

2nd International Symposium "NEW METROPOLITAN PERSPECTIVES" - Strategic planning, spatial planning, economic programs and decision support tools, through the implementation of Horizon/Europe2020. ISTH2020, Reggio Calabria (Italy), 18-20 May 2016

Food sovereignty and territory: the domestic production unit as a basic premise

Celsa Cosío Ruiz^{a,*}

^a West Regional University Center (CRUOC) of the Universidad Autónoma Chapingo

Abstract

While in the current economic model problems of poverty and hunger are still not resolved, in Mexico there are about 63 million people (CONEVAL, 2014), public policies should aim to strengthen the production units which, by their economic and organizational nature, they are more likely to produce cheap food for local final consumers and the same housed units allow reproduction of a huge population. In this article, it is exposed the progress of the research entitled Domestic production unit on food sovereignty: case study of localities with highest level of rurality in Jalisco, guided by the overall objective of generating information on domestic unit of production to assist in the development of a theoretical model that provides indicators on how to achieve food sovereignty in Mexico. This research is based on the hypothesis that strengthening the domestic unit of production is the basic premise to achieve food sovereignty. In this article results are shown of analysis of the relationship between the domestic unit of production and food sovereignty, to determine the conceptual criteria, their variables and indicators to develop tools and instruments methodological basis necessary to obtain the data for analysis, diagnosis and generation of information: results of analysis the existing theory and interviews with 38 domestic unit of production located in two municipalities with high rurality, Cuquío and San Cristóbal de la Barranca, located in the Central region of Jalisco, México.

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Peer-review under responsibility of the organizing committee of ISTH2020

Keywords: food sovereignty, territory, domestic production unit, endogenous local development, local production system

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +52-33-3646-7794; fax: +52-33-3646-7794.
E-mail address: detercc@gmail.com

1. Food sovereignty: from food security to flexible and planned food self-sufficiency

The problem of rural development and income generation in the country has to do with the actual existence of a quarter of Mexico's population living in the countryside and whose way of producing and reproducing their existence, hence their culture, is fundamentally peasant. Public policies aimed for this sector from the decade of the seventies have weakened and unstructured production intended for domestic market, a situation that has accelerated the process of impoverishment in rural areas. In the current economic situation there is insufficient alternative employment in other areas of the economy for this sector of the population, nor the conditions for the use and development of their productive capacities in rural areas. Before the accelerated impoverishment process of most the world's population in the last two decades, its highest expression is a critical reduction of the minimum recommended food intake for reproduction of people, that is the so-called food crisis (since no reduced food production is registered but reduced food purchasing power by impoverished final consumers), it has been initiated the reflection on new models of economic development alternate to the world order. From which this questions follow, how to achieve food sovereignty? Given the current economic context, how can people with little ability to purchase food ensure access to it?

At the World Food Summit held in 1996, it was agreed that food security exists when all people, permanently, physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their daily energy needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (FAO, 2011). However, the argument of the model in not considering the specificity of the internal contexts of each country in development or underdevelopment, not anticipated that the food supply cannot ensure safe and nutritious products since the policy of liberalization of the market has eliminated the planning function of the State; similarly, the economic and physical access to food supplies on the part of households is not assured with strategies of poles of economic investment based on the comparative advantages of cheap labor, required by international agencies and by States materialized premises; also, the standardization of the diet and the creation of food needs will never set conditions for a good use Of the food as it does not lead to diversity in diet or good health practices; finally, the rhetoric of international agencies such as FAO, UN, Inter-American Development Bank, IMF, have not been able to dovetail, because while one promulgates the food security other requires that workers devaluate in the economic cycle.

Within the advocacy of food security model by international financial agencies, the concept of self-sufficiency in food is biased to its economic function, this is, what percentage of a GDP is geared to meeting the food needs of its population, reaching when you are satisfied with their own production without the need to resort to imports; is usually measured by the rate of self-sufficiency, i.e. the degree of contribution of the national production to the domestic consumption total, excluding changes in inventories (Thomson & Metz, 1999). The function of sovereignty as independence, power and freedom is excluded from the argumentation. Such bias has proved in practice direct negative effects on national security and governance. It is worth mentioning that on the basis of these speeches, called the virtuous circle of development, also handled by the same international agencies, could not materialize. Examples of food self-sufficiency, in where they integrate the economic dimensions, independence, power and freedom, as an effective strategy for socio-economic development, are known in the Republic of China where the order has always been the preservation of national independence in the provision of basic foodstuffs, currently highlighted the following characteristics in their strategies (Rodríguez, 2010). That is why the food sovereignty is argued as an alternative model of peasant organizations to food security model developed by the FAO; which integrates the productive capacities of the peasant agriculture, sustainable management of resources and the protection of the State with policies that ensure access to food that is culturally preserved.

2. Conditions that directed toward the loss of food sovereignty in Mexico

From 1982 to 1994 the agricultural sector in Mexico goes into crisis, due to the decline of the general profitability of agricultural investments and the drastic reduction of state participation in the sector, which led to a sharp decline in public investment in irrigation, agricultural development and rural credit, which had been a pillar to encourage investment and to foster the accumulation in the field in the previous decades. In the new model, to agriculture is assigned the main function of exchange earner; for what is determined as strategic or priority only that market-oriented production outside and eminently business, such as vegetables, fruits, flowers and the export of cattle. This has resulted

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