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Governo Cidadão Project and the approach to clusters: an analysis of the limits of the approach in Rio Grande do Norte

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Abstract

The development approach based on the constitution of clusters has, over the years, aroused the interest of several institutions, such as the World Bank, which has been recommending its adoption in the context of public policies. The state of Rio Grande do Norte (Brazil) began to adopt this approach in the Governo Cidadão Project. Considering the economic, social and political context of depressed spaces the limits that are presented for public policies when adopting the cluster approach as a strategy for territorial development are questioned. We seek to discuss the main problems of institutionalizing the idea of cluster as an instrument of public policy in the Rio Grande do Norte. The theoretical construction is based on the notion of clusters, the insertion of this approach in the development agenda of the World Bank and the presentation of the Governo Cidadão Project. Secondary data present in the literature are used in the analysis, as well as semi-structured interviews, focus groups and simple and participant observations, taking as reference of the Açu-Mossoró territory. Important limiting aspects are identified, among them, the lack of an agglutinative concept of cluster, the low generation of external economies and the low level of social capital and governance. It is concluded that it is necessary to reflect on the relationship between subnational spaces and multilateral organizations. Moreover, the focus on clusters requires a process based on the effective participation of the State.

Keywords: Clusters. Rural territorial development. Projeto Governo Cidadão. Rio Grande do Norte. Açu-Mossoró territory.

Projeto Governo Cidadão e o enfoque em Arranjos Produtivos Locais: uma análise dos limites da abordagem no Rio Grande do Norte

Resumo

A abordagem de desenvolvimento pautada na constituição de Arranjos Produtivos Locais (APLs) tem, ao longo dos anos, despertado o interesse de diversas instituições, como o Banco Mundial, que vem recomendando a sua adoção no âmbito das políticas públicas. O estado do Rio Grande do Norte passou a adotar este enfoque no Projeto Governo Cidadão. À luz do contexto econômico, social e político de espaços deprimidos, questionam-se os limites que se apresentam para as políticas públicas ao adotarem a abordagem de APL como

estratégia para o desenvolvimento territorial. Busca-se discutir os principais problemas de se institucionalizar a ideia de APL como instrumento de política pública no Rio Grande do Norte. A construção teórica respalda-se sobre a noção de APLs, a inserção desta abordagem na agenda de desenvolvimento do Banco Mundial e a apresentação do Projeto Governo Cidadão. Utiliza-se, na análise, dados secundários presentes na literatura, bem como lança-se mão de entrevistas semiestruturadas, grupos focais e observações simples e participante, tomando-se como referência um estudo de caso, o território Açú-Mossoró. Identificam-se importantes aspectos limitantes, dentre os quais, a falta de um conceito aglutinador de APL, a reduzida geração de economias externas e o baixo nível de capital social e governança. Conclui-se que é preciso refletir sobre a relação entre espaços subnacionais e organismos multilaterais. Ademais, o enfoque em APLs exige um processo pautado na participação efetiva do Estado.

Palavras-chave: Arranjos Produtivos Locais. Desenvolvimento territorial rural. Projeto Governo Cidadão. Rio Grande do Norte. Território Açú-Mossoró.

Projeto Governo Cidadão y el enfoque en los Arreglos Productivos Locales: un análisis de los límites del enfoque en Rio Grande do Norte

Resumen

El enfoque de desarrollo basado en la constitución de los Arreglos Productivos Locales (APLs) ha despertado, a lo largo de los años, el interés de varias instituciones, como el Banco Mundial, que ha estado recomendando su adopción en el contexto de políticas públicas. El estado de Rio Grande do Norte (Brasil) comenzó a adoptar este enfoque en el Projeto Governo Cidadão. A la luz del contexto económico, social y político de los espacios deprimidos, se cuestionan los límites que se presentan para las políticas públicas al adoptar el enfoque APL como estrategia para el desarrollo territorial. Busca discutir los principales problemas de institucionalización de la idea de APL como instrumento de política pública en Rio Grande do Norte. La construcción teórica se basa en la noción de APLs, la inserción de este enfoque en la agenda de desarrollo del Banco Mundial y la presentación del Projeto Governo Cidadão. Los datos secundarios presentes en la literatura se utilizan en el análisis, así como entrevistas semiestruturadas, grupos focales y observaciones simples y participantes, tomando como referencia lo territorio Açú-Mossoró. Se identifican importantes aspectos limitantes, entre los que, la falta de un concepto unificador de APL, la generación reducida de economías externas y el bajo nivel de capital social y gobernanza. Se concluye que es necesario reflexionar sobre la relación entre los espacios subnacionales y las organizaciones multilaterales. Además, el enfoque en APL requiere un proceso basado en la participación efectiva del Estado.

Palabras clave: Arreglos Productivos Locales. Desarrollo territorial rural. Projeto Governo Cidadão. Rio Grande do Norte. Território Açú-Mossoró.

1 Introduction

The phenomenon of concentration of firms that perform related activities and establish synergies in a given territory has, over the years, aroused the interest of academic, political and multilateral organizations. From an academic point of view, Alfred Marshall, already in the 19th century, drew attention to the fact that this concentration can generate important external economies due to the division of labor and geographic proximity.

In the scope of public policies, this phenomenon, known in Brazil as Local Productive Arrangements (LPA), has become an important strategy for the construction of a process of social agreement and promotion of endogenous development.

It is observed that it is within the scope of multilateral organizations, especially through the World Bank, that the approach centered on LPA has acquired an even more relevant connotation. Living up to its ideological, financial and political power (PEREIRA, 2009; 2010), the World Bank has been directly influencing the insertion of this approach in the process of implementing development policies in countries that obtain financing from it.

Behind this discourse, it is important to remember that the idea of LPA, or more specifically of cluster, emerged on the World Bank agenda, between the 1980s and 1990s, to give legitimacy to the local development model, which was part of the neoliberal prescription proposed by the institution to countries that were going through a critical macroeconomic scenario, especially those in Latin America. Ultimately, under the argument of the power of local forces and social capital, the aim was to reduce the size of the State, thus promoting the decentralization of actions within the scope of public policies and budgetary relief.

In Brazil, especially in the Northeast region, it is important to note that the World Bank has financed a good part of the policies that use the LPA approach in their design. One of these policies is the Integrated Sustainable Development Project of Rio Grande do Norte (Governo Cidadão Project), instituted in 2013 and still in execution, whose main objective is to reduce territorial inequalities in the state, in addition to promoting the improvement of public services and the modernization of public management (GOVERNO DO ESTADO DO RIO GRANDE DO NORTE, 2013a).

