normally supported by me during the PRA process) and EP2 (culture, normally supported by the fishers) were both refuted by the action tests. EP3 (free-riding, supported by authors such as Popkin 1979) was also refuted; even though material costs and benefits have an influence in community participation, the tendency to free-ride, noticed in the fishing activities, was not a determinant factor affecting participation in the PRA meetings.

This chapter provides evidence that political aspects were among the most important determinants of participation (and nonparticipation) in the PRA meetings (EP4). Participation was a political currency, and fishers attended meetings strategically. When they wanted to undermine a process, or a leader (whom they did not support) who was promoting the meeting, they withdrew their participation. When they wanted to support the leaders and the process, they attended the meetings. The history of Itacaré (Chapter 4) suggests that resistance was the main strategy used by peasants in the region. Within a participatory context, it continues to be so; instead of attending the meetings and actively opposing leaders or proposals, the fishers of Itacaré preferred to retreat and let the proposals die or weaken for lack of political support.

The likelihood of resistance depended on the credibility of the process and was combined with the free-riding (if fishers can benefit from a collective good without contributing, they free-ride and not participate). Several people free-rode in the extractive reserve process, but the intensity of it was reduced as the credibility of the process increased, as participation started to be politically advantageous, and as the meetings

benefited from PRA's informal, fun atmosphere. There were multiple dimensions affecting participation (EP5).

Communities that did not have prior experience with community projects and rural communities seemed to attend the meetings more enthusiastically than experienced, urban communities. Finally, as the credibility of the Task Group (and of the process) increased, so did participation in the meetings.

Action testing worked well in the conditions of the PRA in Itacaré to examine Research Question 1. The possibility of "replications" (eight communities and the PRA course), allowed the repeated action testing of the explanatory propositions. In Chapter 3, I discussed three types of possible confounding factors in action-tests: 1) biased interpretations; 2) spurious associations; and 3) quality of the action. I tried to account for this confounds when I discussed the PRA experience in the several communities, and judged as "not tested" or "not conclusive" the propositions and observations for which these confounds became important and did not allow reliable conclusions.

CHAPTER 8
RESEARCH QUESTION 2: WHAT FACTORS INFLUENCE PARTICIPATION BY
LOCAL PEOPLE AS LEADERS IN THE PRA TEAM?

When PRA is carried out, locals can be involved as facilitators and become part of the PRA team. Participation in a group of local voluntary PRA team members can vary from a great level of activity to almost no participation and stagnation. A variety of personal motivations may lead community members to become part of the PRA team, but the reactions they receive from their community and the costs and benefits of becoming PRA team members may greatly affect their permanence in the team. This question is relevant not only for PRA, but also to the development of community leadership in general, because the same factors may affect the locals' willingness to become community leaders to develop sustained activism for some collective objective such as community organizing and empowerment.

This chapter tries to make sense of the swings in the participation of local fishers in the PRA team in Itacaré, but focus on the more general questions of why altruistic people take a leadership role in their communities, why they often give up and let self-interested people take leadership positions, and how PRA affects this. In order to do this, I discuss six explanatory propositions that either locals or I created during this dissertation's fieldwork, or afterwards (Table 8-1).

These explanatory propositions started to be created as participation problems appeared in the Task Group. What should we have expected when PRA started in Itacaré, if fishers in the TG were the ones carrying it out?

Table 8-1: Research question 2 and explanatory propositions: What factors influenced participation by local people in the PRA team?

EP Number	Explanatory propositions
EP9	Pace and material opportunity costs: people have to make a living and cannot be exclusively involved in PRA (or leadership) voluntary activities.
EP10	Multidimensional costs and benefits: Participation in the local PRA team is inversely related to the material, moral and emotional costs of leadership; The intensity of this relationship depends on individual interpretations.
EP11	Cyclical fatigue of the group: after enduring the costs of leadership, the group may need a break before becoming more active again.
EP12	Credibility of group: participation in the local PRA team depends on whether the objectives of the group are seen as likely or possible.
EP13	Outside facilitators vs. insiders: PRA technical needs preserve decisive power in the hands of outsiders; this may frustrate local people in search of empowerment, reduce their participation or create internal friction
EP14	Insiders vs. insiders: internal friction may decrease the participation of people who are less involved, committed or empowered in the group.

According to the pace and material opportunity costs proposition (EP9), TG members would consider the opportunity costs of carrying out a PRA exercise, that is, the activities forgone when they work for their community, and the possible individual material gains or compensation they might receive. This explanatory proposition is in agreement with the basic assumptions sustaining the argument of Popkin (1979). On the one hand, as the level of required dedication to PRA would rise, participation in the local PRA team should decrease. On the other, if material compensation was offered, or if the pace of the PRA exercise was reduced, participation should increase or be maintained.

However, costs and benefits are not only material (EP10, multidimensional costs and benefits). As new leaders enter the public sphere and start to compete for political support, established leaders start to resist them. This resistance by established leaders

may be by refusing to cooperate, denying information crucial to the new leaders' work, influencing their followers not to participate in the PRA activities and by spreading gossip and misinformation about the new leaders.

In small communities, gossip may be an effective way to resist the rise of new leaders. When community members believe gossipers, this can result in social sanctions against new leaders. These sanctions can take subtle forms, such as when other people stop greeting them when walking by each other on the street (emotional costs). On the one hand, new leaders try to preserve their moral capital, or reputation, which may be important not only for their leadership but also for their livelihoods. On the other, they try to keep the flow of positive emotional stimuli they receive in their community, either from friends or acquaintances (emotional benefits). Because of this, when gossip against the local PRA team occurs, participation of local leaders in it is expected to be reduced.

Thus, when local community members participate in the PRA team, this increases the competition for political support, and consequently, the resistance of established leaders, with gossip, moral attacks and other strategies. Such strategies decrease the political, moral and emotional capitals of local PRA participants.

One's political capital is the political support people are willing to give him/her. One's moral capital is the (good) reputation and personal credibility one enjoys in the community. One's emotional capital is the positive emotional stimuli other people are willing to give him/her. Individuals are differently dependent on these three forms of capital, according to their livelihood strategies (which may need more or less the help of other people) or to psychological reasons (some people are more emotionally dependent than others). As these forms of capital are reduced, the new leaders-to-be try to maintain

them, and are less inclined to participate in the PRA team, retreating from the competition for political support (EP10a). If these forms of capital were maintained or increased, not only would the chances of staying in the PRA team increase, but also community participation and response to the efforts of the local PRA team would improve, also increasing the individual satisfaction, or benefits, of being a local member in the PRA team and, therefore, participation in the PRA team. Conversely, if the attacks on the local PRA team members' political, moral, and emotional capital are effective, then the likelihood that the community gives a favorable response to the work of these leaders decrease. This reduces the new leaders' satisfaction and their participation in the PRA team (see below).

Nevertheless, the individual interpretation of the community response to the actions of the local PRA team members may also affect satisfaction with participation in the PRA team (EP10b). Some people may want immediate satisfaction, while others can delay it. Some people interpret things in a negative light, while others are optimists. These interpretations are not only dependent on personal factors but are also related to the views people learn when they become leaders (often there is some kind of learning, either from previous leaders or from people and organizations promoting community participation).

Thus, participation in the local PRA team can reduce the material, political, moral, and emotional capitals of participants. If special strategies are not taken, they may have to reduce temporarily their participation when some form of capital is too low, and work outside the group to recover before they can come back (if they ever do). This can create cycles of participation in the local PRA team if different participants synchronize

their periods of losses and recoveries (cyclical fatigue, EP11). In addition, if participants are investing their capital in the local PRA team, collective and individual objectives must be credible for participation to be maintained (credibility of the group proposition, EP12).

Positive responses from the government, the community, and other sectors, may reassert the credibility of the group and improve internal participation. Lack of prompt results may decrease participation. A positive effect of PRA in mobilizing community participation (as shown in Chapter 7) and good responses from the government, for example, may increase the internal credibility of the local PRA team, and foster internal participation. This is a cyclical effect; credibility creates internal participation, which in turn makes the group even more credible.

Nevertheless, PRA has also limitations. One of the objectives of local PRA team members may be empowerment. However, PRA presents a structural contradiction: on the one hand, its participatory nature promises empowerment of locals; on the other, the sophisticated nature of the PRA tools require knowledge, training and technical skills that are often hard for the poor to master, making them dependent on the goodwill and competence of outsiders. Participatory rural appraisal may preserve decisive power in the hands of outsiders, which can frustrate local hopes for empowerment, create friction and conflicts between locals and outsiders, and reduce participation (EP13).

The same empowerment goal can create friction among insiders, with locals trying to control, or to resist being controlled by, other locals within the local PRA team (EP14). This may reduce the participation of people who are less involved, committed or empowered in the group. These propositions, described above, are related to a local PRA

team which is voluntary and works for at least some months in the community. Shorter term PRA exercises may not have time to develop all these effects.

Participation in the Task Group

In Itacaré, the local PRA team was the Task Group for the Creation of the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré (TG). As described in Chapter 6, the Task Group was formed in the year before my dissertation fieldwork, and the participation of the fishers in it was not constant. Three people, who were the most dedicated to the TG, were the core of this group, and sometimes they did all the work and often centralized decisions. However, there were times when twelve or more people participated.

When I arrived for fieldwork in Itacaré, the TG was almost inactive, except for the core group of three people. For months, TG members did not know what else they had to do to bring about the creation of the Reserve. They had concluded the survey of the fishing community, whose questionnaires had been sent to IBAMA six months before to be processed, and they knew there was a need for a biological study of the Reserve's proposed area, but could not carry it out on their own. My arrival, in September 2000, was a new development that TG needed to recover some of its enthusiasm; according to one TG member, I brought a new perspective of action and orientation on what to do (which the fishers and I had previously agreed on, see Chapter 6): a PRA exercise to mobilize the community for the Reserve, create a community development plan and the Norms of the Reserve. However, as Figure 8-1 shows, after an initial rise in participation, the TG subsequently went through a period of low participation, a crisis that lasted almost three months.

