

Received: 06/04/21

Accepted: 09/20/2021

## **CHARACTERIZATION OF SOCIAL CAPITAL BETWEEN RURAL FAMILY FARMERS IN SÃO RAIMUNDO DAS MANGABEIRAS, MA**

## **CARACTERIZAÇÃO DO CAPITAL SOCIAL ENTRE AGRICULTORES FAMILIARES RURAIS EM SÃO RAIMUNDO DAS MANGABEIRAS, MA**

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### **Abstract**

Family farming, in addition to playing a relevant social role in people's lives, also represents a significant part of the composition of the economy in Brazil. Thus, with the application and improvement of tools that enable an improvement in production in this sector of the economy, good results can be achieved. One resource that can make these results possible is social capital. The aim of this work is to identify aspects and characteristics considered as elements that lead to the formation of social capital in the studied rural community, choosing rural family farmers in the municipality of São Raimundo das Mangabeiras as a field of study and research, regarding collective organization. A survey was carried out in the Assentamento Nova Descoberta community in the municipality of São Raimundo das Mangabeiras, which is located in the southern mesoregion of Maranhão, in the Chapada das Mangabeiras microregion. It investigated whether the existing social capital among family farmers in that community through exploratory research with a qualitative approach and as instruments for carrying out the work, the Integrated Questionnaire to Measure Social Capital - IQ-MCS of the Thematic Group on Social Capital of the World Bank (2003) was used. There were found to be reasonable levels of social capital in relation to the community and some negative aspects external to the community. Research has shown that together, family farmers have made significant gains for themselves and the community.

**Keywords:** Regional development; Social capital; Family Farmers.

### **Resumo**

A agricultura familiar além de desempenhar função social relevante na vida das pessoas, também representa uma parcela significativa na composição da economia, no Brasil. Frente a isso, com a aplicação e aperfeiçoamento de ferramentas que possibilitam uma melhoria na produção nesse setor

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da economia, podem ser alcançados bons resultados. Um recurso que poderá possibilitar esses resultados é o capital social. A objetivo do presente trabalho é a identificação de aspectos e características considerados como elementos que levam à formação do capital social na comunidade rural estudada, no município de São Raimundo das Mangabeiras, quanto a organização coletiva. Foi realizada pesquisa na comunidade Assentamento Nova Descoberta no município de São Raimundo das Mangabeiras, localizado na mesorregião Sul do Maranhão, microrregião da Chapada das Mangabeiras. Investigou-se o capital social existente entre os agricultores familiares na referida comunidade mediante pesquisa do tipo exploratória com abordagem qualitativa, e como instrumento para realização dos trabalhos foi usado o Questionário Integrado para Medir Capital Social – QI-MCS do Grupo Temático sobre Capital Social do Banco Mundial (2003). Encontrou-se um grau elevado de capital social, o que possibilitou a organização coletiva para o alcance dos objetivos da comunidade.

**Palavras-chave:** Desenvolvimento Regional; Capital social; Agricultores Familiares.

## Introduction

Family farming is a sector of strategic importance for the production of food and the economy of Brazil and world. Worldwide, estimates are that 1.5 billion people live and work in this sector of the economy, according to data from the United Nations (SANTOS and RICHARD, 2017). In Brazil, around 80% of the workforce employed in rural areas belongs to family farming, according to FAO/INCRA data (KARNOPP, 2014). In Maranhão, family farming is also present and, although the great economic results of the agricultural sector in this region of the country come from large-scale agriculture, the results given by family farming must also be taken into account, since this agriculture is part of the Maranhão economy.

São Raimundo das Mangabeiras, a municipality in Maranhão, is also included in this context, with the presence of establishments linked to family farming. Thus, it is necessary to identify aspects and features among family farmers who can contribute to the improvement of their activities. This paper approached one of the factors relevant to research on family agriculture; it is the capital stock, subject to authors of works such as Putnam (2006) and Bourdieu (2007). The first considers that social capital is formed with the association of members of a community, while the second considers it as a resource related to the insertion of social groups in power structures. Thus, social capital is a resource that can enhance the action of groups organized around common goals.

The present paper is the result of a survey applied to a rural community on the Nova Descoberta Settlement, to identify and analyze the factors and elements such as trust, participation, and cooperation, among others, deemed essential for the formation of social capital. The objective was to identify aspects and characteristics considered as elements that lead to the formation of social capital in the rural community studied, in São Raimundo das Mangabeiras. The municipality has, according to estimates (IBGE, 2019), 18,868 inhabitants, but according to measured data, a population of 17,474 inhabitants (IBGE, 2010). Of this total, 28.28% live in rural areas. With a percentage of 61.62% of incidence of poor, the municipality lives with two realities, one of prominence in large-scale agricultural activities, the other in subsistence farming practiced by small rural producers who try to survive with few technologies, resources and support.

