

Receiving: 03/15/2020

Accepted: 08/01/2020

## **SOCIAL CAPITAL AND THE CONSTITUTION OF SOLIDARITY ECONOMY ENTERPRISES BY FAMILY FARMERS IN SÃO JOSÉ DO BARREIRO-SP**

## **CAPITAL SOCIAL E A CONSTITUIÇÃO DE EMPREENDIMENTOS DE ECONOMIA SOLIDÁRIA POR AGRICULTORES FAMILIARES NO MUNICÍPIO DE SÃO JOSÉ DO BARREIRO-SP**

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### **Abstract**

The municipality of São José do Barreiro, located in the state of São Paulo, is economically stagnant and has a predominantly subsistence agricultural economy. An alternative to favorably change the conditions of the municipality is the establishment of empreendimentos econômicos solidários by family farmers. However, for the constitution of EESs it is considered necessary the existence of social capital among the producers. Thus, the objective of this work is to diagnose if the social capital existing among the family farmers of the municipality is favorable to the constitution of solidary economic enterprises. The research methodology is exploratory and qualitative. Data collection was done through the examination of documents and interviews with the family farmers of São José do Barreiro. The results showed that there is little cooperation and trust among family farmers; in addition, it has been found that the level of empowerment is low. It is concluded that the social capital existing among family farmers is not favorable to the constitution of EESs.

**Key words:** Social Capital. Solidarity Economy. Development.

### **Resumo**

O município de São José do Barreiro, localizado no estado de São Paulo, encontra-se estagnado economicamente e se caracteriza por uma economia predominantemente agrícola de subsistência. Uma alternativa para alterar favoravelmente as condições do município é a constituição de empreendimentos econômicos solidários por agricultores familiares. No entanto, para a constituição de EESs entende-se necessária a existência de capital social entre os produtores. Dessa forma, o objetivo deste trabalho é diagnosticar se o capital social existente entre os agricultores familiares do município é favorável à constituição de empreendimentos econômicos solidários. A metodologia da pesquisa é exploratória e qualitativa. A coleta de dados foi realizada a partir do exame de

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documentos e por entrevistas com os agricultores familiares de São José do Barreiro. Os resultados demonstraram que há pouca cooperação e confiança entre os agricultores familiares; além disso, verificou-se que o nível de empoderamento é baixo. Conclui-se que o capital social existente entre os agricultores familiares não é favorável à constituição de EESs.

**Palavras-chave:** Capital Social. Economia Solidária. Desenvolvimento.

## Introduction

The municipality of São José do Barreiro is located in the state of São Paulo. It is responsible for generating more than 30% of the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (SEADE, 2017). It is also part of the Metropolitan Region of Paraíba Valley and North Coast (RMVPLM) in the state of São Paulo - a highly industrialized region in which the automotive, aeronautical, aerospace and defense sectors stand out in the municipalities located along the Presidente Dutra Highway (EMPLASA, 2016). However, the municipality has shown contrasting social indicators with the regional reality. Employment and income indicators show the worst performance. In the last decades, São José do Barreiro has been economically stagnant (CONCEIÇÃO, 2015).

São José do Barreiro is characterized by a predominantly subsistence agricultural economy. In 2010, 30% of the local population lived in the countryside, which had a relevant number of agricultural production units - APUs - with family farming characteristics (IPEA, 2013; CATI, 2009). Family farming promotes the generation of jobs and income in rural areas, reduction of rural exodus and production of basic foods for the population (CASTRO, REZENDE and PIRES, 2014). Thus, the strengthening of family farming in São José do Barreiro, by the establishment of the SEEs, can improve its socioeconomic indexes (CONCEIÇÃO, 2015). The solidarity economy is considered a socioeconomic development strategy that generates new jobs, (re)inserts excluded workers, contributes to an increase in income and improves the lives of these workers (BRASIL, 2015). The SEE is constituted by the association and cooperation among social actors; its basic principles are collective ownership of the means of production, democratic management and the division of net revenue among the cooperators (SINGER, 2002). Hence, one of the variables necessary for the viability of SEEs is the accumulation of social capital. Social capital is a resource for the acquisition of other forms of capital. Even though, the conditions for realizing the social capital of a more fragile population, such as family farmers, may be more precarious, making access to other types of capital, such as economic, more difficult (BOURDIEU, 1980).

The objective of the research was to diagnose whether the existing social capital among family farmers in the municipality is favorable to the establishment of solidarity economic enterprises. Social capital can be stimulated by means of public policies. Thus, diagnosing the potential of the social capital among family farmers will make it possible to define the public policy and/or action that will be necessary to foster social capital, encourage the formation of SEEs and make these family farming enterprises viable, promoting the local socioeconomic development of São José do Barreiro (CARNIELLO and SANTOS, 2011).

## Development, social capital and familiar agriculture

There is no universal definition of the concept of development (SILVA, OLIVEIRA and ARAUJO, 2012). The increase in income and wealth (economic prosperity) does not essentially express a good quality of life, since there can be a poor quality of life (high rates of premature mortality, high illiteracy rate, high avoidable morbidity, among other indicators) even in countries with high GDP per capita (SEN, 1993). Thus, it is pertinent to differentiate economic growth from development. The concept of economic growth is related to the increase in productive capacity. Growth is measured by increasing the labor force, the national income saved and invested and the degree of technological improvement of a country or an economic area. Development, on the other hand, occurs when economic growth is accompanied by improved quality of life (VIEIRA and SANTOS, 2012). Development is a multidimensional and interdisciplinary term; it is not only related to growth, but also to the well-being and sustainability. However, as it is a complex phenomenon, there is still no clear and conclusive definition of the concept of development (SANTOS, BRAGA, SANTOS and BRAGA, 2012).

