

Agrarian Policies as A Basis for Achieving Food Sovereignty and Sustainability with A Local Approach

Alvaro Calzada Diaz de Villegas*

Agronomist, MSc University of Cienfuegos "Carlos Rafael Rodríguez", Cuba.

*Corresponding Author: Alvaro Calzada Diaz de Villegas, Agronomist, MSc University of Cienfuegos "Carlos Rafael Rodríguez", Cuba.

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Abstract

The development of agricultural policies based on achieving food sovereignty and security from local agri-food systems is essential to meet the objectives of sustainable development, but this is only possible if we understand the social genesis of public policies and the different reforms in the national and foreign environment, in this sense the processes of agricultural transformation in Cuba and its government policy to face the food crisis must be able to assimilate all the legislative actions that are adopted in other areas of the economy, politics and society. Actions such as reducing the urban-rural digital divide, the existing one between small and large companies and promoting computerization as a driving force for the sector and promoting business development and new business models are challenges to consider in public policies, considering that they have that first supply the popular demands where the approach of the urbanization conditions that propitiate the exodus of the productive forces of the field should focus the look of the authorities to achieve the sufficient and stable availability of food, its opportune access and its biological use, of sustainable way.

Key Words: agribusiness; food crisis; agrarian transformation; agrifood systems

Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity, being designed to end poverty, hunger, AIDS and discrimination against women and girls. Already in 2015, the world economy shows a growth of 0.1 percentage point compared to 2014, which sets off the alarms, a "cooling", the decline is induced by the decline in developed economies.

The slowdown of the Chinese economy, the fall in the prices of raw materials, the weakness of global demand, the volatility of financial markets, the strength of the dollar and the increase in political instability showed their effects on the growth of the economy. worldwide in 2015, registering a rate of 2.8%, similar to that of the previous year.

Meanwhile, the increase in economic activity in the G-7 improved slightly, going from 1.5% in 2014 to 1.7% in 2015, due to a slow recovery in the euro zone and the rebound effect of Japan, which in the 2014 introduced a sales tax that affected its economy. The emerging economies slowed down, going from 5.4% in 2014 to 5.0% in 2015.

Among the main events of the 21st century is:

- 2001 - September 11 attacks in New York.

- 2001 - War in Afghanistan.
- 2003 - Iraq War.
- 2010 - Arab Spring.
- 2011 - Syrian civil war.
- 2016 - Brexit. The UK decides to leave the European Union.
- 2020 - COVID-19: coronavirus pandemic.
- 2022 - Russian-Ukrainian War

As the population increased, it was sought above all to increase the productivity of the land using higher-yield crops accompanied by new production techniques: irrigation, fertilization, selected and improved seeds, application of pest and disease control products, etc., everything that which led to an intensification of agricultural production. However, all this was often accompanied by environmental contamination, erosion and salinization of the land, so that despite the progress achieved in food production, hunger and malnutrition persist in the world in which we live.

The world population is more than three times greater than in the mid-20th century, reaching 8 billion by mid-November 2022, up from an estimated 2.5 billion people in 1950, adding 1 billion people since 2010 and 2 billion since 1998. In addition, the 21st century will be marked by aging, mainly due to the reduction in fertility and the increase in life expectancy, according to a

new report from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

Population growth will continue from 2000 to 2050, 2.5 billion people will be added to be fed, world food production will need to increase by 70% to meet global food needs. To solve the problem of food security for a population that in 2050 will reach almost 9,000 million people, a new equation is necessary.

Development

The agrarian policy describes a set of laws related to domestic agriculture and imports of foreign agricultural products. Claude Servolin, a French writer, was a reference in studies on the modernization of agriculture and the role of family farms, in his book "Agrarian Policies makes us reflect on this issue, ..." It is, however, curious that very few of them (theologians) have considered it useful to be interested in agrarian policy, a particularly active (and costly!) branch of economic policy and which concerns a sector of great economic and social importance... the author questions agricultural development in the countries developed and their participation in economic development, in the same way the organization of agricultural companies, those that are far from being capitalist, states, "The most common way of organizing production, even in the largest farms, retains an "artisanal" character, "familiar"... the backwardness of the agrarian sector is as much a technical delay as a delay of a "social nature".

Agrarian policies are reforms resulting from social movements such as in Mexico in 1919 the "Plan Ayala" proposed by Emiliano Zapata that demanded the return to the towns of the lands that had been concentrated in the haciendas; in Spain it is framed in two stages, the first with the deterioration of the Franco dictatorship and a second stage during the consolidation of the democratic regime and worsening of the crisis that began in 1973 with its greatest development at the end of that decade; In Argentina during the post-war period and in Cuba with the triumph of the 1959 revolution, even without declaring the socialist character, two agrarian reforms were carried out that transformed the socio-economic context of the country.