Despite its advantages, the LPA idea has limitations and cannot be treated as a panacea for development. Strictly speaking, the World Bank has been promulgating this approach and the institution's client countries and states have incorporated it into their public policies without a deeper analysis of the existing restrictions for their effective implementation.

Given this scenario, it is worth examining, in light of the economic, social and political context of depressed spaces, such as the case of the state of Rio Grande do Norte, the limits that are presented for public policies when adopting the LPA approach as a strategy for territorial development. The hypothesis is adopted that in such realities these conditions become restricted, which makes it difficult to achieve the objectives of territorial policies and demands a more effective action by the State.

Considering the adoption of the LPA approach within the scope of the Governo Cidadão Project, this study discusses the main problems of institutionalizing this approach as a public policy instrument in the state of Rio Grande do Norte.

To achieve the objective of the work, we resort to secondary data contained in the works by Apolinário et al. (2009a; 2009b), which bring a diagnosis of the reality of LPA in Rio Grande do Norte. Additionally, a case study is carried out in the Açu-Mossoró territory, one of the beneficiaries of the actions of the Governo Cidadão Project in the state and which brings together LPA supported by the policy in question.

The next section describes and explains the methodological procedures of this article. Then, the main theoretical aspects involving the LPA approach are

discussed. Item four analyzes how the LPA-centric approach emerges on the World Bank agenda. The fifth presents the Governo Cidadão Project and how the LPA approach is inserted in the institutional framework of the policy. The sixth discusses the limits of using the LPA approach in Rio Grande do Norte, highlighting the analysis of the Açu-Mossoró territory. Finally, there are the main conclusions of the study.

2 Methodological procedures

The development of this work is structured under the aegis of two moments, in addition to a brief theoretical review on LPA. In the first, priority is given to the work of Apolinário et al. (2009a; 2009b), the result of a research project within the scope of the BNDES FEP (National Bank for Economic and Social Development – Project Structuring Fund), with the aim of disseminating knowledge about LPA identification and mapping experiences and discussing policies for its development in 22 states of Brazil. In the case of Rio Grande do Norte, 12 LPA were studied, categorized into formalized, partially formalized and non-formalized activities.

The use of these studies is justified by the following aspects: (i) it highlights the configuration of a good part of the LPA that were prioritized within the scope of the Governo Cidadão (beekeeping, milk and derivatives, irrigated agriculture/fruit farming and sheep and goat farming), which allows for a deeper analysis; and (ii) even though it is dated 2009, it should be noted that it is up-to-date, considering that the reality of LPA in Rio Grande do Norte still incurs in many of the problems identified.

The analysis is substantiated, in a second moment, by conducting a field research, through the experience of the Açu-Mossoró territory, whose induction occurred in the wake of the National Program for Sustainable Development of Rural Territories (Pronat), institutionalized in 2003. As of 2008, the territory also became part of the Citizenship Territories Program (PTC).

In summary, within the scope of Pronat and PTC, we sought to establish inter-municipal arrangements with the aim of reducing inequalities and promoting socioeconomic dynamism, based on criteria that sought to bring together municipalities with socioeconomic characteristics that were close to each other and articulated by the Collegiates responsible, among other aspects, for the elaboration of Territorial Plans for Sustainable Rural Development (PTDRS) and the election of infrastructure projects, specifically the Proinfs (Support for Infrastructure and Services Projects in Rural Territories) (FERNANDES; ORTEGA; JESUS, 2018).

The Açu-Mossoró territory has fourteen municipalities, they are: Assú, Pendências, São Rafael, Porto do Mangue, Carnaubais, Itajá, Ipanguaçu, Alto do Rodrigues, Serra do Mel, Areia Branca, Mossoró, Baraúna, Tibau and Grossos. Among the Potiguar territories, it is considered one of the most dynamic, with the highest territorial Human Development Index (IDH), greater industrial weight and greater participation in the state's Gross Domestic Product (BIP) (JESUS; FERNANDES, 2015).

Meanwhile, we sought to extract elements related to the following thematic axes, which are relevant to a territorial development process based on LPA: (i) organization and functioning of spaces for social consultation, with emphasis on the participation of actors and the level of social capital; (ii) the territorial cut, which can contribute to cohesion and facilitate coordinated actions; and (iii) the unfolding of actions of rural territorial development policies, with emphasis on infrastructure

projects financed by the federal government and the institutional framework of the Governo Cidadão Project.

Between June 2017 and March 2018, semi-structured interviews with civil society actors were used (associations, cooperatives, rural unions, rural councils and Non-Governmental Organizations - ONG's) and from the public power (secretaries, managers, financial institutions, researchers) of the Açu-Mossoró territory.

The selection of the interviewees was made from the list of composition of the Collegiate, by the representativeness of their positions and by nominations. The selection of at least one territorial actor from each of the 14 municipalities in the Territory was prioritized. Criteria such as time, accessibility and resources were also taken into account. In all, it was possible to interview 20 leaders from Açu-Mossoró.

Additionally, the focus group was used on three different occasions, with the aim of understanding, in the interviews, the actors' joint vision. Finally, we highlight the use of simple observation - on three occasions - and participant - in three situations -, which occurred in meetings, public hearings and seminars aimed at discussing aspects inherent to the Açu-Mossoró territory and territorial policy in the state.

Indeed, considering the two methodological stages highlighted, it is noteworthy that the temporal space of the research covers the period 2003-2018, which involves the induction of the Açu-Mossoró territory, the results of studies on the LPA of Rio Grande do Norte (APOLINÁRIO et al., 2009a; 2009b), the implementation of the Governo Cidadão Project and the selection process of the supported LPA and, finally, the carrying out of field research.

3 Local Productive Arrangements: brief theoretical considerations

The phenomenon of productive agglomerations that establish economic, social and governance relations in a given space presents a profusion of concepts, such as Marshallian industrial districts, clusters and Local Productive Arrangements. For the methodological purposes of this work, it is advised that the LPA concept will be used, more precisely the concept used by the Governo Cidadão Project, which is the same adopted by Apolinário e Silva (2010, p. 34):

It encompasses a set of economic, political and social actors and their interactions, whether tenuous or consolidated, including: companies producing final goods and services and suppliers of raw materials, equipment and other inputs; distributors and traders; workers and consumers; organizations dedicated to the formation and training of human resources, information, research, development and engineering; support regulation and financing; cooperatives, associations, unions and other representative bodies (GOVERNO DO ESTADO DO RIO GRANDE DO NORTE, 2013b, p. 4).

