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COMPARATIVE APPROACH OF BRAZILIAN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT AND CUBAN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT: AN INTRODUCTION¹

ABORDAGEM COMPARATIVA DO DESENVOLVIMENTO LOCAL BRASILEIRO E DO DESENVOLVIMENTO LOCAL CUBANO: UMA INTRODUÇÃO

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Abstract

This article pursues contributing to the reflection on the theoretical and methodological challenges regarding Local/Regional Development. In this regard, the comparative method was used in order to raise questions about the comprehension of important aspects on the subject, albeit in an introductory way. From the reading carried out, it was possible to point out historical, theoretical and practical aspects by comparing Brazilian and Cuban Local Developments. In addition to the comparable aspects, this article also presents some considerations about the comparative method: what it is, what can or cannot be compared and how to use the method in Local/Regional Development, as well as considerations about its origin and diffusion in Latin America. This analysis also dealt with some historical and theoretical data on Local Development; as well as information on how the Constitutions of Brazil and Cuba address national, regional and local developments. The objectives proposed by Local Development practices in both countries are also part of this article. Through the analysis carried out, it was possible to identify what is common and specific in each reality in terms of theoretical, historical, objectives, actors and institutions aspects, thus making it possible to reach an understanding that perhaps other methods do not allow to reach.

Keywords: Comparative method. Local Development. Territory. Social Technology. Science and Technique Forum.

Resumo

Este artigo tem como intuito contribuir com a reflexão sobre os desafios teóricos e metodológicos acerca do Desenvolvimento Local/Regional. Para tanto, foi utilizado o método comparativo com a intenção de levantar questões sobre a compreensão de aspectos importantes sobre o tema, ainda que de forma introdutória. A partir da leitura realizada, foi possível pontuar aspectos históricos, teóricos e práticos através da comparação entre o Desenvolvimento Local brasileiro e cubano. Além dos aspectos comparáveis, o presente artigo também tece considerações sobre o método comparativo: o

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que é, o que pode ou não ser comparado e como utilizar o método no Desenvolvimento Local/Regional, assim como considerações sobre o a sua origem e a difusão na América Latina. Foram também tratados nesta análise alguns dados históricos e teóricos sobre o Desenvolvimento Local; além de informações sobre como as Constituições do Brasil e de Cuba abordam os desenvolvimentos nacional, regional e local. Os objetivos a que se propõem as práticas de Desenvolvimento Local em ambos os países também compõem o presente artigo. Através da análise realizada, foi possível identificar o que se tem de comum e de específico em cada realidade em seus aspectos teóricos, históricos, objetivos, atores e instituições, possibilitando, assim, alcançar uma compreensão que talvez outros métodos não permitam alcançar.

Palavras-chave: Método comparativo. Desenvolvimento Local. Território. Tecnologia Social. Fórum de Ciencia y Técnica.

Introduction

In the 1970s, the Local Development (LD) emerged in Europe and it has been implemented in different countries, in different ways. From this premise, this article aims at introductory presenting the constitutive elements of the Brazilian LD and the Cuban LD, identifying common and specific aspects of each context. To this end, the comparative method helped to understand its proposals and practices.

This work is structured in the following sequence:

In addition to this introduction, considerations on the comparative method will be presented, explaining what it is and what can be compared, as well as its possible contributions in the search for understanding the articulations in different local and regional spaces. Then, the LD will be discussed in its historical and conceptual aspects, aside from being thought as an alternative possibility concerning the search for a better quality of life.

Considerations about the Brazilian LD in terms of its actors, institutions, definitions and historicity will also be presented. It highlights the closeness between social technology and solidarity economy with the LD as a strategy of local resistance to the reproduction of the capitalist neoliberal logic. In this item, some articles of the 1988 Constitution will be mentioned to show that national and regional developments are covered, but that there is no mention of the LD, which allows us to conclude that, in Brazil, the LD is not a State policy.

In the following topic, aspects of the LD in Cuba will be approached, such as its history, definitions and practices, in order to allow us to know it as a proposal that originates in capitalism, but which can contribute to the advancement of socialism. The agents and institutions that build the Cuban LD will also be highlighted, as well as articles from the 2019 Constitution on the LD, which made it a State policy, with special emphasis on the Forum de Ciencia y Técnica as it is a significant peculiarity of the Cuban LD.

