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Dossier: Economy-Space-Society – Territorial diversities, agrarian conflicts and food inequalities in Argentina and Brazil in the 20th and 21st centuries

The “*rural world*” is heterogeneous and complex. Argentina and Brazil demonstrate these traits through the organization of their territories, the social construction of space and their regional differences, associated with agro-industries and the transition from agriculture to agribusiness. The social conflicts linked to the land system and the variable hierarchy of its social actors and agrarian corporations are part of this diversity, which also express itself in different forms of hunger e nutritional inequality in which its inhabitants live.

Territory organization and the social construction of space define the region. The natural spatiality, which was in force until the 1960’s, has given way to a “*social*” and institutional logic of the territory (Eckert, 1996). The “*differential spatialities*” of the 1980’s (Coraggio, 1987) have become “*territorial complexes*”, allowing the design of a modifiable regional diagnosis with the application of corrective policies (Manzanal and Rofman, 1989).

On the other hand, throughout de 20th and 21st centuries, there was a significant capitalist modernization of agriculture in Argentina and Brazil. The production technological changes of the agricultural sector had a direct impact on both territories and produced various social conflicts. In this context, new actors emerge and others reconfigure themselves to confront the economic and social effects of the expansion of agribusiness.

The resulting agrarian conflicts and territorial diversity are expressions of the nutritional transition in Brazil and Argentina. With different starting points and various public policies implemented in each case, it is possible to recognize the complex nature that the fight against hunger has acquired since the mid-20th century. The food issue is a global concern and is connected to the industrialization of food as well as to the transformations in the link between producers and consumers (Holt-Giménez, 2017). Theoretical approaches and case studies show the composition of the diet as a factor of social inequality, alongside with the productive changes caused by this transformation of the relationship with food, threatening food security and sovereignty (FAO, 2018).

The power and public policies generated from the State integrate this complex and diverse framework, as part of a permeable network linked to unequal relations and as the support of a multiple and also uncertain reality that is based on continuities and changes throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. The approach proposed for the papers in this dossier is based on three axes:

1. Land use planning in rural areas (social construction of space, regional inequalities and public policies) Rural areas in Argentina and Brazil, as "*possible territories*", are constituted by processes, places and actors, which integrate "*an agenda of problems and trends of analysis*" (Bozzano, 2009. Barriera and Roldán, 2004. Velázquez, 2008). It is a fundamental matter to elaborate an interdisciplinary regional history as an expression of a "*game of scales*" between micro and macrohistory (Revel, 1995: 125-143. Levi, 2019).

As part of this debate, the papers of María Celia Bravo for Argentina and the co-authored by Silvana Winckler and Arlene Renk for Brazil are presented. In the first one, the regional history of northern Argentina is approached in the long term, analyzing "*The spatial configuration of the tucumanian sugar model, economic collapse, productive reconversion and social conflicts. Argentina (1870-1970)*". This is a historical study on the public policies that promoted the modernization of tucumanian sugar production (1870-1895), contrasting them with those that caused the socioeconomic disarticulation of this agroindustry (1956-1970). The tucumanian industrial park configured in the last third of the 19th century under protectionist policies, access to credit and railway development are the axes that the author studies to identify the social landscape, modified by the urbanizations inside the sugar mills and the formation of sugar towns around the railway stations. After a century, the Tucuman sugar complex would show a restructuring born of the authoritarian government led by General Juan Carlos Onganía whose results expose an abrupt contraction of the productive volume, the concentration of manufacturing and agriculture, the closure of 11 mills, the decline of sugar towns, the growth of unemployment and emigration. These policies would generate changes in the organization of the territory and its actors, which would soon be articulated with protest movements of the affected sugar sectors, giving rise to the emergence of new corporate actors. In the case of Brazil, Silvana Winckler and Arlene Renk, from the field of law and social anthropology, with a regional perspective, undertake the approach of this thematic axis focusing on the issue of "*Hydro business and environmental conflicts in the West of Santa Catarina*". The socio-environmental impact and its conflicts is the central theme of this proposal to refer to land use planning and its consequences. Through a specific case study, the authors address the effects generated by the installation of the Foz do Chapecó

Hydroelectric Power Plant, the role played by the State in financing the megaproject, the private investments in the field of hydro business and the mobilizations that had the affected social sectors as protagonists. A bibliographical and documentary study, and the critical analysis of interesting interviews carried out in 2019 are the basis of this original contribution to the study of the territory.

