



Role of institutions in the survival of traditional communities in Southern Brazil: the case of *Faxinals*

Olivier François Vilpoux¹

Abstract

The *faxinal* system is a way of organizing small family farms specific to the central-south region of Paraná, South of Brazil, and is characterized by the presence of a community field, for animal production, and an individual planting land. This way of life is threatened, especially with the disappearance of the collective use of land for animal production. The research seeks to understand the role of social relations in the *faxinal* Taquari, in southern Parana, to explain the evolution of the community. Information was collected from semi-structured interviews with the 82 families of the *faxinal*. The analytical model incorporates the variables used in the New Economy of Institutions with the approach of Economic Sociology. The results indicate a decrease of the economic role of the community field for animal production, considered by some residents as a limiting factor for growth of agricultural production. Besides the economic importance, the desire to preserve traditions is an important aspect to be considered. This preservation depends on the existence of efficient internal rules. However, the respect of those rules decreases in younger population, precisely the one least interested in traditions and more attracted by economic activities. The weakening of informal institutions necessitates the presence of formal actions, such as the creation of reserves for sustainable use, where residents are committed to maintaining their way of life and conserving the

Recebimento: 7/12/2012 • *Aceite:* 13/12/2013

¹ Doutor em Génie des Systèmes Industriels pelo Institut National Polytechnique de Lorraine, França. Docente da Universidade Católica de Campo Grande – UCDB, Campo Grande, Brasil. E-mail: vilpoux@ucdb.br

environment. However, the efficiency of this mechanism depends of its implementation, which has not yet occurred.

Keywords: New Economy of Institutions; Economic Sociology; Formal Institutions; Informal Institutions; Traditional Communities

Arranjos institucionais em comunidades tradicionais do Paraná: caso do Faxinal do Taquari

Resumo

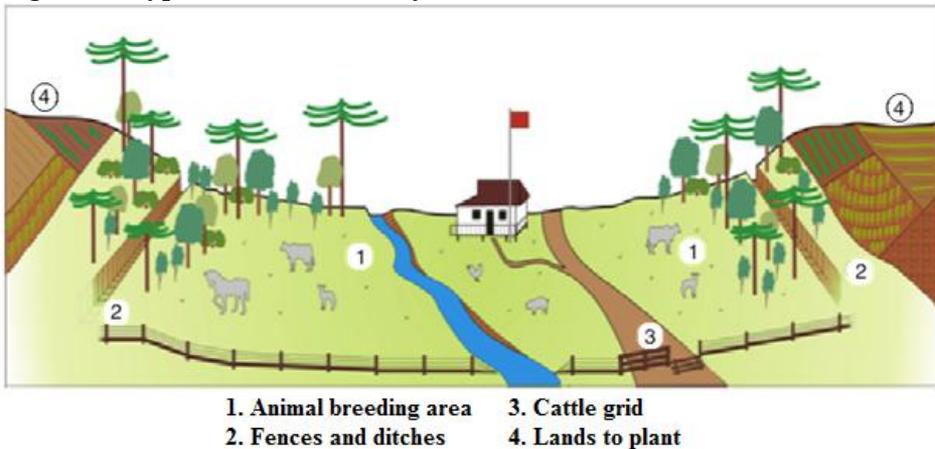
O Sistema Faxinal é uma forma de organização da agricultura familiar específica da região centro-sul do Paraná. Ele se caracteriza pela presença de uma área comunitária de preservação ambiental e criação animal, denominada “criadouro” e de terras cultivadas individuais, ou terras de “plantar”. Esse modo de vida encontra-se ameaçado, principalmente com o desaparecimento do uso coletivo da terra no “criadouro”. A pesquisa busca compreender os arranjos institucionais no faxinal do Taquari dos Ribeiros, no Sul do Paraná, para explicar a evolução dessa Comunidade. As informações foram coletadas a partir de entrevistas semiestruturadas com as 82 famílias do faxinal. O modelo de análise adotado integra as variáveis utilizadas na Nova Economia das Instituições com a abordagem da Sociologia Econômica. Os resultados indicam a redução do papel econômico da área do “criadouro”, considerado por alguns moradores do faxinal como um fator limitante para o crescimento da produção agrícola. Além da importância econômica, o desejo de preservar a cultura tradicional é um aspecto importante a ser considerado. A preservação passa pela existência de normas internas eficientes, no entanto, o respeito a essas normas diminui na população mais jovem, justamente a menos interessada na preservação da tradição e mais atraída por atividades econômicas. O enfraquecimento das instituições informais exige ações formais, como a criação de Reservas de Uso Sustentáveis, onde os moradores se comprometem em manter seu modo de vida e conservar o ambiente. No entanto, a eficiência dessa política pública depende de sua implantação efetiva pelos Governos Federal e Estadual, o que ainda não ocorreu.

Palavras-chave: Nova Economia das Instituições; Sociologia Econômica; Instituições Formais; Instituições Informais; Comunidades Tradicionais

Introduction

In Paraná, a Brazilian state located in South of Brazil, some traditional agro-forestry and pastoral systems still remain despite the strong market pressure, the *faxinals*. The *faxinal* System is a way of organizing small family farms characterized by the presence of two distinct spaces: the communitarian area for *animal breeding* and the lands for planting (Figure 1). The first, where live the residents of the Community, is an area of environmental preservation and animal breeding. The *lands to plant* are located around the *animal breeding area* and are reserved for cultivation. Unlike the *animal breeding area*, the *lands to plant* are not for collective use.