Based on this definition, it is important to highlight that studies on LPA are based mainly on the theoretical contributions of Alfred Marshall, who, in the late nineteenth century, analyzed the concentration of small English firms in specific economic segments, a phenomenon from now on called Marshallian industrial districts (LASTRES; CASSIOLATO, 2003).

Marshall (1996) makes it clear that the concentration of industries in certain locations can provide external economies, thus favoring production development and increasing firms' competitiveness. These are, in fact, positive side effects generated by the division of labor between firms in a territory and by geographic proximity.

On this last aspect, Marshall (1996) pays special attention. According to the author, there are important advantages gained from geographic proximity, including: (i) hereditary aptitude, which refers to the ability to create, transmit and absorb knowledge between generations in a given location; (ii) emergence of subsidiary industries, which supply the main industries with the instruments and inputs necessary for the development of production and trade; (iii) use of specialized machinery, that is, “the subsidiary industries, each devoting themselves to a small branch of the production process and working for many of the large factories of their neighbours, may continually employ very specialized machines” (MARSHALL, 1996, p. 320) and; (iv) creation of a constant market for skilled labor.

As a conclusion of the author's thought, it is worth noting that such conditions, in line with the intangible aspects (culture, social rules, values, customs etc.) of a given territory, would be of paramount importance for creating a favorable atmosphere for the development of business in that region.

Based on these contributions by Marshall, other important theoretical currents developed, such as the case of studies on the Third Italy, from the 1970s onwards. According to Becattini (1999), what spurred researchers' interest was the fact that the Mezzogiorno, as the Third Italy region became known, from a group of small and medium-sized companies, managed to capture important market shares vis-à-vis an increase in the profit margin and in the number of jobs, even operating with a precarious marketing structure, productive scale and access to credit.

Ultimately, Bagnasco (1999) highlights that this process took place without the induction of public policies. In fact, the causes, according to the author, resided in the cultural issue, in trust and reciprocity, in the flexibilization of the capital-labor relationship, in the growth of world demand for consumer goods, in technological progress, in the rural-urban interaction etc. Summarizing this reasoning, Putnam (2000) understands that it was the presence of high social capital, conceptualized by the author as the set of characteristics of social organization (trust, norms and systems) that contribute to increasing the efficiency of society and facilitating coordinated actions, the determinant for the development of Third Italy.

Based on Becattini (1999), it can be said that the success occurred, among other aspects, due to the symbiosis between the sociocultural characteristics (values and institutions) present in Third Italy and the development process of small businesses. In summary, the presence of these conditions provided a favorable atmosphere for the emergence of small and medium-sized companies, culminating in the transition from an agricultural economy to a diffuse industrialization.

In Brazil, in detriment of the concept of Marshallian industrial districts, it was decided to work with LPA terminology. This concept was adopted by the Research Network on Local Productive and Innovative Systems and Arrangements (RedeSist) in the late 1990s and sought to “combine contributions on the development of the Latin American structuralist school with the neo-Schumpeterian vision of innovation systems” (LASTRES, 2007, p. 4). In these terms, RedeSist understands that the LPA

constitute "territorial agglomerations of economic, political and social agents - with a focus on a specific set of economic activities - that present ties, even if incipient" (CASSIOLATO; LASTRES, 2003, p. 5).

Finally, it is important to emphasize that the analysis centered on LPA has advantages and limitations. Regarding the advantages from the perspective of RedeSist, Cassiolato and Lastres (2003) highlight that the focus on LPA enables a vision that goes beyond the traditional one based on the firm, sector or production chain, allowing for the establishment of a connection between the territory and economic activities.

The LPA approach makes it possible to focus on the different institutions and related activities that characterize any local productive and innovative system. LPAs cover the space where learning takes place, the creation of productive and innovative capabilities and the dissemination of tacit knowledge. Finally, this approach represents an important development for public policies.

On the other hand, the idea of LPA has limitations as to its concept, which makes it difficult to actually identify LPA in a state. Furthermore, the local plan should not overlap with national and state development strategies (ORTEGA, 2008).

4 The idea of LPA on the World Bank's development agenda

The World Bank's character goes beyond being a mere financier of social projects or an agency that calls itself an engine of economic development. It is an institution that disseminates its ideas and conceptions of the world in the different countries that obtain funding from it. What to do? How to make? What are the expected results? How should politics behave?

For so many questions, the World Bank does justice to its capacity as a lender and political power to elaborate the respective answers at the international level. Behind this entire process, Pereira (2009) highlights that the World Bank uses both coercion (embarrassment with other lenders and blocking of loans) and persuasion (dialogue with governments and technical assistance) to institutionalize its influence in creditor countries.

As a conveyor of ideas, it is important to note that the World Bank has, over the years, changed its discourse around development and the theoretical focus of its policy recommendations.

The World Bank was created in 1944, during the Bretton Woods Agreement, and its main mission was to provide guarantees and loans for the reconstruction of member countries affected by World War II (PEREIRA, 2009). Here, there is a first caveat highlighted by Coelho (2002), in which the Bank was conceived more as a financial intermediation institution than as an aid institution.

Now, as an essentially financial institution (and that represented US interests), the challenge of the World Bank's first years of operation was to seek the necessary credibility and consolidate its identity in the business world for fundraising (COELHO, 2002). This implied appointing presidents from Wall Street, as well as adopting the rules and behavior of the financial system. Furthermore, the aim was to form a qualified technical staff that was politically and ideologically indoctrinated.

Analyzing this initial period of the Bank, especially after the administration of Eugene Black (1949-1962), Pereira (2009) develops important considerations. First,

the Black administration was marked by a conservative and selective credit policy, that is, loans were destined to countries considered eligible (read solvent and high-income countries). In addition, financing was fundamentally aimed at large profitable projects, such as electricity generation, transport and telecommunications.

Second, the concept of economic development for the Bank was not yet consolidated. Development was understood as PIB growth or PIB per capita, which should be conceived via industrialization. In this context, the Bank's ideas on development were strongly influenced by Lewis' theoretical propositions, which advocated the transfer of production factors from the low-productivity sector (read agriculture) to the high-productivity sector (read urban-industrial).