Finally, we present two common aspects of the LD in Brazil and Cuba: the concept of territory and the difficulty in carrying it out considering the obstacles in the strengthening of local governments. It is followed by the conclusions, however without having a terminative character.

About the comparative method

The comparative method has its origins in the works of John Stuart Mill, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber and Karl Marx. Since its creation, the method has been used in several areas of scientific knowledge: Political Science, Law, Geography, History, Sociology, Anthropology and different branches of exact and natural sciences. Different areas use comparative method to recover common and specific aspects of diverse events, including in regional studies (ALVES; SAHR, 2014). According to the authors, comparative analysis represents “[...] a perspective of social analysis that allows us to break with the uniqueness of events through the concrete action of different subjects that, in fact, build spatial differentiation” (ALVES; SAHR, 2014, p. 5, our translation).

Its use allows comparing similar cases besides the replication at different levels which aims establishing comparative discoveries (GONZALES, 2008). For this study, the historical type was highlighted to explain aspects of Brazilian and Cuban LDs. But what can be compared? According to

Sartori (1994), two facts that are not the same or different in their entirety can be compared. For him,

[...] if entities are completely equal, in all their characteristics, it is as they are the same entity and that it is. Inversely, if entities are different in all, then it is useless to compare them and it ends here (SARTORI, 1994, p. 35, our translation).

In this sense, the facts/objects of the comparison can be several. For example, they can be “[...] both processes and periods, such as countries, large regions or small communities; policies and institutions, groups and movements, or even cultures, values and representations” (SILVA; BARROS, 2011, p. 2, our translation).

In current capitalism, called globalization, the dialectical relationship between socio-economic formation and spatial formation results from the tension between a global order (homogenizing/upright position), which tends to produce similarities, and a local order (heterogeneous/horizontal position), which instigates differences and diversities (BRANDÃO, 2012). This reality contributes to the carrying out of comparative studies, considering that there is no process of globalization that is totally equal or totally different.

The comparison is a contribution in the search for understanding the forms of articulation in different spaces, elucidating dialectical aspects of the

[...] experiences induced or directly led by agents in their attempts to promote homogenization within spatial heterogeneity, as well as the analysis of opposing positions, resulting from the action of local agents (BRANDÃO, 2012, p. 181, our translation).

Through comparison, we tried to identify in which aspects the Brazilian and Cuban LDs diverge or converge, and whether or not they present similarities in their processes. Finally, it is important to highlight that this study is in its initial process and, therefore, it should be considered that the data presented here are still at an introductory level.

Local Development

Local Development (LD) is a plural concept which accomplished various ways in the exercise of real life. Historically, it emerged in the 1970s, in Europe, in the face of the globalization crisis. Its experiences preferably aimed to achieve an increase in productivity and competitiveness in domestic and foreign markets and between cities (VÁZQUEZ-BARQUERO, 2000). Thus, the LD intended to provide adaptive responses to the challenges of globalization and spread the jargon “think global, act local”, which became known and is still widely used, although quite worn out.

The LD brought up terms such as ‘local entrepreneurial capacity’, ‘local actors’, ‘endogenous resources’, ‘local social capital’, ‘local social organization’, ‘local productive arrangements’. Business entrepreneurs, associations of different shades, cooperatives, municipal, state and federal governments with their various public bodies, unions and other actors are part of its construction process, prioritizing components such as: social inclusion; strengthening of the local economy; increase in individual and collective income; innovation in public management; environmental protection; rational use of natural resources, among others.

For Benalcázar (2015), in Latin America it is possible to identify three approaches to the LD: 1) the one that defends the LD as the agglutination of local actors to take advantage of and maximize resources in a territory with efficiency and effectiveness, aiming at competitiveness in the markets ; 2) that which starts from the principle of municipalization of the LD, which asserts itself in local governments as determinants of development processes and articulators of participatory dynamics, and 3) that which thinks of the local-global, or synergistic, perspective as a process of theoretical construction /political that is based on the correlation of various dimensions (economic, social, political, environmental and cultural), seeking transformations through articulation between national and local policies.

In Latin America, there are also theorists arguing that

[...] confronting and overcoming poverty has been the keynote of local development. Its humanist presuppositions increasingly have been used by projects which aim to eradicate misery” (MARTINS, 2002, p. 53, our translation).

