
The representativeness of exportations for local development: evidences from family-owned SMEs

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Abstract: This research investigated how exportations of SMEs are characterised and whether these exportations may favour local development of a region. This is a desk research based on a case study of the Far-Western region of Santa Catarina (Brazil), with exploratory analysis level and supported by documentation analyses of official reports retrieved from Brazilian governmental agencies. Results evidenced that exportations can strengthen local development through the participation of SMEs, instead which occurs with big exporters that accumulate revenues. Although main SMEs tend to commercialise their products locally, and these SMEs face difficulties such as access to harbours and main transportation channels in the state, data evidenced that exporters SMEs are family-owned business which emerged locally and trade local and globally. This research sheds light on the consideration of deductive/inductive analyses of family-owned SMEs through exportations base theory and local development theory as tools for analysing the development of regions.

Keywords: local development; exportations; family-owned business; small and medium-sized enterprises; SMEs; regions.

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1 Introduction

Local development studies already stated the importance of the local trade for the emergence of a sustainable small region. This focus already had captured the attention of governments that aimed more locally targeted solutions to develop regions and, in consequence, states and countries.

The main problem, when dealing with economic principles of the firm, is that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) tend to commercialise mainly in the local market where they are located and where they were born. It is widely known in business management studies that a company needs to survive and thrive through commercialisation activities. If an SME is embedded in a locality that is facing problems, e.g., weak circulation of money or few market opportunities, the SME may suffer a reduction of their revenues which, in consequence, can impact SME survival (Smith, 1983, as cited in Paiva, 2004).

On the other hand, if a local market of the given SME is fully attended by such company, then it needs to transpose local boundaries and explore new markets if the SME wants to grow. Despite the concurrence, a SME's growth, theoretically, is related to the local market where is embedded and with which started trading and tends to grow to other surrounded markets. This is a convenient strategy due to operational issues such as logistics. In fact, as the SME grows or may face by shrinking market, the SME needs to change their market exploration strategy and search more profitable markets in other regions (Smith, 1983, as cited in Paiva, 2004).

Based on the exportation base theory of North (1977), the exportation activities create the needed dynamics on a region, which is important for their development. This occurs due to the surplus generated by revenues that are brought to the region where the company is located. This means that to develop a region, is crucial to generate surplus revenues through exportation of local products, once exportation may be considered to other countries as well as to other regions (Sperotto, 2003).

Regarding exportation theories and practical cases, it is noteworthy that large companies are common among exporters. In considering that big companies, even multinationals, generate a considerable volume of revenues, this does not mean that a region may be more developed. This is due, in accordance to the International Labour Organization, the development does not occur when inequalities in distribution of income occur (CEPAL, 2006).

To study these theoretical postulates regarding exportation activities, local development and the participation of family-owned SMEs in this scenario, we used an inductive and deductive approach for analysing data and to meet our research objective: to investigate how exportations of SMEs are characterised and whether these exportations may favour local development of a region.

We established that, to meet this objective, it was needed a comparison between two important information retrieved from reports:

- a the exportation activities
- b the characterisation of manufactures/exporters.

The retrieved reports were search from three main Brazilian governmental agencies and were analysed in order to find the participation of SMEs in exportation activities, mainly focusing on a specific region of the Brazilian State of Santa Catarina. These procedures

became viable once data were retrieved from reports of these three agencies in the same period, which was difficult to reproduce with more current data due most Brazilian agencies change their research focus, methodologies and criteria, producing reports that may difficult a long-term comparison.

This Brazilian state under study is a prominent state in the national exportation scenario, mainly known by the fact that big exporters appear due to their generated revenues. The focused region is the Far-Western Catarinian Region, having their economy based in the primary sector, although the employment occurs in other industries – such as services, manufacturing and commerce – making this a diversified region according to the employment data (Ferasso, 2006).

Researches were conducted to identify the relationship between exportations and local development, but in a perspective of large or even international firms, or regarding internationalisation (Wilson, 1992; Stubbs, 1999; Smallbone et al., 1998; Bellandi, 2001; Hodgkinson and McPhee, 2002; Oviatt and McDougall, 2005; Nel and Rogerson, 2005). However, these researches do not refer to the exportations of SMEs and their contribution to the local development of a region.

The novelty of this research lies on the inductive/deductive analyses of exportation activities and local development of a region according to the principles of Souza (1999). We focused the SMEs due their contribution for the development in a local level, their contribution for local employment and the consummation of local raw materials and other resources, which favour a more balanced distribution of income according to the local development literature.