The concept of social capital is approached in several disciplines and areas, and sometimes it is misunderstood, as a magical antidote to social problems. Despite the trivialization of the concept, social capital is a factor to be considered for the development of projects and public policies for poverty reduction, promotion of social welfare and socially fair development (LIMA, TERRA and CARNIELLO, 2013). In recent decades, despite disagreements among scholars on the term, the researches on the formation of social capital have extended from sociology to other areas, such as political science and economics. After researching the different concepts of social capital, according to Jacobs (1961), Coleman (1988), Fukuyama (1996), Putnam (2000), Ostrom and Ahn (2003), this paper opted for concept of social capital of Bourdieu (1980) and Araújo (2010). For Bourdieu (1980), social capital is a set of resources that empower individuals to obtain results through social connections based on daily life. The author understands social capital as a tool or resource for the acquisition of other forms of capital. Bourdieu contextualizes social capital in a hierarchy of socially scarce and determinant resources for defining the conditions of competition between different social classes. For the author, the economic capital determines other types of capital, so he believes that there is a hierarchy between the types of capital required for the constitution and the reproduction of social classes. Bourdieu points out that social capital is subordinate to the effects related to the way economic capital and symbolic capital are accessed, which creates difficulties for the organization and for the action of groups belonging to the most fragile social classes. There is a paradox, as the capital of the popular layers is critical to their organization, though their effectiveness conditions may be poor, making it difficult for the organization and the joint action overcome the adverse conditions. Araújo (2010) understands social capital as an instrument that does not operate on its own and it does not replace a necessary State intervention. Social capital is an important instrument for the elaboration of public policies that promote the revitalization of civil society, democracy and sustainable development (ARAÚJO, 2010).

In 2003, the solidarity economy became part of the public policies of the Brazilian federal government with the creation of the National Solidarity Economy Secretariat (SENAES), an office linked to the Ministry of Labor and Employment. Nevertheless, SENAES has been marginalized since its foundation with reduced transfer (less than 1% of its organ budget) of resources (NAGEM and SILVA, 2013). Solidarity economic enterprises (SEEs) have as basic principles the democratic management of the enterprise by direct participation or representation, collective ownership of the means of production, the division of net revenue among the cooperators and the allocation of the surplus according to criteria agreed between the cooperative members (SINGER, 2002). The first national mapping of the solidarity economy was carried out from 2003 to 2007 and it identified about 22 thousand solidarity enterprises. The second mapping was carried out between 2009 and 2013 and it verified the existence of 1,423,631 members, distributed by 19,708 Brazilian SEEs (GAIGER, 2013). According to the survey, the majority of Brazilian SEEs are located in the Northeast region, about 40% of the total of SEEs. This concentration is justified, since the solidarity economy is used as a strategy for sustainable socioeconomic development. In the Northeast, 72.2% of the SEEs work in the rural area, 19.3% in the urban area and 8.5% in both (rural and urban). Despite the high concentration of SEEs in the Northeast, it appears that 74.7% of the members of the Northeastern SEEs access the cash transfer program. Consequently, the income obtained through the SEEs is not yet sufficient to meet the expenses of the participants (SILVA, 2015).

In Brazil, the majority of SEEs are concentrated in the rural area (10,794) and the remainder is distributed by the urban area (6,856) and by the rural and urban areas (2,058). This information justifies the fact that 55% of participants of the Brazilians SEEs are family farmers (SIES, 2013). The current knowledge about the characteristics and dimensions of Brazilian solidarity economic initiatives, obtained mainly through national mapping, makes it possible to affirm that, in Brazil, the solidarity economy is an important alternative for social inclusion still under construction, which is based on the realization of economic activities with practices and values of cooperation, self-management and solidarity (SILVA, 2011).

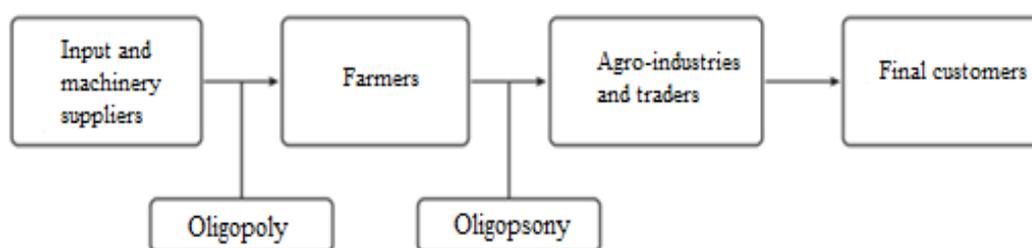
Family farming in Brazil promotes socioeconomic benefits, as it generates employment and income in rural areas, reduces rural exodus and plays an important role in the production of basic foods for the population. This segment is responsible for the national production of approximately 38% of basic foods in the Brazilian diet, such as rice, beans, corn, vegetables, cassava and small animals (CASTRO, REZENDE and PIRES, 2014). To conceptualize the term family farmer, this paper chose the definition established by Law 11.326/2006. A farmer who practices activities in rural areas is considered a family farmer; who is a small owner or lessee of up to four tax modules; that

uses family labor and has a minimum family income originating from economic activities of his establishment or enterprise. Foresters, aquaculturists, extractivists, fishermen, indigenous peoples, members of the remaining communities of rural *quilombos* and settlers of agrarian reform are also considered family farmers (IBGE, 2009; SARAIVA, SILVA, SOUSA, CHAGAS and TORAL, 2015).

In 2006, there were about 4,367,902 family farming establishments and 807,587 establishments of a non-family nature. In the same year, the Northeast had the highest concentration of family farming establishments (50% of the total of establishments) and the Midwest had the lowest concentration of establishments (only 5% of the establishments). Family farming establishments own around 20% of the land and occupy 74% of the workforce in the rural area (IBGE 2009; CASTRO, 2015). In Brazil, 76% of the total families farming establishments own the land on which they produce and 20% have temporary or precarious access to the land (lessee, occupier, partner and producer without land). For Castro (2015), the government has given little assistance to this segment to carry out its activity. Throughout the process of modernizing Brazilian agriculture, family farming was neglected by different government spheres, with a lack of support from access to land to commercialization of production. Despite little support for this segment in Brazil, it appears that some measures were taken to encourage and strengthen family farming, such as the creation of the National Program for Strengthening Family Agriculture (PRONAF), the Food Acquisition Program (PAA), the National School Feeding Program (PNAE) and the National Technical Assistance and Rural Extension Program (PNATER). However, it is necessary to make improvements and modifications to the programs in a manner appropriate to the specificities of each region so that they can really assist the greatest number of family farmers (CASTRO, REZENDE and PIRES, 2014).