Figure 1: Typical structure of a *faxinal*



Source: Egger (2009)

The system of *faxinals* looks like other forms of rural organization based on family production, but its form of organization makes it a unique example, with collective use of land for animal production and social organization. However, despite the use of collective land, ownership remains private (BARBOSA, 2007). Each inhabitant is the owner of part of the communitarian area, with the ability to close his land.

Neiverth and Löwen Sahr (2009) argue that the traditional way of life of *faxinals* is based on agro-forestry and pastoral activities governed by a communitarian social organization and by specific traditions and customs. The authors cite the work realized in groups

(task force), the religious celebrations, the community life and the preservation of Araucaria Forest.

This way of life was common in southern Brazil until the sixties of last century, but in recent years many *faxinals* disappeared. The state of Paraná is the only one where such communities still exist, located in the region of the Araucaria Forest, an evergreen coniferous tree from the *Araucariaceae* family, which occurs mostly in southern Brazil, but also in the southern state of São Paulo and small parts of Argentina and Paraguay. Today, the area occupied by Araucaria has been significantly reduced and the tree is considered Critically Endangered (INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE, 2011).

The first comprehensive survey of the number of *faxinals* in southern Brazil dates back to 1994 and was realized by the Paraná Company of Technical Assistance and Rural Extension (EMATER). According to this survey, in 1994 the number of *faxinals* in Paraná amounted to 121. An update made by the Environmental Institute of Paraná (IAP) shows that 44 of these still remained ten years later. These *faxinals* were composed by 3,000 families, with a population of approximately 16,000 inhabitants (LOWEN SAHR and CUNHA, 2005).

Information about *faxinals* clearly indicates a reduction in the number of these communities and the importance of community areas for the maintenance of the *faxinal*. The *Animal breeding areas* remains open, with free access to all the animals of the Community. The installation of fences and the planting of part of the *breeding area* means the end of these spaces and, consequently, of the *faxinal*. From this information, the objective of the research was to identify factors that threaten the maintenance of *faxinals* and to understand the mechanisms of action of these factors.

Faxinal system can be considered as a cooperative institutional arrangement in which all agree to leave their lands in the breeding area in free access for the Community. Achieving the objective of the research involves the understanding of the rules, or institutions, governing relations between members of those communities and which promote the maintenance of cooperative arrangements.

The analysis focuses on the *faxinal* of *Taquari dos Ribeiros*, in the municipality of *Rio Azul*, in southern Paraná, South of Brazil. In the survey, semi-structured interviews with all the 82 families living in this *faxinal* have been used.

The *faxinal* *Taquari dos Ribeiros* is one of the last *faxinals* in keeping with the traditions of *faxinals* systems, with the *land to plant*

and the *animal breeding area* well defined. In this *faxinal*, the communitarian area has 234 hectares, completely surrounded by fences. Araucaria forests, free animals, the houses of inhabitants, a church, a grocery store, school, a health centre as well as various other places where the communitarian experience of residents can be developed are found in this area (NEIVERTH and LÖWEN SAHR, 2009).

In section II, *faxinals* and the traditional way of life in these communities is defined. The theoretical framework research is then discussed, focusing on the model used in the paper. Finally, the analysis of the case study is presented, assessing the role of institutions.

Traditional way of life of faxinals systems

The use of natural resources in *faxinals* is based on family labour and the common use of land. For Tavares (2008), a good living between the inhabitants of a *faxinal* and the integration with the environment facilitate the preservation of traditional livelihoods and local biodiversity. Some of the specific features of the peasants from *faxinals* highlighted by the author are:

- Association between livestock, agriculture and extractive products;
- Sharing of part of the land in an area defined as a communitarian *breeding area*;
- Creation of large and small animals, free and mixed;
- The practice of subsistence farming with traditional instruments;
- Sharing of seeds, livestock and products through barter;
- The presence of extractive practices (mate tea, wood and pine nuts);
- Strong coexistence and integration with the environment;
- The preservation and respect of traditions, customs and culture (festivals, dances and prayers).

The collective use of land in the *breeding area* is based on rules and norms, or informal institutions, linked to cultural aspects. For Barbosa (2007), political relations internal to *faxinals* are essentially established around consuetudinary power, in which members of pioneer families, especially the older ones, have some influence on others, without having control.

