

The "thinking territorially" regional differences in Brazil



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ABSTRACT

The theory of endogenous development presupposes the protagonism of local actors, interacting in ties of territorial cooperation. In other words, the idea that gains momentum in the academic and political spheres is that the diversities and peculiarities of the locality should be widely considered and discussed in the process of implementing policies, and that local social actors play a fundamental role in the elaboration of effective actions, since these are the greatest connoisseurs of their problems and territorial

reality. This perception contrasts sharply with linear thinking based on the centralization of political decisions, which treats the various territorial realities with homogeneous dynamics. Given this duality of perceptions, the objective of the present study is to show that the Brazilian regions, in fact, present distinct socioeconomic traits that, in a long way, are far from a homogeneous and unique territory. This presupposes, therefore, the combination of more general public policies with more specific and localized actions, in order to contemplate the various dynamics and territorial realities of Brazil. It was proved, with the descriptive analysis, that the North and Northeast regions, the largest in territorial terms, are the ones that continue to present the worst results in socioeconomic terms. Thus, it is evident the need to "think territorially" considering the particularities of these regions in order to seek economic development for Brazil.

Keywords: Endogenous development, Territorial dynamics, Brazilian regions.

1 INTRODUCTION

After World War II, the capitalist world constituted a new model of economic development, better known as Fordism, which was characterized as a standardized industrial monopoly system of production, supported by mass consumption and a Taylorist division of labor. This system of production was supported by the State through social legislation, collective agreements, and regulations on the redistribution of earnings in order to ensure the growth of effective demand. The peak of Fordism occurred between the 1950s and 1960s. From the 1970s onwards the Fordist mode of development went into crisis. The system of mass production was shaken, both by the relative exhaustion of Taylorian techniques, and by the global inflationary crisis (BENKO, 2002).

For Benko (2002), there was initially a saturation of national markets for consumer goods manufactured in series, causing a drop in the pace of accumulation. To replenish their profits, the companies went to the international market, intensifying their exchanges with other countries. However, at the global level, there were no mechanisms capable of regulating supply and demand. This resulted in a multi-dimensional crisis aggravated by the oil shocks of 1973 and 1979. All this



revealed that the Fordist production chain was weakened due to its rigidity and inability to adapt to the adverse scenarios of the world economy. In this context, the exit strategy from the crisis of Fordism was the adoption of flexible production, with the aim of restoring the conditions of capital appreciation.

In this period, three new types of flexible economic spaces were consolidated, "the high-tech industries (the new production complexes), the service economy (essentially in the metropolitan spaces) and the craft and [Small and Medium Enterprises] activities" (BENKO, 2002, p. 24).

This dialectic between the local and the global exposes the presence of regional specificities and reinforces the idea that territories are heterogeneous, thus explaining why some peripheries have industrialized and others have not, and why some centers have disarticulated. The fact is that such elements have rekindled the theory of endogenous development and, along with it, all issues concerning small businesses. In other words, the idea that gains momentum in the academic and political spheres is that the diversities and peculiarities of the locality should be widely considered and discussed in the process of implementing policies, and that local social actors play a fundamental role in the elaboration of effective actions, since these are the greatest connoisseurs of their problems and territorial reality. This perception contrasts sharply with linear thinking based on the centralization of political decisions, which treats the various territorial realities with homogeneous dynamics.

Given this duality of perceptions, the objective of the present study is to show that the Brazilian regions, in fact, present distinct socioeconomic traits that, in a long way, are far from a homogeneous and unique territory. This presupposes, therefore, the combination of more general public policies with more specific and localized actions, in order to contemplate the various dynamics and territorial realities of Brazil.

The present work, of an essentially descriptive nature, used secondary information made available by the main research agencies such as the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), such as the Continuous National Household Sample Survey (PNAD Continua), the Demographic Census and the Atlas of Human Development in Brazil.

For this, the research is structured in five sections, including this introduction. The second section rescues some concepts such as economic development and endogenous development for a better understanding of the specificities of the Brazilian case. Soon after (third section) the methodological aspects are presented, in the fourth section the results and discussions are presented. And finally, the final considerations are presented.