Another difficulty found is the reduction of profits obtained by family farmers due to the high cost of production, such as the increase in costs of manure and fertilizers. Part of the income of family farmers is appropriated by the industrial sector with the purchase of industrialized inputs (VIEIRA, 2014). In the agricultural production chain, the industrial sector provides capital goods and inputs to farmers. The price of these goods and inputs is determined by suppliers, typically, a small group (oligopoly). The production of farmers in marketing prices is determined by buyers - a few agro-industries and food retailers (oligopsony), as presented in Figure 1:

**Figure 1:** Agricultural production chain



Source: Vieira (2014).

In this way, farmers endure the highest costs and obtain the lowest revenues, greatly reducing their profitability and increasing the income of the industrial sector. This relationship makes it difficult for family farmers to access economic capital, making them a fragile class. To modify this relationship, cooperation and partnership between them can be an alternative to their strengthening and better access to economic capital.

## Method

In order to verify whether the existing social capital among family farmers in São José do Barreiro is favorable to the establishment of SEEs, an investigation based on the Bourdieu (1980) and Araújo (2010) understanding about social capital was done. To carry out this study, an exploratory research was used as objective, and qualitative to approach the research problem. For data collection, documentary research and personal interviews were carried out. As a research filter, to confirm that the producer was in fact a family farmer and, therefore, a subject of the present study, a questionnaire identifying the producer was initially applied. Such questionnaire was prepared with closed questions to identify the family farmer according to the criteria established by Law 11.326/06.

To elaborate the script of questions for interviews, the Integrated Questionnaire to Measure Social Capital – IQ-SC was chosen, proposed by Grootaert, Narayan, Jones and Woolcock (2003). This choice is justified because the IQ-SC was developed based on surveys on social capital that demonstrated reliability, validity and usefulness. The IQ-SC had in its elaboration process, contributions and criticisms from specialized consultants, and it was also previously tested in the field (GROOTAERT et. al., 2003). Even though, some questions proposed by the IQ-CS were not sufficient to understand certain contexts; in addition, other questions were added to address the specificities of the surveyed sample. The sample was selected in a non-probabilistic manner and by theoretical saturation, resulting in the final sample of 12 milk producers. In this study, content analysis was used, based on studies by Bardin (2011). The analysis was carried out in three stages: 1) pre-analysis, 2) exploration of the material and 3) treatment of the results, inference and interpretation.

Thus, the IQ-CS has been adapted for this exploratory and qualitative research and organized, considering the dimensions and the specific elements researched, as Table 1:

**Table 1: Dimensions of Social Capital**

Dimensions	Specific Elements Researched
1. Groups and	<input type="checkbox"/> association participation; <input type="checkbox"/> democratic functioning; <input type="checkbox"/> extension of connections with other groups.
2. Trust and Solidarity	<input type="checkbox"/> trust among family farmers; <input type="checkbox"/> trust in members of the neighborhood/locality; <input type="checkbox"/> confidence in government and local leaders; <input type="checkbox"/> existence of solidarity among family farmers.
3. Collective Action Cooperation	<input type="checkbox"/> type of activities developed in groups; <input type="checkbox"/> initiative to cooperate and participate in collective actions.
4. Information and Communication	<input type="checkbox"/> access to the media; <input type="checkbox"/> means of communication used by family farmers; <input type="checkbox"/> means of communication they use to access information about government and market actions.
5. Cohesion and Inclusion	<input type="checkbox"/> inclusion; <input type="checkbox"/> sociability; <input type="checkbox"/> conflict; <input type="checkbox"/> violence.
6. Empowerment and Political Action	<input type="checkbox"/> ability to make decisions that affect daily activities and that can change the life course of family farmers; <input type="checkbox"/> political action by family farmers.

Source: Self-elaboration, 2017.

### The municipality of São José do Barreiro

São José do Barreiro is located in the state of São Paulo (Figure 2). The municipality covers a territorial area of 570.68 km<sup>2</sup>, and its estimated population in 2016 was 4,183 inhabitants. The estimated demographic density for the municipality in 2016 was 4,183 inhabitants. The estimated demographic density in 2016 was 7.33 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup> (EMPLASA, 2016). The municipality belongs to sub-region 4 of the RMVPLN. Sub-region 4 is formed by Arapeí, Areias, Bananal, Cruzeiro, Lavrinhas, Queluz, São José do Barreiro and Silveiras. The RMVPLN, created by Complementary Law 1,166/2012, is made up of 39 municipalities in São Paulo, divided into five sub-regions, as shown in Figure 2. The RMVPLN is an extensive region, with 2.4 million inhabitants and generating 5% GDP of São Paulo. Although São José do Barreiro belongs to RMVPLN, a highly industrialized and prosperous region, it is currently economically stagnant.

**Figure 2:** Location of São José do Barreiro in the Metropolitan Region of Paraíba Valley and North Coast of the State of São Paulo



Source: Adapted by the author (EMPLASA, 2016).