Religion is another important aspect of *faxinal* culture and facilitates social cohesion. To honour the sacred, inhabitants of

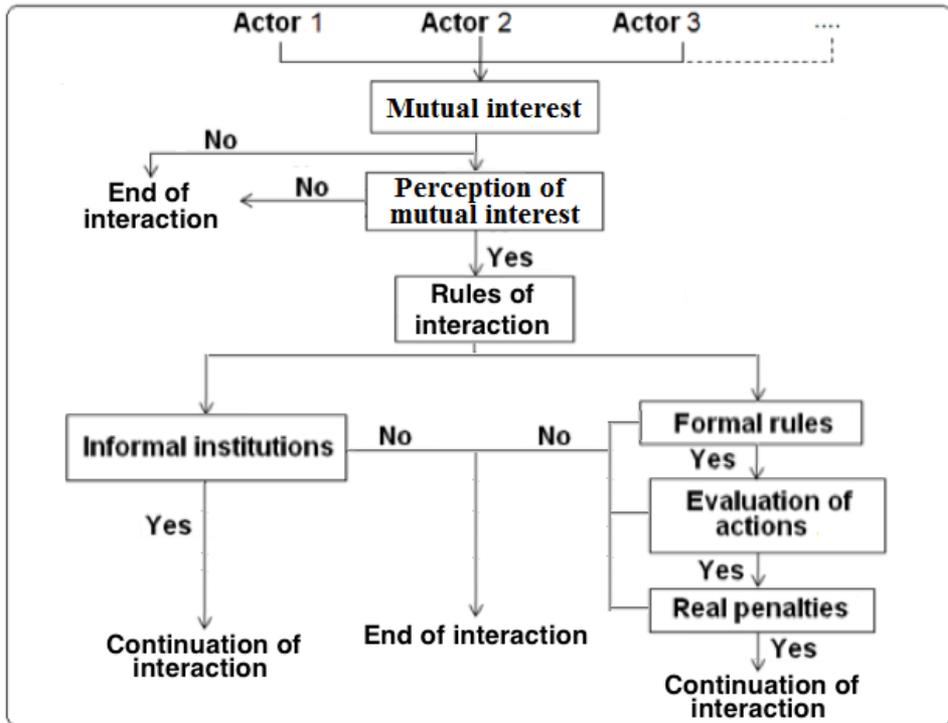
faxinals elaborate festivities that, when aimed at a particular saint, can be performed in the homes of residents. This practice allows for the strengthening of ties of friendship and trust between residents (BARBOSA, 2007).

Analysis model

In interactions such as the one that occurs in the *communitarian breeding area* of *faxinals*, cooperation is built by the mutual interest, or interdependence, of those involved in the interaction, constituting medium or long-term relations, benefiting all the parties. The choice of a different institutional arrangement than the traditional one, with cooperation between inhabitants, leads to the end of the communal area, with individual use by community members of their part of the communitarian area.

The existence of mutual interests is the first condition needed for the existence of a lasting interaction between actors, as shown in Figure 2. Kennedy (1999), describing small tanners in India, indicated that after the elaboration of a new environmental Law, the solution for survival has consisted of joining with others to build and operate a common effluent treatment plant. This new regulation creates a situation of interdependence whereby each firm's survival is contingent on the actions of the others.

Figure 2: Mechanisms responsible for the continuation of an existing cooperation, as in the *faxinals*



The existence of mutual interest is the first step in the continuation of cooperation in a community such as the *faxinals*. However, an entire community will hardly find satisfaction in the same objectives. People with different interests may be tempted to not respect the needs of the majority and instead act differently. In traditional communities like the *faxinals*, actions of a few people can harm the survival of all the community. In this case, mechanisms must exist to allow the whole community to respect the decisions of the majority, a role completed by institutions.

North (1990) describes institutions as being characterized by a) formal rules - constitution, laws, property rights and b) informal aspects - taboos, customs, traditions and codes of behaviour. To Malinowsky (1933), the fundamental function of a law is to keep human instincts within limits, in order to control and compel men to follow a behaviour that is not spontaneous. The author states that the

purpose of law is to ensure cooperation based on mutual concessions and sacrifices, in the pursuit of a common goal.

As shown in Figure 2, one level of control is provided by formal institutions or, as North (1990) suggests, by the formal rules of the game. The existence of efficient contract laws reduces uncertainty and allows for formalizing the interaction between individuals. However, the difficulties of contract enforcement and issues related to compliance with the laws, such as the cost and time related to legal proceedings, can harm contractual solutions. For the threat of court action to work as a deterrent against an opportunistic breach of contract, this threat must be credible. This is seldom the case for small transactions because the magnitude of the loss is not commensurate with the direct and indirect cost of court proceedings (FAFCHAMPS, 2011).

In economies where formal institutions are weak or non-existent and the enforcement of interactions relies almost exclusively on informal mechanisms, the social context becomes essential because it provides the environment in which norms of acceptable behaviour are formed (FAFCHAMPS, 2011).

Among the norms of conduct described by Malinowsky (1933) in the primitive society of Melanesia, some require from an individual, or group, obligations in relation to another individual, or group. Those who do not follow these rules quickly find themselves in an intolerable situation, being rejected by society. For Bowles e Gintis (2002), communities can sometimes do what governments and markets fail to do because their members have crucial information about other members' behaviours, capacities, and needs. An effective community monitors the behaviour of its members, rendering them accountable for their actions.

According to Malinowsky (1933), the existence of mechanisms for forcing compliance with the rules is essential. In the primitive society of Melanesia, effective social impositions were dependent on the existence of a complex network of regulations aimed at forcing people to respect their obligations. Bowles and Gintis (2002) confirm the need for penalties and pointed out that in case of significant penalties, cooperation between individuals increases, even in cases of anonymous relationships. For the authors, the communities that function have the capacity to enforce respect for the rules.

In the absence of formal and informal controls, even with the recognition by the actors of a dependency between them, the

establishment of a lasting relation is very difficult and individual arrangements predominate.

