

Presentation

Dear readers,

Cuadernos de desarrollo rural maintains a permanent visibility policy intended to increase academic debate on rural matters. On this occasion the journal presents its first English issue with the contributions of researchers belonging to doctorate and PhD programmes in which matters in line with the journal's topics are being studied. The articles present cases in countries like Colombia, Argentina, Peru and Spain. This special issue complies with the evaluation and quality criteria being used by the journal for more than three decades.

The papers in this issue keep on nurturing the permanent dialogue and debate needed for understanding changes in rural areas and possible solutions for their permanence in a sustainable way. Learning methodologies will permit the permanent and conscious reorganization of processes of articulation of the different cycles in rural areas, both in terms of family farming and of national and international public policies, which attempt to manage rural areas adhering to New Regionalism.

The Economy of Family Farming Production, by JAIME FORERO-ÁLVAREZ. Based on the author's own research and on a review of literature on the subject, we propose a conceptualization of two types of family farming, peasants and capitalized non-peasants family farmers. The focus is placed on partial monetization of the production model. The existence of a monetary and a non-monetary dimension is the key to explaining the economic rationality of these two production models. As a way of explaining the economic efficiency of family farmers, the article concludes with a new conceptualization: micro-scale economies. This conceptualization takes up the ideas of other authors who assert that small-scale farming is more efficient than large-scale farming. It then moves on and away from this idea by postulating that both large and small-scale farmers can be efficient; the former by virtue of scale economies, and the latter by obtaining scale micro-economies.

The New Regionalism. Policy Implications for Rural Regions, by CÉSAR E. ORTIZ-GUERRERO, is a debate on New Regionalism (NR) as an arena in which different movements and theoretical and normative approaches converge, and which is growing in recognition in the field of regional planning. As a macro-structure NR articulates different theoretical tendencies with the shared scope of regional development, although mainly focused on metropolitan areas. This paper analyses

NR looking at its current contents and conceptual framework, identifying its central criticisms and lessons learned potentially applicable to rural areas, and suggesting some adjustments and a public policy framework for contemporary rural areas.

Biofuels as a New Energy Paradigm: the Key Points of Debate after a Decade, by CARMENZA CASTIBLANCO and ANDRÉS ETTER, examines the way in which biofuels are promoted around the world as an alternative for the substitution of fossil fuels. After a decade of their development, many serious questions persist regarding: 1) impacts generated by changes in the use and coverage of land 2) their impact on food prices and production 3) their impact on water and related ecosystem services 4) greenhouse gas emissions generated by changes in the use of land. This paper presents a critical review of these aspects, particularly focused on tropical countries. Main results show that despite their scarce contribution to the world energy matrix, the large-scale expansion of biofuels may have a very negative impact, as it intensifies the competition for water and land, especially in tropical countries, which characteristically have very vulnerable ecosystems and social structures.

Irrigated Family Farming Panorama in the Latin-American Highlands, by ALVARO-MARTÍN GUITÉRREZ-MALAXECHEBARRÍA, SIMON PRIME and CHRISTOPHE RÉVILLION, analyses how in Latin-America, despite there being statistics and general cartography on irrigation systems, this information does not permit the identification of irrigated family farming areas in highlands. In this paper these areas will be identified and recorded using cartographic methodologies which permit the identification of areas that meet three different conditions: 1) they are irrigated areas 2) they lie over 1,000 m in altitude, and 3) their rural population density exceeds 50 pop./km². Results confirm the large presence of this type of systems in all sub regions in Latin-America. Nevertheless, due to quality and updating restrictions in the baseline information, results must be considered guiding propositions.