With regard to income distribution, the Bank understood, based on Kuznets, that economic growth would provide a "spill effect", that is, an income distribution in the final stages of the economic cycle, so that distributive policies were not made necessary and were even seen as detrimental to growth (KAPUR; LEWIS; WEBB, 1997; STERN; FERREIRA, 1997). In fact, during the entire Black administration, the World Bank did not finance any loan for the social area or for the redistribution of income.

Gradually, this process began to change at the end of the Black administration. As highlighted by Pereira (2009), the pressures coming from emerging countries, which wanted to insert themselves in the Bank's client portfolio, and the need to control the rise of communism were of paramount importance for the change in the World Bank's policy in the 1960s, entitled as the "decade of development".

In 1963, George Woods assumes the presidency of the World Bank and brings in his speeches the intention to change the institution's policy in favor of development. The strategy was to smooth out payment conditions and promote an increase in loans and credits to other parts of the world, in addition to the sectorial diversification of investments. In this context, it is worth noting that the Bank's strategy of acting in development also involved greater investments in more fragile sectors, such as rural areas in peripheral countries, permeated, according to Woods' own vision, by small production units and social infrastructure and physical deterioration (KAPUR; LEWIS; WEBB, 1997).

Thus, development came to be understood as a process of reducing inequalities. Despite advances in the Woods administration, it was with the arrival of Robert McNamara, in 1968, that the World Bank innovated, streamlined and expanded its operations.

As Pereira (2009) points out, behind this process of continuity and growth in multilateral investments and the geographic changes in loans, there was a clear intention of the World Bank and, therefore, of US interests, to circumvent internal criticism of the war of the Vietnam and US support for military coups and dictatorial regimes, to pursue the control of communism, and ultimately to alleviate the financial costs of US foreign policy.

The McNamara administration was marked by the idea that US security depended not only on weapons, but also on preserving political order through economic growth and reducing inequalities (PEREIRA, 2010). In this context, in his first speeches, the then President made it clear that, despite investments in the previous decade and the economic growth of peripheral economies, income inequality in the international system had increased and most of the population remained in poverty.

As Pereira (2010, p. 262) highlights, “this assessment implied the recognition that the dominant capitalist style of development had failed and that the expected 'spill effect' had not occurred”. Also according to the author, this process fostered the need to analyze economic growth and poverty as two different categories.

In this context, poverty ceases to be a merely analytical category and becomes the main ideological banner of the World Bank, materialized by the launch, in the period 1968-1973, of the campaign to directly reduce poverty. Here, agriculture would emerge as the flagship of the Bank's investments, mainly because it constitutes the engine of economic growth in emerging countries and because it engages a large part of the population of these countries (PEREIRA, 2010). Investments in social infrastructure have also acquired an important role in the Bank's financing.

However, the World Bank ran into problems to institutionalize poverty as the main political and ideological campaign front. There was no “an approach that would give it support and rationality and an operational instrument that would allow its replication on a large scale” (PEREIRA, 2010, p. 265). To this end, the author emphasizes that the solution to these problems only emerged between 1973-1974, from absolute rural poverty as the main target of the Bank's intervention through the new Integrated Rural Development (IRD) projects, and with the publication of the book “Redistribution with growth”, coordinated by Hollis Chenery, chief economist of the McNamara administration.

This process undergoes a reversal in the 1980s and 1990s. With the capitalist crisis in peripheral countries in the 1980s, the World Bank began to drastically reduce its investments and direct its discourses and its intellectual, political and financial influence towards the need for a structural adjustment, mainly via restrictive policies and reduction of the power of the size of the state (PEREIRA, 2009). As part of this strategy, the Bank starts to defend and recommend the role of civil society as an instrument for reducing the burden on the State budget and promoting greater social control.

The World Bank's advice in favor of an adjustment of peripheral economies began in the 1980s, but it was with the Washington Consensus, in the 1990s, that prescriptions around a neoliberal ideology became widespread. As an institution that calls itself the holder of knowledge, the World Bank could not be left out of the debate, so much so that it was one of the main organizers of this movement.

According to Pereira (2009), the World Bank used three strategies to consolidate the new liberal apparatus, namely: (i) compensatory poverty alleviation model; (ii) changing the role of the State in the economy and; (iii) redefining the way in which structural reforms should be governed. Especially in the third strategy, Pereira (2009) draws attention to the diffusion of the idea of governance, closely associated with the role of civil society in the sphere of elaboration, implementation and evaluation of public policies.

It is in this context that the idea of LPA emerges on the World Bank's agenda. Ultimately, multilateral agencies, such as the World Bank, started to recommend “the induction of local socio-productive arrangements, which, in an autonomous and endogenous way, should seek development, releasing the State from interventionist actions” (ORTEGA, 2007, p. 281). From this, it follows that the notion of LPA was the economic, social and political institution that was lacking to give legitimacy to one of the main recommendations of the Bank, which was local development.

First, the diffusion of this concept had an important economic aspect in the sense of moving local productive potentialities, generating economies of scale and concentrating efforts on the production of a particular product that presented competitive advantages. Second, the LPA idea was important from a social point of view, mainly because it established social agreement, fostered social capital and relationships between individuals in the same territory, boosted the exchange of experiences and encouraged cooperation and competition. In short, these elements would create an identity and a sense of belonging, supporting the World Bank's discourse in favor of endogenous development. Finally, in the political sphere, the LPA concept presupposes the institutionalization of local governance, something that the Bank disseminates in order to reduce State interference.

Since then, the World Bank has produced several technical studies in order to present the advantages of focusing on LPAs. Basically, these are real practical guides with recommendations on how to implement and manage LPA policies. In this context, it is noteworthy that the Bank uses the concept of cluster and not LPA, so that:

An industrial cluster an agglomeration of companies, suppliers, service providers, and associated institutions in a particular field. Often included are financial providers, educational institutions, and various levels of government. These entities are linked by externalities and complementarities of different types and are usually located near each other (WORLD BANK, 2009, p. 1).

In general, the Bank understands that clusters, especially due to their proximity component (geographic and activities), benefit from important externalities, such as access to human resources and specialized suppliers, dissemination of knowledge and constant pressure for improvements in efficiency given the competitive environment in which they operate (WORLD BANK, 2009).

In the Bank's view, the constitution of clusters can contribute to other even more important aspects, among which: (i) better understanding and discussion of efforts for national competitiveness; (ii) increased productivity and operational efficiency, through involvement with various institutions; (iii) creation of knowledge and promotion of technological innovation and; (iv) stimulation of commercialization and formation of new businesses.