At the height of coffee production, in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, São José do Barreiro was one of the most prosperous municipalities in the Paraíba Valley (RICCI, 2006). Even with the decrease of coffee productivity, São José do Barreiro kept the coffee monoculture, hampering the process of diversification and the modernization of agriculture and thus prevented the emergence of new opportunities (CONCEIÇÃO, 2015). In the 1960s and 1980s, there was accelerated growth in some municipalities in the Paraíba Valley due to the industrialization process. Even though, industrialization had few positive effects in São José do Barreiro and in other municipalities in the Historic Valley (Bananal, Arapeí, Areias, Queluz and Silveiras) this region lost part of its labor force, remaining with a subsistence economy (VIEIRA, 2009). São José do Barreiro has as its main access road Estrada dos Tropeiros (SP-68) - a stretch of the road that connects São Paulo to Rio de Janeiro, passing through the Historic Valley - since 1928, even with the decay of coffee production, it had been partially maintaining the region's economy. However, the opening of the Presidente Dutra Highway (BR-116), in 1951, contributed to the isolation and to the economic drain the municipality since the new highway led to the displacement of the trade route (CONCEIÇÃO, 2015).

The isolation of the municipality and economic stagnation make it difficult to generate jobs and income. In 2010, the FIRJAN Municipal Development Index (IFDM) of São José do Barreiro was 0.6015, the lowest index among the municipalities of RMVPLN and one of the smallest in the state of São Paulo, occupying the 639<sup>th</sup> position among the 644 municipalities in the state evaluated that year (FIRJAN, 2014). According to FIRJAN system (2016), the employment and income indicator is the lowest in the municipality, when compared to the education and health indicators, from 2009 to 2013. There is an increase in the number of population in a municipality when economic growth occurs, often due to migration in search of new job opportunities. On the other hand, when there is economic stagnation, due to the lack of perspective, the population tends to migrate to other areas with better prospects for work and income.

This phenomenon is verified in São José do Barreiro, because, despite the increase in the total population in the period from 1991 to 2010, it was much smaller when compared to what occurred in the state of São Paulo and in Brazil. During the period of 1991 to 2000, there was an increase of 5.34% in the total population the municipality, however, in the period from 2000 to 2010, the total population decreased by 1.59%. The total population of the state of São Paulo and Brazil increased by about 30% in the period from 1991 to 2010, while in São José do Barreiro it increased by only 3.66% in the period. There is a considerable increase in the aging rate of the municipality. In 1991, it was 5.90%, increasing to 8.09%, in 2000. And, in 2010, the result was 9.76% (IPEA, 2013).

This rise in the aging rate of the population of São José do Barreiro justifies economic stagnation, as the municipality has become unable to maintain its own qualified workforce or attract trained professionals. According to IPEA (2013), the rural area is occupied by 30% of the municipality's population. The urbanization rate increased from 53%, in 1991, to 70%, in 2010, though the predominant economic activity is subsistence agriculture. Thus, the strengthening of family farming, promoting the association and the cooperation between family farmers, may be an

alternative to overcome the current economic stagnation and promote the development of São José do Barreiro.

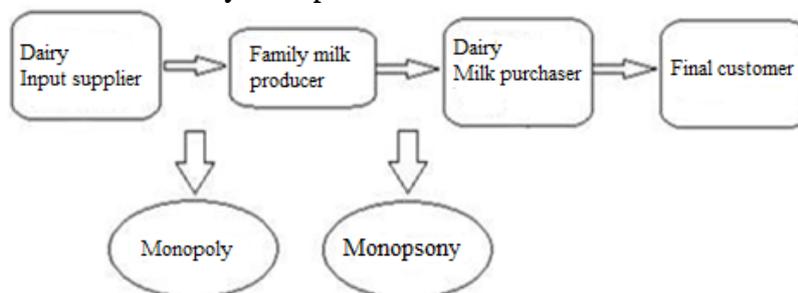
### Characterization of the social capital of family farmers in São José do Barreiro

According to the census survey of agricultural production units in the state of São Paulo in the years 2007 and 2008, there are 251 APUs in the São José do Barreiro (CATI, 2009). In accordance with IE/INCRA nº20/1980, in São José do Barreiro a tax module is equivalent to 24 hectares. To be considered a family farm property, the APU must have up to four fiscal modules (96 hectares). Consequently, 173 APUs can be considered production units for family farming in the municipality. Family farmers face several challenges; one of them is the insertion of their production in the market in a competitive way receiving fair prices for the sales. An alternative to family farmers is to participate in the PNAE, as 30% of the transfer of funds for the purchase of school meals must be used to buy food from farmers and family businesses. However, family farmers, when working individually, are unable to produce the requested demand. The percentages referring to the purchase of food from family farmers in relation to the total value of the resource transferred to the municipality, in the period from 2011 to 2014, was still below the 30% guaranteed by law. In 2011, the percentage of food purchased from family farming was 2.91% of the total amount transferred; an extremely low percentage. But, in 2014, the percentage jumped to 13.93%, even it is still below the percentage guaranteed to family farmers (FNDE, 2016).

The constitution of SEEs by family farmers in the municipality can favorably change the conditions of São José do Barreiro, since the cooperation between producers will contribute to increase income and improve quality of life, promoting local development (CONCEIÇÃO, 2015). To the constitution and the viability of SEEs is necessary the capital among farmers (CARNIELLO and SANTOS, 2011). For a better understanding of the researched population, brief notes will be made on the 12 family producers interviewed. All the small rural producers interviewed are milk producers and they depend on the income obtained from the sale of this product to support their families. Some of them grow a vegetable plantation for their own use only. No rural producers were found to support themselves only with the income obtained from the sale of vegetables or grains. In the free markets in the municipality, it was found that the few producers who grow vegetables sell only the surplus and that their main income is obtained through other sources (they are government or farms' employees).

It was observed that 50% of milk producers lease their properties and the other 50% inherited the property. The extension of the properties varies from 4 to 72 hectares. The number of head of cattle per producer varies from 6 to 60. The total milk producers surveyed produce for only one buyer (dairy companies in the region); most producers buy the feed and other inputs for the production of milk from the dairy company to which they sell – consequently, there is an economic situation of monopoly in the purchase of inputs and monopsony in the sale of milk, as shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 3:** Production chain of family milk production in São José do Barreiro



Source: Self-elaboration, 2017.