2. Agrarian conflicts (social actors in disputes over land, agribusiness and family agriculture) are related to the movement of landless rural workers, tenants, populations affected by the construction of hydroelectric power plants as the study of the previous axis exposed, the representative organizations of family farmers, which produce a rich experience of resistance and corporate organization by starring in an intense struggle for their rights, which deserves to be studied.

Regarding this axis that advances in studies on agrarian conflicts, the historical approach to the situation in Argentina during the first decades of the 20th century is in charge of Pablo Voldkin, who poses the challenge that *"Not everything that glitters is gold: living conditions and protests of small pampeano farmers in Argentina 'granary of the world' (1900-1930)"*. The paper analyzes the living and working conditions of small and medium-sized farmers in the Pampas region during the agro-export stage, that is, when Argentina was one of the main exporters of wheat and corn worldwide. These producers, tenants and sharecroppers, would be the protagonists in the expansion of the cultivated area, despite the severe limitations to access land ownership and bank credit, as well as the impositions of large landowners, railway companies and monopolistic grain marketing firms. The analysis – by means of an important record of periodical publications of the time – is about the first and various measures of protest and organization – such as the Argentine Agrarian Federation (1912) – to make visible their difficulties and achieve temporary reductions in the amount of rents and the sanction of a circumscribed number of laws that would not be insufficient to defuse the large landowners pattern in the land tenure system, in this rich Argentine region. The social anthropologist Gabriela Otilia Margarita Schiavoni addresses the rural issue and its conflicts from another perspective, with more current scope for a territory of the triple border in the Northeast of Argentina. *"Feeding agency: The family scale of food production organizations in Misiones (Arg)"* is interesting because of the anthropological sources utilized, because of the topicality of the subject it addresses and because it allows direct link with the third axis of study that this dossier proposes. The paper is, also, about the production of fresh food in the province of Misiones, which is characterized here as a response of small producers to the changes that occurred in the agro-industrial chains, generated by the

breakdown of State regulation in the 1990s. As the author maintains, the production and marketing of food by the farmers themselves constituted a path designed by the main agrarian organization of the province (the Misiones Agrarian Movement), but it also explicitly specifies that the development of this activity during the last 25 years generated a specific agency format: domestic nature small associations, that are multiplied without scaling. This article accurately describes the characteristics of some of these organizations, using data from ethnographic fieldwork carried out in various rural settlements in the province of Misiones, which gives this study a particular originality.

3. Food inequalities (undernutrition/malnutrition) are associated with social exclusion. Producers, suppliers and consumers of food are part of the scene and are its main actors. The composition of the diet as an indicator of social inequality includes the new forms of hunger and malnutrition, because it combines the excess of kcal with the lack of critical nutrients (Rieff, 2016). The growing *commoditization* of food production imposed by agribusiness generates tensions that transcend the rural world and shows the correlation between less biodiversity and the loss of the omnivorous nature of the diet.

Three papers contribute to the characterization, understanding and theoretical, conceptual and statistical interpretation, through the study of cases and more global approaches, to give substance to this third and last axis of the proposed dossier. The first of them carries out a study from the field of food sociology, with the contribution of current statistical and theoretical sources. Its author is the sociologist Luis E. Blacha, who addresses the issue: “*Agribusiness and nutritional inequality in Argentina (20th and 21st centuries). The diet between productivity and social exclusion*”. From this perspective, this paper proposes to analyze the composition of the Argentinean diet in the 21st century as a factor of social exclusion, and understands that nutritional inequality is a type of social inequality, determined both by the food supply and by access to nutrients. While hunger includes situations of deficiency (of nutrients) and excess (of kcal), which can be reconstructed from changes in the bodies of consumers. In this way, industrialized foods produced from the agribusiness model are characterized by a *flavor* – understood as a complex sensory construction that transcends taste – that becomes part of the foundation of nutritional inequality. In this sense, the paper shows how supply, accessibility and *flavor* are significant elements for the design of food solutions, when diet is valued as a factor of social inclusion. A more limited proposal, in terms of temporality (2008-2022), is the one presented from the perspective of economic development. Rolando García Bernado, referring to “*Access to food and food injustice. Revisiting the controversy over the food crisis of 2008 in light of 2022*”, establishes a focus on