5 The Governo Cidadão Project and the focus on LPAs

The Governo Cidadão Project, instituted in 2013 and still in effect, is the fourth generation of rural development programs financed by the World Bank in the state. Previously, the Bank financed the Rio Grande do Norte Rural Development Program (RURALNORTE) in 1975, the Small Producer Support Program (PAPP) in 1985 and the Program to Combat Rural Poverty (PCPR) in 1997.

The structures of actions and components of the Governo Cidadão Project were budgeted at US\$ 600 million, with 90% of the resources coming from the World Bank. The state of Rio Grande do Norte has up to 30 years to pay off the debt, with a five-year grace period.

According to the Operating Manual of the Governo Cidadão Project (GOVERNO DO ESTADO DO RIO GRANDE DO NORTE, 2013a), the idea is to reverse the state's low socioeconomic dynamism scenario and support the modernization of the public sector. Thus, the document points out that the first objective should be achieved, among other factors, through investments in productive inclusion - with a focus on access to markets by the beneficiaries -, expansion and improvement of socioeconomic infrastructure, strengthening of territorial governance, improvement access and quality of basic services (education, health and public safety), generation of employment and income opportunities in rural and urban areas. In turn, the modernization of the public sector should be guided by results-based management, with better allocation of human and financial resources.

Finally, it is important to highlight two aspects of the Governo Cidadão Project. One is that it innovates by making clear, in its political design, the territorial focus of rural development. In fact, although the PAPP and the PCPR bring some characteristics of the territorial focus, such as the decentralization of actions and the promotion of relationships between individuals, it is only in the Governo Cidadão that the territorial cut appears explicitly in the Project's operationalization. In this sense, the Project works with the territories induced by the federal government in Rio Grande do Norte.

The other is that the Governo Cidadão Project built its territorial development strategy on three main axes, covering the main depressed territories of the state and the target audience of its actions (family farmers, women and youth): (i) the recovery of the former dynamic center of the Seridó region; (ii) the development of the central belt, characterized by a real development gap and; (iii) the development of the West Potiguar region, characterized by an abandonment in relation to the offer of public services and a very restricted penetration of formal economic activity.

To provide legitimacy to this entire territorial approach, the Governo Cidadão is the first World Bank-financed rural development program in Rio Grande do Norte to incorporate the LPA approach into its institutional framework, ie, “given the logic of the State's development proposal, we chose to work with the concept of Local Productive Arrangements (LPAs), due to its breadth and possibility of achieving better results within the development strategy” (GOVERNO DO ESTADO DO RIO GRANDE DO NORTE, 2013a, p. 29). Based on this general justification, the Governo Cidadão presents some considerations about the LPAs that legitimize their use:

The development strategy for the production area is centered on the LPA concept. It is, therefore, of fundamental importance to understand this approach as an analysis tool and planning instrument, which enables a differentiated look to boost potential and combat economic and social weaknesses. The approach has the advantage of escaping from old strategies that saw only the individual agent as a possibility for political action, thus opening the scope for action aimed at productive agglomerations. The LPA analysis allows us to understand the relationships in all the links of the production chain, covering factors such as the production of inputs, financing sources and the commercialization process with the final consumer (GOVERNO DO ESTADO DO RIO GRANDE DO NORTE, 2013b, p. 6).

Based on these assumptions, the Project's Articulation and Planning Nucleus was responsible for developing, in June 2013, a study to identify and map the productive agglomerations in the state. After this step, the study sought to discuss and select the potential LPAs that should be supported, taking into account the targeting strategy and target audience. The methodology for identifying agglomerations followed the same proposal as the study by Crocco et al. (2006), which elaborates an indicator capable of capturing four main characteristics of an agglomeration, they are: (i) the specificity of an activity within a region; (ii) its burden in relation to the industrial structure of the region; (iii) the importance of the sector nationally and; (iv) the sheer scale of the local industrial structure.

In this context, to capture the first feature, the Governo Cidadão used the Location Quotient. (LQ). In general, this indicator is used to check whether a particular location has any productive specialization (CROCCO et al., 2006). Synthetically, it can be obtained by the ratio between the economy under study and the reference economy.

As highlighted by Crocco et al. (2006), despite its importance, the use of the LQ can cause two central problems: (i) confusion between what is productive differentiation and productive specialization, which requires from the researcher a thorough analysis of the characteristics of the reference economy and; (ii) for small regions, the use of the LQ can either overstate the weight of a given industry for the region or understate the importance of certain industries in more diversified regions.

Given the existence of these problems, the authors recommend the use of a second indicator in order to capture the real importance of the activity in the local productive structure. It is the modified Hirschman-Herfindahl index (mHH). Still based on Crocco et al. (2006), the Governo Cidadão made use of a third indicator in order to capture the importance of the sector in the region at the state level. It is the Relative Participation (RP) of the sector in the total employment of the sector in the state.

These three indicators constituted the basis for the elaboration of the Normalized Concentration Index (NCI), which makes it possible to identify the concentration of a productive activity within a region. At this point, a linear combination of the three standardized indicators was performed and specific weights were established for each of the inputs in each of the sectors. Regarding the weights, it is noteworthy that they were calculated using the multivariate method of principal component analysis.