Small rural producers, family farmers, go through many difficulties and one of them is the lack of capacity to organize and articulate around their production activities. Social capital can also be seen as productive capital, as Abramovay (2000) states, when considering that viewed in this way, social structures are considered as resources, because when they join groups, they acquire greater negotiating power, either to have access to the financial credit or to sell at better prices for the market. Consequently, it is necessary to study social capital through its characterization, taking into account relevant aspects, identifying which and how they can influence the results of their agricultural production activities, either positively or negatively.

Therefore, the aim is to produce knowledge that can contribute to local and regional development, through the characterization of the social capital present in the studied community. The paper is organized into five sections, in addition to this introduction. The second section presents the theoretical foundation, while the third deals with the method, the fourth section presents the results and the last summarizes the final considerations.

## Social capital, family farming and regional development

The interest in social capital studies as a way to promote regional and local development has expanded the research in this area. However, to study social capital, it

is pertinent to outline the aspects related to its support. The theme of social capital involves many concepts and variables. To study it, it is necessary to pay attention to the different interactions and social relations present in its composition.

For Bourdieu (1980), social capital is considered a resource that is not naturally constituted, related to competition for scarce economic and political resources. On the other hand, Putnam (2006) presents a different approach. According to the author, the social capital is associated with the presence of trust and networks of cooperation, associated with actions to achieve the common goals to the community. For Putnam, reciprocity in relationship networks within communities and groups is fundamental for the cooperation he associates with social capital. Bourdieu and Putnam represent different perceptions about social capital regarding its composition and effects on the social area.

Despite the differences identified between both authors, it is possible to notice that social capital can be associated with regional development:

Social capital is one of the variables that can contribute to the differences between the development conditions of different localities and regions, without ignoring, of course, exogenous factors such as the actions of the State and the dynamics produced with the international division of labor (SANTOS; VIEIRA; SANTOS, 2018, p. 229).

As part of eyeliner processes of regional development, social capital is associated with other forms of capital such as economic capital, cultural capital and the capital symbolic, it means a component attribute of collective action promoting social networks (MATOS, 2009). According to Cunha (2013), the social capital to exist depends on people, interaction and their relationships. For Putnam (2006), social capital is related to features of social organization aimed at facilitating coordinated actions guided in confidence. Thus characterized by Putnam, along with the chains of social relations, the capital is still considered a public good. Social capital is directly linked to how social organization is present in communities, whether there is the presence of formal or informal groups, or whether there is the presence of both types of groups, and what are the respective characteristics of each group with relation to trust. Relations pertaining to a community may become a facilitator element for achieving collective goals of the organized community, as the community associations. The inability of people to make commitments produces communally shared losses due to a lack of mutual trust. So, an

alternative to this scenario is the action of the State to deal with the impossibility of collective action (PUTNAM, 2006).

Bourdieu (1980) argues that social capital can be developed and this can occur through the improvement of elements that compose it, such as trust, cooperation, participation, networks, and can also function as an element of class distinction, and be used in the dispute by power. For Cunha (2013), trust can provide important gains that strengthen social capital, as it improves tolerance levels in relationships between people and groups, no matter how different they are. It also states that trust can help in a better distribution between rich and poor, promoting a mutual transfer, reducing crime rates, and also with the possibility of helping economic growth. Therefore, trust presents itself as one of the conceptual bases of great relevance for studies of social capital. This improvement in relationships between people, through increased trust, will contribute to solving many everyday problems.

Cooperation within a community is greater, the greater the stock of social capital present in reciprocity rules and civic participation systems (PUTNAM, 2006). From this perspective, cooperation is associated with achieving a certain end in a more effective way compared to individual action. For the effectiveness of cooperation is necessary predisposition on be part of actions in groups. In civic communities these characteristics are present.

For Matos, the term civic can be considered as follows:

In my view, the term 'civic' relates to the fundamental conditions necessary for communicative interactions that aim at the collective understanding of an issue or problem of general interest, being based on exchanges of views and on the

collective attempt to establish a dialogue supported by cooperation and mutual questioning (MATOS, 2009, p.86).