In this sense, agrarian policies are public policies (government actions with public interest objectives that arise from decisions based on a process of diagnosis and analysis of feasibility, for effective attention to specific public problems, where citizens participate in the definition of problems and solutions).

Public policies in the local government agendas constitute subsistence practices based on sustainability and development, being essential for human development and seeking to achieve an improvement in the quality of life of a social group, through the materialization of rights social, economic, cultural and others, through redistribution, social inclusion and the generation of opportunities.

The right to food is a right inherent to the human condition, it implies transcending the legal recognition of rights to the effective materialization of the same and for this, governmental, institutional and community action constitutes one of the mechanisms to make it possible. The right to not be hungry was recognized in article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN, 1948) which states: "Every person has the right to an adequate standard of living that ensures the health and well-being, especially food..." and its binding nature was recognized in article 11 of the Pact for Economic, Social, Political and Cultural Rights DESC (1966).

The People of Cuba approved the Constitution in 2019, identified with the postulates set forth in the concept of Revolution, in its articles 77 and 78 it defines respectively that "All people have the right to healthy and adequate food. The State creates the conditions to strengthen the food security of the entire population"; "All people have the right to consume quality goods and services that do not threaten their health, and to access accurate and truthful information about them, as well as to receive fair and dignified treatment in accordance with the law."

After the agrarian reforms to the triumph of 1959 in Cuba, it was not until 1990 and 2008 that land redistribution policies were applied, these processes, although it was a claim of the peasants, responded to formulas for the increase of the very deteriorated food production. The economic crisis suffered by the country in the decade 1990-2000 considerably affects the agricultural sector, however, the high degree of mechanization existing in the country allows a rapid recovery of the sector and already in the period 1995-2000 the growth rate is of 6.3% with an increase in yields in the 16 main economic crops, quite the opposite, it happens in the period 2000-2010 with emphasis on the 2005-2007 period where the increase in non-cultivable area predominates, fundamentally in the sector state, aggravated by the rise in food prices internationally.

Agricultural models have an impact on the population's access to food, they define two extremes: the conventional (on a large scale and based on the use of chemical inputs to achieve higher yields) and the agroecological (with a smaller scale and that bets on the management and introduction of science for the achievement of productions)

Policies in various governments in the Latin American region based on globalization and the emergence of agribusiness have transformed agriculture, abandoning its traditional production systems to dedicate itself to: export crops in high international demand, satisfying the demand of supermarket chains with royalties well defined for its supply and/or production of biofuels. This change in the production pattern has resulted in a loss of food variety, affecting the food security of producing countries.

As we can see, even when food production could satisfy the demand, the focus and objective of public policies determine the access of different sectors of society to food. This dimension of food security can be physical or economic. The first refers to the availability of food where the population demands it and the second, to the ability of people to acquire it based on the income-price relationship.

In Cuba, when the Revolution triumphed, the idea of industrialization and agricultural diversification as paths to development prevailed, with an economic focus on sugar production and its dependence on the US economy; socially, the latifundio had developed as a link with the sugar expansion to respond to the interests of North American capital, the country did not have the infrastructure and qualified human resources required for industrial development, the demand for food had increased as a consequence of redistributive measures applied in the early years of the revolutionary period for the benefit of the most disadvantaged sectors of the population.

The growing demand could not be covered given the lack of inputs such as fodder and raw materials for feed that intensive farming demanded, as well as the increase in productive rubles such as egg and pork production, in the same way it happened with the demand of chemical fertilizers and phytosanitary products for which the CAME and the link with the socialist community favored a productive accommodation to the detriment of agroecological development and sustainable agricultural production.

The number of investments between 1960 and 1992 represented close to a quarter of the total invested in the country, making possible a high technical endowment in equipment, facilities and genetically improved herds, availability of agrochemical and energy resources and other intermediate goods. In countries where energy is a scarce resource, like Cuba, this leads to an external dependency that makes them very vulnerable.

Starting in 1993, the Cuban agricultural sector was one of those that suffered the most from the impacts of the external financial restriction linked to the collapse of the socialist camp, with the lack of supply having significant repercussions for the population's access to food.