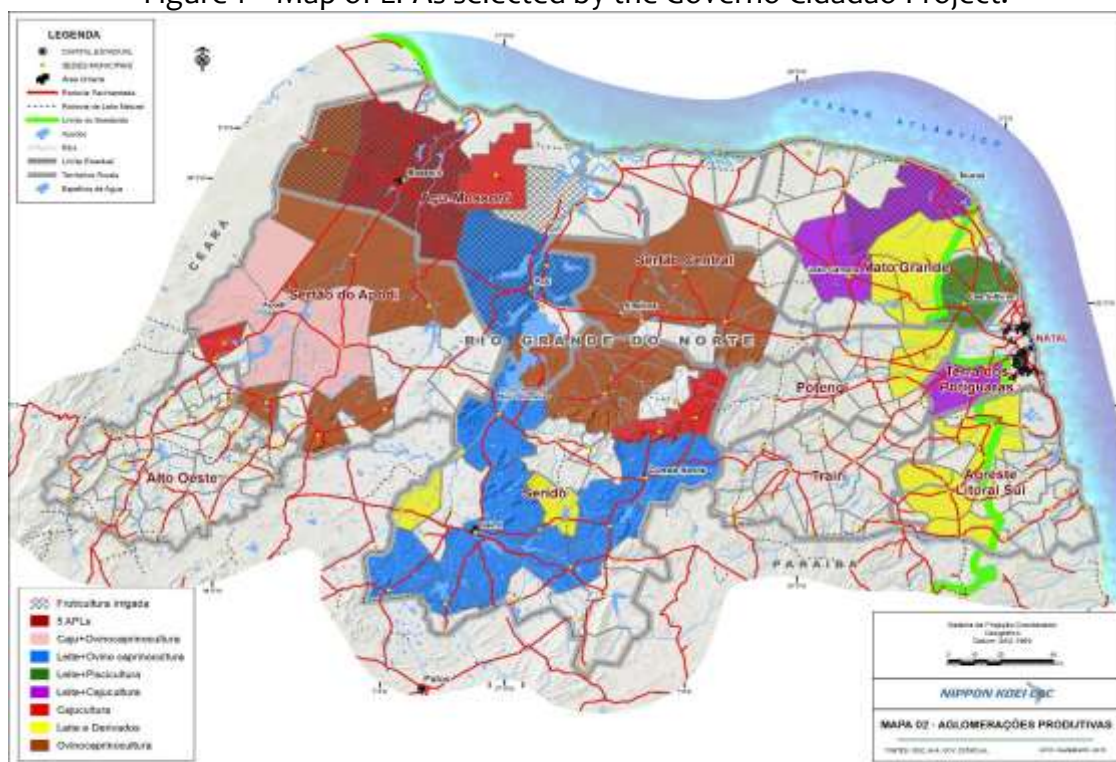
In addition to following this methodological proposal from the work of Crocco et al. (2006), we highlight the use of two more methodologies. The first consisted of measuring the Activity Weight (AW) in the PIB of Rio Grande do Norte, calculated by the ratio between the total product of the activity in the state and the state PIB. The second consisted of measuring the AW in the international trade of Rio Grande do Norte.

With regard to data collection, it is worth noting that the Project made use of the following sources, based on the year 2010 (GOVERNO DO ESTADO DO RIO GRANDE DO NORTE, 2013b): (i) IBGE (Microdata from the 2010 Census, Municipal Agricultural Survey, Municipal Livestock Survey and Regional Accounts); (ii) Department of Taxation of the State of Rio Grande do Norte (SET/RN) and; (iii) Ministry of Development, Industry and Trade (MDIC). Vale salientar que as

informações foram organizadas pela Classificação Nacional de Atividades Econômicas. It is noteworthy that the information was organized by the IBGE's National Classification of Economic Activities (CNAE Household 2.0).

After analyzing the results (GOVERNO DO ESTADO DO RIO GRANDE DO NORTE, 2013b), LPAs for irrigated agriculture (fruit farming), fish farming, beekeeping, sheep and goat farming, cashew farming and milk and derivatives were prioritized. With the exception of beekeeping, Figure 1 shows the LPAs supported by the Governo Cidadão. On the other hand, it is interesting to observe the gaps in LPAs in the state, that is, municipalities that were not contemplated with actions in this regard.

Figure 1 – Map of LPAs selected by the Governo Cidadão Project.



Source: Nippon Koei (2016, p. 24).

Then, strategic plans were drawn up to define the investments that each LPA needed, in addition to the aim of achieving the following objectives (GOVERNO DO ESTADO DO RIO GRANDE DO NORTE, 2013a, p. 32): (i) motivate and mobilize LPA members regarding the need to analyze and compare (benchmark) the performance and capacity of the local production system; (ii) develop a joint vision and strategy to improve training, productivity and innovation; (iii) formulate and implement an integrated set of policies and procedures to promote innovation and learning to strengthen local innovation systems and; (iv) define the mechanisms by which

continuous monitoring will be carried out to ensure the implementation of these strategies and assess the impact of the policies and procedures adopted.

6 The limits of the LPA-based approach in Rio Grande do Norte

6.1 An analysis based on the literature review

A first problem for the constitution of LPAs in the state is the difficulty of a conceptual consensus, so that “it can be said, therefore, that the concept of LPA was apprehended in a limited way or was not actually accepted by the organizations” (APOLINÁRIO et al., 2009a, p. 88). This makes the articulation between the institutions involved difficult. As highlighted by Apolinário et al. (2009a), there is a range of institutions that promote LPAs in the state and, therefore, a plurality of definitions, using the concepts of production chain, LPA, agro-industrial chain and cluster in an indistinct way.

Given the above, the Governo Cidadão Project, by establishing the necessary relationships with these institutions, has an important challenge in the sense of directing objectives and actions around the concept worked by the policy.

Second, the constitution of LPAs presupposes the existence of subsidiary industries, responsible for supplying the main economic activity of the territory with inputs, machinery and equipment. However, the reality of Rio Grande do Norte is quite different. What happens, in fact, is the great dependence on production factors from other states.

In the case of beekeeping, the study by Apolinário et al. (2009b, p. 66) estimated that 56% of the inputs needed for the production of honey were purchased at the LPA itself, with emphasis on wax (100%), wire (100%), uncapping fork (100%), labels (100%) and clothing (10%). On the other hand, 44% of the inputs needed for the development of the activity come from other states, such as beehives (100% from Ceará and Piauí), pollen collector (100% from Ceará, Santa Catarina and Paraná), table uncapping machine, centrifuge, decanter and sieve (80% from Piauí and 20% from Santa Catarina), and clothing (70% from Santa Catarina and 20% from Ceará).

In addition to the high share of inputs from other states, it is clear that the production of honey in Rio Grande do Norte imports those with greater technological content, thus evidencing the low innovative capacity of companies belonging to the LPA vis-à-vis the increase in costs of production. Still based on the study, it is worth noting that the existence of subsidiary industries outside the LPA, but belonging to the state, is another problem. In this context, until 2009, only one packaging company in Natal had relations with the production of honey and even so, it had no capacity to supply specific packaging for the activity. In the case of clothing, the study identified that production is carried out by few people and in an artisanal way.

With regard to the LPA of sheep and goats, Apolinário et al. (2009b) highlight that some non-industrialized inputs are purchased in the LPA itself or in the state of Rio Grande do Norte, such as corn (80% in the LPA and 20% in Goiás and Mato Grosso), sorghum (80% in the LPA and 20% in RN) and mesquite (100% in LPA). On the other hand, industrialized inputs, such as processed feed, mineral mixture, vaccines, pesticides and medicines, are all acquired outside the LPA and the state, especially São Paulo, Minas Gerais, Pernambuco and Paraná.

