

THE NEW TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND BRAZILIAN RURAL EXTENSION.

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SUMMARY: This paper seeks to clarify what advantages and potential barriers there are to the development of the new national policy for technical assistance and rural extension, which was initialized by the implementation of National Policy for Technical Assistance and Rural Extension for Family Agriculture and Agrarian Reform (PNATER), through Law 12,188, 11/01/2010. It's found that PNATER surpasses the traditional model of Technical Assistance and Rural Extension (Ater), which is based on transferring of technological packages from the green revolution, by advocating a model of Ater based on the recovery of the countryman's citizenship. Indeed, a brief discussion on the role of non-state entities in this process is made. An evaluation of Ater is also realized according to the 2006 Agricultural Census data, identifying the restrictions on access of Ater policies by poorer and less educated farmers. Thus, this paper proposes that a more careful focus on the activities of Ater can enhance the results by PNATER.

Keywords: Ater, Ater national policy, PNATER, public policy focus, 2006 Agricultural Census.

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INTRODUCTION

Due to the emergence of a new regulatory framework that proposes a new national policy for the activities of Technical Assistance and Rural Extension (Ater) by PNATER and PRONATER, this paper aims to think through on how to implement this new policy on two aspects: first, the participation of private companies and NGOs in the activities of Ater and second, the ministrations of PNATER with the focus on its beneficiaries, based on the findings of the 2006 Census data. Which states that public Ater is poorly focused towards the goals established by the new Brazilian Ater policy.

Thus, this paper begins by introducing PNATER, showing the advances made by the new policy in relation to the Ater that was offered by the State, as well as a discussion on the participation of private companies and NGOs in this process. Then an assessment is made on the focus of public Ater in Brazil through the Census data, showing how the new policy can be seen, regarding the public that will be favored in order for the objectives, set out by PNATER, to be achieved. Finally, the main conclusions are put together.

1.1 The new Law on Technical Assistance and Rural Extension

Law No. 12,188 - 11/01/2010 establishes the National Policy of Technical Assistance and Rural Extension for Family Agriculture and Agrarian Reform (PNATER) and the National Program of Technical Assistance and Rural Extension in Family Agriculture and Agrarian Reform (PRONATER) amending the Act 8666, 21/06/1993. The Decree 7215, 6/15/2010 regulates Law No.12,188. This regulatory framework defines the activity of Ater as service of non-formal education, in continuous process in rural areas that promotes processes of management, production, processing and marketing for activities of agricultural and non agricultural services, including agro-extractive activities, forestry and craft.

The public benefited from the activities of Ater, according to PNATER, are involved in agricultural reform, indigenous peoples, the remnants of Quilombo and other traditional peoples and communities, family farmers and rural family enterprises, foresters, farmers, gatherers and fishermen as well as beneficiaries of settlement programs and irrigation. To prove the quality of beneficiaries, a Declaration of Eligibility will be required from the National Program for Strengthening Family Agriculture (DAP), or the beneficiary should be included in the List of Beneficiary of Land Reform (RB), approved by the Information System of the Land Reform Programme (Sipra).

It is also defined by this regulation that the formulation and oversight of PNATER is a jurisdiction of the Secretary of Family Agriculture (SAF) part of Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA). According to the guidelines of PNATER the allocation of financial resources will prioritize support for organizations and public and official bodies of Ater, however, as required by law, resources may be allocated to hire the services of Ater from private entities and NGOs, without the need for a bidding process.

In practical terms, PNATER rescues the state's responsibility for maintaining the services of Ater, in a public and free way to the beneficiaries, because this policy was discontinued with the demise of EMBRATER in 1990. In this sense, through PNATER, the State once again recognizes Ater as an educational process of information, communication and support for settling and organizing the farmers and settlers of Agrarian Reform. Also, PNATER seeks to make a transition from the traditional activity of Ater, appointed by scholars as diffusionist productivist (Lisita, 2005), to an ecological model-based agriculture with main approach in development of sustainable production systems, compatible with the proper use of natural resources, preserving the environment. For this purpose, PNATER is based on the adoption of a participatory methodology, with multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and intercultural focus, seeking citizenship and democratization of the management of public policy, respecting the knowledge of farmers as valid knowledge (Freire, 1979), allowing the recovery of value of the families in the country. Also, this model Ater promotes equity in relations of gender, generation, race and ethnicity.

