

**BRIEF HISTORY OF THE POLICY FOR IRRIGATION PERIMETERS IN
THE BRAZILIAN NORTHEASTERN: FROM ITS CREATION TO ITS
POLITICAL RESTRUCTURING.**

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SUMMARY

From the consideration of the factors that enrich this narrative, the present work was produced with a brief history of the policy of irrigated perimeters: from its creation to its restructuring, which deals with the policy of irrigated perimeters from its inception to the present day, reflecting on the aspects that led to the political reorientation, thus pointing out the factors that contributed to the creation of the policy and the changes presented by it, reflecting on the social, political and economic context, experienced throughout its trajectory.

Keywords: irrigated perimeter, northeastern semi-arid region, water resource.

**BREVE HISTÓRICO DA POLÍTICA DE PERÍMETROS IRRIGADOS NO
NORDESTE BRASILEIRO: DE SUA CRIAÇÃO À SUA REESTRUTURAÇÃO
POLÍTICA**

RESUMO

A partir da consideração dos fatores que enriquecem esta narrativa, se produziu o presente trabalho com um breve histórico da política de perímetros irrigados: de sua criação à sua reestruturação, que trata da política de perímetros irrigados desde o seu surgimento até os dias atuais, refletindo sobre os aspectos que levaram à reorientação política, apontando assim os fatores que contribuíram para a criação da política e as mudanças apresentadas por essa, refletindo sobre o contexto social, político e econômico, vivenciados ao longo de sua trajetória.

Palavras-chave: perímetro irrigado, semiárido nordestino, recurso hídrico.

**REFLECTIONS ON THE FIRST MOMENTS OF THE POLICY OF IRRIGATED
PERIMETERS.**

The irrigated perimeters resulted from strategic measures elaborated in the midst of the context in which the Civil-Military Dictatorship (1964-1985) lived in Brazil, which undertook efforts to disarticulate and suffocate social movements, among which were those who fought for agrarian reform, such as the Peasant Leagues that, since the 1950s, have claimed this measure to solve countless other social problems arising from the historical land concentration existing in Brazil, a legacy from the colonial period that lasts until today.

Strategically, the military and civilian governments resorted to numerous devices to implant fears in conservative social strata that linked the actions of these movements to possible threats to unity and national security, criminalizing social movements with the

support of the media (as they even do today), controlled and entirely submissive to the governments with which they maintained close relations.

With the aim of silencing possible manifestations contrary to the measures adopted by the military government, popular support was gained, in addition to the violent methods of torture that we are aware of, the surrounding discourse of modernity and progress was resorted to, from which development, used as a legitimizing factor for verticalized actions implemented during this period.

As an insurgent that it was and the cradle of countless struggles for social improvements, the Brazilian Northeast, at the time, pejoratively pointed out as being “the problem region”, was soon involved in the field of dominating influences of the dictatorial government that tried to control the articulations that took place in the field. , through the creation of measures aimed at the Brazilian agrarian space, in particular the northeastern region.

Such measures aimed to control this population portion and it was under the prerogative of development and modernization that an influence was established

depoliticizing and manipulating in the countryside, subordinating, through the acquisition of the technical package, subjection to the market, among other “modernizing” factors, the peasant to capital. Reflecting on this moment, Braga (2009, p. 35) points out that “the idea of the struggle for land was very 'dangerous', with the need to implement more concrete measures that would serve as a buffer force for conflicts in the countryside”.

Composing the set of interventionist actions directed at the Brazilian Northeast, implemented in the 1970s, was the creation of the Fundo de Investimento para o Nordeste (FINOR), in 1974; the Northeast Integrated Areas Development Program (POLONORDESSE) also in 1974; the Program for Land Redistribution and Stimulus to Agroindustry in the North and Northeast of Brazil (PROTERRA) in 1975; the Technical Assistance and Rural Extension Company (EMATER) in 1976; the Special Program to Support the Development of the Semi-Arid Region of the Northeast (PROJETO SERTANEJO) in 1976; the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA) in 1981; the Northeast Irrigation Program (PROINE) in 1986 and the National Irrigation Program (PRONI) in 1986.

In addition to these, Decree-Law No. 1,106 of June 16, 1970 created the National Integration Plan (PIN), in which the then president of Brazil, General Emílio Garrastazu Médici (1969-1974) , claimed to be the “most important project in the agricultural area” in the country at that time (MARTINS, 2008, p. 43). The plan was defended in the official discourse as being the “solution to the problems resulting from the droughts and for the improvement of the standard of living of the populations of the Semiarid Region” (DINIZ, 1999, p. 84).

