

Regional Heterogeneities and their Potentials for Regional Planning: The case of Vale do Rio Pardo Territory

Taciane Lais da Silva¹, Osvaldo Daniel dos Santos Pinheiro², Natacha Souza John³, José Antônio K. Schmitz⁴

^{1,2,3}Universidade de Santa Cruz do Sul, Brasil.

⁴Universidade Estadual do Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil.

Abstract— The regions are composed of immense diversity and potentialities. Therefore, the territorial cut, adopted in Brazil only in 2003, was an important delimitation for discussion and construction of public policies. The Vale do Rio Pardo Rural Territory (TRVRP) has a peculiar history in relation to its demand to be recognized and become a member of PRONAT. This article aims to analyze the strategy adopted by NEDET with the Territorial Collegiate to carry out the process of planning regional actions in the TRVRP. The process of elaborating the plan provided several stages of discussion, through participatory methodologies, so that the actors formulated proposals to reach the rural development of the Territory. It is concluded that the most coherent way of maintaining the articulation of territorialized public policies and mobilized social actors is to maintain the advisory services to the Collegiate and maintain PRONAT

Keywords— Territorial development; social actors; planning.

I. INTRODUCTION

This article aims to analyze the strategy adopted by the Extension Nucleus in Territorial Development (NEDET) with the Territorial Collegiate (CODETER) to carry out the process of planning regional actions in the Vale do Rio Pardo Rural Territory (TRVRP). Considering the heterogeneity of the social actors that make up this region and the different productive and economic realities that integrate it.

The regions are composed of immense social, economic, cultural, environmental and political diversity. According to Limonad (2004) the region is understood as a category of analysis, but before that it is a social construction that is formed by a heterogeneous social fabric, in a space

where diversity predominates. The society is printing its identity in the territory, giving its form and characteristic to a certain geographic space. The region, in this sense, can be understood as an intermediate space between local and global, added to interests that end up molding regional characteristics.

In Brazil, regional development only received academic attention in the second half of the 20th century. However, the development of the regions can be seen in many ways, for example, with economic bias, organization of productive chains that are often anchored in the interests of transnational corporations, in this way, considering the regions in a hegemonic way. Another way to understand the regions is to recognize regional heterogeneities as possible potentialities, which will be used from 1990 (ETGES, 2013).

For a long time the territorial approach has been outside

Corresponding author: Josef ReinhardNeiber, Dipl.-Wirt.-Ing. (FH),.

the academic research and the focus of Brazilian public policies, both in the state and nationally. Only a few local initiatives. As a result, there was a gradual impoverishment of theoretical contributions on the subject and a scrapping of organizations that worked to reduce regional inequalities (CARGNIN, 2014). The Brazilian rural environment underwent several transformations throughout the period of democratization experienced by Brazil from the 1980s, a process that legitimized a federative agreement of autonomy between Union, States / Federal District and municipalities that defines the functions of federated entities and the financial source that will subsidize such responsibilities. This change, on the one hand, was innovative, but on the other hand, it created a series of difficulties of relations between the federated entities, showing the need for articulation and creation of new institutions that would bring together the municipalities and reach the three spheres of government. In the universe of states and municipalities, there were initiatives and experiences of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), social movements, rural unions, and other civil society organizations in the construction of inter-municipal and intersectoral development projects and articulations, seeking to value the regional potential of family agriculture. At the same time, there was an academic debate on territorial development that arises from the need to think about development in a territorial perspective, incorporating the interaction between the countryside and the city and the valorization of the spatial dimension of the economy and the local resources of a Territory, making critical to the rural-urban dichotomy and the urbanization rates of the country (Veiga, 2002). On the other hand, criticisms of PRONAF-Infrastructure began, with respect to the weaknesses of the Municipal Rural Development Councils (CMDRs), which were often predominantly led by the public power, legitimizing local hegemonic power and somehow delegitimizing the emergence of new articulations of local actors. With this, one felt the necessity to break with the limits placed by the barriers (NIEDERLE, 2014).

In this context, the Territory presents itself as a strategy for the discussion and construction of rural development, characterized as a productive inclusion process, through the articulation of public policies destined to the rural environment, and considered as a space that goes beyond the geographical delimitation, and should highlight social participation and intersectorality in the structuring, performance and proposal of public policies (MDA, 2015). In this period, the agricultural policy for family agriculture was increased by the creation of another Secretariat, which started to work specifically with territorial development - the Territorial Development Secretariat (SDT). It was created in 2003, through PRONAT and implemented through the creation of Rural Territories in practically all regions of the country, with the objective of promoting the protagonism of social actors for the governance of the development of their Territories and also impacts and the results obtained through the territorial policy (DELGADO, LEITE, 2015). It is perceived that the program was taking amplitude; in Rio Grande do Sul, for example, reached a total of 18 Rural Territories. Around 400 Gaúcho municipalities are included in the Territories, which means more than 80% of the State Territory (MDA, 2016).