The LD is also an alternative to development based on industrialization, high consumption and strong environmental impact, thus becoming the search for a lifestyle within the capitalist organization of production. It can also be thought of from the perspective of decentralizing decision-making power to subnational governments (states and municipalities), allowing them greater autonomy with regard to choosing the tax, financial and administrative aspects.

LD proposals coming from sectors of Brazilian, Latin American and Caribbean universities have built representations and actions that aims to break with the traditional idea of development in which all countries should follow the path already taken by central countries, based on certain “natural laws”. In this perspective, everyone should get on the same “train” that follows the “evolutionary trail”, whose final station would be the industrialized, technological, urban society and consumer of products from multinationals. To break with this vision imposed by the imperialist countries, experiments were carried out that aimed to implement new forms of social relations of production based on cooperativism, solidarity economy and social technology at the local level.

Thus, the analysis and practices of the LD have been strengthened in the 21st century and became an alternative applied from rich to poor countries, both capitalist and socialist, among which the case of Cuba stands out. Addressing the Brazilian LD and the Cuban LD is what we intend to do on the following pages.

Local Development in Brazil

In Brazil, the LD has been taking place through partnerships, consortia, local productive arrangements and other intra-organizational groups in the scope of communities, neighborhoods, cities and regions, aiming at creating jobs and income and at solving the population’s problems. It also configures itself as a reproducer of the capitalist approach, since terms such as social capital, Local Productive Arrangements, Industrial Clusters are present and organize the capitalist relations of production.

Several actors and institutions take part in the process: local political organizations, churches, public and private companies, cooperatives, unions, housing associations, social movements, trade and industrial associations, small and medium companies, non-governmental organizations, collegiate of mayors. The focus is to carry out a process that presupposes a change in the local reality, promoting the endogenous development “[...] of a certain small geographic space, territorially defined and that represents a common cultural identity, through which the processes of organization, participation and social relations” (BÜTTENBENDER, 2017, p. 113, our translation).

For Martins, Caldas and Vaz (2010), it is possible to identify three moments in the history of the Brazilian LD: the first took place from the 1970s onwards and was called “antecedents”. In that context of struggle for democracy, the LD

[...] served as an instrument to demonstrate that subnational instances had the capacity to promote development in an alternative way to the large developmental projects that characterized the centralizing and subordinating model implemented during the military regime (MARTINS; CALDAS; VAZ, 2010, p. 565, our translation).

Thus, several municipalities looked for local attempts at development and several cities established the ‘Banco do Povo’, fostered cooperatives, instituted training and professional qualification courses and implemented fair and solidary trade (MARTINS; CALDAS, 2009).

The second period (1989), called the “great crossroads”, lasted until 1992. It was characterized by the expansion of funding sources by the municipalities and by the expansion of attributions and autonomy, which became responsible for solving various demands in the context of urban infrastructure, public services and social policies. The Participatory Budget, adopted in some cities, was also experiences that aimed to provide the participation of the population through a LD project with a territorial dimension, based on democratic participation and income distribution (MARTINS; CALDAS; VAZ; 2010).

The third phase (1993), identified as “the late awakening”, was characterized by the centrality of a local government style and aimed managing social crises and implementing public policies and urban infrastructure. The implementation of tax exemption and the intensification of tax wars between municipalities are part of this moment.

Other Brazilian experiences, still in the 20th century, can be found, for example, in the comparative analysis made by Martins; Caldas (2009), such as: the constitution of the furniture industry in Votuporanga, the construction of the furniture sector in the Serras Gaúchas region, technological incubator of the leather-footwear sector in Vale dos Sinos, production of honey and its derivatives, carried out by communities of Simplicio Mendes, creation of the mini industrial and service districts of São José do Rio Preto and the creation of Banco de Palmas.

Oliveira, Sambuichi and Silva (2013), show some LD experiences in the rural area through agroecology, as well as their main convergences, especially the family one. Among these

convergences are cooperation, community participation, collective dissemination, expansion of the capacities of those involved, the competencies and skills of local agents.

