The Organization of Associativism in the Cities of Natal and Mossoró (RN)[1]

A Organização do Associativismo nas Cidades de Natal e Mossoró (RN)

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Abstract: The aim of this study is to analyze the organization of associations in the two largest cities of Rio Grande do Norte - Natal and Mossoró in Brazil, observing their origin and development taking into account each local context. Methodologically, data from the Map of organizations and civil society (Ipea, 2018) were used, which were categorized based on the typology of Luchmamn (2016). The first step was to carry out a mapping of associations in both cities, identifying the most socially organized neighborhoods. Then, as fundamental elements to understand the local political culture, it is pointed out how the associations and the respective areas of activity are organized based on the selected typology.

Keywords: Associativism; Civil Society Organizations; Political Culture.

Resumo: O artigo objetiva analisar a organização do associativismo nas duas maiores cidades do Rio Grande do Norte - Natal e Mossoró, observando sua origem e desenvolvimento a partir de cada contexto local. Metodologicamente, foram utilizados dados do Mapa das organizações e da sociedade civil (Ipea, 2018), os quais foram categorizados a partir da tipologia de Luchmamn (2016). O primeiro passo foi a realização de um mapeamento das associações nas duas cidades, identificando-se os bairros mais organizados socialmente. Em seguida, como elementos fundamentais para entender a cultura política local, aponta-se como estão organizadas as associações e as respectivas áreas de atuação a partir da tipologia selecionada.

Palavras-chave: Associativismo; Organizações da Sociedade Civil; Cultura Política.

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1. Introduction

Citizen participation has been seen as something indispensable in the exercise of citizenship. This relationship has been studied too much in recent years. It was believed that the act of participating was the founding pillar in the process of formulating and implementing public policies. The perspective was to foster a democratic culture in Brazilian public spaces, allowing for a plurality of visions, transparency, and recognition of rights.

Even in a political culture marked by vertical forms of political organization, resulting from a process of socio-historical formation built on the basis of bossism, clientelism, physiologism and corruption, advances about perception of participation in the consolidation of Brazilian democracy are undeniable. Authors argue that "social participation has been one of the stars of Brazilian democratization" (Avritzer, 2016; Dagnino, 2002).

Democracy in its broadest ideals requires active citizens who exercise political and social rights through participation, whether through collective or individual actions, support or pressure. When these actions grow in scope, depth and social development, they embody the principle of participation as learning, as it enables the individual in attitudes of cooperation and political commitment. Involvement and participation in microspheres of social life expands one`s ability to perceive the political sphere. This means that it fosters essential functions for the maintenance of a democratic political culture (Pateman, 1992).

These participation channels can be associations that: "are spaces or instruments that qualify the participation of individuals as citizens, a true democratic essence. Associations provide information, contribute to the creation of spaces for participation, empower individuals for a more active and qualified performance with participatory institutions" (Lüchmann, 2016, p.33-34).

Associative vibrancy is one of the main premises of vital democracy and effective civic engagement. The willingness to participate in associations instills in its member's relationships based on reciprocity, trust, public spirit, and political participation. Furthermore, it encourages actions that aim to be part or take part in something, in an attempt to assert itself in front of someone, overcome someone, solve a problem or postulate the possession of goods and rights, changing their distribution.

Participatory practice fuels the civic commitment of society by projecting the individual as a subject who bears values, interests, aspirations, and rights: thus building a citizen identity, as well as citizen habits and values. It is a way of selecting or influencing governments, of exercising political and social rights, of support or pressure. In addition, it contributes to the effectiveness and stability of a democratic government.

Recognizing the importance of associations, this study aims to analyze the organization of associations in the two largest cities in Rio Grande do Norte - Natal and Mossoró, observing their origin and development taking into account each local context. Methodologically, data from the Map of organizations and civil society (Ipea, 2018) were used, which were categorized based on the typology of Luchmann (2016). The first step was to carry out a mapping of the associations in the two cities, showing the foundation period, as well as the areas in which they operate, from the Ipea bank.

It is important to highlight the difficulties and limits in obtaining data on associativism in the database used. Associations are broadly classified by the on the database, allowing organizations with different roles and missions to coexist within the same area. Therefore, it is important to recognize the complex nature of the chosen object.

Thus, understanding that the categorization presented by Ipea does not reveal the specificities of social organizations, we feel the need to approach such categorization using Luchmann's typology, which divides organizations into: 1) community and assistance associations; 2) economic and professional associations; 3) cultural, sports and leisure associations; 4) new social movements; 5) academic and research associations; 6) others (specific or unspecified causes). The work also tried to identify the most socially organized neighborhoods, then, trying to verify how they are organized and which are their areas of activity, fundamental elements to understand the local political culture.

Data collection was organized with the following dynamics: a) name of associations, date of foundation, address, area of activity classified by Ipea. These data were complemented with information collected on the website of the Map of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), with data from CSOs throughout Brazil; b) Categorization based on Lüchmann's typology (2016): community/welfare associations: community, educational and health-related associations; groups linked to mutual aid, philanthropy and assistance, groups linked to religion and religiosity; identity / new associativism: ethnic and cultural minority groups, environmental and ecological associations, associations linked to women's causes; human rights and citizenship groups; economic and

professional defense associativism: unions, employers' or business associations; Professional Associations; associativism linked to culture: cultural associations.

Community associations were highlighted in our analysis, as we understand that they are an important segment in the organizational history of the two cities.

The relevance of the study is to understand the diversity of associations that work in both cities and their role in local political culture. For future studies, we verified the need to create a new typology to contemplate the complexity and particularities of the associations worked in the research.