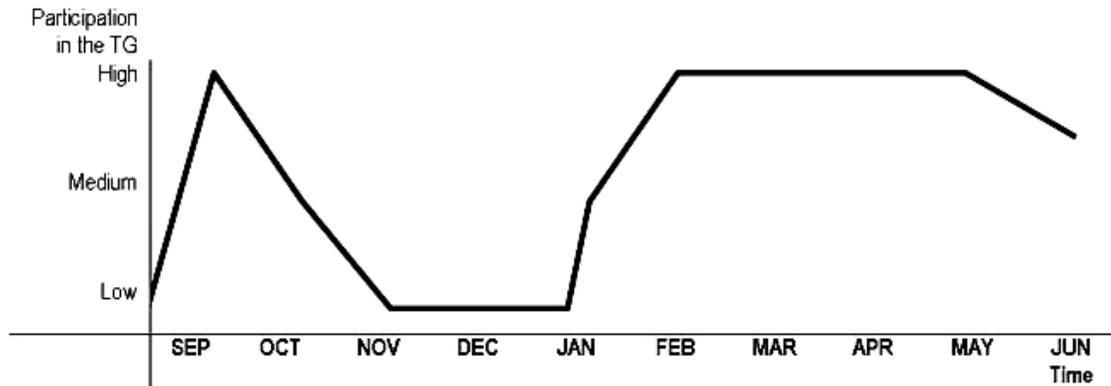


Figure 8-1: Participation within the Task Group.

Pace and Material Opportunity Costs Proposition

The TG had decided that technical people would not be paid to carry out PRA with them, and they would carry out the process on their own, with my orientation. In order to start the PRA in the communities of Itacaré, TG members first had to learn about PRA. This is described in Chapter 7, when it was pointed out that the participation of TG members in the PRA course given to them started high and reduced over time. In the second week of the course, less than a third of the people who started the course were still participating, and only the three core TG members had consistent participation throughout.

When PRA started and increased dedication from TG members was required, participation in the TG started to decrease. Some TG members told me that the pace at which we were carrying out PRA was too fast because they had to work to make a living (pace and material opportunity costs proposition, EP9). In addition, report writing was hard, and took a long time for them, and the scheduled PRA exercise in the Banca do Peixe started before the report on Piracanga was done. Their complaint implied that PRA was increasing the costs of participation in the TG.

We agreed that these costs had to be compensated or reduced, and there were four possible solutions:

- Reducing the costs by including technical volunteers to organize meetings and write reports
- Reducing the costs by slowing down the PRA exercise
- Offering individual material compensation to TG members who facilitated the PRA
- Giving up PRA and returning to the approach offered by IBAMA

As said before, in the action testing practiced in this research, these solutions were also the way to test the proposition. Including technical volunteers would be interesting, but we could not see any acceptable people available locally. Giving up PRA was not yet openly considered; some TG people felt they had committed to me and to my research on the use of PRA in the creation of the Marine Extractive Reserve. Slowing down PRA was the immediate solution, but the TG was also in a hurry to have the biological study that PRA would provide sent to IBAMA. Thus, at the time, the core TG members and I talked about this and we agreed that compensating the increased individual costs of PRA was the best possible solution to their problem (and was the way to test this proposition in action). An opportunity was to propose a small budget to IBAMA to cover the costs.

However, the core TG members argued that it was “dangerous” to be open about payments for the work of the TG members because it could “attract the wrong people” to the group. I agreed with them, despite the ethical problems in this decision, that it was better to wait and to see who would show commitment to the group without payments first, while we prepared a funding proposal to IBAMA to cover this cost.

The multidimensional aspects of participation (EP10) became evident in this dilemma: should material compensation for the participation of fishers in the TG be offered, or should the TG members individually bear the costs of the collective good they

were building? Should they be told upfront about this possibility, creating the risk of self-interested participation, or should this information be a secret of these three people who were self-elected leaders?³²

The fact that the core TG members, who were the only TG members aware of the possibility of payments, were also the only ones who continued their dedication, while others did not, is consistent with the proposition that material costs and benefits were influencing participation in the TG, despite their claim that their participation was a result of their commitment to the Extractive Reserve. It also suggests that participation in the TG was a form of investment, and as an investment, it was affected by its credibility (EP12, see below). However, this is just speculation, because I could not really tell what specific motivations people had behind their altruistic discourses (I wonder if *they* could).

When the proposal to IBAMA to pay TG members involved in facilitating the PRA was done, I convinced the core TG members that we should share this information with the rest of the group, despite the danger of selfish participation. They invited the people they thought were still committed to the TG for a meeting to tell all of them. We expected the money to arrive soon.

Some people were surprised by this information, whose secrecy was explained, and justified, again in terms of the individualism and the gossip it could create. I do not know how everyone felt about this (that is, seemingly not being trusted by the core TG members and me), but it may have created some resentment.

³² Worse than self-elected, maybe these leaders were elected (or supported) by AAE, the NGO which had advised the TG for the year before, and me, who assumed they were the legitimate leaders to be empowered in the creation of the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré.

Whether or not to pay community leaders is a dilemma faced by many community projects. The risk is not only to attract “the wrong people,” as TG members worried, but also to create a habit that increases the cost of community action and makes it dependent on external monetary resources. Participation can acquire a price, and be sold to projects, just like labor. The increased material opportunity costs of PRA were reducing participation within the TG, but there were other factors, as discussed below.

Pace and Opportunity Costs (EP9) vs. Multidimensional Costs and Benefits (EP10)

In Itacaré, the prospect of payments initially seemed to stimulate participation in TG meetings, but it eventually backfired in the PRA activities. Because IBAMA was taking longer than expected to send the money, some people (including one of the most active) started to argue that the TG should reduce their activities in order to coerce IBAMA to pay them. That is, when IBAMA showed an interest in paying TG members for their work, this transferred the ownership of the Extractive Reserve proposal from the community to IBAMA. It was as if the community and TG were not beneficiaries of the Reserve; the beneficiary was then IBAMA.

Why was this so? I believe this was because TG members did not feel, at the time, a good response from the community to their work. If the community had recognized their work, it could have rewarded TG with prestige and leadership, and TG members themselves would also benefit as resource use extractors. However, they were not enjoying these benefits because their work was not yet visible, and gossip was denigrating their image in the community. When IBAMA agreed with payments, it created a demand for TG work, which, without similar demand from the community, shifted the ownership of the Reserve proposal.

Thus, the material dimension was not the only one affecting participation within the TG. First, the proposal to reduce the activities of the TG to force IBAMA to send the money sooner was, in fact, a political strategy; it was resistance. This shift in ownership, some TG members thought, opened an opportunity for a resistance strategy; that is, just slowing down, not being active about their material needs. Once more, resistance was confirmed as a typical political strategy of the cacao region. Second, as the discussion above shows, information about the material costs and benefits of participation was important. So were the moral values that prevented people from explicitly acknowledging their needs for material compensation. However, emotional costs and benefits also seemed to be making an affect. Low visibility of the work done by the TG and gossip in the community were reducing the emotional rewards to TG members, and increasing the costs, thus reducing their satisfaction and destroying their motivation.

TG members complained that the community did not recognize their work, and that some people were not talking to them anymore. They lacked recent accomplishments in which to take pride, and their self-esteem was bombarded by the gossip about them. This process was worse for them than for some of the established leaders who had explicit private agendas: if your morals do not allow selfish behavior, and if what motivates you is the feeling that you are a good person because you are altruistic, accusations of dishonesty and selfishness are particularly hurtful. The defensive response of the TG was to blame back, and go into increased isolation (as described in Chapter 6).

However, if the multidimensional costs and benefits proposition (EP10) was right, TG members needed to reduce the multidimensional costs of being in the TG and increase their benefits. That is, on the one hand, they needed to control the gossip about

the TG in the community, and reduce the competition with established leaders. On the other hand, they needed to be effective in mobilizing the community, which would result from reducing the gossip and from other strategies related to the PRA discussed in the previous chapter.

When the TG discussed the gossip problem, we did not immediately agree on its causes or solutions. In my view, gossip creators were active and had a fertile ground in a community accustomed to being fooled by their leaders and politicians in the past, and who thus expected the worst from any community project. I proposed that we have a meeting to demonstrate the use of money received from CNPT by the Task Group. The main goal was to neutralize the gossip that was spreading. The TG resisted this idea at first. Showing their tendency to isolation, some people in the TG said that they did not have to respond to the criticisms and gossips of people who were against the Reserve. My utilitarian justification for the meeting failed to convince them. Then, I tried a moral argument (the TG was doing public work, with public money, and the community was entitled to have this money accounted for), and so they accepted the proposal of the meeting.

Several of the people who were perceived as opposing the TG at the time participated in the meeting, along with several fishers who were then skeptical about the TG. The money received (R\$1,700) was accounted for, and everybody was able to ask questions. Later, the same statement of expenses was published in the *Jornal da APA*, the monthly newsletter of the Environmental Education Program of the Itacaré/Serra Grande Área de Proteção Ambiental. This transparency with the group's expenses was something new, and created credibility regarding the use of money by the Group. For the next eight

months (until I left Itacaré) at least, we did not hear of this kind of gossip again. This was a relief to most TG members. During the meeting, the TG was also criticized for being secretive and not sharing information. This was related to a difficulty in dealing with problematic people (mostly former technical volunteers) in the process of extractive reserve creation. They were competing against the fishers for leadership in Itacaré. Instead of developing strategies to exclude these problematic people, limit their role, or take advantage of their potential contribution while minimizing their negative influence, TG slowly ostracized them. In so doing, they were exposed to the criticism of being secretive. One technical volunteer, for example, used the word "*grupinho*" to describe the TG, which in the context was a pejorative word meaning "secretive and arrogant little group."