This research paper is structured, beyond this introduction, by a theoretical section where main concepts are discussed, followed by a research design section, a region characterisation and data presentation and discussion sections. This research paper ends with a conclusion section and consulted references.

2 Theoretical background

2.1 Local development

Global and local circumstances were intertwined by local development theory as a strategy to overcome limitations (Goulart et al., 2005). According to De Oliveira (2001), local development is considered an approach as a polysystemic process, because it comprises as many dimensions as possible in which citizenship is practiced, thus any attempt to turn it into paradigmatic models is bound to failure.

De Oliveira (2001) stressed that the first substantial dimension of local development concerns the capacity and effective participation of citizenship in a so called ‘local government’ which appears as a revival of the Greek *ágora*¹, once the representative democratic form is insufficient to deal with the profounder separation between the governing people and the governed people in modern age.

According to Putnam (2002), community spirit works to foretell economy, because socioeconomic development of a region in this century was less dependent on the initial social-economical potential than on its civic potential. Thus, the local development covers mechanisms that favour development processes and efficient operation forms of economic, social and political actors (Zapata et al., 2000).

Barquero (1999) underlined that the local development is supported by the idea that a locality has unexplored resources and economic power that can potentially develop this territory. This is also related to region's social capacity to leverage resources and respond to challenges imposed by world economy dynamics (Verschoore Filho, 2000), once improving citizens' lives (Cabreira, 2002). In an economic and historical perspective, cities have become centres for social and cultural evolution, since it is in the cities that occurs economic dynamics (Bithas and Christofakis, 2006).

The endogenous development arise when internal process of continuous aggregation of value to production emerge through employment, production expansion and income generation in a regional development perspective (Martinelli and Joyal, 2004; Coffey and Polèse, 2005). Development can only be considered effective when it is converted into human, social and sustainable development, for the improvement of citizens' lives and concerned about the present and future generations (Martinelli and Joyal, 2004; Turnes et al., 2004; Bertrand, 2004).

The development of a region results from the convergence of diverse elements that base economic activities as starters of this development. Entrepreneurship has a fundamental role in local economic perspective since entrepreneurs are responsible for phasing out commercial and cultural barriers, shortening distances, and by renew local economic dynamics. Entrepreneurs can also reset new work relationships and new employment opportunities (Dornelas, 2001; Malecki, 1993).

Maciel (1996) identified on Italian small businesses that they have been more resistant to crisis because the primary motivation for their existence is a family-owned business. Italian socioeconomic success has its bases on the thousands-of-years-old technical and commercial traditions, as well as regional differentiation, post-war movements, policy of support to small businesses and cooperatives, an organisational arrangement that benefits companies with less than 16 employees and family cohesion (Garofoli, 1994; Maciel, 1996).

In the vision of Sachs (2002a), sustainable development combines three goals: economic efficiency, social equity and environmental protection. The execution of an enduring policy of development envisages the integration of social, economic and environmental fields (Brunet, 2005).

We underline the need of public policies necessary for structuring a model of sustainable management to assure local development (Feiock, 1991; Benitez, 2000; Garofoli, 2002; Leigh and Blakely, 2013). The US development model based on large firms of Industrial Revolution era has contributed to the formation of companies in modern age. However, this model brought economic challenges once such growth not considered social well-being (Wren, 1994; Beduschi Filho and Abramovay, 2004; Dowbor, 2003).

Development is characterised as innovating territorial surroundings, which requires social, cultural and organisational changes in order to facilitate the creation of a local atmosphere of entrepreneurship and creativity. Localities have resources, as well as unexploited economic opportunities, which make up their potential for development. Thus, endogenous local development is characterised by an environment characterised by spatial connections that offer a great variety of actors, conditions of information and facilities to assure ties among different networks (Zapata et al., 2005).

Around the 1980's, in Europe and Canada, some local experiences and development initiatives were realised to the advancement of job opportunities by means of support small local companies (Zapata et al., 2005).

With the opening of international markets, companies need to update their technological innovations which require a larger demand of knowledge from research and development organisations (Bortoluzzi et al., 2003). Regarding to the international market, globalisation stressed the need and importance of local development once it creates the need of identity formation and differentiation among regions (Martinelli and Joyal, 2004). In Brazil, importations were replaced by acquiring competences more recently, but the economic structure of the country is still heterogeneous (Sachs, 2002b).

2.2 Local development and exportations

According to North (1977), within a region, the demand for exportations of certain products is an exogenous factor. The regions can try to reduce costs by promoting their economic welfare and improving the competitive position of their products. The purpose of this effort is to enable the region to compete with other regions or foreign countries. Moreover, the exportation base plays an important role in determining the level of absolute and per capita income of a region.