In the 21st century, some approximations between Social Technology (TS) and Solidarity Economy (ES) are identified, whose principles are adopted in Brazilian LD practices, aiming at social inclusion, solidarity and the active participation of producers/users in construction knowledge and artifacts with the LD. Preferentially designed for less favored sectors, TS and HE require the participation, empowerment and self-management of those who participate (DAGNINO, 2014). Both aims to solve basic community problems based on the creativity of those directly involved in the problems, and indicate that the technologies adopted must be of low environmental impact, creative and cheap.

TS combined with higher education enabled the construction of “[...] socio-technical arrangements capable of feeding and being fed by the utopia of ‘another possible society beyond capital’” (LIMA; DAGNINO, 2013, p. 12, our translation) More recent experiences that combine TS and ES in order to contribute to the LD can be found on the Fundação Banco do Brasil website, under the link ‘Social Technology’.

Through the various practices of the LD, at least two possibilities can be identified: those that reproduce the capitalist logic in force at the local level and those that serve as an experience in the place of resistance or counter-hegemonic action. Those in the first group continue to reproduce, albeit to a lesser extent, the inequalities of resources and power, of impoverished forms of sociability resulting from competition, through the growing exploitation of natural resources. Institutionally, these experiences supported by regional development began to be debated with greater intensity from 2003, during the Lula government. Subsequently, the proposal for the National Policy for Regional Development (PNDR) was created, instituted in 2007 through Decree 6047.

Those in the second group, in turn, where the place is perceived as a territory facing the experience of resistance to capitalism, the actions are characterized by producing spaces in which the principles of equality, solidarity and respect for nature prevail (MARTINS; CALDAS, 2009), and identify themselves with the principles and actions of higher education. In these, a great and constant threat to the process is the co-option to operate in the logic of the market.

The country's Constitution is a good element for comparison, as it demonstrates important aspects of the decentralization and autonomy of municipalities and makes other provisions regarding Development. In the Brazilian case, decentralization is evidenced in its article 18, where it says “The political-administrative organization of the Federative Republic of Brazil comprises the Union, the States, the Federal District and the Municipalities, all autonomous” (BRASIL, 2016, s/p, our translation). However, regarding the LD, the Constitution does not address almost anything, but makes considerations about national and regional developments. In its Article 3, it says that the following are fundamental objectives of the Federative Republic of Brazil: “I – to build a free, fair and solidary society; II – guarantee national development; III – eradicate poverty and marginalization and reduce social and regional inequalities” (BRASIL, 2016, s/p our translation).

In Article 21, which deals with the competence of the Union, it says, in its item IX, that it is incumbent upon the Union to “develop and execute national and regional plans for territorial ordering and economic and social development” (BRASIL, 2016, s/p, our translation) and, in item XX, in turn, it says that the union is responsible for “[...] establishing guidelines for urban development, including housing, basic sanitation and urban transport” (BRASIL, 2016, s/p, our translation). In Article 30, among other powers, it is incumbent upon the municipality to “[...] legislate on matters of local interest” (BRASIL, 2016, s/p, our translation).

Article 174, first paragraph, says: “[...] the law will establish the guidelines and bases for balanced national development planning, which will incorporate and make compatible national and regional development plans” (BRASIL, 2016, s/p, our translation). In Article 180, it is stated that “The Union, the States, the Federal District and the Municipalities shall promote and encourage tourism as a factor of social and economic development” (BRASIL, 2016, s/p, our translation) and, in its Article 182, one has to:

The urban development policy, carried out by the Municipal Government, in accordance with general guidelines established by law, aims to order the full development of the city's social functions and ensure the well-being of its inhabitants (BRASIL, 2016, s/p, our translation).

Having made these considerations about the Brazilian LD, we will proceed from now on. some considerations about the Cuban LD.

Local Development in Cuba

In Cuba, the LD emerged in the early 1990s, aiming to solve the needs of the municipalities experienced during the “special period of times of peace”, in face of the two blockades situations, as Fidel Castro said (1991): “[...] this country is under a double block at this moment: one is volunteering and the other is not. These are the realities and these are the problems we have to face” (CASTRO, 1991, s/p, our translation). The first one is a consequence of US imperialism and the second is a result from the end of the Soviet Union.

In that period, the municipal governments were subordinate to the Municipal Administration Council which directed the economic entities of production and local services aiming to satisfy the social, health, education, sport and recreation necessities of the community; furthermore it was created the Popular Council was created as a mechanism to enable territorial and local governance. However, the receptivity of the LD theory in Cuba faced a strong controversy regarding its viability due to the particularities of Cuba (SEGURA, 2013). Its implementation took place based on the argument that the place is thought of as a space for the construction of a new policy aimed at achieving a development opposed to individualism and that excludes capital.