The PIN had the objective of promoting the integration of national territories, articulating and interconnecting them, giving them a unifying character. In this way, he planned measures to be implemented by the different portfolios that made up the military and civilian governments, covering the entire national territory, mainly the most

“disconnected” areas, such as those in the Amazon region, and “problematic” ones, such as the Northeast region.

With regard to the Ministry of Transport, for example, the construction of highways was promoted, such as the Transamazônica, ports and river docks, thus inserting the Amazon region in the context of market relations based on its connection with the Center- South and, consequently, with the globalizing business world. In partnership with the Ministry of Mines and Energy, PIN proposed: the topographical, forestry and geomorphological survey of the areas, in order to find out about aspects related to soil moisture and the possible existence of energetic minerals. (FGV, 2017).

With regard to the Ministries of Agriculture and the Interior, the PIN foresaw the creation of colonization mechanisms and what they defended as an “agrarian reform”. Those would be your main goals. To this end, agricultural and agro-industrial projects would be implemented at a time when irrigation became “the central axis of a public policy to combat droughts, which aimed to modernize the countryside, by encouraging the use of modern techniques and capital investments public, organizing the space for capitalist activity in the countryside”, as Diniz points out (1997, p. 74).

In this way, the policy of irrigated perimeters for the northeastern semi-arid region emerged in the official discourse as an important solution to regional problems, whether these were of a natural order, resulting from droughts, in particular; social movements, characterized by the threats that social movements and the struggle for agrarian reform represented to the permanence and stability of military and economic governments, through the modernization of the countryside with a view to national development based on the solution of specific problems related to what they considered a “problem region”.

According to the official discourse propagated at the time of the creation of this policy, the irrigated perimeters would derive from processes involving extensive research carried out by scholars from different areas: economic, social, political, hydrographic, agronomic, among others. These researchers would carry out previous studies in the areas intended for the projects, thus tracing a natural and socioeconomic profile of the same.

Such processes also involved the selection of areas, land expropriation and, in many cases, expropriation of these, although this was not propagated in the speech (perhaps because it did not match the optimism used in it), implantation of irrigation infrastructure , selection, settlement and training of settlers, in addition to the organization of areas destined for planting and those destined for housing.

Establishing, still, the implantation and management of the irrigated perimeters in the semi-arid region of entire responsibility of the DNOCS, agency that, until then, had its action in the Northeast region directed to the construction of dams, wells and other mechanisms of water reserves with a view to the “coping” with the problems caused by prolonged droughts.

However, what was perceived was the capture of the body's actions by the local agrarian elites who, by being holders of the lands on which such reservoirs were built, ended up

having strengthened their power before the backcountry population who, contradictorily, every state action in the region, was even more hostage to the elites.

When dealing with the capture of public policies directed to the northeastern semi-arid region, by the local hegemonic groups, holders not only of land, but also of economic and political power, since in the semi-arid region, they seemed inseparable. It would be these “public actions that are more conducive to maintaining groups in power than actually promoting the expected development” (CHACON and BURSZTYN, 2016, p. 01).

Therefore, when bringing this analysis to the studied context, it is assumed that, despite the official discourse listing "development" as an objective of the policy of irrigated perimeters, it is understood that, in fact, it sought to achieve economic growth from of these projects, pointed out as a solution for regional agriculture, which would no longer be susceptible to the occurrence of rains, thus mitigating the problems arising from droughts in the semi-arid hinterland.

In the 1970s, aiming to legitimize state actions in the semi-arid region, the irrigated perimeters were presented in the DNOCS reports as part of effective measures to improve structural issues, such as the low productivity of the semi-arid land that, from now on, with the insertion of techniques and modern technologies characterized by the sprinkler irrigation system and the machinery present in the projects, would reach more satisfactory production rates.

In this context, the high concentration of land was also cited, recognized in the reports as being one of the causes of regional socioeconomic problems, whose combat would result from this policy that, through expropriation processes, would promote land redistribution reforms. Trying to convince that, through irrigated perimeters, they would meet the wishes of those who fought for reforms in the distribution of Brazilian land, thus adjusting the land problem to the objectives of economic development that guided the actions of military and civil governments.

