

New local food systems in the Andes and their contribution to recognition of peasantries: the case of community baskets and citizen markets in the province of Chimborazo, Ecuador

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Abstract: *Faced with historical marginalization, Andean peasantries have developed various adaptation and resistance strategies, recently including new local food systems (LFS). These LFS, as new socio-spatial dynamics associating peasants with a diversity of actors, raise questions about new relations between peasants and markets, society and territories, especially since they are being developed in unprecedented sociopolitical contexts that now take into account concerns like food sovereignty, solidarity economy and agroecology. Based on case studies of two types of LFS in the province of Chimborazo (Ecuador) we argue that new LFS contribute to recognition of peasantries through the construction of multi-stakeholders proximity alliances. Peasants are being recognized by society and public authorities namely through access to urban public spaces; new social construction processes of food quality and prices; public and citizen engagement for food sovereignty; and implementation of new territorialized food policies of which peasants become socio-economics actors. The analysis of peasant families' trajectories shows that new LFS contribute to more diversification and ecologization of peasant activity systems and improve the income of peasant families. Thus, they contribute to give back social, economic, ecological and even civic meaning to peasant activity. Finally, peasants are being recognized by themselves, by society and by public authorities, as key actors of sustainable and territorialized food systems. As these new LFS are now spreading and institutionalizing both at local and national scale, in a context of agroecological transition, it raises questions and controversies about which models are being supported and which peasants are actually being recognized.*

Introduction: Andean peasantries and new local food systems, from marginalization to recognition?

The peasantries in Andean society and space: ancient marginalization and struggles for recognition

In the Andes, the transformations of agriculture and society have created and reinforced a situation of marginalization of peasantries. Today it reveals itself in a duality between, on the one hand, a small-scale, diversified, often based on pluriactivity, peasant and family agriculture which is turned towards self-consumption and the domestic market, and, on the other hand, a large-scale capitalist, entrepreneurial, monoculture and many times agro-exporter agriculture (Gasselin, 2000). This duality is technical, socioeconomic, political and spatial at the same time, and is expressed at various levels. First, whereas capitalist agriculture has been fitted with substantial technical, financial and human resources and has developed on the most favorable agropedoclimatic areas, peasant agriculture is often located in the most difficult areas, far from the cities and where access to resources and to the markets is very limited. Then, whereas capitalist agriculture is mainly in the hands of entrepreneurs of which many live in the cities, Andean peasants live in rural and many times indigenous communities, where Andean reciprocity still regulates exchanges between individuals, families and the political authorities (Cliche, 1995). Indigenous communities are often located on the cold levels of the cordilleras, whereas the most temperate levels host mestizo communities (Gasselin, 2006; Girard, 2008). Andean peasantries are also characterized by their frequent pluriactivity (De Grammont & Martínez, 2008), which must be linked with their mobility and migrations. They are strategies to adapt to resources scarcity and to obtain off-farm incomes, and are the cause of multi-located and even transnational families (Vaillant, 2013; Cortes, 2011). Those migrations, many times done by men, contribute to explain the important role played by women in food production and commercialization (Bravo-Ureta *et al.*, 1996).

Moreover, whereas capitalist agriculture has been encouraged by agro-exportation-oriented public policies, peasant farming and peasants' access to markets have lacked State's support. Although peasants play an important role in providing food on the local markets (Chiriboga & Arellano, 2005), there has been an important social, economic, cultural, and geographic distance between producers and consumers. Indeed, especially in provincial capitals, products often go through several intermediaries before reaching the urban consumer, and often come from remote production areas. In many cases municipal markets are controlled by intermediaries and retailers, so much that peasants have very little access to those commercialization spaces to sell their production directly to urban consumers. Most peasants are forced to sell their products to intermediaries who have all social and economic power (Burgos, 1977; Chonchol, 1994). As regards urban consumers, some have insufficient purchasing power to buy local products which compete with low-cost importations. Moreover the prices, controlled by intermediaries, are many times as unfavorable to consumers as to producers. As for the wealthiest consumers, their preference goes to supermarkets that have quickly expanded in Latin America in the last two decades (Zamora, 2005).

Finally, until the end of the 20th century, peasant agriculture has been recognized neither by public policies, nor by society, particularly urban mestizo society. At most peasantries have benefited from social and food policies but disconnected with economic and agricultural policies, being considered much more as a population whose poverty and malnutrition had to be reduced rather than actual agricultural and socioeconomic actors. This absence of public

policies designed for peasantries has been partially counterbalanced by support from some streams of the Church, then from NGOs and some local governments, particularly since the eighties where the application of the Structural Adjustment Plans and the coming of neoliberal policies have led to the withdrawal of the State (Arcos Cabrera & Palomeque Vallejo, 1997).