Matos considers the conversation as something of fundamental importance in the study of social capital, for before contentious issues, can come to an understanding directed to issues of collective interest, with recourse to the dialogue. Thus, Matos adopted the term civic conversation for these everyday communicative exchange relationships of citizens. The economic development may be linked to social capital (Putnam, 2006). In this sense, participation and cooperation can support the relationship networks necessary for the development of a community. From this perspective, conversation can enhance the socialization necessary for trust and solidarity. For Matos, social ties measure the intensity of social capital. For the author, strong ties are characterized by proximity between members of a community, while weak ties are characterized by occasional approximation and without intimacy (MATOS, 2009).

Social capital can be understood as a complex resource, composed of dimensions relevant to social life. The dimensions relevant to social capital are related to the dynamics present in social life. The dimension groups and networks comprise the relationships established in the social organization, considered from the formal and informal perspectives. Another dimension refers to the establishment of trust and solidarity, necessary for the densification of social capital in a community. The dimension of collective action and cooperation is pertinent to the capacity for collective articulation, while the dimension of information and communication corresponds to the identification of how access to information occurs. The cohesion and social inclusion dimension corresponds to the means used to resolve conflicts. And the authority and political action dimension is related to political articulation before the State and the institutions responsible for public management and policies (GROOTAERT; NARAYAN; JONES; WOOLCOCK, 2003).

Social capital makes it possible to understand the forms of community articulation regarding their ability to present solutions to collective demands. The dimensions of social capital indicate the elements necessary for the association between members of a community in favor of the resolution of collective demands. Social capital enables the investigation of community articulation for collective challenges. Among several activities in the national territory, the family farming is present in investigations on regional development in Brazil.

The definition of family farming considers the socioeconomic characteristics of the activity and the size of the area under cultivation, the labor profile, the origin of the income and the annual amount of income relevant to agricultural activities. A definition of family farming corresponds to limiting the property up to four fiscal modules, with a predominance of family labor for the most activities, more than half the income originated from the rural activities. When family farming is related to native peoples, extractive workers and traditional communities, the size of the areas used is relativized (WIENKE, 2017).

The scope of activities related to family farming is identified by the United Nations (UN), as 1.5 billion people would engage in family farming (SANTOS and RICHARD, 2017). In Brazil, according to information publicized by the FAO/INCRA (Karnop, 2014), the family farms employ 80% of the labor area rural, equivalent to 20% of the economically active population. Despite having an area corresponding to 25% of agricultural land in Brazil; family farming generates 80% of the food in the country. When considering rural establishments, in a total of 7 million, 6.5 million are linked to family farming (KARNOPP, 2014).

The representativeness of family farming in Brazil indicates its potential for public policies dedicated to fostering social and economic development. Family farming is relevant for workers related to this activity, as well as the population whose food security depends on the food production of the sector. Family farming is a fundamental sector for Brazilian development, which entails the expansion of studies related to its production conditions, as well as other aspects such as social organization. Among the elements that make it possible to characterize the contribution of family

farming and its association with the development process is social capital. Understanding the presence of social capital among family farmers allows us to characterize their relationship with the collective organization of family farmers.

The articulation between social capital and family farming results from the perception of development as a process of confronting social asymmetries, carried out in the territory. In the territory, endogenous and exogenous variables are articulated (MORAES and SCHNEIDER, 2010). The territory results from the historical process that combines the action of social, economic and institutional actors relevant to political, social, economic, cultural or religious motivations, who compete for scarce resources (DALLABRIDA, 2017).

The theoretical diversity related to the debate on social capital stems from the different approaches in relation to this asset, from its understanding as a resource to guide collective actions to its control as an element in the dispute for scarce economic resources. However, despite the differences in understanding regarding social capital, its density defines its impact on the ability to search for resources necessary for social and economic development.

## Method

The methodology used was exploratory research through a case study in relation to the objectives and with a qualitative approach. The case study can be defined as a suitable procedure for qualitative research, seeking the understanding of contemporaneous events (Yin, 2005).

To carry out the research it was applied one research tool with closed and open questions to participants, with the expectation of identifying and measuring the share capital present among rural farmers in São Raimundo das Mangabeiras/MA. The research instrument was adapted from the work of Oliveira (2017), carried out in the same research clipping, the social capital present among family farmers.

