



PLANNING AND SOCIAL MANAGEMENT IN THE RURAL TERRITORY OF MID-ARAGUAIA, TOCANTINS: THE CHALLENGES AND THE POSSIBILITIES¹

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Abstract

This article aims to discuss the conception and development of the Rural Territory of Mid- Araguaia, located in the western region of the state of Tocantins and to point out the challenges in consolidating the territorial approach attributed to rural development in the territory's social management. With regard to methodology, two approaches were used: participant observation and document analysis (Territorial Plan

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for Sustainable Rural Development of Mid-Araguaia, Tocantins (*PTDRS*), formulated by Jalapão Ecological Institute). This information served as a guideline for organizing the discussion regarding the challenges to the planning and the social management from a territorial standpoint, through public policies developed by the Ministry of Agrarian Development's Territorial Development Office (*SDT/MDA*).

Keywords: Territory; Rural Development; Social Management

Introduction

The territorial approach to rural development in Brazil is nothing new. The starting point of Brazilian territorial policy can be attributed to the industrial district initiatives that generated local development in Europe in the nineties, grounded in previous studies, notably in northern Italy. This discussion arrives in Latin America and in Brazil around this time and it finds fertile ground, connecting the rural issue with the fight against poverty. In Brazil, from the European perspective, there was progress in the sense of combining the issues of endogenous development and regional development, as well as including the rural issue within this process (CORRÊA, 2009).

Discussion regarding rural territorial development begins during Fernando Henrique Cardoso's (FHC) presidential term (1995-2002), expanding during the offices of Lula (2003-2010) and his successor Dilma (beginning in 2011). Discussion during FHC's term was strongly influenced by the World Bank, in which the family farmer is seen as a "proto-entrepreneur". This standpoint was maintained during Lula's term. The difference between points of view during the two terms can be summarized along three lines. During Lula's term, discussion of territorial development was more pronounced, with attempts to broaden its scope by integrating rural and urban spheres and greater incentive from Lula to participate. However, the central idea of development by means of "professionalising" family farmers remains as a backdrop (GERALDI, 2012).

The current Brazilian rural development policy was instituted in 2003 by the Ministry of Agrarian Development's Territorial Development Office (*SDT/MDA*) via the National Program for the Sustainable Development of Rural Territories (*PRONAT*) (BRASIL, 2010), currently known as simply the Program for Sustainable Development of Rural Territories (*PDSTR*), "whose main objectives are encouraging the establishment of 'rural territories'" (FAVARETO; SCHOREDER, 2007) and their management via a territorial council⁶.

⁶A Territorial Council is a territory's main management organ. The agency is made up of representatives from organizations in civil society that are present within the territory, representatives who defend the interests of family farmers, and government representatives from different spheres. Councils are considered to be institutionalised spaces of participation and legitimisation of public policy, included in the processes of social management of federal funds allocated to rural development (Freitas *et al.*, 2012, p.1203). A Council must include, as a minimum, the following: Full Assembly, Ruling Authority and a Technical Unit. Legal Affairs and Technical Chambers, as well as

According to the *MDA* (2015), the territorial approach is one that integrates spaces, stakeholders in society, agents, markets and public policies. This approach, represented by the Program, considers “equity, respect for diversity, solidarity, social justice, a sense of belonging, appreciation of local culture and social inclusion as fundamental goals to be attained” (*MDA*, 2015).

This article aims to discuss the conception and development of the Rural Territory of Mid-Araguaia, located in the western region of the state of Tocantins and to point out the challenges in consolidating the territorial approach attributed to rural development in the territory's social management. The methodology used was participant observation and analysis of the Territorial Plan for Regional Sustainable Development (*PTDRS*), formulated in 2011 by Jalapão Ecological Institute. Secondary data on the municipalities, obtained from official sites, are also used.

The article is divided into a further six sections, besides this introduction. In the following section, the concept of “territory” is presented, approximating it to the *MDA*'s definition. Subsequently, the same process is observed for the concept of social management. Section 4 focuses on the challenges and the possibilities of participation. The fifth section presents the results that pertain to the Rural Territory of Mid-Araguaia, followed by the closing remarks.

The challenge regarding the multiple dimensions of the concept of “territory”

Although it is a widely debated concept in Geography, the use of the term “territory” in scientific studies has its origin in the natural sciences, more precisely in Biology and Zoology from studies related to Ethology (*TERRA*, 2009), and from there its use has spread to the other sciences.

The concept of territory is a very broad one with several interpretations, depending on the area of science which spawns it. Geography assigns greater emphasis to the territory's materiality. Political science takes into account the power relations associated with the concept of State. Economics conceives of it as a locational factor or production base. Anthropology emphasizes its symbolic

Sectoral, Legal Affairs or Technical Committees, may also be included in order to expand the process of action and participation (*MDA*, 2013).

dimension through different societies. Sociology analyses it by its participation in social relations, and Psychology through its personal identity on an individual scale (HASBAERT, 2004, p.37).

In the social sciences, the term “territory” has been used since the 19th century, when the territorial dimension was approached on a national or “Nation-state” scale (TERRA, 2009). The explanation for this can be found by analysing the etymological meaning assigned to the word “territory”. *Territorium* derives

directly from the Latin word *terra* and was used by the Roman legal system within what was called *jus terrendi* [...] as a piece of land appropriated within the limits of a certain political and administrative jurisdiction [...] (HAESBAERT, 2004, p.43).