In sum, an in-depth geographic and sociohistorical analysis of the evolution of the role and position of peasantries in Andean spaces, markets and society reveals that the historical process of marginalization of peasantries is related to a historical social and spatial polarity between urban and rural areas, which encompasses several basic polarities (Heinisch, 2017) (Fig. 1). Those polarities which intersect and strengthen together define the social and spatial structures that have been built and reinforced along the Andean history. They correspond to partial realities, and to stereotyped representations that have been shaped by the dichotomous discourse of modernization (Guérin, 2007; Peemans, 2008). In fact, there are multiple interactions and inter-dependencies between the poles, due to the fact that peasants are connected with several geographic and socioeconomic spaces, but through unequal relations of domination and/or exclusion.

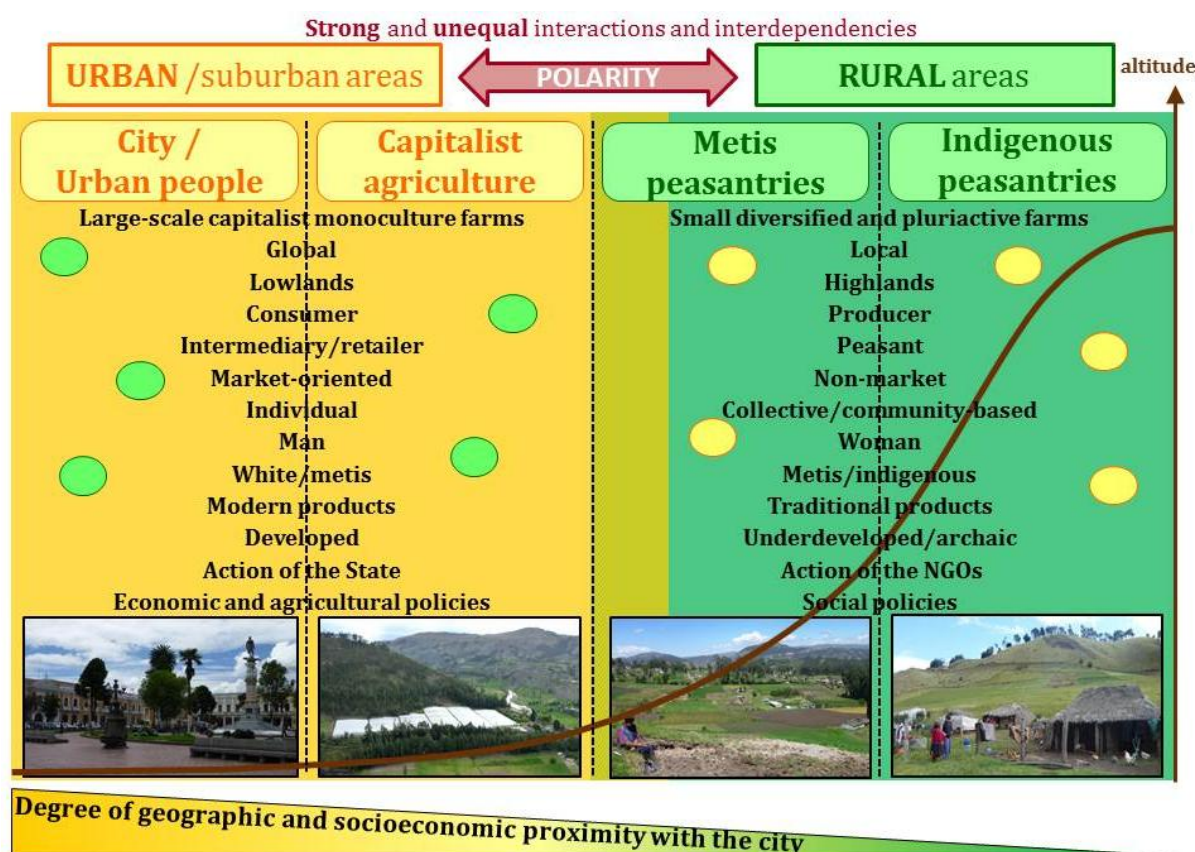


Fig. 1 - Marginalization of peasantries and urban-rural socio-spatial polarities

However, faced with this historical marginalization Andean peasantries have developed strategies of resilience and valorization of their activity and identity (Haubert, 1991; Chonchol, 1994; Sietz & Feola, 2016). On the scale of the farming and activity system and of the community, defensive strategies (diversified farming systems, social and ecological

highland-lowland complementarity, reciprocity, migration etc.) have enabled them to survive, and even to improve their living conditions significantly. Besides, peasantries have organized themselves and with their historical allies to claim for access to resources and to build collective solutions on production and commercialization issues, and even to carry largest claims by way of peasant and indigenous struggles. In the course of their history, Andean peasantries have achieved some victories, which, nevertheless, have not been enough to reverse the ancient process of marginalization. In particular, agrarian reforms¹ were an inflection point in the history of peasantries: they certainly released the peasants and their capacities for innovation, organization and individual and collective action, through land distribution and access to private property and abolition of the different kinds of servitude that kept the peasants attached with the haciendas, but those reforms have remained incomplete and unequal (Chiriboga, 1988; Mesclier, 2006).

New sociopolitical contexts and new local food systems: new challenges and opportunities the peasantries?