An alternative policy that makes its way into the capitalist society itself, supporting the convenience of applying ‘local development’ in the processes of building a society superior to the capitalist one (ALFONSO, 2011, p. 29, our translation).

From 1993 on, the government started to include actions based on the postulates of the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development – Eco-92 – and to carry out a policy of sustainable development. Gradually, the focus on sustainable agriculture was intensified as a fundamental technological guideline of agricultural policy, as it is said in the Agenda 21, and in opposition to the ideological years of the Green Revolution, ongoing since the implantation of the revolutionary government.

Lamar e Roach (2018) call this change as “epistemological turn” when the principles of agroecology, sustainability, holistic approach, interdisciplinary highlighting a sustainable LD become the basis of university studies. During this period, it was implemented the agricultural market decentralization and the promotion of endogenous and Local Development.

Although the LD started in the “special period in times of peace” (1989 – 1999), it began to be effectively made possible in 2001, through the Ministry of Economy and Planning, which has been implementing the Iniciativa Municipal de Desarrollo Local (IMLD). This initiative aims to replace imports and promote exports, based on economic sustainability (DÍAS, 2014), and gains strength from the VI Congress of the Cuban Communist Party (2011). It is based, above all, on planning as a fundamental tool to drive the country’s economic development.

A definition of Cuban LD can be verified in Segura (2013), when he says that, when talking about LD in Cuba, it has to do with a management model based on the endogenous development theory that articulates its own and external resources to the territory, “[...] Based on the capacity of local actors and to direct those processes based on their own needs, which, in the Cuban case, is also in correspondence with the objectives and priorities of local development” (SEGURA, 2013, p. 142, our translation).

Its practice occurs in territories at the provincial, municipal, micro-regional and regional levels; its actors or agents are business entities, a civil society or local government such as institutions and cities; it aims to promote a growth, modify the economic structure and create better conditions to the local population through promoting education access, health, sports and culture. It also permits that people can participate in the identification of their problems and finding the most effective solutions (DÍAZ, 2014).

Cuban LD theorists understand the local as a space for a new political construction, a concept that enables the conquest of development in contrast to the individualistic and exclusive nature of capital, an alternative policy that provides the construction of a society superior to capitalist (ALFONSO, 2011).

Thus, the LD is understood as a mechanism for enabling and consolidating socialism. In its implementation process, the university and the Ministry of Higher Education and Research centers have been playing an important role, as the LD demands knowledge, technology and innovation, aiming to present creative solutions to local social problems. In order to meet these demands, the ‘Management Universitaria del Conocimiento y la Innovación para el Desarrollo’ was created in 2006 with the objective of stimulating knowledge and innovation management capacities aimed at LD.

A significant change that took place in Cuba's universities at the beginning of the 21st century (2002), and which greatly contributed to the realization of the Cuban LD, was the "territorial turn" (JOVER et. al 2015). Its main aspect was the creation of Sedes Universitárias Municipais (SUM), enabling the municipalization of higher education with 3,150 higher education institutions (REYES; MARTÍNEZ; RODRÍGUES, 2011).

Currently, the former SUM are called Conselhos Universitários Municipais (CUM) and act as aggregator of human heritage and local innovator; as knowledge agents that help to think about the place; participate in the elaboration of knowledge-based development strategies; participate in the training of human resources; identify local productive arrangements and reflect on the knowledge and technologies needed for local development; promote in local actors an integrated and holistic vision of local development with the orientation of sustainable, equitable and inclusive development (JOVER, 2017).

As of 2010, the Iniciativa Municipal de Desarrollo Local (IDML) was extended to the entire country with funding from the Fondo de Fomento, administered by Banco de Crédito y Comercio. Another state institution that contributes to the realization of local development is the Centro de Desarrollo Local y Comunitario (CEDEL), linked to the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment, which carries out the Programa de Desarrollo Local (PRODEL), developing a work of awareness and consultancy with municipal authorities (DÍAZ, 2014).

