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► To cite this version:

Eric Sabourin, Doris Sayago. Dossier: "Public Policies for Territorial Development in Latin America". *Sustentabilidade em debate*, 2013, 4 (2), pp.15-16. 10.18472/SustDeb.v4n2.2013.10047. hal-02803286

HAL Id: hal-02803286

<https://hal.science/hal-02803286>

Submitted on 10 Jun 2020

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Dossier: “Public Policies for Territorial Development in Latin America”

Eric Sabourin and Doris Sayago

This dossier is devoted to the subject “Public Policies for Territorial Development in Latin America”. It is true that articles about either public policies for rural development or territorial and environmental development have already been published in *Sustainability in Debate*. However, this present dossier has the merit of introducing scientific articles that combine both research subjects – public policies for rural and for territorial/environmental development.

We prepared this dossier as an outgrowth of our position as coordinators of a new research network, the “Public Policies and Rural Development Network in Latin America”. One of the network’s research axes is the territorialization of public policies and the emergence of territorial development programmes in the continent. This phenomenon goes hand in hand with a double process: a process of decentralization and the retraction of the role of the State in the field of rural development.

A significant number of recently implemented national public policies for territorial development include common traits that are worth noticing:

- They seek to establish a new governance scale/level which is supra or inter-municipal: the rural territory;
- Paradoxically, those policies are originated in ministries with sectorial scopes, such as Agriculture, Agrarian Development, or Rural. Those policies generally focus on a specific rural sector: family farming / smallholder farming;
- Finally, most rural development territorial policies in Latin America are associated with participatory processes involving civil society.

The articles of this dossier allow readers to deepen their understanding of the above-mentioned traits, as well as to search for other similarities or specificities on their own.

The first piece, by Márcio Caniello, Marc Piroux and Valério Veríssimo de Souza Bastos, titled “Ideas and Practices for the Social Management of Territories of Citizenship. The Case of the Borborema Territory, Paraíba”, discusses the results of a monitoring and evaluation system for rural territories implemented by the Territorial Development Program conducted by the Brazilian Ministry of Agrarian Development, in the Borborema territory of Paraíba State. Based on the analysis of a set of indicators, the authors seek to explain why a territory whose civil society actors and institutions, all sharing high levels of social capital, are reaching only poor or mediocre results in terms of program performance and project implantation.

Also focusing on the Brazilian experience, authors Eduardo de Lima Caldas andIVALDO MOREIRA examine the parallel and simultaneous application of two development programs in the Amazonian region of Northern Mato Grosso State: the Inter-municipal Consortiums for Sustainable Development Program and the National Program for Territorial Development, run by the same Ministry of Agrarian Development (PRONAT/MDA). In their article, titled “Policies for Territorial Development and Inter-municipality in Brazil: Complementarities and Tensions”, the authors

explore the tensions, but also the complementarities and the similarities between those two policies.

In the third article, “Governance in the Operation of Environmental Management Services in Montevidean Beaches (Uruguay)”, authors Luidgi Marchese, Daniel Conde and Marcus Polette assess the impact of a territorial management services program operating in a specific territory: the Montevidean beaches. The analysis proposes the introduction of participatory processes in a program originally created through a top-down process.

The last article of the dossier, “Internationalization and Dissemination of Rural Territorial Development Public Policies: Model Hypotheses for Latin America”, offers theoretical-methodological elements for improved understanding of the dissemination of development policies for rural development (DTR, in Portuguese) at the continental level. The authors Gilles Massardier and Eric Sabourin present the hypothesis of a specifically Latin American model for DTR policies, departing from the simultaneous “intertwining” of different internationalization types for public policies.

In the Debate Section, the organizers of the dossier exchange views on territorial development programs in Latin America with Octavio Sotomayor, from the Rural Development Unit of ECLAC. Sotomayor examines the factors explaining the emergence of DTR policies in Latin America and analyzes options to improve the impact of those policies.

Finally, the Interview Section offers food for thought on Brazilian territorial policies. Interviewed by Raquel Lopes Sinigaglia Caribé Grando, Tânia Bacelar – an economist from the Federal University of Pernambuco, and a renowned expert on territorial dynamics-brings a science-policy approach to the debate. Besides her scientific career, professor Bacelar has directed the Planning Secretary of the State Government in Pernambuco, of (SUDENE) and has acted as the National Secretary of Regional Politics in the National Integration Ministry of Brazil.