Thus, the concept of “territory” becomes relevant due to the historical context of modern Nation-states controlling their physical space. However, new interpretations for the term's use have emerged, the term now being used frequently by both the natural sciences and the social sciences. Thus, different conceptions and approaches have been used to understand and conceptualise what is meant by “territory” (TERRA, 2009).

Haesbaert (2002) draws attention to the existence of two conceptions of “territory” that are expressed in the relationship between society and space. The first regards a naturalistic view concerning “territory”, a conception in which it is presented in its “physical, material sense, as something inherent to man, almost as if it were an extension of his being, as if man had roots in the earth” (HAESBAERT, 2002, p.118). In line with this connection to the earth, the author highlights another facet of the naturalistic interpretation that involves the field of the senses and of human sensitivity. Here, “each social group is deeply rooted to a “place” or to a rural scene with which it particularly identifies” (p.118).

The second conception portrays an ethnocentric view of the word “territory”, “which ignores the relationship between society and nature, as if territory could do without its “natural basis” (...), as if it were a purely human, social construct.” (HAESBAERT, 2002, p.119).

Territory is, therefore, a social process, invested with power and symbolism, a “result of the relationship between a human group and the space that houses it, which is, above all, dynamic” (TERRA, 2009, p.28). Haesbaert (2002) adds that “every group essentially defines itself by the links it establishes in time, weaving its ties of identity in history and in space, appropriating a territory (be it concrete and/or symbolic) in which the traits that guide its social practices are distributed” (HAESBAERT, 2002, p.93). Furthermore, the territory inspires insights that can guide and redefine power relations, and the design of development projects that prize symbolic and cultural identities (SAQUET; BRISKIEVICZ, 2009).

Abramovay (1998) argues that a territory represents a network of relationships with historical roots, political configurations and identities that perform roles still little known within economic development.

With a similar conception, Tartaruga (2005, p.5) emphasizes that “the concept of territory is directly related to the idea of power in its broad sense, or in other words, to its different origins and manifestations, but always with a focus on its projection in space”. Saquet (2007) adds to this idea, stating that a territory takes on several representations, according to its multiple and complex territorialities and its unity in diversity. According to the author, what marked the rediscovery of the concept of territory was the perception of how the power relations that exist within its space define and they are defined by changes in the territory's social relations. Tartaruga (2005), based on the geographer Marcelo Lopes de Souza, argues that the concept of territory needs to be understood as both a restrictive element (when emphasis on the idea of power is given) and as a broader element, when the manner in which the concept covers the political, cultural, economic and social diversity that exists within a certain space is considered.

(...) a territory's materiality is not reflected by its more commonplace and superficial description, brought into effect in the last century through a non-reflective and positivist study of geography. On the contrary, a territory's materiality is expressed within the inter-subjective relations derived, ultimately, from the need to produce and to live that connects human subjects to the environment's materiality, causing interactions between them as members of a

society. Territory, thus, results as the content, means and process of social relations. These social relations, which are at the same time material, give substance to the territory (SAQUET, 2007, p.8).

These social relations, besides defining the territory itself, are responsible for the existence of the power relations disputed within its space.

The understanding of “territory” as a whole involves grasping social reality via its strategies and tactics for remaining within the territory. The author states that “these tactics and strategies are a result of power itself (belonging to the rulers) and of resistance to it (by the ruled), which is characteristic of power relations (TARTARUGA, 2005, p.5). For Santos and Silveira (2008, p.20), it is important to understand the significance of the social relations that exist within the territory in terms of unity and diversity. Based on the above considerations, “territory” may be understood as the spatial basis that houses the various social processes through which societies organize themselves and define rules of inclusion/exclusion, and of belonging/not belonging.

Saquet (2007) uses the studies of the Italian sociologist Arnaldo Bagnasco (1988 – “*La costruzione sociale Del mercato*”) to show that it is necessary to perceive the development of a certain territory using multiple approaches, which take into account its various regional profiles as distinct social formations that coexist and are connected to one another within a network. The author explains that Arnaldo Bagnasco uses regional empirical evidence as a basis for his arguments, and emphasizes his analysis based on a number of mechanisms of economic regulation that are present within the process of territorialisation, consisting of the following: “a) the reciprocity between individuals and institutions; b) the market, which creates social relations and actions; c) the internal and external organisation of each firm and d) politics as a form of intervention in and protection of the interests of certain social groups” (SAQUET, 2007, p.96).

In this way, and in agreement with the ideas of Milton Santos and Maria Silveira (2008, p.19), territory is not a simple data, but a result. For the geographer, the defining element of the territory is its use and not its definition *per se*.

What is usually understood by territory is a tract of land that has been appropriated and

is being used. But the word “territoriality” as a synonym for belonging to that which belongs to us...this feeling of exclusivity and boundary goes beyond the human race and dispenses with the existence of the State. Thus, this idea of territoriality extends to animals also, as a synonym for a space for living and reproduction. Human territoriality, however, also presupposes concern with one's destiny, building a future, which, among living beings, is a privilege of man (SANTOS; SILVEIRA, 2008, p.19).

It is in this sense that Cirad-Sar (1996, p.134) highlights that territories are in a constant process of construction, materializing “through the strategies of the stakeholders involved and mechanisms of collective learning, or in other words, the acquisition of knowledge, common information through practice or collective experience”.

