



Territorial development focused on family farming: reduction of ambitions or recognition of the agriculture multifunctionality?

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Abstract

The relationship between the multifunctionality of agriculture and territorial development has been a topic of interest in the literature for some time, particularly emphasizing the importance of considering activities undertaken in rural areas beyond the agricultural dimension. However, a recurring critique of public policies for territorial development implemented in Brazil highlights the predominance of family farming and actions focused on the primary sector as limiting factors of the territorial strategy. This article seeks to reflect on this issue, using as a basis for discussion the theoretical framework on the multifunctionality of agriculture and the "Territories of Identity" initiative in the state of Bahia, which represents the country's main ongoing territorial public policy. Our argument is grounded in the principle that this approach does not necessarily undermine the ambition of the territorial development strategy. On the contrary, it is posited that family farming, through its multiple functions, constitutes a form of territorial occupation capable of ensuring intersectoriality and multidimensionality in territorial development.

Keywords: Family farming; Territorial development; Multifunctionality of agriculture; Territorial public policies; Territories of Identity.

Desenvolvimento territorial orientado para a agricultura familiar: redução das ambições ou reconhecimento de sua multifuncionalidade?

Resumo

A relação entre multifuncionalidade da agricultura e desenvolvimento territorial já é tratada na literatura há algum tempo, sendo destacada, sobretudo, a importância de se considerar as atividades desempenhadas no meio rural para além da dimensão agrícola. Entretanto, na avaliação das políticas públicas de desenvolvimento territorial aplicadas no Brasil, é constantemente encontrada a crítica da predominância da agricultura familiar e de ações voltadas para o primeiro setor como fatores limitantes da estratégia territorial. Assim, este artigo tem o objetivo de refletir sobre esta questão, mobilizando como linha de discussão o referencial teórico sobre a multifuncionalidade da agricultura e o dispositivo dos Territórios

de Identidade do estado da Bahia, o qual representa a principal política pública territorial em andamento no país. Nossa argumentação parte do princípio de que este enfoque não reduz necessariamente a ambição da estratégia territorial de desenvolvimento. Ao contrário, defende-se que a agricultura familiar, por meio de suas múltiplas funções, representa uma forma de ocupação territorial capaz de garantir a intersectorialidade e a multidimensionalidade para o desenvolvimento do território.

Palavras-chave: agricultura familiar; desenvolvimento territorial; multifuncionalidade da agricultura; políticas públicas territoriais; Territórios de Identidade

Desarrollo territorial centrado en la agricultura familiar: ¿reducción de ambiciones o reconocimiento de la multifuncionalidad de la agricultura?

Resumen

La relación entre la multifuncionalidad de la agricultura y el desarrollo territorial ha sido abordada en la literatura desde hace algún tiempo, destacándose, sobre todo, la importancia de considerar las actividades realizadas en el medio rural más allá de la dimensión agrícola. Sin embargo, en la evaluación de las políticas públicas de desarrollo territorial aplicadas en Brasil, se encuentra constantemente la crítica de la predominancia de la agricultura familiar y de las acciones orientadas al sector primario como factores que limitan la estrategia territorial. Por lo tanto, este artículo tiene como objetivo reflexionar sobre esta cuestión, utilizando como eje de discusión el marco teórico sobre la multifuncionalidad de la agricultura y el dispositivo de los Territorios de Identidad del estado de Bahía, que representa la principal política pública territorial en curso en el país. Nuestra argumentación parte del principio de que este enfoque no reduce necesariamente la ambición de la estrategia de desarrollo territorial. Por el contrario, se sostiene que la agricultura familiar, a través de sus múltiples funciones, representa una forma de ocupación territorial capaz de garantizar la intersectorialidad y la multidimensionalidad para el desarrollo del territorio.

Palabras clave: Agricultura familiar; Desarrollo territorial; Multifuncionalidad de la agricultura; Políticas públicas territoriales; Territorios de Identidad.

1 Introduction

The territorial approach to rural development has been emphasized as a priority agenda since the late 1990s. In recent years, this approach has gained increasing relevance by promoting territorial development based on local characteristics (MARINI et al., 2020).

In Brazil, this approach was concretized through two main public policies. In 2003, the Sustainable Development Program for Rural Territories (PRONAT) marked a shift from the municipal-scale rural development previously promoted under the National Program for Strengthening Family Farming (PRONAF) (SCHNEIDER; SILVA; MORUZZI MARQUES, 2009). Later, in 2008, as a form of enhancement, the Citizenship Territories Program (PTC) was established, becoming the country's most emblematic territorial strategy.

Both programs were based on the formation of territories by grouping municipalities that shared similar social, cultural, economic, and demographic characteristics, as well as geographic proximity. The objective of this arrangement was to foster collaboration among various social actors to improve the integration of

public actions, enhance insertion into domestic markets, and promote the sharing of a common identity capable of fostering territorial cohesion (BRASIL, 2005).

Their implementation was carried out through the Territorial Development Councils (CODETER), which were responsible for managing the Rural Infrastructure Investment Program (PROINF) and drafting a Territorial Sustainable Development Plan (PTDS). CODETER brought together representatives of civil society and the public sector from the various municipalities within the territory, aiming to create a democratic, participatory, and self-managed space for discussion.

Many studies indicate that the territorial policies implemented in Brazil brought significant gains in the social dimension of development, particularly by increasing participation, organization, and the empowerment of civil society (OLIVEIRA; DIAS, 2015; SILVA JUNIOR, 2016; BALEM; SILVA; FROEHLICH, 2016; ROSA; FERREIRA, 2018). This approach thus ensured greater social engagement in the discussion and planning of public actions, promoting democratization, the inclusion of historically marginalized actors, and broader access to public citizenship policies.

