



Article

Higher distance education: possible supporting in regional development

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ABSTRACT

The article argues that, mainly in what concerns the applied social sciences, distance higher education might represent knowledge creation about the immediate realities of the students and help to promote regional development. The study is based on the experience of the graduate course in Economics of the Federal University of Santa Catarina, offered since 2008. It initially highlights the role played by the universities in promoting development, stressing their capacity to prepare people able to generate and disseminate knowledge on the economic, social and political local conditions. Distance education stands out in this kind of process as long as it stimulates the analysis of the problems which pervade the students' everyday life. Local and regional subjects tend to be strongly represented in the research undertaken by such students in order to provide the final piece of work required by the graduate course in Economics of that university. Four studies of this type, elaborated under the supervision of the author in connection with the discipline of Regional and Urban Economics: there is proximity to regional or local development issues, especially due to the suggestions in terms of policies or measures for development promotion.

Keywords: Graduate course in Economics at a distance. Research required for course conclusion. Regional development.

RESUMEN

El documento sostiene que, especialmente en las ciencias sociales aplicadas a la educación superior a distancia pueden representar la creación de conocimiento sobre la realidad de los estudiantes y contribuir a la promoción del desarrollo regional. La base es la experiencia del curso de graduación en Ciencias Económicas de la Universidad Federal de Santa Catarina, que comenzó en 2008. El texto pone de relieve el papel de las universidades en general en la promoción de este desarrollo, incluida la formación de las personas para generar y difundir el conocimiento acerca de la economía, sociedad y política en ese plan. La modalidad de educación a distancia se destaca en este proceso cuando se estimula el estudio de los problemas que marcan la vida cotidiana de los estudiantes. En la graduación a distancia en Economía de la UFSC hay una fuerte presencia de los problemas locales y regionales – teniendo en cuenta los municipios de residencia

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de los estudiantes – en las monografías de formación de finalización de las distintas clases. Se muestran cuatro de estas obras, dirigidas por el autor y vinculados a la disciplina de la economía regional y urbana: se observa la proximidad a los temas de desarrollo regional y local, incluyendo las sugerencias con respecto a la formulación de políticas o medidas de promoción.

Palabras clave: Curso a distancia en Economía. Realización de trabajos de curso. Desarrollo regional y urbano.

RESUMO

O trabalho sustenta a argumentação de que, especialmente no âmbito das ciências sociais aplicadas, a educação superior a distância pode representar a criação de conhecimento sobre as realidades dos estudantes e contribuir para a promoção do desenvolvimento regional. É usada como base a experiência do curso de graduação em Ciências Econômicas da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, iniciado em 2008. O texto destaca o papel das universidades em geral na promoção desse desenvolvimento, inclusive pela formação e capacitação de pessoas para gerar e disseminar conhecimento sobre as condições econômicas, sociais e políticas nesse plano. A modalidade do ensino a distância sobressai nesse processo quando estimula o estudo de problemas que marcam o cotidiano dos alunos. No curso de graduação em Ciências Econômicas a distância da UFSC, é forte a presença de temas locais e regionais – considerando-se os municípios de residência dos alunos – observados nas monografias de conclusão da formação, nas várias turmas. Neste estudo, são evidenciados quatro desses trabalhos, orientados pelo autor e ligados à disciplina de Economia Regional e Urbana: observa-se proximidade com questões de desenvolvimento regional ou local, inclusive pelas sugestões no tocante à formulação de políticas ou medidas de promoção.

Palavras-chave: Curso de graduação em Ciências Econômicas a distância. Trabalhos de conclusão de curso. Desenvolvimento regional e urbano.

INTRODUCTION

The second half of the twentieth century recorded major corporate changes within and outside the central areas of the world economy. The rapid economic growth, with strong gains in productivity and a pattern designated as mass consumption marked almost three decades, particularly in the richer countries. Intertwined with this movement, there was a university explosion, with the increasing higher education, inseparable movement of the demands of the dynamic of capitalism and the role and status that this level of training started to show.

In Brazil, this process has advanced at a rapid pace in the 1970s, although the creation of federal universities, accompanied by state institutions, to unfold since the 1950s and higher education could exist in some cities in the beginning of the twentieth century. Anyway, Brazil diverges, even for Latin American countries on the precocity of a consolidated offer of this educational level. Thus, it deserves highlight the whirlwind of the past few decades, which have articulated important advances in graduate school.

Important step in the spread of higher education occurred with the implementation of the distance mode. This experience, with variations in the modus operandi, is international, as illustrated by the British Open University, world-precursor and inspiration for various initiatives of its kind. In Brazil, the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (Law 9.394, of 20/12/1996) established this form of education for different levels, in Section 80 (BRASIL, 1996), which regulation was left to Decree 5.622 (of 19/12/2005). Normative Ordinance 2 of 10/01/2007, provides for the regulation and evaluation regarding higher education.