From a theoretical perspective, the research will be anchored in the discussions on participation, political culture and social capital.

2. Participation, associativism and social capital

The creation of participatory spaces, community movements, associations, councils, parties, trade unions, political and religious meetings are important in the consolidation of more democratic societies (Gohn, 2001; Putnam, 2006; Lüchmann, 2016; Dagnino, 2002; Avritzer, 2016), because in addition to being spaces of stimulus to collective coexistence, they are also promoters of the empowerment that these spaces develop in strengthening the struggle against the governmental agenda and social control in relation to the spheres of power.

Trust, cooperation, civic engagement can appear as virtues caused by participation in the public spirit, as well as a way of facing the demands of excluded groups or on the margins of the political process. Drawing upon Putnam's (2006) perspective, the difference of a civic or non-civic community relies in the fact that the citizens of the former are collectively involved in the public spirit, which directly reflects in the management of public policies. In less civic scenarios, citizens are passive to political dynamics.

Feeling freedom and identity in these associations allows the creation of the pedagogical learning promoted by participation, reorienting individualistic choices and positions to collective and public aspects (Patenam, 1992; Lüchmann, 2016). There is no completed and consolidated process of participation, because the understanding is that it must be conquered constantly. It is a project of democratic continuum, which should not be seen as a gift, concession and something preexisting (Demo, 1996)

However, it is relevant to point out that the degree of participation depends, above all, on the level of social capital of a society. Using Putnam's (2006) theoretical-

methodological concept, he understands social capital as a set of elements of social organization, such as networks, norms, and social trust, which facilitate coordination and cooperation for the collective benefit. In other words, the social capital says respect the characteristics of the social organization, as confidence, norms and systems, that contribute to increase the efficiency of the society, facilitating the coordinate actions. The accumulation of social capital encourages participation in the process and maintenance of voluntary, state and interpersonal networks that form the civic community. Thus, there is the thesis that a society's civic culture can act positively on institutions and society as a whole. In other words, social capital has become a good indicator of the democracy of a country, region and locality

One of the elements considered important for Putnam (2006) regarding the quantum of social capital of a society is the level of associativism. The author believes that the high density of associations and the existence of reciprocal social relations are important elements for a latent democracy and an effective civic engagement. Participating in associations awakens in its members values that contribute to the effectiveness and stability of a democratic government. In other words, the direct benefits of participating in associations go beyond the nature and purposes of the organization itself, expanding to broader social and political objectives.

According to the Tocquevillian framework, associations can be understood as a voluntary union of individuals who form non-profit civil associations, in order to seek better visibility for their struggles. In this sense, for Lüchmann (2016, p. 50):

> [...] associations are the central actors of civil society and responsible for publicizing and problematizing social demands and problems. Associations and social movements promote democratic legitimacy by feeding the debates and measures taken by political institutions and they trigger political engagement and activism, exercising activities of a propositional or contesting basis, problematizing power relations and social injustices.

Despite being created by varied interests and objectives, associations tend to mobilize, inform and engage individuals from socially vulnerable places. They exert pressure for social and political changes, adding individuals who never had the opportunity to participate actively in favor of their struggles. For Lüchmann (2016), associations are spaces that help management to deal with the range of complex social problems.

In Brazil in the 1970s and 1980s, the first community-based associations emerged in large urban centers, attributed mainly by popular housing estates. The need was anchored in the collective search for basic infrastructure for the newly built housing units, acting in the search for water, school, paving, transportation and health.

These forms of organization are expanding their scope of social struggles as well as the idea of rights, empowering the discourse in favor of citizenship. Society moves from peaceful and bureaucratic forms of mobilization to act more openly towards the State. Most of these associations were created from the mobilization organized by the church, as a result of the restructuring of the left-wing in the country (Avritzer, 2016).

Even recognizing the particularities in configuration, proposals, and objectives, the associations tend to publicize problems with the public power, demand public policies, mediate conflicts and promote struggles in favor of marginalized groups. However, the context to which they belong will be important in the perspective of outlining their field of action. Therefore, scholars of the theme, reiterate the need to analyze these spaces and what responses they generate in the places where they are inserted.

By political culture, Diamond (1993, p.8) claims to be a "[...] set of beliefs, attitudes, values, ideals, feelings, and valuations that predominate among citizens, regarding the political system of their country and the role they play in that system". Democratic institutions influence the quality and level of local political culture.

Still, for the author, the legitimacy of democracy is achieved provided that civic values are universalized, through habit and routine, to the point that the actors have internalized the rules of the democratic game even if intuitively, which further reinforces the importance of associations for political culture. The apprehension of a society's political culture necessarily passes through its history, the way of life of its people, the dominant cultural standards and, above all, the political experience of the members of the civic community. We recognize that part of the answers can be found in the struggles, changes and goals of the associations.

3. Mossoró: associativism and local political culture

Mossoró is a city located in the west of Rio Grande do Norte, and according to the population count of IBGE (2019) the city has about 294.076 inhabitants, of which 90% of the population is concentrated in its urban area. It is located between two capitals,

Natal and Fortaleza, that are connected by BR-304. Mossoró is one of the main cities in the northeastern interior, resulting in intense growth, both economical and infrastructural. Growth that is stimulated by salt and petroleum industry, making the city one of the largest producer in both areas around the country (Rocha, 2005). The city also concentrates a considerable resource on the communication system. In addition to newspapers and magazines, there are cable and open TV channels that cover the region.