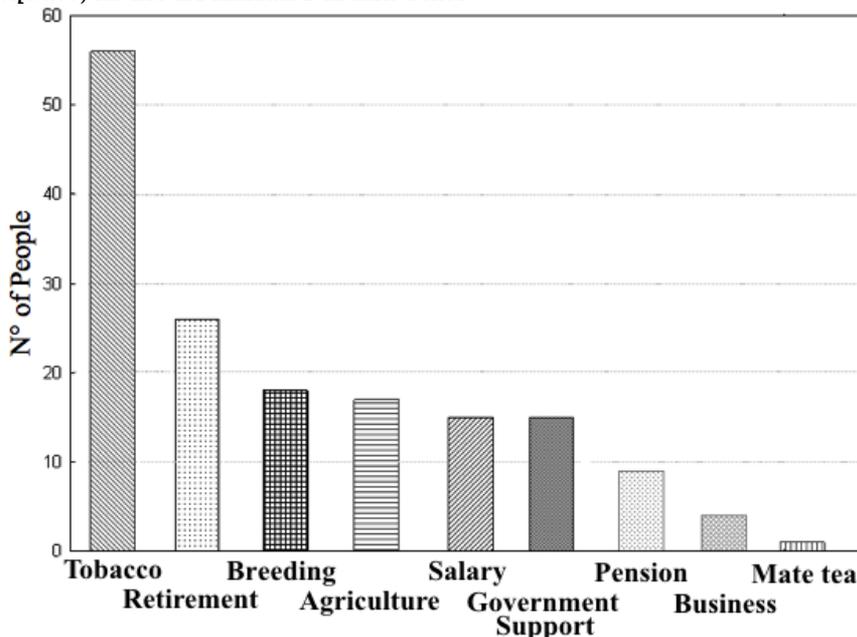
Existence of mutual interest between the residents

The first factor identified in Figure 2, which influences interaction between members of a community, is the existence of a mutual interest between actors. A relationship based on a mutual interest means that the residents have some kind of advantage in maintaining the *faxinal*, maintenance that can be assessed based on the preservation of the community area.

The first interest evaluated is the economic one. The end of the *animal breeding area*, with the installation of fences, means a reduction in the number of the animals possible to breed by the residents of the *faxinal*, especially for the owners of the smaller surface in the *animal breeding area*. In this case, these producers would be the most interested in preserving the communitarian area.

In the case studied, the areas available for each family in the *animal breeding area* ranged from 0 to 22 ha. Economic interest concerns only farmers with livestock and an area insufficient to use only their own land in the communitarian area. However, less than half of the inhabitants in the *faxinal* commercialized animals or derivatives. Between these breeders, only 10 had insufficient space in the *animal breeding area*. Many farmers were producing for their own consumption, most of them owning enough space. These results demonstrate the lack of importance of livestock for commercial purposes in the *faxinal*. This data is strengthened by the small role of breeding in the income of the residents of the Community (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Sources of income for members of the Community *faxinal do Taquari*, in the Brazilian Paraná State.



Tobacco participated in the family income of 56 residents in the surveyed *faxinal*, or 70% of the total. Of these, 52 reported that this culture was their main source of income. Livestock production has reached only the third position, with 22% of inhabitants of the *faxinal* concerned and was never the main source of income. The marketing of mate tea, harvested in the community and which used to be very important for communities of *faxinals*, represented only marginal activity.

Figure 3 confirms the reduced economic importance of the *animal breeding area*, while highlighting tobacco as the main activity. The profitability of that crop pushes residents to use their lands in the *animal breeding area* for this production. Among 56 tobacco producers interviewed, 21 had more than 20% of their land in the communitarian area and might be encouraged to increase their production in this space. At the time of the interviews this situation had already occurred with two of them.

The analysis indicates that the farmers' income does not depend on the maintenance of the traditional mode of existence of the *faxinals*. Instead, the possibility of improving income has been

identified through the transformation of lands in the *animal breeding area* into planting lands, especially for tobacco. Tavares (2008) confirms the influence of the tobacco industry in regards to the changes that have occurred in recent years in communities from *faxinals*. Of the 25 *faxinals* visited by the author, only one did not produce tobacco.

The search for higher yields than those obtained with traditional activities, with the introduction of cash crops, is considered a major threat to the maintenance of the way of life of the *faxinals*. In addition to tobacco, Souza (2009) and Tavares (2008) mention other monocultures, such as pine trees, soybeans, corn and wheat.

However, other aspects may encourage the preservation of the *faxinals* traditional way of life. There may be non-economic objectives that connect the residents of a *faxinal* and favour the preservation of these communities, such as those related to collective interests. The *animal breeding area* is an environmentally protected area. It retains the traditional lifestyle of the residents, with housing surrounded by open pastures and forests, with free animals. The desire to preserve this lifestyle can be a major objective that economic profit and can create a mutual interest among residents.

As the preservation of *faxinals* depends on the cooperation of all, it is necessary to implant mechanisms that prevent people with more economic vision and little concern with tradition, to put fences in their land within the *animal breeding area*.

It is expected that residents who were born or have lived for a long time in a *faxinal* are more attached to local culture and have more interest in maintaining traditions. In the investigated *faxinal*, in 40% of the families the couple was born on the site and in 35% of cases, at least one of them was from the Community. Among those born outside the *faxinal Taquari*, 77% lived there for over 20 years. Only 6% of the population resided in the *faxinal* for less than five years, half of whom married with residents who were born there.