Indeed, I think that the TG was secretive but would not admit it. They avoided inviting and sharing information with problematic people, or people they were in conflict with, both consciously and unconsciously, for example, by forgetting to invite or by not employing the same energy to invite them to the meetings. This was done even to ASPERI's president who was a fisher and a potential ally of the group. To fight for leadership, the group was adopting an unsustainable strategy: it was isolating itself. This strategy was typical of the landless movement (Navarro 2002), and of AAE, and served well the objectives of these organizations in other settings, but were creating difficulties for the TG in Itacaré.

One week later (October 31, 2000), in an evaluation meeting with the CNPT consultant, another technical volunteer who was not present in the previous accounting meeting said that the TG was distanced from the community. She criticized the lack of

information flow to the community and to the people who were formerly involved with the Reserve (the technical volunteers), and the lack of involvement of older fishers. Moreover, privately, she criticized the lack of legitimacy of TG members to be leaders of the fishing population of Itacaré.

Except for the legitimacy criticism, I agreed with her comments. At the time, instead of building up support of potential allies and neutralizing potential opponents, the TG had closed itself in a shell of defensive ethics and intolerance. Other people's faults were very important to them, but they avoided looking at their own faults. The group complained about the gossip but did not have a strategy to inform the community. They complained of lack of participation but never did a good job inviting people to the meetings. There was almost no broadcasting of meeting times and places (the logistics problem, discussed to explain low participation by the community in the PRA meetings). How could they blame their audience?³³

Their black-or-white views did not equip them to consider the response of the community in relativistic terms, but there were some exceptions. In a TG meeting, one TG leader said "*Temos que ter uma cabeça maior que a dos outros*" (We have to have a broader view than other people), "recognition comes later!" However, another TG member was pessimistic: "Recognition never comes..." These opposing attitudes resulted in opposing perceptions of the moral and emotional costs and benefits of participation.

These two TG members had opposite interpretations and ways to deal with the emotional rewards and costs offered by their community to the work they were

³³ I always repeated, in the PRA course that I gave them and during the work afterwards, that "if they don't participate, it's our fault; we are the ones who are not doing a good enough job."

promoting. One, by postponing his need for recognition, by being patient and by finding a higher form of ethical satisfaction was able to offer a justification for continuing the work. The other, by requiring immediate satisfaction, and by focusing on what people around him said, could not.

However, puzzlingly, the optimistic one was the one to vanish from TG meetings for the next two months (he was working intensively in the construction sector, as an electricity technician) while the pessimist maintained his participation, even while resenting the lack of recognition. Only two of the core TG members persisted in participating; all others practically disappeared from the TG meetings until January, when that optimistic member was the first to return with full enthusiasm (his return is discussed below, in the analysis of the cyclical fatigue of the group proposition, EP11).

However, before this, some people who participated in the TG more had a superior attitude towards people who participated less, and ostracized them when they did not come. This form of social coercion could have worked to maintain participation if people did not have much of a choice and the TG was a way to access individual benefits, but this was not the case. When punished for their lower participation, less active TG members simply distanced themselves from the group and ceased to come. It was just one more incentive to free-ride. The internal relations among TG members were contaminated by the same black-or-white views which created the isolation between the TG and other sectors in Itacaré (which supported the insiders vs. outsiders proposition, EP14).

After some meetings with low participation, I started to suspect that the more active TG members were not being active enough to get the word out to all the others.

This was confirmed when some fishers told me they had not been invited. Core TG members said they were tired of inviting people and nobody coming. However, as meetings were carried out, the noninvited people created resentment against TG leaders, who resented back.

A way to solve this was to set up a weekly meeting, in a place known and open to all. In this way, the task of inviting people to the meetings would not be such a burden, and less active people would not depend on the goodwill of the core TG members to be able to participate in the meetings. The TG liked the idea. Everyone would know the day and time of the meeting (Mondays, 7:30 PM). Also, the appearance of secrecy of the group would be diminished, because the group would be able to say “We have meetings every Monday; anyone can come!”³⁴

Thus, the TG decided to hold its weekly meetings in ASPERI’s office, and have more open meetings in the Colônia’s classroom. In this way, also, both organizations would be involved. Holding the meetings in ASPERI was also good because Pedro (the president) would be involved. Although Pedro’s participation in the Extractive Reserve creation process was often less than ideal, he was a legitimate leader of ASPERI fishers. It was politically important to involve him in the process. Moreover, as pointed out before, he criticized meetings happening at the homes of TG members when there were “institutional” spaces for them.

³⁴ However, we all knew that the meetings could not be really open. There were delicate topics that we did not want to share with people that were opposing the Reserve, and topics that could be misunderstood by first-time participants. Given the power of gossip in Itacaré, the access to the information shared in TG meetings could not be so open. A real danger was that partial information became gossip when it reached the ears of people that did not understand the whole process because they were just casual participants.

Weekly meetings were a successful strategy to reduce the appearance of secrecy and create a notion in the community that the TG was active. The meeting place (ASPERI) was on the other side of the town from where the core TG members and I lived. We often ran into fishers on the way there, who asked us where we were going. “To the TG meeting!” we answered. “You are always going to or coming from those meetings!” they replied, “When is the Reserve going to be created?” they asked. This was positive moral and emotional reinforcement to the TG members.

This set of strategies (reducing gossip and vulnerability to moral attacks; the prospect of individual compensation; and increasing community recognition because of the first PRA successful meeting in the Colônia) started to produce results, and some TG members who were distanced started to come back to the meetings. However we all were unpleasantly surprised when a TG member closer to AAE told us she had suspended the project we sent to IBAMA, without consulting the TG, or discussing this decision at the meetings. This shocked some of the TG members who were returning, who later complained about it to me and other leaders of the fishers, and no longer came to the meetings (insiders vs. outsiders proposition, EP14, see below).

When PRA started again, in January, and good participation was achieved in all the communities, the gossip about the TG was controlled. We were able to discredit most of the opposition to the Reserve, by making the TG accountable to the communities, and by exposing the interests of the gossipers, in the PRA meetings. TG members were not trying to promote PRA only in their communities, but went to other fishing communities, where they became reference people for the Reserve. Participatory rural appraisal was a great tool to teach the concept of the Reserve, particularly the participatory natural

resource map. In addition, the institutional diagrams seemed to strengthen the leadership role of TG members; they were listening to the communities about the problems of other institutions and this seemed to create trust between them and the PRA participants.

The high level of activity during the PRA exercise seemingly created a sense of reality about the Extractive Reserve proposal. At the time, CNPT/IBAMA was going through a severe reform and could not provide any response to the fishers, but in Itacaré, the PRA kept the fishers believing the Extractive Reserve was going to be created. On the streets of Itacaré, people started to ask us when the next meeting was. New people became interested in joining the TG. This positive response from the community increased the moral, political and emotional capital of active TG members, creating an incentive to internal participation.

However, how to have a high level of activity without increasing the material opportunity costs of the TG members (pace and material opportunity costs proposition, EP9)? When PRA restarted, since we were unable to pay the TG members to carry out the PRA, we tried to reduce individual costs. Outside volunteers (including me) prepared the meetings, took notes and wrote the reports, and raised material support from the municipal government, NGOs and local businesses. Insiders (TG members) coordinated the meetings whenever possible, planned and supervised PRA activities, and made the decisions about the process. The strategy seemed to have worked well.

Cyclical Fatigue of the Group (EP11)

Was the participation crisis in the TG, before PRA was resumed, just part of a cyclical process, in which these new leaders needed to accumulate the various forms of capital outside the TG from time to time? Above, I discussed the increased material

opportunity costs imposed by PRA and that one solution that the TG and I devised was to pay for the work of TG members carrying out the PRA.

However, with the help of the project submitted to CNPT, PRA was going to be carried out during the high tourism season, increasing the opportunity costs of participating in the TG with a PRA exercise in motion. One core TG member was involved in selling *acarajé*, a typical food from Bahia, to tourists. Another was taking tourists on boat trips. And the third core TG member was the busiest, doing construction work as the town was preparing for the peak season.

These three were also tired from several months of stress, working for the community for free, while there were few economic opportunities. The time to cash in was coming and the CNPT/IBAMA project was going to compete with these private activities. Waiting until after the peak season was materially rational to some individual TG members, particularly the core group.

Maybe this could explain why the TG member closer to AAE cancelled the proposal for CNPT/IBAMA to pay the TG members. She said it was because people were approaching the TG because of the money, and that the TG was not ready to manage the money. However, the people who were coming to the meetings were basically the same people she had always considered to be part of TG. The purpose of project money was to allow their participation. I believe that she had both material motives (discussed above) and political motives (discussed below) to cancel the project.

However, the cyclical fatigue of the group proposition was the most popular explanation in the TG for this period of crisis. When we discussed why TG members were not participating as much, a common explanation was that they were tired. Indeed,

after a while, many came back before PRA started to produce results, and most were back when the first round of PRA meetings was halfway done.

Outside Facilitators vs. Insiders (EP13)

However, the cancellation of the project to pay TG members could also have been related to a conflict between AAE and me. I believe it was also a strategy to undermine the possibility that the PRA would go on, and to exclude me from the process. The TG member who cancelled the project was also acting as a member of AAE, which had developed suspicions against me, and my work for the Extractive Reserve (see Chapter 6), and some people in the TG started to be influenced by her. In December 2000, considering the low participation of TG members, a TG meeting with four TG members and me cancelled the whole PRA strategy, which was only considered again one month later, when it became the faster (and maybe the only) strategy for the generation of the biological report for the creation of the Reserve.

