

PRESENTATION

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This new INTERthesis dossier focuses on one of the essential debate topics today about the *territorial dimension* of the new development strategies concerned with the worsening of the global socioecological crisis, that is: the challenges related to the activation and integration in networks of *localized agri-food systems*.

For its composition, some contributions presented and debated during the *VI International Conference on Localized Agri-food System - The LAFS facing the opportunities and challenges of the new global context* have been gathered. The event took place in the city of Florianópolis, from May 21th to 25th of 2013. The event was promoted by the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC) and by the Center for the International Cooperation on Agricultural Research for Development (CIRAD). Besides UFSC and CIRAD, EPAGRI, State University of Santa Catarina (UDESC), as well as research institutes and universities from other states (UFMG, IEA/SP, UFS, UFRGS) and Mexican and Argentinian partners from the RED SIAL Latino Americana also participated in the organization of lectures, discussion tables and workshops.

The issue in question here is being widely discussed inside and outside of the academia. In the past three decades, the concept of *territorial development* has

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become increasingly present in the international debate about alternative regulation strategies of modern economies. In the uncertain and controversial scenario generated by the worsening of the global crisis - a socioeconomical, sociocultural, sociopolitical as well as socioecological crisis - in several regional contexts, new socioeconomical dynamization practices have been emerging, thus challenging the traditional development conceptions and analyses. Such practices highlight the need for a wider and stricter incorporation of the historical and spatial dimensions in the reflections about the feasibility conditions of new *ascending strategies* (endogenous or *bottom-up*) of rural and urban development, now in a *post-Fordist* modernization scenario (PECQUEUR; VIEIRA, 2013).

In interpreting this undoubtedly singular phenomenon, the pioneering role of several Italian economists and sociologists in rescuing the experiences of Italy's *diffuse industrialization* in the late 70s must be acknowledged. Indeed, studies that focus on the socioeconomical dynamization process in the "Third Italy" impacted profoundly on the further evolution of such ideas (BAGNASCO, 1977; BRUSCO, 1982). As it is known, these economists and sociologists reinstated the key concept of *industrial district*, introduced by Alfred Marshall in the dawn of the 19th century. The 1980's saw a rise in comparative research on new *flexible production systems*, considered to be product of autonomous, but not autarkic, territorial dynamics. The intention was to generate new impulses for a review of the dominant spatial planning approaches, within initiatives concerned with the grounding of a *territorial economics* (BECATTINI, 1992; COURLET, 2001; PECQUEUR, 2006).

As highlighted by Bernard Pecqueur (1987), the *territorial-space* differentiates itself from the *local-space* due to its "construction" from the creative dynamism of the individuals who inhabit it. In this sense, the notion of *territory* begins to designate an endogenous process of *creative and institutional creation*. Such notion highlights the potential present in not exclusively mercantile relationships, bearing in mind the fulfillment of the basic (material and intangible) needs of the local communities. Besides that, such notion should not be identified to a certain geographical scale of coordination between agents. It concerns the consideration of a dimension situated between the individual and the national productive systems, in terms of a peculiar and highly innovative type of cooperative self - organization of social agents on a local level. In this sense, they appear to be sensitive to the adoption of new forms of

productive valorization of the so-called *territorial resources* in their territories (GUMUCHIAN; PECQUEUR, 2007).

Among these processes marked by the local agents' intentionality are included, besides other dimensions, the creation of new forms of *economic reciprocity*, nurtured by the development of a particularly cohesive and cooperative social fabric; the structuring of *local productive systems* in rural areas, integrated in *networks* of small and medium companies that transcend the sphere of purely mercantile relationships and unfold new types of non-agricultural activities in rural areas; and research of new authentically decentralized institutional arrangements, aimed at the progressive maturing of *territorial governance systems*.

In spite of the relevance and the undeniable heuristic potential found in such analyses, they usually neglect a rigorous evaluation of the compulsions, opportunities and controversies associated to the evidences of an unprecedented historical *socioecological crisis* on a global scale. Occasional references to the intensive degradation syndrome of the life support systems in the biosphere continue to mobilize - as a general rule - reductionist interpretations of the potential present in the concept of *sustainable development* - understood as an objective to be reached on a global scale. Thus, the risks of a *technocratic purely economics-based shift* in dealing with the relationships between a territorial focus on development and the search for a responsible treatment of the structural causes of the socioecological crisis have become more evident. To put it differently, the force of inertia of the *economics-based ideology* (BOURG, 1996; DUPUY, 1980, 2002) can seriously compromise the still incipient ongoing initiatives of promoting a hybrid focus of *sustainable territorial development*.