The research was approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Taubaté, under protocol No. 12830519.3.0000.5501. It is noteworthy that the survey instrument was developed considering the Federal Law No. 11.326/06 establishing the concepts, principles and instruments for public policy at the familiar agriculture. The Integrated Questionnaire to Measure Social Capital – IQ-MCS, proposed by Grootaert, Narayan, Jones, Woolcock (2003), was also used as a parameter. It is a field-tested model, analyzed by specialized consultants, having been developed through surveys on social capital, thus presenting reliability, validity and usefulness (OLIVEIRA, 2017).

## The social capital of family farmers in São Raimundo das Mangabeiras

São Raimundo das Mangabeiras has an estimated population of 18,868 inhabitants (IBGE, 2019). Of these, 71.7% were in the urban area and 28.3% in the rural area, according to IBGE data (2010). It presented in the Agricultural Census (2006) 849 rural establishments, 831 were individual owners, and 648 were classified as land owners. In the Agricultural Census (2017), the number of rural establishments is 589 establishments, 402 are individual producers and 472 are classified as owners. It is noteworthy that the expansion of agribusiness in the region tends to change agriculture and the local landholding structure, through the progressive incorporation of neighboring properties and even more distant ones.

Family farming presents different conditions in relation to agribusiness. According to the Agricultural Census (2017), among rural establishments, only 45 of them receive technical assistance and 538 do not, 149 establishments fertilize the soil and 440 do not do it. These data show that most rural establishments do not have the necessary support and conditions for the development of their activities in order to achieve good results in terms of quality and productivity. In the Agricultural Census (2017) more than 90% of agricultural production in São Raimundo das Mangabeiras comes from the great precision agriculture practiced by the large producers.

In this scenario, the ability of family farmers to articulate is fundamental. In this aspect we find the relevance of the investigation of social capital. According to the analysis of the interviews carried out and in accordance with the dimensions of Grootaert, Narayan, Jones, Woolcock (2003), the characteristics of the social capital diagnosed among family farmers in São Raimundo das Mangabeiras will be exposed.

Table 1 presents a summary of the categories analyzed in its main elements, used for the understanding of the characteristics of the capital of the analyzed group. Subsequently, we present the results obtained from the survey along to farmers rural of São Raimundo das Mangabeiras / MA.

**Table 01:** Characterization of relations on social capital.

Categories	Researched Elements
Groups and networks	Participation in groups and associations
	Decision-making
	Group organization
	Leader choice
Trust and solidarity	Trust in people in the community
	Trust in people who are part of the government and local leaders
	Trust in other family farmers in the municipality
	Degree of trust among family farmers in the municipality
Collective action and cooperation	Participation in community activities
	Working together with others on community projects
	Cooperation between family farmers in the community
	Direct participation or not of family farmers in political and social activities
Information and communication	Most used means of communication in the community
	Access to information in the community
	Means of communication to access information on government actions
	Means of communication used in the community to access market information, product prices and crops
Cohesion and social inclusion	Aptitude or willingness to meet with people in the community
	Aptitude or willingness to meet family farmers in the community
	Feeling about crime and violence in the community
Empowerment and political action	Power to make decisions that can change your life
	Exercise of the vote in the last state/presidential elections and why
	Do local government and local leadership take into account your and other people's concerns when making decisions?
	Degree of honesty of people who are part of the municipal government, local politics and local leaders

Source: Adapted from Grootaert, Narayan, Jones, Woolcock (2003).

### Category groups and networks

For the category groups and networks, the elements indicated in Table 01 were studied. The first was associativism. For Putnam (2006), associations play an important role both internally and externally, as they internally awaken what he calls “habits of cooperation, solidarity and public spirit” while, externally, they arouse the “articulation of interests” and the “aggregation of interests”. Such aspects, for Putnam, are intensified by networks of secondary associations. Thus, with respect to participation in groups and associations, all farmers interviewed participate in the

community pool, while some take part of other associations and groups. The time of participation is a relevant fact, as only one farmer had a reduced time of association, only 4 months of participation, while the others have around 5 and 22 years of participation.

These characteristics are considered relevant in terms of social capital, since the degree of involvement in associations is seen as a way of identifying the presence of social capital and its potential for engagement among community members:

In practice, the 'volume' of social capital would be identified with the level of associative involvement, that is, with the links of belonging and acting in interaction networks allied to participatory behavior in a civically engaged community (MATOS, 2009, p. 48).

Another relevant aspect, according to the parameter established by Matos (2009), is the participatory behavior identified in the studied community. It was found that farmers allocate part of their time each month to participate in work in the associations or groups to which they belong. It highlights that this time varies from 1 to 8 days a farmer to another. It was found that 5 farmers allocate 5 days of work to activities in the associations or groups to which they belong, 2 farmers allocate 2 days, 2 farmers allocate 8 days, 1 farmer allocates 1 day and 1 farmer allocates 5 days.