Milk production per day ranges from 27 liters to 300 liters, depending on the amount of cattle the producer handles. Only two producers reported using a mechanical milking machine. The price of milk is established by the dairy company, which is communicated through newsletters. The milk producers interviewed work 10 to 16 hours a day, every day of the week. The gross monthly income per person and per property is R\$ 333.00 to R\$ 6,000.00. The number of people per property varies from 2 to 4; they are usually husband, wife and children. Producers reported living with financial

difficulties; mainly producers lease their properties and have a smaller number of cattle. They highlighted the difficulty in buying dairy cattle due to their high cost. Therefore, the dependency relationship that producers have with the dairy company weakens the family producer in São José do Barreiro. In this relationship, the dairy company establishes the price of the necessary inputs and production, increasing its earnings and reducing the income of the family producer. This reduced income makes it difficult to access important goods for the family producer, such as land, cattle, milking machine, among others (economic capital). In order to survive, the producer ups his workload to increase his production, often ceasing to live with the community, restricting himself only to living with his family nucleus, hindering the development and accumulation of social capital. Subsequently, the characteristics of social capital diagnosed among family farmers in São José do Barreiro will be presented, according to the dimensions proposed by the World Bank (GROOTAERT et. al., 2003).

### **Dimension 1 - Groups and networks**

Participation in associations and networks enables the accumulation of the capital (GROOTAERT et. al., 2003). Most of the interviewed producers never participated in any group or network. There was also no report about the participation of their family members. Only one of the interviewees said he was part of a network he recently joined, in which milk producers from São José do Barreiro and Areias participate. According to the producer, this network offers small milk producers support and assistance from veterinarians and agronomists. The producer does not invest any financial resources in the network, he only receives information, follow-up and teachings on procedures that he must follow. The producer expects to receive from this network knowledge and assistance that contribute to the genetic improvement of his dairy cattle, to increase the amount of milk and his profits. According to this young producer: 'Their project offers everything we need such as assistance and monitoring of veterinarian, agronomist, even insemination! (Producer 2). The producer could inform a lot about the network, as he had joined it two weeks ago.

In the search for more information about this network, through contact via e-mail with the technical consultant, it was found that it is part of the milk program in the Historic Valley. This program is a private initiative that arose from the partnership of 3 companies: ZOETIS, IBS and SEI. The objective of the program is to promote actions for genetic improvement and animal health; expand the concept of semi-confinement, with emphasis on animal nutrition planning; expand knowledge and practice of pastures and semi-intensive management; improve milking quality and milk delivery. To join this network, the producer must meet certain mandatory criteria: to produce 100 to 300 liters of bovine milk per day; to have more than one person dedicated to the dairy activity; to have at least one literate person on the property who can attend the project; to have proof of vaccination for the foot-and-mouth disease campaign and the registration of a rural producer or appropriate legal person. Although the first visits to publicize the program to producers began in 2016, the technical visits for the development of such actions started in January 2017 and were expected to end in December 2018. However, there was no democratic participation of the producers in the network; they must only assimilate the information and act exactly as directed, to continue participating in the program and receiving the benefits.

Some of the interviewed producers are union members, but their participation is restricted to lectures and workshops offered by the union. One of the interviewees said he was part of the union's board, but stressed that: 'In the union, there are not many decisions... the decisions are made mainly by the president' (Producer 3). In the interviews, it was found that the producers have many acquaintances, but only few close friends whom they trust and can count on. They only trust their closest relatives, as reported by producer 4: It's that story...they are close in good and bad times, right! It's the only thing that encourages us... the family! By family...I mean...wife and children. Not the others! The others, God forbid!' It is understood that a network is formed from social relationships that become closer with the coexistence, making the members closer, enabling trust between them and allowing the exchange of knowledge, even though the producers demonstrated to have a very small circle of people in they trust, hampering the formation of support and cooperation networks. After analyzing the dimension of associations and networks, it appears that the fact that small milk producers do not participate in associations and networks makes it difficult for them to accumulate social capital. For this reason, a high difficulty in association and democratic functioning is identified, in addition to the absence of connections with other groups.

## Dimension 2 - Trust and solidarity

When questioning the producers about what makes them trust someone, everyone replied that they trust those who keep their word, who honor their commitments, as producer 3 points out: 'The word of honor... I'm like my father who doesn't need papers... only a handshake and that's it. I'm still from that old school.' Many interviewed producers still value the word as in the past, at the time of their parents and grandparents, when a handshake was enough to close a deal (ARAÚJO, 2010). However, producers report that people are no longer reliable, so they need to know the person well before trusting, especially when it involves financial resources, as producer 4 describes: 'There is that thing... there are some trustworthy people, right! But there are some... I really don't trust. Falsehood... human falsehood is the worst thing. It's what brings everything down.'

The producers trust their families, but restrict the family nucleus to their parents, spouses and children. It was found that this culture of trust restricted to the family is detrimental to the business-oriented association, since interaction with other people besides the family nucleus is necessary, and contracts and rules must be trusted for a business to actually happen (ARAÚJO, 2010). Most producers say they trust the members of the municipality, but emphasize that they really know are trustworthy. Producers are discredited not only by local politicians, but by politicians in general and even by the rural union, as reported by producer 4: 'I took part in the union once. Nowadays it doesn't work. It only works for half a dozen only! It's useless!'

Disbelief and the lack of trust are mainly due to unfulfilled promises. This disbelief and this disenchantment of producers may be working against democratic values (ARAÚJO, 2010). Although many say that there is no union between producers, there is a greater level of proximity and trust between them, and even a little cooperation, as producer 8 says: 'Ahh... the rural producers don't have that union. So... let's do it together... let's sell milk together to receive a better price. It's difficult! But what works for one, works for all. I believe it!' There was cooperation between neighboring producers or friends, in some situations, such as, for example, helping to unstuck or find a cow, when calling the ambulance or lending the car to take someone to the doctor, in making loans for a small amount of money, in taking care of the neighbor's property for a short period of time, among others. When analyzing the dimension of trust and solidarity, it appears that there is a low level of trust when it comes to the involvement of financial resources and doing business, but there is a better level of trust and solidarity among small producers when it comes to small services. Trust is the basis of social capital; feeling and knowing that you can trust enables the individual to receive more collaboration and better take advantage of the opportunities that arise (ARAÚJO, 2010). The absence of trust, or its low level, impairs the accumulation of social capital.