The evaluation of the origin of the residents indicated that a large proportion of inhabitants originate from the Community, which reinforces the connection with the place and its traditions. The preservation of *faxinal* culture requires the involvement of all in a common desire of conservation, a situation that highlights the existence of mutual interest among the inhabitants.

The destruction of *faxinal* as a place of coexistence and preservation of the environment would change the lifestyle of people, to the detriment of those attached to the traditions. Souza (2009) states

that even when a great majority is in favour of the permanence of the *breeding area*, the right of individual owners who want to put fence around their lands shall prevail.

Conscious of the need for the cooperation of all, which is necessary to preserve the traditional lifestyle, community members must find mechanisms to ensure the maintenance of traditions and limit the possibilities of free-riders.

Informal mechanisms for the preservation of faxinals

Traditionally, the mechanism that guaranteed the permanence of cooperative arrangements in *faxinals* was the existence of informal institutions. As defined by Nelson (1995), they allow for the outlining of acceptable behaviour in a given Community. In the case studied, the behaviours of interest are those that regulate the use of the *animal breeding area*, with free circulation of animals and prohibition of increasing the amount of animals beyond the support capacity of the physical territory.

Informal rules in the faxinal Taquari dos Ribeiros

A total of 53% of respondents indicated the absence of conflict in the Community. For the others, there are some conflicts, but most are resolved in meetings or through the intervention of the President of the Residents Association. This information showed the control of the Community on the actions of its members, with the existence of a referee in case of conflict. However, the biggest problem is related to the type of penalty to be applied in case of non-compliance with the operating rules of the communitarian area, given the right of the owners to put up fences and cultivate their lands. According to the literature, the best option in communities like *faxinals* is the application of relational penalties, especially those involving removal or exclusion from the group.

The first factor with possible influence over compliance with local norms is the origin of residents. Barbosa (2007) indicates the existence of a threat to the *faxinals* due to residents who were not born in the community. In the *faxinal* studied, the Kruskal-Wallis test highlighted the lack of impact of this variable. This test is used as an alternative to the ANOVA, where the assumption of normality is not acceptable. It is used to study the relative positions of two samples described by ordinal or discrete quantitative data (ADDINSOFT, 2011).

Penalties based on removal from the community to encourage compliance with community norms can be effective both for those born in the place and for people from the outside. The inhabitants of the *faxinal* who were born outside the Community participated as much as the others in community and religious activities. The proportion of income obtained from tobacco and from traditional activities of *faxinals*, such as the commercialization of animals and mate tea, was the same in families with both members born outside the *faxinal*, only one outsider or all members of the family native of the *faxinal*.

Another explanation, also discussed by Barbosa, is the urban influence on new generations. The social network of young people moved from the *faxinal* to the city, contrary to the social network of their parents, centralized in the *faxinal*. The Community with which they maintain more contacts is no longer the one where they live. This change has made the threat of exclusion linked to the disrespect of internal rules of *faxinal* ineffective. Young people, with the change in their social networks, started to respect the norms of the new communities with which they identify better (groups of friends, professional associations, among others) and not those that govern the *faxinal*.

Another important aspect pointed out by Tavares (2008), which reinforces the deviation from the Community rules, is the influence of television. Most young people stay at home watching television with restricted contact with local residents, while the older ones go to visit the neighbours to “chat and tell stories”.

The frequenting by young people of schools outside the *faxinal* and extension of the duration of studies (Figure 4) facilitate the exit from the influence of norms applied in the Community of *faxinals*.

Figure 4: Education of residents of the *faxinal* Taquari for parents and children over eighteen

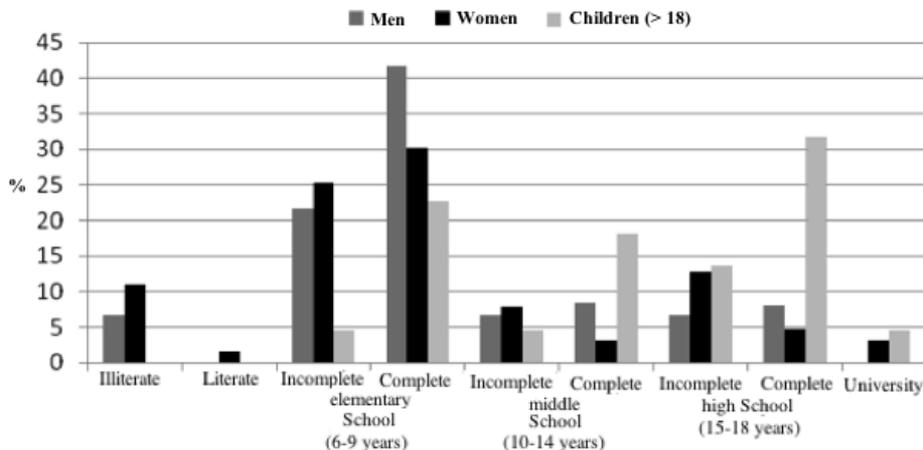


Figure 4 indicates an increase in the educational level of the new generations. The higher the level of study, the greater the distance travelled from the community to access the school, which increases the likelihood of young people to escape the influence of the *faxinal*.