An Eco-Technological Approach to Handcraft Production. Two Cases in the Colombian Caribbean Region, by JUAN CARLOS PACHECO, GABRIEL ERNESTO BARRERO and GONZALO GÓMEZ VÁSQUEZ “An eco-technological model for craft production in wood carving and weaving with Iraca fibres” with the rural communities of Galapa and Usiacurí, located in the Colombian Caribbean region. We concentrated on the analysis of the productive reality of the artisan communities, for which we sought the relations between the local

technological variables. We worked using participatory methodologies. The eco-technological model we obtained shows the complexity of the key relations existing among the artisan groups in order to achieve an appropriate productivity level. We concluded that the global economic challenges for the rural artisans call for technological productivity based on the sustainable use of the natural resources necessary for craft production.

Working With People (WWP) in Rural Development Projects: a Proposal from Social Learning, by ADOLFO CAZORLA, IGNACIO DE LOS RÍOS and MIGUEL SALVO, presents a conceptual framework that synthesises the evolution of the Modern Project and its main values and reaches a new approach to rural development project planning in postmodern times: Working With People (WWP). The WWP model joins international “social learning” debates and includes key elements from planning –such as social learning–, collaborative participation and project management. WWP is the product of 25 years’ experience since the GESPLAN group in different European contexts and in emerging countries. Its implementation has generated many methodologies and applied research projects. This new way of thinking opens new fields of research in the planning, evaluation and direction of rural development projects.

The Worldwide Expansion of Evaluation: a World of Possibilities for Rural Development, by PABLO VIDUEIRA, JOSÉ M. DÍAZ-PUENTE and ANA AFONSO, maintains that the importance of evaluation is proven by its growing use within international organisations and in both national and local regional public policies, as well as by the exponential expansion of evaluation associations worldwide. Focusing on rural development, such expansion is due to the suitability of evaluation for providing evidence that facilitates decision making and improves interventions, and a value system that provides explicit standards and criteria by which to judge interventions. This paper attempts to underline these aspects through a thorough analysis of the evolution and current situation of the evaluation field. A bibliographic review and the authors’ experience confirm the possibilities provided by evaluation as a scientific baseline for decision making in rural development programs.

Evaluation of Development Projects: a Process-Centered Approach in the Outskirts of Lima, Peru, by JOSÉ L. YAGÜE, AGUSTÍN MONTES and FRANCISCO J. MORALES, analyses the evaluation, with a special focus on processes, of an urban farming project in Lima (Peru). Results show that the implementation of this approach, which combines different evaluation tools, permits identifying

and analyzing processes together with the actors involved, providing a greater understanding of the real sustainability of the results.

Rural Depopulation in the Pampean Region of Argentina: Intervention Model, by RICARDO STRATTA FERNÁNDEZ, FRANCISCA GÓMEZ GAJARDO and PABLO RODRÍGUEZ SÁEZ, establishes that the consolidation of technological changes in farming in the Pampas entailed a decrement in the agrarian structure due to the loss of producers and decreasing population in rural towns. This paper analyses this problem and proposes a new intervention model for rural communities, incorporating the conceptual basis of the so called WWP (Working With People), planning as Social Learning and some elements of the European LEADER initiative. Apart from the development of its basis, its application in the locality of Punta Indio in the Argentine Pampa region will be described. A few years after its start, it is worth noting its importance in articulating rural development in rural communities with depopulation problems.

Sustainability of Rural Development Projects within the Working With People Model: Application to Aymara Women Communities in the Puno Region, Peru, by SUSANA SASTRE-MERINO, XAVIER NEGRILLO and DANIEL HERNÁNDEZ-CASTELLANO, examines the way development projects have changed from a technical and descendent perspective into an integrated one that aims at economic, social and environmental sustainability. Thus arise planning and management models with ascending approaches such as the Working With People (WWP) model, which emphasizes participation and social learning, and includes a holistic performance approach involving three components: social-ethical, corporate-technical and political-contextual. This model was applied to a rural development project managed by an organization of Aymara women from Puno (Peru). The model is considered a useful tool for encouraging leadership and the development of technical, behavioural and contextual abilities for project management, in order for women to become leading actors in their own development, transforming their traditional activities in sustainable and successful business projects.

We hope to keep bringing attention to current topics and thematic trajectories that will help to explain changes in rural areas.

Kind regards,

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Director/Editor