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**Title:CHANGING FOOD SYSTEMS AND SOCIETY: THE IMPACTS OF GLOBALIZATION ON REGIONAL AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Based on research carried out in the Northeast Brazil and comparative analytical strategies, the paper presents a case study of how growing 'quality' concerns for food products and their production practices are actually playing in the realities of local and regional development. Global market demands are now more clearly embedded in the daily lives of all those who work in agro-food systems. In the farms, working places and in the producer associations, the grounding and power of the rules and regulations of retailers and distributors are interfering with labor, local organization and environment practices. Also, the hierarchy and conventions of quality, taste, environmental concerns, as well as worries about safety and health risks are now being shown explicitly to the workers, in order to control their tasks to prepare the specific and differentiated products and packages to the different consumers. There is an increasing array of intermediaries operating between producers and consumers; more 'middle-men'-consultants and agronomists are contracted to support and service the system. These changes in production and distribution of food, are being developed along with certain permanent inequalities of class and gender, which come along and within the food chain, affecting, specifically, workers and consumers. Evidences come from case study on family farms, cooperatives, local markets and supermarkets, revealing that the impacts of globalization are being experienced and felt differently by each one of the actors, according to their position in the social hierarchy and their capabilities to respond to the market demands and local development conditions.

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## Introduction

The literature on globalization has come about with some interesting findings about the new features of global /local relationship.. Not surprisingly, empirical studies have shown that globalization or at least the conditions of globalization are based on specific territories, under certain conditions: technical control of labor; territories and productive activities on the whole. Accordingly, there have been observed the emergence of new actors in the local spaces and redefinitions of role played by the old ones. Interestingly, as observed in the San Francisco Valley, Platô de Neópolis and Argentine Alto Valle, new approaches to local development and the pressure to integrate local production and the other actors in the networks of food, have implied in bringing back the role played by State and the emergence of other regulation agencies on ruling in the locales of production., thus affecting territories, types of investments on infra-structure and changes in agriculture and related activities Technological and organizational changes have promoted once remote regions of the world in a platform for quality food export.( Cavalcanti,, 1999).

Also evident in the findings of our research projects are the impacts of the globalization of consumption in the modernization of the local and regional production.

.The case of fruit producing for the global market is a case in point

Global market demands are now more clearly embedded in the daily lives of all those who work in agro-food systems: traditional family farmers, in the cases here analyzed have answered on different manners to that; forms of daily resistance and political strategies, of which coalitions, entering into partnerships and demands to Public policies. Agro-industries have gone into process of differentiation, partnerships and restructuring of their business.

Workers syndicate are powerless, but producers associations are more organized than before .

Technological changes, however important are not the major elements of local transformation. The social (local, regional) structure plays a significant role on the design of how the external demand interfere with the local development.

Food Systems for quality markets and local demands for food security and safety food are very much playing in a field of power. The cases here analyzed reveal significant outcomes and process of disappearance, persistence and redefinition of the role played by the actors, while adapting themselves to global demands. In the Alto Valley family farmers complain against Brazilian safety standards; in the San Francisco Valley, producers blame European or US consumers for their strict rules on commodities.

On the whole, the process are exemplary of how labor adjustments and labor control are imposed on long days of those involved in the tasks of globalizing foods.

There is an increasing array of intermediaries operating between producers and consumers; more 'middle-men'-consultants and agronomists are contracted to support and service the system

### **Daily Strategies.**

Trying to understand what happening in these local spaces, one way to look at it is to organize the work load of those actors, around the clock.