A specific location can expand their borders thanks to the growing demand for goods, starting with foreign sales, or by an income increase in the consumer market, or a change in customers' preferences. Thus, improvements to reduce exportations costs are made by companies in the region, and this competitive behaviour will promote development (North, 1977; Freund and Pierola, 2010).

Comparing Brazilian and Canadian firms, Martinelli and Joyal (2004) and Joyal (2006) underlined that Brazilian SMEs export much less. Participation of SMEs in international trade of manufactured products is 2.0%, while this proportion is 50.00% in the USA and 64.00% in Italian SMEs. The difference between Brazilian and Canadian population, the size of foreign markets and the purchasing power of both countries are factors that partly explain the contrast of the participation in the international trade scenario. Another issue is that SMEs face barriers on exportations more than greater and well-established companies (Sharkey et al., 1989).

SMEs could become more active players in global context if inserted in a network formation aiming the dissemination of knowledge and supported by policies to technology obtention and exportations focus. Industrial clusters are a possibility to develop the ability of such companies to overcome obstacles to growth and to compete in international scenario (Ferguene, 2002; Scatolin et al., 2003; Nique et al., 2005; De Macadar, 2006; Cooke and Lazzeretti, 2008). One difficulty faced by SMEs is the competition with large conglomerates that can impede their survival in foreign markets (De Souza et al., 2003).

According to Tiebout (1977), regional economic activities focus on manufacturing for local and global market. Exportations are not admitted as a driver of regional income due the determination of national income depends, in part, on region size under analyses. For a given region compared into two different periods, a change in total exportations is a change indicator of income level, but a region can grow with exportations at constant levels if internal autonomous activities follow the increase. Therefore, the larger the region, the stronger the dynamic forces that modifies inner income.

An alternative for a SME to expand markets at lower costs is to explore surrounded regions, once the freedom to enter new markets can be a contribution to faster develop a region (Sen, 2000). For Smith (1983, as cited in Paiva, 2004), the country's inner regions may have no other market to commercialise, then companies start to explore surrounding regions or foreign markets, i.e., other countries (Gunter and Der Hoeven, 2004).

In Latin American countries, the policies on business innovation are targeting SMEs that are able to export and this prioritisation redirects investments. On the other hand, non-exporters SMEs face the scarce benefits if compared with the formers (Llorens, 2001; Le Bars, 2001). A possibility to support SMEs is the exportation consortium, resulting in a network among local firms and institutions (Casarotto Filho and Pires, 1998). Networked companies may work cooperatively to achieve international competitiveness (Martinelli and Joyal, 2004; Vargas et al., 2005; Dowbor, 2006).

In France, the post-war context has evolved favourably to SMEs. In addition to companies' clusters, technology centres arise (high-tech industrial districts), as seeing in Toulouse (aerospace) and Grenoble (electronics). The government strategies supported networked companies in the same industry, products, and markets as well as inter-company partnerships (Abrantes and Benko, 2003).

The ideal development model is based on a combination of rapid expansion of exportations, with selective substitution of importations, providing the transference of technology, and diversifying interdependencies between economic activities (Souza, 1999).

2.3 Exportation base theory

The exportation base theory has been considering a crucial lens to explain regions' dynamism in their early stages of development, while in later stages of development the theory of regional economic base is more suitable due it includes, in addition to exportations, a whole influx of foreign income (Sperotto, 2003).

Souza (2002) stated that many regions arise and grow based in an economic activity for exportation, such as tobacco, soybeans, coffee and others, but it is clear that many of these regions go into decline if they are unable to diversify their production structure.

Although the diversification of economic base is important to develop regions, governments may face difficulties to support the regions they govern. In the case of Santa Catarina (Brazil), there was investments imbalance caused by earlier development policies that concentrated investments in their coastal region. A solution to balance regional development of the stat was to prioritise less developed regions with new developmental policies (Ferasso et al., 2004).

By analysing Perroux's theory (as cited in Souza, 1980), the problem is that it is possible to decentralise industrial growth by concentrating investments in selected regions, which would require a policy of regional polarisation. In this sense, what happens is that the spatial concentration would continue for the following years, until these centres are capable to develop and gain scale production sufficiently able to induce the formation of new decentralisations in less developed regions.

The established relationship between job creation and exportations can be found in Souza (1999), where the products to be exported, i.e., products that have comparative advantages, are simpler technologies and incorporate higher proportions of work (the most abundant factor).