On the other hand, researchers have noted that the debate forum was quite limited, involving only a few actors and programs, which undermined the concept of territorial development (FAVARETO, 2010c; ROSA; FERREIRA, 2018; VALENCIA et al., 2018; VALENCIA et al., 2019). Consequently, the limited diversity within the Councils and the bias toward actors from the primary sector led to low effectiveness of the territorial policies.

Even in state-level territorial public policies, such as in Bahia—which was initially developed in conjunction with PRONAT and remains active to this day—criticism persists regarding its anchoring in the agrarian and sectoral paradigm. Favareto et al. (2020), for instance, highlight the continued concentration of actors linked to family farming within the Councils and in the actions of the PTDS, which excessively restricts productive restructuring, the building of intersectoral agreements, and the formulation of truly territorial projects through the negotiation of interests beyond traditional agricultural actors.

Brazil's national-level territorial policies were halted in 2016 when funding for the Territories was cut off due to a presidential change and the subsequent dismantling of the Ministry of Agrarian Development (SABOURIN et al., 2020; MARINI et al., 2020). However, in 2024, with the return of a more progressive vision in the federal executive branch, the territorial approach once again became part of the public agenda and debate (MDA, 2024). In light of this new context, revisiting this discussion becomes relevant. This article, therefore, aims to encourage reflection on one of the main criticisms directed at Brazil's territorial policies: whether the focus on family farming can, in fact, be considered a reduction in the ambitions of public policies for territorial development.

To this end, we adopt the concepts of the multifunctionality of agriculture and territorial development as our theoretical framework. Our line of discussion is grounded in the case study of the state of Bahia, which is one of the most emblematic in Brazil due to its status as one of the few federative units that has maintained an uninterrupted public policy for territorial development. Three territories in Bahia—*Chapada Diamantina*, *Litoral Sul*, and *Sertão do São Francisco*—were selected to better illustrate the case, with a focus on their main governance instruments: CODETER and PTDS.

2 Theoretical Framework: The Multifunctionality of Family Farming and Public Policies for Territorial Development

The notion of the multifunctionality of agriculture (MFA) began to gain prominence in the 1990s as a response to criticisms and limitations of the intensive and specialized agricultural model, which had resulted in severe environmental and social impacts. In this context, the multiple functions of agriculture were emphasized, highlighting its role beyond the production of food and agricultural commodities.

In the international debate, this perspective emerged during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro (Eco 92), where the social, economic, environmental, and cultural functions of agricultural activities were formally recognized (SABOURIN, 2005). From that point onward, the concept of multifunctionality was championed in various international forums, such as the negotiations of the World Trade Organization (WTO), and became a subject of research, particularly in the context of its incorporation into European agricultural public policies (SABOURIN, 2005).

In this regard, France played a significant role by promoting theoretical discussions on the concept of agricultural multifunctionality and its integration into the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The work of Jacques Rémy (2004) exemplifies this French influence, detailing the complex transition from an intensive and specialized model—widely promoted in the post-World War II period—to a multifunctional approach to agriculture. This shift gained traction in the early 1990s, when France began embedding the principles of multifunctionality into public policies and advocating for their inclusion at the international level.

In Brazil, the notion of MFA gained greater prominence in the following decade, particularly through the work of Maria José Carneiro and Renato Maluf (2003). However, due to the country's specific land structure and the coexistence of distinct production models, this concept became closely associated with family farming, as this category “best expresses, effectively or potentially, what the notion aims to achieve as a goal of public policies” (BONNAL; CAZELLA; MALUF, 2008, p. 187–188).

The multifunctionality of agriculture can be understood as the capacity of family farmers to provide public goods related to food security and sovereignty, the preservation of natural resources and rural landscapes, the conservation of biodiversity, the maintenance of the social and cultural fabric, and the socioeconomic reproduction of rural families (MALUF, 2003).

Similar to developments in European countries, the concept of MFA gained relevance in Brazil within debates on rural development public policies, emphasizing the need—through a sustainability lens—for the integration of the productive, social, and environmental dimensions (MALUF, 2003). Bonnal, Cazella, and Maluf (2008) were pioneers in identifying the importance of incorporating the notion of agricultural multifunctionality into Brazilian territorial development policies, which were widely debated at the time. According to the authors, integrating MFA contributes to the shift from a sectoral to a territorial approach, recognizing the interconnection of agriculture's diverse functions.

It is important to highlight that territorial development policies were primarily designed for rural areas. This new perspective aimed to transcend traditional top-

down strategies and economically biased views of development. Instead, the territorial approach was grounded in endogenous development, emphasizing the importance of understanding and leveraging the specific potentials, characteristics, actors, and assets of a territory (PECQUEUR, 2005); participatory governance, enabling the active engagement and involvement of local actors in the formulation and implementation of public policies (SCHNEIDER, 2004); intersectoriality, fostering the dynamization of the territory through the diversification of economic activities and the strengthening of rural-urban linkages (VEIGA, 2016); multidimensionality, conceiving development as a reflection of various dimensions of territorial heritage and their interrelations (DALLABRIDA, 2020); and social cohesion, promoting the construction of a collective actor that seeks common well-being and reduces inequalities and disparities within the territory (COVAS; COVAS, 2013).

Thus, both approaches—territorial development and MFA—are directly interconnected and mutually complementary, as they emphasize the importance of considering local specificities and potentials, the multiple dimensions and functions of human activities, and social inclusion (BONNAL; CAZELLA; MALUF, 2008).