Although there are difficulties in implementing the LD in Cuba, several experiences can be verified such as: in the municipality of Yaguajay, province of Sancti Spíritus (VEGA et al 2012); the experience of sustainable local development in Las Terrazas (PÉREZ 2011); the experience of the municipality of Viñales, province of Pinar Del Río (VIÑAS, 2014); the project carried out in the municipality of Camajuaní (MEDINA et al., 2016).

Other cases can be found arising from Estrategias de Desarrollo Municipal (EDM), approved by the Asambleas Municipales del Poder Popular (AMPP), whose implementation is related to the characteristics of each territory (PREMIER; APÁN, 2019) and are carried out with the support of the PRODEL, whose main responsible for the Program is the CEDEL.

About the approach to local in the Cuban Constitution, approved in 2019, there are several aspects that can be highlighted. First, what is written in its preamble calls attention, as it contains political and ideological elements that express the general lines of the Cuban social organization. It is said that the people of Cuba are guided by Cuban, Latin American and universal revolutionary, anti-imperialist and Marxist thought, in particular by the ideas and example of Martí and Fidel and the ideas of social emancipation of Marx, Engels and Lenin; supported by proletarian internationalism; convinced that Cuba will never return to capitalism and that it is only in socialism and communism that human beings reach their full dignity (CUBA, 2019).

In Article 13, which deals with the essential purposes of the State, the proposal to implement sustainable development is evidenced by saying that it is up to the State to promote a [...] sustainable development that ensures individual and collective prosperity, and obtain higher levels of equity and social justice, as well as preserve and multiply the achievements of the Revolution (CUBA, 2019, s/p, our translation).

In Article 101, which deals with State bodies, in its 'd' paragraph, it is said that [...] State bodies, in accordance with their functions and within the framework of their competence, develop initiatives aimed at taking advantage of local resources and possibilities (CUBA, 2019, s/p, our translation).

In Article 113, it is stated that the National Assembly of People's Power adopts policies that guarantee the proper connection of deputies with their voters and with local entities of People's Power in the territory in which they were elected. In Article 168, it says that the municipality is the local society that

[...] constitutes the primary and fundamental political-administrative unit of the national organization; It has its own autonomy and legal personality for all legal purposes, with the purpose of achieving the satisfaction of local needs (CUBA, 2019, s/p, our translation).

In chapter III, the Constitution refers to the municipal bodies of popular power. Article 185 says that the Municipal Assembly of Popular Power is the highest body of state power and is imbued with the highest authority in its territory. In Article 191, which deals with what the Municipal Assembly is responsible for carrying out, it is stated in its paragraph 'b' that it is "[...] to approve and control, as appropriate, the plan of the economy, the presupposition and the integral development plan of the municipality" (CUBA, 2019, s/p, our translation).

In the municipalities, there are the Popular Councils which, according to Article 198, are organs of the Popular Power, with a representative character

[...] of the highest authority for the performance of its functions and, without constituting an intermediate body for the purposes of the political-administrative division, it is organized in cities, towns, neighborhoods, towns and rural areas (CUBA, 2019, s/p, our translation).

In Article 199, which deals with the Popular Council, it is stated that it exercises control over local production and service entities, and it works to satisfy health, assistance, educational, cultural, sporting and recreational needs, “[...] as well as in prevention and social care tasks, promoting the participation of the population and local initiatives to achieve them” (CUBA, 2019, s/p, our translation).

An important specificity of the Cuban LD is the Forum de Ciencia y Técnica (FCT). The idea arose in the late 1980s, under Fidel Castro government, faced with the US blockade and the difficulty of obtaining spare parts. Effectively, the Forum emerged in 1981, aiming to boost the manufacture and the recovery of parts to reduce the need for imports. This activity was organized with all the ministries and, together, they created the National Commission for Spare Parts, bringing together experienced workers, technologists and engineers from different branches of the industry.

The FCT is a movement that mobilizes the participation of researchers, specialists, technicians and workers from different economic segments, based on cooperation and integration in the search for solutions to problems facing a particular company or institution. Its importance lies not only in the search for new solutions, but in the wide dissemination of proven solutions. Its performance reinforces the actions of the National Science and Technology System (SAÉNZ, 1996).