The community association in which they claimed to participate is formally organized and registered. The interviewees claimed to have active participation in decision making. Some stated that they have already received benefits for participating in this entity, others did not receive any. Some of the benefits mentioned by the interviewees are related to the acquisition of land, own house, running water, and agricultural machinery, help with planting and harvesting, electricity, training, among others.

The following statement presents the relevance of associations and associativism:

More recently, an independent line of research has reinforced the idea that associativism is a necessary precondition for democratic government. Synthesizing the results of case studies on development in the Third World, Milton Esman and Norman Uphoff conclude that local associations play a crucial role in successful rural development strategies (PUTNAM, 2006, p. 104).

Rural development is inseparable from family farming. Associations are one of the ways to strengthen rural development. Although the survey participants claim to contribute in some way with some benefit to the association, not everyone has already received some benefit from the association or group they participate. Collective involvement, despite the benefits not perceived by everyone, indicates the pertinence of the presence of social capital present in civic communities. For Putnam (2006, p.124): "it is said that in the civic community, citizens behave correctly with each other and expect to receive the same treatment in return".

In the research, this was evident, considering that when asked about issues of close relationships with each other, friendship and reasonable proximity were identified among the participants. The predisposition to collective involvement is a trait of social capital. In the testimonies, characteristics present in the social capital can be seen:

I help people because I think that human beings were born to help each other, it's a conception that we have that we are helping others, we are helping ourselves, we end up receiving a reward, sometimes it may not be of that person, but of others (Farmer 1).

A predisposition towards voluntary actions can be observed, therefore, volunteering is present in the community, which is a positive evidence of social capital. Something similar can also be noticed in the speech of farmer 2: "That the situation, I always think about tomorrow, you know? I think if today you ask for help, tomorrow it could be me". These are the rewards or retributions present in the rules of reciprocity highlighted by Putnam (2006):

Generalized reciprocity refers to a continuous exchange relationship that at any time presents imbalance or lack of

correspondence, but which presupposes mutual expectations that a favor granted today will be repaid in the future (PUTNAM, 2006, p. 181).

The reciprocity is an important variable for the capital. It is often present in the community, but what draws attention is the strong belief in the speech of farmers, which shows that are focused and identified with the interests of the group, the collective interests.

### **Confidence and Solidarity category**

When asked about the relationships of trust, all farmers stated that they trust their families, community residents and other farmers in the municipality. However, some affirm that they do not trust fully. For Putnam, "social capital refers to characteristics of social organization, such as trust, norms and systems, which contribute to increasing the efficiency of society, facilitating coordinated actions" (PUTNAM, 2006, p.177). These coordinates can happen through a network of relationships that develop through interactions with the proximity and trust present in relationships between people. The emergence of these networks of relationships leads to an alignment in defense of the common interests of a community.

When asked if they trusted their family members, they all said they trusted them very consistently, as shown in statement of farmer 1: "when we're in trouble, it's the family that's on our side". It is reaffirmed by farmer 6: "I'm sure that if I need help, they will not leave me, never." The statements of farmers corroborate Putnam, by indicating that "family ties play a special role in solving dilemmas of collective action" (Putnam, 2006, p. 184). The family environment corresponds to a support reference.

With regard to questions about the confidence in the residents, community and farmers of the municipality were also obtained results that show characteristics of social capital, as said by farmer 4 about the confidence in the residents of the community: "They never demonstrated anything that undermines their credibility". The trust guides the relationship between people and contributes to the success or failure of social relationships, depending on its intensity. The trust between the farmers participating in the research is intense. This finding is supported by testimonies such as the one from the farmer 1. When asked why he says, "Because it is a honest people, they do not lie, I think they are sincere. The idea is confirmed by the words of farmer 4: "Because they are good character people".

This trust can also be related to the role and performance of each citizen in society, as for Putnam: "the awareness that each has roles and duties as citizens, combined with the commitment to political equality, constitutes the cultural cement of the civic community" (PUTNAM, 2006, p. 192). A civic community is a place in which there is the presence of social balance with good levels of cooperation, trust, reciprocity, civility and collective well-being (PUTNAM, 2006).

Regarding the relationship between family farmers in the municipality, it was found in the results, according to the opinion of the interviewees, a good level of relationship, as most pointed to a pleasant relationship, although some considered that it is not very good nowadays.

