

Speeches and practices of the rural development: A reading from Caldas department, Colombia

Discursos y prácticas de desarrollo rural: una lectura
desde el departamento de Caldas, Colombia

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ABSTRACT

To contribute to the current debate on rurality, research was conducted focusing on the discourses and practices of rural development. To this end, documents were reviewed that address this topic from 1950 to 2007, and was examined primary information provided by officials from various institutions and programs oriented rural development projects in Caldas. It was found a predominance of economic and productive approaches in rural development practices, and an eclectic position in speeches. Analysis of primary sources can be inferred that in Caldas there is a vanguard and theoretical management of the concept, but the practices continue to be guided by principles derived from theories and models considered outdated.

Key words: approaches of rural development, rural societies, farming sector, human development.

RESUMEN

Para contribuir al debate actual sobre la ruralidad, se realizó una investigación enfocada en los discursos y prácticas del desarrollo rural. A tal fin se llevó a cabo una revisión de documentos que abordan esta temática desde 1950 hasta 2007; así mismo, se examinó información primaria aportada por funcionarios de distintas instituciones que orientan programas y proyectos de desarrollo rural en Caldas. Se encontró un predominio del enfoque económico-productivo en las prácticas del desarrollo rural y una posición ecléctica en los discursos. Del análisis de las fuentes primarias se puede inferir que en Caldas hay un manejo teórico vanguardista del concepto, pero las prácticas continúan orientándose por principios derivados de teorías y modelos que se consideran ya superados.

Palabras clave: enfoques de desarrollo rural, sociedades rurales, sector agropecuario, desarrollo humano.

Introduction

In the existential context of human beings, concepts, like the imaginary and institutions play the role of guiding our ways of being (identity) and to be (done) with the world and society. However, they are collective constructions, socially and historically located and permanently subject to changes and modifications.

Rurality and rural development, as human constructs, have been subjected in recent years for changes both in speeches and in their content, and practices by academic and political institutions of government and non-governmental order. These new meanings are manifested in the definition of policies that mandate and regulate rural and agricultural sector, and the orientation and implementation of rural development programs.

Although the changes promoted within societies are justified in terms of promoting better living conditions, studies

on the impact of development programs in rural areas have shown their inability to not only help to achieve the desired societal achievements, but, by contrast, have created new and more complex issues, from the dynamics and processes of implementation.

The above considerations motivated the conduct of research can be identified at a local space, the department of Caldas, the state of the discourses and practices of rural development.

Methodology

This document is based on research "Rethinking rural development in the department of Caldas", held by the authors of this text and members of the research group CERES (Centre for Rural Studies, University of Caldas).

The approaches are derived from: a) A review of academic and official documents of different national and inter-

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national institutions involved in the countryside by his speeches and / or practice: IICA, Clacso, FAO, Eclac, World Bank, the Inter-American Development, Fodepal, Incoder, CCI, IGAC and Ministry of Agriculture of Colombia. b) Semi-structured interviews made to officials: Mélida Fraume and Cristina Restrepo (Incoder, Manizales), Silvio Rios Yepes (Ministry of Agriculture of the department of Caldas), Miryam Robledo and Martha Giraldo (Social Integration Unit of Manizales), Pompeyo Jose Parada and Luis Miguel Alvarez (Programs of Sociology and Agriculture of the University of Caldas); in the field guild to Jesus Antonio Diaz (Salvation Agricultural Unit). The contents of this inquiry were: perceptions and understandings of the countryside, its implications for development programs, and on indicators used by institutions to evaluate the success of programs or projects.

The required information is classified in tables and matrices categorical then analyzed according to criteria developed from the questions and objectives.

Results and discussion

The literature review identified the theories or models of development that have resulted more in structuring approaches to rural development in Colombia. It is clear that the criteria that guide the discourses and practices of rural development in historically determined societal spaces (the case of Latin American societies), respond to a social ideal previously defined within development theories developed for social systems have other reference points, geophysical, economic, political and cultural (in the case of the United States and Europe). Tab. 1 presents the main idea of the theoretical and methodological approaches that shape rural development in the country.

TABLE 1. Rural development theories and approaches.

Models / Development theories	Rural development approach
Modernization	Modernizing
Industrialization	Who industrialized
Neoliberal	Opening-up
Neostructural	Integrational – Agroexport
Eclectic	Territorial Livelihoods

Cloning companies

The modernization theory underlying the fact that third world countries should follow the same path as the developed capitalist countries (Kay, 2005:3). The principles of this theory promote rural development process that contributes to achieving the proper ideals of modern society.

This is done through penetration with economic, social and cultural part of the modern Northern industrialized countries in the countries of the South and rural agricultural tradition.