2 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENDOGENOUS DEVELOPMENT

Economic development is regarded as a specific sphere of economic growth (economic growth can be seen as the variation of the total volume of production over time), but the growth of output must expand at a rate greater than that of population increase. However, "development is not only a process



of accumulation, of increased macroeconomic productivity, but mainly the path of access to the social forms most apt to stimulate human creativity and respond to the aspirations of the collectivity." (FURTADO, 2004, p. 3).

For Schumpeter (1982, p. 47) economic development is "a spontaneous and discontinuous change in the flow channels, a disturbance of the equilibrium, which alters and displaces forever the previously existing state of equilibrium". Thus, Schumpeterian development translates into quantitative and qualitative changes in economic variables, which alter the economic structure and equilibrium conditions. The actions of the State influence the transformations of economic structures. Their action is fundamental to influence the decisions of entrepreneurs.

The State has an important role in economic development, because it can intervene with public policies capable of stimulating economic development, through the improvement of infrastructure, promotion of productive activities and social investments (MYRDAL, 1965; FERRERA DE LIMA et. al, 2011).

The process of economic development is characterized by transforming underdeveloped economies into developed economies. In this process, the regions move from activities considered backward to more modern or advanced activities. When the development process is triggered in each region, growing internal and external economies guarantee the continuity of the economic development process, to the detriment of other regions and productive activities. The fundamental problem of development is to generate and channel energies in the direction of more modern activities. Thus, to achieve development it is essential to commit to a series of actions that produce favorable effects on the flow of income and in various economic and social areas, such as: urban activities, industry, logistics infrastructure, etc., the realization of which is limited by the regional investment capacity (HIRSCHMAN, 1961).

For Singer (1970), when a region develops, it can break the bonds that bind it to the social division of labor and that establish that less developed economies are doomed to become specialized producers of food and raw materials. Since the regions that develop their economies do not completely leave the foreign trade scene, their break with the existing social division of labor requires that a new division replace the old division of labor.

Endogenous development arose from the transformations that occurred in regional development theories in the 1980s. Since the early 1980s, there has been a profound change in economic policy, at which time local and regional actors began to undertake actions aimed at influencing the growth processes of local economies. These transformations were caused by the crisis and decline of traditionally industrial regions and the emergence of regions with new industrial paradigms. What is observed is that at the same time that there is a movement of expansion on the part of companies (subcontracting, alliances and mergers) and countries (commercial opening and increase



in the volume of capital in world circulation), the regions have been showing a movement of "endogeneization", both of the decisions related to their destiny and of the use of the means and resources used in the economic process (VÁZQUEZ BARQUERO, 2001; REZENDE; FERNANDES; Smith, 2007).

Thus, endogenous development emerged as a response of communities to the challenges posed by the closure of companies, deindustrialization and the increase in unemployment. The theory of endogenous development presupposes the protagonism of local actors, interacting in ties of territorial cooperation that constitute the social capital of a region, this type of capital allows the members of a community to trust each other and cooperate in the formation of new groups or in carrying out common actions (SOUZA FILHO, 2002; VÁZQUEZ BARQUERO, 2001).

Endogenous development aims to meet the needs and demands of the local population through the active participation of the community involved. More than making gains in terms of the position occupied by the local productive system in the social division of labor, the goal is to seek the economic, social and cultural well-being of the local community. Thus, endogenous development consists of a territorial approach to the development and functioning of the productive system (VÁZQUEZ BARQUERO, 2001).

Vázquez Barquero (2001) also propose that the development of an economy is always promoted by actors of a society that has its own culture, forms and mechanisms of organization. Each society promotes the emergence of specific forms of organizations and institutions that are its own and that will favor or hinder economic activity, because economic agents make their decisions in this organizational and institutional environment and because they do not always follow the theoretical prescriptions of economic models.

In this sense, the theory of endogenous development identified that the factors of production, such as social capital, human capital, knowledge, research and development, information and institutions, can be determined within the region. Therefore, it is soon understood that regions in which these factors are present or are strategically directed to develop them internally would have the best conditions to achieve accelerated development (SOUZA FILHO, 2002).