To face this crisis and the harmful environmental effects of the previous agricultural management model, new agricultural policies were introduced during the nineties of the last century, among which are:

- The change in the form of land administration, with the constitution of the Basic Units of Cooperative Production (UBPC)
- A land delivery program based on the family economy.
- Reopening of a free market space for the productions of the sector destined for food
- Flexibility of the collection price system
- Development of urban agriculture
- Incorporation of stimulation systems in currencies,

These alternative agrarian policies try to address and solve the problems associated with the conventional agro-productive model, which is based on the substitution of imported technology for local technology, prioritizing artisanal biotechnology for the production of biofertilizers and biopesticides; the conversion of conventional agriculture to organic agriculture; the efficient use of human resources, land, energy, animal traction, etc.; crop diversification and animal integration; the preservation of the environment and the conservation of natural resources; the active participation of rural communities and cooperation between them for the generation and dissemination of technology.

These policies also bring about a radical change in the relationship between scientists and farmers, turning it into a two-way street: producers will have to participate more and more in innovation, contributing their traditional knowledge, and scientists will have to incorporate each producer to the generation and diffusion of technologies.

These policies led to the reduction in the decrease in the production of the agri-food sector, but not a sustainable transformation in the form of management, incapacitating the productive sector to face, firstly, the progressive deterioration of the technical infrastructure, and secondly, the worsening by the current administration in the United States (Donald Trump) of the restrictive measures for trade with Cuba, the arrival of family remittances and other forms of foreign currency acquisition, and thirdly the occurrence of the pandemic caused by the SARS - CoV - virus 2 that paralyzed the world economy with the greatest effect in the least developed countries.

In this sense, the Cuban government adopts a group of measures as a policy to promote food production in the immediate term, on the basis of stimulating the producer, eliminating obstacles and favoring the population's nutrition.

All the measures adopted generate a new national economic approach with a leading increase in the non-state sector, although the objective is to promote the State Company, the decrease in imports, to revitalize the economy, fundamentally food production, tourism, the transformation of the energy matrix and the decentralization of government management towards the municipalities, as well as the creation of local food systems. The government work system seeks to strengthen the role of science and innovation in the search for creative solutions to problems that arise in the process of economic and social development of the country.

For the agricultural sector, 63 measures were promoted with the intention of boosting production, these structured in groups respond to three of the guidelines approved by the communist party in its sixth congress, ratified and updated in the seven and eight, with its objective to improve the management model of the agricultural and forestry sector, transforming its business system, fundamentally the role of the state company, with the aim of sustainably increasing agricultural production; create better conditions for the development of the other forms that make up the productive base; continue developing the production of quality seeds, plant and animal genetic resources, and the conservation, improvement, and sustainable management of soils, water, and the use of fertilizers. Increase the production and use of organic fertilizers, minerals and national bioproducts. Strengthen and improve the execution of the Municipal Self-Supply and Urban, Suburban and Family Agriculture Programs to achieve and sustain the objectives,

indicators and goals set for the production and consumption of root vegetables, vegetables, grains, fruits and proteins of animal origin in each territory.

Although these measures help to reduce the urban-rural digital divide, as well as that between small and large companies, promote computerization as a driving force for the sector and promote business development and new business models, they have the economic crisis against them. and social that the world is going through, exacerbated in countries with little development, in this sense the Cuban economy adopts new actions for its recovery, all with a transversal impact on agricultural production, the dynamism and systematization of the 63 measures necessarily have to be capable of assimilating the social, economic and structural changes in the productive sector since like any process it requires the cognitive transformations of the actors so that they act as social spark plugs in the understanding of the process.

In this sense, the reduction of the urban-rural gap is not only digital, it is also social and economic that counteracts rural depopulation, being essential to have quality services, mainly health, education, culture and sports, basic supplies, transportation public, telecommunications, postal services and banking and commercial services, promote an attractive employment plan and with access conditions from the cities, promote rural tourism as an activity that promotes economic and direct replenishment to the sector, technological improvements are also necessary that minimize the use of labor and promote systematic updating with technical scientific advances, diversification of the rest of the sectors of the economy is necessary based on agricultural potential, creating sustainable and attractive value chains and encouraging solutions in the rural ecosystem productive based on nature.

Conclusions

Although conceptually food security refers to the sufficient and stable availability of food, its opportune access and its biological use, in a stable way over time it is only possible if those who manage it satisfy cultural, economic, social and spiritual needs from an attractive productive environment from its recognition attached to traditions and distinctive values.

Public policies for food safety are not managed based on official regulations, even when they are aimed at the most underprivileged segments of the population, and have a true focus on social justice, it is necessary to attend from the perceptible demands of the actors and the satisfaction of their needs to what we could define as a process of rural urbanization.

Conflict of Interest

The author has no relevant financial or non-financial conflict of interests to disclose.

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