However, the city is constantly highlighted by its political trajectory. The history of local political culture in Mossoró is intertwined with that of the Northeast region as a whole, since the elements of patrimonialism, bossism, clientelism and coronelismo (Brazilian term used to refer to the rural oligarchies headed by rich landowners) are mixed in the socio-political and economic aspects of the city. It is almost impossible to speak of these perspectives without referring to local oligarchic families, which reproduce their elements in the economic, local, educational, cultural and public spaces as a whole, strategic means for the perpetuation of their power (Lemuel, 2004, 2001; Lucas, 2001).

The city does not have a solidified social organization in its history, it does not have a great tradition in social movements. Political relations in the city have always been marked by verticalism and centralization of power and a situation of alienation from the population in relation to ways of solving the city's problems (Nascimento, 2009). The traditional Rosado family disseminates its legacy in the most different spaces of the city. "The Rosados used universities, literary collections (Mossoroense Collection), civic parties and even the urban space as a strategy to consolidate their political strength" (Nascimento, 2009, p.63).

Silva (2004 apud Nascimento, 2009) shows that the oligarchization of power in Mossoró occurs between the Old Republic and the implantation of the Estado Novo (dictatorial period in Brazil during the rule of President Getúlio Vargas) due, mainly, to two factors: the good financial situation acquired with the successful businesses, mainly of the gypsum and the image of men prepared for politics, built from this business success (Felipe, 2001).

The very dynamics caused by agro-industrial activities made it possible to offer services that were fundamental for the perpetuation of political clientelism that is not concentrated in rural but in urban strongholds. This domain is spreading strongly to this day, and even with the process of urbanization and modernization of the city, the opposition movements have shown themselves to be incipient in an attempt to minimize

the powers of local oligarchies (Lucas, 2001; Felipe, 2001). Proof of this is the fact that the family in question has already traveled through almost all political positions: senate, state and municipal executive, in addition to the federal, state, municipal legislature.

The forms of local political organizations did not prove to be a strong alternative to local politics (Nascimento, 2009). The struggles of neighborhoods in the city, for example, accompanied the city's expansion process, mainly seeking improvements in basic urban infrastructure, but which was linked to clientelism in relation to the Rosado family (Queiroz, 2012, 2017).

The very emergence of local organizations in the city points to years when there was an intense mobilization orchestrated by the State itself. They were actions with the discourse of participation, but with the same political practices, this because the little expressiveness of new social movements in the region and the civil social fragility allowed political actors that dominated during the military regime to remain in power (Costa, 1996 apud Nascimento, 2009). The very approximation between government and participatory channels provided in the 1988 Constitution was not sufficient to delegitimize the political power of the Rosado family (Lima, 2006). Quite the contrary, the family has resignified itself (Costa, 1996).

So as to verify when the greatest mobilization took place in the city, the figure 01 shows the foundation of associations over the years, according to the data provided by the "Map of organizations and civil society" (Ipea, 2018):

Figure 1: Number of social organizations per year of foundation in Mossoró
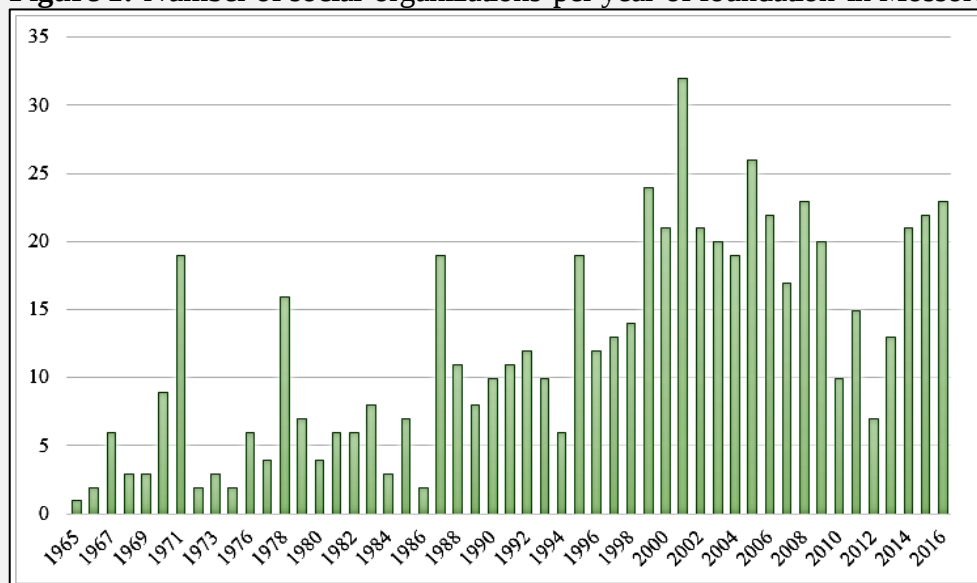
Source: CNPJ/SRF/MF 2016, OSC Representative, RAIS/MTE, OSCIP/MJ.

The data show that, in Mossoró, there was no constant growth in the number of associations, which portrayed a political culture of engagement, but they reveal peaks in certain years, mainly at the beginning of each decade. In Mossoró, of the 620 organizations identified, 19 emerged in 1971. Of these, 18 were linked to churches, but, before that, from 1965 to 1970, there were only 24, of these, 13 were linked directly or indirectly to religious organizations. In 1978, the city also experienced considerable growth (16), but 11 also linked to churches, and in the previous year, there were only 4. In 1985, only one neighborhood organization was created, but from 1986 to 1990, 14 new organizations were created, either in the configuration of councils or neighborhood associations. From the 1990s onwards, with the change in the organizations' situation, since the emergence of NGOs, the area of activities related to the defense of social rights has been highlighted.