This research is concerned in analyzing the distance learning in higher education. Its base is the experience in Economics course from the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC), started with Resolution No. 010 of 06/06/2007, the Undergraduate Education Board of this university. The main goal, which guides the development of the article, it is necessary: to argue that, in forming processes under the applied social sciences, this type of education can promote the creation of knowledge about socioeconomic realities and students immediate policies, helping to create critical mass and capabilities aimed at promoting regional development. The study line is in accordance with the provisions of the Law 9.394 (BRAZIL, 1996), for the purposes of higher education:

Section 43. Higher education is to:

[...]

III – encourage research work and scientific research aimed at the development of science and technology and the creation and dissemination of culture, and thus develop the understanding of the individual and the environment they live in.

[...]

VI – encourage knowledge of the world problems, particularly national and regional, providing specialized services to the community and to establish a reciprocal relationship (BRASIL, 1996)

The text is organized as follows. The next section discusses the role of the university in promoting regional development: highlight the importance of education and training of people to produce and disseminate knowledge about the economic, social and political in this plan, and it is postulated that distance education can be startled in this process by encouraging and supporting the study of problems that mark the daily lives of students.

The next section focuses on the undergraduate degree experience in Economics in distance of UFSC, with socioeconomic indicators for municipalities where such training has been offered and showing the incidence of local issues in the course conclusion work. The third section, the last before the final considerations, presents structured manner which does sustain the central perspective of the study, that higher distance education can help to create knowledge about socioeconomic and immediate political realities of students; the contents of four works of completion of course, covered in the article having been prepared under the guidance of the author, are explored in this direction.

1. UNIVERSITY AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT: GENUINE DIFFICULTIES

The importance is not short with respect to the institutions, in general, on regional development. This becomes clear when you emphasize, the institutional environment, learning processes, diffusion of knowledge and innovation in different approaches and considering broad meaning of the term institution. The emphasis is not surprising, because the institutions are distinguished in any promoting development projects on a regional scale, as implemented in the framework of decentralization of state functions, a trend observed in many countries in recent decades, including Brazil (BOISIER, 1996; LINS, 2011).

One reason for this highlight of knowledge in the institutional environment is that the configuration of such an environment (public or private, formal or informal) is the basis of learning and innovation, decisive response to globalization. It must be said the same about the role of institutions in encouraging cooperation between the actors present in the territories. In fact, cooperation is fundamental to the dynamics of the regions, as suggested, for example, in the work edited by Vanier (2009), by linking it to the strategic nature of its promotion.

The University stands out among the institutions that promote learning, the dissemination of knowledge and innovation, particularly at the regional level. Because part of the system of production and dissemination of knowledge, the university performs essential functions to the development, in a broad sense, something a little more significant, given the demands posed by globalization.

Of great importance are the interactions with the regional productive web. It refers here above all, the projection outside the university through outreach activities, including - and especially - reflecting the growing social demand for university practices of external collaboration, originated particularly in relation to production (LINDQVIST, 2012). Latin America is not on the fringes of this movement: in many countries the requests grew in the productive sector, generating convergence efforts between the interests and activities of the university, the productive sector and government (SUTZ, 2000).

In Brazil, the 1980 recorded strong push in this direction, because of this enduring crisis that represented financial crunch on public sector and reduction of investments in companies. In the 1990s, pressures on productive restructuring and increased competitiveness - due to trade liberalization, which greatly aggravated the competition - boosted the approach of the business community with the university environment, with mixed results.

But there are many limitations and difficulties surrounding the external linkages of the university, affecting the performance of the institution in promoting regional development. One aspect of the problem is that participation always is the encounter between two distinct spheres, which tend to have specific logic: the university itself, with its broad functions, defined and enthralled with a sense of universality, and the territory (the region, the local), surrounded by more immediate and pragmatic interests.

Anyway, much of that hinders dialogue, refers to own academic performance, often unable to reach certain areas, either by the conduct of their agents in the production and dissemination of knowledge (topics and speeches by other academic) is the precariousness under communication. But also the regional environment can be a source of problems, especially when the private and public sectors of the territory can not reach university or even have greater interest in involvement with the institution (EUROPEAN UNION, 2011).

It follows that the university management itself deserves notice. It belongs to a variety of measures, in fact, facilitate communication between the activities of the university, showing its potential and the environment in which the entity has direct presence. In fact, to project in the community means, first of all, tell about themselves. The university initiative is essential, attracting the community with proper communication of the results of their research and demonstration of the usefulness and interest that it is done.