Indeed, the model of Ater proposed by PNATER, overcomes the diffusionist model, characterized by the technological packages transferred to farmers, mainly in the 1970s, to an activity model of Ater, that at the same time is able to provide better conditions for production,

and also makes possible the implementation of other public policies necessary not only to improve production, but for the strengthening of citizenship in the field, especially for all beneficiaries of PRONATER.

For PNATER to reach its goals, complex transformations are required in their practical form, the institutions that carry out the management of Ater, the Ater professionals, as well as their form of financing. The current professionals were trained to provide technical assistance in the traditional model. Furthermore, they should also change and be able to act in this new model of Ater, that requires new knowledge and attitude in methodological, technological, socio-environmental and teaching approaches.

The implementation of PNATER also requires a paradigm shift, not only within the rural extension, but also in research and teaching, because they are both still working with a linear logic of S & T, thereby creating difficulties for the guidelines of PNATER to be incorporated. This linear logic has a principle of exclusion, it excludes not only the data, statements and differing ideas, but neither is able to recognize some problems that are within the context of the activity of Ater. It just understands the Ater activity as a matter of efficient productivity. The new Ater, in this sense, will confront and overcome the conventional approach.

Within the context of PNATER, Ater institutions should also be an area of dissemination, coordination and integration of other public policies focused on family farms and rural areas, such as: Food Purchase Program, Harvest Guarantee, Land Credit, redistributions of income (Bolsa Família), Pronaf, Digital Inclusion Program, among others. Accordingly, PNATER will transform the entire public policy directed to the country field.

Despite this set of changes in the Ater model, which is wanted to achieve in Brazil with PNATER, as required under the new law of Ater, there is the possibility that non-governmental institutions provide Ater service through contracts of service. However, the joint action of governmental and nongovernmental institutions in the context of the extension, can create difficulties in coordinating actions to achieve these goals. The private companies, NGOs and other institutions of Ater can hinder the process of change, because the capacity of intervention of government agencies responsible for PNATER is lower in these institutions than in the institutions that belong to the very structure of the state.

Still, it is important to note that the orchestration of a national public policy, that is related to a set of: federal public institutions, private institutions and voluntary sector, is complex due to a set of idiosyncrasies, and also, economic and political interests, which arise under these institutions.

In fact, if the State can not reach the farmers, who are the target group, with quality, through Ater, the hiring of support from non-state institutions to temporarily alleviate this bottleneck is justifiable. However, this temporary solution can not be allowed to become permanent, since the economic dynamics of non-state institutions are not necessarily those of the state, when it comes to public services.

There is no question about the importance of the involvement of non-state institutions interested in offering the services of Ater. The point is that both the coordination and execution of Ater must be under the charge of the State. If this responsibility is outsourced to non-state

institutions, even partially, one can be jeopardizing not only the PNATER, but also, a large number of other social programs for rural areas (cited above), which are somehow related activities of Ater. Because the interests of non-state enterprises are different from the State's objectives.

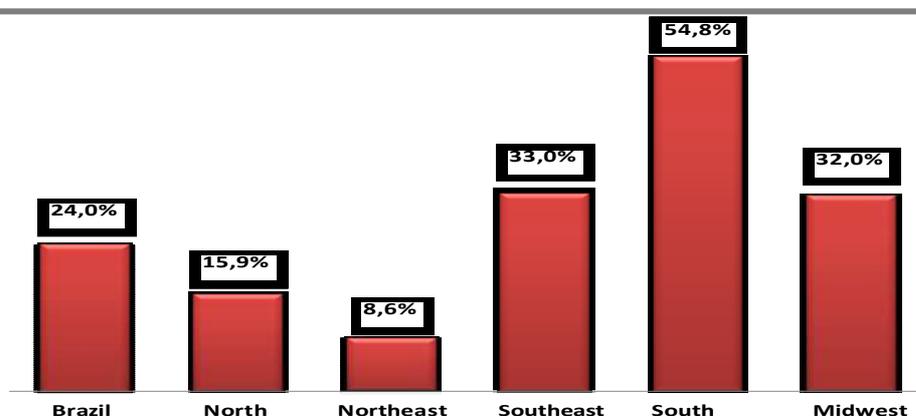
1.2 The Ater in Brazilian agriculture and the issue of focus, according to the 2006 Agricultural Census.

The activities of Ater, according to the 2006 Agricultural Census, were studied with specialized technical guidance and / or assistance for the agricultural establishment, by skilled professionals: agronomists, foresters, veterinarians, animal scientists, agricultural engineers, biologists, agricultural technicians, food technologists and home economists. All this, in order to impart knowledge and guidance to agricultural producers.

