

The role of Community Organizations in the transformation of foodscapes for the consolidation of peace economies and territorial peace in Colombia

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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the relevance of rethinking the opportunities of Participatory Design as an interdisciplinary perspective that stimulates community innovation and co-designing effective solutions to the daily crossroads of COs in the current Colombian context for the transformation of foodscapes, in which relationships in the value chain are framed by trust, the building of close relationships between producers and consumers, the recognition of local knowledge and the generation of added value.

Through the project “Custodians of hope”, was found that in Colombia exists community processes, like the experience of the Ecobufalo¹, strengthening the bonds of trust between the actors involved in value chains to contribute to the construction of peace economies with a territorial approach.

Author Keywords

Community organizations; foodscape; community innovation; peace economies; territorial peace; trust; participatory design.

CSS Concepts

• Social and professional topics~Geographic characteristics • Social and professional topics~Cultural characteristics

INTRODUCTION

The community organization is part of the traditional Latin American heritage since a long time, the “minga” and “trueque” are samples of them, however, the armed conflict, have weakened the autonomous community’s process jeopardizing the permanence of communities in their territories and the guarantee of their right to food. Despite this context, in Colombia the territories historically have led processes from the perspective that resist to exclusive economic models and public policies that promote deterritorialization². Ecobúfalo, from the Association of the Cimitarra River Valley (Acronym ins Spanish ACVC), shows that from the territories, community innovations are set up that disrupt foodscapes³.

In the arena of bottom up organizational processes, participatory design has the potential to become a space that promotes the dialogue, active listening and trust building for community organizations to find authentic and creative solutions to the problems that face in their daily lives, especially to those that addresses relations with actors in the value chain and generation of added value.

METHODOLOGY

Comparative analysis of international experiences through Participatory Action Research (PAR) process, developed by the author who visited 30 productive processes, living with farmers, indigenous people and urban people who initiated life projects in the country-

1 Organization that belongs to Campesino Association of the Cimitarra River Valley (Acronym in Spanish ACVC).

2 Carolan, M. (2017). No One Eats Alone: Food as a Social Enterprise. . Washington DC: Island Press.

3 Bosschaart, W. (2015). Strategies towards Urban Foodscapes: A Comparison of Theory and Practice in Planning for Urban Foodscapes. Wageningen: Wageningen University, thesis in Space Planning. Holland.

side, with the “Custodios de Esperanza project”. The primary sources come from the work done by the author with community organizations linked to alternative models of peace building, through the production of food in a community, supportive and profitable way.

CONCEPTS

PEACE ECONOMIES: Peace Economies involve the consolidation of inclusive political models of governance of all parties involved, through proposals for sustainable production, transformation and commercialization encourage the interlocution between family farming and agribusiness to curb polarization and increasing concentration of the earth, social models open to dialogue.

FOODSCAPES: Refers to the food landscape of a community in a territory, they refer to the ways in which food is produced, bought or obtained, prepared and consumed, and the relationship between food and individuals in the community, understanding food as a political act that advocates for equity, sustainability and easy access to healthy food⁴.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION: Scenario for the construction of a political and economic project that guides the course of interaction between its enrollees, while serving as the manifestation of the corporate project defended by its members⁵.

TRUST: According to (Gambetta, 2000)⁶ we say we trust somebody when we implicitly mean that the probability that the person will perform an action that is beneficial (...) is high enough for us to considered engaging in some form of cooperation with him.

how CO generate innovations in foodscape

In the COs that we visited for this research, we found that trust was a crosscutting element to three common factors that favor the configuration of COs as scenarios for the construction transformation of foodscapes in their local context through: *Collective construction of tools and capacities for territorial peace; Novel national and global spectrum of opportunities for advocacy*

4 Mackendrick, N. (2014). Foodscape. Context, 16-18.

5 Prada Páez, A. (2015), Procesos de identificación de lo campesino y lo caucano en la Cooperativa del Sur del Cauca (COSURCA). Estudio de caso de una organización campesina, Degree work, Sociology Degree, Faculty of Social Sciences. Bogotá, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana.

6 Gambetta, Diego. Can We Trust Trust?. 2000. Oxford. University of Oxford.

in public policy with a territorial approach to strengthen community processes in the construction of Peace Economies; Bottom up innovations in foodscapes in Colombia focused on inclusion.

The experience of Ecobufalo building peace economies in the Magdalena Medio region

Ecobufalo, is an experience of the ACVC in the Magdalena Medio region, protagonist in the construction of Peace Economies with territorial approach in Colombia. In 2000, the ACVC started the production with buffalo, in 2014 gave life to Ecobufalo, to boost the economy of peasant families through productive and business dynamics for its integration into the buffalo value chain in Colombia. Ecobufalo producers also work in their farms to ensure their food security and sovereignty, developing an economic and productive project that allows them to remain in the territory.

Ecobufalo is a model organization that represents peasant producers, improving the quality of life of their members by increasing their income, through the development of productive activities with dairy and buffalo meat, produce in community, generate added value and participate in short circuits marketing, recognize the role of women as guardians of ancestral knowledge and have influenced public policy in favor of farmers to continue generating guarantees of permanence in the territory.

Participatory design and transformation of foodscapes for the consolidation of peace economies and territorial peace

In the current context, participatory design has the challenge of contributing to social justice and reducing social gaps, from the perspective of foodscapes value chains, participatory design has a unique potential to contribute to:

The reduction of the gap between community organizations such as ACVC and its consumers through the estimation of innovation for the transformation of food products, meeting the needs and desires of starters; The recognition of local innovations and knowledge as a fundamental input for the co-creation of solutions to concrete problems of community organizations; By co-designing with community product organizations, implementing methodologies that estimate collaboration, for community organizations to gain autonomy by moving forward in the value chain; Reflection on participatory design methods and practices that estimate

the creation of trust between producers and consumers to contribute to the transformation of foodscapes towards Peace Economy models.

Participatory design should be a way of relating to community organizations that transcends the discipline of design, that encourages the exchange of ideas, the recognition of local knowledge, that encourages active listening and encourages the creation of consensus between community organizations and the external actor that facilitates the participatory design space.

CONCLUSION

There are organizational processes that, like Ecobufalo, contribute to the configuration of peace economies and the construction of territorial peace in contexts of armed conflict and the prevalence of war economies such as drug trafficking. Also is an example of a participatory approach in the design of solutions it bears fruit with a view to consolidating economies of peace.

Regarding the transformation of foodscapes, participatory design has the challenge of implementing methodologies and practices that contribute to the consolidation of social justice and the reduction of gaps between the actors involved in value chains. The recognition of local knowledge and skills that exist in community organizations facilitates the transfer of tools and knowledge that community organizations are capable of autonomously managing trust-based community innovation processes.

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