On the other hand, adapt to the realities that change, incorporating new demands on the agenda for study and research means establishing harmony with extramural life and institutional inclination to search for answers to real problems. This is not about to confine the university activities to local needs and demands, but to advance the absorption of the territorial dimension alongside other scales. This action appears to be essential to help promote development on a regional scale if it is considered an integral factor of the objectives list of the university.

Thus to participate in promoting development, the university needs to incorporate a management method compatible with such interest. Initiative is welcome under any circumstances with regard to administrative routines, which can always be improved in their bureaucratic procedures, especially with the streamlining of procedures.

More than concerning the institutional administration, especially relevant and fertile ground refers to education. Indeed, "[...] the most significant contribution of universities to society and the economy will remain having the form of well-educated graduates with critical minds and good skills for learning" (LUNDVALL, 2002, p. 1). In this plan, a better link between the studied content and reality of students is revealed strategic measure to regional development. Naturally this occurs in relation to the research, basic foundation of what is studied. With regard to the organization of teaching, the projection in the community's mean even perception of local needs in professional matters.

All this can resonate in the creation of new courses or adaptation of training already available. Restructure curricula, introduce content that also contain thematic proximity to regional interests and tailor learning methods and teaching procedures, in general, they are worthy of attention actions. On the subject, it is worth mentioning the warning Lundvall (*ibid.*, P. 1), that traditional forms of organization of studies in general "[...] characterized by well marked and hard boundaries across disciplines and isolated from society in general, are being challenged, and alternatives need to be developed."

Distance education, DE, shows accessible as a tool to enhance the university's participation in the promotion of regional development, in addition, being an innovation in the Brazilian university system. Note that, in itself, the physical presence of the DE - through classroom support poles - affects the sites involved, including stimulating economic activities, especially when it comes to small municipalities. The study by Diana (2015) systematized some indications that such a process would have occurred in distance education centers in Santa Catarina.

But the privileged aspect in this article refers to another type of question. By their

very nature, and keeping fidelity to the general objectives of its implementation, this form of education is the range of people who otherwise would hardly have access to higher education in a significant quantity. This observation, signals important facts with respect to the encouragement and support of development, the broad relevance in any views the potential for intellectual deepening and strengthening level of the territories.

To the extent that this type of education is molded to incorporate, in their program contents, subjects exhibiting proximity to the territorial realities in which it is given, the reflexes in that direction tend to be even stronger. But even if the available training is traditional profile with classic disciplinary content without adherence to the problems experienced by students, it is still possible to promote the critical mass of constitution and local intervention capacity through research carried out as part of training.

It refers here to the completion of work of undergraduate courses. Encouraging approach to local issues, bearing fruit in the choice of such matters is opportunity for an analytical exercise carried out as the academic and scientific liturgy, and, above all, means the production of knowledge on territorial reality, in its various aspects. In a word, it is the opportunity to contribute to the promotion of regional development.

2. DE IN ECONOMIC SCIENCES AT UFSC: INCIDENCE OF LOCAL ISSUES IN THE FINAL PAPERS

The undergraduate degree in Economics in distance offered by UFSC started its academic activities at the beginning of the first half of 2008, after completion of the selection process in July 2007. Since then, other groups have been created through instruments selection put in place in July 2009, November 2010 and July 2013. In the first three classes, were included candidates from Rio Grande

do Sul and Roraima, and the fourth group, suitors of Santa Catarina and also from Rio Grande do Sul.

Ten poles of presence support operated in the first three groups, six in Rio Grande do Sul - in the municipalities of Hulha Negra, Jacuizinho, São Francisco de Paula, Seberi, Tapejara e Tio Hugo - and four in the state of Roraima - Boa Vista, Caracaraí, Iracema e Normandia. The fourth group, currently underway, involves six poles, five in Santa Catarina - Braço do Norte, Concórdia, Itapema, Pouso Redondo e Praia Grande - and one in Rio Grande do Sul - Vila Flores.

Table 1 intends to report on the socio-economic situation of these poles, with respect to population and the Municipal Human Development Index (IDHM)². Gather such information is more than simple curiosity. Most students who developed course conclusion monographs on problems of their home towns or regions where they are located inhabit the municipalities themselves that shelter or shelter centers on-site support to the course. This issue is explored in the article to argue about the role of distance education as an aid in promoting development on a regional scale.

² The IDHM is a way to measure the development, used by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which considers the longevity of people and their income levels and education; It ranges from 0 to 1 and indicates a development much higher the closer IDHM is the second limit.