At four o'clock, small farmers at the San Francisco Valley are getting ready to go to the fields; laborers must be up to get the truck that will take them to the fields. At five, those working on a Public Distribution Centre may be closing their daily activities. At 6:30, a manager of a retailer center in the city of Recife is having breakfast to start his journey that may be finished by midnight. In Truck Companies, late in the night there starts the work of a truck company for the following day. They may be awaiting a supermarket demand to the early morning delivery. Also they will be monitoring the truck, drivers and the loads to be sure they are attending the standards. Cooperatives are analyzing market prices, competitors and external requirements for their commodities. Working twenty four hours a day, those participant in the globalization of food have in common the fact that

their work are observed all day by others, based on codes, standards and conventions. They might not be aware of this, but they are all part of a supply chain, along which several responsibilities must be shared on a North/ South perspective. Meanwhile, consumers may be traveling along the chain to choose, if they can, what they find more appropriate for their concerns, lifestyles, ethnic demands. Finally, if all these experiences may require a direct contact among the actors, there is still other way to fulfill their demand. Internet services are permitting a virtual shopping, from which they may have opportunity to buy and, retailers, on the other hand, will have the opportunity to trace consumers demand and consumer performance; all these are contributing to make the local as a point in the globalization of food, and regional development thoroughly part of globalization process.

There is an increasing array of intermediaries operating between producers and consumers; more 'middle-men'-consultants and agronomists are contracted to support and service the system

## **EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE**

José is an entrepreneur farmer He is 43 years old, married, has 3 children of two, six and seven years of age. He has 18 hectares of land where he cultivates grapes, guava, papaya and other fruits. He was employed for wages in the agroindustry until he could establish himself as a producer. His wife also works performing external services, such as running errands. Having learned to read at the age of 30, he graduated in Administration and has been developing a total quality program in his lots: "It's the first farm to carry out a human resource program in the area". According to his information, he wants to make his employees his partners in the future. Making them partners in the company "is a risk I have to run". For him, the important aspects of the management of his lots are:

- \* demanding work from his employees;

- \* attending well to his clients; having more than one client; never selling more than 70% of the production to a sole client;

\* being well informed. In order to do so he takes part in three associations: Valexport, Grapes Marketing Board and Association of Small Producers of Quality, the latter recently unactivated.

Such strategy enables him to "know beforehand the innovations in the sector; prices, markets, new varieties of grapes". In his own words: "Whoever knows more is luckiest and successful. Those know the other side are better organized...There are rules in the world that are beneficial to these macrostructures...and the small ones have to do whatever is possible not to be swallowed."

### **Local and Regional Impacts**

**The San Francisco Valley** region became known by the specificity of its commodities and dedicated products (Storper and Salais, 1997:29). There, the production of 'quality' fruits affects other issues that were the major aims of the original project for the region: rural development and employment. By disregarding other social benefits of the expansive market for grapes and mangoes and the cheap labor and climate comparative advantages for the purpose of achieving competitiveness, the path of development of that region took the 'quality' road to counteract the obstacles of a highly competitive market. The increase in the proportion of value added to commodities, as mentioned earlier, and the novelty of products and markets in which they circulate, have combined to enhance the role, relevance and meaning of defined standards. Those standards, it becomes evident, are also the measure to evaluate the success of producers and laborers.

Elsewhere, with colleagues (Cavalcanti (1997), Marsden et al. 1996) I have demonstrated the limits by which the quality of commodities is combined with other qualities such as those of labor and the environment. Men and women may experience the impacts of globalization in their lives in different manners; Cavalcanti et al (1998) have explored facets of the gender division of labor in the expansion of fruit export in the San

Francisco Valley. The feminization of labor force in the case of grapes is one of the outcomes in a gender division of labor. According to large and small producers, women are a more adequate labor for dealing with that commodity because they are more sensitive to beauty and softer in dealing with grapes, therefore more skilled in structuring the grape bunches for export. This gender approach was however, beneficial to women in the region; a clear example of this is offered by the impressive number of their participation in the Rural Workers Syndicate of the Valley: Sixty percent of 80,000 (counting those in the whole Valley) member workers is a clear evidence of the higher proportion of women comparing to their fellow men. This creates a ground for their empowerment, in spite of the macho bias in their society. Branco(2001) also argues that all the migrant women were happy with their job in the viticulture, because they became slightly independent vis-à-vis their partners and family in general, if compared to the life they had before in the dry zone of the *sertão*. The definition of quality interferes with management strategies and labor processes, as observed in several Latin American agricultural regions of luxury goods. (Cavalcanti, 1997; Bendini and Bonacorsi, 1998; Lara, 1998): *'The incorporation of quality criteria in the production of export fruit and vegetables leads to the reorganization of the labor process; particularly the feminization of certain productive phases* (Lara, 1998: 5).