These aspects are considered essential because they are elements such as relationship networks, social interactions that lead to social relationships, as for Putnam (2006, p.178): "the chain of social relationships allows transmitting and spreading trust: I trust in you because I trust it, and it assures me that it trusts you".

In the aspects related to trust in the government and in local leadership, the results showed negative characteristics in relation to social capital, as most of them demonstrated that they did not believe in politicians. Thus, 8 farmers said they do not believe, while only 3 believe, as shown in the words of farmer 7: "They come here and talk a lot but after the election they just don't visit us and if they see us around, they pretend not to see."

The lack of credibility in the political class and in the respective political leaders may be a consequence of the lack of support, or insufficient support from governments in all spheres of government for family farming. It was realized in the statements of farmers what they have achieved for the community was the result of collective action through association and part of that support came from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as CARITAS, Catholic Church, Union, among other entities of this type.



For local development, this discrediting of politicians and administrations can be considered worrying, since the State is responsible for a good part of the essential services that the community needs, as well as for others that may supplement its needs. What can be seen is that those who would be likely holders of that political capital in the city are in discredit in relation to the research participant group.

### Collective action and cooperation category

In this dimension, it is necessary to understand two fundamental aspects. First, voluntary cooperation depends on social capital. According to the principles of reciprocity and civic participation systems, they encourage cooperation and trust, as they contribute to reducing uncertainty and the desire to transgress (PUTNAM, 2006).

It was found that among the interviewees, all had participated or still participate in community activities. In the community are carried out some activities such as task forces, held from one to four times a month depending on the time of year. It was cited by interviewees other community activities such as the planting of seedlings and fairs. And there are also activities of the collective effort in work with temporary crops such as the planting of rice, corn, beans, cassava, and others.

This predisposition to voluntary work through collective activities may be evidence that social capital is productive:

Coleman carried out an analysis of social capital from the economic and sociological angles, to transpose the concept of rationality from economics to sociology. In his view, rational action combined with social capital would make social action possible. The author indicates that, like other forms of capital, social capital is productive, as it allows reaching certain goals that would not be achieved without its presence, unlike other forms of capital (MATOS, 2009, p. 37).

The assertion that social capital facilitates the achievement of some goals, which, without it, would possibly lead to difficulties, can be evidenced in the testimonies of farmers in the community. The farmers stated that they had some requirements met and that they provided benefits to the community, as they were carried out on behalf of the association. These requirements were aligned to common goals. Because of this, the community acquired agricultural machinery, an artesian well, the construction of popular houses for the residents, seeds for planting, among other benefits. It is in this way, the social capital becomes productive, as it contributes to obtaining benefits collectively, unfeasible only with individual action. This is the understanding of Abramovay (2000) when declaring that social capital can also be seen as productive capital, and thus, social structures are considered as resources.

It is considered that the ability to cooperate voluntarily in the community is consistent. When asked if they would help to carry out collective goals in the community, all stated that they would contribute. Regarding their opinion about the possibility of other farmers helping in the achievement of collective objectives, the interviewees said that other residents would help. It is noteworthy that some declared that not all would help, but that a good part would.

Considering this point of view, it is highlighted that one of the most important aspects is the trust present in the statements, as, according to Putnam (2006, p.180): “trust promotes cooperation. The higher the level of trust in a community, the more likely there is to be cooperation. And cooperation itself generates trust”.

This degree of trust, the willingness to cooperate and voluntarily to help actions in the community is very well evidenced when asked if they would help in a project in which they were not benefited. Among 11 farmers interviewed, only 1 would not help. All the others said they would help.

When asked why they would help, some answered that people must to help each other. Farmer 1 replied: “That’s the ways it is, not everyone is being part of the project”. The farmer 4 affirms that although he did not receive the benefit directly, he would be indirectly favored, since the benefit arriving for some it would also benefit others. As he reported:

Not directly, but indirectly it helps me, right... I can have my results. Because if... let's say, a person has a milk cow, and I don't participate in the milk cow project, but I can buy this

milk. I don't need to buy in the city; I can buy it here (Farmer 4).

The report of the farmer 4 demonstrates the level of motivation and involvement experienced among farmers in the community. It demonstrates the commitment to everyone and to the objectives of the community reaffirmed through the guidelines defined by the community association.

According to Matos (2009), this participation is essential for the community:

Political participation aims to engage individuals and groups in debates and conversations that seek to directly influence government action, with regard to the formulation of public policies or the selection (appointment) of representatives or managers responsible for implementing such policies (MATOS, 2009, p. 99).