Table 1: Resident population and Municipal Human Development Index (IDHM) in municipalities with classroom poles in Economics in distance mode from UFSC - 2000 and 2010

STATES AND MUNICIPALITIES		TOTAL POPULATION		IDHM	
		2000	2010	2000	2010
Rio Grande do Sul	Hulha Negra	5.359	6.043	0.569	0.643
	Jacuzinho(*)		2.507		0.662
	São Francisco de Paula	19.725	20.224	0.592	0.685
	Seberi	11.349	10.884	0.597	0.723
	Tapejara	15.115	19.250	0.660	0.760
	Tio Hugo(*)		2.724		0.742
	Vila Flores	3.086	3.200	0.621	0.742
	Total state	10.187.798	10.641.426	0.664	0.745
Roraima	Boa Vista	200.568	282.896	0.649	0.752
	Caracaráf	14.286	18.322	0.521	0.624
	Iracema	4.781	8.691	0.518	0.582
	Normandia	6.138	8.936	0.373	0.594
	Total state	324.397	448.675	0.598	0.707
Santa Catarina	Braço do Norte	24.802	28.981	0.687	0.778
	Concórdia	63.058	68.539	0.710	0.800
	Itapema	25.869	45.740	0.705	0.796
	Pouso Redondo	12.203	14.801	0.589	0.720
	Praia Grande	7.286	7.254	0.598	0.718
	Total state	5.356.360	6.226.708	0.674	0.774

Source: prepared by the author using the IBGE - Censuses - and PNUD (IDHM 2000: <http://www.pnud.org.br/atlas/ranking/Ranking-IDHM-Municipios-2000.aspx> ; IDHM 2010: <http://www.pnud.org.br/atlas/ranking/ranking-idhm-municipios-2010.aspx>)

(*) Municipality created by state law in mid-1996 and installed on 01/01/2001.

As the population, it refers to very small municipalities, mostly. Seven had less than 10,000 inhabitants according to the Population Census of 2010, and four between the base and 20,000. The largest populations refer to Boa Vista and Concórdia, important agro-industrial town midwestern in Santa Catarina.

Another aspect relates to population density, expressed in the behavior of quotas between 2000 and 2010. Disregarding

Jacuzinho and Tio Hugo, non-existent as municipalities in 2000, it is observed to have occurred: population contraction in Seberi and Praia Grande; stagnation, or nearly so, in Vila Flores and San Francisco de Paula; explosion in Itapema (77% increase), an illustration of what generally is called littoralisation in Santa Catarina; and movements that little draw attention in other cases.

About IDHM, only five of the group of municipalities stood at the top level of the

respective states in 2010, three of these cases of concern to Santa Catarina. All exhibited an increase in index between 2000 and 2010, in some experiments, in order to change the above condition IDHM smaller than the state as a whole, as in Tapejara Vila Flores. Another aspect is that the five lowest IDHM in 2000 or in 2010, refer to the hinterland municipalities of Roraima and the two from Rio Grande do Sul: Hulha Negra e São Francisco de Paula.

It was in this heterogeneous and diverse environment as the numerous socio-economic and environmental aspects, which took place the process of design and preparation of monographs of completion of the course, in their various classes. And, unsurprisingly, the choice of the students was marked by issues relating to the immediate conditions or environment of their places of residence. widely

prevalent local or regional themes. Table 2, built on information on all the defenses of course conclusion work carried out until July 2015, reports on this issue.

It can be inferred from the table that 24.6% of monographs addressed on residence municipalities of the authors (and, in most, these municipalities coincide with the locations of presence support poles), and 15.9% said to the regions where they are located such municipalities (if debiting of course, those accounted for in the municipal level). This amounts to 40.5%, which, adding to the work devoted to statewide issues, allows us to observe that well over half - just 56.4% - of all monographs reported to problems immediately perceived by students or located in, so to speak, sociospatial vicinity of the respective fields of observation.

Table 2: Number of course conclusion monographs defended the undergraduate degree in Economics from the distance of the UFSC - distribution as the general profile and the spatial extent of the studies: the first half of 2012 to the first half 2015

PERIODS	1 st	2 nd	2 nd	1 st	2 nd	1 st	TOTAL
	TERM. 2012	TERM. 2012	TERM. 2013	TERM. 2014	TERM. 2014	TERM. 2015	
General profile and spatial extent theme							
Development issues in the author's city of residence	7	2	0	2	3	3	17
Development issues in the municipal area where the author resides	7	2	1	0	0	1	11
Different state problems to which it belongs the municipality where the author resides	2	2	0	1	3	3	11
Various topics in other scales: national macro-region, country, world	10	6	3	2	4	5	30
Total	26	12	4	5	10	12	69

Source: prepared by the author with undergraduate course department data in Economics in distance modality of UFSC.