Still according to the official speech, when acting on these fronts, the irrigated perimeters would appear as redeemers of the historical regional problems, since among the benefits brought by them, would be their positive reflexes in the reduction of the rural exodus, since, they would promote greater fixation of the man in the field, from the colonization of their areas by the peasant families entering the same, defending such policy as the creator of guaranteeing mechanisms of permanence in the field.

Thus, the Brazilian State used these and many other arguments. It involved the sertanejo population in the discourse of irrigated perimeters as a synonym of a “progressive wave” that would take the sertanejos out of agricultural backwardness and would include them in the national territory as protagonists and no longer, just, as the excluded parcels in which they would be doomed to always follow the towing the remnants of the advances achieved by the Center-South.

However, among the many fallacies of the official discourse and optimism regarding the policy of irrigated perimeters, the researcher Diniz (1997) points out its conservative

character and little transformation of the unequal and exclusionary reality experienced in the semi-arid region of the Northeast, since:

During this period, the capitalist State implemented changes of a conservative nature, aimed at a process of modernization of agriculture, via an irrigation policy, modifying the production process, labor relations and intensifying the use of artificial inputs. Such changes did not alter the land structure based on the latifundium, nor did they mean improvement in working conditions in the countryside, which well expresses the concept used by Graziano da Silva (1981) of painful modernization (DINIZ, 1997, p. 74).

This conservative character of the old land structures, highlighted by Diniz (1997), became evident over the years, when this policy underwent important changes, being therefore classified into two distinct phases: before and after its political reorientation, a reorientation that it is also the (re) orientation of capital, that is, the policy of irrigated perimeters submits to the wishes of the economic policy outlined for Brazil at certain moments in its history.

Thus, we have the first phase of the policy of irrigated perimeters, which dates from the 1970s to 1980s and which brought with it interventionist, paternalistic and authoritarian aspects that, through welfare measures, intermediated by DNOCS, held hostages those served by them.

State authoritarianism, characteristic of military and civilian governments, also present in actions aimed at agriculture in the semi-arid region, becomes evident in speeches such as the one given by the then Minister of Agriculture in the Geisel government (1974-1979), Alysson Paulinelli, by determining that the “farmer who thought in terms of subsistence, will have to think in terms of the market. He starts having to organize as a company, concerned not only with production, but with marketing” (CNBB, apud MARTINS, 2008, p. 45).

Determinations like this were part of the context of rules imposed by DNOCS on former peasants converted into small producers within the irrigated perimeters. These aspirations were even part of a larger context, whose main desire was to transform not only the peasant into a capitalist, but agriculture into an (agro) business.

The main factor responsible for the changes undergone by the policy of irrigated perimeters has its origin in the performance of the Brazilian State, responsible for these projects that, by adhering to economic neoliberalism, directed the irrigated perimeters to meet the demands of capitalism, subjecting this social policy to economic aspirations that began to influence primarily their directions.

In this way, there are clear changes in the public served by the irrigated perimeters, as well as in their focus of action. In the 1970s, in documents and reports about public irrigation projects, only peasant families appear as beneficiaries who, after being selected by DNOCS, would inhabit the projects, dedicating themselves to the practice of family agriculture, associated or not with the creation of animals, depending on what the DNOCS determined as the “vocation” of each project.

An example of the service is in the DNOCS report on the implementation of Araras Norte. In the report, prepared based on the principles that governed the first phase of the policy, a number of 857 families were defended as direct beneficiaries of the project, which would be “contemplated” by the distribution of 857 lots. As there were no possibilities to deliver lots to other beneficiaries other than these families:

The Araras Norte project aims to irrigate 3,023 hectares, distributed in family lots of 3.50 hectares (829 lots) and 4.35 ha (28 lots), making a total of 857 lots, directly benefiting 857 families, 241 of which are in the project area and the rest of neighboring areas (DNOCS, 2013).

Over time, this characteristic has undergone changes, however, for the time being, attention should be paid to the fact that the projects presented in the 1970s had a clearly welfare bias, whose presentation, made by the official discourse, sought to equate them with the reformist measures aimed at promoting land distribution in the northeastern semi-arid region. The way this policy took place in the 1970s, with the presentation of it and the first projects, shows paternalistic and authoritarian aspects of the Brazilian State under the aegis of military and civil governments.

Among the processes that would result in the implementation of the projects, there was the choice of areas to be expropriated and expropriated by the State for its insertion. Expropriation took place in cases where the documentation of the land was not duly proven, that is, through the lack of ownership documents in the name of the peasants who lived on it. What was common at the time, given the lack of information and the informality characteristic of those times, when access to information and literacy was the privilege of a few.