At the basis of this development would be the identification or creation of a cooperative culture in the community. And it would be the existence of this culture that focuses on the belief of a development perspective based on existing capacities and resources at the local level, in the use of human resources, in the mobilization of attitudes and values, that a virtuous development trajectory would be made feasible (ORTEGA, 2008). Thus, the degree of development is determined by social capital, understood as a conjunction of social forces capable of establishing norms and social networks aimed at the development of collective actions beneficial to the community (MOYANO-ESTRADA, 1999).



However, in Brazil, not very rare, a striking feature is the centralization of governmental decisions, treating the most diverse territorial spaces homogeneously, without, therefore, considering local particularities¹. This has contributed to the widening and intensification of local, regional, sectoral, social and economic inequalities, requiring substantial changes in the way of facing the asymmetries that persist in the various Brazilian regions (BRASIL, 2008). This perception is glimpsed by the public agencies themselves, such as the Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA), which stated in 2005 that:

The public policies implemented in recent decades by the Federal Government have always treated the country as a homogeneous whole. The realization of investments and services showed that national policies very centralized in management and pulverized in the implementation present difficulties in achieving the expected objectives of development in a sustainable way, because they are little sensitive to local particularities and the systemic approach, eventually subjecting the social and productive matrix exclusively to national interests (BRASIL, 2005a, p. 01).

Public policies, when undertaken from a homogeneous perspective, contribute to the more developed regions or localities benefiting more from government actions, which tends to potentiate inter-regional disparities. Ortega (2008, p. 16) calls as "economically depressed territories the territorial spaces whose social indicators (education, income, health and infant mortality, etc.) fall short of the national average [...]". The author is emphatic in stating that:

Because of the asymmetric distribution of resources, the benefits that could occur with decentralization are captured, especially in more developed regions and localities, which have the means and training to perform the functions that have been assigned to them, [...], which ends up maintaining or expanding interregional disparities (ORTEGA, 2008, p. 16).

For endogenous development to occur, it is necessary that economic, social and structural changes occur in the territorial base, that is, that they are led by the local community through its growth potential, which can contribute to the improvement of the standard of living of the population. Thus, according to Ortega (2008, p. 20), the combination of "*top-down* actions with *bottom-up* actions becomes essential for the success of territorial development" and endogenous. This is because territorial development aims to value the place with endogenous strategies, from the inside out, so that the social capital, human capital, knowledge, research and development of each territory individually is considered in the process of implementing public policies.

¹ Some territorial initiatives were developed in 2003, such as the creation of the Food Security and Social Development Consortium (CONSADs) and the Rural Territories Program (BRASIL, 2005b, 2010; ORTEGA, 2008), but that, according to Silva (2017), obtained less modest results. Soon after, in 2008, the Federal Government created the Territories of Citizenship Program which, among many actions, provided for: (1) sustainable organization of production; (2) rights and social development; (3) health, sanitation and access to water; (4) education and culture; (5) infrastructure; (6) support for territorial management; and (7) land actions (BRASIL, 2009).



Therefore, the implementation of synergistic actions with the local reality requires, first of all, a diagnosis of the main problems, whose purpose, that is, the knowledge of the real needs of the territory (ORTEGA, 2008). Thus, we seek to highlight, in the next section, some socioeconomic aspects of the large Brazilian regions that lack a close look on the part of public policies.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The continental dimensions of Brazil make the country present important singularities, so that regional differences are easily noticeable when analyzing some indicators. In terms of population, in 2017, for example, according to data from population estimates of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) – which was used to have a more up-to-date result, since the last Demographic Census was in 2010 – Brazil had about 207.5 million people, with the Southeast (41.9%) and Northeast (27.6%) regions being the most populous, while the Midwest and North had the lowest population (Table 1).