The concentration of technology-based manufactures in most industrialised regions increases regional inequalities, once they tend to produce for exportation purposes (for other regions or other countries). Manufactures which tend to be more labour-intensive are focusing more peripheral regions. That is a characteristic of SMEs, once mostly of them do not have all current resources and/or cutting-edge technologies to manufacture their products. So, these SMEs absorb a significant labour and, as consequence, they create more job positions in poorer regions, which reduces inequalities and generate regional income (Souza, 1999; PNUD, 2006).

3 Research design

The present desk research is characterised by the production of knowledge from a general to specific perspectives, using the deductive and inductive methods – essentially qualitative – by using available data from secondary sources. We adopted to analyse the Far-Western region of Santa Catarina (Brazil) as case study (Yin, 2001), with an exploratory analysis level, supported by secondary data research (document analysis), comprising data from January to October 2006. As mentioned in introduction section, this period was chosen due main Brazilian governmental agencies related to exportations and SMEs published only specific reports in the same period that allowed the comparison for theoretical purposes, according to this research objective.

For Yin (2001), the case study brings as a contribution the understanding of individual phenomena, because it allows the researcher to preserve the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events, such as changes in urban areas (Chizzotti, 1998).

Considering these guidance, we performed literature and thematic documentation researches. In the first phase, we searched the literature for theoretical background (Godoy, 1995a, 1995b, 1995c). In the second-stage, to perform the case study (Yin, 2001), we used documents analysis, i.e., reports from the Manufacturers Federation of the State of Santa Catarina (FIESC), National Ministry of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade of Brazil – SECEX and CIN/FIESC, supported by additional documents published by the same agencies (SECEX, 2006; FIESC, 2006; CIN, 2006). The selected period of the year 2006 allowed the comparison of all available reports from these three governmental agencies, which was not possible for earlier or later periods. This criterium was used as basis for testing our assumption stated in our research objective (as seeing in introduction section). For Severino (2002), thematic documentation collects elements relevant to achieve a particular research objective in a determined subject; such technique is used depending on the content structure of studied topic.

Specifically, the data retrieved from the aforementioned reports are related to:

- a exportations destinations
- b main exporting industries
- c main exported products and byproducts
- d exporters and industries from which they belong
- e the presence of SMEs in the Catarinian exportation scenario.

According to Yin (2001), documents information is relevant to all topics of the case study. Information can be found in documents, such as correspondences, reports, administrative documents, studies or evaluations, articles and newspapers. Data selected for analyses were retrieved from specific reports in the form of total amounts of revenues, total volume of exported products by industry and by exporters. To maintain a comparison rigor, we retrieved data from the same period, which were not available as a report result, i.e., the authors needed to build the data used in analyses from the selected reports.

Data were analysed using content analysis (Bardin, 1977; Minayo et al., 1994) which were compared and contrasted. The purpose of the content analysis is to find answers to the asked questions (Minayo et al., 1994; Patton, 2001). In practical, the content was the information regarding total amounts of revenues and volume of exported products. These data were important due, once crossing information, allowed the identification of Far-Western SMEs participation, their industries and their products. After comparing selected data, we identified the major exporters and we also identified the position of Catarinian and Far-Western SMEs. In accordance with the theoretical background of this research, we analysed data and reached our conclusions.

As limitations, the study has applications to the addressed region, which data were retrieved from January to October 2006. Although the results do not necessarily apply to cases at different times, the adopted methodologic procedures may be replicated into future researches aiming to compare a State-Region in order to identify the presence/absence of SMEs in exportation scenario.

4 Characterisation of the state and the selected region

4.1 Santa Catarina: characterisation of economic formation

The genesis of Catarinian economy in the period from 1850 to 1950 had a great contribution from immigrants, who started by 'clearing the land'. This led to an economy based on subsistence agriculture and livestock farming followed by a vibrant diversified industrialisation in the later years. In summary, the technology carried by immigrants, mainly Germans and Italians, was a great and solid base on which Catarinian economic model was built (Renk, 1991).

From 1950 to 1960, the Catarinian economy became more diversificate and wider, mainly based on new industries that were developed such as paper pulp, coal, mechanical devices, ceramics, metalworking, plastics, electrical and transportation related industries, resulting a metamorphosis from merchant to an industrial capital (Renk, 1991).

Due to the shrinkage of domestic market during the '80s, the conquest of foreign markets has become a necessary condition for survival, and the ceramics industry was one of industries that had to introduce new production and management methods (Ferasso et al., 2004).