Overall, the results of 2006 Agricultural Census put emphasis on the fact that Ater activities are still very limited in Brazil, as it is practiced, on average, in only 24% of establishments nationwide. Also, the distribution of Ater is very uneven. The establishments in the South (54.8%) are the most assisted and the states in the Northeast (8.6%) are least served by Ater institutions (Chart 1). Beyond the geographical segmentation, the 2006 Census data indicate that there is great differentiation of the average size of properties that received Ater (228 Ha), in relation to establishments that did not receive (42 Ha) (IBGE, 2007).

Nationally, according to Table 1, about 40% of the activities of Ater come from the government, being mainly directed to smaller establishments, with an average area of 64 ha (IBGE, 2007). Ater hired by the farmers accounts for 20.1% of establishments. Cooperatives and integrators attended respectively to 18.1% and 12.4% of establishments. The participation of NGOs is negligible in relative terms, they only served less than 1% of establishments, however, in absolute terms they served approximately 6,800 establishments.

Chart 1 - Brazil. Ater activities received by stabilishments in major regions- 2006.



Source: IBGE - Agricultural Census (2006).

Table 1 shows, in percentage, in each major region, which entity provided the services of Ater received by establishments. In the South, the establishments are attended mainly by Ater provided by the government (29%), cooperatives (27%) and integrators (23%). In the Southeast, the Ater is mainly from the government (39%), belonging to the individual farmer (29%) and cooperatives (17%). The Midwest is assisted mainly by the government (34%) and by the producer (35%). In the northern region, the assistance comes from the government (71%). In the Northeast, Ater originates mainly from government (60%) and the producer (25%).

Table 1 - Brazil. Ater activities received by stabilishments, according to procedence and major regions - 2006.

	Govern	Belonging to producer	Cooperative	Integrators	Private Companies Of Planning	NGOs	Other Origins
Brazil	39,5	20,1	18,1	12,4	6,9	0,5	2,4
North	70,9	17,8	5,8	1,5	2,8	0,4	0,8
Northeast	60,4	25,1	3,5	2,5	4,1	1,7	2,7
Southeast	39,1	28,6	17,4	4,4	6,3	0,3	3,8
South	28,6	11,1	27,5	23,4	7,4	0,3	1,8
Midwest	33,7	35,3	9	5,1	14,2	0,4	2,3

Source: IBGE - Agricultural Census (2006).

The data presented show the dominance of government in the delivery of Ater in all major regions in Brazil. Given this dominance, a fundamental issue is the focus of these Ater services. This is justified by the fact that public policies aimed for Ater, which reach the demands of farmers, run into the State budget constraint and can not assist all farmers who need public policy Ater. The focus of the evaluation of Ater becomes relevant in that the models emphasize the targeting procedures and methodologies related to efforts to redirect the allocation of public spending with Ater in terms of equity and efficiency.

A focused policy adopts mechanisms to allocate the benefits of the program primarily to poorer populations. A program is well focused when it increases the amount of benefits to farmers most in need while it decreases the resources that come to the less needy. An efficient allocation of public expenditures intended to Ater activities must, according to the guidelines of PNATER, allocate resources on the neediest farmers in terms of knowledge, skills, competencies and attitudes in order to improve their living standards, seeking the construction of citizenship and democratic management of public policy. To achieve this goal it is necessary to correctly select the beneficiaries of PRONATER.

In Brazil, most public policies in the agricultural sector, as well as PRONATER, takes into account the criterion of fiscal modules to classify the properties and thereby identify the farmers who should receive the intervention of public policy. Specifically, the focus of PRONATER is based on the following criteria: according to Law 11,326, 24.07.06, it defines the family farmer as one who practices rural activities in rural areas, also taking into account the following requirements: i) not being the holder of any type of area greater than four fiscal modules, ii) predominant use labor from his own family in the economic activities of establishment or undertaking; iii) having the