Table 1 - Distribution of the Brazilian population, according to major regions, in 2017

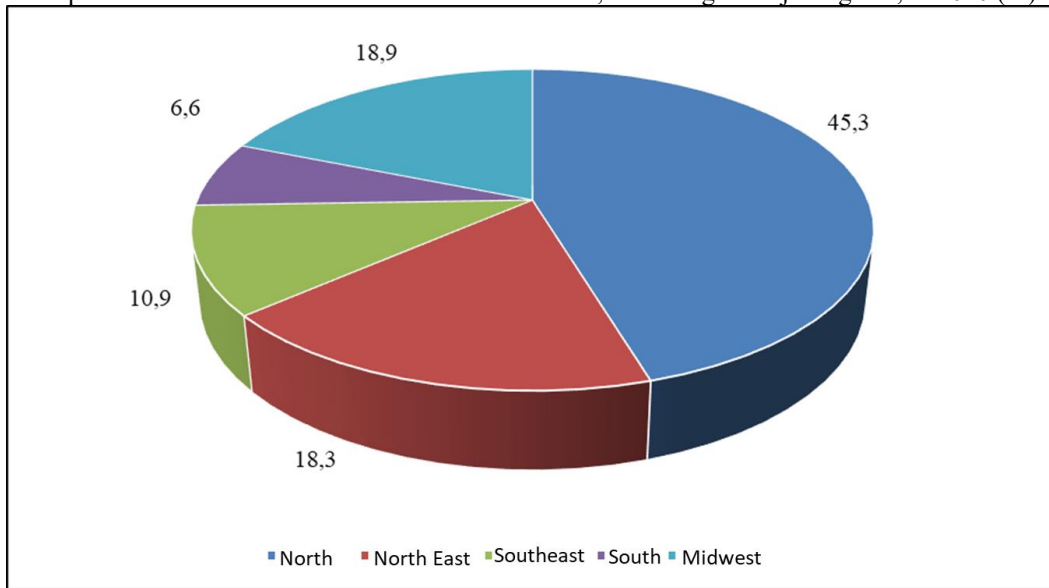
Geography	Total population	% of total
Brazil	207.660.929	100,0
North	17.936.201	8,6
Northeast	57.254.159	27,6
Southeast	86.949.714	41,9
South	29.644.948	14,3
Midwest	15.875.907	7,6

Source: IBGE/Pnad Continua (2017).

Another significant difference refers to the territorial extension of the Brazilian regions. According to data from the 2010 Demographic Census, the North region makes up practically half of the national territory, with 45.3% of the total area, and the South represents the smallest territorial extension. The particular case of the North, *per se*, shows the challenges for the governmental spheres in implementing public policies, given the complexity to encompass such distinct dynamics that possibly exist in this wide territorial space (Graph 1).



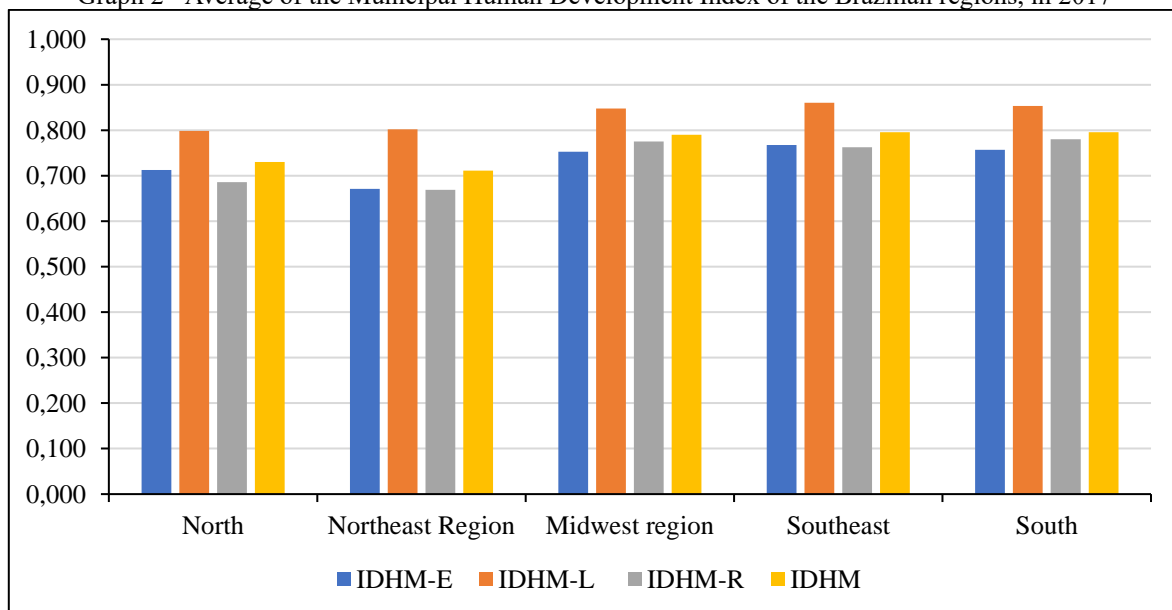
Graph 1 - Distribution of the Brazilian territorial area, according to major regions, in 2010 (%)