The existence of *faxinals* was always based on the presence of dense and closed relationships, as defined by Granovetter (2005). The research identified a transition to open social relations, or weaker ties, which, according to Lin (1999), facilitates the introduction of innovations in the Community, but increases the difficulty of the preservation of traditional norms.

Social cohesion in the *faxinal* Taquari

For Coleman (1988), the ability of a Community to maintain its internal norms depends on the properties of the social structure encountered. Social cohesion is important because it reveals the strength of the sanctions available within the community to ensure the respect of the rules. The higher the cohesion, as with closed networks, the greater the effect of internal sanctions.

The main threat to the culture of *faxinals* is the end of the *breeding area* as an open space, with free access for all of the Community. However, it is possible to consider the removal of the *breeding area* as the completion of the process of disappearance of *faxinal* culture, rather than the beginning. The traditional *faxinals* are

characterized by the existence of a culture of solidarity between the community members, based on relations of reciprocity. These relationships are reflected not only in the maintenance of the common area, but also in task force activities organized in the Community, in help between residents and in community feasts.

Two thirds of the community members reported participating in task forces, which denoted great involvement in the collective life. Among the activities, the most cited were the renovation of the fence around the *animal breeding area*, the help of sick people from the Community, the cleaning of common areas, the building of wells and installation of water and telephone.

However, after comparison with a Kruskal-Wallis test, a significant difference in age and educational profiles was observed in community members, according to their participation in task forces. The analysis revealed that the average age of residents who had not participated in any task force was 45 years, versus an average of 53 years for those who participated. The age and educational profiles of community members who participated in task forces were significantly different, with less involvement of young and more educated people.

Among the other activities identified in the community, such as planting in partnership and tools division, it was not identified any interference of age and education. However, one-third of the residents reported not to share their implements with anyone and two-thirds were planting alone. Half of the residents declared not to participate in any association and 8% participated in an organization not connected to the *faxinal*. This data may signify a general lack of interest for life in the community.

The integration of producers of the *faxinal* in capitalist agribusiness, such as tobacco, could also destabilize the relations between the inhabitants of the *faxinal*, as reported by Tavares (2008). Table 1 examines the participation of producers, based on the production or not of tobacco. In the Nomenclature adopted, significant differences were those with a probability value (p) lower than or equal to the level of significance (α) of 0.05, which means the impossibility of concluding for the equality between populations.

The Kruskal-Wallis test showed no significant difference in the planting with partnerships, in the participation in task forces and in the community association. The residents don't participate very much in task forces, with or without tobacco cultivation.

Table 1: Influence of planting of tobacco on cooperative activities among the residents of the *faxinal Taquari dos Ribeiros*, Paraná state

Evaluated variables	Planting of tobacco		N° of persons interviewed		p
	Yes	No	Plant tobacco	Don't plant tobacco	
Planting in partnership	0,37	0,26	54	19	0,40
Participating in task forces	1,00	1,17	56	23	0,54
Dividing implements	0,78	0,44	54	18	0,01
Trust to lend money	1,74	1,33	50	18	0,15
Participating in community association	0,47	0,33	55	21	0,28

Legend: For the variables *Planting in partnership*, *Dividing implements* and *Participating in the community association*: 0 = no, 1 = yes - *Participating in task forces*: 0 = no, 1 = participated in one type (culture, fence, well, cleaning, ...), 2 = participated in more than one type - *Trust to lend money*: 0 = No, 1 = only family members, 2 = some of the residents of the *faxinal*, 3 = all the inhabitants of the *faxinal*.

By contrast, the results in Table 1 indicate that tobacco producers share more equipment with the other residents of the *faxinal*. Although not significant, probably due to the small number of residents who did not plant tobacco, the results also indicate a tendency for tobacco producers to rely more on the other residents of the *faxinal*, outside their family circle, to lend money. These results are contrary to those that were predicted from the literature review and seem to indicate a greater spirit of solidarity among tobacco producers. In this case, it is not possible to say that capitalist agribusiness dismantles relations between community members, as often mentioned.

All producers of tobacco began the cultivation more than 10 years ago, most of them since the eighties of last century. In this case, it can be concluded that the tobacco crop is already well established in the *faxinal* and has managed to adapt to local traditions.

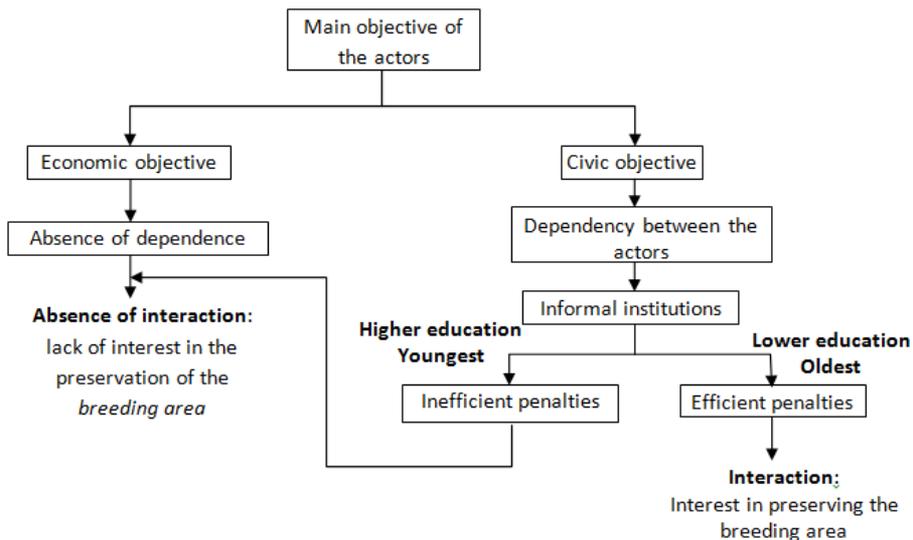
Religion is another very relevant aspect of the culture of *faxinals*, which has an important role in the social cohesion of the community. For Platteau (1994), in groups sufficiently small for information transmission to be effective, religion serves not only to encourage co-operation but also to signal or identify members.