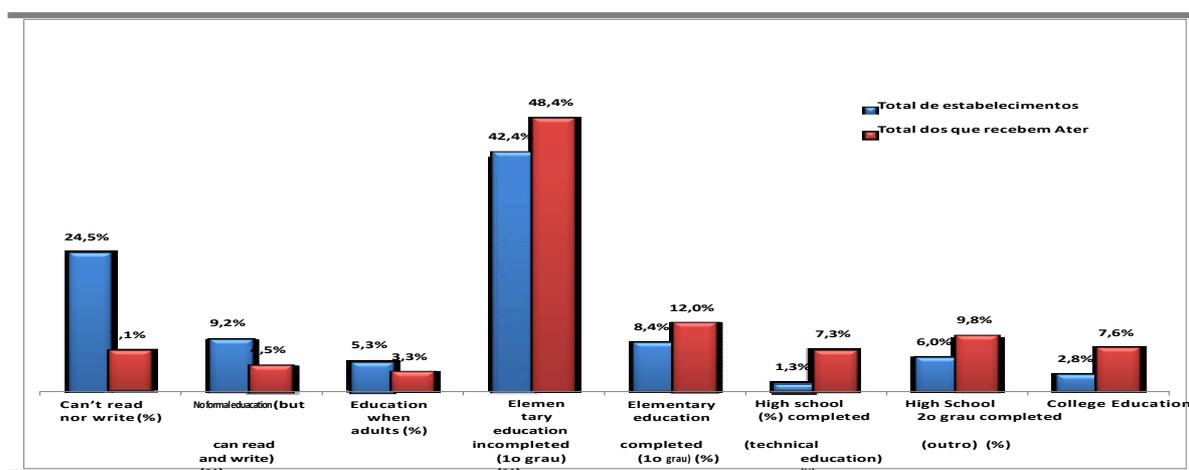
household income originated mainly from economic activities linked to their own business or venture, and iv) conducting of business or enterprise with his family.

The number of tax modules is obtained by dividing the total area of the rural property tax by the module of each municipality, which is set in acres and takes into consideration: i) the type of exploitation prevalent in the city, ii) the income obtained with this operation, and iii) other farms in the municipality which, although not predominant, are significant as a function of income or the area used and the concept of family property. Its calculation is to determine the size and classification of rural lands in small farms, small, medium and large property.

This classification has often proved to be inappropriate, there are cases of farmers classified as having a family businesses, which receive funds from the State, and have over 100 acres of land, which is to be considered a major landowner in the face of international standards (Tenorio, 2010, p . 59). This shows that this classification cannot capture the real conditions of farmers and some most likely have favorable conditions in terms of technology production and access to credit, and therefore don't have the need for state assistance. This classification can lead to distortions which effect is not to provide Ater to businesses that really need this state policy, producing leakage of resources to institutions that are outside of the target population of Ater public policies.

Thus, the question arises: how to identify the farmers who really need the services of Ater? This is a question that has no consensus among scholars of the subject, but there is actually a group that defends the idea that first, one must classify the farmers based on their technological resources and then, focus on the services of Ater according to this classification . The rationale is that public policies should focus on family farmers behind in technology in order to insert them economically in the market. This new classification allows you to focus and improve the efficiency of services provided by Ater to groups of farmers and small producers technologically backward (VIEIRA FILHO, 2010; TENÓRIO, 2010).

Chart 2 - Proportion of businesses receiving Ater according to educational level and proportion of total establishments by level of education - Brazil - 2006.