Source: Demographic Census/IBGE (2010).

The Brazilian regions also have substantial differences regarding other indicators/dimensions. Regarding the Municipal Human Development Index (MHDI), it is ²noted by Graph 2 that in the Midwest, Southeast and South regions the index is 0.8, considered very high according to the parameters of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), while the North and Northeast the same indicator is 0.7 (high). When the three dimensions that make up the index (education, longevity and income) are analyzed, the differences become even more evident, especially in relation to income and education, so that the Northeast presents the lowest index in these two indicators.

Graph 2 - Average of the Municipal Human Development Index of the Brazilian regions, in 2017



Source: Brazil (2017).

² It was calculated based on the average MHDI of the states that make up each of the regions.



Data from the 2017 Continuous National Household Sample Survey (PNAD) show that the real average monthly income from all jobs of employed persons aged 14 years or older was, on average, R\$ 2,178 for Brazil. The analysis according to the large Brazilian regions shows an unequal pattern, such that at one extreme are the Northeast and North with the lowest average incomes, R\$ 1,509 and R\$ 1,630, respectively, and, at the other extreme, the Midwest, Southeast and South regions that presented the highest average monthly income, even higher than the national average (Table 2).

Table 2 - Average monthly real income of all jobs (in reais) of the employed population and composition of incomes, at average prices of the year, by type of income, in 2017

Area Geographical	Average yield (in R\$)	% of income from labour income	% of income from pensions and pensions	% of income from other sources
Brazil	2.178	74,8	18,3	6,9
North	1.630	78,0	14,1	7,9
Northeast	1.509	68,7	22,4	8,9
Southeast	2.425	76,0	17,6	6,4
South	2.397	74,5	19,2	6,3
Midwest	2.512	78,6	14,8	6,6

Source: IBGE/Pnad Continua (2017).

In all Brazilian regions, work is still the main source of income for the population, so that its share in the composition of income is higher than that of other sources (pensions, rent and lease, alimony, donation, etc.). However, in the Northeast region (in addition to having the lowest share of labor income compared to the other regions) pensions and pensions also gain importance, which would be responsible for about 22% of income, while in the others this participation varies between 14.1% and 19.2%.

Per capita *household income* also presents distinct dynamics among the Brazilian regions. According to data in Table 3, the national average of average *per capita* income (average real income per person) in 2017 was R\$ 1,271. The South region had the highest income (R\$ 1,621), being practically twice as high as the amount received in the Northeast (R\$ 834) and North (R\$ 857).

Table 3 - Average monthly real household income *per capita*, according to the major Brazilian regions in 2017 (in R\$)