The data show that discussions concerning the Brazilian political opening process were important to enable the emergence of organizations, as well as the expansion of housing estates. "Studies seek to present different phases in the trajectory (historical and theoretical) of collective actions in the country, highlighting an increase - and pluralization - of associative practices from the 1970s and, especially, in the 1980s" (Lüchmann, 2016, p.16).

The data also demonstrates that redemocratization was an important scenario for associations. Recently, the institutionalization of politics has given a new guise to the organizational movement in the country. The growth in participation reached its main highest level in the early 2000s, when the PT government (acronym given to a Brazilian political party called the workers' party) introduced in its government priorities the agenda of participation and political openness of its government to a series of demands from social movements, which in addition to the classic agendas health, assistance and housing, debates on human and women's rights were added. In this regard: "Thus, with regard to participation in the Lula and Dilma Rousseff governments, we can safely say that their mechanisms were used more by both governments than in the previous ones, especially in the area of public policies" (Avritzer, 2016, p.60).

As we can see in the figure 02, on the types of organizations that operate in the city of Mossoró, 34% of the entities working in Development and defense of rights and 23% linked to religion were identified. It is also noteworthy the influence of organizations

with a religious configuration, whose notoriety precedes the period of redemocratization, since, historically, it has always been a field of social participation in the country.

Figure 2: Areas of activity of Social Organizations in Mossoró/RN
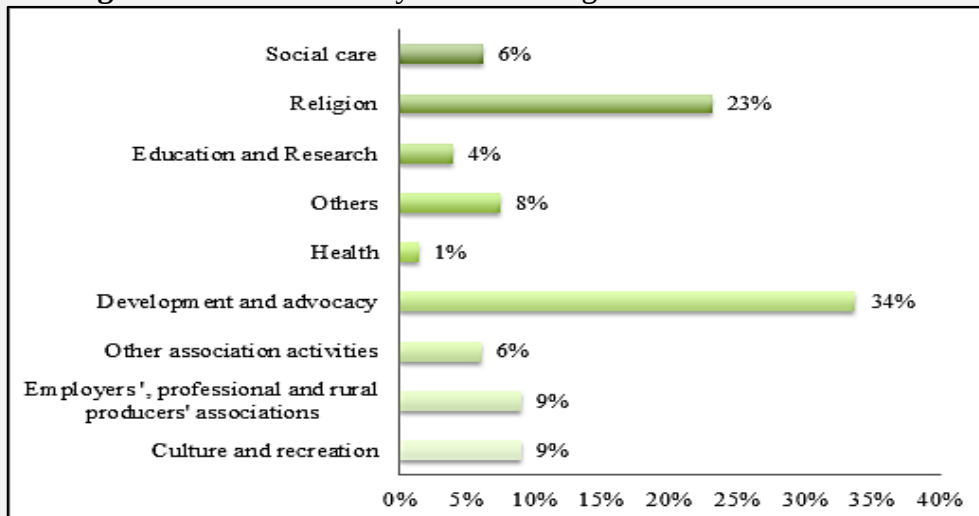
Source: CNES/MS 2017, RAIS/MTE, CNEAS/MDS, CEBAS/MS 2017, CADSOL/MTE 2017, CEBAS/MEC 10/2017, CNEAS/MDS 2017, OSCIP/MJ, CNPJ/SRF/MF 2016, CADSOL/MTE.

Recognizing the limitations of the classification used in the "Map of organizations and civil society" (2018) repository , which tends to aggregate associations of different natures in a few categories, we adopted the typology of Lüchmann (2016) as a way of perceiving in the figure 03, the information reveals that cultural, sports and leisure associations correspond to 11%, community and welfare associations 57%, economic and professional associations 9%, identity - New associations 17%, academic, support and advisory 3% and another 3%.

Figure 3:
Areas of activity of Social Organizations in Mossoró/RN from Lüchmann (2016)
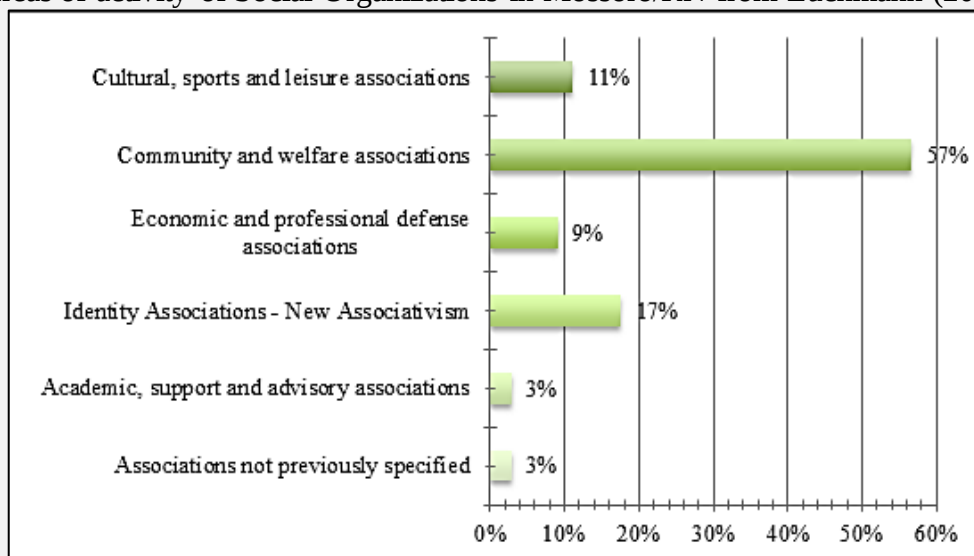
Source: Map of organizations and civil society - IPEA (2018). Own preparation, 2019

The intensive use of participation in favor of a social agenda begins in a more local dimension and reaches a national plan in the Lula government, leaving participation behind, for example, with a struggle addressed to infrastructure (Avritzer, 2016). However, we could not fail to point out that assistance area policies have evolved a lot in the last few years of 2000, mainly as a result of the access of the low-income population to government policies, which has culminated in a growing number of organizations with this focus.

