

Food Sovereignty in Ecuador- the case of coffee producers in the Intag Valley

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Reduction of hunger is often combined with the terms of Food Security and the Right to Adequate Food. Both terms are top-down approaches made by a global political elite (Fairbairn 2010). The aim of Food Security is often to increase productivity in agriculture. This leads to industrialized agriculture with focus on international trade and the orientation in exporting products (Jarosz 2014). In line with the aims of Food Security, the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) Number One, as defined by UN, was to halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger between 1990 and 2015; this goal, though, has not been reached, a fact that shows that the actual global food system can't provide an overall solution to fight hunger and malnutrition (Windfuhr and Jonsén 2005).

The rethinking of food systems went along with the birth of the concept of Food Sovereignty, as an alternative to the actual global food systems, and emerged in the last 20 years (Clark 2015). Contrary to Food Security, Food Sovereignty was developed by small-scale farmers, peasants and farm workers and members of La Vía Campesina (LVC) as a bottom-up approach to agri-food systems (Fairbairn 2010). The concept of Food Sovereignty promotes national and local trade by strengthening family farming and a participatory decision-making process by farmers. Food Sovereignty initially came up by civil society and NGOs; it was against the neoliberal trade by WTO and subsidies in agricultural products (Jarosz 2014). But later on, some governments decided to adopt the concept in a structural way. One of these countries is Ecuador, which implemented in 2008 the concept of Food Sovereignty in the National Constitution.

According to the World Bank, 25% of the Ecuadorian population in 2013 worked in agriculture, often in family-based units. Since the Correa government (2006), agricultural exports have increased. Products like coffee, cocoa and bananas are sometimes produced by small-scale farmers, but the main part of the production for export comes from large-scale agribusiness. Also often small-scale farmers are integrated into agro-industrial commodity chains, where they practice mono-cropping, which is not fitting in the Food Sovereignty principles (Clark, 2015). Whether and how Food Sovereignty benefits farmers, especially when it is adopted by institutions, is of course still an open debate and deserves investigation.

This thesis aims at investigating how the concept of Food Sovereignty emerged in the *campesino* society and whether and how farmers benefit from the implementation of Food Sovereignty in the national Ecuadorian Constitution. For this reason, the case-study of small-scale coffee producers in the Intag Valley has been selected.

Research Questions:

- How did the concept of Food Sovereignty emerge in the Ecuadorian *campesino* society?
- How do farmers benefit from the implementation of Food Sovereignty in the national Ecuadorian Constitution?

Methods

-Literature research

-Questionnaires with qualitative and quantitative questions for the coffee producers about farm size, household, production.

-Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions.

To conduct the interviews, first contacts have been established with the local population in the Intag Valley and some time has been spent before starting the interviews to allow for a better understanding of related issues. This has also allowed the selection of participants.

In addition, some targeted focus groups are included: coffee producers (small-scale, large-scale, members of cooperatives), cooperative managers, members of governmental institutions e.g. COPISA (Conferencia Plurinacional e Intercultural de Soberania Alimentaria), members of civil society e.g. CLOCLVC (Coordinadora Latinoamerica de Organizaciones del Campo- La Via Campesina) and coffee traders.

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