In this context, it was up to DNOCS to select and transform spaces/territories, creating infrastructure and technologies, thus becoming a bright spot in the middle of a sertão seen as being “dry and backward”. Thus, the policy of irrigated perimeters imprinted on this sertão the progressive aspects of agricultural modernization, here characterized by the creation of mechanisms that enable the development and practice of irrigated agriculture.

Expropriations took place upon proof of effective ownership of the land, observed by DNOCS technicians who, after analyzing the land, assigned a value to it, based on attributes such as its extension and the improvements that, by chance, they presented.

The expropriation and expropriation processes were presented as one of the many disarrangements caused by the verticalized policy, since, when it was elaborated, public opinion was not consulted, nor was it considered possible mismatches to be caused in the lives of the families involved, either as expropriated /expropriated, or as selected, as settlers/irrigators of the projects.

The first disorders concern those whose victims were dispossessed or expropriated families who, suddenly, were advised that they should leave their lands so that they could receive the implementation of a public project of irrigated agriculture in which they could even register and participate in the process selective to become a colonist/irrigator. However, there would be no guarantee that these would be selected. If so, their

permanence on the same lands where they lived until the arrival of DNOCS was not guaranteed.

It is important to pay attention to the fact that this sudden state intervention established important ruptures in the lives of the families affected by it. The severity of the order of vacancy in the selected areas expelled family groups who, in turn, perceived those lands as a home, refuge, source of food, workplace, synonymous with social interaction and contact with nature, among many other personal meanings.

This set of affective connections between the evicted families and the expropriated and expropriated lands made the land their place in the world. The one who is able to keep his history and that of his ancestors.

Hence the intensity of the ruptures and the subtlety of the issues involving these processes that can be understood, based on the geographical point of view, as being of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, since, with the withdrawal of families from their lands, there was migration to other places, where they had to adapt and (re)start a new story.

This perception is even valid for those who, even though they were selected by DNOCS as irrigators, come to occupy areas different from those in which their lands were located and which, therefore, seemed strange to them, because for not keeping their memories, or telling their story, there was no identification with them. Therefore, it would be up to the settler/irrigator to (re)start. This adaptation process would not be limited to the new place of residence, as it would also include the new way of living and producing that, in the irrigated perimeters, was determined by the DNOCS.

The dispossessed or expropriated families not selected as settlers/irrigators by the DNOCS were left to leave for other areas, in large part, for the urban areas located close to their former lands. By settling in these, they began to live in a different way, following a more urbanized dynamic that, little by little and with different intensities, distanced them from the countryside and the set of relationships that it involves. Mainly transforming their relationship with the land and work.

Urban life made the former peasants insert themselves in other activities. In most cases, in those components of the tertiary sector, gradually moving away from agriculture, as the context in which they were inserted did not contribute to the resumption of contact with the land. Ironically, this bond with the land was weakened or lost when they were expelled from the countryside by a policy defended in the official discourse as being capable of promoting the settlement of the sertanejos in the countryside.

Thus, through processes of expropriation and expropriation of land by DNOCS, since the end of the 1960s, a total of 38 irrigation projects have been implemented in the northeastern semi-arid region, distributed among the federative units of Bahia, Paraíba, Pernambuco, Piauí, Rio Grande do Norte and Ceará, as shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1- Distribution of irrigated perimeters in the Semiarid region, by federative unit.

UNIDADES FEDERATIVAS	Nº DE PERÍMETROS	PERÍODO DE CONSTRUÇÃO		
		1968-1979	1980-1989	1990-1992
Bahia	3	3	0	0
Ceará	14	10	3	1
Paraíba	3	3	0	0
Pernambuco	4	4	0	0
Piauí	6	4	2	0
Rio Grande do Norte	5	4	1	0
Maranhão	3	0	3	0
TOTAL	38	28	9	1

Source: DNOCS (2012). Organized by Ximenes (2013).

The spatial distribution of these irrigated perimeters in the northeastern semi-arid region can be seen in the image in Figure 2.



Source: Ministry of National Integration; Secretariat of Water Infrastructure (2013).

Based on the information contained in Chart 1 and Figure 1, it is possible to understand that Ceará was the state that most received irrigated perimeters because, over three decades, 14 projects were implemented in 22 municipalities, under the prerogative of promoting the Ceará's agricultural modernization and thus boost the regional economy, based on irrigated agriculture to be developed in these projects.

