





Key aspects in agro-projects with a commercial approach: An approach from the epistemological conceptions of the rural agricultural problem in Colombia

Aspectos clave en agroproyectos con enfoque comercial: Una aproximación desde las concepciones epistemológicas sobre el problema rural agrario en Colombia

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ABSTRACT

Solidarity economy investment agro-projects have become, since the last decade, State and non-State tools to bring economic development to rural communities in Colombia. This article aims to present a bibliographical review of solidarity economy agro-projects in Colombia and the key aspects (solidarity economy, associativity and productive projects) that affect its sustainability over time. The documentary review was applied in the Proquest and Redylac databases. We collected quality data and information on the state of the art of the study object. Methodologically, we analyzed epistemological approaches and theories with which the agrarian problem in Colombia has been addressed. The concept of agro-project was discussed initially. This concept was defined in its technical, economic and administrative aspects and was differentiated from other types of conventional agricultural organization. Elements such as the solidarity economy, productive projects and associativity were addressed in light of the epistemological treatment of the analyzed authors.

Keywords: agro-projects, solidarity economy, social economy, productive projects

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RESUMEN

Los agroproyectos de inversión de economía solidaria se han convertido desde la última década en las herramientas Estatales y no Estatales para llevar desarrollo económico a las comunidades rurales de Colombia. El objetivo de este artículo es presentar una revisión bibliográfica de los agro-proyectos de economía solidaria en Colombia y los aspectos clave (economía solidaria, asociatividad y proyectos productivos), que inciden en la sostenibilidad en el tiempo de dichos proyectos. Se aplicó revisión documental en bases de datos como Proquest y Redylac, con el propósito de recopilar la información y datos de calidad sobre del estado del arte del objeto de estudio. Metodológicamente, se aplicó un análisis de enfoques y teorías epistemológicas con las que se ha abordado el problema agrario en Colombia. Se aborda inicialmente el concepto de agroproyecto definiéndolo en sus aspectos técnicos, económicos y administrativos, y diferenciándolo de otros tipos de organización agrícola convencionales, seguidamente se abordan elementos como la economía solidaria, los proyectos productivos y la asociatividad, a la luz del tratamiento epistemológico los autores analizados.

Palabras clave: agroproyectos, economía solidaria, economía social, proyectos productivos.

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INTRODUCTION

The socioeconomic precariousness and isolation of the farmer in Colombia has been one of the issues that has most afflicted the national territory. Various authors and schools of thought have widely debated this in Latin American literature. Marxism, for example, through Engels and Marx himself, posits that "under the development of capitalism, pre-capitalist production relations would be almost absolutely destroyed, and with them, the small farmer and the parcel economy" (Acosta & Cruz, 2019, p.15). A similar approach has been observed from the structuralist and neo-structuralist epistemology, the former influencing attempts at agrarian reforms to reduce poverty by distributing income and restricting economic growth. The latter is concerned with public policies aimed at macroeconomic balance, the agreement between private and public, and generally renewing the vision of the agrarian structure (Machado, 2002).



However, the neoliberal doctrine of economic liberalism views the agrarian problem from a simple productivist perspective given by market competitiveness and a decrease in state action; that is, the problem is not centered on the agrarian structure, but on being able to develop factor markets and incentivize them to be redistributed, and if land concentration (rural property) is directly proportional to productivity, the state should not intervene (Machado, 2002). The above allows for significant reflection on the approach to rural problems that the continent, specifically Colombia, has had, as today we can observe the triumph of rampant neoliberalism in all areas of society (Gómez et al., 2019).

It is precisely the neoliberal vision of the state that could give rise to agro-projects, rural investment projects, or productive projects, as the neoliberal school advocates for the temporary financing of rural development programs, which is fully identifiable with the agro-projects executed today, but what is an agro-project? And what relationship does it have with neoliberal practices? An agro-project can be understood as a project with an agricultural or agro-industrial scope. A project is understood as "a temporary effort that is undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result" (PMI, 2017, p.16), which means that every project has a beginning and an end or closure, which is what local, regional, and national governments have done to date, as they implement a project with a community of producers where they are given financing for a certain period with the hope that after that the group of participants can on their own maintain production and operate in a self-managed way to satisfy a market that the project itself brings, such as the case of the Project support for productive alliances - PAAP of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development- MADR.