The Millennium Development Goals in 2000, promoted by the UN, in turn, motivated the creation of a commitment amongst developing countries, with the reduction of hunger, poverty, and environmental degradation, health, education, among others.

In order to verify how associations are organized in the neighborhoods of Mossoró, this research sought to identify whether there is fragmentation in the city or concentration in specific places, as a result of processes of particular struggles in the locality. In the graph below, we can see that the rural area and the city center concentrate the largest number of organizations. The neighborhoods with the highest housing density have few records, with the exception of the neighborhood of Santo Antônio, Nova Bethânia and Alto de São Manoel. We can infer, from the data, that there is a concentration of these associations close to the space of greater organization of supply and services in the city, which would be in the center, which reveals a struggle that is not related to a specific space of mobilization, but to the very institutionalized nature. The

rural area has an organization directly related to projects to support rural men, which require institutionalized participation, to receive, for example, resources.

The neighborhoods in question have different characteristics between them. Census data (2010) show that Santo Antônio is among the five largest one's in the city. With a population of 19,107 inhabitants, with a low to medium income configuration, it is recurrently highlighted in the local media as one of the most violent neighborhoods in the city. With 6,426 permanent households in the neighborhood, associations linked to the locality are of a community and welfare nature. Nova Betânia neighborhood is considered one of the noble neighborhoods in the city, with the highest income. The population is 9,701 inhabitants and the associations located in the neighborhood are fragmented into three areas of activity: community and welfare, economic and professional and cultural, sports and leisure. Alto de São Manoel is the largest in size and is among the populous, the neighborhood has 18,336 inhabitants with predominance in the community and welfare area (figure 04).

Figure 4: Social Organizations by neighborhood in Mossoró/RN
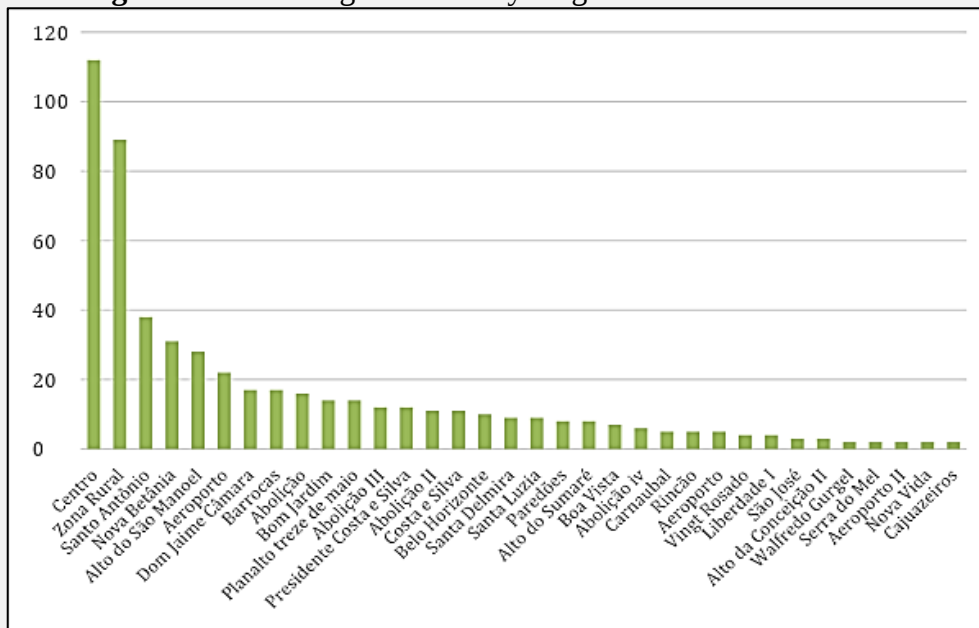
Source: Map of organizations and civil society-IPEA (2018). Own elaboration, 2019.

The fragile organization of society has allowed local governments to anticipate the instrumentalization of local participation. Besides creating, they control, often discouraging autonomous spaces for mobilization and directly interfering in the authenticity of the city's participation mechanisms (Nascimento, 2009), as previously mentioned.

This scenario has the consequence of weakening organizations, which could be used as a space for dialogue between the State and the population. Evidence of this is the lack of data that reinforce the confrontation of these organizations with the State. Neither RN nor the city of Mossoró has had in its history mobilizations that reinforce the civic involvement of its population. According to Queiroz (2017, p. 91):

> (...) the neighborhood movements start from the search for access to the city and its urban infrastructure with requests for access to water and sewage, as well as housing, with the formation of neighborhood associations that articulate with the governments to meet the demands in a true co-optation process, in the sense that there is no opposition to government actions.

In Mossoró the data reveal a diversification of the associations, despite the field marked by the performance of community and welfare associations. We recognize that the typology proposed by Lüchmann (2016) was not sufficient to account for a complex object, which are associations. The very nature, size, and resources create a dangerous scenario for generalizations, as the author herself warned. Therefore, for future work on the city, a new typology is needed, as well as a specific study of the performance of religious associations in the city, due to the expressive number that appears in our research.