This friction between the TG member closer to AEE and me reduced participation in the TG even more. One TG member said he was upset with the core TG members because of how they treated me. Such conflicts, in carrying out the PRA process, would not happen if the PRA did not need my technical expertise, or the technical expertise of outsiders. They had to choose PRA with me or no PRA, because they did not know how to do it by themselves. At that point, the TG member who was also a AEE member, for the first time, took advantage of a meeting with low attendance and the presence of people she had most influence, and they chose no PRA.

Later, in January, when we returned to the PRA approach, the core TG members maintained part of their suspicions about my assistance for some time. The only member with time to participate in all PRA meetings was Catu, who soon would start to trust the

process more. He was designated by the core TG members and AAE as the TG's overseer of the PRA process. His participation did not have significant material opportunity costs because he was hired by the municipality and allocated to the PRA, and had saved enough money in his previous period of inactivity in the TG but of hard work as an electricity technician (cyclical fatigue of the group proposition, EP11).

The friction, between the TG member who was also an AEE member and me, persisted. However, the weekly meetings gave the TG good control of the process and my limited time left in Itacaré made my presence less threatening to her and AAE. In order to implement the strategy of using volunteers to reduce the opportunity costs of the PRA to the TG members, and to reduce the local suspicions about (and resistance to) technical volunteers, local people, whose interests and alliances in the local power structure were known, were avoided. Through a message on the internet, I requested applications from recent graduates, and selected three. The acceptance of these volunteer research assistants was exceptional, and even the most cynical people in the TG immediately trusted them.

The research assistants were very social and introduced an emotional aspect to the group, by promoting social gatherings. Often, after concluding a series of PRA meetings in a community, TG members, the research assistants and I went to a bar to celebrate. There was an atmosphere of complicity among us (Catu, Batista, Gil, Pedro, Jeneca, João Doido, Jó, and others) although some were still resisting. That is, although there can be conflicts between outsiders and locals due to PRA's need for outsiders, these conflicts do not need to exist, or persist, in the process. However, such frictions can be part of the group dynamics and be established also among insiders. The persisting friction existed

between the TG member who was closer to AAE and me, *and* between different TG members.

Insiders vs. Insiders (EP14)

The TG members also had conflicts among themselves. The suspicions of the core TG members were not only directed towards outsiders; they also targeted insiders, less harshly, but still so. Insiders were suspected of staying in the TG just for the possible payments, to spy on the work of the group, or to try to influence the group towards results that were advantageous to its enemies (*guincho* owners) or their own sectors, that is., individual fishing communities or fishing practices.

Resentment was directed towards group members who did not work as much as the most active members, or those who did not perform the activities according to what was planned. People who behaved in a way that was considered improper to a community leader were also criticized. In addition, some complaints were directed towards some of the core TG members, who were accused of centralizing and being secretive about key information, of making decisions without proper group participation, and of trying to influence the TG to keep it dependent on AAE.

These resentments and internal conflicts would eventually break the group apart. A fisher told me that, after I left, several TG members left the group because they were upset with the way a core TG member linked to AAE was behaving in the group. They complained that they were being manipulated, that information was not being shared and that they were not being trusted. The long time the government was taking to create the Reserve may also have reduced their satisfaction with the participation in the TG. This corroborates EP14: internal friction may decrease the participation of people who are less involved, committed or empowered in the group.

Credibility of the Group (EP12)

During the participation crisis in the TG, and with most of the TG members involved in other activities, they maintained the weekly meetings. Their major concern was how to do the biological study for the Reserve, but the lack of response from CNPT was making the credibility of the Reserve go down, even within the TG. In January 2001, CNPT told me that it could send money for the biological study only by the end of February. In March, *Universidade Estadual de Santa Cruz* (the state university located nearby in Ilhéus) was going to have its annual school break, when most of the professors and researchers associated with the Oceanographic Group (responsible for the biological study) would be traveling to other states to conduct research on board research ships, and would be unavailable. Thus, *if* CNPT kept their promise, the biological study could be carried out only in April (just before my predicted return to the US). However, there was no guarantee, and CNPT rarely kept their promises.

Based on our experience with CNPT so far, we could not trust their prediction. The process was at a greater risk than ever, because the TG was small, with no activities planned, and CNPT was unable to give any positive response. In one of the TG meetings, a TG member said that nothing should be done before CNPT started to pay them for the work. However, payments would not come because the TG itself (through the AEE member participating in it) had cancelled the request.

This transference of ownership of the Reserve from the TG to CNPT needed to be reverted. I started to articulate the possibility of UESC doing the biological study with little participation, as the TG had decided, and only with local resources. However, the UESC Oceanographic Group insisted they wanted to do the study only within a PRA exercise because they had little time and resources to obtain enough information using

conventional methods in such a short time. That is, because I was the only person trained in PRA, I would have to carry out the PRA with them, since the TG members were unable to do it on their own.

The main problem was that time was short, the PRA for the biological study required reports, the TG had little capacity to produce them (it failed before and it was unlikely to work this time), and I would not be able to write all of them alone; I needed to focus more on my research. Moreover, many people in the TG were occupied with summer activities, that is, the opportunity costs of their participation would have been even higher than before. They could participate in the PRA meetings but did not have time to spend on their organization.

In a TG meeting, with the presence of most people (except the AEE member, who was advised about the topic but decided not to go), I asked “Is the Extractive Reserve ours or is it CNPT’s?” “Ours,” they answered. “So why should we wait for them?” I asked again. We discussed the situation and the possibility of using the PRA strategy again, and they approved it. Because the TG was small, tired and busy with summer income generating activities, and because our experience had shown in the past that writing reports was very difficult for them even when time was available, I proposed a combination of outsiders and insiders in the promotion of the PRA. I requested the Group’s permission to raise human and monetary resources for the PRA, and they approved.

This plan started to create internal credibility in the TG. The collective objectives of the group seemed more plausible again, if they did not have to wait for the government. Their question was probably this: OK, he has a plan, will it work? In the

next week, I told them about some of the support I was already obtaining in Itacaré, and the E-mail response of candidates for the positions of volunteer research assistants. Twelve people replied to the internet offer of two internship positions in the PRA exercise. I had no money to offer to the volunteers, only meals (donated by Senzala restaurant) and lodging (in my house). They paid their own trip to Itacaré. The UESC oceanographers said they could obtain some resources in their own organization to come to Itacaré, participate in meetings and collect specimens. The Fishers' Association (ASPERI) obtained donated fuel for boat trips from the gas station. These initial support responses increased the trust that this way would work, and consequently, the internal credibility of the group.

When we started to obtain good results of the PRA activities in the different communities (see Chapter 7), this credibility became even stronger. People from communities where PRA had just been carried out came to see it be done in the next communities. We started to invite interesting people we met in different communities to go to the weekly TG meetings, and some did. Some former TG members, and even new people, started to attend the meetings.

The discussion of the Norms of the Reserve, in the second round of PRA meetings, gave the TG members an increased sense of their legitimacy as leaders of the fishers. In addition to good attendance in all meetings, the decision making process, the TG and I enjoyed a high level of trust. During the process of elaborating the Norms, the TG members faced a series of delicate decisions that would affect their power and the power of their friends and enemies. They could have manipulated the process, but the interaction between different members, some of whom were becoming more vocal and

ethically concerned, and some who were already vocal, and me, created a self-vigilance that ensured decisions based on a notion of fairness. To be fair and morally correct was an important and constant worry of the TG. Self-enforcement was tight, and discussing these issues became increasingly open. This was one of the benefits of the organization style promoted by AAE (typical of the landless movement, according to Navarro 2002); however, it created great emotional stress inside TG because it was hard for these leaders to be watched by each other all the time.

Nevertheless, the process of creating the Norms of the Reserve consolidated the leadership of the TG, increasing the group's internal and external credibility, and fostering internal participation. The norm prohibiting *guinchos* was the main objective of urban fishers and the main cause of opposition to the Reserve from local industrial fishers. It was approved in all community meetings, despite a little polemic in the Forte, where industrial trawlers (*guinchos*) docked, and some fishers who worked for the *guinchos* opposed it at first, but then agreed with it when they realized they could change to small boats. In other communities, the correctness of approving this rule was not even discussed. The rule was acclaimed and applauded and was expected to increase the catches of shrimp and fish, and reduce losses with lobster nets.

Other norms involved more discussion, such as the proposal to ban the use of nets 500 meters from the mouth of the rivers. After much discussion, people agreed that only *redes de espera* should be forbidden, and at only 200 meters from the mouth of the rivers. Scuba dive fishing and dive fishing were sources of great conflict between fishers of Itacaré and outsider dive fishers. Most local fishers condemned them, arguing that it was “unfair” to the fish. “When we fish using lines, the fish only dies if it wants to eat the

bait,” they said, “but divers take them all.” Diving also represented a clash between younger and more capitalized fishers and older, traditional fishers. Diving equipment was expensive, and the activity required one to be in shape, and to be innovative. In fact, dive fishing seemed more unfair to traditional fishers than to the fish. The many norms about which the TG and I were able to facilitate the discussion will empower the local fishers when the Reserve is created, and we felt the fishers’ recognition for that work.

Due to the tourism development that challenged the customary rights of local fishers to different resources (trails, land, etc.) in most communities there were “fights” in which the TG was able to support and represent the fishers against landowners, tourism entrepreneurs or industrial fishing companies. The cause and the moral commitment of the TG, morally supported by the community, and the new use of legal instruments by the TG, resulted in political empowerment as the TG started to interact with state agencies, such as the Environmental Resources Center (CRA), other than IBAMA.

This political empowerment was evident in the actions to open the access to some beaches, negotiate a problem of road access in the community in Itacarezinho, and the land conflict in Piracanga. All these problems were being caused by the new tourism economy and the TG was able to reduce them, which increased their internal and external credibility. During the PRA process, the Task Group built credibility in the community and consistent internal participation. After the tourism season was over, many of the WG members had more time to participate and started to act on the demands created by the PRA. In each community, local leaders were identified and became partners of the TG in the empowerment of the community. Particularly in the rural communities, which the TG did not know well before the PRA, the leadership of the TG became strong.