The situation is even more worrying in the case of LPA for milk and dairy products, especially if this LPA is divided into two main production chains - dairy cattle raising and dairy products. In the first, the only input acquired in greater quantity in LPA is cassava root (80%). In the state, the purchased inputs represent a tiny percentage, as is the case of the other 20% of cassava root and corn (10%). The rest of the inputs needed for the development of the activity (mineral mixture, medicines, pesticides, ready-to-eat feed) are produced outside the LPA and the state.

Considering the fruit production chain, it should be noted that about 80% of the pulps come from other states. This high percentage is justified by the producers due to the better quality of the fruit. Another input that could be purchased at the LPA itself is the packaging, however, it is estimated that 95% comes from Bahia and São Paulo. Add the fact that the annual expense with packaging is around R\$ 300 thousand (APOLINÁRIO et al., 2009b), something that could generate income locally if the production were internalized.

Finally, it is not necessary to remember that the LPA for fruit production also depends on chemical inputs, fertilizers, machinery and equipment from other states. In summary, it is clear that, in most of the LPAs selected by the Governo Cidadão Project, the Marshallian external economies generated by geographic proximity are incipient. Of no less important character, given this context, the chaining forward and the consequent generation of added value in LPA becomes limited. Despite the justification for the existence of competitive advantages, an LPA policy should prioritize and encourage the emergence of subsidiary industries in the territories of Rio Grande do Norte, thus contributing to increased competitiveness of firms and greater interaction between them.

Thirdly, the LPA concept presupposes the involvement of firms with educational and research institutions, mainly in the field of production and dissemination of knowledge, technologies and innovations. In Rio Grande do Norte, this process is incipient, being limited to some isolated actions, such as the Federal Rural University of the Semi-Arid (UFERSA), which works with LPAs of beekeeping and irrigated agriculture, or more rigor, in irrigated fruit growing, carrying out phytosanitary and productivity studies (APOLINÁRIO et al., 2009b).

The situation becomes even more critical when considering the research institutions linked to the state government. A EMPARN (Agricultural Research of Rio Grande do Norte S/A), for example, it is linked to agribusiness and performs its actions without taking into account the principles of the LPA (APOLINÁRIO et al., 2009a). In turn, considering EMATER (Institute of Technical Assistance and Rural Extension of Rio Grande do Norte), technical assistance is one of the main bottlenecks for the constitution of LPAs, especially those related to agricultural products, the focus of the Project Governo Cidadão.

Therefore, the Governo Cidadão Project must pay special attention to the promotion of science and technology in prioritized LPAs, as well as integrate its actions with teaching, research and extension institutions. In turn, it is up to the State to restructure the professional staff and increase spending on public institutions for research, development and extension.

6.2 An analysis from field research

Another component that limits the effectiveness of LPAs as a public policy instrument is the low social capital present in the state's territories (FERNANDES; ORTEGA; JESUS, 2018). Contrary to the characteristics identified by Putnam (2000) in Third Italy, in the territories of Rio Grande do Norte, it should be noted the low degree of association and cooperation, as well as a set of social rules that give rise to opportunistic actions and that make it difficult business development.

The reduced power of social capital in Rio Grande do Norte can also be seen within its family farming, the main target audience of the Governo Cidadão Project and of the LPAs to be supported by the policy. This claim can be legitimized by the opinions of two representatives of FETARN. In the view of these actors, family farmers, especially those in the Northeast region, have informal rules that block the shared management of resources. The idea is that the family farmer sees others as competitors and not as people who can contribute through a system of cooperation and dissemination of knowledge. The perception is that family farmers have an individualistic culture when it comes to managing their production, which again makes it difficult to generate external economies in the territory.

Added to this is the issue of governance. In general, what is observed in the territories of Rio Grande do Norte is its low level, materialized by some characteristics that hinder the implementation of LPAs, such as overlapping actions, political interference, centralization of actions by local power groups and existence of information asymmetries.

Here, it is true that the Governo Cidadão Project foresees a series of actions to raise awareness, training and mobilize local actors in order to raise social capital in the territory and promote greater governance. However, the actions are still on a very general level, giving rise to a more specific delimitation of objectives, goals and action strategies.

From the case study of the Açu-Mossoró territory, there was little involvement between public authorities and civil society. Within the collegiate, although advances can be registered - especially in the initial years of the constitution of the territory - with regard to the debate on public policies, implementation of some thematic chambers (such as productive inclusion) and discussions of projects to be deliberated, most of the interviewees draw attention to the reduced participation of actors, incomplete representation of the fourteen municipalities and disbelief in the effectiveness of public actions.

The involvement of public authorities, in the role of municipal managers, was fragile and took place through the representation of secretaries, generally with reduced decision-making power. This scenario changed when there was a deliberation of resources, resulting in greater presence and political action by the government, including the attendance of some mayors and other representatives.

The existence of power relations in its most varied forms was identified. Here, the formation of nuclei, political articulation for the deliberation of projects, attempts to reduce the importance of political and academic actors, among other aspects, are highlighted.

The reproduction of these power relations, allied to the reduced bonds of trust between civil society and public authorities, the insufficient participation of actors in public affairs and the low degree of cooperation, reciprocity and solidarity,

gives the territory characteristics of social organization that make it difficult to reach share capital.

The territory was not able to promote a concrete insertion of the most diverse segments in the discussions and proposals of alternatives in favor of development, limiting itself, fundamentally, to the actors linked to the rural area. This situation can also be found in other studies, such as in Jesus (2013), when he analyzed the Northwest territory of Minas.

Both in the composition of the Collegiate and in the interviews, there was a reduced and/or even non-existence of articulation with public and private actors from other spheres of the economy (industries, financial institutions), a relevant aspect in the approach of LPAs and, in particular, it could shed light on the problem of input dependency, as discussed in the previous section.

Regarding the cut-out, an element that reinforces the importance of geographic proximity and cohesion in the constitution of LPAs, the presence of sub-territories was found, with their own identities (especially from a social point of view) that hindered the concertation of interests.

Added to this is the meeting of heterogeneous municipalities, with different needs, which makes this process of cohesion even more difficult. Noteworthy heterogeneities in terms of territorial extension, population residing in rural areas, level of poverty and extreme poverty, and *per capita* income. Considering this last variable, for example, 2010 Census data (JESUS; FERNANDES, 2015) allow us to conclude that the difference in absolute values between municipalities in the Açu-Mossoró territory was greater than R\$300.00, as can be seen from the relationship between Mossoró and other municipalities, such as Porto do Mangue, Baraúna and Ipanguaçu.