Until the end of the 20th century few alliances would exist between peasants and the nearby city and other social groups. However, between the end of 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries, a civil society standing for agroecology, natural resources preservation and solidarity economy started to emerge in the Andean region as in all Latin America (Chartier & Löwy, 2013). Meanwhile, international peasants' movements standing for food sovereignty were organizing at an international level (Desmarais, 2002). In this context, Andean peasantries, allied with other rural and urban stakeholders begun to build, defend and bring to public debates, a food sovereignty project as an alternative to neoliberalism and the agro-industrial model. In Ecuador, following the victory of Rafael Correa and his project of "Citizen Revolution" at the presidential election, the new 2008 Constitution integrated the principles of food sovereignty as a new food and agriculture model based on peasant farming and agroecology, as well as solidarity economy. This has been the result of favorable sociopolitical climate that had emerged after two decades of peasant and indigenous struggles regarding economic, social, ecological and food quality issues, and that had been joined by other social movements from the beginning of the 2000s (Heinisch, 2017).

Concurrently with and related to this unprecedented evolution of the sociopolitical context in Ecuador, and despite many national contradictions and tensions regarding the actual application of food sovereignty and solidarity economy (Giunta, 2014; McKay *et al.*, 2014; Vergara-Camus, 2013), at local level multiple initiatives moving towards the peasants' proposals for food sovereignty, agroecology and solidarity economy can be observed. Within them, new local food systems (LFS) are emerging since the beginning of the 2000s (MAGAP, 2012). They gather a large diversity of stakeholders (peasants, consumers-citizens, NGOs, public authorities, intermediaries, researchers, environment actors, health actors etc.) who seem to show new or renewed interest for peasantries and peasant farming.

Those renewed forms of production and exchange, which belong to the universe of local food systems (Kneafsey *et al.*, 2013) are emerging either in the South or in the North. While traditional forms are renewing, innovative forms have appeared and their (re)newness is many times linked with their characteristic of being collective and multi-stakeholders. These

¹ The agrarian reforms were different depending on the countries. Concerning agrarian reforms in Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia, see for example Heinisch (2017, pp. 81-104) and references cited in the text.

new LFS, which aim at strengthening the links between agriculture, food, environment and territories, raise interest from researchers and practitioners for they emerge or renew in reaction to the negative social, economic and ecological effects of global markets and of the dominant agro-industrial food system. They claim to be “nested” in social and local (Van der Ploeg *et al.*, 2012) and call upon new social and spatial relations between production and consumption (Deverre & Lamine, 2010). As new socio-spatial multi-stakeholders dynamics, they are part of new geographic and socioeconomic proximities (Bouba-Olga & Grossetti, 2008) which are a key-characteristic of these new LFS. Thus, the local food systems we are interested in are those which look for and build new proximities, both in geographic and social space between the stakeholders who are involved in those initiatives, regardless of the number of intermediaries and with variable distances between production and consumption spaces according to the context. In this way we agree with Praly *et al.* (2014) for whom approaching LFS with proximity implies not having a restricted definition – e.g. with a fixed number of intermediaries and/or distance – because it is precisely the analysis of each initiative of LFS that make it possible to define its outlines. Finally, the territory is at the crossroads of the two forms of proximities (Torre & Beuret, 2012), so that defining those LFS through proximity enable to consider them as embedded in territories which influence them and which they contribute to transform.

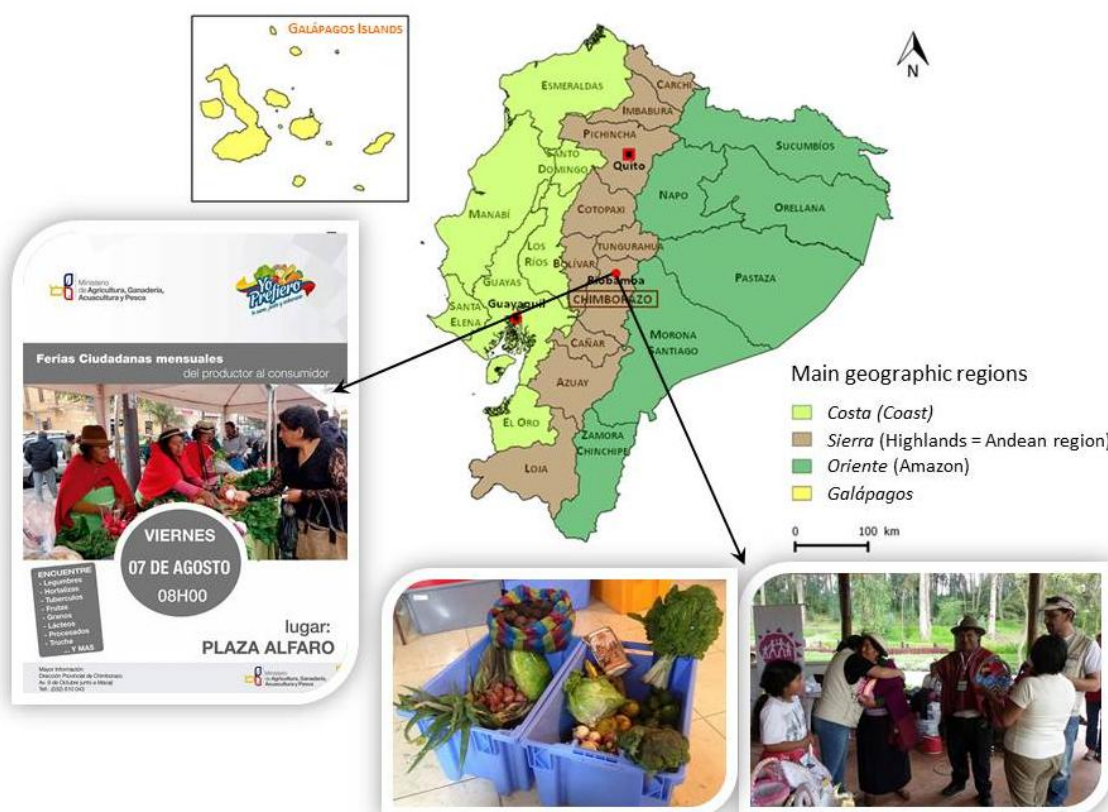
In the Andes and in Ecuador in particular, the emergence and development of these new LFS, within a sociopolitical context of unprecedented changes, raise questions about the sense of this emergence. Thus, to the extent that peasantries in the Andes are a social group that have been historically marginalized through social and spatial polarities between rural and urban, and if new LFS have a part in building new forms of relations and proximities between cities and countryside, then we can wonder about their contribution to recognition of peasantries, especially about the role and the position of the latter in Andean markets, society and territories.

