



Questions about the new rurality

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Introduction

This paper presents the changes in the characteristics of the social actors of the agricultural production sector in relation to the conditions they once had as subjects in the Pampa region configuration when this region began its international insertion and capital expansion. Its modernization has modified the production structure as well as the forms in which technology has been incorporated. Such technologies as those produced by the agrochemical and the farm machinery industries, and others such as transport and technology packages can all be used in different contexts of production. In like manner, the industrialization of

agriculture has advanced in many countries. The trans-nationalization of agriculture has given the agri-food complex a leading and dominant role. The agri-food industry started to demand raw materials with the same characteristics regarding conservation, transport and other conditions related to the modernization of the means of production of the industries themselves.

The new contexts have brought about diverse issues for the analyses of the rural structure, specially its forms of organization. Capital has advanced over the agro-industry and modified work relations and contracts. Contracts have given less stability in the work relations. The incorporation of agricultural machinery has affected the work force and has impacted on their salaries and their families. The capital has thus spread quickly because at the beginning it benefitted all actors of production due to their possibility of mobility within the rural structure trough an increase in production

Modernization marks the beginning of the New Rurality in the Pampa region because the new technologies have given place to many changes in all means of production as well as in the livelihoods of farmers. Young people have migrated from the farms to the cities to study and/or to find new job opportunities. The rural families have moved to the villages and rural towns. So all this has given rise to monoculture while livestock production has decreased.

Globalization has restructured the relationships among social actors and, at the same time, has given rise to new actors. This issue focuses on the new realities of the products and on the changes in the production means and the New Rurality is strengthened through a circular relationship between products and capital (products, capital, land and social capital) and among the position changes of the actors within the structure. This issue is developed below.

From de social models to the technological model

The expansion of capital since the industrial revolution has consolidated social models through the organization forms of the production in the rural space. The subjects of these models are determined by the access to and the ownership of the production resources and these determine the rural structure. In this process, both technologies and industrial production have preponderant roles.

The social model is conditioned by the reproduction of the forms of production organization and the process of accumulation. The social relation reinforces subjects with those characteristics born out of the power relations. They become consolidated in the rural structure and by relations of domination which involve political and economic powers.

The technologies adopted in the late 70s and in the following decades strengthened the technological model and showed the importance of the means of production organization. For example, family farms were re-arranged to fit in the technological model either to become capitalized or to survive. Besides, a competition for the acquisition of technological packages took the lead while the social actors of productions became secondary. All of these circumstances have stressed the differences within the rural structure.

The new actors are associated with the technological model and their leading role in the acre expansion of monoculture farming, particularly soybean, in the Pampa region. These actors have built up networks to obtain the greatest benefits and to ensure the reproduction of the cycle of production through capitalization. In these cases, the control over the production resources such as land and capital has been the priority. The technology model is articulated with the control of production in different regions and countries to produce commodities. The main actors in this process of accumulation have found this hegemonic form as a result of globalization.

The new actors are present in each stage of the internationalization of capital.

The characteristics of the New Rurality have increased during the stages of globalization, for example with relation to the introduction of technologies and the characterization of new actors in diverse situations. In the process of transformation, some actors have become connected to the food system complexes with hegemonic characteristics while others to the service sectors such as tourism, organic and urban productions, and so on. They all have in common an increase in income and a decrease in costs for the producer by the quality of the region natural resources. The natural resources of production are still important in the Pampa region. Here, this issue includes a struggle for the land. The largest producers increase their production scales by renting lands from smaller producers, some of which were family farmers. In the Pampa region, the traditional landowners of large acreages used to divide the land in parcels to let tenants, often family farmers, with the aim of earning an income and making investments. Nowadays, the reverse process is taking place, bound to technology packages and forms of production control through the adoption of new technologies such as precision and communication ones. But in both situations the biggest (in acres and capital) producer has obtained the greatest income.

The globalization strategies include renting lands in different regions and countries and using new technologies partnered with local and regional workforce such as contractors or partnered with existing economic groups.

The subjects as the landowners changed their profile and have influence the state economy and policies. This power still remains in the region states and in other countries. This power is present in the history of the region in relation to the natural resources and the progressive use of capital incorporated to the productions (Flichman: 1977).

The modernization model becomes widespread because there begins a new process which is functional to the different types of producers. The expansion of capital over the agricultural productions manages to tell apart producers, and this process has not stopped yet.

The process of social differentiation in the 90s increases the concentration and control of the transformation process. These mechanics form part of the cycle of reproduction fostered by globalization. Together with the economic scale of production, there is an emphasis on the land and capital control. The technological model acquired thus becomes the protagonist leaving the movements of the social model of production in second place. This issue is evinced in the decrease in the number of small-scale producers and in the increase in the concentration of the food complex in economic groups by controlling various businesses in each group. The commodities turn to be the main focus of concentration and integration of these economic groups. They also come into conflict with the states over the control of the productions. (Romero: 2008, Teubal and Giarraca: 2006; Barsky et al: 2005).

The agribusiness through technology innovation and command of communication technology has expanded quickly. So the complex has been reshaped in global networks that are reproduced in each region. This results in the loss of autonomy and is first perceived in the commercial channel, chiefly goods and supplies. These products are essential for the production cycle.

The family farm organizations have tried different combinations to keep on working. These new forms were born into the capitalist system of production so these forms are capitalized but not capitalists. The technologies strengthen the work and the work is a resource that can persist in the cycle of crisis. The Pampa region saw the disappearance of 25-30% small-scale

organizations between 1988-2002 (www.indec.gob.ar) and was even more serious in the dairy production sectors because farm reductions reached 50%.