The differences in this indicator reflect on the situation of poverty in the territory, as five municipalities, in 2010, had a poverty percentage above 30%. We can mention the cases of Mossoró, which had 12.81% of its population in poverty, and Porto do Mangue, with 47.11%. It is interesting to note that many of the municipalities in the worst socioeconomic conditions are part of the oil and/or irrigated fruit production chain. This reveals that development occurs unevenly.

In the territory, the problem of clipping is exacerbated by logistical difficulties (displacement, daily rates, time), affecting the dynamics of the Collegiate. It is understood that this delimitation, in the way in which it was carried out, took as its main variable the agglutination of municipalities with a common guiding idea, being the production of fruit in the Açu-Mossoró territory.

The territory also presented problems regarding the deliberation, implementation and monitoring of infrastructure projects. Before moving forward, it should be noted that many meetings of the territorial Collegiate were based on the scope and dispute of resources, limiting the scope of the policy's objectives. Information from the SGE/MDA shows that the territory has approved twelve Proinfs, totaling R\$2,597,944.85.

In general, we highlight the deliberation of few projects, concentrated in a few municipalities, low level of implementation or, considering those that were completed, reduced functionality. Another aspect to be highlighted is the fragile monitoring and social control. As examples of these problems, the following can be mentioned: (i) the financing of a Mini Milk and Derivatives Processing Plant in the

municipality of Alto do Rodrigues, in 2005, the total amount of which was budgeted at R\$302,163.59 and; (ii) construction, in the municipality of Pendências, of a Fish Processing Plant with acquisition of equipment, approved in 2009, in the total amount of R\$ 160,632.63.

In fact, in Açu-Mossoró, the deliberation of some infrastructure projects decided by the territory took place based on the articulation between interest groups, leaving aside a more in-depth analysis of the feasibility of these projects. The territory's attempt to implement innovative projects, with territorial coverage and aimed at improving the territory's production chains, such as milk and dairy products and psyculture highlighted above, draws attention. Other investments were directed to beekeeping.

It should be noted that some actors showed no knowledge of the financed projects. A possible explanation for this lies in the fact that some projects were defined outside the Collegiate, meeting the interests of municipal governments separately and, in some situations, favoring sectoriality.

In addition to the structural and local organization problems for the constitution of LPAs in Rio Grande do Norte, the institutional character of the Governo Cidadão Project made it difficult for the actions to proceed. It is worth mentioning that, despite having been established in 2013, the Governo Cidadão took a long time to complete the planned and necessary strategic plans for the development of the LPAs.

This process is part of a broader issue, which involves the various institutional ties proposed by the World Bank in the Loan Agreement. First of all, the World Bank is a financial institution and for the effective release of the loan it makes requirements that restrict/limit the operationalization of policies.

Also within the scope of the Citizen Government Project, it is necessary to comment on the study of identification and mapping of productive agglomerations in the state. As can be seen, the study focused on identifying productive agglomerations based on economic criteria, that is, without a deeper analysis of the historical, social and institutional aspects inherent to the arrangement, an analysis that would be carried out in the next prioritization phase of the LPAs. By considering only these aspects, there is a risk of benefiting stronger and more articulated arrangements, fostering inequalities.

Furthermore, there is a certain contradiction between the guidelines of the Governo Cidadão Project, especially with regard to the target audience of family farming, and some of the activities already chosen for support. In the case of the LPA of irrigated agriculture, for example, irrigated fruit production is included, which includes a significant portion of the state's employer agriculture, including in the Açu-Mossoró territory. This fact can also be verified in the LPA of milk and dairy products. Thus, there is a risk that the biggest beneficiaries of the investments are the large producers, fleeing from the logic of politics.

Following this line of reasoning, it should be noted that there is no typology for classifying the degree of formalization of LPAs. According to the study by Apolinário et al. (2009b), taking into account variables such as labor relations and the form of organization of the LPA itself, it is possible to identify different degrees of formalization of the LPAs in Rio Grande do Norte. It is understood, therefore, that by establishing certain typologies, the policy will be able to better direct its actions.

7 By way of conclusion

As demonstrated, the World Bank, since its creation, has financed more than resources, it has financed ideas, recommended its interests and conditioned loans to its way of doing politics. In fact, the World Bank's historic influence on its clients is, in part, a reflection of the economies' low financing and planning capacity.

In Rio Grande do Norte, which has been establishing itself as an assiduous partner over the decades, the tone was no different. Since the first financed program, RURALNORTE, in 1975, culminating in the current Governo Cidadão Project, the World Bank has been exercising its intellectual, financial and political power in the state.

Within the scope of these recommendations, the institutionalization of the territorial approach to development and the constitution of LPAs, both identified in the Governo Cidadão Project, are configured as the most important. These two aspects, which ultimately represent the main strategies for the construction of a development process based on endogenous potentials, present important contributions due to the possibility of creating a space for social consultation, involving the decentralization of actions, social relations and economic among individuals, the feeling of belonging to the place, the mode of production and the dissemination of knowledge and innovation.

It is necessary, however, to relativize the power of these approaches as instruments of public policy, especially in depressed contexts, with a lack of economic and social infrastructure. When dealing more specifically with the structure of LPAs in Rio Grande do Norte, for example, limiting aspects were highlighted. First, there is a conceptual multiplicity on the part of the institutions that promote LPAs in the state, which makes it difficult to have a greater articulation between them and between public policies. Second, the LPAs selected by the Governo Cidadão Project are inserted in a reality with a low presence of subsidiary industries, which hinders the generation of Marshallian external economies. Add to that the precariousness of teaching and research institutions, as well as the fragility in the process of interaction with firms in these LPAs.

In turn, by bringing the experience of the Açu-Mossoró territory, materialized by the reduced social capital, the existence of other territories in one - in the sense of a deficient territorial cohesion from the established outline - and intrinsic problems to the management of financed projects, barriers with the adoption of the territorial approach and the LPA approach, they are latent. At the same time, the Governo Cidadão Project, by prioritizing certain production chains, runs the risk of not including the target audience, family farmers.

It is therefore necessary to treat the focus on LPAs not as a panacea, which emerges only from the will of local actors or the existence of social capital, but as a process based on the effective participation of the State, both in the constitution of a social and economic, as in the promotion of research and development and the creation of synergies between the different actors that make up the LPA. Furthermore, the objectives of an LPA policy, or more strictly, a territorial development policy, must be articulated with a national and state development strategy, an indication that allows for an agenda for further research.

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