From '80s to the '90s, oligopolies and multinational oligopsonies² had been favoured and take advantages from the 'administrative torpor' of small local entrepreneurs, who were helped until then by the government for their survival. Despite these oligopolies and oligopsonies made the economy of this state dependent on large firms/conglomerates, they sustained the determination of certain economic base somewhat sustainable of the Catarinian economy (Ferasso et al., 2004).

From the 2000s, the Catarinian economy had become specialised, diverse and integrated (Goularti Filho, 2002). According to SEBRAE (2004), SMEs exportations in Brazil started from concentrated SMEs located in five states: São Paulo, Santa Catarina, Rio Grande do Sul, Parana and Minas Gerais, which corresponded to 76.00% of exportations made by SMEs. It is from the 2000's that Brazilian exporter SMEs began to consider internationalisation and integration strategies to become an international player in foreign markets (Piccinini et al., 2005).

4.1.1 The Catarinian exportations: a brief historical context

Piazza (1994) observed that in mid-1910, exportations value increased six times in Santa Catarina, a pace that lasted until the '30s. During this period, it was possible to identify the formation of a productive vocation of Catarinian economic base, which justify the use of economic base and exporting base theories to explain the development of this state.

A summarised analysis of Catarinian economic dynamics evidenced that, in the 1920s, there was an increase in exportations for the internal national market, which can be understood from the following major economic changes:

- a The timber and wooden furniture industry increased their production more than 22 times due to early exploration of the Western region and *Rio do Peixe* Valley.
- b Exportations of yerba mate to Argentina and Rio de Janeiro has increased more than 13 times, and later the state started to export to Uruguay too.
- c The structuration of the yerba mate industry on the Northern Catarinian coastal region was mainly due to logistics reason (the railroad construction); the textiles industry (cotton shirts, cotton yarn, cotton socks and silk) increased eight times due to exportations increase to Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, and new manufactures emerged in the Itajai Valley (mainly in the '20s).
- d The food industry, in general, increased as a whole: beans (eight times), lard (five times), butter (five times), rice (twice) and cheese (three times) due to increased sales to Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and to the cities of Porto Alegre and Curitiba.
- e The coal industry emerged in Catarinian exportations during the First World War, keeping the growth rate until 1930. This occurred due to the increased international demand for coal, which favoured the formation of large coal manufactures (supported by railroad expansion) and the improvements in both Catarinian southern ports located in Laguna and Imbituba.

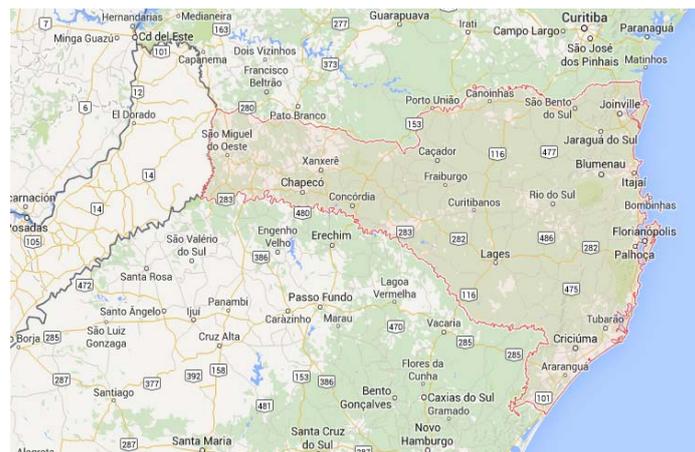
4.2 Catarinian Far-Western region: characterisation of economic formation

The Region, mainly known by the livestock farming and agriculture, is characterised by a predominance of small family units of diversified agricultural production, which arose due to the arrival of Italian immigrants and Italian-Brazilians that remained on that region (Velozo et al., 2005). To situate the reader, the region under study is numbered with '1' in Figure 1(a), and their special location in the Catarinian State is shown on Figure 1(b).

Figure 1 The location of Far-Western region of Santa Catarina and their frontiers (see online version for colours)



(a)



(b)

Source: (a) Adapted from Ferasso (2007, p.438) (b) Taken from Google Maps (2015)

The economic development of this region was based in the primary sector, i.e., agriculture, which was sustained primarily by farming and the processing of their products. The region was highly dependent on this economic activity specially in the earlier years (Veloza et al., 2005).

The agricultural activities were mainly the production of maize/pork or maize/poultry, and some products as beans, tobacco, soybeans, wheat, cassava, and sugar cane. In the last ten years, we observed a significant growth in milk production, once this region became the main dairy region of the state (Veloza et al., 2005).