## Dimension 3 - Collective action and cooperation

Collective action is an important aspect of a community's life. In this dimension, it was verified the degree of collective action, the type of activities developed collectively and the degree of cooperation (GROOTAERT et. al., 2003). Thus, there is a very low degree of collective action among rural producers. Most of them never participated in collective actions; only two of them participated, when they were still young, in the community task force, as reported by the producer 1: 'In the beginning we did it... when my father started work here... we used to do this task force, but it was like that... one day we went to one place, the other day we went to another. So, we worked a lot in the fields.' This task force was formed by neighboring producers and it was based on cooperation and trust between them. There was no involvement of financial resources, the only benefits they had were lunch (sometimes) and their propriety clean. Some producers reported that in the past (20 to 30 years ago) their parents or grandparents participated in actions of this type, but that there are currently no such actions.

When asked why there are no more actions like the task force today, the answers were: because of the interest or need of the producer to receive payment; there are no more properties with extensive plantations in the municipality; the existence of machines made work easier and so much labor is no longer needed; the plantations were extinguished due to the difficulty of planting and cultivation (environmental laws). It was found that producers help each other, but only isolated actions; they help only when requested, and usually the help is with small services, as stated by producer 9: 'Oh... we can't help with money! Financially, it is difficult. Sometimes we can help, I mean, when someone needs help with horseshoes, we go there and do it.'

The producers reported that they have a high workload and they are barely able to take care of their own business (their livelihood), so they do not participate in other community actions. In addition, they highlight the financial difficulties they are constantly facing, due to the problems with the drought, the fall in the price of milk, health, and with livestock, among others. They say that they strive not to need help, not to depend on the help of others, or to hinder other producers who are also in the same difficult financial situation, as producer 8 describes: 'We don't have much resource in the fields anymore. There are no more people, so it's hard. We can't be too dependent on each other. Then we avoid disturbing each other.' Some producers believe that the union between them could strengthen them, but they do not believe that this will really happen. They understand that the rural producers' class is disunited and some reasons for that would be: lack of time to get together, divergent thoughts and lack of financial resources, as reinforced by producer 4: 'I think it is the most disunited class that exists. I mean, it starts with the rural union, it's useless! It is disunited. If it was united, it would be different. But perhaps the necessity of daily life means that we cannot be united. You can't go on strike alone. You need people. It's too disunited!'

When analyzing the collective action dimension it was found that in the past cooperation between producers was stronger, with the union of producers and their families to brush the properties of members of the collective effort. In 2007/2008, according to the census survey of agricultural production units in the state of São Paulo, only 11% of the APUs in São José do Barreiro was part of a producer cooperative, and about 6% of the APUs were part of a producer association (CATI, 2009). Thus, it appears that the non-participation of family farmers in networks and associations, low trust between them (when financial resources are involved) and little cooperation between them are factors that hinder the accumulation of social capital. It is necessary to revive the culture of trust and solidarity that existed in the past, so that the formation and accumulation of social capital between the rural producers of São José do Barreiro will happen.

#### Dimension 4 - Information and communication

In this dimension, a list of sources of information and means of communication used by rural producers was identified. Access to information is essential to help farmers to have a more active voice in matters relating to their well-being. The communication infrastructure was also verified in this dimension (GROOTAERT et. al., 2003). The rural producers communicate using cell phones. However, when they need to talk to some other farmers, go to the property to speak personally as comments producer 10: 'When you want to talk to [acquaintances](#), we go to them. Sometimes we really need to talk, right?! Then we go to their houses.'

To obtain information about what happens in the municipality and in the region, the main way is the radio and informal conversation with friends or acquaintances. Little use of the television and the radio for entertainment, but sometimes they watch some specific channels such as *Canal do Boi* and *Terra Viva*, and some newspapers for more news from the region and the country. The price of milk is informed by monthly newsletters sent by the factory that purchased the milk. Only three producers use the Internet. One of them accesses the Internet also to obtain information that can contribute to the improvement of his business, the other two access to communicate with their children.

The access roads that lead to the properties are, mostly, of land and in good condition, but often need maintenance. Most producers often go to the center to pay bills, shop, withdraw money from the bank, go to the dairy company, but few go to the center for leisure, as reported by producer 9: 'I just go to my job. I come here and return at night. So I don't have much time for a walk. No time for chatting. This is really important, but there is not much time.' The travel time from the properties to the center varies from 10 to 40 minutes, depending on the distance. Producer 7 highlights the difficulty of getting people together: 'I hardly go out. Sometimes I go out on Sunday. I'm going to church, a little walk around the square, but it's difficult, you know?! Bring everyone together is hard! Time is too short!'

Producers, on average, go two to three times a year to nearby municipalities (Areias, Arapeí, Cruzeiro and Resende) to visit relatives, see a doctor, and shop items they cannot find in São José do Barreiro. The travel time varies from 40 minutes to 1 hour. When analyzing the information and communication dimension, it appears that family farmers have easy access to the means of communication (cell phone, radio, television) but radio and personal contact are the most used means of communication to obtain information about government actions and the market. Even with access to the media, some producers do not have information or have distorted ones about

government programs, such as PNAE and the PRONAF, programs that would contribute to their improvement.

Specifically in relation to PRONAF, the distortion of information and the lack of engagement of the local public power directly impact the development of this program that should allow access to credit for family farmers. PRONAF should contribute to the strengthening of the family farmer, being an improvement tool and the development of the rural community of São José do Barreiro, but is ostracized (ROCKENMEYER, 2016). In rural properties that are close to the urban center, producers often go to there. The roads are usually good, but for some properties there is only one access road. The interviewed family farmers produce milk and they already have a single customer (a dairy company in the region). The purchasing entity for milk production from family farmers sells them the feed and any other product they need to maintain milk production. Thus, they do not need to leave the area, as the producer reports 12: 'I buy in the factory where I deliver milk. They sell everything! Corn, feed, bran, tool. Every dairy company has a place to supply things for the producer.'