The gender division of labor may however express other not virtuous impact on women lives. Female workers complain against sexual harassment that they experience while being transported to the fields together with male workers. Also, for some time, they were about to lose their jobs because their participation in changing syndicate agenda. There are in general, entrepreneurs and family farmers who complain about this participation because of the agenda they were able to build based on women rights, sensitive to maternity leave and motherhood duties. Consequently, they say that women became very expensive labor and they tried to redefine the gender division of labor by hiring men for viticulture. In this circumstance, levels of resistance to forms of labor control and feminist and ethical trade activist movement in the west are contributing to added value for their commodities. Nowadays the San Francisco Valley is experimenting with the effect of these social movements on the quality of mangoes and grapes sold, by advertising their firm as an equal opportunity institution, adding their preference for female workers. The prospect is for the continuation of gender approach and consequently for provisioning jobs for women, albeit

the attempts to cut on labor cost in general; new varieties in production are said to require less women tasks.

**The Neópolis Plateau** was built as part of strategic politics supported in hydro-agricultural projects and automatic irrigation systems, that have transformed the Semi-Arid and northeastern Tabuleiros Costeiros in a space for production of fresh fruit with strong connections to the national and international markets.

The Neópolis Plateau is located on the right bank of the San Francisco River in Sergipe, reaching part of the towns of Neópolis, Japoatã, Pacatuba and Santana do São Francisco. It has 38 lots that vary from 20 to 600 hectares. Up to 2003, only 4.267 hectares (60% of the total area) were occupied with six types of fruit production systems: coconut, banana, mango, citrics, diversified with and without coconut.

Differently from other fruit-growing projects in the Northeast, the Plateau is based on the model that presents innovation in the partnership between the State and private initiative, in which the first was responsible for planning and installing the irrigation infrastructure outside the lots. The representation of concessionaries in the State's partnership is under the responsibility of a condominium called *Associação dos Concessionários do Projeto Neópolis Plateau* (ASCONDIR).

Inspired on the experience of fruit producing regions in California and the San Francisco Valley, the Plateau was conceived as a possibility of creating a "modernity island" surrounded by businessmen, workers, money and different businesses.

Recently, coconut producers made a big investment in order to establish differentials in terms of quality (size, taste and color) for the coconut produced in the Plateau, under the fantasy name of "Sergipe's green coconut" in contraposition to Bahia's coconut, a generic denomination for those produced in the Northeast, since this was the State where it was introduced in colonial Brazil, and also because southerners see Bahia as a territory that identifies northeasterners.

Even if the products from the Plateau still don't have a differential associated to the region, quality or territorial identity, the project is constituted in a specialized professional reception pole from the South and Southeast of Brazil. Curiously, these technicians (normally agronomist) settle with their families for 1 or 2 years, with salary advantages and completely different housing conditions from local professionals.

Given the different initiatives, completely different productive strategies coexist in the Plateau, which reflects in the conquest of the more and less dynamic markets. However, there is no doubt that the capacity of the undertaking to make its strategies flexible is its great differential, due to the production under demanded specifications in exact time. Up to now, the project has not been established as a regional development pole yet, either because the products have faced fierce competition (irrigated coconut hasn't been able to compete with the price of dry area or because the businessmen's interests were not articulated in the sense of obtaining non-conventional commercialization channels, such as Valexport in the San Francisco Valley.

When the Plateau was implemented, its great expectation was the generation of direct and indirect jobs for the local and neighboring populations. As in other parts of the world, the productive strategies adopted in the Plateau privilege the reduction of human labor and, for those who remain, they are selective because they require specific qualifications.