Action Tests for Research Question 2: Summary and Conclusion

In this Chapter, I examined the factors that affect the participation of local people as leaders in a PRA team. The specific case of Itacaré may not be too typical of PRA, because, in addition to a PRA team, the TG was a group of local activists for community empowerment. However, I believe this feature makes the TG even more interesting.

Table 8-2 shows the results for action tests regarding Research Question 2. The first row present different actions or local developments (A1-8) intended to solve different participation problems and able to test different explanatory propositions. Because there was just one Task Group, these tests are not “replications” (which would be created by the study of more than one group). The pace and opportunity material costs proposition (EP9) was suggested during the PRA in Piracanga and Banca do Peixe (first PRA attempt, A3), and counter-evidence to it was offered when the prospect of payments from CNPT/IBAMA (A1) failed to attract participation. However, it was corroborated by the increasing participation of TG members in the TG when the PRA was resumed with the help of research assistants (A5), and increased even more at the end of the tourism season (A7). It was corroborated again when the TG people receiving payments from a project funded by Terra Nuova (A8) increased their participation in the TG even more. While paid TG members increased their participation, people who did not receive payments withdrew from the group.

The first time the prospect of payments for TG members (A1) was offered, described above, it failed to mobilize TG members probably because of other reasons,

such as political resistance (included in EP10) and fatigue of some group members (EP11). However, the action tests could not verify if fatigue was a major factor.

Table 8-2: Results of the action tests for the explanatory propositions for Research Question 2.

EP	Factor	A1: Payments proposal (IBAMA)	A2: Accountability meeting	A3: PRA Piracanga and Banca do Peixe	A4: Weekly meetings	A5: PRA	A6: Research assistants	A7: End of the tourism season	A8: Payments (Terra Nuova)	Total
9	Pace and material opportunity costs	-	0	+	0	0	+	+	+	+3
10	Multidimensional costs and benefits	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	+6
11	Cyclical fatigue	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12	Credibility of group	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	0	+2
13	Outside facilitators vs. insiders	0	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	-1
14	Insiders vs. insiders	+	0	0	+	0	0	0	+	+3

Key: plus sign (+) = corroboration, minus sign (-) = refusal, zero (0) = not tested or not conclusive.

The multidimensional costs and benefits proposition (EP10) was corroborated when people (re)approached the TG after

- It neutralized gossip in the community
- A successful PRA meeting was carried out in the Banca do Peixe
- The TG appeared more active because of the weekly TG meetings
- PRA was resumed in the communities and the TG started to be recognized as legitimate and credible leaders of the fishers of Itacaré
- The research assistants suggested and organized social gatherings.

The cyclical fatigue of the group proposition, although it was the most cited explanation for the internal participation crisis faced by the TG, could not be tested in action. However, I believe it makes great sense from what I observed, as discussed above,

and is consistent with the two propositions discussed above. The credibility of the group proposition was corroborated mainly by the weekly TG meetings (A4), which created a sense of activity in the group and were able to attract some members back, and by the PRA (A5), which involved a high level of activity, great local support, and the explicit interest of outsiders, such as the volunteer research assistants and the regional university. All these strategies increased the internal credibility of the group, and consequently, attracted some participation of new and former TG members.

The outsider facilitator vs. insiders proposition was not corroborated by the action tests. The conflicts were real. However, the presence of outsiders need not be a source of conflict in the PRA, as was shown in the case of the research assistants. Itacaré presented complex problems in the relationship between outsiders and locals. Many of these problems were inherited from previous projects, and derived from prejudice. However, the choice of strategies I used in promoting the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré increased the potential for conflict.

Nevertheless, insiders also had problems among themselves. The weekly TG meetings, by reducing the need to advertise whenever the TG met, also reduced misunderstandings and conflict inside the group. However, when payments were introduced, with the Terra Nuova project, many other conflicts appeared, and participation started to decrease.

CHAPTER 9 CONCLUSION

This dissertation is concerned with *PRA for collective action* and *PRA as collective action*. Participatory rural appraisal requires community participation, which (if it is voluntary) is a form of collective action as any other, facing the same obstacles. In this way, when this dissertation discusses PRA collective action, it presents insights for other forms of collective action. However, by examining the explanatory propositions regarding participation in the PRA meetings and in the local PRA team, this dissertation studies not only what motivates participation, but also why local social change is so difficult. Among other causes, change is difficult because sincere leadership is essential to promote it, and as this study shows, a series of mechanisms react against the commitment of such leaders. In addition, this dissertation shows how some of these mechanisms can be neutralized to promote the empowerment of new leaders.

Why Participation?

What is the purpose of participation? Is it to make communities more palatable to governments or to make governments more palatable to communities, or both? Or to really make governments respond to communities?

In Itacaré, participation was intended to give fishers the opportunity to organize, decide and fight for the creation of an institutional and legal framework that could improve their lives. The extractive reserve proposal could provide such a framework, and it was open enough so that local fishers could decide on most of its aspects. However,

only participation, that is, good quality participation, could provide fishers with the power they needed.

Thus, in this case participation was not intended to make local communities more palatable to governments; in fact, local communities became increasingly unpalatable as their demands increased. Nor was it to make governments more palatable to communities; instead, communities became more aware of governmental faults. The purpose of participation was not only to make the government respond to the communities, and provide them needed assistance and power in decision making processes, but also to make the communities, themselves, internally less conflictive, and more productive and cooperative.

Participation of the Fishers of Itacaré in the PRA Meetings

Both the local explanation (individualistic culture) and my explanation (logistics) failed to explain completely why fishers did not participate in the first PRA meetings. On the one hand, attendance at the PRA meetings for the creation of the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré was not an automatic result of good logistics (that is, fishers did not automatically participate when the opportunity was opened). On the other hand, the supposedly solitary nature of fishing activities did not make the fishers of Itacaré behave individualistically. On the other, participation in the PRA meetings for the creation of the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré was not an automatic result of good logistics (that is, fishers did not automatically participate when the opportunity was opened). First, fishing activities of most types of fishers in Itacaré were not solitary, and when they involved less group work, the lives of the fishers still involved a great deal of cooperation. Second, even though there were participation problems, eventually fishers participated in the PRA meetings without any perspective of individual gain. This finding

provides evidence against descriptions such as of Poggie (1980) and Kottak (1992), which argue that fishers are more individualistic than other sectors, and against Pollnac and Carmo (1980), who said that both fishers and farmers were not inclined to cooperation. This dissertation further suggests that individualism as a value has little to do with individualism as behavior. Individualistic values may be more or less present in different cultures, and tend to be persistent within them, but individualistic behavior is dependent on the context, and can quickly change into cooperative behavior, and vice-versa.

The free-riding explanatory proposition says that individualistic behavior occurs in a context in which it is possible to access benefits of a collective good without contributing to it. Testing the free-riding proposition depended on whether participation was ever achieved without strategies to limit the access of noncontributors to the collective good (the Extractive Reserve). If it did, the proposition would have been falsified. Evidence in favor of the proposition would have been provided if, in the presence of such mechanisms, participation increased.

Against this proposition, the evidence was that, once political and credibility problems were solved, the PRA meetings had good attendance in spite of the absence of mechanisms preventing free-riding. In favor of this proposition, some participants seemed to be motivated by such mechanisms when it appeared that these mechanisms were starting to develop (when people had to register to vote in the Norms of the Reserve). Therefore, although PRA participation benefited when mechanisms that appeared to be excluding free-riders were introduced, they were not needed once other problems, discussed below, were solved.

Nevertheless, the difficulty in organizing peasants (or fishers) to provide a collective good may be due not only to free-riding, as argued by Popkin (1979), but also (and more importantly) to the other dimensions of participation. In this study, political resistance was a more important factor causing fishers not to participate than free-riding. Often, fishers expressed their disagreement with a proposal and its promoters by withdrawing their participation and political support. In Brazil, a proverb says “*quem cala, consente*” (“the silence consents”); however, in Itacaré, silence (nonparticipation) was a sign of protest. When people did not participate, they meant something, and often it was not consent. They were not just free-riding; they were saying that they disagreed, or were suspicious of something. However, they would not come to the meetings and say it.

This silent resistance, instead of active opposition, was developed as a political strategy over decades of oppression by the cacao elite of southern Bahia, when the poor were denied education and freedom. And it was maintained in a political environment where political support became a currency, exchanged for private benefits. People knew the dependence of the local intermediaries on their display of political support, and used this in their strategies to obtain benefits or to shape the course of local politics. In addition, there were two types of competing intermediaries in Itacaré:

- The declining cacao elite
- Environmentalists and people related to the tourism sector

This dispute of elites fostered the already existing vertical alliances originating from the cacao economy, and was expressed in the *nativismo* discourses that framed the development debate in Itacaré in terms of a conflict between locals and newcomers. Many of the poor (including the fishers) of Itacaré previously had negative experiences with the newcomers in the environmental projects. Such negative experiences seemed to

be partly the result of mistakes (or authoritarianism) by the environmentalists, and partly created by other discourses already framing the views of the poor (notion of the limited good and free-rider myth), which apparently made the interpretation of such experiences even more negative (most of what I observed suggested that the negative interpretation of the environmental projects in Itacaré was exaggerated, and motivated by an opposition by the traditional elite to the newcomers and their environmental agenda). Moreover, the experiences with government agencies, such as the Port Authority and IBAMA, were also negatively viewed by many of the fishers.

Much difficulty mobilizing community participation in development and conservation projects may be related to such previous negative experiences with them and/or the agencies that promote them. In addition, sometimes the goals of a project are not clear to the community, and the credibility of the project regarding these goals is low. The proposal for the creation of the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré sometimes was affected by these factors, which created opposition, and as expressed above, resistance nonparticipation was the main form of political opposition in Itacaré. This research corroborated the explanatory proposition that in communities with a previous negative experience with collective action, community projects and government agencies, mobilizing participation in the PRA meetings is more difficult. This may be an important factor affecting PRA in other settings where communities have previous negative experience with participation in development projects.