Magdaleno (2005, p.119) adds that territory can be considered “(...) an effective and/or symbolic appropriation of a portion of geographical space by a particular social agent, the concept does not denote an unchangeable 'entity', one without scalar variation”. Santos and Silveira (2008, p. 247) add “we are faced with a territory that is alive, living”. From this perspective, two important elements must be considered: the fixed elements, in other words, static issues within the territory, such as those that make up public or social order, and the elements in flux, or in other words, the moving ones, “composed of public and private elements in proportions that vary by country, to the extent that these countries are more or less open to privatization initiatives” (SANTOS; SILVEIRA, 2008).

These authors place great emphasis on economic issues as the territory's defining factors. They believe that the political regulation of the territory is necessary and that it should also be regulated by the foreign market. In opposition to this, Saquet (2007, p.9) emphasizes the importance of territories' internal autonomy, understanding that this autonomy does not mean self-sufficiency or isolation from outside influence. The author defends the “ability of self-government regarding internal and external relations of territoriality, of self-projection of development centred on these relations”. In general terms, he declares that the need for “balance between justice and freedom also requires autonomy in the development of territories, obtained via processes that are at the same time conflicting,

cooperative and competitive”. The same need for balance between internal and external movements is expounded by Cirad-Sar (1996, p.134), who argues that the main issue when perceiving development from a territorial approach is the integration, organisation and coordination between “resources and actors, by opposing sectoral or corporatist approaches that separate the rural from the urban, the agricultural from the industrial”.

Saquet (2007) adds that development based on a territorial approach should not be guided only by economic advantages, but it should also show the social, cultural and political advantages of the location, respecting its peculiarities, instead of adapting them to external standards that aim simply to maximize yield for global financial capital.

From this discussion, some defining aspects of the notion of “territory” can be found, such as multidimensionality, power conflicts, tension between permanence and change, among others. It is also important to highlight the tangible (physical space, structures) and intangible issues (power, sense of belonging, identification). The concept of “territory” is a complex and plural one that embraces diversity, but at the same time is a unit held together by space and identification.

Given the previous discussion, a comparison with the *MDA's* definition of “territory” can now be made:

(...) a geographically defined, usually contiguous physical space that includes both the urban and rural spheres, which is characterized by multidimensional criteria such as environment, economy, society, culture, politics and institutions, and by a population with relatively distinct social groups, who relate to one another internally and externally via specific processes, in which one or more elements that indicate social, cultural and territorial cohesion may be distinguished” (BRASIL, 2005b, p.7-8).

The *MDA's* definition can be divided into two parts, space and population. However, the definition also considers intangible issues such as relations between social groups, which include power, identity and social and cultural cohesion. Generally, in theoretical terms, the *MDA's* definition follows the current debate on territories. The only

reservation relates to the issue of relations between social groups via “specific processes”. If these processes are specific to the territory, then, there is no problem, but if the *MDA* is referring to a restriction of territorial discussions to institutionalised spaces such as the territorial council, which does not seem to be the case, the conception is too restrictive.

In the following section, the concept of social management will be presented, following the same structure as this section. First, the academic debate, and then, the *MDA*'s position.

Social management: a theoretical approximation

Social management is established in Brazil as one of the few genuinely national experiences of conceptual development. The starting point for research was the creation of the Social Management Study Program from the Brazilian School of Public Administration and companies belonging to Getúlio Vargas Foundation (*PEGS/EBAPE/FGV*) in 1990, the initial conceptual work performed by Tenório (1998). Nowadays, social management is, in Brazil, an area of study that has seen some progress, but it is still in search of its first paradigm (CANÇADO, 2013).

After the Program's implementation, several other research groups and discussion forums were created throughout the country. Today, social development in Brazil boasts scientific journals, and technological, undergraduate, graduate and master's courses, a network of researchers (Social Management Researchers Network (*RGS*)) and a national event that has already been held on eight occasions (National Conference of Social Management Researchers) (CANÇADO; PEREIRA; TENÓRIO, 2015). This diversity of researchers and spaces is currently undergoing intense debate, which has given rise to considerable progress in the field.

Tenório (1998; 2005; 2008a; 2012) presents social management as antithetical to strategic management. Influenced by the ideas of Guerreiro Ramos (RAMOS, 1981) and by the Frankfurt School's critical theory, both first generation (Horkheimer and Adorno), and second generation (Habermas), Tenório (2005) defines social management as:

[a] dialogic management process in which authority of decision is shared between those who participate in an action (that may occur within any social system – public, private or

non-governmental). The adjective “social” that qualifies the noun “management” is to be understood as a privileged space for social relations in which all have a right to speak, without any kind of constraints (TENÓRIO, 2005, p.102).

Other conceptions of social management approximate it to development management, as a perspective on social development management with an emphasis on training the social manager and on his/her performance as a transformative mediator within collective spaces (FISCHER, 2002). Another approach presents social management as a process and as an end, approximating it to public management, though not management by the State (FRANÇA FILHO, 2008). Carrion (2007) adds that social management lends itself to “good governance”, which contemplates the possibility and ability to participate, that would normally be the prerogative of the State. The State should, besides creating spaces, make participation possible.