Different from other agricultural undertakings, registered occupations have been predominant and this has influenced the permanence of workers in the local sphere. The labor recruitment process presents itself as a counter tendency for occupation prioritizing those who live in the area and belong to interknowledge networks, which illustrates the diversity of existing situations in new areas of fruit-growing. This shows that companies don't ignore the fact that the knowledge of interactive and relational behaviors are important instruments in controlling workers as revealed by the informants.

### **Cooperatives- CAJ- A CONCRETE EXPERIENCE**

Matters related to demands were particularly analyzed in an agricultural cooperative located in the Northeast of Brazil –

The *Cooperativa Agrícola Juazeiro da Bahia* (CAJ). is specialized in the commercialization of *fresh* fruits and is established in the town of Juazeiro-BA, in the San Francisco Valley. Funded in 1994, the local community considers it the biggest and better structured association of agricultural producers in the San Francisco Valley. It has 68 associates, the majority of them are Japanese descendants. Their main produce are grapes, mangoes, and



custardapples, totalling a produced volume (according to numbers from 2002) of 3.425.000 boxes, aimed for the internal and external markets.

CAJ's insertion in the market has brought in the region constant production inspection and control by more demanding international buyers. This has been demanding a permanent concern with the adoption of rigorous quality control. Since 1995, with the adoption of the Total Quality Program (TQP), the procedures related to classification and standardization of grapes were defined, involving weight, size and quality, the presence or lack of stains and presence or lack of pesticides (Pires, 2004; Pires & Cavalcanti, 2000). These standards are certified by two technicians hired by the cooperative upon the delivery of the product to the CAJ. Through a 10% sampling system over the total volume, these technicians check if the products's standards correspond to those specified on the boxes. If any impropriety is detected, its reclassification to an inferior class is performed and the producer is notified. The various statements from technicians and management reveal that the demands carried out by the cooperative in this field have guaranteed credibility with national and international buyers.

Effectively, CAJ constitutes an example of organization based on a management style that foresees a flexible structure, training policies and a strong concern regarding improvement of the quality policies adopted. Consequently, access to important tropical fruit markets in Europe is guaranteed.

It was also observed that CAJ has been contributing to the generation of direct and indirect jobs due to the number of businesses it carries out, also serving as reference to cooperative practices in the Northeast, especially those in the San Francisco Valley.

### **The New Characteristics of Distribution and Consumption**

If we look at the other parts in the supply chain, we may be surprised by the way in which standards and codes are negotiated.

**A supermarket** that is part of a worldwide network and that has been well established in Recife for a few years was selected for an analysis in order to contemplate what is globalized in the segment.

According to a syndicate report, foreign networks such as Carrefour and Wall-Mart that are established in São Paulo State and are presented as quality promoters for consumers, systematically disrespect working norms and restrict syndicate activity in the new areas in South American countries, such as Brazil.

Under the point-of-view of changes in work organization in supermarkets, Silva, (2002) demonstrates how the selection process is articulated, as well as packaging and exposure of the food in the supermarket, which involves many employees who perform specific duties that go from product reception to arriving in the gondolas - without forgetting the work performed at the cash registers.

The reception of products occurs in a specific area of the store, where they undergo an analysis that considers quality, quantity and related items. In this sector of the store there is no need for specific knowledge, once the first evaluation done in the *Distribution Center* is detailed and requires the use of special equipments that verify even sugar content. Such evaluation is performed by a agricultural technician. However, in some cases it is done by elder employees with experience in the sector or by a third party (in testing phase). When the cargo is accepted, it is unloaded in the climate controlled internal area and goes to the shelves; some are previously packed.

Employees frequently circulate among goods taking care of cleaning and visual aspects of the products' presentation. Cleaning of the installations and state of the vegetables exposed are under constant care of employees who are responsible for collecting damaged produce. To control employees, a program called *The 5S Total Quality Program* was instituted, aiming to keep them under the established patterns and at the same time promote their well-being.