Its organization starts with the Fórum de Base, which takes place within companies or institutions in which people with different levels of technical and academic qualification participate, constituting two groups: the ‘young creators’ (composed of people of both genres and with up to 35 years old), which constitute the “Juvenile Technical Brigades”, also known as Brigadistas; and the group formed by people of both genres (over 35 years old), known as the “Innovadores y Racionalizadores committees”, also called Aniristas.

These two groups work in collaboration with a particular institution, which has a “problem bank”, built by those who work at the institution. The Aniristas, based on the problem bank, prepare a thematic plan to obtain the respective solutions, with the effective participation of the brigade members. The works go through a selection process and those selected are sent to the municipal Forum.

At the Municipal Forum, a program of activities similar to the one carried out at the base is developed: through a technical event, the works that will be sent to the Provincial Forum, held every two years, are chosen. Annually, a summary of the achievements made and the problems that remain outstanding is produced. After the Provincial Forum, the National Forum takes place (every two years), where selected works are received in the Provincial Forums. In this, the results of innovations and rationalizations, carried out in the country at its different levels, are socialized.

In the 21st century, the Forum improves its organization, reaching greater diversity, intensity and systematicity, approaching the Ministerio de Ciencia, Tecnología y Medio Ambiente. In 2018, there were several Fórum de Base, such as the one at the Universidad Central “Marta Abreu” in Las Villas, with the following research priorities:

- 1) Food production, especially animal feed; 2) Energy, with priority to renewables; 3) Environment and the impact of climate change; 4) Computerization and automation of society; 5) The demographic situation; 6) Water and natural resources; 7) Urban territorial development; 8) The satellite industry; 9) Import substitution of raw materials and spare parts in the production of teaching aids; 10) The increase in the production of educational software and videos for teaching and the extension of R&D results (VIGO, 2018, s/p, our translation).

In 2020, there was the National Forums, where solutions to the problems of factories, schools, hospitals and other institutions in the selected locations were developed, later implemented in other realities that may need such solutions. Thus, the Forum can be understood as a strategy to resist globalization and to build alternative practices in favor of the Cuban LD.

Common Aspects in Local Development Proposals

In Brazil and Cuba, the territory, with its various definitions, is taken into account in the debate on the LD. As a representative definition in Brazil, we highlight the one presented by Santos (2007), who understands the territory as a contradiction in itself, as it is also the space of action and

power, where class conflicts and domination strategies are clearer; it is the place where history is fully realized through the manifestations of existence. It is also “[...] the foundation of the work; the place of residence, material and spiritual exchanges and the exercise of life” (SANTOS, 2007, p. 114, our translation). It finally is the space in which the human being makes and remakes himself every day, at every moment, in their social relationships, either with each other or with nature.

In the other way, In Cuba the LD rescues the dimension of the territory in the development processes, because, through it, it is possible to build a process that proposes the “[...] adjustment and alliances of actors, in search of the improvement of the living conditions of society in these areas” (SEGURA; LOPES, 2011, p. 12, our translation). Thus, the territory is understood as a dynamic set, delimited by a border, in which environmental and human elements are combined; it is the place where you experience the heterogeneity and complexity of the real world; and there are environmental characteristics, social actors and mobilizations around strategies and projects, but without the presence of class struggle. It is in a certain territory, be it a neighborhood, a micro-region or a city, where a set of interrelations takes place in which the LD takes place.

Another common aspect in the Brazilian and Cuban LD proposals is the difficulty in putting it into effect, given the lack of strengthening of local governments, as only a strong local government system “[...] can guarantee that the needs, the habits, urban forms, social priorities and the environmental conditions of the area are reflected in local urban development plans” (BRUNDTLAND, 1991, p. 276, our translation).

However, local governments – except for a few – have not received the necessary credits, the specializations and the necessary authorities to deal with local challenges. In order for local governments to become key agents of the LD, they need greater political, financial and institutional autonomy, and have access to a greater share of the wealth generated in the city (BRUNDTLAND, 1991), and this has not yet taken place in the vast majority of Brazilian municipalities.

In Cuba, the autonomy margin for the LD is small and, according to Guevara) “The municipalities do not have a critical mass of resources to face the needs of the territory” (GUEVARA, 2018, p. 24, our translation). Furthermore, the exercise of local government authority over institutions of national subordination located in the territory is weak. For the author,

The high level of centralization of financial resources prevents the income generated by companies located in a local space from reverting in their development with the same intensity that these spaces need resources to generate it (GUEVARA, 2018, p. 24, our translation).