Boullosa and Schommer (2008; 2009) demonstrate concern with what they classify as the rapid institutionalisation of the field of social management which could, during this process, lose its status as an innovative process, becoming an innovative product, establishing a formal model. Cançado, Tenório and Pereira (2011) argue that the field's institutionalisation is not a problem *per se*, but the way this happens could be. The authors agree that social management cannot have a prescriptive character, under threat of losing its own *raison d'être* due to its origins in the Frankfurt school of critical theory.

Progress in the field is permeated with debate. One of the discussions relates to the concrete possibilities of social management as a process for broadening participation. Pinho (2010) argues that the Brazilian population is probably not ready for participation and that the opening of these channels of participation would only serve to legitimise positions that are already previously decided by the elite. According to the author, for social management work an extensive education process, would be necessary prior to opening these spaces. Cançado, Tenório and Pereira (2011) recognize this danger, however they argue, based on Paulo Freire (2001), that participation is not learnt via formal education, but by participating. These spaces would be schools of participation. The authors also resort to Lave and Wenger's (1991) concepts of communities of practice and legitimate peripheral participation to complement their arguments.

To summarize the argument, people have at least the right to participate, although they also have an intrinsic duty to do so. Even if not versed in the subjects to be discussed in the public domain (in this case, the territories' deliberative jurisdictions), these subjects are a part of their daily lives. If Pinho's (2010) argument is accepted, it may be considered as justification for maintaining the *status quo*. This situation is described by Motta (1981) as the naturalisation of management from the outside and domination via the bureaucratic apparatus, in other words, one can only participate/offer an opinion if "prepared", which generally means the elite, this preparedness being understood to apply to those with a formal education or holding public office. On the other hand, Cançado, Tenório and Pereira (2011) defend the right to participation via these channels of participation, even given the risks involved. This process can, with time, make participation more qualified, an initially "peripheral" but "legitimate" participation. However, it is necessary to qualify this participation whenever possible, making it "less" peripheral.

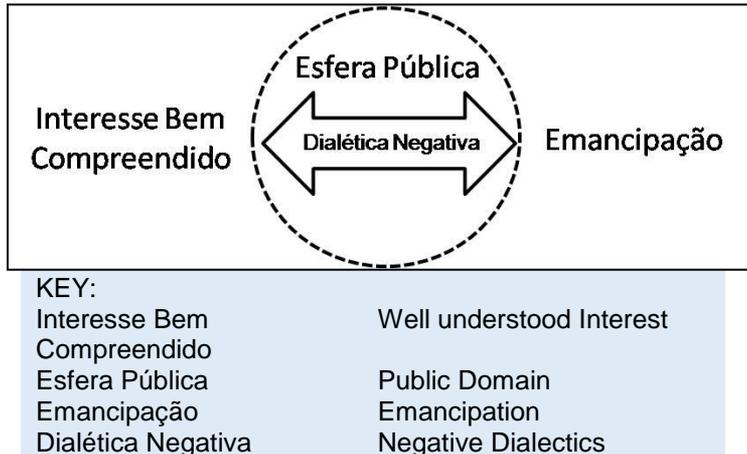
Lastly, Araújo (2012), in line with Boullosa and Schommer (2008; 2009), argues that inconsistencies and ambiguities still exist today within social management. The field is still a long way from being established, this establishment arises from the practices which already exist. The author further argues that social management is ostensibly multi-paradigmatic by nature, it does not fit into just one paradigm. Cançado (2013) defends the idea that social management has already come a long way and that, despite discrepancies on some points, much progress has already been accomplished. Cançado and Rigo (2013) add that the first paradigm shall be based on participation. This is the main consensus among authors in the field. It can be said that if there is no participation, then there is no social management. On the other hand, the authors question: what kind of participation is this? How is it arranged? Thus, a number of avenues of research aiming to better qualify this participation emerge, linked to the spaces in which it occurs in both scope and characterization.

In a recent study, Cançado, Tavares and Dallabrida (2013), discuss points of convergence and divergence between the different concepts of territorial governance and social management, highlight that social management can take place beyond the State. Social management is a process devised and run by people, provided they have the freedom to do so. The State is welcome, but not essential. Oliveira and Cançado (2015) add to this conception of justice (derived from Plato's Republic) as an important reference point for social

management. This justice is understood to be the possibility for people to realize their potential.

To close this brief presentation on the concept of social management in Brazil, Figure 1 shows Cançado, Pereira and Tenório's (2015) theoretical approximation.

Figure 1: Theoretical approximation of social management



Source: Adapted from Cançado, Pereira and Tenório (2015).

This theoretical approximation of social management occurs through three large theoretical categories: Well-understood Interest, Public Sphere and Emancipation. Interaction between these categories occurs through Adorno's negative dialectics (ADORNO, 2009).

In general terms, the idea is that social management occurs in a Public Sphere where decision-making is done collectively, without coercion, based on transparency, intersubjectivity and dialogicity. This Public Sphere is nurtured by the relationship between Well-understood Interest and Emancipation.

The perspective of Well-understood Interest is based on Toqueville (1987). Interests are “well-understood” when it is perceived that individual interests are supportive (interdependent) of the collective interest, or in other words, to achieve individual interests sustainably, the collective interest must also be achieved. On the other side of the Public Sphere is Emancipation, in its classical sense. Emancipation means to think for oneself, to free oneself from tutelage (CHAUÍ, 2011), considering others' opinions, of course, but

understanding oneself as an individual capable of having one's own ideas and participating in rational debate.