More recently, from the 1990s, the emergence of a concept of *localized agri-food systems* (MUCHNIK; SAUTIER, 1998) put in perspective a process of institutional activation and strengthening of geographical concentrations of rural agro-industries, understood as powerful levers of these new territorial development dynamics. This concept emerged within the development of research about industrial districts, integrated local productive systems, and *clusters*. In other words, the focus shifted to stimulating an agri-food production with *cultural identity*, "*em territórios marcados por complexas articulações territórios-atores-sistemas-de-inovação e por*

um imbricamento crescente das relações rural-urbanas"³ (BOUCHER; ORTEGA, LEGLISE, 2012, p. 6; REQUIER-DESJARDINS, 2007). The background of this debate - which has developed considerably since then - remains marked by the problematic of *endogeneity* of development dynamics of the so called *local economics*, *poverty reduction* in rural areas, promotion of *agricultural multi-functionality*, *qualification* of products linked to the territory, and the search for *food security* - in a now conflicting scenario of increasingly severe global crisis.

The dossier is structured in two parts. First, we offer certain elements for a contemporary reflection about the *conceptual, theoretical, and methodological foundations of the Territorial Development, Sustainable Territorial Development and Localized Agri-food System approaches*.

Bernard Pecqueur's text (*Territorial development. A new approach to development processes for the economies of the developing countries*) offers a brief characterization of the most essential traces of the *territorial development model* and *points out the assumptions to its consistent application to the realities of developing countries*.

Following, Claude Courlet (*Localized productive systems: from definition to model*) focuses on clarifying the concept of *localized productive system*, understanding it as an essential component of the *territorial development's* standard approach.

On the other hand, Geraldo Torres Salcido (*Localized Agri-food Systems. Innovation and debates in Latin-America*) offers a wide picture of more recent research focused on the problematic of the *localized agri - food systems*. The author characterizes this approach as an innovative method to better understand the possibilities and obstacles to the experimentation with *territorial dynamics* in an asymmetric globalization scenario. In order to do so, he insists on recognizing the specific conditions surrounding its application in the contemporary development context of Latin American countries.

Along the same lines, Denis Requier Desjardins (*Localized agri-food systems and qualification: a complex relationship*) focuses on an in-depth reflection on natural and cultural heritage management mechanisms in managing the hybrid approach to sustainable territorial development today. Moreover, his text problematizes the risks

³ In territories marked by complex articulations between territories-agents-innovation-systems and an increasing overlapping of rural-urban relations.

of social exclusion that still permeate activation processes of localized agri - food systems in several regional contexts.

To conclude this first part, Paulo Freire Vieira (*From local development to territorial ecodevelopment*) puts back in focus, on one hand, the need to advance the construction of a territorial approach - and consequently a LAFS model - through the internalization of the socioecological variable. In order to do so, he explores the relationship between complementarity involving such approach and the progressive re-elaboration path of the classic *ecodevelopment* model - which came to surface on the occasion of preparations for the Stockholm Conference in 1972. Besides that, the author suggests a coordinated experimentation strategy with a hybrid focus, appealing to a yet little exercised integration process of *trans disciplinary collectives of action-research-formation* in "laboratory-regions of territorial ecodevelopment".

The second part presents syntheses of three case studies conducted recently in two states of Southern Brazil. In the current scenario of Santa Catarina's coastal zone, the article signed by Claire Cerdan and Mariana Aquilante Policarpo (*Synergies and conflicts between territorial development dynamics in the coast of Santa Catarina*) focuses on the several ongoing territorial development dynamics and their multiple effects in socioeconomical, sociocultural, sociopolitical, and socioecological terms.

Besides that, in Susana Maria Pozzer da Silveira's contribution (*Ecovida Agroecology Network: a strategic innovation for sustainable territorial development in the coast of Santa Catarina?*) the results of an analysis of this sociotechnical innovation's profile until now can be found. Her line of thought reveals, at the same time, the potential and the limitations of creation experiences in localized agrifood systems in the state of Santa Catarina - from the point of view of the strict requirements set up by the consolidation of sustainable development territorial dynamics in the current development stage of our country.

The last article, signed by Sandra Mara S. Bánkuti, Ferend I. Bánkuti and Melise D. M. Bouroullec (*Incentives to Fairtrade certification: the case of orange production in the state of Paraná, Brazil*), offers an original reflection on the perceptions and attitudes related to the adoption of the principles of *fairtrade* in communities of orange producers in Northeastern Paraná. The authors evaluate in which sense this process has generated positive economic, social, and environmental results in the analyzed region.

We hope that by spreading our ideas in the academia we may positively contribute to raising awareness concerning the sense and the magnitude of this still incipient paradigmatic reorientation research strategy on the phenomenon of development - and which appeals to a profound transformation of ethical agency in such times of global crisis.

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