Such program establishes criteria that should guide employees performance during their activity inside the company as well as outside of it. They are translated from Japanese to *sense of usage, sense of order, sense of cleaning, sense of health and sense of self-discipline.*

Disrespecting working laws, the company uses the so-called *hour bank*, which consists of registering all the extra hours put in by the employee and converting them in days off, not requiring payment or increase in salaries, as well as control of time used for resting or using restrooms.

Still regarding research, Pires (2003) produced a paper on new consuming habits, pointing out the present tendency of consumers playing a more effective role in the daily choices of the food that will go to their table. Pires also noticed through her interviews that the consumer's social class is determinant on this choice due to the high price of fresh fruits and vegetables, combined with the difficult access to places where these products are sold, usually far from poorer neighborhoods.

### **The transportation sector**

Following up the network, concerning changes in work and control over workers, which has become more materialized due to the globalization of food we have a relevant sector in complying with the time required to guarantee the freshness of the food and it plays an important role in its distribution: the transportation sector. Due to the need of constant maintenance of food quality, the sector integrates the chain the moment that the tendency for hiring third parties to deliver the goods prevails.

When giving a company the duty to transport goods, the supermarket transfers the responsibility of perishable products to others who must maintain the same quality of the origin upon delivery. The driver has the final responsibility for this quality, once the conservation of food depends on the temperature of the trunk as well as the way he drives his truck. Dias(2003) analyzes in detail the day-to-day of a transport company that usually carries fresh produce from production sites to supermarkets, as well as the precarious work relations that prevail in this field of work. Trucks and drivers are monitored 24 hours a day in order to ensure the quality of products, deadlines and the certainty that the products do

not lose the quality requirements demanded to enter distribution space on the way. Thus, managers of these services share the common tension of agro-food globalization chains. They are alerted to their responsibility in the required process of taking a quality product to consumers. They must register the duration of production and transportation of the food to the gondolas, and along with the supermarket managers who are also responsible for marketing ( as Lien states 1997: 11 )constitutes an empiric arena of interaction between local and global), they share the anguish of meeting the time and priorities in the process of ensuring the PES- *the first to enter must be the first to leave* and develop strategies that ensure a quick flow of goods. These processes are also the means by which they are controlled, evaluated and judged according to competence, efficiency and speed that guarantee produce flow.

### **Strategies of work and worker control**

In the fields of our research, conditions of work access are influenced by a dynamic network of indication of new employees by those who are already hired or by local entrepreneurs. In the San Francisco, Alto Valle and the Plateau, work relations are highly individualized, through face-to-face negotiations performed by employers and employees to obtain one occupation, despite the salary of the majority of employees being the same; kinship and friendship play a significant role in it. In supermarkets and transport companies, friends and relatives networks also work when the subject is a competent worker (Cavalcanti, 1999a, p. 150).

**CEASA-** The problem of food supply started to receive more national attention in 1960, when under the guidance of recently created SUDENE (Superintendence for Northeastern development) technicians (sent by the French government) study favoring the improvement in the distribution of food in big cities of Northeastern Brazil was initiated (Neto, 1993). Considering the recommendations in this study, in 1962 the Federal Government constituted *CAPESA- Central de Abastecimento de Pernambuco S/A* - which one year later had its name changed by SUDENE the moment that its performance extended to the Northeast. Thus, it became *CANESA*. – In 1972 a presidential decree instituted *SINAC – Sistema Nacional de Centrais de Abastecimento*. *CARE*, a member of

the group, changed its corporate name to *CEASA/PE – Central de Abastecimento de Pernambuco S/A*. In 1987 the federal Government passed *CEASA*'s shareholder control to the state government of Pernambuco and from September 1988, it authorized this central's incorporation by *CAGEPE-Companhia de Armazéns Gerais do Estado de Pernambuco*.

In June 1996, the consolidating process contribute to the change of its corporate name to *CEAGEPE-Companhia de Abastecimento e de Armazéns Gerais do Estado de Pernambuco*. In 2004, this has been changed; we will analyze this, latter.