### **Dimension 5 - Cohesion and social inclusion**

In this dimension, we sought to identify the general perception of communion and proximity between members of the municipality and rural producers; the nature and size of the differences that normally occur in communities; the degree of sociability; the level of violence that exists in the municipality and the groups excluded from essential public services (GROOTAERT et. al., 2003). Everyone knows each other, but there is communion and closeness only among some members belonging to certain groups. Among small rural producers, these groups are smaller in number, at most four producers, who are usually neighbors or relatives.

When investigating the nature and size of the differences that occur in the municipality, only few people feel any difference. Producers are included, since they are invited to all events that take place in the area. However, they feel prejudice and different treatment of other people when they go to the urban center. The only difference noted refers to income; the producer says he feels the difference in the treatment given to low-income people in the municipality, as producer 1 says: 'Sometimes you get somewhere and the person looks at you from the top to down, so we notice it. I don't know if it's because of the person's malice, but we can feel it.'

The other producers did not mention other differences or prejudices; but most of them do not participate in social events, and may be unaware of what really happens, as producer 1 explains: 'Whenever there is something they even invite us to participate. But we have no conditions, because our job here. There is no time for ourselves' Now, there is nothing happening, but there was some courses, some things... that they always invite us to participate. So generally those who don't do it are those who don't want it. Or who is unable to do it. But they are always inviting us.'

For this reason, a very low degree of sociability was identified among producers. Most producers say they do not like noise and turmoil or attending social events. They are receptive, but do not usually go to friends, only relatives. The reason is the high workload they perform every day, leaving only time to rest. They work an average of 14 hours a day, seven days a week, so they do not have time for leisure. They say they receive people at home (friends and family), but barely visit them because their work. It was observed that the degree of violence in São José do Barreiro is low. Only three producers reported the same 2 occurrences of violence and theft that happened in the municipality two years ago. The first occurrence was with a farmer, who, at the time, was beaten at home by the offender looking for money, and the offender was not arrested. The second occurrence was a case of tool theft on a property. The farmers feel safe because there are no frequent violence actions in the community or in the municipality. The producers believe that São José do Barreiro is a peaceful place, but they are apprehensive on festive days when tourists come, as stated by producer 4: 'Here you can still sleep with the window open during the week. But when there is a party we need to keep track of people because there are a lot of outsiders. A lot of *cachaça* and drugs. But the people from here are calm!'

### **Dimension 6 - Empowerment and political action**

In this dimension, the ability of producers to make decisions that affect their daily activities and can change the course of their lives was verified, as well as their civic engagement (writing petitions, voting in elections, maintaining political involvement) (GROOTAERT et. al., 2003). Most

producers believe they have the autonomy to make decisions that affect their daily activities. Some of these producers reported that they decide with their spouses the actions that can change the course of their lives. According to Freire (1987, p. 91), '[...] while the decision is not in who should decide, but outside of it, he only has the illusion that he decides'. Thus, it appears that most of them are not aware of the dependence on decisions regarding price and quantity established by the dairy company. Only one producer understands that he does not have control over his life, as he believes that the influence of government actions and the lack of financial resources interfere in his decisions, as expressed by the producer 11: 'Nowadays it is very difficult. It depends on the government, the family, money... And money is difficult, so it depends on several things.'

From the interviewed producers, only one said he was aware of the union of some members of São José do Barreiro to deliver petitions to the city hall (requests to prevent the increase in councilors' salaries and to solve the water supply problem), but he did not participate in these petitions, just heard about them. The rest of the producers have never written or participated in a petition and they are not aware of who did it. When asked whether they voted in the last election, the majority replied that they did. All of them said that they think it is important to vote, but some said voting should not be mandatory. They believe that mandatory voting makes people elect unprepared candidates as a form of protest. They understand the voter without the obligation to vote will only go to the ballot box if he believes that the candidate really deserves his trust, and for that, politicians must do more to win the votes, they will have to keep their promises. To be decided on by a candidate, producers usually choose the most humble, those who greet them, they seem to be honest and able to do something for people. Even though, some producers have also said that they vote for those candidates they can count on. There is still the idea that good politicians are those who solve the individual's specific problems; there is a difficulty in thinking about the good of the collective.

When asked about paying additional money to government officials to receive some service or problem resolution, everyone said they never had to pay. When analyzing the dimension of empowerment and political action, it was found that family farmers feel empowered to make decisions that can change the course of their lives. However, in the production chain, they are dependent on dairy to buy the inputs and sale of the milk produced. Producers have little participation in political actions. They know the importance of voting and accompanying elected officials, but they are discredited by politicians, as producer 5 says: 'You have to vote to improve it, right! I think it's important. We vote for the person who can govern, right!' They believe that most politicians are corrupts and they do not fulfill the promises. And they still think of politics as a means of obtaining individual and not collective benefits, as shown in the speech of producer 6: 'I think you have to vote for a good person, right! A person that can do everything you needed and will not mock you. We do not need anything, but if one day we'll do, we'll have someone who counts on.'

There is a low accumulation of social capital among family farmers. The ones who sell to the factory have accommodated themselves because they already have an established customer, on the other hand, with the drought; they are having difficulty producing the amount of milk required by the dairy. The drought has also affected small producers, who are unable to produce the minimum amount of milk to be able to sell to the dairy. The union and the cooperation among farmers could contribute to the increase in milk production. A greater quantity of milk would be easily sold to dairy but also to other customers, such as the public authorities through the PNAE. In this way, family producers would no longer be dependent on a single customer.