Nevertheless, despite advancements in recognizing MFA, significant challenges persist in translating this concept into practice within territorial policies. Chief among these challenges is the need to move beyond a purely productive view of agriculture. This limitation had already been noted by Sabourin (2005) and Bonnal, Cazella, and Maluf (2008), who highlighted the necessity for new theoretical and epistemological models capable of capturing the complexity and diversity of the functions performed by agricultural activity. This rhetoric continues to resonate in current debates, underscoring the relevance of reinforcing a new perspective to assess the effectiveness of public policies for territorial development.

3 The Territorial Development Policy of the State of Bahia

Regionalization as a form of planning public action began to take shape in the state of Bahia in the 1930s, strongly influenced by the state interventionism of the American New Deal (ORTEGA; CERQUEIRA; SILVA, 2016a). During the Estado Novo period (1937–1945), the interventionist perspective was consolidated, and Bahia was regionalized for the first time into sixteen physiographic zones, based on social and economic criteria of the municipalities (ORTEGA; CERQUEIRA; SILVA, 2016b). The primary focus of this division was economic development through the urbanization and industrialization of the state, as its economy was heavily reliant on the primary production sector, with cocoa cultivation (for export) as its main driver (SOUZA, 2008).

However, Bahia faced significant challenges in integrating into the industrialization process. In this context, members of the Bahian elite began voicing concerns about the political and economic obstacles hindering the state's industrial and urban development. This dissatisfaction intensified during the 1950s, fueling debates about the causes of Bahia's economic decline (SILVA, 2012).

Amid one of the most severe droughts experienced in the Northeast, the government of Antônio Balbino (1955–1959), operating under a centralized public administration, proposed a new alternative for the development of Bahia. The Economic Development Council (Condeb) and the Economic Planning Commission

(CPE) were established to implement the Bahia Economic Recovery Program. This program aimed to increase and stabilize the state's per capita income through investments in transportation, communication, and industrial sectors, as well as through the expansion of the domestic market and diversification of production (ORTEGA; CERQUEIRA; SILVA, 2016b).

Despite these efforts, the program failed to achieve significant socioeconomic progress. Consequently, the government of Juracy Magalhães, after 1959, resumed regional planning with the creation of the Bahia Development Plan (Plandeb). The goal was to combat drought and transform the state into a capitalist society with an industrial base (ORTEGA; CERQUEIRA; SILVA, 2016b). The plan aimed to integrate Bahia's economy with the dynamics of Brazil's Southeast region, facilitating the supply of intermediate goods. However, the initiatives became concentrated in the metropolitan region (MR) of Salvador, resulting in partial and uneven industrialization.

During the military dictatorship, Bahia's public administration remained rooted in a centralized and conservative approach to industrial intensification. The state was divided into 16 administrative regions (later expanded to 17), each with a designated seat housing government agencies (ORTEGA; CERQUEIRA; SILVA, 2016b). However, this regionalization failed to promote socioeconomic development or reduce regional inequalities, as public actions remained concentrated in the coastal and metropolitan regions of Salvador (the state capital).

In the 1980s, the financial crisis led to a prioritization of private initiatives. Modern, specialized areas of the primary sector emerged, particularly in the western region (soy production in the city of Barreiras), the northern region (irrigated fruit farming in the city of Juazeiro), and the far south (pulp and paper production) (MIDDLEJ, 2004). However, this planning, which prioritized the demands of private companies in these regions, exacerbated inequality (SOUZA, 2008). As a result, economic growth remained confined to areas experiencing industrialization and urbanization, while the majority of the population continued to live in extreme poverty (SILVA, 2012).

The 1990s were marked by the adoption of neoliberal economic policies and the proliferation of privatization practices. In 1991, fifteen economic regions were proposed in Bahia, based on their proximity to the state capital and physical criteria, particularly natural features such as topography (SILVA, 2012). However, regionalized public action continued to prioritize areas with higher prospects for private investment returns, to the detriment of semi-arid regions, further intensifying interregional inequalities in Bahia (SILVA, 2012).

In the early 2000s, attracting private investment remained a priority in Bahia. The first two administrations of the new century emphasized the concept of spatial segmentation, inspired by the economic zones established in 1991. The aim was to create new development zones focused on dominant production corridors in agriculture, mining, industry, agribusiness, commerce, and tourism. Territorialization, therefore, continued to align with regional investment parameters and the expansion of private capital (ORTEGA; CERQUEIRA; SILVA, 2016b).

By 2006, half of Bahia's population resided in small-sized cities, with 68% of these municipalities having up to 20,000 inhabitants and economies centered on subsistence agriculture (ORTEGA; CERQUEIRA; SILVA, 2016b). Conversely,

municipalities with populations exceeding 200,000 inhabitants, along with the metropolitan region of Salvador, housed the remaining population (ORTEGA; CERQUEIRA; SILVA, 2016b).

In light of this scenario, in 2007, newly elected governor Jaques Wagner abandoned the prevailing regionalization model and adopted a new form of territorialization aimed at reducing disparities among the state's regions (ORTEGA; CERQUEIRA; SILVA, 2016b; DIAS, 2017). This marked the first spatial division that did not prioritize industrialization or private capital but instead focused on territorial development based on local characteristics and actors.