4. Natal: Social participation and political culture in the state capital

Natal, capital of Rio Grande do Norte, has a population of 877,640 inhabitants (IBGE, 2018), being the 20th most populous city in the country. Concerning the economic aspect of the city, there is a predominance of the tertiary sector and the public service. Since the 1970s, the growth of secondary and tertiary activities has boosted the city's urbanization process. Textile industry and tourism are major drivers of the local economy.

From a political perspective, Natal is a city without a history of social organization, differently than other northeastern capitals which had in their socio-historical process a struggle associated with its urban expansion (Andrade, 1990).

However, in the 1950s, Natal witnessed a popular political organization that grew in the neighborhoods, encouraged by Mayor Djalma Maranhão. The incentive was the creation of neighborhood professional associations. Also in the 1950s, the Catholic Church in the articulation of the "Movimento Natal", a pioneering movement in Brazil, created actions to serve the poorest populations in the city. The results of this initiative

were the creation of the School of Social Service and radio schools. The Church's action, thus, reached the peripheral neighborhoods of Mãe Luiza, Bom Pastor, Nova Descoberta, Dix-Sept Rosado and others. The creation of Social Centers and other kinds of associations were also the result of that initiative, with adult literacy, vocational and "political education" courses being offered in those places (Andrade, 2006).

However, the popular organization initiative was demobilized when the military government was established nationally. At the state level, Aluízio Alves began the political trajectory of the Alves family in the state, based on oligarchic and clientelistic practices. Another important family in the political trajectory of the state is the Maia family, who conquered their space from the benefits of the military period when they were called to be a political force of the military in the state. The main figures were Tarcísio Maia and José Agripino Maia. The political centralization between the two families even made it difficult for other political leaders to emerge in Rio Grande do Norte.

A new mobilization in the city happened with the arrival of the housing complex in the 1970s. The II National Housing Plan included housing programs within urban policies. Natal, as well as other capitals, was contemplated (Andrade, 1988). In conjunction with the program, there was encouragement of popular participation in the new locations. The proposal was "to promote the 'social integration' of cities through community development" (Guimarães, 2013, p. 76). The intention was to control local participation, since the Brazilian State itself was going through a crisis of legitimation, which required a redefinition of the state role in some sectors, mainly in social policies. "Furthermore, the obligation to introduce "participatory" policies in the state agenda due to the articulation of the funding agencies, which suggested participation as an essential element for the effectiveness of the programs." (Albuquerque, 2010). According to Guimarães (2013, p. 76-77):

> This policy has as its flagship the National Program of Urban Social Centers (PNCSU), developed in Natal, from 1976, as a pioneering experience in the Brazilian context. For years, the target of investments by the leaders of Rio Grande do Norte and more precisely Natal, despite the community participation project implemented through the Urban Social Center (CSU), was only the starting point for a much more aggressive policy by the leaders of the Maia group in the following years. Especially about the people-government relationship aspect, summarized in an intense work of political involvement and manipulation in the neighborhoods, involving community entities.

It is important to emphasize that the support base for the Maia family was strengthened in the neighborhoods based on clientelist policies: the State offers services to the neighborhoods and they thank them in the form of votes. The objective was to strengthen this relationship of state control over neighborhood organizations. Andrade (1989) has already reiterated this state involvement in the organizations when he stated in his studies that they sponsored the emergence of associations, including the financing of leaders and investment resources in order to generate a reliable network of legitimization of their power.

As a reflection of this historically constructed scenario and based on data from Ipea (2018), the current context of associativism in the Potiguar capital is analyzed. Currently, Natal has 2,240 associations, becoming the 35th city in Brazil in quantitative terms. When identifying the years of foundation of the associations in Natal, we verified that the origin of the associations in the city came from the incentive on the part of the government in front of the organizations in the new housing estates. In terms of the associativism growth, the figure 05 shows a peak in the 1970s. More precisely in 1970, 33 were created, however, in the following year, the number was for 104 new organizations.