Thus, in the last two years of the 1960s, interventionist processes began that culminated in the materialization of the projects, as they were built: Morada Nova and Icó-Lima Campos, whose implementation works began in 1968 and 1969, respectively.

In the 1970s, 8 more irrigated perimeters were implemented, which were named: Quixabinha and Ema, both projects implemented in the period corresponding to the years 1971 to 1973; Várzea do Boi, from 1973 to 1975; Curu-Paraibapa (1974) and, in turn, the Curu-Pentecoste and Forquilha projects date from the period between the years 1974 to 1979, and the Jaguaruana project was also implemented between the years 1975 to 1979.

In addition to these public irrigation projects mentioned, in the period between the years 1974 and 1978, another one emerged that consists of one of the objects of this research: the “Ayres de Souza” project, located in the Sobralense district of Jaibaras, where 8,942, 75 hectares of land.

In the 1980s, when the policy was still in its first phase, a significant change can be seen in terms of its beneficiaries, who in the previous decade were restricted to peasants with a tradition in agriculture, but which from now on would include three other groups, named by DNOCS as categories. These are: companies; that of agricultural technicians and that relating to agronomists.

In turn, these three categories, despite being foreseen in a smaller amount in each project, would have the right to land parcels superior to those destined to the former peasants inserted in these, who, because they were inserted in the productive logic imposed by the DNOCS, were now called small owners.

Table 2 presents data related to the way in which the lands of the Araras Norte project were distributed. In this it is possible to identify the inequalities involving these Categories and the plots to which they were entitled.

Table 2- Distribution of land in Araras Norte by category of irrigator.

CATEGORIA DE IRRIGANTE	ÁREA MÉDIA (ha)	QUANTIDADE	ÁREA TOTAL (ha)
Pequeno Produtor	7,00	89	623,00
Técnico Agrícola	11,00	3	33,00
Engenheiro Agrônomo	9,33	9	84,00
Empresa	302,90	2	605,80
TOTAL		103	1.345,80

Source: DNOCS (2012). Adapted by Ximenes (2015).

This opening of projects for the entry of companies and technicians would be the harbinger of a transition process that they would go through with the creation and entry of these new categories brought the desire to adapt the activities developed there, so that they could meet more specific economic desires. To this end, the performance of these categories would serve as a model to be followed by small producers, and it is up to them to adapt and follow the guidelines of the DNOCS, in view of the performance of these categories.

Still in the 1980s, in Ceará, three more irrigated perimeters were implemented: Baixo-Acaraú, in 1983; Jaguaribe-Apodi in 1987 and in the same year Araras Norte (1987) was implemented, located in areas constituting the municipalities of Varjota and Reriutaba, for which 6,407.39 hectares of land were expropriated and/or expropriated. This is relevant in this research because it constitutes one of the study objects. Relevant information about the irrigated perimeters of Ceará are organized in Chart 3, which highlights the two projects studied in this research.

Chart 3- List containing data from irrigated perimeters implemented in Ceará.

PERÍMETRO IRRIGADO	MUNICÍPIO	FONTE HÍDRICA	ÁREA (ha)		IMPLANTAÇÃO/ANO		
			DESAPROPRIADA	IMPLANTADA	INÍCIO	TÉRMINO	OPERAÇÃO
ARARAS NORTE	VARJOTA; RERIUTABA	AÇUDE PAULO SARASATE	6.407,39	1.616,50	1987	2014 ¹	1998
AYRES DE SOUZA	SOBRAL	RIO JAIBARAS (AFLUENTE DO RIO ACARAÚ)	8.942,75	615,00	1974	1978	1977
BAIXO-ACARAÚ	MARCO; BELACRUZ; ACARAÚ	RIO ACARAÚ	13.909,42	8335,00	1983	-	2001
CURU-PARAIBAPA	PARAIPABA	RIO CURU	6.912,50	3.004,14	1974	-	1975
CURU-PENTECOSTE	PENTECOSTE ; SÃO LUIZ DOCURU	AÇUDE GENERAL SAMPAIO, AÇUDE PEREIRA MIRANDA	4.569,37	1.068,00	1974	1979	1975
EMA	IRACEMA	AÇUDE EMA	352,03	42,00	1971	1973	1973
FORQUILHA	FORQUILHA	AÇUDE FORQUILHA	3.327,13	218,00	1974	1979	1977
ICO-LIMA CAMPOS	ICÓ	AÇUDE LIMA CAMPOS	10.583,18	2.712,00	1969	-	1973
JAGUARIBE-APODI	LIMOEIRO DO NORTE; QUIXERÉ.	RIO JAGUARIBE (ATRAVÉS	9.605,71	5.465,09	1987	-	1989

¹Ano previsto para a finalização da segunda etapa, entretanto, ainda, não foi concluída.