In 1995, 75.19% of local farms facilities were located within less than 10 and 20 hectares. This demonstrates the importance of Agricultural Sector to the local workers. Although agricultural production became diversified, corn production remained the main product in seeds production, with an annual harvest of 178,574 tons, followed by cane sugar (30,385 tons), cassava (30,385 tons), and tobacco (10,911 tons) (Veloza et al., 2005).

In the region, the extractivist timber production suffered a sharp setback. In the forestry sector, wood resulted from reforestation reached the largest production in timber for different purposes (furniture manufacturing, timber for civil construction applications) (Veloza et al., 2005). In the small farming producers, they focused their economic activities on broilers, dairy and beef cattle farming followed by pork and fish farming (Borchardt, 2003; Veloza et al., 2005).

4.2.1 Exportations in historical context of the Catarinian Far-Western Region

Historically, the exploration of Catarinian Western region took place from the border demarcation between Brazil and Argentina made by President Cleveland (USA) in 1885. The emergence of farms and the exploration of yerba mate formed the earlier economic base of this region. The conquest of the unexplored Western Catarinian region was done after the 'Guerra do Contestado' (Contestado war), as a result of the agricultural expansion of Northwestern of the State of Rio Grande do Sul, which advanced to the interior of Santa Catarina (Dos Santos, 1998; Fligenspan, 2000).

Earlier colonisers, who began to settle in the region – mostly Italian immigrants and Italian-Brazilian descendants from Rio Grande do Sul, gained land grants from government to promote colonisation. The railroad builder company sold the lands along *Rio do Peixe* River to their employees as part of their payment for the railroad construction. This fact increased the flow and permanence of people and the formation of colonies and villages. These communities have played a crucial role as centres of regional development, which lead to the formation of municipal districts created from 1917 (Dos Santos, 1998; Radin et al., 2003).

As in any colonisation, this land occupation brought competition and the search for profits. The farmers, responsible for 'clearing' of West lands, were exchanged by an aggressive exploration of forest and land resources. The floods of Uruguay River and rainy-seasons in the 1910s allowed the first Far-Western wood exportations, where the timber went down the river up to Argentina in the form of rafts (Dos Santos, 1998; Radin et al., 2003).

According to Dos Santos (1998), the First World War (1914–1918) created opportunities for wood commercialisation, especially Parana pine, once prices rose sharply internationally. As a result, sawmills emerged everywhere in this region. Lands firstly acquired by government had their forest resources extracted, and then these lands were sold in instalments to the settlers to cultivate their crops.

Corn agriculture and pork farming had opened prospects for Far-Western region become a food supplier region. The railroad Sao Paulo-Rio Grande, through Santa Catarina soil between the cities of Porto Uniao and Marcelino Ramos facilitated the discovery of new markets outside the state (Dos Santos, 1998).

Several poultry processing manufactures, some of them currently with national and international reputation, had their origins in the Western Catarinian region. The

exportations of meat started in 1975 were responsible for more than 13.00% of Catarinian exportations in the late '80s (Dos Santos, 1998).

5 Data presentation and discussion

On this section, data are presented and further discussed.

5.1 Characterisation of Catarinian and Far-Western Region exportations

After selecting relevant information for data analyses from the aforementioned reports and retrieving the needed information from the period from January to October 2006, we present the comparative results on Table 1.

Table 1 Destinations, exported products, and exporters of Santa Catarina and Far-Western Region

<i>Retrieved data</i>	<i>State of Santa Catarina</i>	<i>Far-Western Region</i>
Top five destinations (% from the total volume of exportations)	United States of America (23.89%)	United Kingdom (25.38%)
	Argentina (6.38%)	United States of America (11.95%)
	Germany (4.66%)	South Africa (8.59%)
	Russia (4.44%)	Canada (8.30%)
	United Kingdom (4.29%)	Germany (6.92%)
Main exported products (% from the total volume of exportations)	Meat and meat byproducts (26.93%)	Wooden furniture and byproducts (46.85%)
	Machinery, mechanical equipment and byproducts (14.21%)	Timber and byproducts (12.52%)
	Timber and byproducts (10.14%)	Bananas (11.85%)
	Furniture and byproducts (8.05%)	Chicken and byproducts (10.91%)
	Electrical materials, machinery and byproducts (6.79%)	Grain/soybean and corn (8.35%)
	Ceramics (4.04%)	Pork meat and byproducts (5.54%)
Main exporters (% of total exportations – US\$ FOB)	<i>Perdigão Agroindustrial S/A (7.71%)</i>	
	<i>Seara Alimentos S/A (7.3%)</i>	
	<i>Sadia S/A (6.67%)</i>	
	<i>EMBRACO compressors S/A (6.09%)</i>	
	<i>WEG S/A (5.48%)</i>	

Source: The author (2018)

We observed that in 2006, Catarinian exportations were concentrate in one country (USA), although there is some heterogeneity in relation to other destinations. Among the five greater Catarinian exporting firms, we observed that large oligopsonies dominate the Catarinian exportation scenario (as shown in main exporters section of the table). Checking the 21 major exporter cities, no municipality belonging to the Far-Western Catarinian region was observed (which lead to the blank cells of main exporters of Far-Western Region column).