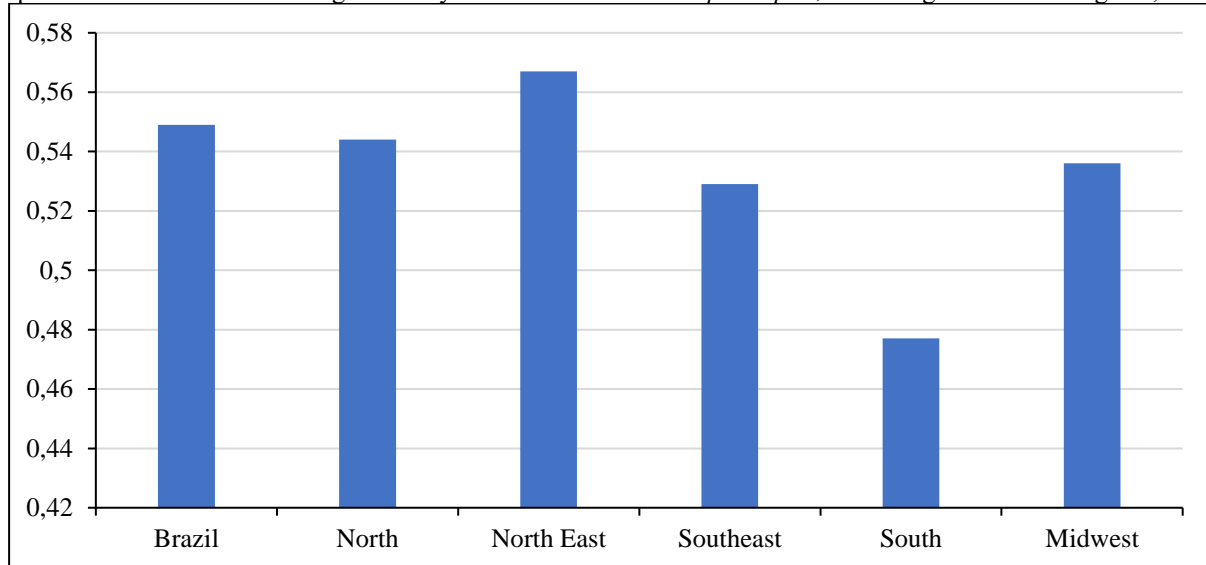
Geography	Per capita income (in R\$)
Brazil	1.271
North	857
Northeast	834
Southeast	1.583
South	1.621
Midwest	1.553

Source: IBGE/Pnad Continua (2017).



To analyze the concentration of income, the IBGE publishes the Gini index of the average monthly real household income *per capita* for Brazil and large regions. This is a measure of concentration of the distribution, and its value ranges from zero (perfect equality) to one (maximum inequality). With this information, it is noted that the index for Brazil was estimated at 0.549. The Northeast presented the highest concentration of *per capita income* (0.567) compared to the lowest index of the South region (0.477).

Graph 3 - Gini index of the average monthly real household income *per capita*, according to Brazilian regions, in 2017



Source: IBGE/Pnad Continua (2017).

Data from Atlas Brasil for the year 2017 show that the richest 10% of the country earned 17 times more than the poorest 40%. In the North and South regions, the richest 10% earned, respectively, about 20 and 10 times more than the poorest 40%. On the other hand, the richest 20% earned, in these two regions, approximately 14 and 7 times more than the poorest 40% (Table 4).

Table 4 - Average of income inequality indicators in large Brazilian regions, in 2017

Geography	Ratio 10% richer / 40% poorer	Ratio 20% richer / 40% poorer
Brazil	17,3	11,9
North	20,3	14,1
Northeast	18,2	12,4
Southeast	14,0	9,7
South	10,7	7,7
Midwest	14,2	10,1

Source: Brazil (2017).

The North and Northeast regions, similarly to what was previously analyzed, – these regions presented deficiencies in practically all the indicators investigated in the present study – concentrate



the highest rates of extremely poor and, mainly, of vulnerable. It should be noted that while the percentage of vulnerable in the Southeast, South and Midwest regions is less than 20%, in the North and Northeast it is above 40%, according to data from Atlas Brasil for the year 2017. This shows a situation of socioeconomic fragility, in which certain groups experience a process of exclusion and impairment of social well-being.

Table 5 - Distribution of the extremely poor, poor and poverty-prone population in large regions in 2017

Geography	% of extremely Poor	% of poor	% of vulnerable to poverty
Brazil	6,0	11,7	25,0
North	14,1	27,1	46,5
Northeast	11,6	22,4	42,6
Southeast	3,7	7,0	17,8
South	2,3	4,2	11,2
Midwest	2,8	5,9	15,6

Source: Brazil (2017).

The inadequacy of household conditions in the North and Northeast regions is a very present problem, especially in relation to sanitary sewage and garbage collection, as can be seen in Table 6. For illustration purposes, in the North only 20.7% of the households have sanitary sewage through a general network, while in the others these services are better distributed. These services are essential for the prevention of diseases, which requires the public spheres to implement effective actions that provide universal or equitable access, under penalty of compromising development indicators, especially those related to health.