This spatial division became known as the Territories of Identity (TI), resulting from efforts by PRONAT, which had initially defined five Rural Territories for Bahia, representing the micro-regions prioritized by the Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA) (FORNAZIER; PERAFÁN, 2018; DIAS, 2016). However, the limited number of territories prompted a reaction from major rural social movements, which demanded their expansion across the entire state. Consequently, a Working Group was established to deepen discussions on the composition of additional territories, leading to the formation of 23 Territories in 2004, which later increased to 26 in 2006. The final adjustment to this territorial map occurred in 2011, when one more TI was incorporated into the spatial division.

Upon assuming the governorship of Bahia, Jaques Wagner also adopted the Territories of Identity (TI) as the unit for planning and implementing public policies (DIAS, 2017). This recognition was formalized with the publication of Law No. 10.705 on November 14, 2007, in the state's Official Gazette, which established the use of TI for formulating the 2008–2011 Multi-Year Plan (PPA) and distributing the state budget across all TIs (DIAS, 2017). Furthermore, for the elaboration of this plan, Territorial Social Hearings were held for the first time, transforming the state planning process into a Participatory Multi-Year Plan (PPA-P).

In 2010, this regionalization process gained greater institutional strength, becoming formally recognized through a decree that served as the main regulatory framework for the TIs. Through this measure, the Territories of Identity Program was established with the goal of promoting the socioeconomic development of the territories as a means of coordinating public policies (BAHIA, 2010). Decree No. 12.354 of August 25, 2010, also officially recognized the Territorial Development Councils (CODETER) and the State Council for Territorial Development (CEDETER), assigning them their respective roles in territorial governance.

In 2014, the state of Bahia further institutionalized the Territories of Identity by transforming them into a state policy through Law No. 13.214 of December 29, which formalized the guidelines and principles of the Territorial Development Policy and regulated the roles of CODETER and CEDETER (BAHIA, 2014). As of 2024, all 27 TIs and 27 CODETERs remain active, and five Participatory Multi-Year Plans (PPA-P) – 2008/2011, 2012/2015, 2016/2019, 2020/2023, and 2024/2027 – have been consecutively developed following the territorial and participatory approach. In this regard, Favareto and Lotta (2017) consider Bahia to be the state that has most successfully institutionalized governance at the territorial level, representing the longest-standing and most robust territorial policy in the country.

4 The Importance of Family Farming in Territorial Development Strategies

As previously discussed, a recurring critique in the Brazilian debate on territorial development concerns the limited diversity of actors within the CODETER, which results in a prioritization of actions toward the primary sector and family farmers (FAVARETO, 2010b; FAVARETO, 2010c; OLIVEIRA; DIAS, 2015; FORNAZIER; PERAFÁN, 2018; ROSA; FERREIRA, 2018). According to these experts, such a bias compromises the essence of the territorial development strategy, particularly by limiting intersectoriality within the process.

While this critique is conceptually valid in terms of territorial development strategy, it is also important to emphasize that family farming—when viewed through the lens of its multifunctionality—can serve as a solid foundation for the diversification of activities (MALUF, 2003; BONNAL; CAZELLA; MALUF, 2008). From this perspective, the improvement of these families' livelihoods extends beyond the agricultural sector, creating opportunities for broader territorial development (FAO; IFAD, 2019). It is, therefore, a matter of recognizing the "rural" as a dynamic and heterogeneous space that transcends agricultural activities, encompassing multiple social, cultural, and economic functions (CARNEIRO; SANDRONI, 2019).

Marchetti et al. (2024), for instance, highlighted the multiple functions of cassava production among agrarian reform settlements in the southernmost region of Bahia. According to the authors, this activity not only promoted food sovereignty and security for families but also stimulated the local economy through income generation and distribution aligned with the territory's endogenous potential and its social and ecological context. Additionally, it strengthened the social and cultural fabric by engaging different generations in productive activities and transmitting traditional knowledge, while contributing to the conservation of agrobiodiversity through the circulation of various cassava species and their derivatives.

It is also important to clarify the concept of intersectoriality. Considering the economy as composed of three main sectors—primary (agriculture, livestock, and extractivism), secondary (industry), and tertiary (commerce and services, including public administration)—intersectoriality refers to the integration of these different segments of economic activity. At the organizational level, this notion of overlap is equally relevant: it involves the first sector, represented primarily by the public sector; the second sector, by private enterprises; and the third sector, by nonprofit organizations committed to addressing socio-environmental issues.

Within the scope of Bahia's territorial policy, the PPA incorporates, to some extent, all economic sectors and types of organizations. In other words, all sectoral activities are considered within the range of government programs, and the audience consulted during the Territorial Social Hearings is diverse—extending far beyond CODETER—through the participation of various thematic councils (health, education, environment, etc.), professional associations, labor and employer unions, and industry and commerce federations. Therefore, when reflecting on the territorial policy of the state of Bahia, it is appropriate to focus specifically on CODETER and PTDS, as these are the governance instruments embedded in the daily life of the territory and are also the main targets of criticism regarding the predominance of family farming.

Table 1. Composition of the CODETERs of Chapada Diamantina (CD), Litoral Sul (LS), and Sertão do São Francisco (SSF) by Category of Representatives

Category of Representatives	CD	LS	SSF
Family Farming Associations/Cooperatives	17	11	14
Rural Unions and Rural Social Movements	17	4	10
Civil Society Organizations (socio-cultural, educational, environmental, and/or agricultural)	16	13	20
Private Companies, Consultancies, Business/Employer Associations or Representatives	2	2	1
Public Authorities (municipal governments, secretariats, public consortia)	29	29	14
Educational and Research Institutions (universities, federal institutes, Family Farming Schools)	9	8	3
Public Health Institutions/Centers	1	0	0
Public Companies/Institutes (BNB, CAR, BAHIATER, SETAF, etc.)	5	5	6
Total	96	72	68

Source: Organized by the authors based on data from BAHIA (2022a; 2022b; 2022c).