As for Adorno's Negative Dialectics (2009), these establish the dynamics of theoretical approximation. Hegelian dialectics begin with the thesis and proceed to the antithesis, closing the cycle with the synthesis. In Negative Dialectics there is no synthesis, or "false synthesis", as Adorno (2009) prefers. The process takes place continuously. The greater the Well-understood Interest in the Public Sphere is (in the configuration shown), the greater the possibility for emancipation and vice versa. The opposite is also true.

This theoretical approximation, still regarded as being under-construction by the authors, should be considered a Weber's ideal-type, or in other words, a situation at which one wants to, but will never fully arrive. Thus, Cançado, Pereira and Tenório (2015) present social management as a decision-making process that occurs in the public sphere in which well-understood interests and emancipation are related via negative dialectics.

The *MDA's* definition of social management will now be presented. According to the *MDA*, social management within its territorial policy is understood to be:

(...) the process through which the group of social actors within a territory becomes involved not only in the spaces of deliberation and consultation regarding development policies, but, more extensively, in the set of initiatives ranging from the mobilisation of these agents and local factors to the implementation and assessment of the actions planned, going through the stages of diagnosis, plan preparation and policy and project negotiation. Social management thus entails constant sharing of responsibility for the territory's fate (BRASIL, 2005b, p.10).

The *MDA's* definition is very close to the approximation of Cançado, Pereira and Tenório's (2015), assigning broad roles to stakeholders within the territory's management processes and its shared responsibility. This process necessarily involves different degrees of Well-understood Interest and Emancipation, besides requiring a Public Sphere of a deliberative nature. Upon assigning to these stakeholders leading roles within the "constant sharing of

responsibility for the territory's fate”, Negative Dialectics can be approached, as this continuity requires a process that matures via praxis (action and reflection) (FREIRE, 2001).

In closing this study's theoretical framework, one may observe that the concepts of territory and social management used by the MDA are quite close to those used in academic discussion, enabling one to infer that they are indeed derived from it, in as much as ministries count on academic support to build their policies. However, all of this refers to the discussion's theoretical background. In the next section, some criticisms of the programs carried out by academia are outlined.

The challenge of participation in processes of promotion of rural development from a territorial approach

Social public policies arise from the need to support disadvantaged populations, due to the poor distribution of income or even to the social and economic exclusion that they face (TEIXEIRA, 2002).

The top-down manner in which public policy has historically been presented in Brazil has been widely debated, and a bottom-up participative model has been sought after by society, with different degrees of permeability *vis-à-vis* the State. Discussion on the roles of specialists and the participation of “laypeople” is once again taken up, raised by Pinho (2010) in relation to the possibilities of social management. The issue raised is whether the public policies should be designed by those “prepared” to do so and then presented to society. In other words, should public policies, mainly those of a social nature, take into account the participation of society in their preparation processes?

Freitas and Freitas (2011) highlight a recurring concern regarding the creation and strengthening of local decision-making organs. According to the authors, the institutional mechanisms (councils and committees) were created by the demand for public policies, which may cause certain weaknesses in these organizations' constitutions, as they may have been created without a process of mobilisation and education (FREITAS; FREITAS, 2011). Furthermore, those who make up these entities may not have an affinity with the discussions raised by them. These institutions are usually created by default.

If participation is understood as a process, stages or cycles, that should be performed, it can easily be identified. In other words, there

must be dialogue between society and government. In this sense, one should note the concern of the *SDT/MDA* in creating institutional document No. 3 in 2005, with the aim at organizing the elements relative to the conception and the method of work within the specific theme of social management of rural territories and, from this, helping to make the information and guidelines available to all of those who are or will be involved in these territorial articulations (BRASIL, 2005a). Furthermore, the document clarifies the manner of managing the creation of councils and the territorial approach to be attributed to this organ of rural development promotion, for the preparation, implementation, execution and evaluation of the *PTDRS*.

This concern in disseminating information, on the other hand, does not disqualify the lack of discussion in relation to the development of territorial public policy. In one way or another, “specialists” (be they academic or otherwise) design public policy, which must be participative in order to work, in a top-down manner, without consulting those who will be the protagonists in this participation. Geraldi (2012) adds that the creation of territorial councils may decrease the legitimacy of other collective spaces that already exist or may exist in the future. This analysis does not aim to criticize policies *per se*. The discussion is being held beyond the merits of the idea, the analysis taking into account the processes and the consequences that may arise from it.

Geraldi (2012) further argues that territorial policies have a controlling character on the part of the State. The final objective is the possibility of rationalising and planning rural spaces, bringing in development as a “natural path” and, in some ways, as an imposition. Moreover, territorialisation enables the State to plan and to control space more objectively. The appropriation of the development of family farming, integrating it into the market as a “family farming agribusiness”, reinforces the instrumental nature of the policy. The author further considers that this “decentralisation” has an administrative character rather than a political one.

Corrêa (2009) highlights that this transplantation of territorial policy from Europe to Brazil did not take into account the differences between the two, mainly in relation to the latter's higher levels of poverty and exclusion, much longer distances and problems with infrastructure and information access. In this regard, we often find ourselves in a legal no man's land. Brazilian legislation only recognizes states and municipalities; territories do not officially exist. Thus,

funding for territories is decided by a supra municipal organ, though it must be processed through the municipalities (GERALDI, 2012).