3. EXPLORING EXPERIENCES FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES: THREE MUNICIPALITIES, FOUR MONOGRAPHS

Aiming to illustrate the involvement of focus in progress students with issues related to their own socio-economic and professional realities, they present briefly the contents of four monographs prepared in DE centers in the UFSC Economics located in Rio Grande do Sul. They are works made between 2012 and 2015 in different classes of this course under the guidance of the article author, who teaches the discipline of Regional and Urban Economics.

The first monograph, held in July 2012, expounded on tourism events in Gramado (VIDAL, 2012); the second, presented in December 2014, focuses on the effects of the polarization exerted by Tapejara municipality in northern Rio Grande do Sul (ANTUNES, 2014a); the third, also completed in December 2014, also explored the reality of Tapejara, but with interest in real estate behavior (ANTUNES, 2014b); fourth, evaluated in July 2015, has considered a ban on semi-precious stones mining in Salto Jacuí (GUERREIRO, 2015). Figure 1 allows you to view the location of these municipalities.

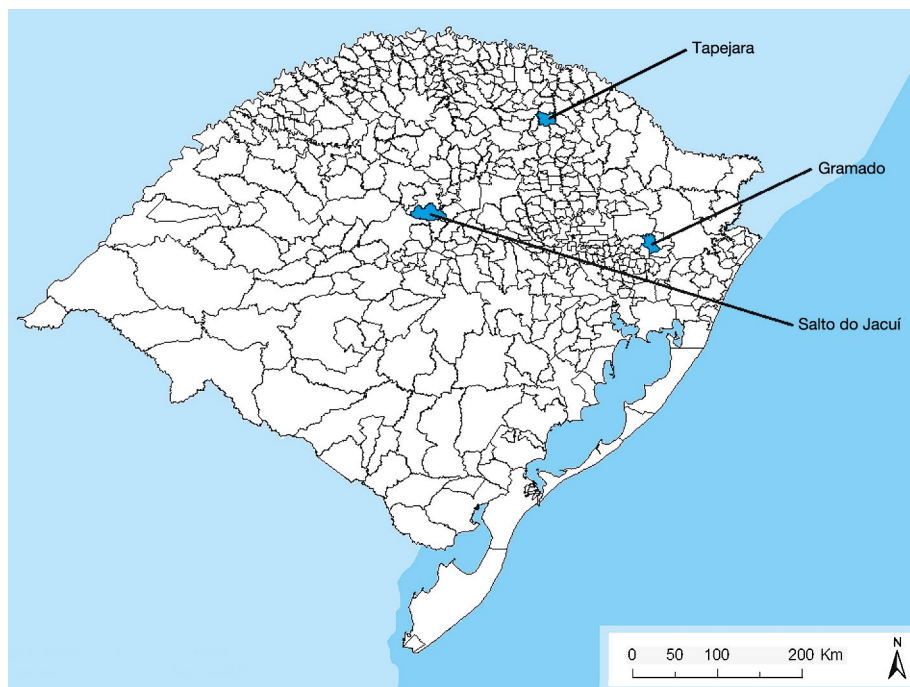


Figure 1: Rio Grande do Sul: position of the municipalities of Gramado, Salto do Jacuí e Tapejara

Source: prepared by the author on cartographic base of the IBGE.

3.1. Tourism Events in Gramado: possibilities for local development

The monograph of completion course designed by Vidal (2012) addressed the socio-economic tourism in the city of Gramado, a major tourist destination in southern Brazil, whose primary attraction lies largely in combination (developed in the marketing plan) traits supposedly European sites (landscape, climate, gastronomy). Local resident and professionally connected to the tourism sector, the author took on the task of describing the local tourist path and to analyze the operation of the event tourism mode, the object of particular attention from the public and business leaders, as well as strong dissemination target in the media (as in the case of the Film Festival, Natal Luz, Chocofest).

Based on bibliographical and documentary research and mainly on interviews with stakeholders linked to various segments of tourism, the author could suggest evidence of the great economic importance of tourism not only for the city but for their regional environment (including nearby Canela, another important and popular tourist area of serra gaucha). This enhancement has to do with the growth of events which helps to distribute the flow of visitors over the months, even though most of the demand manifests itself in the cold period, due to the local characteristics.

The direct research showed, for example, events such as Natal Luz and Chocofest reverberate strongly in terms of labor contracts, even if temporarily. It indicated also that local businesses in different branches, registers large increase in sales and hosting services sector or supply impacts considerably in revenues. However, in respect of multiplier effects, the significance of tourism is limited by the narrow economic base of the local economy: less than 1/3 of suppliers to tourist activities are the same municipality or the surrounding area, and yet, these are individuals the rural part (small farmers, for example). The largest number works in Porto Alegre and Caxias do Sul.

According to the survey, the preparation for tourism events was originated from deliberate actions under the partnership between government and private enterprise. This convergence reflects understanding that cooperation is an essential requirement in building successful tourist destinations.