To honour the sacred, feasts are prepared that, when aimed at a particular saint, can be performed in the homes of residents. This practice, that strengthens the ties of friendship and trust between residents, almost disappeared from the *faxinal Taquari dos Ribeiros*.

Among the interviewed, only 10% reported that they still organize or participate in such festivities, and 20% stopped to participate.

Figure 5 shows the variables that influence the institutional arrangements adopted in *faxinal Taquari dos Ribeiros*.

Figure 5: Characteristics that influence the choice of institutional arrangements in *faxinal Taquari dos Ribeiros*



The *animal breeding area* already had an important economic role in the Community, especially in the production of meat, milk and mate tea, but at the time of the research this area has lost its economic importance. This area is even considered by some *faxinal* inhabitants as a limiting factor in the growth of agricultural production, mainly of tobacco. In this case, the economic approach indicates a trend towards the disappearance of this area.

Another aspect that motivates inhabitants of the *faxinals* is the desire to preserve their traditional life, a goal that involves the cooperation of all residents of the Community. The need to preserve the traditional way of life of the *faxinal* led to the implementation of internal rules of coexistence, with monitoring carried out by the Community itself, and penalties through the isolation of offenders. However, besides the reduction of interest in maintaining the traditions, the strength of sanctions decreased, especially in the

younger and more educated population, the portion of the population least interested in tradition preservation and the most anxious to develop economic activities.

Dhesi (2000) found a similar situation in the Punjab region in India, where social cohesion decreased with the increase of trade relations with other communities. The economic opening has weakened the traditional norms and social sanctions that followed, which is a source of difficulty for collective activities.

The explanation for this evolution can be found in Coleman (1988). For the author, closure of the social structure is important for the existence of effective norms. In the case of the investigated *faxinal*, the relationship of younger and educated residents with actors from outside the community opened the network of relationships, reducing the effect of sanctions inside the group. In this case, alternative mechanisms of control must be found to limit the actions of members of the community.

Formal mechanisms for preservation of faxinals

In 2007, with the Law 15.673/07, the state of Paraná recognized the *faxinals* as a specific culture. This law opened the door for new municipal laws, as in the municipalities of *Antônio Olinto* and *Pinhão*, which prohibit actions within the *animal breeding area* that do not respect the community agreements signed between the *faxinals'* inhabitants (TAVARES, 2008). As penalties fines are stipulated for violators.

Another possibility in the preservation of *faxinals* involves the creation of Sustainable Use Reserves (RDS) in traditionally occupied lands. Article 30 of Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization (ILO), ratified by Brazil, mentions the duty of governments to protect traditional peoples, adopting measures in accordance with their traditions and culture. As stated by Tavares, inhabitants of *faxinals* are recognized by the Brazilian Government, by the Decree of 13 of July 2006, as traditional people. Therefore, according to the ILO Convention 169, *faxinals* have the possibility to create RDS.

A RDS is a natural area where traditional populations live, whose existence is based on sustainable systems of exploitation of natural resources, developed over generations, adapted to local ecological conditions and that play a key role in maintaining biological diversity (TAVARES, 2008). The government grants the right to use the area with the condition of maintaining the traditional way of life of

the community and seeking the conservation of the environment. The sale of areas is prohibited, which reduces the risk of cultural loss. Properties that do not adopt the traditional way of life and are included within the limits of RDS can be expropriated.

These laws could be an efficient mechanism to preserve *faxinals*. However, the third meeting of the People from the *faxinals*, which occurred in 2009, highlighted the difficulties of compliance with the protection laws of the *faxinals*. People from *faxinals* claimed for the demarcation of *faxinals* as RDS and recognition of the identity of the inhabitants, which until now has not happened.

Final considerations

The changes of priority for young people and the increasing difficulties in applying the internal informal norms explain the difficulties of *faxinal Taquari dos Ribeiros* and probably of most of the others surviving *faxinals*. The dissolution of informal institutions, especially among the younger and more educated inhabitants of *faxinals*, weakens the relationship between members of the community.

Institutional rules were based on the need to preserve an area for breeding and the extraction of mate tea, activities that previously represented an important aspect of life for residents, but which are now marginalized. These rules are no longer adapted to economic reality.