In order to understand this process in a real situation, the creation of the Rural Territory of Mid-Araguaia in Tocantins, is presented below, with a discussion on how it behaves *vis-à-vis* the concepts presented and the context in which it is inserted.

The Rural Territory of Mid-Araguaia, Tocantins

The Rural Territory of Mid-Araguaia (*TRMA*), is located in the western region of the state of Tocantins, with an area of 14,675.5km². According to *PTDRS* (2011) data, the territory consists mainly of a population associated with the former crystal mining and rubber-tapping activities, home to a wave of migrants from the states of Maranhão, Piauí and southern Goiás. These migrants, who arrived seeking to improve their families' standard of living, now comprise the municipalities that make up the territory.

With the large concentration of land ownership in the region and the decline of the crystal mines, many workers face difficulties in providing for their families, which led to these workers organizing themselves to secure a tract of land so they could live off agriculture (*PTDRS*, 2011). Thus, via rural workers' associations and unions, the implantation of land reform projects within the region began.

Before the *TRMA* came into being, there was an Environmental Educators Cooperative, which lobbied for the *MMA* (Ministry of the Environment) Call for Proposals no. 1/2006 – Mapping of Potential Educational Cooperatives for Sustainable Territories. According to information supplied by the council itself, the town hall in the municipality of Couto de Magalhães led the process using its own funds, between 2007 and 2009.

Between 2007 and 2008, the municipalities of Couto de Magalhães, Bernardo Sayão, Juarina and Pequizeiro began discussion on the creation of a territory that would be part of *PRONAT*, and this was achieved in 2008. This recognition was given by the Tocantins State Council for Sustainable Rural Development (*CEDRUS*), initially with a mere ten municipalities. In 2009 and 2010, the municipality of Fortaleza do Tabocão proposed and achieved membership and in 2013, the municipalities of Colinas do Tocantins and Presidente Kennedy were also incorporated (*PTDRS*, 2011).

These initiatives, by the municipalities and the Environmental Educators Cooperative may be considered a proactive answer to a public policy that, initially, did not include the region in its

territorialisation criteria. On the other hand, the creation of the territory also sought the benefits arising from the public policy.

Table 1: Characterisation of the Municipalities of the Rural Territory of Mid-Araguaia, Tocantins

Municipality	Total Population	Area (Km2)	Urban Population	Rural Population	HDI (2000)	HDI (2010)
Couto Magalhães	5,009	1,585.790	1,884	3,125	0.40	0.61
Arapoema	6,742	1,552.220	5,455	1,287	0.48	0.68
Bandeirantes	3,122	1,541.840	1,685	1,437	0.44	0.64
Bernardo Sayão	4,456	926.888	2,187	2,269	0.50	0.64
Colinas do Tocantins	30,879	843.846	29,649	1,230	0.56	0.70
Colméia	8,611	990.720	6,370	2,241	0.50	0.67
Fortaleza do Tabocão	2,423	621.562	1,968	455	0.47	0.66
Goianorte	4,956	1,800.980	2,760	2,196	0.41	0.62
Itaporã do Tocantins	2,445	972.977	1,563	882	0.51	0.65
Juarina	2,231	481.048	1,033	1,198	0.44	0.58
Pau D'Arco	4,588	1,377.410	2,900	1,688	0.42	0.66
Pequizeiro	5,054	1,209.800	2,390	2,664	0.43	0.63
Presidente Kennedy	3,685	770.423	3,229	456	0.52	0.67
TOTAL	84,201	14,675.500	63,073	21,128		
Average	6,477	1.128.880	4,851	1,625	0.47	0.65
State of Tocantins	1,383,445	277,720.569	1,090,106	293,339	0.52	0.69

Source: Prepared by the authors. Data from IBGE(2012), Census (2010) and Atlas (2010).

This information shows that, between 2000 and 2010, the territory's HDI increased by 38% whereas that of the state increased by 32%. However, with the exception of Colinas do Tocantins, easily the territory's largest municipality, which was already above the state average, all the municipalities are still below the state average. As the territory was only recently created, especially in relation to the follow-up HDI survey in 2012, only 4 years after creation, this difference in the rate of the index's growth compared to the state cannot be attributed to the territorialisation process.

According to MDA (2013) data, the territory has a large number of family farmers, a population served by the federal government's policies, as well as 41 agrarian reform and land credit projects.

Table 2: Family farmer/Agrarian reform numbers in the Rural Territory of Mid-Araguaia, Tocantins

Family Farmers	Agrarian reform (08/10/2013)		DAP* (September 2013)		PRONAF 2012/2013* (October 2013)	
	Families Settled	Restored Area (ha)	Individuals	Legal Entities	Contracts	Value (R\$)
4,024	2,989	134,237	3,567	0	1,325	28,838,044

*DAP: Declaration of Suitability to the National Program for Strengthening Family Farming (PRONAF).

Source: MDA (2013).

Table 3: Land credit numbers in the Rural Territory of Mid-Araguaia, Tocantins

LAND CREDIT (10/10/2013)			
Year	Families	Area Acquired (ha)	Value (R\$)
2002-2005	0	0	0
2006	53	2,123	2,119,995
2007	220	6,220	8,579,547
2008	38	1,381	1,453,730
2009	68	2,093	2,636,022
2010-2013	0	0	0
TOTAL	379	11,817	14,789,294

Source: MDA (2013).