Family farmers in São José do Barreiro belong to a more fragile social class. They are in a monopoly and monopsony economic relationship, the dairy is their only supplier and buyer, it establishes the price of the inputs needed for production and the price and quantity of the milk produced. The dairy raises its income and passes on the greatest costs to the family producer, who obtains a reduced income from the sale of his production to a single customer, making it difficult for him to access economic capital. In order to bear the costs of renting land, inputs, medicines for livestock and also for their livelihood, the family producer ups his hourly workload, in an attempt to produce more and try to increase his gain in the quantity produced. As a result, the producer ceases to participate in the interaction with the community, restricting their friendship to the family unit, damaging their ability to organize, associate, cooperate and trust, hampering development and the accumulation of capital.

In order for producers to really increase their income, an association is necessary for the constitution of SEEs that would allow farmers to have access to credit (credit cooperative), produce some of their inputs (cooperative production of corn, bran, silage), add value to the product

(cooperative production of butter, cheeses, sweets) and distribute their product to the final consumer (open markets). However, there is no accumulation of social capital favorable to the viability of these SEEs. This is the paradox mentioned by Bourdieu (1980): social capital is fundamental for the organization of family milk producers, but its effective conditions are precarious, which makes it difficult to overcome their production conditions and their access to economic capital. Thus, we see how necessary it is to carry out effective actions together with milk producers, including public policies, so that family farmers can overcome the simple awareness of the dependency relationship they currently have with the dairy and become mobilize for the constitution of economic alternatives to the current reality. To strengthen these producers, it is required effective actions of training and of technical guidance on management, such as the Milk program in Historic Valley.

Actions by the municipal government are necessary to encourage the accumulation of social capital among family farmers. For example, the creation of municipal public policies that empower and qualify family farmers, motivating them to become agents of change, capable of questioning, challenging, proposing, seeking new ways of doing things, and finally, so that able to create strategies for their own development (BASSO, 2006). For this, it is necessary an effective State intervention through local public policies specific to the reality of family milk producers in the municipality, together with existing public policies, such as PNAE, PRONAF and PNATER, to create conditions to develop and accumulate social capital among family milk producers.

An example of the partnership between the public, private and civil society that has achieved good results is the Local Development Associations (ADL) of the Alentejo, in Portugal. ADL is formed by management entities that initiated real challenges, particularly in rural areas, establishing partnerships, defining medium-term action plans, identifying priorities and defining strategies that generate local synergies. These partnerships are intended to encourage the feeling of belonging and local culture, the use local resources, the importance of the participation of the local community, aiming at integrated development and articulating different groups and sectors (REVEZ, 2014). A partnership between the public, private and civil society in São José do Barreiro, and other municipalities of the Historical Valley would be feasible to strengthen not only the family dairy farmers, but also to strengthen all the family farmers of region, and even other sectors, such as rural tourism, historic tourism and ecotourism, promoting local development.

## Final considerations

São José do Barreiro is economically stagnant, mainly due to the difficulty of generating new employment and income opportunities. Thus, the municipality has been unable to retain its own young labor force, which is evading in search of better prospects in the municipalities of this region. An alternative to modify this economic situation is the incentive to strengthen family agriculture, mainly due to the fact that, currently, the main economic activity is subsistence agriculture. For the effective strengthening of family farming, it is clear necessity of the association and the cooperation between producers to form SEEs; however, in order to make these SEEs viable, it is necessary to accumulate social capital among family farmers.

To this end, this paper aimed to diagnose whether the social capital existing among family farmers in São José do Barreiro is favorable to the establishment of solidarity economic enterprises. The following characteristics of social capital were identified among family producers: high difficulty in association, in democratic functioning and absence of connections with other groups (dimension of groups and networks); little trust and solidarity (trust and solidarity dimension); low capacity for cooperation; good access to the media, but little knowledge of their rights (information and communication dimension); false feeling of social inclusion, as they are sociable, but do not have time for social interaction; little conflict; little violence in the municipality (cohesion and social inclusion dimension); no empowerment; false sense of control over decisions and low civil engagement (dimension of empowerment and political action).

The existing social capital among family farmers is not yet favorable to the constitution of SEEs. The low accumulation of social capital among family farmers in the municipality is due to their dependence on dairy in the production chain, which expresses their social fragility and, in turn, makes it difficult for them to access economic and social capital. In the milk production chain, an economic relationship of monopoly and monopsony was identified, since the dairy is the only supplier and the only buyer of the milk. Therefore, family farmers bear greater expenses and obtain reduced income, while dairy factories, which establish the price of inputs, the quantity and the price of the milk produced, obtain higher income. The family producer is not aware of this dependency

relationship that exists, because in order to be able to afford these costs and still survive, he ups his workload in an attempt to increase his income by expanding the amount of production. The work routine becomes alienating, as the producer isolates himself from living with the community, restricting himself to living only with his family nucleus. This alienating routine hinders the accumulation of social capital necessary for the most fragile classes, such as family farmers, to access economic capital. In order to break this routine, it is pertinent to unite producers to make access to credit possible, add value to their product and improve the distribution of the product to the final consumer, increasing income and improving producers' conditions.

The effective actions by the municipal public power through public policies to strengthen family farming (PNAE, PRONAF and PNATER) are really necessary, even with the creation of municipal public policies specific to the reality of family farmers, to encourage the accumulation of capital between the producers of São José do Barreiro. And actions in partnership between the public sector and civil society, with the aim of establishing a culture of trust and of cooperation. State intervention, by means of effective actions to encourage association and cooperation between family farmers, can create conditions for them to become agents of change, capable of questioning, proposing, innovating and creating strategies for their own development.

The accumulation of social capital is one of the necessary variables to make the solidarity economy viable. Following this idea, the accumulation of social capital among family producers will favor the constitution and the viability of SEEs. Thus, it is understood that the social economy can be a strategy for strengthening family farming and to local development of São José do Barreiro, however the development and the accumulation of social capital among family producers is crucial for this strategy becomes effective and can favorably modify the economic situation.

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