In the above debate, and for this document, an agro-project is defined as a project formulated, financed, or managed by some institutional line, program, or fund, whether public in its various orders or private, such as non-governmental organizations (international cooperation). Here it is important to make a semantic distinction with agribusiness insofar as this can be understood as a generic term to encompass a business related to agriculture, even with agro-industry; therefore, an agribusiness can be a particular initiative of a natural or legal person with a clear purpose of obtaining surpluses by cultivating, marketing or transforming an agricultural product without it having any direct alignment with a state policy, plan, program or fund.

Now, just because it is one of the many neoliberal measures to address rural issues in Colombia, it is not necessarily a completely unviable alternative for peasant communities, especially considering that many agro-projects have a strong associative component or what is known as the solidarity economy; in this sense, given that agro-projects turn out to be the preferred option by the Colombian institutionality and that there are successful cases of such initiatives, such as the association of fish farmers of Tarra, an association of farmers of Tarra who in the context of the launch of the PPAP presented an innovative proposal to produce fish in the heart of Catatumbo (Norte de Santander). Initially, there were 25 small producers involved, who, in 7 years, went from offering the market 2 thousand kilograms per month to more than 20 tons, with projections of 50 tons for the year 2023.

Similarly, to date, they group more than 60 farmers from the area who see fish production as a viable alternative for economic development, especially as an option against illicit crops. On the other hand, it is a reality that agro-projects present aspects to be improved in any of the phases of the life cycle, so it is imperative in academia to research these opportunities for improvement, and this is where the objective of this paper comes in: to perform a bibliographic analysis between the years 2018 and 2020 to determine the state of the art of the object of research which is solidarity economy agribusiness.

As previously mentioned, one of the motivations of this document is to seek opportunities for improvement so that solidarity economy agribusiness can be sustainable over time and at least allow peasant communities to have significant economic development. In this sense, this research focuses on reviewing state of the art based on the hypothesis that there are critical factors that can guarantee the sustainability over time of these peasant agricultural initiatives—also, considering that in Colombia, the conceptions about the agrarian problem have been moved by Marxist, structuralist, neoliberal, neo-structuralist, and neo-institutionalist doctrines (Machado, 2002).

The first section of this document addresses the concept of solidarity economy, social economy, or popular economy and its respective interpretations from the neo-institutional doctrine of a Mexican case and the neoliberal vision of Colombian studies. Subsequently, the associativity or peasant cooperative component is examined from a neo-institutionalist and neo-structuralist doctrine represented in a Colombian case study, a Spanish case study, and a scientific document that includes information from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico, among other Latin American countries. Finally, the experiences of Mexico, Ecuador, and Argentina regarding productive projects related to agriculture, whose paradigms are neo-institutionalist and neo-structuralist, are analyzed. Subsequently,

the conclusions and baseline questions for future research are presented.

METHODOLOGY

The present research was developed under the precepts of documentary research, which according to the authors, "is an instrumental discipline, like any methodological activity. Considered from this point of view, the theoretical base should be supported by Methodology - understood as the theory of the method - or Epistemology - Theory or Science of Science" (Tancara, 1993, p. 5). A documentary review was applied in databases such as Proquest and Redylac to collect quality information and data on the state of the art of the subject of study. Methodologically, following Estrada et al. (2018), an analysis of epistemological approaches and theories with which the rural problem in Colombia has been addressed was applied. Likewise, various techniques and tools, such as indexing, were used to assign existing bibliographic and determine the scope and contribution to the research.

RESULTS

The research results are presented below and divided into three sections or parts. The first pertains to the solidarity economy, the second to associativity, and the third to productive projects. In each section, an analysis of approaches and epistemological theories with which the rural problem in Colombia has been addressed was applied.

Part I: Regarding Solidarity Economy

As mentioned, one of the significant logics of the neoliberal trend has been to transform the entire productive apparatus, agricultural and non-agricultural, into the industry, leaving little room for maneuver to the urban micro-entrepreneur or small rural producer. In this sense, the concept of solidarity economy, social economy, or popular economy is presented, which perhaps contradicts a little the epistemological logic of addressing Colombian rural problems of the free market, insofar as all strategies for economic development aim to make invisible the work of the small rural producer and their forms of collective action. In Colombia, however, with the rise of agro-projects and forms of social investment towards groups of individuals, the term solidarity economy became popular under a connotation of teamwork, collaborative work, or, in very specific cases, the emphasis placed on the common effort to improve the socio-economic conditions of those who participate in that social group.