Because it is a population formed mainly by family farmers, Table 2 also shows the number of Declarations of Suitability to PRONAF (DAPs), as well as the number of contracts issued by PRONAF which, in Table 4 is presented in detail, showing the number of contracts relating to each harvest.

Table 4: PRONAF data for the Rural territory of Mid-Araguaia, Tocantins

National Program for Strengthening Family Farming – PRONAF (October 2013)			
Harvest	Number of contracts	Value in R\$	Average value in R\$
1999/2000	616	1,371,201	2,226
2000/2001	356	1,215,665	3,415
2001/2002	365	1,316,721	3,607
2002/2003	405	2,069,293	5,109
2003/2004	992	5,614,408	5,659
2004/2005	617	2,842,062	4,606
2005/2006	1,250	6,083,157	4,867
2006/2007	1,310	6,592,654	5,033
2007/2008	2,479	14,600,419	5,890
2008/2009	1,306	12,421,254	9,511
2009/2010	2,030	16,966,453	8,358
2010/2011	2,137	16,295,579	7,625
2011/2012	1,479	17,289,663	11,690
2012/2013	1,325	28,838,044	21,765

Source: MDA (2013).

Once again, the variation in indicators cannot be attributed to the territorialisation process. However, it can be seen that there is an increasing trend in the average value of contracts, most notably from 2011/2012 onwards, which can be explained by the effects of the experience curve together with the needs of family farmers, such as expansion of cultivation or acquisition of machinery/tools.

As for other actions undertaken by the MDA within the municipalities after the creation of the Rural Territory of Mid-Araguaia, the acquisition of R\$147,798 set aside for family farming in 2012 related to the National School Meals Program (*PNAE*), should be mentioned. Investments by *PROINF*, the Support for Infrastructure and Service Projects Program, totalled R\$2,894,884 (between 2003 and 2012) and R\$37,138,670 was transferred from the Municipalities Participation Fund (*FPM*) which comprises the municipalities that make up the Territory. The Growth Acceleration Program (*PAC*) enabled the acquisition of ten backhoe loaders and three motor graders for the territory's municipalities.

Now that the MDA's initiatives in the territory have been presented, the following section comprises the central discussion regarding the territory's social management and planning.

Challenges and possibilities for the territory's planning and management

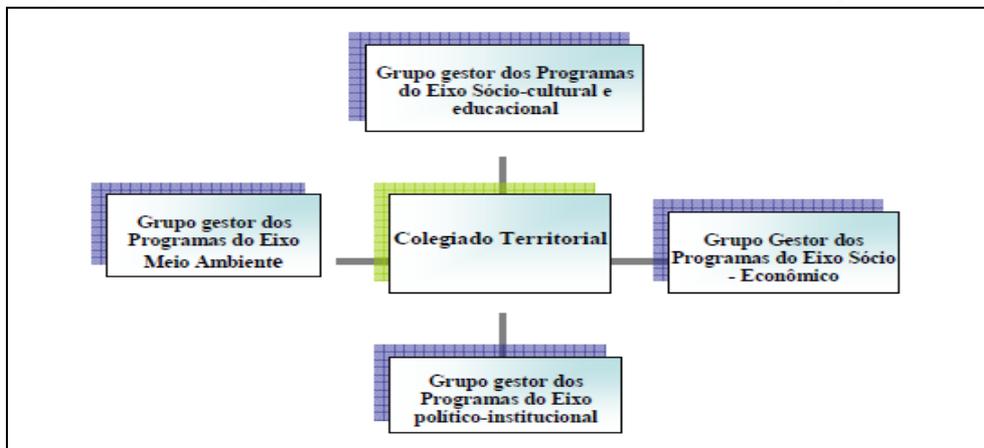
The management model for the Rural Territory of Mid-Araguaia seeks to involve and allocate co-responsibility to the three spheres of government (federal, state and municipal), the various public bodies and the leaders within the location. Moreover, one can see that the *PTDRS* developed in 2011 followed the characteristics identified by Institutional Document No. 3 with regard to the references for the social management of rural territories. However, in practice, there was difficulty in obtaining the broad participation of the municipalities and civil society in the process of territorial management, as stated by the council's members during the *NEDET* team meetings⁷.

It is worth mentioning that the *PTDRS* was created by Jalapão Ecological Institute, engaged by the *MDA* to this end. The methodology described goes back to participative strategic planning techniques, validated by the territorial council (*PTDRS*, 2011). This strategy of counting on external support to develop the *PTDRS* was considered by the council as an important step.

Execution of the Territory's *PTDRS*, however, is the responsibility of the Territorial Council in partnership with the *NEDETs*, which must interact with the stakeholders and also promote the monitoring and assessment of the *PTDRS*, "making it an instrument of negotiation, proposition and stipulation of public policies and development actions" (*PTDRS*, 2011, p.140). In the specific case of the Rural Territory of Mid-Araguaia, the Territorial Council has indeed established technical councils but, according to the team's observations and reports by the members themselves, they need incentives for reactivation.

The *PTDRS* also demonstrates that the Council is organized on axes of operation (Figure 2) in accordance with the programs that have been implemented.

⁷*NEDET* – Territorial Development Further Education Centre. Established by the *MDA/CNPq* Call for Proposal 11/2014. This call for proposal aims to approach universities and territorial councils via the creation of centres for further education. These centres have Territorial Advisors for Social Management and Productive Inclusion.