		DO AFLUENTE RIO QUIXERÉ)					
JAGUARUAN A	JAGUARUAN A	RIO JAGUARIBE	343,08	231,31	1975	1979	1977
MORADA NOVA	MORADA NOVA; LIMOEIRO DO NORTE.	AÇUDE BANABUIÚ; AÇUDE PEDRAS BRANCAS	11.166,31	4.474,19	1968	-	1970
QUIXABINH A	MAURITI	AÇUDE QUIXABINH A	530,35	293,00	1971	1973	1972
TABULEIRO DE RUSSAS	RUSSAS; LIMOEIRO DO NORTE; MORADA NOVA	RIO JAGUARIBE E RIO BANABUIÚ	18.915,00	10.765,72	1992	-	2004
VÁRZEA DO BOI	TAUÁ	AÇUDE VÁRZEA DO BOI	12.878,71	326,00	1973	1975	1975
TOTAL DE PERÍMETROS IRRIGADOS CEARENSES			108.443,98	52.689,31	-	-	-

Source: Freitas (2010). Adapted by Ximenes (2014).

Making the irrigated agriculture to be developed in these projects possible were the water reservoirs, whose location was a determining factor in the selection of areas for implantation of the irrigated perimeters. The dams responsible for the water supply were also built by the DNOCS in a period prior to the policy of irrigated perimeters, in which the referred agency had its performance marked by the construction of reservoirs, a period that was conventionally called its hydraulic phase (1909 to 1960).

The desire to make the proposal of irrigated agriculture in the perimeters a reality and, with that, to propagate the legacy of the military and civilian governments, led to the inauguration of the projects, although some sectors of them presented unfinished works. As a result, the infrastructure present in the projects is not distributed in their areas in an equal and totalizing way, with sectors in which they have never received water (neither for irrigation nor for human consumption) since the irrigation infrastructure was not implemented in them. which, in turn, is precisely what characterizes irrigated perimeters and differentiates them from other areas of cultivation.

Marking this initial period in the history of irrigated perimeters in the semi-arid region was the selection of those responsible for occupation and production in the projects: the settlers/irrigators. This policy had excluding aspects, evidenced in this selection process, which, firstly, had a patriarchal sexist character, since only men were selected, preferably young men, with aptitude and willingness to work in the field.

Before being accepted as settlers/irrigators in the perimeters, the candidates also had their lives and that of their families investigated by the DNOCS technical team, which, according to the information obtained in the interviews carried out with families who

lived through these processes, went to the vicinity of the candidate's residence, in order to find out about his origin, that is, how he behaved in the midst of social life.

Important information was considered to be information that revealed whether or not the candidate practiced what the interviewees called “riots”, characterized by events such as street fights, drunkenness and parties. And yet, if they were lazy and/or conflicted. Prior knowledge of these characteristics was important in the selection process because they would be useful to outline the profile of each candidate.

In addition to a vocation for life in the countryside, it was also essential that these candidates demonstrate characteristics that would ensure their harmonious coexistence with their neighbors and, above all, with the DNOCS team. Those that did not correspond to this set of attributes of the model settler/irrigator were considered potential threats to the success of the project and, therefore, were not accepted in them. This is yet another factor that demonstrates the exclusionary nature of the policy.

However, such a policy should provide conditions for upliftment and survival, based on work on the land, for all those who needed it, since it would be through access to land and work on it that the reversal of conflicts would be promoted. and also, the elevation of the self-esteem of the parents of families considered “problematic”, idle and alcoholics, however, these families are victims of the historical unequal processes to which they were submitted. Therefore, they are a product of the social context in which they are inserted.

Those who managed to pass the DNOCS selection process to choose settlers/irrigators, had to adapt to the new way of life and agricultural production to which they would be submissive from their entry into the projects. This was a new moment of disarrangements and rearrangements in the lives of the selected families who were going through processes of de-re-territorialization. It is up to them to live harmoniously and obey the DNOCS technicians, thus following the set of rules of conduct to be obeyed by the settler/irrigator families.