According to numbers from 2003, *CEASA/PE* occupies an area of 640.000 m<sup>2</sup>, being 290.000 m<sup>2</sup> a commercial area. It has 34 commercial sheds that hold 1284 stores or fixed boxes, where 1150 dealers are installed and 500 free boxes (with a unit area of 3m<sup>2</sup>). They receive a daily average of 300 dealers (the majority are small producers) The average flow of people in this central is of 25.000, while the monthly flow of vehicles can reach 10.000 for loaded trucks and 210.000 for utility and private cars. The average value of business is over 30 million Reais and estimates for job generation (institutional direct, formal direct, informal direct and indirect) can reach 35.000.

Another important point is that while in large Brazilian urban centers a continuous change in how supermarkets operate and are always evolving and better attending to client's needs - whose commercialization field of fresh produce nowadays is one of the sectors that is dedicated to improving the quality of offers - on the other hand, producers, wholesalers and retailers haven't been able to follow the new tendencies of consume that search for quality and differentiation of products. Thus, despite improvements with the advent of *CEASA*, they stagnated and became outdated.

A clear example of this new conjuncture of market and difficulties faced by the majority of *CEASA* wholesalers is in the fact that only 15 of the 1150 permanent dealers supply to big supermarket chains in the city and neighboring regions.

This is partly due to the fact that when trying to acquire better quality products, supermarkets began to directly interfere in production, shortening the chain, eliminating unnecessary mediations and reducing losses.

Work permission defines those who display and sell commodities in the *CEASA*.

To big supermarket chains special concessions are made, such as the freedom to enter the premises on Sundays or at night after the Central is already closed, in order to organize trucks so that they arrive on the time established by the supermarkets, since they don't allow delays. Of course, for those who are limited to selling their products only for small markets this condition is totally forbidden. The way the two categories treat the products are different, from the moment they arrive to CEASA premises to the way they are conserved and transported to redistribution centers.

The numbers of waste confirm the difficulties met by the majority of CEASA's wholesalers. This central produces 600 tons of garbage per month, in which 400 tons are organic waste. The great villains of waste are handling, transport and packaging used from production to distribution.

With the number of families living in extreme poverty in the state of Pernambuco and the advance of the monopoly of big supermarket networks that begin to dictate supplying rules, CEASA is under the challenge of facing globalized economy while still caring for its main objective, which is to promote improvement in the quality of life of the poor population segments.

Some programs have been implemented aiming to reduce waste or use food without conditions of being commercialized with poor communities..

**A virtual experience.** In pace with competition among those participating in food distribution, supermarkets are developing new strategies to bring new and dedicate consumer to their establishments. From a 24 hours shopping to internet services.

Entry in a supermarket site is an experience as interesting as entering in a real shop. In the first page the prospective buyer have to register him or herself ; in order to access the page he has to have a password, if he is not yet register, he has to write in his post code, to see if the services applies to the region.; also class ( by income) , levels of education. After the identification, the client may enter in the shopping area. The commodities display is very peculiar: one can not see the real product; client, sellers and commodities are not meeting each other. However, there is a shopping list displayed according to the retailers segmentation of consumers.. There is also other options according to seasonal feasts; small families; babies; workaholic, vegetarians and so on...Based on this , there has been a certain surveillance of consumers., following supply chain ...

## Conclusion

Although not yet concluded, this paper reveals homogenization, specifications and inequalities developing at local, regional and global spaces, the relevance for them will further be explored<sup>2</sup>

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## **LOCAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT.**

### **Local Territories and Institutions: Globalizing Spaces**

#### **EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE:**

**The San Francisco Valley ;The Argentine Alto Valley; The Neópolis Plateau; A Supermarket ; A Cooperative, A Transportation Company ; Local Centre Of Distribution- CEASA; A Supermarket Web Page .**

**The New Characteristics of Distribution And Consumption**

**Homogenization, Diversification and Dedicated Commodities: Retailers, Producers and Consumers Choices.**

**State And Private Regulations; Changing Labor, Production and Environmental Practices.**

**Permanent Inequalities.**