Indeed, considering the example of the three selected Territories of Identity (TIs) in Bahia, Table 1 above shows that the councils are predominantly composed of representatives from family farming, including farmers' associations, unions, and rural social movements and organizations. However, it is important to emphasize that these structures also encompass a wide range of organizations from both the public (first) and nonprofit (third) sectors, such as public entities (municipal governments, public educational institutions, and public companies) and non-governmental organizations.

Furthermore, regarding the PTDS, all three plans address multiple dimensions—productive, social, cultural, educational, infrastructural, and environmental (TERRITÓRIO CHAPADA DIAMANTINA, 2010; TERRITÓRIO LITORAL SUL, 2010; TERRITÓRIO SERTÃO DO SÃO FRANCISCO, 2008). Specifically, within the productive dimension, as shown in Framework 1 below, it is evident that in addition to actions targeting agricultural activities (such as the promotion of local production arrangements, agrarian reform, technical assistance, and rural extension), there are also demands for initiatives related to agro-industrialization, product processing, market access, and youth-oriented projects.

Table 2. Proposed Actions in the First PTDS of the Identity Territories Chapada Diamantina, Litoral Sul, and Sertão do São Francisco for the Productive Dimension

Chapada Diamantina	Litoral Sul	Sertão do São Francisco
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for production chains and agroindustry (e.g., coffee, sugarcane, dairy, cassava, goat and sheep farming, beekeeping, aquaculture, and vegetable and fruit cultivation); • Revitalization of native seed varieties and promotion of exchanges among farmers; • Strengthening of ATER (Technical Assistance and Rural Extension) and ATES (Social Technical Assistance); • Promotion of market access for family farming; • Implementation of public policies aimed at youth retention in rural areas; • Advancement in land distribution and legal documentation of properties for settlers and squatters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects for the management, extraction, and marketing of forest and sociobiodiversity products; • Land regularization; • Construction of enterprises, agro-industries, and marketing centers for small producers; • Implementation of an artisanal fishing program, including the installation of a processing unit and fish farming tanks; • Support for the value chains of cocoa, cassava, livestock, and beekeeping; • Provision of technical training for farmers and strengthening of ATER (Technical Assistance and Rural Extension); • Support for youth entrepreneurship; • Promotion of non-agricultural activities in traditional communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processing, marketing, and implementation of infrastructure for the production and transformation of productive arrangements in goat and sheep farming, beekeeping, poultry farming, and artisanal fishing; • Land regularization; • Support for the productive management of communal grazing areas (<i>fundo de pasto</i>) and agrarian reform settlements; • Technical assistance for adapting livestock farming to the semi-arid environment.

Source: Organized by the authors based on Território Chapada Diamantina (2010); Território Litoral Sul (2010); Território Sertão Do São Francisco (2008).

Thus, the core of the discussion lies primarily in the incorporation of the secondary sector into the governance structure of territorial development. In other words, it involves including representatives from industries and private companies to broaden the diversity of social groups within the councils, thereby also expanding the promotion of non-agricultural activities. However, when reflecting on this issue, it is worth considering the perspective of Wanderley (2019), who emphasizes the importance of reaffirming the rural as a societal value—recognizing its place within urban and industrial society and understanding it “as a specific form of social life, characterized by the predominance of nature and interpersonal familiarity” (WANDERLEY, 2019, p. 29).

Moreover, the immense social inequality, land concentration, and centralized power structure justify a more assertive role by both the Brazilian and Bahian governments in reducing these disparities. The development process in Brazil—as also experienced in Bahia—has historically favored the interests of large landowners, prioritizing their export-oriented monoculture estates to the detriment of small family farmers, who are the ones truly responsible for sustaining and enabling the survival and maintenance of the population (PRADO JUNIOR, 2011; RIBEIRO, 2015). These marginalized groups have, for centuries, been excluded from the political pact and have lacked institutions capable of addressing their challenges and demands

(MARTINS, 1983), leaving them dependent on the paternalistic protection of local oligarchs in a subordinate and devalued position (LEAL, 2012).

Therefore, considering the principles of territorial development—especially the promotion of more symmetrical relationships—it is appropriate to include organizations from the so-called second sector that contribute to the social inclusion of the local population and the strengthening of family farming. From this perspective, the endogenous potential for processing regionally distinctive products, whether directly by family units or by agro-industries formed through the collective efforts of these farmers (via their cooperatives or other farmer-led organizations), tends to foster sustainable production and fair, solidarity-based trade for both agricultural and non-agricultural activities.

In other words, by understanding the territory as a space of dispute and power (RAFFESTIN, 1993), the promotion of debate and initiatives must—within a participatory democratic framework—serve to strengthen the achievements of family farming rather than threaten its existence. A reduction in the presence of this category within decision-making bodies could further exacerbate inequalities, given that its capacity for agency—expressed through political and economic power—is vastly inferior to that of private market actors, as already demonstrated in Bahia's early territorialization strategies.

Marchetti et al. (2020) rightly point out that the Parliamentary Agricultural Front—comprising 48% of the members of Brazil's National Congress—actively defends the interests of agribusiness enterprises, often advancing conservative agendas that run counter to the family farming production model. Examples of this orientation include the rural caucus's demands during the 2018 elections, such as calls to revise existing environmental regulations, reduce agricultural labor costs, and loosen the legal definition of labor analogous to slavery (WANDERLEY, 2019).