The arrangements resulting from this policy, however, face challenges to its effectiveness and implementation. Among these, is the conformation of the territorial cut-off adopted for each Territory in the country, as well as, meeting the demand of the social actors involved in the construction of this space, taking into consideration the culture, economy, social and environmental relations present in each Territory, which is a necessary condition for social protagonism and for the continuation of the development processes of the Territories. Therefore, it is of fundamental importance to establish strategies to achieve these goals, because the Territories are spaces of life, history, strategies of cooperation and also of conflict. These dynamic spaces experience and involve local institutions, networks of actors, collective platforms, games of interest and ideas that are established in a real arena.

The spatial clipping and object of study of this article is the TRVRP, which in its formation and search for recognition of its territorial identity along the territorial policy of the MDA, obtained a peculiar trajectory. Following will be presented the history of TRVRP, then the role played by NEDET and CODETER to mediate regional conflicts and finally some considerations about the perspective of territorial planning.

II. METHODOLOGY AND THE CASE OF THE VALE DO RIO PARDO TERRITORY

The Vale do Rio Pardo Rural Territory (TRVRP) - a spatial clipping object of study - has a peculiar history regarding its demand to be recognized by the Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA) as a Rural Territory and become part of the National Program of Sustainable Development of Rural Territories (PRONAT). In order to achieve this purpose, the leaders of eleven municipalities in the Vale do Rio Pardo region, in November 2011, met to formalize the Vale do Rio Pardo Pre-Territory. The intention was to press the MDA for the creation of the Territory, among the organizations present were 23 representatives of civil society and 16 of the public power (SCHMITZ, 2014).

However, only in January 2013, the MDA recognized the Pardo River Valley as a Rural Territory, establishing it with a new geographical delimitation. In addition to the two distinct macro-regions, the southern region of the Territory (referring to the Rio Pardo Valley proper) and the North region (referring to the Alto do Serra do Botucaraí region, now included in the new territorial delimitation determined by the MDA) Territory. This information, to a certain extent, demobilized all the work of articulation, organization and data capture of the region, causing a strong disinterest among the representatives of the various entities in continuing the work, in view of the understanding that there were no inter-relationships or identity (SCHMITZ, 2014). Therefore, with this new territorial arrangement, today the TRVRP is composed of 28 municipalities, which are: Alto Alegre, Barros Cassal, Boqueirão do Leão, Campos

Borges, Candelária, Ernestina, Espumoso, Fontoura Xavier, Gramado Xavier, Herveiras, Ibirapuitã, Itapuca, Mato Leitão, Mormaço, Nicolau Vergueiro, Pantano Grande, Passo do Sobrado, Rio Pardo, Santa Cruz do Sul, São José do Herval, Sinimbu, Soledade, Uncle Hugo, Vale do Sol, Vale Verde, Venâncio Aires, Vera Cruz and Victor Graeff. Together they have a population of 429,236 inhabitants, it has a total area of 12,790.21 km² (SDT, 2015). It is important to consider that the South region of the current TVRP is strongly based on Family and Peasant Agriculture and has its production base mainly focused on tobacco cultivation and its integrated production system. Already in the North, the predominant agricultural culture is the soybean, even next to the familiar agriculture.

With the intention of strengthening, supporting the organization and articulation of public policies for family agriculture, MDA launched in 2014 a public call, CNPq / MDA / SPM-PR No. 11/2014 to support the implementation and maintenance of Extension Centers in Territorial Development (NEDETs). The objective was to hire for two years an advisory to the area of productive inclusion and another to the area of social management, in partnership with public universities, considering a "possible solution" to solve the issues related to the transfer of resources.

In the TRVRP the project was the State University of Rio Grande do Sul (UERGS) with a unit in Santa Cruz do Sul. The main challenge of NEDET Vale do Rio Pardo was to work on the themes of sustainable development in the midst of the difficulty of territorial cohesion between the actors that make up the Territory in question. Thus, the NEDET Vale do Rio Pardo had as its main goal to build the Territorial Plan for Sustainable Rural Development and Solidarity (PTDRSS) of the TRVRP. With the purpose and challenge of covering and contemplating all the plurality of existing social actors, reducing the sectorization of public policies, making diversity a potential for the development of the Territory, otherwise, according to Brandão (2011, 25) "Sectorialist and

conservative interests do not allow structural actions to advance."

However, the major challenge of the Extension Nucleus in Territorial Development (NEDET) and the Territorial Collegiate (CODETER) was to contemplate the plurality of social actors in the territory. Thus, together with the Coordination of Territorial Development (CODETER) of the Rio Pardo Valley, NEDET began to use the strategy of subdividing the territory into two macro-regions (North and South) and mobilizing the actors in micro-regional plenaries, bringing them together from sets of municipalities called microregions.

The methodological tool used to gather the empirical data was the Fortresses, Opportunities, Weaknesses and Threats (FOFA) matrix, based on the four dimensions of sustainability - 1. Socioeconomic, 2. Sociocultural and Educational, 3. Political Institutional and 4. Environmental. The FOFA was carried out in all seven microregions of the Territory. In addition, other primary data were collected in meetings with social actors to discuss the proposal and articulate the mobilization of entities that involve civil society and public power.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This strategy of division into microregions served mainly for two phenomena, the first was a mobilization and participation of more social actors of the instances of participation of the Territory. The second was through smaller plenaries, with a higher level of identity, where the actors began to integrate into the Rural Territory Vale do Rio Pardo (TRVRP). This sense of belonging, of defending the region, according to Raffestin (1993) may only be simply to seek meaning, but must be understood as a relation of society to individuals, when individuals allow themselves to belong to such a society, when it is discovered who first belongs to a territory and only then belongs to a society.