financialisation, the variation in prices and the gross agricultural product per capita. The frequency of food crises in the 21st century, which in recent years has been influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, are the central issues that allow the author to present, in a general way, the dynamics of these food crises in medium and short term trends. Finally, and as a compendium of the realities in Argentina and Brazil, Antonio Inácio Andrioli presents his agroecological study on *"Food Inequalities in Argentina and Brazil: a dilemma of our time"*. Food sovereignty and insecurity, and especially hunger as a cause of inequality, are the central axes that the author deploys to carry out his analysis that aims to assess the situation of food inequalities in both South American countries, possessors – as he maintains the same in his arguments – of *"rich and hungry territories at the same time"*. The loss of purchasing power of their populations, the concentration of land, the lack of public policies to combat poverty and the diversification of the agro-export model of basic products, are part of the causes that give consistency to the author's explanations, which are based on statistical studies and political diagnosis about the unfair distribution of income and the increase in poverty among social actors, both in rural and urban areas.

In summary, the central proposal of this dossier about territorial diversities, agrarian conflicts and food inequalities in Argentina and Brazil during the 20th and 21st centuries are exposed here from disciplinary fields, theoretical and regional contexts that are different, but convergent, complementary and with records and interpretations that intend to encourage academic debate, so that their results can become inputs for the implementation of plural and equitable public policies.

The journal's current issue number has, in addition, three works on open topics that enrich, from other social, migratory and environmental perspectives, aspects that are not addressed in the reviewed dossier.

From the field of geography and social sciences, Emanuela Gamberoni and João Carlos Tedesco propose a brief analysis of the *"Historical dynamics and causalities of the Senegalese diaspora – 1970-2010: brief remarks"*. A topic of current interest that through statistics, cartography and photographic illustrations aims to characterize and interpret in demographic, territorial and environmental terms over four decades the causes that produced the intense mobility of the population of Senegal towards new destinations, especially towards Latin America, in particular to Brazil, as part of a migratory cycle – the authors point out – that is part of a particular dynamics in search of new spaces, hopes, opportunities and horizons as substantive and symbolic qualities of the act of migrating.

The second contribution to this section of free topics belongs to Leonardo de Camargo Subtil, a specialist in maritime law, who – with a historical approach – proposes to investigate, as part of international law, an original and not yet deeply analyzed topic by historiography: the whale protection regime during the first half of the 20th century. The analysis is essentially normative with a deductive approach and intends to consider, as the author puts it, *"the legal regimen of regulation of whaling"* in the times preceding the Second World War, with the aim of understanding the possibility of reconciling *"the stability of the whaling industry and transformation through the initial protection of the whales"*. Conventions, protocols and agreements established during the 1930s become the main primary sources of this interesting academic work, which refers to *"The historical-normative evolution of the international whale protection regime before the Second World War: Between stability and transformation"*.

Lastly, José Antonio Moraes do Nascimento presents a regional historical study of the privatization of forest territories through a case study. It is about *"A contestation of community identity through the privatization of two communal forest territories of Rio Grande do Sul during the 19th century"*, based on the analysis of municipal documents, official publications of the period, trades and correspondence, which give originality to the proposed approach. The proposals and interpretations refer to the relationship with community identity, privatization and communal forest areas in the mid-nineteenth century, when the Land Act of 1850 was discussed and sanctioned. The challenge of community identity that is part of the official discourse of the period encourages the privatization of the territories. However, at the same time, Moraes do Nascimento underlines how conflicts and tensions are generated, which become acute in the North of Rio Grande do Sul; that is, in a geographical space to which the author gives centrality in his research.

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