Searching more specific information regarding the participation of this region on the Catarinian exportations scenario, we found in Ministry of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade reports (SECEX, 2006) that eight municipalities participated in exportations in that period: Mondai, Itapiranga, Sao Miguel do Oeste, Guaraciaba, Palma Sola, Guarujá do Sul, Sao Jose do Cedro and Anchieta (the Far-Western region is formed by 18 municipalities). We underline that, despite the Brazilian governmental agencies reported the main Catarinian exporters, smaller exporters were not reported individually. Thus, we identified the presence of greater exporters in the Far-Western Region by industry and by municipality, i.e., mainly from the Wooden furniture and byproducts of the region, an industry that is characterised by SMEs and, mainly, family-owned SMEs.

Revisiting the literature, and in accordance to Dornelas (2001), entrepreneurship has a key role in local economic dynamics by the added value of the products they produce. Regarding this statement, among the exported products/byproducts it is possible to identify that the products with added value came from the wooden furniture industry (see bold products and byproducts on Table 1). We observed that the Far-Western region is present into Catarinian exportations scenario thanks to the wooden furniture, where 46.85% of total exportations came from this industry. The wooden furniture and byproducts is an industry characterised by SMEs, which favour the local development according to the revisited concepts presented in literature of this research paper.

5.2 Discussions: the relationship among exportations, local development and SMEs

As stressed in introduction section, we perceived that there are few researches conducted in relation of SMEs' exportations and their contribution to the local development of a region. This is due SMEs do not appear in reports as important and notorious players on international scenario: looking at the total amount on exported products or total revenues, these are generated by large firms or even international conglomerates. However, according to the local development postulates, we can have a more balanced development if localities can produce their own forms of sustainability (Sachs, 2002a; Zapata et al., 2005), in terms of business creation, mainly supported by their endogenous power (Martinelli and Joyal, 2004; Coffey and Polèse, 2005; Zapata et al., 2005).

It is clear that when a region faces barriers (Sharkey et al., 1989), the absence of strong public policies (Feiock, 1991; Garofoli, 2002; Leigh and Blakely, 2013), and suffer from weak business ties or absence of any kind of governance (Ferguene, 2002; Scatolin et al., 2003; Nique et al., 2005; De Macadar, 2006; Cooke and Lazzarretti, 2008), SMEs can suffer much more when considering the entrance on international market scenario. Therefore, they prefer to trade locally (Paiva, 2004) which may lead them to disappear from the international market (Martinelli and Joyal, 2004; Joyal, 2006).

Focusing the Far-Western Catarinian region, there are positive influences for being a border region due to dry port of Dionisio Cerqueira municipality. However, the exportations of this region exporters for Argentina, neighbouring country, is characterised as partially significant, since Argentina is the eighth largest destination for exportations, totalling US \$627,448.00 during the period. However, Argentina is the main destination of Mercosul countries. An important fact to be observed is that although the municipality of Dionisio Cerqueira is the geographical border with Argentina and possess a dry port, we did not observe exportation activities from this municipality. This signifies that this municipality is serving as a corridor for other exporters of Far-Western region.

When SMEs are sufficiently prepared to face the aforementioned barriers, they look at the international market as a sustainable and grown perspective on business. Those SMEs that can compete in international trade scenario can build competitive advantages in the locality where they are embedded. Therefore, we argued that the exportation base theory (Souza, 1999, 2002; Sperotto, 2003) can be a useful tool to be addressed to the study in a local development approach due only strong and well-established SMEs can export.

We perceived on data analyses, that exporters SMEs also commercialise their products to exigent countries like the USA, the UK, Germany, and others. In this sense, these SMEs must be technologically advanced (in production and processes management) to aggregate value to their products in order to not only export commodities – which is mainly seen in primary sector products – or non-manufactured products.