They could also understand how the process of demand-building takes place through dialogues and planning that go beyond the borders of their municipalities, and that it is possible to think of actions in partnerships with

neighboring institutions and to think of territorial development based on their realities. This methodology is articulated in the pretension to overcome the sectorized vision of the plans, seeking a better inter-relation between the different social segments that make up the region.

In the TRVRP the process of elaborating the Territorial Plan for Sustainable and Solidary Rural Development (PTDRSS) provided several stages of discussion, which ended up contributing to a better understanding of the social actors about the real purpose of the National Program for the Sustainable Development of Rural Territories (PRONAT). These spaces promoted in the TRVRP placed the social actors in dialogue to discuss their realities, as well as proposals to achieve rural development and projects that enable the sustainability of the Territory. This process took place in four phases of elaboration over two years, from the initial mobilization of the social actors, the accomplishment of the various micro-regional plenaries and the two macro-regional plenaries, ending with the approval of the Plan at the CODETER VRP general assembly in December 2016. This process generated some results, which were obtained from the methodological tool of the Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses and Threats (FOFA) matrix. In this analysis, the anxieties for policies planned by the territorial base of the Territory that can be executed in the short, medium and long term were clearly observed. Desired by social actors with the intention of improving the quality of life in rural areas. It was also found that even when changes that threaten their prospects emerge, such as the demise of the MDA shortly after the parliamentary coup that gave rise to then President Michel Temer, these actors demonstrated resistance and confidence that the institutions of civil society and power may require recognition from the government in office. These results could be seen in the proposals elaborated in the microregional plenaries and later debated and prioritized in the macroregional meetings.

IV. DISCUSSIONS FROM REGIONAL POTENTIALS IN TERRITORIAL PLANNING

The mobilization of social actors was a collective effort by the Territorial Collegiate (CODETER) to overcome divergences, awaken potentialities and motivate the construction of a Territorial Plan for Sustainable Rural Development and Solidarity (PTDRSS). These spaces promoted in the Rural Territory Vale do Rio Pardo (TRVRP) placed the social actors in dialogue to discuss their realities, as well as to formulate proposals aimed at achieving rural development with projects that make the Territory sustainable. This in a way generated expectations and hope to be able to demand public policies appropriate to the regional reality.

Planning in the South region, by having more civil society organizations, as well as having a history of participation and performance in the regional guidelines and articulations more effectively, pointed as a priority issues such as: to adapt the political pedagogical proposal of the rural schools, so that the pedagogical practice is contextualized according to the local reality; organize a marketing network for products from family farmers; promote agroecology and organic production; expand and qualify the services of Technical Assistance and Rural Extension (ATER); expand and qualify the services of basic sanitation and selective collection in the rural environment. Moreover, for the success of this trajectory, it is important to highlight the support provided by the NEDET, called by the managers of "luxury consultants" because they are linked to the universities and have specialized technical competence, in the mediation of the debates and mobilization of the entities to build this process of planning.

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V. CONCLUSION

In general, as the authors Delgado, Bonnal and Leite (2007) put it, it is possible to intuit that the policy of the Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA) was successful in promoting the exercise of planning and articulating policies in regions where there was almost no history of intermunicipal articulations. This intuition can be confirmed, in particular, through the process that took place in the Vale do Rio Pardo Rural Territory (TRVRP). However, it is a fact that the construction path of the Territorial Plan for Sustainable and Solidary Rural Development (PTDRSS) contributed to regional articulation and stimulated the debate for a collective planning. It remains to be seen whether this will contribute to the reduction of the sectorization of access to public resources and whether the actors will actually prioritize collective projects. However, in this context, it is worth considering what Favareto (2010) points out regarding the weaknesses of the composition of the Coordination of Territorial Development (CODETERs), since this refers to the need for articulation with other organizations and other initiatives, alerting the risk of discontinuity of the territorial policy, which would lead to the bankruptcy of these Colleges. However, in a very unfavorable political context for the construction of public policy demands, where these are threatened by the current rulers, the VRP CODETER was able to advance in the process of building its PTDRSS.

Faced with this uncertainty, due to the inevitable uncertainties due to the country's political and economic crisis, immersed in this cyclical and recurrent process of world capitalism, we come to the conclusion that, in the short term, the most coherent form of maintaining the articulation of territorialized public policies and mobilized social actors consists in maintaining the advisory services to CODETERs, as well as in the transformation of the Territorial Policy into a State policy. According to Brandão (2011, p. 35), "it is necessary to overcome the sectorial and compartmental nature of public policies and to bring about the transversality and their intersectoriality in order to bring them together in the territory." Thus, in the medium and long term, it will be possible to build the autonomy of the social actors, the legitimacy of their protagonism and the effectiveness of the territorial approach in the regional development process.

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