Therefore, the intention to include industries not linked to family farming within territorial development strategies could lead to the precarization of rural wage labor and the subordinate vertical integration of family-based producers. At this point, it is also worth noting that the pluriactivity of farming families can have different consequences depending on its form. Generally, activities carried out by family farmers outside and disconnected from their farms are the result of a hostile adaptation to socioeconomic conditions imposed upon them—conditions that are highly unfavorable and often characterized by unstable employment, lacking formal contracts, union representation, or social security (LACERDA; MORUZZI MARQUES, 2012; CHAUI, 2019). This type of pluriactivity tends to promote land concentration, social marginalization, and environmental degradation (LACERDA; MORUZZI MARQUES, 2012).

As an example, the cases of soybean production in Barreiras and fruit cultivation for export in the Sertão do São Francisco—both of which were incentivized under the justification of promoting industrialization in Bahia's interior, inspired by previous state regionalization strategies—have in fact led to increased social inequality and serious conflicts over access to land and natural resources. The case of Correntina city continues to spark major protests by local traditional communities (PORTO-GONÇALVES; CHAGAS, 2019). The establishment and expansion of agribusiness companies in these areas have caused water scarcity for local populations, especially due to the use of center-pivot irrigation systems for grain

crops. This practice threatens the livelihoods of traditional communities, which rely on river water to carry out a wide range of essential activities. According to Porto-Gonçalves and Chagas (2019), this conflict reflects a development model that disregards the fundamental connection between communities and their territories.

In a similar vein, Cerqueira Neto (2012) examined the expansion of pulp and paper company activities in the Extreme South Territory of Bahia. Despite some economic gains, the author highlights that this process led to significant in-migration of liberal professionals and small to medium-sized entrepreneurs, primarily from the states of Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo, which undermined territorial cohesion and the construction of a shared local identity. On the contrary, these enterprises intensified socio-environmental conflicts over land use—pitting an anti-ecological, socially exclusive development model against peasant agriculture, which has since been under constant threat (FERREIRA; PEREIRA; LOGAREZZI, 2019).

These disputes have become increasingly frequent and aggressive due to the continued arrival of new companies and industries in the interior regions. In Bahia, 211 conflicts were recorded by the Pastoral Land Commission in 2022—a 16.42% increase over the previous year, surpassing the national average growth rate of 10.39%. As a result, Bahia ranks third in the national agrarian violence index, behind only Maranhão (225 conflicts) and Pará (236) (AMORIM, 2023). Land disputes account for the vast majority of these cases (around 75%), involving land occupations and reclaiming of territories, resistance and confrontation over possession, use, and ownership of land, as well as access to natural resources (AMORIM, 2023). The most affected groups are the traditional *fundo* and *fecho de pasto* communities, representing 43% of all recorded incidents, followed by Indigenous peoples (16%), *quilombola* communities (15%), and landless workers (15%) (AMORIM, 2023). The main perpetrators are agribusiness and wind energy companies, responsible for 40% of the conflicts, followed by other large landowners (26%) and mining companies (6%), all of which impose development models that are fundamentally misaligned with the collective interests of local communities (AMORIM, 2023).

Given this context, it becomes clear and justified why the CODETER of the Sertão do São Francisco did not include major private investment projects—such as the installation of a wind farm—in its PTDS (FAVARETO et al., 2020). The inclusion of large-scale projects led by major private companies—most of which are external actors with no representation in the decision-making councils—does not promote the endogenous development of the territory. In other words, such a strategy ultimately runs counter to the enhancement of local economic activities, as well as to the appreciation of the territory's landscape and cultural identity.

Escobar (2015) refers to this process of deterritorialization as a “practice of emplacement,” which invades, encloses, or confines agricultural and traditional communities. In the words of Porto-Gonçalves (2021), it is a process of “disinvolvement,” one that breaks the intrinsic social bonds of regional populations. These are, therefore, projects that do not reflect the social capital roots of the territory and hinder the development of truly territorial strategies.

On the contrary, the spread of market logic transforms all economic, social, and political rights into services governed by the market, where everything is rationalized and mediated by financial capital (BOLTANSKI & THÉVENOT, 2020). The privatization of rights deepens inequalities, imposing itself as a totalitarian model

that excludes social heterogeneity—represented by different social classes, ways of life, behaviors, beliefs, opinions, customs, and values (CHAUÍ, 2019). The deregulation driven by financial capital also results in the usurpation of natural resources, cultural heritage, and the very lives of traditional peoples (CUNHA, 2017). Thus, this mercantile-industrial order represents a predatory political-ideological project that views rural space merely as a site for investment (WANDERLEY, 2019).

Thus, as Bonnal, Cazella, and Maluf (2008, p. 222) pointed out, “some projects may end up encouraging business initiatives that are disconnected from the principles of territorial development and detrimental to the social reproduction of family farming.” It is not a matter of concealing the disputes and contradictions within the territory (VALENCIA-PERAFÁN et al., 2020b), but rather of embracing an “egalitarian” perspective (MEDEIROS, 2023), aimed at reducing disparities and social injustices. In fact, it was precisely to counter this harmful neoliberal model that the state of Bahia developed its territorial development strategy, prioritizing family farming in order to amplify its voice and representation in public discourse.

Therefore, overcoming the agrarian paradigm and incorporating the secondary sector into territorial development strategies should, within this inclusive and sustainable perspective, be guided by the local vocations of family farming and traditional communities. That is, “sectoral interests must be subordinated to territorial dynamics, understood as capable of mobilizing and enhancing the environmental and human resources available within the local space” (WANDERLEY, 2019, p. 21).