Research methods

A research based on case studies: community baskets and citizen markets in the province of Chimborazo

Our research was based on case studies (Yin, 2002) of two types of new LFS: community baskets and citizen markets in the province of Chimborazo, in the central Ecuadorian Andes (Fig. 2). One the poorest province of the country, it is mostly rural and agricultural and hosts an important peasant and indigenous population (INEC, 2010). Its capital, Riobamba, is a medium-sized mestizo town often qualified as a “market-city” (Burgos, 1977; GAD Chimborazo, 2011) that gathers most of the agricultural and food products commercialization activities of the province. Chimborazo is characterized by a diversity of climates linked with altitude and, thus, by a diversity of ecosystems being at the root of a diversity of farming systems and a high variety of products. In Chimborazo, as everywhere in Ecuador, access to land has remained highly inequitable and peasantries are mostly minifundists (INEC, 2012). In Chimborazo, and particularly in Riobamba, socioeconomic relations have been historically marked with racism from white and mestizo society towards indigenous people, and with a high socio-spatial differentiation between urban and rural areas, and food products commercialization dynamics have been historically marked with iniquity and abuse. Mestizo intermediaries and retailers control market places, by keeping peasants outside of the official

commercialization spaces, by controlling the prices and the measure instruments, by putting peasants into debt, and by making them suffer verbal and even physical violence. However, the creation of the new municipal wholesale market in Riobamba tends towards partial rebalancing in the historical power relations and to progressive recognition of the role of peasants as actors of commercialization (Matuk Otálvaro, 2010).



Design and realization of the map: Claire Heinisch & Nathalie Udo. Source: INEC, División Político-Administrativa 2012

Fig. 2 - Localization of the province of Chimborazo and of the case-studies

Faced with this situation, over the course of the 2000s, new LFS initiatives which establish proximity relations between peasants and urban consumers and claiming for food sovereignty, solidarity economy and agroecology have emerged in Chimborazo. Among these initiatives the Utopía community basket results from the encounter of an urban consumers' food buying group and of local agroecological peasants. Today it gathers around a hundred urban families and a hundred local agroecological peasants. Today, a basket contains around twenty different products, of which 60% are local and agroecological. Another initiative are the citizen markets, which come from the encounter of, on the one hand, local agroecological peasants, supported by NGOs, who had been looking for spaces in Riobamba to sell their products directly to urban consumers, and, on the other hand, a government policy aiming at creating food markets without intermediaries within the context of the 2007-2008 food crisis. That is how the first Ecuadorian citizen market, called Macají, was created in Riobamba with the support of the local services of the Ministry of Agriculture (MAGAP) of Chimborazo. The citizen markets, that have expanded in Chimborazo, are collective organizations supported by the MAGAP in collaboration with other public and

private stakeholders, and that gather local peasants, local small and medium-sized enterprises (for processed food products, mainly dairy products), retailers for tropical fruits and staple foods (rice, sugar, oil) produced in the Costa region, and small urban entrepreneurs who offer ready-cooked dishes made from peasants' products. Two years after its creation the Macají citizen market would count about 130 stalls – which represents indirectly several hundreds of peasants' families – and would make a weekly turnover of 10 000 USD with 1 500 consumers (Chauveau & Taïpe, 2009).