However, this interaction also concerns what has been identified as an important local issue to be evaluated in the Gramado tourist environment. It was found in research that according to the evaluation of several members of the local tourism industry, the costs of conducting the events in that city are very high.. For this reason, Gramado would be losing to other cities in serra gaucha, trade opportunities, festivals and other such events. An eminent competitor is the city of Bento Gonçalves, who seems to be structuring as an entertainment destination including great events. Criticism of local behaviors was blunt: the "[...] [not] solution [...] depends only on the government, given that many places for events are private [...]" (VIDAL, 2012, p. 63). Anyway, the City Hall appears to be implicated, especially because "[...] the municipality has its own event space (Expo-Gramado), but there is no way to force all events to migrate to this place." (ibid., p. 63).

As noted, this course conclusion work represented undeniably creation of knowledge about the socio-economic reality in which the author lived and acted professionally. Thus, the research was the sense of contribution to information and ideas, one way or another, to promote regional development. It does not allow different classification a study that brings diagnosis as this one: move the tourism sector in Gramado beyond what has been achieved so far reaching demands that the public sector "[...] to invest in infrastructure to improve traffic in the city in times of events, and also perform coordinated actions between public and private agents to reduce their costs [realization]." (ibid., p. 63).

3.2. The polarization exerted by Tapejara and its regional reflections

The research that instructed the preparation of the course conclusion work by Antunes (2014th), involving data collection and information on municipal, state and federal agencies, as well as field work in the form of interviews with relevant institutional partners, focused on the interactions Tapejara between economic and regional environment, especially Sertao, far (by road) just over 50 km from the first. The choice of the second municipality derived from perception, fostered and supported by socio-professional status of the author, that the Tapejara axis - Sertao deserve to have enhancement in approach to regional dynamics inspired by the debate on poles of growth or development.

In general, exhibit analytical importance in this debate issues such as irradiation of economic dynamism and strengthening of linkages and interactions account regional production web. The same is to say, as a counterpoint, processes of domination and even atrophy activities in areas suffering polarization, including the draining of resources (human and other) sites. The idea of the study was to produce knowledge about how Tapejara polarizes its surroundings, reflecting notably in Sertao.

Tapejara stands out in its region for its population size and urban conditions, and in the productive structure due to the presence of various sectors, especially the agricultural industry (including grain processing and refrigerators), with activities that give some economic vitality to the local . The study has raised the existence of over 220 industrial establishments, some of which are installed in industrial areas of the city. They have a special focus operations of an important agro-industrial group, formed by several units, benefiting grain in the city and maintains facilities in Sertao.

The Sertao records scarce industrial presence, with the bulk of their economic activity linked to agriculture, it excels the production

of grain. The unit installed in this municipality, which belongs to the agroindustrial group mentioned above (grain processor in Tapejara), which receives the raw material produced in the region and provides transportation to another county. There are thus territorial division of activities that are built not only an industry, but a corporate group, evoking intra-firm complementarity between the municipalities, under the Tapejara command. Sertao also has a campus of the Federal Institute of Rio Grande do Sul (about two thousand students), and for decades has housed one Embrapa experimental station.

The Antunes research (2014th) allowed to know that while Tapejara experienced considerable population growth in the decade completed in the year of the study, surrounding municipalities attended reduction processes such quotas and striking in some cases. Among these, it was highlighted Sertao with pace of contraction of the most significant. This population decline indicates that there were displacements between municipalities, and at least part of that traffic was Tapejara as destination (although Passo Fundo and Erechim seem to channel the most). This was due, including the stimulus represented by the disclosure, on billboards companies positioned at the entrances of the city of jobs in the secondary and tertiary sectors. The attraction also reflected itself in occupation of jobs also by many people who remained inhabiting neighboring municipalities, with performing daily commutes.

But movements from these municipalities, located more or less close, not limited to the daily commute to work. The research was able to show, based on reports on the external calls of Tapejara hospital, that among those difficulties, the hospital recorded and provided outpatient care, considerable number referred to patients from several surrounding towns, some located in neighborhood, others more distant.

At the conclusion of the study, Antunes (2014th, p. 64) pointed out that "Tapejara figure

in the regional scene as a city that attracts people from surrounding municipalities both in daily displacement flows, like [as] families who come to reside in the great most cases looking for employment opportunities offered [...]. Its regional role is therefore polarization. Towards the promotion of regional or local development, and as a kind of interpellation launched to the public administration, the author realized the need for better monitoring of these flows and their impacts in technical conduct able to support policy actions. This monitoring would represent "[...] basis for important decisions aimed at financial planning of the city in sectors [...] such as security, health and education, among others." (ibid., p. 62).