However, in countries like Mexico, according to Rojas (2019), there are several widely recognized and identified models: the popular economy (EP), social economy (EC), and solidarity economy (ESD); that is, a very specific distinction can be made in these three concepts that are closely related, and not to mention that they complement each other. In the first case, the EP, according to Rojas (2019), refers to:

a model of the social organization of essentially autonomous work, in which the investment of effort is directly proportional to the need for the social reproduction of the family or economic unit and can also be qualified as the effort to produce for one's use, providing the indispensable means to ensure the survival of its members (p. 7).

Under this premise, it is important to retake that this autonomous and spontaneous organization is the most basic and pure since it is common in some villages that peasants organize themselves to take turns helping in some cultural work of crops, which does not bring up much more sophisticated constructions such as the culture and customs of social groups. Up to this point, this type of economy that Rojas does not refer to could be understood as a light Marxism to the extent that the fundamental pillar that leads the peasants to the popular economy are the life stories since in the end, the protagonist continues to be a peasant as a victim of savage capitalism. And it is precisely at this point that it is worth mentioning the social economy (SE), which according to Rojas (2019), is a:

a model of social labor management, of an associative and self-managed nature, made up of a set of socially owned and democratically managed associations and enterprises, which have their legal personality and have decided to operate within the rules of the non-profit market and with the aim of distributive justice and environmental protection (p. 69).

This definition by Rojas describes a sector in the country in which foundations and corporations prevail, which are not necessarily made up of peasants but can work and carry out specific actions on behalf of peasants and many other social causes driven by the collective action of their members. In this sense, it is possible to identify a neoinstitutionalist current since this type of economy considers the associative institution as a unit of analysis and an element capable of generating social change. Finally, Rojas defines the solidarity economy (SE) as a model:

associative, self-managing, and solidary, expressing itself as an organized, deliberate, and autonomous effort of collective subjects to solve their most pressing needs through the construction of a threshold of shared values and ethical principles and the parallel development of alternative anti-systemic and countercultural practices oriented to the transformation of the dominant social, economic, political, cultural and ideological relations (p. 70).

This is significant, as it takes up the pillars of the EP, that is, the ideological, cultural, and community-territorial foundations, and merges them with the concept of ES with its institutional formality characteristic of neo-institutionalism. This is relevant in a world like today's, where adaptation for survival is necessary. Although this might seem like a maxim from natural selection theories coming from natural sciences, it is a reality that cannot be ignored: then, why not use the socially accepted models at the level of peasant organization and take advantage of them to resume those practices aimed at social transformation, just as Rojas mentions in ESD?

The above, insofar as addressing rural problems, has become an ideological struggle that seems endless between Marxists and neoliberals (Machado, 2002), which has diluted the real fight and has removed the peasant and small producer from the context, who paradoxically is the actor, protagonist, and victim of rural problems.

Returning to the Colombian environment, numerous authors and institutions have proposed a solidarity economy as key in poverty reduction processes, even as a fundamental alternative for post-conflict. Now, in the country, the solidarity venture is associated as the precursor of the solidarity economy. Therefore, it is proposed as an element that generates wealth, welfare, and quality of life for the population, so the entrepreneurial spirit should be encouraged through public policies that allow for generating social capital (Romero & De la Fuente, 2019).

This is in coherence with the neoliberal doctrine, as business competitiveness is pursued, given the ability to generate surpluses in production that can be increased by raising the volume of sales. Now, it is true that associativity is a viable alternative; however, it is necessary to re-evaluate whether rural problems related to low peasant incomes should be addressed from the neoliberal perspective of using the solidarity economy as an excuse to insert the small producer into a system in which only profits matter.

On the other hand, as previously stated, not necessarily a solidarity economy organization that is dedicated to the commercialization of agricultural goods, products, and services means that it is doing things wrong, quite the contrary; However, the crux of the matter is when the solidarity economy agro-projects become an industry with a social surname, as this would not contribute to rural development; because as already analyzed in the Mexican case, the solidarity economy is much more than a group of small producers who join under a legal figure to sell their crops in conventional capitalist logic. In Brazil, for example, according to Schwab et al. (2020), the valuation of cooperative processes in the territory, the formation of new markets with an emphasis on social and economic sustainability, and issues of equity and gender are part of the solidarity economy proposal. Likewise, unifying agroecology with the social and solidarity economy (SEE) represents an opportunity to democratize agri-food systems while defending the right to food and sustainable, healthy production adapted to the territory where it is grown.