As pointed out before, the traditional elite organized the *nativismo* discourse to explain the underdevelopment of Itacaré, blaming newcomers and outsiders for the local poverty and inequality issues. This suggests that, when local knowledge is organized, it is

often organized by the elite in a way that is not in the best interests of the poor. In consequence, fishers of different communities could not see the common issues they all faced, and were trapped into vertical alliances with the retrograde traditional political elite. However, during the PRA, a class discourse started to be developed, which started to challenge the alliance with the elite, forge horizontal alliances, and make evident the vertical conflicts between the poor and the rich in Itacaré.

The participatory rural appraisal exercise provided new discourses, and the prospect of the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré provided common interests, to create a new identity uniting all small-scale fishers of Itacaré: a provisory class identity. This new identity needed representation, and the Task Group was the natural candidate to represent the fishers. Apparently, when participation increased in the PRA meetings, this was also a form of political endorsement and support to the TG. Moreover, this new class conflict discourse and the prospect of the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré framed action in a way that it made the possibility of empowerment credible to the poor, which seemed to encourage participation. On the one hand, the legitimacy of the actors promoting PRA influences how participation is mobilized. On the other, PRA can contribute to frame issues and legitimize its promoters.

However, other sorts of factors influenced participation in the PRA meetings. Material and political considerations were very important, but the fishers also seemed to respond to the moral, emotional and informational dimensions of participation. These dimensions of participation become important to understand why, once political resistance nonparticipation stops, fishers did not just free-ride: in the other dimensions, free-riding was more difficult.

My observation suggests that sometimes fishers participated with curiosity (information dimension), as when PRA meetings were carried out in visible places, right on the streets close to their ports. Other times, they seemed compelled to participate by a sense of moral obligation (moral dimension). And often, the first to come to the PRA meetings were the friends of the TG members, and the fishers who became my friends (emotional dimension). These are just some examples of the multidimensional costs and benefits of participation in the PRA meetings that fishers experienced in Itacaré. In this way, if participants feel that the information shared in the PRA meetings is really important, and if the material costs are reduced by good logistics, then free-riding (by asking what went on in the meetings) is possible but less advantageous. In addition, if the meetings are pleasant social occasions, one can only enjoy this aspect by participating. Finally, moral aspects can create costs for nonparticipation.

When we consider participation in PRA meetings with multidimensional costs and benefits, the value of the PRA techniques (which are fun, personal and informal) becomes more evident. However, it also explains why attendance at the PRA meetings was more easily mobilized in rural than in urban communities. In rural communities, the value of the information provided by the meetings is even higher, as are the benefits of social interaction, and the moral costs of free-riding. In Itacaré, rural communities accepted meeting times and days that were less convenient than those acceptable to urban communities, and attended the meetings more enthusiastically than their urban counterparts. Another factor is that outside people willing to support rural communities politically may be more rare, and thus make meetings politically more important in rural areas than in urban communities.

This dissertation suggests the theoretical that moral, emotional, and informational dimensions of participation explain the attendance of the fishers at the meetings, but methods focusing more specifically on their study (such as in-depth interviews with participants about these topics) are needed in future research to better identify how the multidimensional aspects of participation affect participatory behavior. In summary, although other dimensions seemed important, participation in the PRA was mostly influenced by the political dimension. Resistance nonparticipation could explain much of the difficulty mobilizing attendance at the PRA meetings, particularly when the local PRA team was not very effectively managing its image in the community, and where the past experience with community participation was negative.

Communitarian or Individualistic?

In the Introduction, I presented the debate between the communitarian and the individualistic schools in peasant studies. Authors such as Redfield (1930) and Scott (1976; 1989) were presented as examples of the communitarian school, while Foster (1961), Lewis (1951; 1960-1961), and Popkin (1979) represented the individualistic school. The communitarian school emphasizes cultural values and socialization, and presents a view of peasant communities oriented by internal harmony, threatened by external forces. This aspect has exposed the communitarian school to criticism of holding a romantic view of peasants.

The individualistic school emphasizes individual decision-making and rationality, and presents a view of peasant communities including a great deal of conflict and competition resulting from internal and external forces. The individualistic school has been criticized for its little emphasis on the cultural context of peasant choices and behavior, and has been accused of oversimplifying human behavior.

My research leads me to agree that interpersonal relations in peasant and fishing communities are neither harmonious nor cooperative, but full of conflict, gossip and difficulty to act together towards collective goals. These aspects are caused by the power structure of fishing communities and, at the same time, prevent social change. Because of their difficulty to organize towards a collective goal, peasants and fishers have difficulty changing the power structure that causes their marginalization and allows their exploitation by the local elites. The main form of collective action that is available to peasants is resistance, both because of the often oppressive social and political conditions of their present and past, and due to its passive, individualistic character.

As Guijt and Sha (1998a) have pointed out, a romantic, idealistic view of communities permeates much participatory work. Nevertheless, it was as a PRA practitioner that I was able to experience the obstacles to community action (which I would not have experienced as an impartial observer), and it was in that role that I was able to solve some of these obstacles, too. On the one hand, the individualistic view of peasant communities is often seen as one that disempowers communities and collective action. On the other, the obstacles to collective action can be best explained by the individualistic school, which can also provide the strategies to solve them.

Conflict and Consensus in PRA

Participatory rural appraisal has been criticized for its emphasis on consensus, and the possibility that this aspect can silence the voices of the disempowered in the community, such as women and minority groups (Guijt and Sha 1998a; Kapoor 2002). Given the presence of conflict within fishing communities (explained above) this danger is real, but strategies can be adopted to avoid it.

In Itacaré, carrying out separate PRA exercises for each fishing community allowed communities, which historically had been disempowered in participatory processes, to express their needs and to participate in decision making processes. In neighborhood communities, where women had strong participation, working in small groups divided by gender allowed women to express their views and have them considered in the discussions. To negotiate conflicting issues between communities, an emphasis on consensual decisions (rather than looking for majority decisions) empowered minority groups, who would have lost in voting processes. Finally, the participatory diagnosis did not have to be consensual, and disagreements were also expressed in the final PRA report.

Local Participation in the PRA Team and Leadership

New Leaders vs. Intermediaries

In community-based development and conservation, intermediaries try to maintain their positions and roles. In local communities, there often are people who are better educated and wealthier, and who try to intermediate benefits and political support between the poor and the elite. When development and conservation organizations become willing to support a community initiative, these intermediaries try to place themselves in a position that allows them to continue to intermediate external help, and control the resources that are directed to support the community. This often allows them to appropriate part of these resources to themselves, which reinforces their position. Little social change comes from this.

Avoiding these intermediaries is important to reduce inequality, increase credibility, reduce community resistance, and promote community participation and empowerment. An alternative to the intermediaries in a local PRA team is the

involvement of people with a sincere wish to benefit others, be they established leaders or new people who take a leadership role in the PRA. Nevertheless, there are ethical and methodological issues with identifying and empowering the “right people.”

In Itacaré, there was a natural selection process influenced by external agents (me, AAE and CNPT/IBAMA). For some time, the absence of individual benefits to the TG members made the emotional benefits of altruistic action the main motivator for those who endured months of hard work and no material gain. However, even this natural selection was not infallible, and certainly it did not have any political legitimacy, since these new leaders of the TG were not elected by the community. They were supported by the external agents, and their leadership reflected this external power influence, the external agents’ preferences, biases, and personal and ideological affinities.

Although I consider the results of the selection in Itacaré very positive in terms of selecting motivated and altruistic people with a great concern for social justice, I believe that this selection process is vulnerable to ethical criticism. A better model to select new leaders in other locations should be attempted. The local PRA team should be legitimated by some type of election process, but the chances of intermediaries being elected would be high. Maybe a democratic choice after some period of experience volunteering could solve the issue.

Factors Affecting Participation in the Local PRA Team

One interesting possibility that we tried to explore in Itacaré was to have locals facilitating the PRA. We tried twice: first with more educated locals, a strategy that failed because most of them were intermediaries who were rejected by the fishers disputing with them the leadership position in the process; and second, with the TG members, a strategy that also failed, mainly because of the technical needs of PRA. In addition, when

we tried to have the TG carrying out the PRA exercise, the participation of TG members decreased. The causes of such decrease were complex, but this research suggests that the increased opportunity costs of participating in the TG introduced by PRA caused people to participate less.

In addition, there were multidimensional costs and benefits of being a TG member. Altruistic leaders are the ones most likely to suffer with the gossip about them, because instead of the rewards and gratitude they expected, they were targeted by nasty comments affecting their honor and reputation. Thus, PRA has to be accompanied by a social management strategy to empower altruistic leaders, reduce the effects of gossip and rumors, and avoid early confrontation with established leaders (but also avoid alliances that could undermine credibility of the PRA; there are tradeoffs).

Again, democratic principles should be adopted. Itacaré showed that the local PRA team has to be accountable to the community, show what it is doing and how individual members are benefiting from the PRA. This greatly reduced the gossip denigrating TG members *and was the community's right*.

In addition, a legitimate local PRA team must expose the actions and interests of the people who oppose it, and educate their audience in terms of value of the information that is spread in the community, particularly by the intermediaries. This strategy proved to be effective in Itacaré, further reducing the gossip about the TG.

However, the credibility of gossip and rumors is based on espoused discourses that organize perception. The notion of limited good and the free-rider myth were discourses that generated credibility for gossip and rumors about leaders and successful people in the community. Elsewhere, gossip was considered an equalizing force in the

community (e.g., Kottak 1992; Scott 1976), but in Itacaré it also was making it more difficult to empower new and more legitimate leaders. Social change may be difficult exactly because of this equalizing effect, that is, because it depends on the emergence of new leaders, whose leadership is undermined by gossip and rumors.