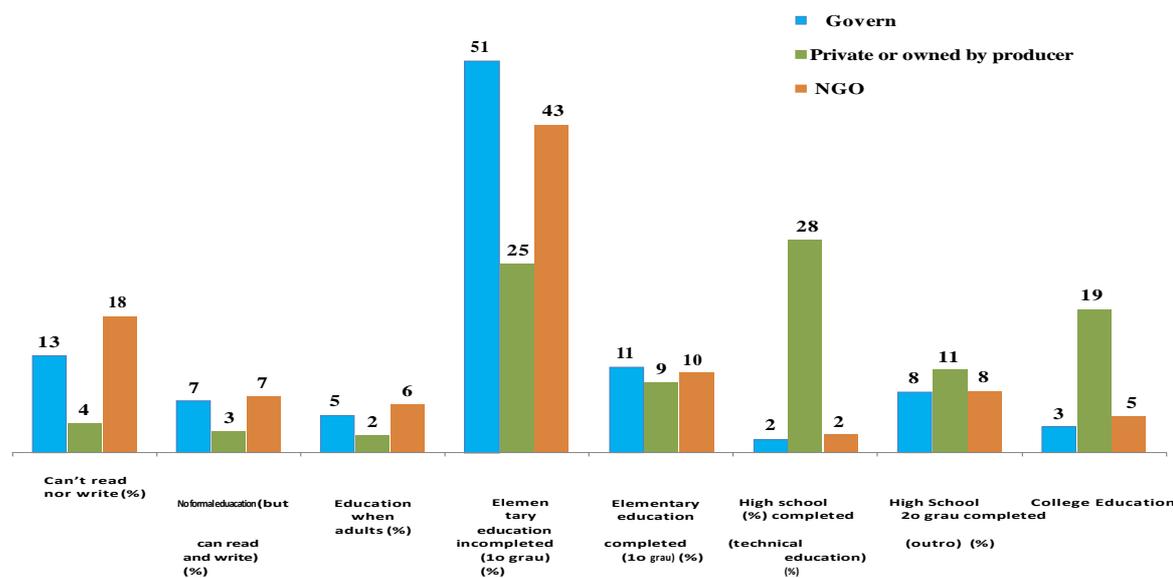


Source :IBGE – Agricultural Census (2006).

Empirically, using data from the 2006 Agricultural Census, it appears that the beneficiaries of Ater, by education level, have a focus contrary to what one would expect, with reference to a public policy focused on what is expected, that is, that the beneficiaries would be distributed proportionally among the different profiles of the total population. Graph 2 shows that the services of Ater favor farmers with higher education to the detriment of those who have less education, or establishments in proportion of farmers who have less education received less Ater services in relation to their share of total establishments and vice versa.

This may be the result of the existence of selection bias in the access to Ater policy meaning that people with more education have greater access to Ater, because they have higher social mobility, greater ability to interact with the extension, have further information to decision making, as well as have greater resources to access the benefit of the Ater policy. In this sense, public policy would be of Ater strengthening social distortions, because they are well focused.

Chart 3- Proportion of businesses that receive Ater according to the level of education and institutions that provide services of Ater - Brazil - 2006.



Source :IBGE - Agricultural Census (2006).

Chart 3, relates the level of education and the institution that provided the service of Ater (Government, private companies and NGOs), it shows a bias in the government policy of Ater. The government should focus its activities in establishments with family farmers with less education, because they are supposedly the most needy in terms of knowledge, skills, competencies and attitudes. Chart 3 shows that the government is working in establishments whose farmers have higher levels of education, which is not recommended if the objective is to establish a public policy focus. However, private companies that provide services of Ater have better focus given to farmers who have higher education, which are supposedly the ones who can afford to bear these costs.

To the extent that the public policies of Ater, according to PNATER encourage farmers with fewer resources (land reform settlers, indigenous people, the remnants of Quilombo and other traditional peoples and communities, family farmers and rural family enterprises, foresters, farmers, gatherers and fishermen, as well as beneficiaries of programs of colonization and irrigation). This policy can be effective if it include as many family farmers out of resources and reduce leakage, reducing the number of farmers with greater resources.

2 CONCLUSIONS

PNATER is an institutional framework with regard to policies for family farming, especially in the redesign of the technological dynamics of Brazilian small-scale agriculture held in properties with low-income, primarily related to the production of livelihood of the lower income rural areas.

In this sense, it constitutes a break with the past pattern of the Ater focused on productivist diffusionism, characterized by the linear logic of technological diffusion, based on the transfer of ready technological packages, characterized by being capital intensive (machinery and industrial inputs such as fertilizers and pesticides).

It is possible to retain from the present discussion that two observations expose the limitations in relation to the new regulatory framework established by PNATER regarding the demand for change in the profile of extension activity in Brazil. The first refers to the potential difficulties arising from the inclusion of non-governmental institutions in the provision of Ater. It is believed that the joint action of governmental and nongovernmental institutions in the context of the extension can create difficulties in coordinating the actions to successfully implement the proposed guidelines in PNATER. These difficulties are a result of the sometimes different interests of public and private institutions and NGOs

The second and more important observation is related to the need for a more precise focus on farmers that should be benefited from the program. In the present context, a group of farmers who are, in theory, able to have access to Ater on their own, are being assisted by activities of Ater, notably of the government, giving less conditions for access to farmers which PNATER signals their actions, which are disadvantaged farmers or those living in poverty and extreme poverty. Noteworthy is the fact that it occurred in the census data that about 24% of all farms are run by a Brazilian farmer who can not read or write and only about 7% of establishments served by Ater have this same characteristic.

Thus, it is proposed that measures should be taken in order to better focus the PRONATER, to create better conditions to meet the guidelines of PNATER and it's also proposed, the exclusivity of the state in both the coordination and implementation of Ater as a way to ensure that its objectives are achieved.

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