All interviewees consider the participation of family farmers in political activities related to local or regional development to be important and good, however they pointed out that it needs to improve; as farmer 1 says: "I believe there is still a long way for us to participate in these aspects. We participate but we are not so confident. I think the community would need to be more participative in this aspect". It can be seen that there is the will or motivation among farmers to participate in collective action. There is aware that this participation is necessary for them to have greater access to benefits, including those provided by government entities.

### Information and communication category

Communication is essential for the formation of social capital. First, it is through communication that information is accessed. Second, it is through communication that social interaction takes place, social relationships, or networks of social relationships are reached, or otherwise, they need communication to develop in the community or between communities, anyway, in society. However, the communication we are talking about is not just an ordinary type of communication; it is a communication that brings with it a commitment to common interests of the community, with the public good:

The existence of communication is a necessary factor for the creation of social capital, but it is not sufficient. Social capital is the product of a particular type of communication: only communication committed to the collective interest (in origin) and public benefit (as a goal), which presupposes accessibility, participation, negotiation, universal and joint taking decisions (as procedural rules) and implying openness, transparency, visibility, free expression, respect for pluralism and interactivity (as deontological norms) can generate social capital (MATOS, 2009, p. 131).

Communication, according to Matos, corresponds to the interests of the community. In the researched community, it was noticed that there is this type of communication between the residents, as it was possible to observe the concern with the community's problems of alignment with the community. Decisions are taken together through communication established between everyone, but through association.

Internet was mentioned as the primary and most used means of communication in the community. Second, they cited the telephone and verbal communication directly with people. Also with regard to access to information in general and access to government action of information, the internet is first place as most used group, followed the television. The same means are used to access information on prices of crop and other products, but in this case, they also have access to this information through cooperatives and at fairs.

The use of digital communication produces another alternative of contact between community members, for a space of engagement able to overcome the barriers of time and space:

Leading to new forms of community, the internet would provide a meeting space for people with common interests,

regardless of notions such as location, time, economic status, religion and race. Thus, the disengagement noted by Putnam could be before, only the migration of engagement, physical and traditional communities to virtual communities and new molds (MATOS, 2009, p. 137).

It is observed that the use of virtual communication is associated with the maintenance of direct contacts, such as the habit of visiting and receiving visits in their homes. When asking how many times they are visited per month, 7 of the farmers answered around 20 times, 2 said around 10 times, 1 around twice, and 1 around 7 times. Regarding visiting other people in their homes, 4 responded around 20/26 times a month, 4 around 10/15 times and 3 around 1/5 times.

These personal interactions provide a significant gain in confidence among research participants, because this way of interacting through a direct approach is considered an economical and safe way to acquire information about the reliability of people, of the actors involved (PUTNAM, 2006).

### **Cohesion and social inclusion category**

The community is predisposed to meet, both among residents and among family farmers, considering the responses of all interviewees. They also stated that the community is considered peaceful and declared that they have not suffered any type of violence in the last 12 months preceding the survey. When asked about why consider peaceful community, said they live in peace and unity, which can also be explained to the deponents of collective observation of the Community rules:

In our case, we don't deal with bars and there are very few parties, so we like this kind of relationship with people who don't practice these things, we are peaceful. The objective here is not to have a bar, you know? (Farmer 4).

Some residents stated that since the beginning of the formation of the settlement community, it was agreed that the establishment of commercial business for the sale of alcoholic beverages would not be accepted. This determination made jointly with all farmers in the community, in consultation through a vote, is maintained. But there is a party club for scheduled events, including some parties throughout the year.

In the same way, farmer 7 also says: "I can tell you... in a community that doesn't have a bar; you already know that there is less violence there." Still in the words of farmer 9: "There is no bar here. Have you seen any bar here? There is no bar here. We have problems, but we are not intrigued."

In the testimony is evident predisposed to the observation of rules and regulations, a relevant factor to social capital present in communities that appraise civic values. Valuing rules, norms and laws, as well as honesty and trust are the pillars of the definitions of civic virtue (PUTNAM, 2006). Putnam highlights the relevance of civism for development:

Civility is so closely related to institutional performance and regional development that it is statistically difficult to distinguish between the three, even though, marginally, civics is the greatest determinant of life satisfaction by all (PUTNAM, 2006, p. 127).