Thus, not only the material costs, but the multidimensional costs of participation in the TG, reducing the political, moral and emotional capitals of TG members, could lead to cycles of fatigue, when many of its members would reduce their participation until they rebuilt such capitals. In this study, the evidence for this was not conclusive, although it reflects the most popular proposition, among TG members, to explain a participation crisis in the group. However, other factors, such as the internal credibility of the group to achieve both group and individual goals seemed to be more important.

Problems of participation within the local PRA team can be created by the conflict between insiders and outsiders. First, the dependence of PRA on the knowledge and skills of outsiders can create friction and internal conflict in the PRA team. In Itacaré, this conflict was observed, first, when the TG rejected the local technical volunteers, who were not outsiders, but who were newcomers to Itacaré. It was a power conflict, and the TG's account is that these volunteers tried to centralize information and take control of the Extractive Reserve creation process for their own benefit.

Then, *I* faced conflict with some members of the TG. They were also suspicious of my intentions and seemed to resist my help, even though they would not verbalize it to me at first. It seemed that one TG member, who was better educated and received orientation from a NGO that was opposing my influence in Itacaré, was the main articulator of such resistance. In any case, even though we could blame the conflict on the

influence of the NGO, if I had not been needed due to the PRA, this friction would not have been necessary.

However, there were conflicts among locals, too. Exactly this TG member who resisted my influence became controlling, and started to create internal friction with other fishers in the TG. From the beginning of my fieldwork, this TG member advocated that not all information should be shared with the other TG members, which appeared to be for the protection of the group, by avoiding that selfish motivations interfered with the important leadership role the TG was taking. However, this continued, and this member ended up taking advantage of several situations to manipulate decisions and try to control the TG. This upset some of the other TG members, who eventually left the group after I left Itacaré.

These two sorts of conflicts (outsiders vs. insiders and insiders vs. insiders) indicate that the local PRA team becomes a power arena, and that *facilitating and participating are both political activities*. On the one hand, PRA practitioners hold a great deal of power in a PRA exercise. Participatory rural appraisal is a political activity and the practitioner's values, ideology and ethical commitments are as important as those of a politician or community leader. This dependence makes PRA susceptible to political manipulation. Kapoor (2002) argues that rules are needed to increase the community's trust in the PRA process, and make it more transparent. I agree. Internal rules to limit the power of PRA practitioners should be developed to increase trust in the PRA process, reduce conflicts and reduce the quality problems with the proliferation of PRA exercises.

On the other hand, power manipulation can be a problem among insiders, too. In Itacaré, some TG members who were better educated obtained the trust of government

and nongovernmental organizations, and supported by them, seemed to have the legitimacy to speak on behalf of the community. However, at least before the PRA, no one in the community gave these people the right to speak on their behalf; their “legitimacy” was created by the very external recognition, not local recognition. Thus, some insiders can try to control the process (and even be the agents of outside organizations, as in Itacaré). They even may use an empowerment discourse and speak for the community, although they were never given such authority.

Sometimes locals have leadership without legitimacy; that is, they have the political support of others but there was no legitimate process giving them authority to speak in the name of the community. A minimum level of legitimacy (not only leadership) of the new leaders may be established by a process of choice that is considered legitimate. Finally, the local PRA team needs rules that guarantee *internal* transparency and democracy. A radical commitment to democratic values may avoid that initial well-intentioned paternalistic behavior becomes authoritarianism and manipulation, as sometimes it did in the TG.

In spite of these problems, inherent in any participatory process, the local PRA team’s leadership and organization capacity greatly increased during the process that started in 1999 with my first course on community leadership, and continued after I left in 2001. From 1999 to 2000, TG members were advised and supported by AAE. They learned about organizational procedures and the implications of their leadership role in the community. When I arrived for dissertation fieldwork in 2000, they learned about participatory techniques, the procedures to create an extractive reserve, and mostly, about the other fishing communities of Itacaré, with which they were not familiar. PRA was a

great tool to promote the group's leadership where they knew little about the community. Naturally charismatic, initially, the main leadership problem of the TG was its lack of understanding of the conditions that generate community participation. The group used to resent when people did not respond to their leadership, and such resentment created additional resistance to the TG. After this action research process, the factors affecting participation by the community became clearer not only to me but also to the TG. The group became less judgmental and moralist, and more understanding of their constituency. This new view of participation became a great asset to motivate participation by the community, and to maintain internal participation in the TG when attempts to mobilize the community failed for some reason.

Multidimensional Model

In order to represent the interaction of all the factors affecting participation in the PRA meetings and in the local PRA team, I presented a model of human behavior in which behavior results from the people's responses to a series of multidimensional costs and benefits. I also argue that discourses limit the choices of behavior, and affect how these costs and benefits are perceived and interpreted. This is a simplification; it is used only for the purpose of expanding other views that focus on just one of the dimensions and disregard others.

The multidimensional model was supported by my observations; however, a problem with it is that we do not know how important different dimensions were, relative to each other. This dissertation did not use methods that could assess all five dimensions. Also, the model does not deal with behavior that is the result of habit and conventions (scripted responses to scripted situations), but only with behavior that is related to a situation where people assess the costs and benefits, and make a choice based on such

assessment. Anthropologists such as Pierre Bourdieu have pointed out that much social behavior is not the result of external incentives and calculation, but results from implicit and unconscious assumptions and rules, and there is little or no choice (Wilk 1996). However, Bourdieu points out that when people are aware that there is more than one possible course of action, they may assess the situation and its consequences individually, and choose the interpretation and course of action that best fits their interests (Wilk 1996). When PRA is carried out in a community, there is often such a possibility of choice. Thus, the multidimensional model can be appropriate to such a situation.

The usefulness of the multidimensional model is that it allows one to deal with the free-rider problem and explain how collective action is possible, even when the assumption is that individuals try to take care of themselves (maximize benefits or reduce discomfort), which they often do. In addition, the multidimensional model can also account for when people fail to develop collective action. The model is also useful to make individualistic and communitarian views compatible. If we apply the same assumptions we have about material costs and benefits to the other dimensions of participation, we notice that the obstacles to participation are not always as important as the benefits. We further see that PRA provides participants with benefits for participation in the other dimensions where free-riding is more difficult.

The multidimensional model provides a basis for the design of successful PRA action. When free-riding is possible in the material dimension (a common situation when voluntary collective action is attempted), the design should, on the one hand, reduce the material costs of participation, which can be done by good logistics and well-organized meetings. The costs in the other dimensions also need to be considered.

Often, policymakers and scholars who focus on material benefits arrive at the conclusion that participation is motivated by such benefits. However, unless they condition the benefits to individual participation, they do not deal with the free-riding problem. Despite the importance of material benefits resulting from collective action, particularly to people in material poverty, the benefits in the nonmaterial dimensions where free-riding is more difficult are the ones that can not only motivate participation but also deal with the free-riding problem. To become more useful to explain and improve participatory processes in particular, and social processes in general, the multidimensional model demands greater conceptual and methodological operationalization. How can we assess the moral, political, emotional and informational dimensions of participation? Will we ever be able to quantify them? Is this useful?

Competing Extractive Reserve Models

In Itacaré, two approaches of extractive reserve creation were competing: a conventional approach proposed by CNPT/IBAMA and a PRA approach proposed by me. In the creation of extractive reserves, CNPT/IBAMA has used the following general sequence (Instituto Brasileiro do Meio Ambiente e dos Recursos Naturais Renováveis 1995):

- Make initial contact with local populations and receive community requests for extractive reserves (as a result of preliminary visits to the communities and motivating the extractive populations to collect signatures for the requests)
- Conduct studies and surveys to justify the requests (socioeconomic survey, land tenure survey, biological report). These documents are usually elaborated with minimal community participation; at most, some community members participate carrying out the questionnaire surveys pre-elaborated and analyzed by IBAMA (though sometimes discussed in a community meeting)
- Create the extractive reserve by a presidential decree

- Implement first improvements (through planning involving communities or only the directors of a local association that represents the users, without a deeper participatory diagnosis)
- Elaborate the “utilization plan³⁵” using a preliminary version of resource use rules discussed with some community leaders. The utilization plans resulting from this process often involves complex language. It has not been clear whether or not they reflect pressing conservation problems for the most important resources of the communities. Generally, the plan has been elaborated through household visits and community meetings paying more attention to the rules than to the specific conservation problems faced by the different communities
- Elaborate the development plan, which defines guidelines (or strategies) for extractive reserve development, based on community discussions and a diagnosis, often with little community participation

With the new National System of Conservation Areas (SNUC) law, utilization and development plans were replaced by a “management plan,” which have not been applied yet, and CNPT/IBAMA was still figuring out what the law means for marine areas. According to CNPT’s consultant Alexandre Z. Cordeiro (personal communication), in the marine extractive reserves, CNPT plans to have “management plans phase 1,” equivalent to the utilization plans, and later have a more detailed management plan for the area. At the time of this dissertation fieldwork, although the SNUC law existed, it was not implemented yet, and the utilization and the development plans were still used.

It was my belief that this process could be made more effective and participatory if the participatory elaboration of the development plan were used to organize the community and generate the documents needed to create the Extractive Reserve. My argument was that, in addition to the first socioeconomic and biological studies, by the

³⁵ “Utilization plans” constitute the norms of the extractive reserve, including resource use rules.

use of PRA, we could mobilize the community and generate resource use rules (which would give fishers the main instrument of reserve management earlier in the process) and development strategies (which would guide community action and government policies). This had never been done before.