Hence, new markets and activities can be promoted with a focus on the protagonism, autonomy, and empowerment of family farming as a social, economic, and political actor within the territory. The goal is to support the full diversity encompassed by the broad category of family farming—that is, farmers, extractivists, aquaculture producers, fishers, foresters, agrarian reform settlers, traditional communities, and Indigenous peoples—so they can fulfill their multiple functions in favor of environmental preservation, social cohesion, local culture, and socioeconomic balance.

In other words, the activities encouraged should be closely tied to the Family Rural Establishment and/or Enterprise, as defined in Law No. 11.326 of 2006, integrating a range of opportunities—agricultural or otherwise—that may arise from these new configurations. According to Lacerda and Moruzzi Marques (2012), activities not directly related to agricultural production but carried out within the family’s rural unit are referred to as “para-agricultural” activities, which tend to strengthen the family establishment. These activities go beyond food production and may include community-based rural tourism, handicrafts, environmental conservation services, family agro-industries, among others.

However, the promotion and/or incorporation of new entities and economic activities into the territorial development strategy depend on the specific characteristics of each territory. As already noted by Conterato, Schneider, and Waquil (2007), rural and regional development is a diverse process that manifests itself territorially in heterogeneous ways, thus requiring distinct solutions for different contexts. On this point, there is significant consensus among specialists: territorial development cannot be approached using a one-size-fits-all model (FAVARETO & LOTTA, 2022; VALENCIA-PERAFÁN et al., 2020b).

In Bahia, most public policies are indeed implemented using a one-size-fits-all model. Although the state has made progress in certain areas—such as the formation of Public Consortia and initiatives led by the Regional Development and Action Company (CAR), including *Bahia Produtiva* and *Pró-Semiárido*, in which actions are designed by local actors—a large portion of the policies and public programs outlined in the Participatory Multi-Year Plan (PPA-P) are still developed in a top-down manner. Many public initiatives arrive pre-formulated from the executive branch and are only later prioritized within the Identity Territories (TI) based on where they best fit, with goals adapted to local realities. According to Favareto and Lotta (2022), this model has rendered territorial approaches in Brazil shortsighted or blind:

Shortsighted, when they acknowledge that there are actors within the territory who may be important in setting priorities, yet lack the mechanisms to strengthen them and actively incorporate them into the design and implementation process. Blind, when they assume the territory is merely a space where investment is carried out (FAVARETO; LOTTA, 2022, p. 21 e 22).

The analysis of the three Identity Territories in the state of Bahia reinforces the importance of establishing effective mechanisms to overcome this shortsighted perspective. In this assessment (Table 3), the significant heterogeneity among territories becomes evident, highlighting the need for distinct approaches tailored to each locality. It is important to note, however, that the aim here is not to define territorial typologies but rather to illustrate the existing regional disparities.

Table 3 - General Information on the Identity Territories of Chapada Diamantina, Litoral Sul, and Sertão do São Francisco

Population and Urbanization	Chapada Diamantina	Litoral Sul	Sertão do São Francisco
Number of municipalities	24	26	10
Total population	383,853	720,508	553,098
Population of the head municipality	46,160	186,708	235,816
Average population of the remaining municipalities	14,682	14,796	35,254
Number of family farming establishments	36,206	23,277	41,368
Urbanization rate	48%	82%	64%
Representation of Economic Activity by Sector			
% Agriculture and Livestock	25%	8%	10%
% Industry	12%	17%	23%
% Commerce and Services	63%	75%	67%
Employment generation			
*Agriculture and Livestock (employed personnel)	100,746	65,992	138,805
*Main employer in agriculture and livestock	Family farming (70%)	Family farming (60%)	Family farming (67%)
Industry (formal jobs)	1,258	8,800	7,751
Main job in industry	Mining (48%)	Civil Construction (34%)	Food (58%)
Services (formal jobs)	20,400	61,200	35.500

Main job in services	Public Administration (72%)	Public Administration (52%)	Public Administration (63%)
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Source: SEI (2018; 2015); *IBGE (2019). Organized by the authors.

In the Sertão do São Francisco and Litoral Sul territories, both the population and GDP are concentrated in the main municipalities of Juazeiro and Itabuna, respectively (in Litoral Sul, the city of Ilhéus also stands out). These are more urbanized settings, indicating that industrialization is more intense in these cities. In fact, 43% of the population of Sertão do São Francisco resides in Juazeiro, which accounts for 50% of the territory's GDP. In Litoral Sul, 51% of the population is concentrated in Ilhéus and Itabuna, which together represent 68% of the GDP. Urbanization in these cities is also significantly higher due to their proximity to the Bahia coastline (where the state's formation process began) and the Salvador metropolitan region. In contrast, Chapada Diamantina shows a more homogeneous distribution of population and total goods and services produced among its municipalities, which are predominantly rural. Seabra, the territory's main municipality, is home to only 12% of the population and generates 11% of the GDP.

Regarding economic activity from the perspective of its tripartite division, the commerce and services sector is the most representative (in monetary value) across all three territories, mainly due to jobs generated by public administration. This sector is also particularly significant in job creation in Litoral Sul, accounting for 45% of formal jobs. The primary sector has a stronger economic presence in Chapada Diamantina, where its activities generate twice the value of those in the industrial sector—an inverse trend compared to the other two territories, where the economic value generated by industry surpasses that of agriculture and livestock.