Returning precisely to the conjunction presented by the previously mentioned authors, between agroecology and solidarity economies, some Colombian Marxist studies precisely address the concept of the agro-ecological peasant as a response to the current capitalist-imperialist system and the idea of making two forms of socio-economic production concomitant and co-existing is extracted (Lince & Pulgarín, 2018); however, the challenge lies in finding not only middle ground between these two positions but in truly contributing to peasants leading a dignified life, as well as small producers, as it is no secret that the income of farmers' collectives is well below the current legal minimum wage and in general to the average income of workers in the rest of the country (Osorio et al., 2019). The above shows that as long as this eternal ideological and Manichaeian debate continues, the reality is that peasants and small producers continue to live in precarious conditions.

Part II: On associativity

The second factor to consider in the success of a solidarity economy agroproject is associativity, which is concurrent with the analysis in the first part of the document. UNDP defines associativity as a voluntary and non-remunerated organization of people who generate a defined and explicit bond to find or pursue a common objective.

Now, many have considered associative organizations as the axis of rural development, or at least economic development, as through this type of affiliation, it is possible to confront large-scale industrial or business agriculture,

especially in these times of globalization, free markets, and free trade agreements. In Colombia, their creation has been promoted since the 90s as a mechanism for small agricultural producers to insert themselves into national and global economies. This primarily responds to the prevailing neoliberal doctrine, as peasants or small producers would otherwise be completely excluded from the economic equation. However, it can also be understood as a neo-institutional solution, as these associations or rural institutions are called to be the fundamental unit of the Colombian rural movement, and not merely as a simple way of "opposing" or articulating capitalism as a mode of subsistence; but as true territorial actors.

Under the previous debate, authors such as Bravo et al. (2020) indicate that "it is possible to find contributions that these business associations can make to the development of productive policies, through union representation, service provision, capacity building, participation in policy design and promotion of local strategies" (p.18). Knowing there is a low institutional and business intensity, this should be done by promoting actions that stimulate coordination to stimulate the convergence of individual efforts. However, although the goal is to achieve economies of scale, this effort to coordinate, organize, and, in general, associate should be able to channel the common purposes of individuals and amalgamate them into an institution that is the object of social attention. Therefore, it is a predominant factor in the success of a solidarity economy agro project, as perhaps the level of associativity is not sufficient to face the difficulties that arise, and this, in turn, may be given by the mere interest of the participants for the economic benefit of being able to market together; that is, having access to specific markets, which is the neoliberal proposal.

There is a relationship between urban cooperatives and rural associativity, all defined by the visions of addressing rural and non-rural problems. In this regard, through a new public procurement regime, Europe has generated a series of guidelines that focus on public investment through civil society cooperatives, thus fulfilling its social, environmental, entrepreneurial, and social innovation objectives (Arnáez, 2020). This corresponds to a neostructuralist logic since, through public policies, governments should favor these organizations representing a large portion of society. This, of course, represents powerful challenges, as "collaboration with cooperatives is manifested, not only as the preferred option to respond to social needs not sufficiently covered by the state but also as the ideal form for citizens to participate more and better in public affairs" (Arnáez, 2020, p. 52).

Thus, the epistemological discussion should be about whether this type of neostructuralist proposal can be applied to solve the problems of Colombian rural life. The Euroreo case, specifically that of Spain, as Arnáez (2020) mentioned, is an example that the State can develop policies around worker cooperatives. But this has happened, beyond political will, due to a strong component "of solidarity, democracy, equity, equality, self-help, and self-responsibility" (Arnáez, 2020, p. 53) that these associations have had. Therefore, it is imperative that in Colombia's solidarity economy agro projects, emphasis is placed on such components, plus any applicable, so that these organizations can be solid and become true institutions of representation and rural empowerment in the future.

In terms of associativity, Colombia also has significant progress. "The association is a strategy to return the social fabric in the territory; that is, a space for listening, resilience, thinking about a life project together, and especially where women can actively participate, becoming a transformation axis of their environment" (Chamorro, 2020, p.23); however, according to the same author, "the integral rural reform requires the construction of peasant associations, where peasant cooperatives can be a key point for the agricultural sector" (p.26). Under this debate, strengthening associative competencies, skills, or abilities must be one of the relevant points to guarantee the success of solidarity economy agroprojects. Thus, it is possible to determine the relevance of the formal peasant organization as a fundamental axis for the agricultural sector, not only in the economic sense but also socially, for example, in its contribution to the deconstruction of violence, which is a contribution to mitigating the rural problems affecting the country.