Another aspect that the author calls attention concerning the proper articulation between local conditions and national objectives, set by global organizations or by national companies based in the municipality that leave little space for local action. Also, some municipal planning lacks an integrating vision of LD, considering important aspects such as gender approach, local spiritual culture and city participation (GUEVARA, 2018). These aspects that are, many times, outlined in LD practice Brazilian.

Conclusion

The first aspect that stands out in this conclusion is about what can be compared: everything that is not exactly the same and not exactly different can be compared. So, the comparative method can be used in development processes like local, regional or national. Here, it was shown the possibility of comparing the Brazilian and Cuban LDs, clarifying specific and common aspects, differences and similarities, as shown in the table below:

Table 1: Comparative elements of the Brazilian and Cuban LD

	Local Development Brazil	Cuba Local Development
History	Early 1980s. 3 periods: antecedents, great crossroads and late awakening.	Beginning of the 1990s, due to the locks and increased from the 2000s onwards. Two changes were fundamental: the “territorial turn” and the “epistemological turn”.
Actors/institutions	Local governments; local productive arrangements; industrial clusters; churches; cooperatives; unions; social movements; trade and industry association; small and medium companies; NGOs.	Ministry of Economy and Planning; Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment; Ministry of Higher Education; University; Local and Community Development Center; Research Centers; Civil society; business sectors; Local Governments; Cuban Communist Party.
Where does it happen	Communities; neighborhoods; cities; regions.	Provinces; counties; microregion; regions.
Goals	Reproduction/adaptation to capitalist logic; resistances or counter-hegemonic action; job creation; increased income; basic troubleshooting.	Generate better living conditions; construction of a society superior to capitalism; consolidation of socialism.
Constitution	Nothing about Local Development, demonstrating that it is not State policy.	Several articles deal with the place, characterizing it as a State policy.
Examples of practices performed	Votuporanga furniture center; Furniture sector of Serra Gaúcha; Vale dos Sinos technology incubator; Mini industrial districts of São João do Rio Preto.	Municipalities of Yaguajay (province of Sancti Spiritus). Las Terrazas, municipality of Viñales (province of Pinar Del Río), municipality of Camajuaní.
Specific Aspects	Social Technology and Solidarity Economy.	Forum de Ciencia y Técnica.
Common Aspects	Use of the concept of territory; difficulty in strengthening local government; aims at sustainable development.	Use of the concept of territory; difficulty in strengthening local government; aims at sustainable development.

Source: author's elaboration

From the Brazilian Constitution onwards, it was seen that the LD is a topic that is practically not addressed. In the Cuban Constitution, however, there is a policy aimed at the LD, even mentioning the National Assembly of Popular Power and the Popular Council, which exercise control over production entities and local influence services.

It was also possible to notice that, in both realities, the notion of territory is common. However, in the Cuban reality there is no presence of the class struggle. We have also seen that, in Brazil, critical perspectives in the definition of LD can be identified, especially where it is said that most LD definitions are more for adaptation of the dominated than alternative to domination, but that it can be understood as a tendency against dominant processes.

Both in the Brazilian and Cuban LD, there are several institutions that participate in the process. In Brazil, however, it is possible to identify greater participation of the private sector and its organizational forms. In both realities, it is possible to find LD experiences in communities, such as neighborhoods, municipalities, micro-regions and regions. In Cuba, however, by implementing the LD, a management model aimed at building a socialist society is being sought.

In the proposals of the Brazilian LD, it is possible to identify approximations with the praxis of higher education, TS and sustainability (the latter also present in Cuba). In Cuba, in turn, in addition to the foundations of the social economy, the effective action of the Forum de Ciencia y Técnica is identified, which reinforces the actions of the National Science and Technology System. There is also the wide contribution of Cuban universities.

We have also seen that there is no effective articulation between local conditions and national objectives. In addition, some municipal planning lacks an integrative view of the LD, without considering important aspects such as the gender approach, the local spiritual culture and citizen participation, aspects that are often forgotten in the Brazilian LD practice.

Thus, it is possible to conclude, from this approximation between Brazilian and Cuban LD, that there are common aspects and specific aspects in the different realities. However, both the Brazilian and Cuban processes have a lot to contribute to each other.

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