We underline that the exportation and business culture are key-factors when studying the economic base of a region (Garofoli, 1994; Maciel, 1996). Under this statement, there is a need to overcome barriers, to invest in technology, in efficiency, in competences, in productivity and in competitiveness for SMEs to conquer and remain in international market. In addition, we stresses the value and support of public policies (Feiock, 1991; Benitez, 2000; Garofoli, 2002; Beduschi Filho and Abramovay, 2004; Leigh and Blakely, 2013) favouring the strengthening of local business.

With exception of oligopsonies, which tend to concentrate income, the wooden furniture and byproducts industry stands out in terms of being characterised by local SMEs. Exportations of this industry totalled 46.85% from SMEs of this region and this contribution came from only one sector: wooden furniture industry.

Data analyses revealed that only strengthen industries can aggregate value and has potential growth, which is evidenced by the wooden furniture industry. As an empirical finding, the author of this research lived on the region for more than 20 years and had maintained contacts with several managers and owners of notorious SMEs of this region. Empirically, we underline the entrepreneurial vision of SMEs owners of this region that are always seeking international opportunities to trade wooden furniture and to aggregate more value to their products on international market.

Based on these findings, we performed a more profound search to identify and cross data profiles of SMEs of the wooden furniture industry of this region. The comparison of SMEs profiles was performed by searching information on SMEs' websites and at the Wooden Furniture Association website (SIMOVALE, 2018), where we obtained a list of exporters from this region.

By exploring the SMEs profiles, we identified that these SMEs are characterised as family-owned business: as indicated in Catarinian historic colonisation in previous sections, families that had installed in the studied region have strong culture related to Italians and Germans descendants, whose cultures are mainly focused on family-owned business and a labour-based culture. These wooden furniture SMEs grew up by commercialising their products to local inhabitants and, due to the entrepreneurial profile of their founders, these firms searched for opportunities in the international trade market by exportations. It is particularly interesting to notice that the main exportation activities identified on SMEs on the selected region came from, exclusively, family-owned business.

Regarding exportations, and considering the regional historical context, the Far-Western Catarinian region is characterised by the existence of exportation activities

in the food production (mainly meat, by big manufacturers/oligopsonies) and wooden furniture (by family-owned SMEs). Thus, as stated by Martinelli and Joyal (2004), endogenous development comprises a continuous process of expanding value-added production, which evidenced in the wooden furniture industry only.

According to the presented literature in theoretical section, a region can achieve local development through SMEs by many ways. We underline that SMEs can contribute to the local development when they are more prone to export, once they consume raw materials produced by local suppliers and services provided by local inhabitants (North, 1977). When these SMEs are well-established, they may consider external markets where there are highly competitive levels. This is why SMEs need to invest in a set of current business management practices/strategies that lead to gains on added-value to their products to remain in the international market.

We recommend to policy makers to strengthen or create new policies towards local SMEs related to their exportations activities by organising SMEs in structured and governed networks where these SMEs may find the support to reduce production costs and gain competitive advantages through more several improvements they may need, what will imply in a more competitive position in international scenario.

6 Conclusion remarks

This research revealed that local firms, characterised as family-owned SMEs, are not among the leading exporters of Santa Catarina if considering the total volume of exported products and/or total amount of revenues. This Brazilian State is internationally recognised by having great exporters playing in the national and international scenarios (mainly seen in food industry), but we cannot miss the cultural aspect that local firms tend to focus on their local market and can become relevant exporters if considered a regional-level exportations base, according to the local development precepts.

Results evidenced that the main local exportations activities are concentrated on wooden furniture industry (46.85% of total exportations), the main destination are the UK, the USA and South Africa. Except for the oligopsonies from the food industry (meat and byproducts), SMEs favour local development of the studied region, once they originated and were established in municipalities of the Far-Western Catarinian region. A second performed search revealed that these SMEs are characterised as family-owned business.

Further researches are suggested to identify the reasons why local entrepreneurs from other industries of this region do not seek information regarding exportations and opportunities in foreign markets.

The author would encourage researchers to perform future researches dealing with deductive/inductive methods to analyse comparative data on exportations of regions and States. This research procedure may lead to identify the relevance/impact of SMEs in the international scenario and their contribution for local development in other Brazilian regions or even in other developed/emerging countries.

We conclude that, based on the local development approach and the analysed data, exportations are an important indicator for verifying how exportations of family-owned SMEs can strengthen these companies and how they can contribute for local development of a region.

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Notes

- 1 From Greek, main public square of the ancient Greek cities, public meeting among Greeks (Maniataglou, 2004).
- 2 Buyers that characterise as large companies that buy from multiplex smaller suppliers.