From a Marxist perspective, an association can be distinguished as an alternative means to reduce helplessness in the face of large foreign empires. In this sense, this type of association has greatly impacted Latin America since it is not only Colombia but also Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay, where significant changes have been achieved in preserving peasant and rural systems thanks to associativity. A case that exemplifies this is the sugar cooperatives in the province of Tucumán in Argentina, where, due to organization and cooperation, they have managed to contribute to the extent possible to meet the needs of the associates by integrating into the Argentine sugar agro-industry (Acosta & Cruz, 2019). However, given the complexity of the agricultural problem and the spaces of capital domination, a relevant measure for the strengthening of investment agroprojects is precisely a public policy aimed at the real strengthening of peasant associativity and, if possible, a cooperative or formal association is structured that can respond to the needs of the peasants and of course the territory.

As mentioned in some previous sections, the power of change of community associative organizations (peasants or workers) can lead to companies being recovered by their workers, where a clear re-conversion of the capitalist system into a cooperative one is evident. In Argentina, the diffusion of recovered companies nourished "the repertoire of collective action of workers to face the closure of productive units" (Kasparian and Rebón, 2020, p. 45).

The Argentine experience is relevant for the Colombian case, specifically for addressing rural problems, as all associations must be strengthened to channel their purposes beyond market access, and the way found in the Argentine case gives a clue as to how they should be strengthened: by sharing and showing successful experiences both in other regions of the country and the world, and this is where one of the critical aspects for solidarity economy agroprojects arises, which can correspond to the university, the academy as "a fundamental actor in these developments, developing movements in the institutional order to be able to articulate actions with social organizations and other state entities on the way to developments that enhance transformations in the territories" (Niño and Vázquez, 2019, p. 78) and other private institutions or not, with interests in the peasant problem, and although the epistemological discussion continues to persist among a neoliberal government that opposes the other epistemological visions, to find an assertive, adequate, and adapted way to the peasant's needs so that the solidarity economy agroproject to which it belongs can be sustainable over time, this method should, as shown in this second section, have as a basic foundation the strengthening of rural associativity.

Part III: On Productive Projects

In the preliminary section of this document, a differentiation was made between an agroproject and an agribusiness; however, it is pertinent here to mention another important element related to agricultural projects. Much has been said about productive projects, but it is a term that has been coined under the following conditions: in small populations through UMATAS or free resources from territorial entities, supplies, seeds, and other things have been directly delivered to farmers without the intermediation of legally established associations or cooperatives so that the farmer could carry out individual productive projects as a strategy to improve the socio-economic conditions of rural life.

Secondly, in Colombia, with the boom of technical high school education and the SENA-MEN agreements that allowed - for better or worse - those official educational institutions (IE) had within their goals to integrate with a technique offered by SENA and even create a program that was adapted to the needs of the IE environment; under this new policy, it was sought that high school graduates had a joint and double degree (technical) so that they could be articulated to the productive world. Most IE requires to award of the degree of technical bachelor and the presentation of a productive project by the 11th-grade student; these projects were worked on from the 10th grade in a theoretical and practical way, then at the end of the 11th grade, this business unit is sustained. These productive projects or productive units range from crops, and food processing, to providing services such as gardening to the inhabitants of municipal capitals. Third and finally, also due to the income and intervention of NGOs and international cooperation in rural areas, financial and technical support was given to individual or collective initiatives, but not necessarily mediated by legal persons, for farmers to have productive activities that are usually related to better species, and vegetable crops.

The above allows us to make an approximation to the concept of a productive project, which is that individual initiative financed by the State or by international cooperation but not aimed at the solidarity economy; but to provide direct and particular support to individuals, not to collectives. It is also highlighted that, due to their scale, these types of productive projects are mainly tools or alternatives for food security or subsistence for farmers since their aim is not to accumulate capital. However, these productive projects have lost value by some neoinstitutionalist postulates, and subsequently by neoliberal hegemony, and have opted to support institutions, associations, and legally constituted groups as an alternative for inclusion in the logic of capitalism and the free market.