Figure 5: Number of social organizations per year of foundation in Natal.
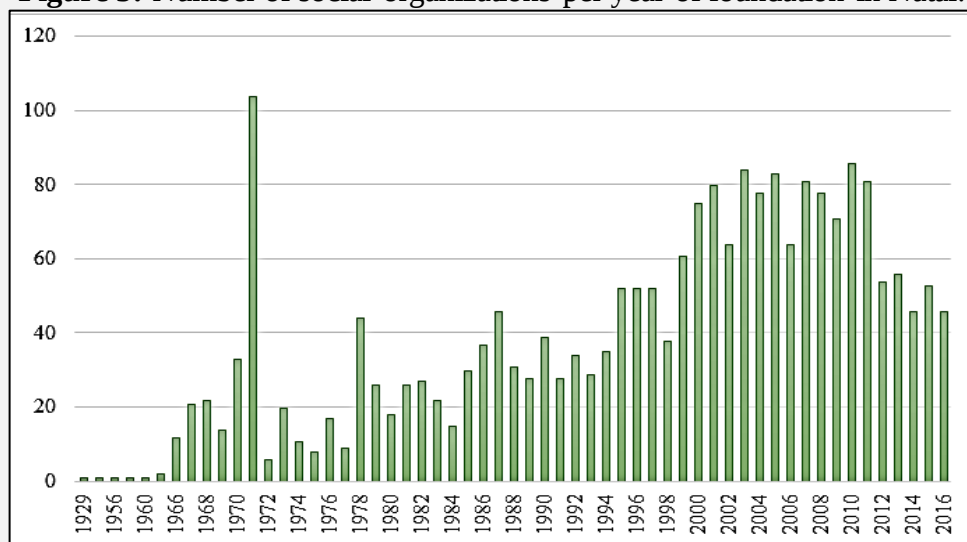
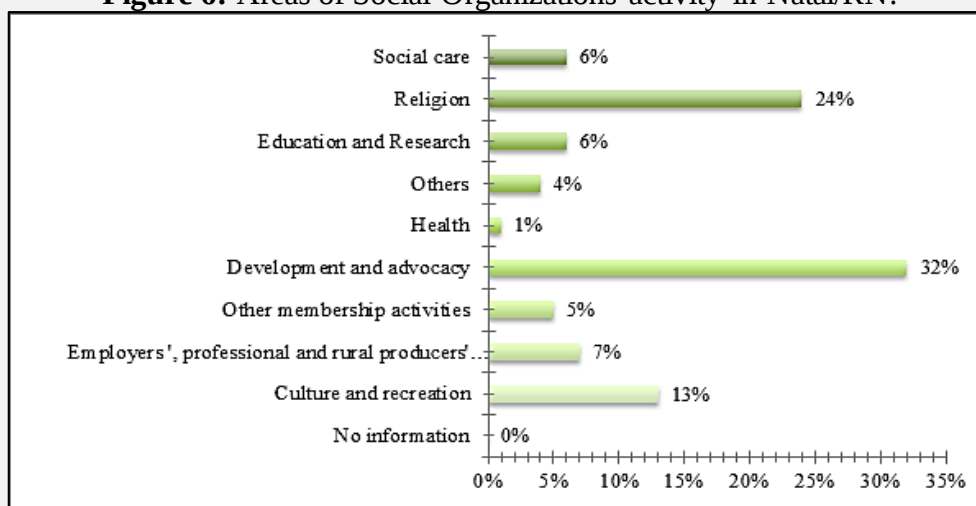**Source:** CNPJ/SRF/MF 2016, OSC Representative, RAIS/MTE, OSCIP/MJ.

The crisis of legitimacy of the military government triggered the emergence of social movements and organizations that operate in a scenario that in addition to political repression, highlighted the very worsening of social issues. In the 2000s, as verified in

Mossoró, changes occurred around participation and urban management in Brazil, which is directly related to the arrival of the PT to the government, a moment in which the movements envisioned in the State a way to guide their agenda, just as the government saw in the movements the possibility of being secure politically.

In other words, there was a redefinition of the way the state relates to organizations. New relations with public policies and other actors were highlighted. (Avritzer, 2016; Abers & Von Bulow, 2011). The Lula administration, due to its profile and openness, made it possible to expand the organization of sectors and segments of organized civil society. Thus, movements and organizations began to influence government policies (Avritzer, 2016).

When analyzed based on data from Ipea (2018), the activities in Natal are verified, acting more on two fronts: in development and defense of rights with 32% and with religious dimensions with 24% (figure 06).

**Figure 6:** Areas of Social Organizations activity in Natal/RN.

Source: Based on LIE/MESP 2017, Census SUAS 08/2017, CSO Representative, RAIS/MTE, CNEAS/MDS, CEBAS/MEC 10/2017, OSCIP/MJ, CNEAS/MDS 2017, CNPJ/SRF/MF 2016, CADSOL/MTE, CNES/MS 2017, CADSOL/MTE 2017, CEBAS/MS 2017.

Religious influence was also very important in the 1970s. The work of the church was related to the performance of the Archdiocese of Natal through the Youth Ministry of the Popular Environment and the Justice and Peace Commission, which also proposed, among others, to organize the community movement (Andrade, 1990, p. 156). In this decade, the churches have also become institutionalized, among the 115 organizations created from 1970 to 1980, 79 are linked to religion.

The area of development and defense of entitlements includes a wide network of oraganizations, but considering the categorization of Ipea (2018) it is not possible to know the details. The changes in the agenda for the struggle of organizations and social movements in the 21st century were centered in the face of new demands: environmental, gender, ethical-rational as well as demands in the very participation in the political-administrative structure (Gohn, 2010).

Using Luchmann (2016) categories, we separate the assistance and community areas of the New Social Movements in order to understand diversity. In the figure 07 we see the predominance of Community and Assistential Associations at 60% over the others.

Figure 7: Areas of Social Organizations activity in Natal/RN from Lüchmann (2016)
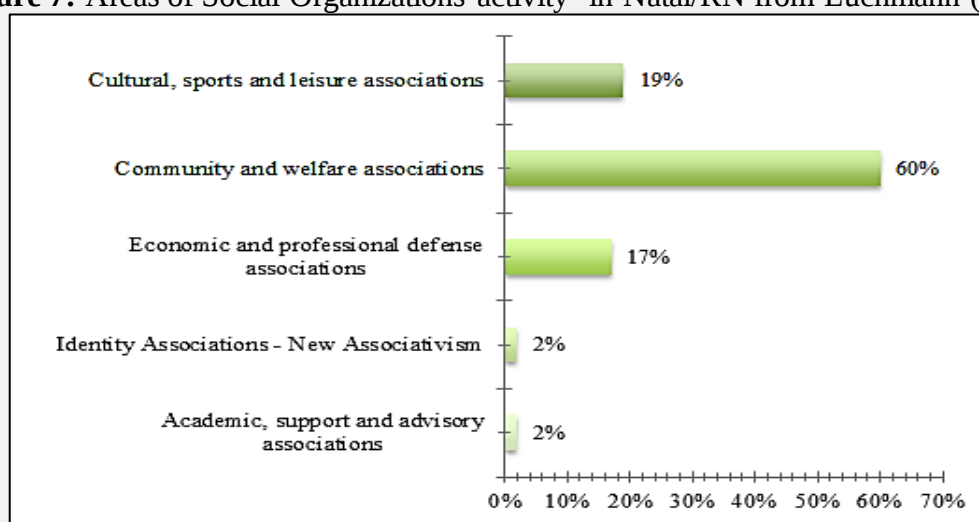
Source: Based on Ipea (2018).