The global scale and the global network businesses by corporations and economic groups framed in globalization have placed the small farms in uneven conditions. They find it hard to gain access to the capital and land due to market influences and stated disputes with the biggest corporations over the control of the resources.

This social relationship raises two issues called: new actors in the production and, related to this, the term New Rurality. (Gras et al: 2011; Carviotto et al, 2007)

The new actors include in their profiles characteristics of globalization that allow them to reorganize their productions and the control over what governs the economic network since the spread of the new technologies and the returns obtained. The changes in the model of relations between rural and industrial actors are produced by the circulation of technologies and consumption forms.

The movements between both structures (rural and industrial) become evident in the rural-urban space regarding the finances and competitive transactions. However, this competition brought consequences regarding the concentration of trade and production resources.

In these contexts who do we consider new actors? When the loss of confidence in the traditional institutions of rural structure such as the cooperatives gives place to small and medium savers to put their money in sowing pools, trust, and mutual investment funds, this situation is directly related to new actors.

These social agents operate in the rural structure through land renting and the control of the circulation flow which includes the financial and trade supplies for the production cycle. These supplies are needed in the very same part of the cycle of re-production of productions. So urban actors come into the rural production as new actors and they differ with respect to their internationalization and transnationalization.

In addition, there are the peri-urban areas. They are areas (Feito: 2014) where actors with different agricultural, industrial, real estate, and marginal interests all converge, as if this space comprised the most concrete evidence of a production process in which technology homogenizes everything through the expansion of technological models of production and which in turn emphasizes social differences.

When interests are debated in opposition to the hegemonic model, they are articulated to social movements and marginalized populations are observed. These voices are heard by the new technologies as the internet and community radios, and then are seen in the regions with conflicts and permanent tensions. In the local situation, not only the possibilities for change can be found but also the relationships of dominance as gender issues, child labour, work conditions and others become accepted by populations out of necessity.

Reflections: between the New Rurality and new agricultural actors

In each stage of the expansion of capital, new rural actors are found. But not all new actors in the agrarian productions are part of the rural structure. Globalization places the capital as a protagonist of the inventions in the agrarian productions or in other sectors. This is intensified by other actors as sowing pools, trust and investment funds.

The trade and financial channels of the producers aim more and more at the control of the food complex so that larger producers are benefitted while smaller ones are ignored. The landowners of the internationalization are different because they rent lands for the same productions in countries with favorable natural resources conditions and the consumption of manufactured food is consolidated by populations, which is the main business of economic groups. So large-scale landowners can be more or less benefitted according to the type of link they build with economic groups.

Corporations, economic groups and large-scale producers also generate income from royalties and contracts with businesses through the advantages brought by the new technologies.

Are contractors that complete the cycle of production more common than those who perform parts of it such as fumigations or others? This question is important in that the contractors take the risk of working to complete the whole cycle. And there are tensions as regards the rent or when the farmer does not have the right technologies to complete the work and has to contract the services.

In the region the agreements of lease were the habitual form for the family farm organizations to have access to work the land. But due to globalization, the new landowners (who own large acreages) rent the land by themselves or in association with the economic groups.

The economic groups require qualified managerial work and also need low labour costs. For this reason, today's large-scale producers lay down the work conditions which in turn confer work flexibilization because the wages are not permanent during the whole production cycle and these costs (workforce) are paid by contractors.

Tourist ventures are generated to achieve increased revenues and are conceived as supply services. The increase obtained is completed by workforce or capital from the units.

Social actors in urban or peri-urban areas as well as the certified productions start as activities out of the need to increase or generate income. There are also producers that once formed part of the region configuration and are now involved in activities of urban growth that need some control of the production conditions and have also the pressure of real-estate companies who sell lands. The land that is next to the city turns into a good deal, so there is pressure over their ownership.

The concentration of natural resources and capital control by large-scale producers as the production scales increase are natural in different contexts. So this situation has had an impact on the number of production units, chiefly in the family farm organizations.

The term New Rurality has been mitigated by regions and social actors. The modernization change is important but not enough, because it does not explain all the changes caused by globalization.

To analyze the New Rurality two issues have to be considered:

- 1- The changes and movements in relation to the reproduction of the production cycle, but in different scales and with different actors.
- 2- Do the movements of the reproduction cycle and the access to production resources change at the same time because the characteristics of the social actors change?

These considerations try to analyze the issues that demand rethinking and to contrast the contexts in which the productions and the actors' mobility inherent in the production processes or linked to them through service delivery are performed.

The New Rurality cannot be defined here on the basis of the new actors. It requires a change in the relationships between units of production in the cycle of reproduction. In this question, societal interests among new actors, economic groups and traditional actors that once made up the region enter into competition.

Apparently, the incorporation of technologies can modify the characteristics of social relations and productions, but this situation does not parallel the idea that these transformations equal the changes in the rural structure. The access to the resources and the reproduction of the cycle of production must also be included.

The technological model has been socially validated by all producers from diverse social origins and histories. This model emphasizes the process of social differentiation. The practices used for the cultivation of soybean make up the leading model in the Pampas.

Terms such as New Rurality are among some of the interpretations of organizational forms through the adoption of technologies and the changes in the social relations which characterize the agrarian structure of the region. The changes in the position of the social actors in the agricultural production structure are mainly due to their access to capital in the form of technology, land, natural resources, cultural and intellectual capital. Arguably, this can represent a New Rurality, or a highly articulated social sector that takes part in dynamic agribusiness, as well as in marginalized ones, looking for a differentiation through strategies that foster income increases.

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