Table 6 - Distribution of households according to selected housing conditions, states of the Northeast and Midwest regions, in 2017

Geography	Water supply (general network)	Garbage collected directly by cleaning service	Sanitary sewage (general network, rain network or septic tank)	Electric power (general network)
Brazil	85,7	82,9	66,6	99,5
North	59,2	69,8	20,7	96,4
Northeast	80,2	69,6	46,0	99,4
Southeast	92,5	91,7	89,0	100
South	88,1	86,1	66,0	99,9
Midwest	86,7	85,1	52,6	99,6

Source: IBGE/Pnad Continua (2017).

Another indicator that reinforces the differences between Brazilian regions is the illiteracy rate among people aged 15 years or older and the average number of years of schooling. In the Northeast



region, illiteracy among this population group is 14.5%, that is, four times higher than in the South and Southeast regions, and the average number of years of schooling is approximately 8 years (Table 7).

Table 7 - Illiteracy rate of people aged 15 years or older and average years of schooling in the states of the Northeast and Midwest regions, in 2017

Geography	Illiteracy rate – 15 years or older	Average years of study
Brazil	6,9	9,4
North	8,0	8,9
Northeast	14,5	8,2
Southeast	3,5	10,1
South	3,5	9,6
Midwest	5,2	9,7

Source: IBGE/Pnad Continua (2017).

Access to quality education is a fundamental constitutional right, and the State has the duty to provide it. In addition to the offer, it is necessary educational policies that contribute to the permanence and success in the educational process. It is noteworthy that investments in education constitute an essential tool for the reduction of economic and social inequalities, while making the population more aware of its role in society.

From the synthesis of indicators presented it was possible to perceive that the Brazilian regions present peculiar characteristics in relation to the most diverse socioeconomic aspects. Given this, although the difficulty of implementing heterogeneous policies that contemplate the most diverse territorial demands is recognized, it is imperative to break with the deterministic, linear and homogeneous logic that has so much guided development policies over time in Brazilian history.

First of all, it is necessary to recognize regional differences as a fundamental premise for the elaboration of effective actions, so that local particularities are considered in this process. Moreover, the participation of local/regional actors in the discussion, elaboration and implementation of public policies is, in this diverse and multifaceted context, essential, since they are the ones who are most knowledgeable about their needs.

4 CONCLUSION

In this sense, recognizing that the various regions or spaces present characteristics that differentiate them, and that local actors are endowed with rationality and their own identity, therefore, must actively participate in the processes that involve them, are important aspects to propose effective territorial development projects.

Therefore, it is the high degree of social capital that explains why the same public policies directed to similar territories present different results. And in this way, the results of public policies



aimed at development depend, to a large extent, on the communities in which they are being implemented.

Thus, the construction of social and political structures depends on the participation of social actors, the market, the State and Institutions, and not only on one or the other as occurs recurrently. It becomes imperative to break with traditional forms of control, opening space for the performance of the various institutional levels, with the use of the most varied mechanisms/instruments of negotiation of the conflicts that involve the various local realities.

Thus, we sought to show that the Brazilian regions, in fact, have distinct socioeconomic traits that, far from a homogeneous and unique territory. And thus, endogenous development is shown as an alternative for an improvement in the productive dynamics of the regions.

In fact, the multifaceted Brazilian reality with differentiated regional dynamics, as demonstrated through some selected socioeconomic indicators, depends, fundamentally, on policies that are thought and elaborated from the local reality, so that they are effective in mitigating/solving the problems and challenges that involve the population.

It was proved, with the descriptive analysis, that the North and Northeast regions, the largest in territorial terms, are the ones that continue to present the worst results in socioeconomic terms. Thus, it is evident the need to "think territorially" considering the particularities of these regions in order to seek economic development for Brazil.

Regarding future research on this research theme, it is suggested an analysis of recent public policies and their regional impact, whether in recent years regional public policies have been designed that considered the specificities of each Brazilian region or whether generalized policies that reinforce regional inequalities are maintained.



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