### **Empowerment and political action**

When each farmer was asked about the power to make decisions that could change their lives, most answered yes, however, two responded negatively. In the interview with one of the farmers, it was evident that despite being settled, planting and living there in that community, they are still fighting for their piece of land. In the report of farmer 10, even responding that he has the power to make decisions, he presents indignation: "I think I do. I just need to get the document from my land then I change my bad life for good." The aforementioned farmer, who has lived and worked in that land for over twenty years, reported the struggle for land documentation. He indicated that at that time the signature of a representative of the local administration was still needed for the federal

government, through the National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform (INCRA), to issue the deeds for the land area of each settler.

Participants indicated their desire for the community in which they live to become a better place. Many of them reported that it would be a dream, others said that they would feel more valued and motivated, as farmer 9 demonstrated: "The impact of not accepting being as small as I am."

Regarding the process of choosing their political representatives, all claimed to have voted in the last elections, even though they did not believe in politicians and political leaders, they voted. When asked why they voted, they proved to be politically aware and also hopeful that change will happen to improve people's lives through politics. Farmer 1 reported: "I believe we need people to govern our country. We need the policy. I have to exercise my citizenship." Or, farmer 3: "Because I believe that someone will get there and make the difference."

Although the words were different, they deal with the right to exercise citizenship, expressed in the vote as the exercise of citizenship. In other questions, they shown interest or political issues, as well as to participate in the government, what is lacking is the opportunity or space. These reports reinforce the evidence of the existence of social capital in the community, as they refer to the ideals intended by civic communities in which social capital is present. For Putnam (2006):

Such a community will be all the more civic the closer politics gets to the ideal of political equality among citizens who follow the rules of reciprocity and participation of the government (PUTNAM, 2006, p. 102).

Political awareness was analyzed through responses about the possibility of voting for a candidate who was not of the same ethnicity, race or locality. In the responses, they showed concern with the proposals, the projects and the management. Therefore, this concern is evident in the explanations of farmer 1: "I vote for projects and not for the person." Or in the words of farmer 6: "I vote more for the person's knowledge and character". And also in the report of farmer 9: "I try to know the history of the person in charge."

Thus, even the majority believing that political leaders are not honest and disregard the concerns of citizens when making their management decisions, they believe have chosen their political representatives responsibly and have hope of changing their lives for the better through politics. This can be explained by the fact that they participate in the community association and believe in reaching the public interest objectives through the choice of representatives. As a matter of fact, the associations perform this function of motivation very well to participate in this political process and even to improve it. In this regard, Putnam makes the following statement:

Civil associations are said to contribute to the effectiveness and stability of democratic government, not only because of their 'internal' effects on the individual, but also because of their 'external' effects on society (PUTNAM, 2006, p. 103).

Community residents usually submit applications to the government and local political leaders, the majority reported that some applications were made and whenever they need to be done. According to most of the interviewed farmers, part of the requirements was met and the problems solved.

## Final considerations

Family farming is carried out under conditions different from those related to agribusiness. The capacity for articulation and action is fundamental for family farmers to raise adequate conditions to overcome economic and social adversities. Among the resources able to promote the articulation capacity of family farmers is social capital.

Research carried out in the community of a settlement localized in São Raimundo das Mangabeiras, demonstrated by the profile of the farmers of this community, that family farming can move forward and achieve good results in the community and probably in the city, as the presence of social capital. There was willingness for collective organization and collaboration among the settlers. The community features corresponding to the presence of social capital in a high degree.

The results show that everyone participates in the community association and some participate in other groups and associations; decisions are usually taken in meetings, some with conducting meetings between members; all claimed to trust other family farmers; most do not trust people who are part of the government and local leaders, representing around 60% of interviewees; all claimed to have participated or still participate in community activities; the majority said that

there is cooperation between family farmers in the community; all stated that the internet is the main means of communication used; all consider the aptitude or willingness or degree of closeness between people in the community to be good; with regard to the degree of honesty of people who are part of the municipal government, local politics and local leaders, the majority said that they do not consider them totally honest.

In this way, farmers demonstrated that the support of government entities is insufficient. They demonstrated trust and believe in the residents and farmers of the community and the family farmers of the municipality, but showed a dissatisfaction and distrust in government and local political leaders, for not found space or support in government administrations.

The results also show that through collective action, family farmers have achieved gains for the community, which are not feasible with individual actions. Thus, it is highlighted that associativism and/or cooperativism can be an alternative for the strengthening of family farming. The presence of social capital in a high degree is related to obtaining better results in family farming, possibly through associations that can improve relations between all the actors involved and facilitate the achievement of benefits for the communities of family farmers.

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