The province of Chimborazo, the community baskets and the citizen markets are a particularly interesting field for our research. Firstly, Chimborazo is a territory where peasants' marginalization have been particularly marked along the history, and, in reaction, where the peasant and indigenous struggles for recognition have been particularly strong and organized, which must be related with the historical role of the emancipatory movements of the Church and, later, with the role of NGOs in development and in supporting the social movements. Moreover, the province of Chimborazo has known a particularly remarkable development of new LFS. Thus, when we started our research in 2011, it was the only province where we could find the five main types of “short alternative commercialization circuits” that had been identified in a diagnostic ordered by the MAGAP (Chauveau & Taïpe, 2009). Besides, several national LFS networks or largest national networks were born from Chimborazo LFS initiatives and stakeholders.

Framework, methods and data for the analysis of the case-studies

We studied the Utopía community basket and the citizen markets by means of a comprehensive analysis of their emergence and development processes, through the reconstruction of their trajectories in their territorial context and global environment.

To this end, we used the tools for the analysis of project trajectories within organizations (Brochier *et al.*, 2010), and so we identified the sequences, the ingredients, the drivers and the bifurcations. In our case, the ingredients and the drivers of each sequence are the elements that make up the “dispositive” of LFS. Based on the adaptation of the notion of dispositive by Michel Foucault to social (Chiffolleau, 2006) or territorial (Rey-Valette *et al.*, 2010) innovations, to participative certification of food products quality (Rodet, 2013), and to local food systems (Dumain *et al.*, 2010), we define (Heinisch, 2017) a dispositive of LFS as: a complex ensemble made up with diverse actors and spaces, in dynamic interaction between each other and around objects and material and immaterial resources that guide the construction of projects which are implemented through a concrete and more or less institutionalized organization. The LFS dispositive evolves along time and space according to the effects it produces and to the trials (external contingencies or internal controversies) that it encounters. Finally, it is embedded in a territory (Laganier *et al.*, 2002) which influence it and that it contributes to transform, and it involves actors who are embedded in multiple territorialities (Raffestin, 1986).

Along a LFS trajectory, the change from one sequence to another takes place when the arrangement of elements the dispositive is reorganized under the influence of internal or external factors. Our analysis focused particularly on the socio-spatial dynamics between the actors of the dispositive. To this end, we analyzed the role of geographic and socioeconomic (e.g. cognitive, material, relational and mediation) proximities that are being activated and constructed during the emergence and development processes of the dispositive. Finally, in

order to both analyze the trajectories of LFS, and to understand the sense, for the actors themselves, of their involvement in the LFS, we also studied the actors' involvement trajectories in the dispositives. As for the particular case of peasants, we studied their involvement in the LFS through the concept of activity system applied to small-scale agriculture (Gasselin *et al.*, 2012).

After pre-investigation phase on the field during which we carried out various observations and exploratory interviews, the data collection took place during two phases of immersion that enabled numerous ethnographic observations, and during which we carried out 56 comprehensive interviews (Kaufmann, 2011) with stakeholders involved in the dispositives. We also made interview with experts in order to understand and analyze the territorial and national contexts, and we carried out a large literature and audiovisual sources review dealing with the territory and the dispositives we studied. Besides, coming back from our immersion in the field, we continued to follow and to reconstruct the trajectories of the dispositives through participant observations in Internet social networks in which the leaders of the dispositives are particularly active.

Results

LFS trajectories in the province of Chimborazo: example of the Utopía community basket

The Utopía community basket has passed through different steps, and each of them coincides with a new project and with the enrolment of new actors (Fig. 3). The trajectory of a LFS dispositive can basically be decomposed in three main phases, knowing that each of them can include one or more sequences: (i) an early stages phase, on the scale of small local collectives, before the actual creation of the dispositive (in yellow), (ii) a development phase (in violet) and (iii) a phase in which the dispositive is spreading and reproducing in the territory and even beyond, at national and global level (in green).