The desire to preserve their values can serve as a mechanism for preserving the *faxinal*. In the absence of an aspiration shared by all residents, preservation depends on the existence of efficient mechanisms for the respect of the internal norms of the Community. However, a reduced participation in associations and task forces was observed. Festivities such as the "Saint at home", once very important for the cohesion of the community, are disappearing. These aspects indicate a sharp deterioration of social cohesion within the community, which weakens the role of informal institutions and increases the threat to preservation of the *faxinals*.

Despite the disappearance of these festivities, religious life remains important in the Community. A great homogeneity has been found among the population of *faxinal Taquari*, with 95% of respondents who declared themselves Catholics and affirmed to participate in church services. Religion is the main aggregating element remaining in the *faxinal* communities, able to involve almost

all the inhabitants. It is an element that could act in the approximation of residents.

Faced with the growing fragility of informal institutions, the main option to save the *faxinal* system passes through formal institutions, with the implementation of RDS. Although potentially more effective, this solution requires an effective implementation.

For Bowles and Gintis (2002), the state is well suited for handling particular classes of problems. The state is attractive because it has the power to make and enforce the rules of the game that govern the interaction of private agents. However, in Brazil, despite the existence of a law with great potential for preservation of *faxinals*, the country still lacks a political will for implementation and enforcement of this law, which greatly reduces its effects. While these problems were not resolved, the *faxinals* continue to disappear.

Acknowledgment

This work is the result of the research project "Compreendendo geograficidades existenciais de povos e comunidades tradicionais: quilombolas e faxinalenses no Paraná ", funded by the *Fundação Araucaria*, Paraná state, coordinated by Prof. Dr. L. Cicilian Sahr Löwen (DEGEO-UEPG).

References

ADDINSOFT. *Xlstat 2011*. Paris: Addinsoft, 2011.

BARBOSA, T.A. *Território e territorialidades do sistema faxinal: análise a partir da reconstrução histórica familiar na Comunidade taquari dos ribeiros em Rio Azul/PR*, Monografia - Departamento de Geografia. Ponta Grossa: Universidade Estadual de Ponta Grossa, 2007.

BOWLES, S.; GINTIS, H. Social capital and community governance. *The Economic Journal*, v. 112, p. 419–436, 2002.

COLEMAN, J.S. Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital. *The American Journal of Sociology*, v. 94, Supplement: Organizations and Institutions: Sociological and Economic Approaches to the Analysis of Social Structure, p. S95-S120, 1988.

DHESI, A.S. Social capital and community development. *Community development journal*, v. 35, n. 3, p. 199–214, 2000.

EGGER, A. *Geoökologische Untersuchung des Faxinal-Waldweidesystems der Hochländer von Paraná, Südbrasilien*. Tese (Doutorado em Geografia) - Faculdades de Química e Geociências, Instituto de Geografia. Heidelberg: Universidade de Heidelberg, 2009.

FAFCHAMPS, M. Markets and the diffusion of institutional innovations. In: PLATTEAU, J.P.; PECCOUD, R. (Orgs.). *Institutions and Development. New insights into an old debate*. London and New York: Routledge, 2011.

GRANOVETTER, M. The Impact of Social Structure on Economic Outcomes. *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, v. 19, n. 1, p. 33-50, 2005.

INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE. *The IUCN red list of threatened species*. IUCN, 2001. Disponível em: <<http://www.iucnredlist.org/apps/redlist/search>>. Acesso em: 06/06/2012.

KENNEDY, K. Cooperating for Survival: Tannery Pollution and Joint Action in the Palar Valley (India). *World Development*, v. 27, n. 9, p. 1673-1691, 1999.

LIN, N. Building a Network Theory of Social Capital. *Connections*, v. 22, n. 1, p. 28-51, 1999.

LÖWEN SAHR, C. L.; CUNHA, L. A. G. O significado social e ecológico dos faxinais: reflexões acerca de uma política agrária sustentável para a região da mata com araucária no Paraná. *Emancipação*, v. 5, n. 1, p. 89-104, 2005.

MALINOWSKY, B. *Le crime et la coutume dans les sociétés primitives*. Tradução S. Jankélévitch. Paris: Ed. Payot, 1933.

NELSON, R. *An Evolutionary Theory of Economic Change*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995.

NEIVERTH, N. ; LÖWEN SAHR, C. L. *Terra e cultura faxinalense: reflexões em torno de políticas e ações governamentais na Comunidade Taquari dos Ribeiros (Rio Azul/PR)*, 2009. Disponível em: <<http://www.uff.br/vsinga/trabalhos/Trabalhos%20Completo/Nayme%20Neiverth.pdf>>. Acesso em: 07/03/2011.

NORTH, D. *Institutions, institutional change and economic performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

PLATTEAU, J.P. Behind the market stage where real societies exist – Part I : The role of public and private order institutions. *The Journal of Development Studies*, v. 30, n. 3, p. 533 – 577, 1994.

SOUZA, R.M. de. Mapeamento social dos faxinais no Paraná. In A.W.B. de ALMEIDA; R.M. DE SOUZA (Orgs.). *Terras de faxinais*. Manaus: Edições da Universidade do Estado do Amazonas, 2009.

TAVARES, L.A. *Campesinato e os faxinais do Paraná: as terras de uso comum*. Tese (Doutorado em Geografia Humana) - Faculdade de Filosofia e Humanidade, Departamento de Geografia. São Paulo: Universidade de São Paulo, 2008.