3.3. Urban growth and dynamics of real estate in Tapejara

In preparing his monograph, Antunes (2014b) spoke about recent behavior of real estate Tapejara sector, particularly in the the housing segment. Resident in this municipality, the author saw in the local demographic dynamics a vector of strong growth in demand for housing affecting the housing market and pressure on prices, making it difficult housing conditions for families of low income, the number would grow due the migratory flow. Detect public actions for this issue was also objective of the study, designed as it is easy to notice, to an important aspect of local development. Its base was a documental and bibliographic research, along with state and local public sources and interviews in construction and real estate companies, and in bodies of Tapejara city hall.

The demographic dynamics of continuous increase of the municipal population (in ten years completed in the year of preparation of the monograph), mainly due to the attraction of even distant locations contingent, made the housing deficit grow considerably in Tapejara. In 2009, this indicator reached almost 900 housing units (a population close to 19,000, one can estimate a deficit - considering

families of four members on average - around 19%). The figure showed ills also in the form of numerous inadequate housing, with many problems and irregularities such as illegal occupation. All this reflected the expansion of poor and even miserable contingent, showing the ads of jobs in the city entrances and released by radio were far from representing opportunities for all who ventured in search of better living situation.

The expansion of real estate in the analyzed period, with increasing number of buildings in line with a broader trend in this direction in the state and country, but also reflecting the growth of the local demand for medium standard of real estate and medium / high represented unable movement equating the needs of disadvantaged groups. On the contrary, prices have risen strongly in previous years, so that, "[...] with the values prevailing in the city, an average low-income family, or low, [have] very difficult to carry out the acquisition [..]" (ANTUNES, 2014b, p. 45).

The region's economy showed rising prices because successful farmers in the cultivation of grain opted for real estate investments, often on land near the city access roads, heating up the market. And even urban families of higher income, linked to industrial, commercial or services activities invested in this market, contributing to the rise in prices, showing that investments for rentier and speculative nature purposes were not out of this process.

The author concluded that it is extremely difficult for families of low and middle income acquire properties in Tapejara. Her analysis involved a comparison of the average family income of a couple employed in local industry and the conditions imposed by the Federal Savings Bank to provide financing for the purchase of housing in simulations on the Internet of the financial institution. So, while the builders were earning a lot of money in

Tapejara, families with lower income remained members of a dramatic housing shortage framework, a central issue in the debate on local development in urban areas under any circumstances.

Hence the need and the crucial importance of consistent policies and actions. Locally were experienced programs and projects with strong involvement of the City Hall, as the rising prices undermine the purchase of land for popular allotments and social housing and therefore tend to depart in Tapejara or elsewhere, private companies in this market in real estate. Housing plans with social interest were executed, resulting in some housing developments and projects have been designed and implemented in interagency partnerships with the state and federal governments. However, the increase in demand for housing means trouble that followed clamoring for addressing initiatives in the survey period.

At the conclusion of the study, the author suggests, as derived from his analysis of an important aspect of local reality contribution, the installation process of "[...] evaluation of the results from the social programs implemented by the municipal government, [...] [With real analysis] improvements in the living conditions of the families." (ANTUNES, 2014b, p. 66). The same would be up to "[...] regularly identifying the lots that now are irregular, and [for] information about areas that may be acquired for new housing developments of social interest [...]" (*ibid.*, p. 66-67).

3.4. Socioeconomic consequences of the mining ban in Salto Jacuí

The monograph prepared by Guerreiro (2015) addressed a problem, manifested in the county where the author resides, who won strong impact on regional media: a ban on mining of semiprecious stones, especially agate, and their reflections in Salto do Jacuí. In this municipality, such deposits are among the largest in Brazil and even the world, reason why,

from the beginning of the twentieth century, at least, have increased local presence mining activities. Since 2007, the picture painted by the news and public events around the ban on mining makes sense of the term local or regional crisis.

The study involved documental and bibliographic research and also interviews with relevant stakeholders, in addition to gathering information on institutions able to contribute to the perception of ongoing processes. During the first half of 2015, gold miners (20) and former miners (ten) were interviewed, as well as 27 companies (extraction, purchase and primary processing of stones or more business segments) and members of the sector's staff municipal public.

Research on the prohibition of the mines involved, as an initial step, to seek information that could understand the activity of the operation itself, in order to illuminate the reasons for the shutdown. It turned out that the mining of semiprecious stones has become an important sector of the local economy, alongside the cultivation of grain and power generation to the State Company for Electric Energy (due to the presence of three hydroelectric power plants in the city). In Salto Jacuí, settled and multiplied only extraction activities, without the segments of representative production chain of added value, ie products generators, incorporating technological advances and skilled labor, as well as reflect advances in design, aspects that favor the sales of the stones even abroad.