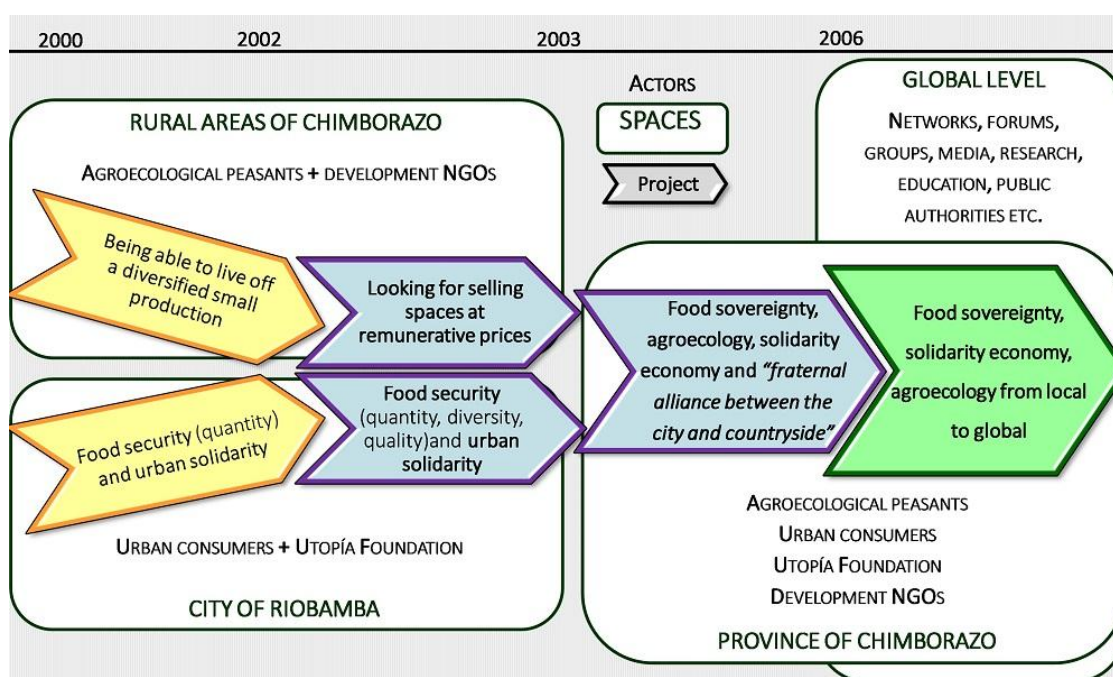


Fig. 3 - Simplified trajectory of the Utopía community basket

Utopía's early stages: a food security and urban solidarity project

Originally, the community basket Utopía is a food buying group of consumers from Riobamba. It was created in the context of the Ecuadorian economic crisis in the late nineties, and with the organizational support of a small local foundation, the Utopía foundation, which gave its name to the initiative. The principle is that families gather together every two weeks to buy food on the wholesale market and thus make economy of scale on the price of food. Therefore, at the time, it was a food security and an urban solidarity project.

Meanwhile, in the rural areas of the Chimborazo province, various groups of agroecological peasants supported by NGOs were looking for solutions to live off diversified agroecological small productions that were not, or very badly, valorized on the conventional markets.

When reflections on products quality modify Utopía's project: first relations with agroecological peasants and first failures

Progressively, Utopía consumers entered into collective thinking about the quality of the products, not only sanitary quality, but also nutritional quality and the question of cultural identity. It led them the idea of getting products directly from local agroecological peasants, who were looking for urban spaces to sell directly their products at remunerative prices. To this end, they would activate geographic and relational proximities with some groups of local agroecological peasants thanks to a member of the Utopía foundation who had worked with national and local NGOs of rural development. At the time, Utopía's project is still a project of food security not only based on quantity, but also based on quality and diversity.

Nevertheless, during the first years, the attempts to build sustainable relationships with local groups of agroecological peasants were a failure. Indeed, both consumers and peasants would reproduce the relationships exactly such as they had existed on the conventional markets, in other words, as if the other were an intermediary that would actually rip them off.

From farm visits to the construction of the current project of Utopía: a fraternal alliance between the city and the countryside for food sovereignty

Arrangement of farm visits was the first step towards the construction of sustainable relationships between peasants and consumers and towards incorporation of peasants as full members of the dispositive Utopía, and not only as mere providers. Peasants and consumers have learnt to know each other thanks to regular meetings and interactions, and have started to build first relational proximities, and then strong cognitive proximities, in other words based on shared values. It led them to develop a shared project of food sovereignty, agroecology and solidarity economy, summarized in their slogan “*a fraternal alliance between the city and the countryside for food sovereignty*”. This project is the outcome of a multi-stakeholders process allowed by the proximities, and is the expression of explicit recognition of peasantries, in particular of the value of their work and of the quality of their products, and also of engagement in favor of transition to peasant agroecology.

Utopía's spreading from local to global: towards national diffusion for food sovereignty, agroecology and solidarity economy

Utopía has progressively experimented on the ground and theorizing a global project of social transformation based on food sovereignty. Thus, the project carried out by Utopía goes far beyond the only scale of this local agroecological food system and of the members of the initiative. Indeed, it responds to national debates that have been particularly active since the recent political changes. In this way, this project led the actors of Utopía to activate cognitive and relational proximities to link with or even to create networks, forums, campaigns etc. in which they have been particularly active and that gather various actors such as peasant's organizations, civil society, NGOs, actors from the public sector, from research and education, from the media etc., both at territorial and national level.

Thus, at the scale of the province of Chimborazo, peasants and NGOs, some of them being members of Utopía, created in 2006 a local collective which, by occupying squares and parks in Riobamba, would claim to public authorities for access to spaces for peasant commercialization, spaces that the Municipality of Riobamba would not supply on the grounds that indigenous peasant selling their products directly to urban consumers, even more in the city center, was prejudicial to the image of Riobamba. At local level this collective achieved a meaningful victory with the creation of the Macají citizen market in 2008 close to the center of Riobamba. At national level this collective took part in the creation of the Social and Solidarity Economy Movement of Ecuador. Moreover Utopía's actors initiated in 2003 the Sea, Land and Basket Network that today gathers urban consumers, peasants and small fishermen involved in community baskets initiatives. In 2007 this network was one of the founding members of the Agroecological Collective of Ecuador (ACE), in association with a national ecologist organization, a national organization of organic producers, a national network of exchange of peasant seeds, and a think tank on agroecology created in the nineties. The ACE has progressively become a multi-stakeholder national network that have been very active in thinking (seminaries, forums, trainings) and political impact (demonstrations and events, citizen awareness campaigns, participation in the formulation of laws and policies) on agroecology, food sovereignty and responsible consumption. The ACE has also been very active on the field taking part and/or supporting concrete local initiatives.