When reflecting on this delicate moment in the lives of families, marked by their entry into irrigation projects, Diniz (1997, p. 34), based on the study he carried out on the experience lived by these actors in the irrigated perimeter Ic6-Lima Campos , argues that “upon reaching the perimeter, the worker not only receives a new nickname, but a new way of living, of producing, of working the land, of living.”

The author also points out the existing strategic measures behind the colonization established in the irrigated perimeters, which would be nothing more than “a palliative measure implemented by the military governments in order to demobilize the growing conflicts in the countryside, also placing itself as a way to increase productivity in rural areas” (DINIZ, 2002, p. 42).

Therefore, the colonization of the projects would contribute to the depoliticization of peasants, in addition to subjecting these peasants, now transformed into settlers, to the productive demands of modernized agriculture. Bringing market capitalist precepts to the scope of the projects from the beginning would end up transforming all relationships

established inside and outside the projects and carried out by the actors involved with them.

The way in which this process of insertion of settlers in the projects took place established what the official discourse announced as being a redistributive measure, in which, in addition to meeting the modernizing demands imposed by developmentalism, they would have access to land, therefore, would be contemplating the desires of those who fought for land deconcentration, based on land expropriation and redistribution in the form of lots.

However, what was verified were, at the very least, aspects of an “upside down” agrarian reform, that is, conservative, since the concentrating character of land was maintained, through a policy based on latifundia, since each colonist had the right to the assignment of use of a lot with an extension, many times, superior to what he could take care of with his family. On the other hand, peasants who did not meet the criteria required by DNOCS when sharing land were excluded from this policy. These, therefore, remained without access to land.

When discussing the policy of irrigated perimeters and their negative repercussions on the struggle for land conquest, on the part of social movements, Freitas (2010, p. 51-52) points out that: “the perimeter project had the objective of mitigating social conflicts that came mainly from the struggles of the Peasant Leagues. In fact, the irrigation policy ended up making a true agrarian reform unfeasible”, with a consensus among authors, such as researchers Diniz (1997) and Freitas (2010), the conclusion that these projects are a maneuver for the non-resolution of the problem of land concentration in the northeastern semi-arid region.

In addition to making agrarian reform unfeasible and weakening the mechanisms of struggle for it, the policy of irrigated perimeters brought disruption to the lives of peasants, since it promoted processes of expropriation and expropriation of land from families who lived in them, inserting other families in these lands. who, in turn, would have to adapt not only to the new place they belonged to from then on, but also to the productive model and living standards imposed by the DNOCS so that the experience of colonization and agricultural modernization, through irrigated perimeters , was successful.

As a result, at the end of the processes that resulted in the implantation of irrigated perimeters, the misfits or “rearrangements” provoked in the lives of peasants who, before the creation of the irrigated perimeter policy, carried out activities in a family regime and who, from the State intervention, those who “were already “fixed” in the countryside, were forced to leave those lands to give “space” to the implementation of a new way of living, working and producing the land, where other criteria and priorities were observed, created through meeting needs external to that territory, defending interests that are alien and therefore alien” to these peasants who were intensely affected by such a policy (XIMENES, 2015, p. 78).

The infrastructure present in the irrigated perimeters, modern by the standards of the time, was defended in the official discourse as being one of the many advantages that, in turn,

would differentiate the producers linked to the projects from the others, thus creating a hierarchical system in the field or intensifying the relationships pre-existing inequalities.

In this official discourse, one could clearly see the attempt to create, in the imagination of the peasants selected for the projects, the notion that from the use of the technical package, these peasants, now called small producers, would have their production guaranteed, as this would be more susceptible to climatic conditions, therefore, the harvest would not depend on annual precipitation.

In the management of the perimeters, the DNOCS imprinted the interventionist, authoritarian and paternalistic mark of the Brazilian State under the governments of the civil-military regime. This is noticeable when trying to understand how this body works, which brings clear nuances of this regime to the daily life of the irrigated perimeters, including some rules of conduct in the daily lives of the families selected as settlers/irrigators of the irrigated perimeters.

To this end, it has the support of different professionals, among which social workers are relevant, who directly influenced and interfered in the daily lives of colonist families in projects implemented in the mid-1970s and 1980s, when the policy of irrigated perimeters was still presented itself in its welfarist version, characteristic of this first phase of the policy.

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