Functions such gained ground in the municipality of Soledade, far nearly 110 km from Salto Jacuí for whose companies - which show export growth and consistent sales levels - mining has become the second supplier of raw material. Thus, a true technical and spatial division of labor around the semiprecious stones (agate first place) took shape gradually in the center of riograndense territory. The activities most "noble" of the production chain

settled, therefore out of Salto do Jacuí benefiting notably Soledade, where they are found, for example, decorative artifacts and jewelry, meaning transpires in revenue levels much higher comparatively, especially with respect to sales in international markets.

In addition, no investments up to what would be required for better performance, mining remained rudimentary (with manual or semi-mechanized mines) at Salto do Jacuí, embittering lack of planning and infrastructure and logistics projects. Lawlessness has only grown, because many mines were kept running without proper licensing - an aspect that does not fail to reflect the slow granting processes of licenses for exploitation of the soil and subsoil - and workers insufficiently or not at all trained in the extraction stones. Environmental risks by erosion processes linked to the opening of mines in the open and random cuts, and time-consuming and low profitability extractive procedures characterized the activity as a whole.

As a result of this scenario, environmental degradation took root and began to pose a serious local and regional problem, drawing the attention of environmental enforcement agencies from 2006 mainly. Plowings fronts were inspected, of which took place many interdictions and arrests of miners and entrepreneurs. "Over the years, the situation remains similar: legalization request stops the competent bodies and illegal activity by the sprawling municipality [...]" (GUERREIRO, 2015, p, 74). Thus, "In 2010, it closed the siege of the Federal Police and socioeconomic status [...] worsened [...]" (ibid., p. 74). The socioeconomic effects were deep and installed an atmosphere of crisis, since the alternatives were quite limited. Although it is caution in assigning all the problems observed the prohibitions of mines - because the more general framework of economic difficulties is to have had an influence - it is difficult to avoid the postulation that the decline of commercial movement (in clothing and even food, for

example) and the problems in municipal tax revenues witnessed in the period keep tuning in some degree, to the situation in mining.

The author's experience and his keen analytical glance on the academic formation obtained allowed the tangenciase monograph suggestions with a sense of contribution to regional or local development. The modernization of the mines could be encouraged and supported through public-private partnerships, providing greater productivity and profitability and lower environmental problems. Aiming for economic options, inspired in recorded experiences elsewhere (in Brazil and in the world) a mining tourism in unproductive and native plants, but keep the tunnels and equipment could be promoted by integrating regional tourist itineraries, which also include hydroelectric plants, existing indigenous villages and resources of natural and scenic base, including existing waterfalls.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is argued in this paper that the DE, especially in related courses to the applied social sciences, is capable of promoting the creation of knowledge about the immediate socio-economic and political realities of the students, whose involvement revolves around different poles of classroom support, that is, within the territories lived. For immediate realities is meant, first of all, the municipal or regional level of the course of life experiences and work of students. This type of training is thus able to contribute to the achievement of critical mass and training geared to supporting and stimulating regional development, a purpose contemplated in the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education, as noted in the introduction of the article.

The information acquired by the undergraduate course department in Economics distance of UFSC, which consisted of the focus of the work showed that numerous monographs of completion of the course, the various

classes into which it is deployed from its beginning in the first half of 2008 were held on issues of municipalities or regions where the authors live. Elaborate the monograph represents, thus, an opportunity to find out about these problems, that is, produce knowledge that, otherwise, certainly (or probably) not emerge and can contribute in any way to the promotion of regional or local development. The fact that these surveys often face many difficulties in obtaining data and information and end limits and typical institutional weaknesses of small municipalities, as well as own inexperience of the authors, does not seem to compromise the indicated direction.

The illustration to the theme proposed in the article was sought in four monographs, inspired by the discipline of Regional and Urban Economics and directed by the author of the study. The preparation of such works included problems in municipalities of different regions of Rio Grande do Sul: Gramado, na serra, Tapejara, in the north, and Salto Jacuí in the center of the state. Respectively, tourism events, polarization, real estate and mining dynamics were the main focus of the work, whose theme choice was motivated by the perception of residents - the authors - that these issues have particular relevance in their territories of life and work. Conduct researches represented a diving, with looks and gestures anchored in one way or another, in the education obtained.

Thus, situations that were previously more intuited than the explained and understood, gained transparency. In view of the outlines of analysis and suggestions to the initiatives contained in these studies, it is difficult to resist the idea that these efforts represent attempts to think and contribute to promoting regional development. It does not seem wrong to consider, in effect, that this is the greatest significance of this commitment. Therefore, it must be admitted the understanding that the DE mode displays potential as an adjunct in promoting development on this scale.

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