The implementation of this theory concentrate efforts involving national and international road construction (development strategies) that enabled modern countries (industrialized and urbanized) to disseminate among the nations pre-modern agricultural knowledge, skills, technologies, organizational forms, institutional, entrepreneurial attitudes and innovation, thus ensuring social order in the image and likeness of the North.

Change of vocation

The approach that some call the industrialization of the countryside and others, import substitution industrialization, is derived from the theoretical proposal also known by the ECLAC model name because it was promoted by the Economic Commission for Latin America ECLAC. This proposal, far from being an alternative to the previous model (modernization), is presented as the appendix or continuation.

He assured the underdeveloped countries to move into a more advanced model of society was necessary to give the agricultural vocation and take the industrialization of economies as the key strategy to overcome the factors delay (Perez and Farah, 2002:14). It was argued that the primary sectors (especially those related to agriculture) were unable to produce and lead the economic and social transformations necessary to stimulate development. ECLAC said that economies based on export of agricultural or mineral products were bound to fail (Jaramillo, 2002:17).

Produce for export

The openness approach is based on the proposals of globalization and open markets to promote agricultural restructuring towards export, modernization of technology and agribusiness (Acosta, 2006:4). It advocates the dismantling of protective regimes on exports, the reduction of tariffs on imports of agricultural products, the incentive for private sector participation (Perez and Farah, 2002:18). The public support for companies producing goods agricultural end-use for their highly competitive price, quality or features.

Promoted by international agencies, like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB), rules proposed model equal economic openness for all sectors of the economy because they have advocated policies that favored a particular productive sector in particular. In this

theoretical context was not feasible to discuss or refer to rural development policies, but rather a stable and consistent macroeconomic scenario (Kay, 2005:17). He put on an equal basis to both domestic and foreign capital.

The spread of neoliberal theory coincides (eighties) with two social and political events of great significance and importance: a) Sustainable development (Romero, 2006:300) and, b) structural reforms to States, in the case of Colombia, materialized in participatory planning and the decentralization policy. At the same time authorized the national government to carry out a restructuring of the Ministry of Agriculture (Perez and Farah, 2002: 19; Acosta, 2006: 5).

Global integration

The neo-structuralist theory, eighties and early nineties, emerged as an alternative to the neoliberal model and in response to the new realities created by globalization. As the structuralist approach or industrialization is sustained and supported by ECLAC.

It raises the need for the State is erected as the promoter par excellence, of development. This revival starring the State is accompanied by a set of requirements (Kay, 2005: 25; Pachón, 2006: 8) relating to:

- a) An institutional restructuring to enable the States to exercise greater management capacity compared to human resource development and equitable economic growth.
- b) The non-state intervention in productive activities.
- c) Recognition from the agricultural policies of the heterogeneity of agricultural producers.
- d) The design of differentiated policies that support the rural economy.

In the context of rural development, this approach makes less emphasis on land reform as a strategic element of this process and gives more importance to markets, private enterprise and foreign capital, which he considers necessary for a country to reach levels successful development, also highlights the maximum state intervention as regulator or controller on the market (Kay, 2005: 25).

Return to local people and

Eclectic theoretical positions give rise to new approaches to rural development, among these, the focus of Territorial Development and Rural Livelihoods approach.

The first aims to overcome the failures identified by the approaches and strategies designed and implemented

previously (Acosta, 2006: 6). It is based on Marshall's theory of 1930, which takes the concept of agro-industrial districts. According to this theory, the agglomeration of firms in the same sector in a country generates so-called "local external economies" (internal to the territory). These savings help reduce production costs due to the presence of skilled labor, easy access to resources and services, reduced costs of transport, information and knowledge flow and linkage to markets (Schejtman and Berdegué, 2003: 18).

The territorial approach promotes "[...] a political process that affects the entire space from the neighborhood to the global village" (Echeverri, 2006: 208). "Gives weight to the agency of the State (national, regional, local) or, alternatively, to international agencies and NGOs as promoters of development agencies" (Llambí and Duarte, 2006: 245). Relates the development "[...] a process of productive transformation and institutional development in a particular rural area, which aims to reduce rural poverty" (Llambí and Duarte, 2006: 13).

For its part, the Livelihoods approach (livelihoods approach) or livelihoods, as others call it, was initially introduced as the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) Report "Food 2000" presented to the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987. Its starting point is not the needs or wants of individuals and family groups, but the assets or capital resources (human, social, political, financial, natural, materials) that have, and the actions and decisions made in the everyday of their lives. It emphasizes the identification and study of livelihood strategies (ways to combine the use of these assets or resources), and strives to expand the mechanisms for participation of various stakeholders, especially rural families in the formulation of public policies. The assets, pillars of livelihood, to some extent can substitute for each other. Thus, some groups may use the social capital, such as family or neighborhood networks, in times when financial capital is scarce.