In terms of job creation, the agricultural sector is the main employer across all three territories, accounting for 82% of the employed population in Chapada Diamantina, 49% in Litoral Sul, and 76% in Sertão do São Francisco. A central point for the purposes of this article is that the majority of these individuals are engaged in family farming. Industry generates the lowest number of jobs in all three territories, representing 1% of jobs in Chapada Diamantina (mainly in mining), 6% in Litoral Sul (mainly in civil construction), and 4% in Sertão do São Francisco (mostly in the food industry).

Thus, the data above clearly show that each territory has its own specific characteristics, which must be considered when designing coherent territorial development strategies. In Chapada Diamantina, for example, the inclusion of the secondary sector—both in the Collegiate body and in the PTDS—is quite limited, given that its presence (and even existence) is very small. In this territory, economic dynamism can potentially be driven by innovations in agricultural and para-agricultural activities, which employ more than a quarter of the population. The region's strong tourism potential is also noteworthy, allowing for the more decisive inclusion of tourism-related actions in the territory's development strategies, such as community-based tourism initiatives linked to rural establishments.

On the other hand, in the Sertão do São Francisco, industrial inclusion appears more relevant, but it is also closely linked to agricultural activity, as the food industry—particularly fruit processing (especially mango and grape for export)—is the most prominent in the territory (SEI, 2018). From an inclusive perspective, one

way to enhance this activity would be to promote family-based agro-industrialization or the formation of family farming cooperatives for direct integration into this agri-food market. Furthermore, Juazeiro has a thriving rural producer market; stronger integration with farmers from inland areas—especially from traditional communities such as riverine populations, *fundo* and *fecho de pasto* communities, and *quilombolas*—can foster socio-productive inclusion.

The Litoral Sul represents the most complex case. The participation of the primary sector in the economy and job creation is more limited, and it is also the territory with the highest urbanization rate, featuring two large cities (with over 150,000 inhabitants) within its composition. Itabuna and Ilhéus concentrate the majority of the GDP, industry, and population, while the other municipalities are predominantly characterized by agricultural activity within the rural landscape (SEI, 2015). As a result, the territory's economic dynamism is concentrated in the more vibrant urban center (Ilhéus-Itabuna).

This type of issue also occurs in other territories, where resources tend to concentrate in more dynamic regions with higher population density and business activity, typically located in more privileged areas (CANIELLO; PIRAUX; SOUZA BASTOS, 2014). Consequently, more rural and underprivileged regions struggle to achieve the desired progress (MASOT; ALONSO; MORENO, 2019). Therefore, the inclusion of the secondary sector must be carried out in a way that helps reduce disparities within the territory, targeting support toward municipalities located farther from the economic core.

Moreover, from the perspective of territorial development as a public policy, this process of inclusion should also aim to increase the engagement of all segments of the broad spectrum of family farming, especially those with less political and financial representation and influence, enabling them to gain greater prominence in decision-making arenas. In other words, it is essential to empower more actors to become development agents capable of mediating conflicts and formulating innovative strategies for reducing social exclusion and promoting environmental sustainability (CAZELLA, 2008).

Such an endeavor can be realized by making the governance structure and the form of intervention more flexible and creative (VALENCIA-PERAFÁN et al., 2020b), through tailored solutions for different groups, such as Indigenous peoples, *quilombolas*, riverside communities, squatters, and agrarian reform settlers (MEDINA; GOSCH; DELGROSSI, 2021), while also considering the technical and administrative aspects of territorial governance, such as operational rules and budgets (BORSATTO; ANTUNES JUNIOR; SOUZA-ESQUERDO, 2020), adapted to local realities and contexts.

5 Final Considerations

This article aimed to contribute to the debate on the criticism surrounding the focus on family farming within the public policies for territorial development implemented in Brazil. Our argument is based on the principle that this focus does not necessarily diminish the ambition of territorial development strategies. On the contrary, family farming, through its multiple functions, represents a form of

territorial occupation capable of ensuring intersectoriality and multidimensionality for a more inclusive, just, and ecological development.

Indeed, family farming holistically encompasses several key aspects of sustainable development, such as the production of healthy food, the preservation of biodiversity, the conservation of natural resources, and the safeguarding of traditional knowledge. Thus, when strengthened, these farmers are capable of promoting economic growth that also generates positive spillover effects in other sectors of the economy.

Furthermore, it is essential to consider the purpose and historical context of the territorial approach applied in Brazil. For centuries, the social category of family farming was marginalized, representing the most vulnerable population in rural areas. Territorial policy emerged as a government strategy to enhance their agency, thereby increasing their influence and representation in social arenas. Specifically in the case of Bahia, the current territorial approach is recognized for breaking away from the favoritism historically granted to private industries at the expense of family farming.

Indeed, the inclusion of the industrial sector—currently the main absence in the Territorial Development Councils—must occur from the perspective of endogenous development. In other words, this inclusion should take into account the specificities and actors of the territory to prevent its promotion from erasing local culture or reducing the participation of social actors in governance bodies. Thus, in Bahia, where rurality predominates, initiatives that strengthen family farming enterprises—whether agricultural or para-agricultural—should be prioritized.

However, it is essential to ensure the representation and involvement of all social groups and localities within the territory in the composition of these collegiate structures, particularly those who are socially vulnerable and distant from economically dynamic centers. Creative approaches that enhance territorial social cohesion should be encouraged, fostering more flexible and innovative structures that allow for greater autonomy and leadership from transformative agents.

In conclusion, from our perspective, the limitation of the territorial approach does not lie in its focus on family farming but rather in the standardized way in which the effectiveness of this strategy is assessed. Each territory has specific socio-cultural, environmental, and economic characteristics that must be considered in the design of public policy mechanisms, resulting in different forms and degrees of intersectoriality.

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