The legacy of community and welfare associations persists in the history of organizations in Natal. Even with the great growth of these in the 2000s, we verify the same predominance of associativism. The insertion of associations and new agendas of struggles were not enough to create bonds of trust between the population and new democratic projects. In fact, the mere existence of democratic institutions is not enough to accustom citizens to the demands of democratic procedures.

Peripheral neighborhoods with their daily problems still suffer a lack of attention from public authorities. Often, community leaders themselves act more at the service of political-electoral exchanges than at the community itself (Albuquerque, 2010). The growth of organizations has not resulted in a local civic engagement that would change the city's history.

For the present work, in order to highlight how organizations operate in the neighborhoods of Natal, we have separated them by administrative zones for methodological purposes. The city of Natal is divided into four administrative zones according to Ordinary Law No. 3,878/89.

The west zone is formed by 10 neighborhoods, with a population of 21,8405 inhabitants, according to the 2010 Census, which corresponds to 27.17% of the population of Natal. It has a monthly income of 0.99, which is even below the municipal average of 1.78. The northern area is the largest of the four areas of the city, its urban expansion started in the 1980s as a result of housing developments as well as informal subdivisions (Prefeitura do Natal, 2009). Consisting of 7 neighborhoods, according to the last census, this area had a population of 303,543 people, corresponding to 37, 77% of the city, with an estimated population in 2017 of 360,122 inhabitants, reinforcing its population dimension. With regard to income, the average is 0.92, with the exception of Salinas neighborhood, which has a lower average (0.46).

The east zone, made up of 12 neighborhoods, has seen a population decrease since 2007. According to the last census (2010), the population was 115,297 inhabitants, with an estimated population in 2017 of 114,649 people, with an average salary of 2.86. Finally, the south zone has 7 neighborhoods, with 166,491 inhabitants and an estimated population, in 2017, of 179,325 inhabitants. It has the highest average monthly income in the city, 3.45 minimum wages, and its initial expansion was also associated with housing developments (Prefeitura do Natal, 2017).

In this survey, we found that the East (39%) and South (33%) zones, besides having neighborhoods with the best social conditions, demonstrating that they are not necessarily the neighborhoods with the greatest needs for public services and the absence of the State in the provision of those that have the greatest number of associations. Community and welfare associations predominate in all regions, reaching 74% in the North and 72% in the West.

The institutionalization of participation, already problematized in this study, has created a profile of organizations that manage public resources, assuming a more technical character in the relationship with the State. Many times, the associations are equipped in a partnership with the State, removing their own mobilizing and autonomous characteristics (figure 08).

Figure 8: Areas of Social Organizations activity in Natal/RN
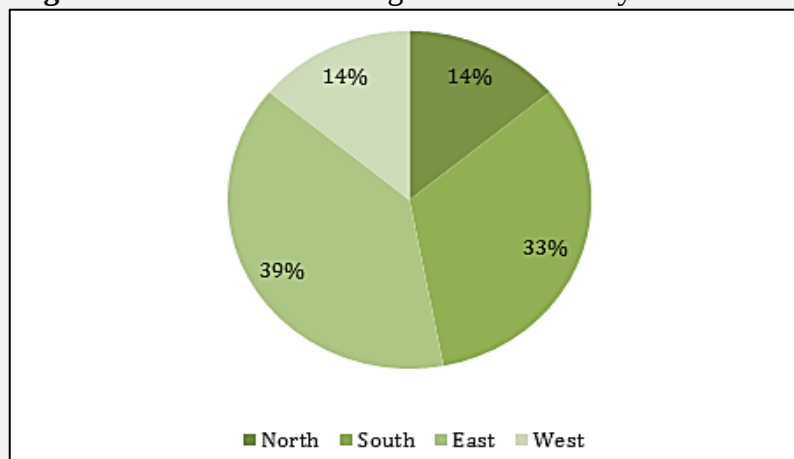
What we realize is that, even with an increase in recent years, experiences and participatory spaces, if they do not show results, end up generating frustration with society. As a result, the furor of the beginning gives way to disenchantment, apathy and even hostility towards democracy.

For future work, we feel the need to monitor these organizations more closely, in order to verify how they organize themselves in a more adverse national political scenario in the development of their activities. In addition to the need to create a new typology that seeks to detail the nature of these.

5. Conclusion

The trajectory of associativism in Mossoró and Natal has increased considerably in recent years, mainly in the assistance and community areas. But, to verify if they are really consistent channels of social participation, it would need a work of qualitative magnitude, since the creation of participative spaces with a pedagogical character is related to social organizations with relative autonomy, capacity for mobilization, rooting and social recognition, which historically the two cities do not have, in view of the great insertion of the State in the local popular organizations.

We recognize in our research that Lüchmann's typology (2016) allows for more detailed analysis, but to understand this complex field that are associations, greater fragmentation in the classification would be necessary. Generalizations can generate hasty inference, therefore, the creation of a typology could help to understand the nature and performance of these with more property in both cities.

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