All those processes would not have been possible without the involvement of "boundary spanners", in other words actors who had one foot in the rural world and the other one in the urban world, and whose leadership allows them to take part to local and national public debates. Some of these actors coming from the world of NGOs or of social movements even have accessed key-positions in the public sector.

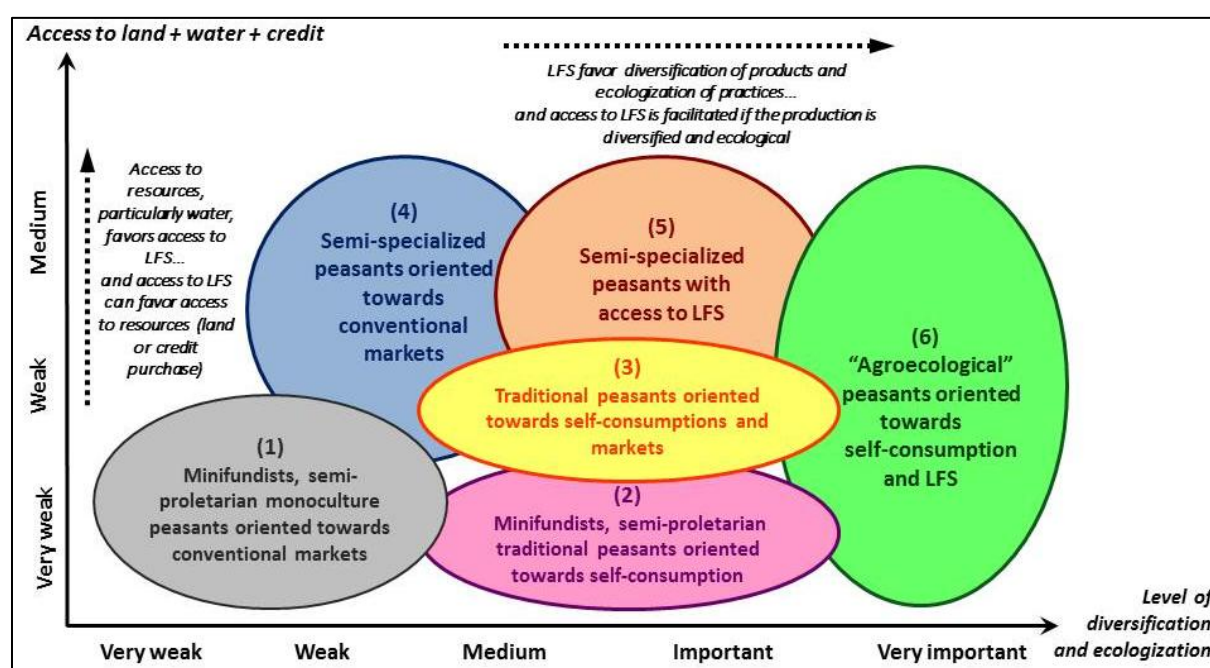
In the context of implementation of food sovereignty as part of the new Constitution, those connections at territorial and national level have made it possible for Utopía's actors and networks to influence, and even take part to the formulation of new national and territorial agricultural and food policies. Thus, in the Chimborazo province, where the Utopía community basket, a pioneer initiative regarding agroecology and solidarity economy, was born in 2000, there are emerging, since the beginning of the 2010s, various institutional and collective programs and actions on the subject of sustainable food, peasant farming, agroecology and solidarity connections between cities and the countryside. Such is the case, for instance, of the *"I prefer the healthy, fair and sovereign"* program managed by the MAGAP in collaboration with diverse public and private local actors, and whose leading action are the citizen markets.

New LFS as laboratories for the construction of recognition of peasantries

The comparative of the community basket Utopía and of citizen markets reveals that new LFS contribute to several changes in the relations between peasants and markets, society and territories. Those changes that we analyze in what follows correspond actually to various and multiscaleforms of recognition of peasantries as actors of territorialized food systems and of rural-urban linkages.

LFS as vehicles for valorization and consolidation of more sustainable peasant activity systems

By analyzing the profiles and trajectories of peasants (Heinisch, 2017) (Fig. 4), we show that LFS contribute to more diversification and ecologization of farming systems, and to improvement of the peasants' income. Access to resources, especially water – vegetable productions are particularly present in the LFS – favors access to LFS and access to LFS, that secures economically peasant families, can favor access to other resources such as land and credit. Moreover, LFS offer outlets for low volumes of diversified and ecological productions that are badly valorized on conventional markets and, in return, LFS, through relational and cognitive proximities that are built between peasants and other actors, favors diversification of products and ecologization of practices. Farming activity, which finds again economic and social meaning, is being valorized and recognized by the peasants themselves, and, in some cases, leads to returns from migration. Recognition is a process that is fundamentally relational and that plays out not only within social relations but also in relations with oneself (Honneth, 2004; Dufour & Lanciano, 2012). For the peasantries in general, and for women and indigenous in particular, participation to LFS and access to urban public spaces represent not only economic and symbolic recognition but also recognition of oneself, of one's activity and identity and, besides, enable participation as peer to social and civic life.