Thus I proposed that the development plan should be one of the first things to be done, because it provides an opportunity for a much more participatory process of extractive reserve creation. The elaboration of the development plan could provide all of these documents:

Socioeconomic survey. With PRA the socioeconomic study can be much more participatory, involving the community in information gathering and analysis, and in the identification and ranking of problems. Later, in the phase of planning and DP elaboration, the community would use the same diagnosis, which reflects its view of the problems, and also "participatory tools" to analyze and identify its priorities in the sectors of income generation, health, education, environmental defense, and community organization.

Biological report. Normally, the biological report is elaborated by biologists with little community participation. Participatory rural appraisal provides research tools adequate to the participatory study of natural resources of an area to be transformed in an ER. Natural resource maps, historical diagrams, calendars, role-plays and other tools allow community identification and ranking of natural resource problems. These tools, combined with specific skills and expertise of biological scientists, could provide a richer and more representative biological report. In Itacaré, the Universidade Estadual Santa Cruz was involved in the process, and a preparatory phase was the adaptation of PRA

tools to answer the questions oceanographers had to answer in the biological report, combined with conventional biological research techniques.

Thus, following this proposal, using PRA, all the documents needed to create the ER were produced in a faster, more participatory way. The most important aspect was that the community was involved since the beginning in a process of capacity building, community organization and creation of local institutions for management of natural resources. The work in Itacaré represented an important pilot experience for other reserves to be implemented in the future.

In order to carry out PRA, different strategies were tried, some conceived beforehand by me, and some evolving in the field and conceived by locals and the organizations assisting them. Thus, the Itacaré model of extractive reserve creation was the result of our collective thought and work. The PRA exercise in Itacaré did not finish when I left. The TG was going to continue the process, carry out appraisal in some riverside communities that could not be included in the first two rounds of PRA, verify their use of the natural resources that will be included in the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré, and facilitate a detailed development plan for the fishers of Itacaré, with the help of a regional NGO. So far, the TG and I had achieved a general set of guidelines and development priorities established by different fishing community representatives. More was needed, including the creation of the Reserve, which was still pending, one year and half after this dissertation fieldwork finished.

This was a problem with the PRA approach to the creation of extractive reserves: by raising the expectations about the Reserve, it presents the danger of frustration because bureaucratic processes in the government are slow. In the case of Itacaré, in the

Brazilian government there has been resistance against the creation of marine extractive reserves in open sea, particularly from the Navy of Brazil. In addition, just after my dissertation fieldwork ended, the Brazilian National Petroleum Agency sold the rights to prospect and drill oil in the sea of Itacaré without consulting CNPT/IBAMA or the local community, disregarding years of participatory work. The challenges to the creation of the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré are great, but in January 2003 a new president committed to social issues took his office, and the hope is that the Marine Extractive Reserve of Itacaré will be finally created.

Action as Research and Research as Action

This action research process generated as many lessons about research as about participation in PRA. To better be able to generalize from one person's experience with action, and produce research and scientific results, action researchers must take care with their involvement in the action. There were two main problems during this action research process:

- **Threats to objectivity.** I believe that the problems related to objectivity in action research are similar to those of common ethnographic research, but are more intense. I dealt with the objectivity problem created by my personal involvement in action research, in different stages, during and after fieldwork. When I was immersed in the research process, often stressed by abundant gossip and puzzling behavior, it was often hard to maintain my coolness, and be objective. When I had research assistants helping me, just talking with them was very useful to put things in perspective and become more objective. This experience suggests that it would be useful to work with have a second researcher, who would not be involved in the action, to talk about the process. After I returned from fieldwork, I went through a stressful process of report writing, trying to make my involvement, ideas and observations clearer. This writing process also was important as a way to distance myself.
- **Work overload.** When one becomes too involved in the action, there may be little time left for the research part of action research. This may make it difficult to write diaries and notes, causing loss of the research results. Objectivity problems that could be solved by writing a personal diary can persist when there is little time for reflection and examining oneself. Carrying out action research should not be a solitary activity, and other people should be involved to help in the action part, as well as in writing

reports, while the researcher can be involved in methods to complement the information. Often, research assistants wrote the preliminary PRA reports while I wrote my research notes and theoretical insights, which had coinciding aspects but differed in focus. If I had had more time to carry out the research, both action and research could have been carried out in a slower pace, which would have been beneficial both to the community and to the research process.

This dissertation research adapted an action testing procedure for action research that worked well in the study and promotion of local participation in the PRA meetings and in the local PRA team. In addition, by providing experiences contradicting self-deprecating views held by the fishers, in which fishers participated and started to obtain results, action research and PRA changed the views of fishers about themselves. Increasingly, they started to see their capacity for cooperation and their willingness to participate as dependent on the context, particularly, on the credibility of the initiative, including its leaders and goals. They were not defective, selfish or individualists. Self-deprecating views that fishers were individualistic lost grounds, and their self-esteem seemed to improve, particularly in the TG. This confirms the value of action research compared to other forms of research in promoting social change, as the research process was also a learning process for the communities and their new leaders.

Thus, I believe that action research was able to perform all of its goals: research, action, and local learning. The intervention associated with this research was not always effective in empowering the fishers, but action research was an important learning strategy so that empowerment could be achieved, although I cannot comment on its persistence. New studies are necessary to know how the social reality in Itacaré is evolving as a result of the PRA, the Marine Extractive Reserve, and the strategies associated with establishing the leadership of the Task Group. Finally, it is important to study how the action-testing procedure done in this dissertation can be used to answer

other types of research questions, and how it works to answer the same questions in other sites.

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APPENDIX
SCHEDULE OF PRA MEETINGS

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
January	22 Porto de Trás PRA appraisal meeting	23 Porto de Trás PRA appraisal meeting	24 Porto de Trás PRA appraisal meeting	25 Porto de Trás PRA appraisal meeting	26 Report writing	27 Visit to Piracanga, to verify land conflicts	28
	29 Working Group meeting (UESC Data collection on fish catches, mangroves and algae and corals)	30 Banca do Peixe PRA appraisal meeting	31 Banca do Peixe PRA appraisal meeting (UESC Data collection on beach organisms)	1 Banca do Peixe PRA appraisal meeting (UESC data collection on fish catches)	2 Report writing	3 Itacarezinho, meeting preparations	4 Itacarezinho PRA appraisal meeting
	5 Working Group meeting (UESC Data collection on beaches and mangroves)	6 Banca do Peixe PRA appraisal meeting	7 Banca do Peixe PRA appraisal meeting	8 Report writing	9 Report writing	10 Taboquinhas PRA appraisal meeting	11 Taboquinhas PRA appraisal meeting
February	12 Working Group meeting	13 Forte PRA appraisal meeting	14 Forte PRA appraisal meeting	15 Forte PRA appraisal meeting	16 Forte PRA appraisal meeting	17 Campo Seco PRA appraisal meeting	18
	19 Working Group meeting	20 Report writing	21 Riverine communities	22 Report writing	23	24 Carnival	25 Carnival
	26 Carnival	27 Carnival	28 Ash Wednesday	1	2	3	4

Figure A-1: Schedule of PRA meetings.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
March	5 Working Group meeting	6 Passagem/ Marimbondo PRA appraisal meeting	7 Passagem/ Marimbondo PRA appraisal meeting	8 Passagem/ Marimbondo PRA appraisal meeting	9 Report writing	10	11 Piracanga
	12 Working Group meeting	13 General meeting of representatives preparation	14 General meeting of representatives preparation	15 General meeting of representatives preparation	16 General meeting of representatives preparation	17 General meeting of representatives	18 General meeting of representatives
	19 Working Group meeting	20	21	22 Banca do Peixe PRA Norms of the Reserve meeting	23 Banca do Peixe PRA Norms of the Reserve meeting	24 Piracanga PRA Norms of the Reserve meeting	25 Piracanga PRA Norms of the Reserve meeting
	26 Working Group meeting	27 Porto de Trás PRA Norms of the Reserve meeting	28 Porto de Trás PRA Norms of the Reserve meeting	29 Forte PRA Norms of the Reserve meeting	30 Forte PRA Norms of the Reserve meeting	31 Taboquinhas PRA Norms of the Reserve meeting	1 Taboquinhas PRA Norms of the Reserve meeting
	2 Working Group meeting	3 Itacarezinho PRA Norms of the Reserve meeting	4 Campo seco PRA Norms of the Reserve meeting	5 Passagem/ Marimbondo PRA Norms of the Reserve meeting	6 Passagem/ Marimbondo PRA Norms of the Reserve meeting	7 General Meeting– Objectives and strategies for development	8 General Meeting – PRA Norms of the Reserve meeting
	9 Working Group meeting	10	11	12 Holy Week	13 Holy Week	14 Holy Week	15 Holy Week
April	16 Working Group meeting	17	18	19 Report sent to Ibama	20	21	22

Figure A-1: Schedule of PRA meetings. Continued

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Ronaldo Weigand Jr. was born on January 24, 1967, in São Paulo, Brazil. In 1990, he received his bachelor's degree in agronomic engineering from the Escola Superior de Agricultura "Luiz de Queiroz," Universidade de São Paulo (USP). From 1989 to 1990, he produced and presented the environmental education radio program Nave Terra. In 1992, he became an ecology professor at the Universidade Federal do Acre, in the western Brazilian Amazon, where his main activities included teaching and coordination of a research and extension agroforestry project. From 1994 to 1996, he was supported by a fellowship from the Ford Foundation to pursue a Master of Arts degree in Latin American Studies, with a Tropical Conservation and Development concentration, at the University of Florida. In 1996, he joined the team of consultants of the United Nations Development Program's Technical Cooperation Project to assist the state government of Rondônia (southwest Brazilian Amazon) to implement extractive reserves. In 1998, he returned to the University of Florida, this time to work toward his doctoral degree in Anthropology. Upon graduation, he plans to return to Brazil, to join a nongovernmental, governmental or an academic institution, and to develop activities assisting coastal, rural and forest communities to improve their sustainable use of natural resources, nature conservation, participation, and empowerment.