Figure 2: Mid-Araguaia's Territorial Council and the Axes of Operation**KEY:**

1. Colegiado Territorial
2. Grupo gestor dos Programas do Eixo Sócio-cultural e educacional
3. Grupo gestor dos Programas do Eixo Meio Ambiente
4. Grupo gestor dos Programas do Eixo Sócio-econômico
5. Grupo gestor dos Programas do Eixo político-institucional

1. Territorial Council
2. Management group for the Programs on the Sociocultural and educational Axis
3. Management group for the Programs on the Environmental Axis
4. Management group for the Programs on the Socioeconomic Axis
5. Management group for the Programs on the Political-Institutional Axis

Source: *PTDRS* (2011).

Each management group consists of commissions formed in accordance with the programs created (*PTDRS*, 2011). Table 5 presents the programs based on each axis.

Table 5: The *PTDRS*'s axes and programs in Mid-Araguaia, Tocantins

Sociocultural and educational axis	Environmental axis	Socioeconomic development axis	Political-Institutional development axis
Quality education	Prevention and control of fire	Production	Political institutional strengthening of the territory
Health and sanitation	Solid waste management	Agro industrialisation/ Transformation	
Culture, leisure and sport	Conservation, preservation and recovery of the various forms of vegetation and the Special Protection Areas	Trading activity	
Strengthening social capital	Soil conservation and recovery	Social and productive infrastructure	
Combating extreme poverty within the Territory	Promoting and incentivising environmental research	The Territory's production system	
	Incentivising sustainable economic activity		

Source: Produced by the authors based on *PTDRS* (2011) data.

With the definition of strategic axes and their respective programs, the Territorial Council intends to organize better planning, monitoring and evaluation of the needs of the populations that comprise the Rural Territory of Mid-Araguaia, thereby enabling the numerous stakeholders to overcome the challenges of this new institutional arrangement.

According to the authors of the present study and *NEDET* members, the creation of the Rural Territory of Mid-Araguaia demonstrates the perceptions of the stakeholders with regard to the possibilities of development within the territory. Pronouncing the region as a territory was a local demand, not a top-down imposition

from the State or the *MDA*. However, there are still important challenges to be overcome.

There is a latent need to publicize the Territorial Council to civil society within the territory. In many cases this space is unknown or very new to some of the stakeholders, who still do not feel they are part of the process. Thus, the council, via a legitimate peripheral participation process (LAVE; WENGER, 1991) can be a proactive agent in publicizing this deliberative space. This need is also present with the Territorial Council's discussions.

In parallel, municipal executives, mainly those who did not take part in the territory's creation process, should be sensitised to adopt the proposal. In this sense, discussion is necessary, not in the instrumental sense, only for raising funds, but for discussing demands and local potential which could be the subject of debate in the Territorial Council.

Discussion within the territorial council generally moves in the direction of social management. The main limitations are related, firstly, to the issue of "territories deciding and municipalities implementing", aggravated by the fact that a number of municipalities are sometimes, for various reasons, insolvent, thus not having the right to receive funds. This is a common problem to practically all territories. Another limitation to the territory's social management is the lack of continuity inherent to a process under construction whose development is influenced by changes both in the municipal executive spheres and in the dynamics of civil society. These limitations are not incapacitating, but may be considered challenges to the process itself. In any case, one can generally say that decisions are collective and guided by social management.

However, the most relevant issue regarding the Rural Territory of Mid-Araguaia is coping with the topics and public policies presented exclusively by the *MDA*. The Territorial Council's structure has the potential to transcend public policy and discuss topics of regional interest, seeking resources and partnerships beyond the portfolio presented by the *MDA*. This could be considered a long-term objective for the Council's actions.

In this regard, the *NEDET*'s performance can be relevant in the sense of acting **with** and not **for** the council, taking advantage of the technical and even political potential that the universities have. However, it can be said that this is a shared responsibility; on one hand, the *NEDET* as hired technical advisors and the Territorial Council on the other, as the deliberative public sphere.

In terms of planning within the territory, the *PTDRS*, in some ways, is a “constructed product”, developed in an assisted, but participatory fashion, and may be considered a starting point. It becomes necessary, then, to implement the plan, in addition to making adjustments where appropriate.

The next section contains the closing remarks.

Closing remarks

The consolidation of a Territorial Council enables the participation of both public power and civil society. The emphasis given to the territorial approach has the potential to become a means to guide the collective decision-making process in the development, monitoring and enforcement of public policies.

The aim of this article was to discuss the conception and the development of the Rural Territory of Mid-Araguaia. Initially, the concepts of “territory” and “social management” were analysed in the light of current academic discussion. Significant conceptual convergence was observed. Following this, the experience of the Rural Territory of Mid-Araguaia was presented, in which potential for the territory's social management was identified. This potential arises from the pro activeness in the territory's creation, from the development of the *PTDRS* to the involvement of the *NEDET*. The main challenges, however, pertain to broadening the participation of both civil society and the municipal public authorities. In this sense, the Territorial Council, in partnership with the *NEDET*, can be important players.

The next actions to be taken in the territory are very important. The reactivation of legal affairs committees and the rapprochement with the public authorities make up the agenda. For future studies on the territory, the gathering of information can be broadened via interviews with municipal public administrators and members of civil society who are not yet involved within the Territorial Council.

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