Although this approach livelihood strategies builds on a base material incorporates, in turn, in the process, social, cultural and political.

For its part, the theoretical proposal called the New Rural-ity and structure is supported from the recognition of the various transformations, especially in recent decades, rural areas of countries denominated in the developing world. These changes are related largely to the dynamics involved in the process of globalization and the implementation of structural adjustment packages derived from neoliberal theory. Among these transformations, Kay (2005: 31) mentions the following:

- a) The multi or multiple jobs for the rural population which is manifested in the growing employment in non-agricultural activities such as crafts, trade, transport, rural tourism or agro-industrial and construction located in urban or rural;
- b) A tendency toward wage labor;
- c) Intensification of migration processes, long and short term, to rural or urban areas within and outside the country;
- d) Diversification of sources of income of most rural households;
- e) Change in the valuation and use of rural areas.

Caldas institutions

The institution is represented, at this point, government territorial entities directly involved in the rural and agricultural sector through the implementation of programs aimed at producers and the rural population in general.

People first

Under the premise that achieving rural development requires first achieving human development, officials interviewed suggest that the institutional priority action programs and actions aimed at improving the living conditions of rural population. The main objective of these development programs has been to improve human development indices in the region, however, recent studies by international agencies such as the Human Development regional report 2004: A pact for the region. United Nations Program for Development - UNDP concludes that, in the last decade, the department of Caldas has a stagnation in human development indicators.

According to the above, development programs led by the institutions in the department of Caldas, are intended to solve (whether partially) some of the problems identified as persistent. Is the case of newly implemented programs for Social Integrity Unit and the Ministry of Agriculture Department, called "Food Security, Rural and Urban", which have focused on providing the rural population, inputs and training to produce species of crops and vegetable consumption.

Through these actions the institutions reach only provide superficial solutions to problems that are structural and promote many times between the rural and social organizations, more dependence and subordination (Mora and Sumpsi, 2004: 31); relational conditions ultimately, serve to exacerbate existing problems.

The department of Caldas recreates conditions that have helped define the criticism of governmental and nongovernmental institutions engaged in policy planning and rural development programs. These conditions include:

- Lack of coordination between the various stages of inter-agency working, planning, management, implementation and execution of projects and programs. This, despite the existence of political and legal space mechanisms that allow interaction of the various characters involved in the processes and dynamics of rural and agricultural sector.
- Lack of integrity in the projects. Generally, they focus their analysis and focus their actions in the dimensions related to productivity and the adequacy of agricultural infrastructure. This targeted intervention can generate good results, but rarely improve the lives of the rural population because they cannot fill the gap left by the exclusion of equally important existential dimensions.
- Lack of continuity of projects and programs. They are mostly short-term programs with a permanence that hardly goes beyond four years and regular governments.
- Lack of evaluation. It manifests itself in a vacuum of information for analysis and promote adjustments in programs and actions. In some cases, knowledge of the effects of these interventions cannot transcend the local, in others; its effectiveness is unknown even in the area of influence (Mora and Sumpsi, 2004: 31).
- Instrumentation of the rural population. The institutions, in its attempt to improve from outside the living conditions of the rural population, end up reducing them to "receptor units" of programs and development packages, denying passing them as active subjects and co-authors of the rural and agrarian.

Despite growing concern for human development, institutions have not made structural changes in the process of planning or related structures of rural inhabitants. Rather, the ways to practice development continue Sticking more to principles derived from the approach "modernization", which is assumed solely from farmers as producers and receivers of technological packages, which from the beginning of development proposals alternative and innovative.

Academia: unrealized proposals

In the academic field is, perhaps, where more progress has been made in the analysis and development of alternative approaches for sustainable development in critical reflection on the impact of the approaches and models of

development in the rural realities and current agricultural issues. However, this “theoretical art” or progress in rural development thinking, is not realized, for instance:

- a) Proposals for new social arrangements that create political, economic and environmental triggers counter the various problems facing the rural world and society in general.
- b) Expansion of training program offers professional, undergraduate and graduate level in the field of agronomy, veterinary, animal husbandry, agricultural anthropology, among others.
- c) Update on training programs. So far, curricular adjustments have been made do not show a significant change in its philosophy, training purposes, the contents or in the field of socio-agricultural interventions. A reading of current curricula reveals that still bound to productivist principles and guidelines, technology and sectored.
- d) Coordination between the political thinking, technical thinking, academic thinking and knowledge and production practices of rural populations.