Now, the issue of productive projects is taken up again as a critical success factor for a solidarity economy agroproject because first, it should be thought to strengthen the individual character of the small producer through diverse, productive projects; that is, not monocultures, or only one species for everyone, which later become associations, objects of solidarity economy agroprojects and offer to the market a great variety of products that are not affected by supply-demand, because by having a range of possibilities, just like the logic of investment portfolios, the risk of losing crops is reduced. In Campozano, a province of Ecuador, the intervention of NGOs supporting productive projects of artisans and farmers has been significant because, thanks to this, the level of income and job generation increased and allowed economic development not seen before in this community, also generating

an increase in the quality of life (Zea et al. 2019). This case is particularly striking, given that the financial support given had to be repaid; that is, practically via credit, which is a neoliberal approach to the problem of Ecuadorian rural life; however, it was an option that generated economic development in Campozano.

In Coahuila, Mexico, the experience of rural productive projects with a gender focus has been enriching, as poor women in rural conditions seem to develop greater resistance to the unfair and undignified context in which they live (Cázares-Palacios, 2019). Therefore, women seek various individual and collective strategies to face the economic and social situational demands in their lives and those of their families. Colombia is no exception, as the network of agroecological markets in Bogota represents a milestone in the national agroecological revolution, insofar as although there are legally constituted associations, there are also informal organizations of farmers or small agroecological producers who started their business units as productive projects; but once this "super association" or kind of "federation" of agroecological producers was formed, it allowed to develop synergies related to fair trade as an alternative for development for Bogotan peasant communities. The plurality and high participation of producers on such a small scale, which normally could not participate in a traditional fair due to the volume required, is highlighted.

The above implies that "the network has become a community that has reciprocity as a fundamental element, where the care of producers and consumers are the essence of its existence" (Alarcón, 2018, p. 167). Now, private enterprises can also contribute to these models of productive projects. The experience of Peru in the mining influence zone of the regions of Arequipa and Piura is an example of this; in this case, the mining company gave the farmers in the influence zones capital and accompaniment to generate individual agricultural productive units such as guinea pigs, chickens, vegetables and even a hydroponics project, as the technical emphasis of the production system transmitted to the peasants, was partly agroecological, since they were taught to elaborate organic fertilizers, intelligent use of irrigation, and best practices of soil use (Salas, 2019).

This practice from Peru generates a contrast since the neoliberal extractive logic to "balance" the scale and the negative externalities generated give the affected peasants a short-term economic development alternative since environmental damage cannot be swapped for any reason. The point will come when it is irreversible, and not even all the productive projects given to the peasants will be able to compensate for that damage. The above would also fit within an analysis of practices of domination of private enterprise to maintain and not lose control of communities; however, this element is not part of the framework of analysis of this document.

CONCLUSIONS

Generally speaking, this manuscript allows us to glimpse the deep debate and epistemological conflict between the neoliberal structuralist, neostructuralist, and Marxist currents, which has led to a fragmentation in the treatment or approach of rural issues in Colombia, with a prevalence of predominantly neoliberal proposals and measures that the state has formulated and implemented to date.

Similarly, even though it may seem that solidarity economy agro-projects are nothing more than another facet of neoliberalism, or an attempt to introduce the farmer into the dynamics of supply and demand and capitalism, significant approaches have been made suggesting that a properly directed solidarity economy agro-project can transform into an option that not only provides economic stability for the small producer but also promotes the food security and sovereignty of the territories.

Regarding the Solidarity Economy, it is possible to indicate that the first challenge for the solidarity economy, specifically related to agro-projects, will be to redefine precisely the term 'solidarity economy,' which today is practically limited to the concept of entities like DIAN, leading to the impoverishment of the true depth of a Solidarity Economic Enterprise (EDS) capable of not only generating economic security for their families through agro-projects, but also of developing alternative, anti-systemic and countercultural practices, as denoted with agroecology and local or short circuit markets. Regarding the epistemological approach, the direct antagonism between followers of the neoliberal doctrine and those of Marxism seems never-ending. So alternatives must be proposed that harmonize these two currents to the extent that, while it is true that Marxism places the peasant-land axis as central, which would be ideal; however, we must not forget that we live in a westernized, colonial, and therefore neoliberal capitalist country, and until that reality changes, a middle ground must be found where it is possible to present the peasant and small producer with a solution to the problems they must deal with in national rural areas.

Productive projects can become a preliminary alternative to implementing solidarity economy agro-projects. In

the same way, the following questions are raised: ¿How to take the experiences from successful cases of productive projects analyzed to generate a replicable model in other rural areas where a solidarity economy agro-project is intended to be implemented? What should be the real objective of an agro-project, food security or sovereignty, or the generation of surpluses for participants?

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