Given this, the university is in default academia to undertake structural changes in the thematic training and research orientation and projection. The training process should focus on the population involved in farming, their participation in decision-making processes, idiosyncrasies peasant, knowledge, values and customs, food sovereignty. And stop thinking about the productive and technological dimensions as the only alternative for rural development (Pachón, 2006: 12).

At the academy he questions his growing isolation and lack of leadership in the areas of cooperation, planning and decision making on matters related to rural and agricultural sector. In the case of the department of Caldas, universities have lost importance in the generation of knowledge and development of technologies appropriate to geophysical and socio-political characteristics of rural societies. They demand joint design strategies to enable them to interact with the political, economic, business, agriculture, farmer and rural society.

Unions: fight for superlive

The union is connected, usually with farmers’ organizations that bring together producers by crop, region or area, or their economic capacity. Among the most representative organizations of the country include: the National Federation of Coffee Growers (Federacafe), the National Farmers

Federation (Fedegan), the National Federation of Potato Producers (Fedepapa) and the National Farmers Federation Grains (Fedenalce), among others.

Regardless of the work object, each of these organizations are striving to carry out actions aimed at ensuring the welfare of its members, affiliates and / or beneficiaries, to negotiate with the government and other entities to protect and guarantee the production and marketing of their products. In the country, sector union has become a socio-economic actors in the development of both the rural and agricultural sector and society in general.

In the department of Caldas, the National Salvation Association for Agricultural groups to small and small producers, mostly coffee, sugarcane and rice. For this association is clear that while the development of rural communities and the country’s agricultural sector is related to economic development, economic growth alone does not produce the desired social outcomes in terms of distribution and equity. This assertion is supported by the fact that the distribution depends, fundamentally, the political structure of countries and institutions inherited from the past, ie the initial distribution of production factors, including land , and human resources provided by the educational system (Kalmanovitz and Lopez, 2007: 167).

Conclusions

At the present time, it is evident the difficulty faced by both societies as actors to signify the concept of rural development. It’s no secret the confusion that results when official texts non-governmental agencies or bodies, academics and guilds find different words (concepts) to refer to the subject, to the contexts and the processes and activities related to the practice social. In this sense raises questions as: What is different about rural development and agricultural development?, How rural society and agricultural sector?, What farmer and producer?, How rural women, rural women and women producers?, did family, youth, childhood farm, rural and producer?, how productive chains and networks structures and social relations?, how productive a business organization and a productive family organization?, etc..

The above difficulty is explained, in part because the human world in general and rural areas in particular have increasingly more complex because: a) have diversified and changed both its processes and its actors; b) de-subjectification and delocalization processes of agricultural production has shifted the control of this activity to other actors of society, such as hypermarkets, were not considered part

of the rural world; c) globalization is creating a dynamic in which decisions about the processes and activities of the rural and agricultural sector less dependent on farming communities and governments (local and national) and the demands of the market and private interests of international order.

Historically it has been stated that neither the ordering of society, nor the living conditions of farmers, rural development approaches have generated the expected results. Although its application has led to advances on production and economic growth, this progress has benefited only the few, the majority of this population continues to coexist with old and new problems associated with social phenomena such as hunger, poverty, income inequality, inequality gender, land concentration, pollution, among others. In Colombia still expected to change the current social order which is expressed in the adoption of new political and economic structures in rural societies promote favorable conditions for human reproduction and agricultural production.

In this connection we share, in part, FAO's concern when asked: Will there be an insurmountable divide between the theoretical and the results of the application of different approaches? It is possible that overcoming the gap lies in: a) defining a national project through a process of collective construction that focuses on the strategic development and contexts are derived from a consensus around the interests of various actors Colombian society; b) develop approaches and design proposals for development from below, ie from the inhabitants in partnership with trade associations, academic, governmental and nongovernmental organizations. Each approach should be built based on the reality of the territory or area, according to their needs, strengths and weaknesses, as each place has different economic, environmental, social, cultural and political.

Eclecticism is the perspective that dominates the discourse and practice of rural development institutions of the department of Caldas. The program proposals are guided by principles not derived from a single theory or model of development, but that feed on a variety of its political, social, environmental and economic problems that have been emerging within the various disciplines and schools of thought. Such is the case of recent approaches known as Territorial Development and Rural Livelihoods, because although its impact is not yet evaluated and documented, they paid the effort to recognize and give value to size and resources not accounted for by previous theories or approaches. However, despite its

efforts to focus on people, these new approaches still fail to get rid of the constituent political and ideological burdens of old models of development.

Given the geophysical and climatic characteristics of Colombia and the recognition of the role played by agriculture in the history of our country, it is urgent to engage universities and their research groups in developing proposals for both forms of social organization and productive as research, innovation and agricultural technology.

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