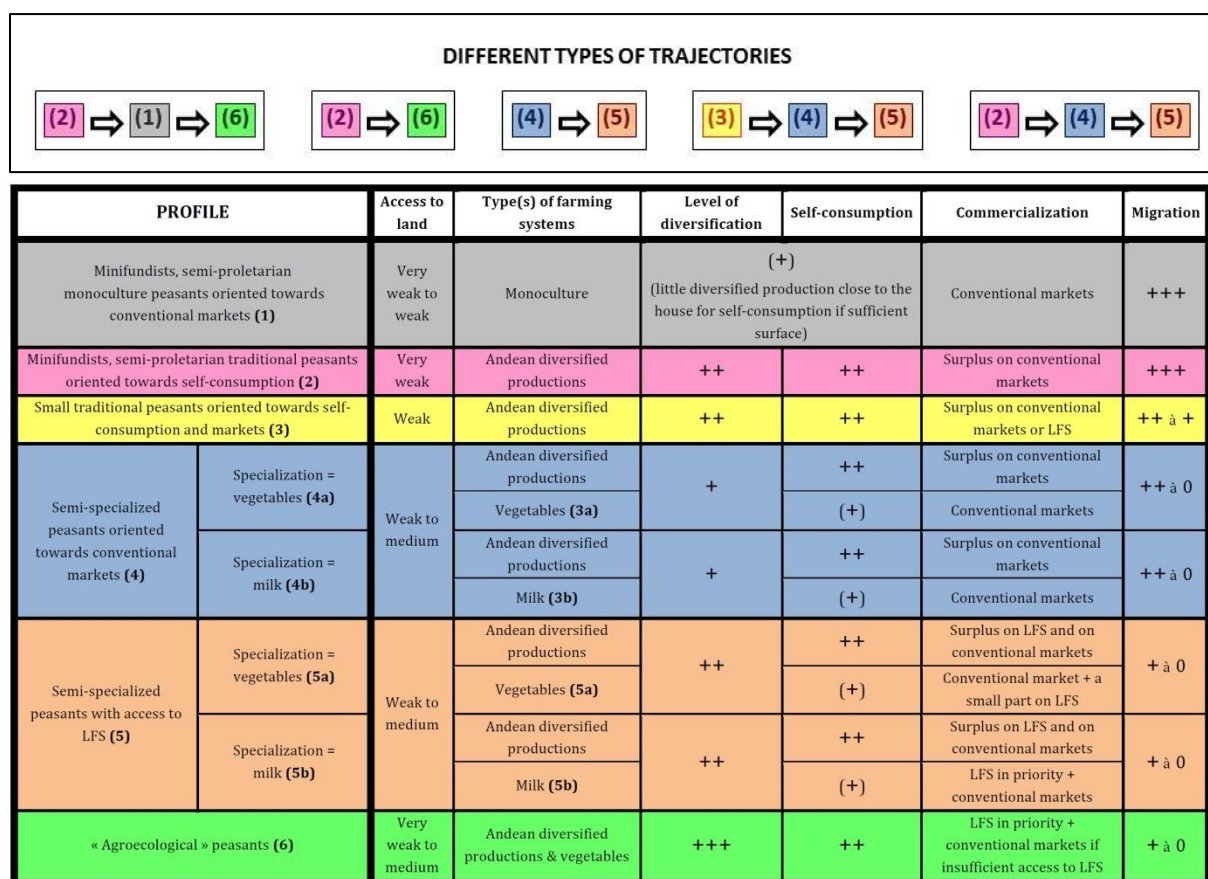


Fig. 4 - Profiles and trajectories of Andean peasants

LFS as spaces for social construction of new qualities and fair and stable prices

In the course of the phases of development of the dispositives, two strongly connected processes are playing out for recognition of peasantries: one is about quality, the other about price.

Regarding quality, LFS are spaces of social constructions of new forms of evaluation of quality, not only food quality, but production and exchange processes' quality. In doing so, they valorize peasants' knowledge, expertise and way of life. These new forms of evaluation of quality are made possible through mediation and relational proximities that influence the perceived quality and have an effect on created quality (Prigent-Simonin & Herault-Fournier, 2005). The specificity of LFS regarding the quality is that it does not concern only the "product" which refers to an idea of "merchandise" whose quality is being evaluated on a standardized way by the "market", but also "food" with all it contains in terms of intrinsic qualities related to health and pleasure and external qualities related to the methods of production and to the geographic or cultural origin. Thus, traditional peasant food that had been forgotten or even rejected by urban people is being revalorized. For instance, the *machica de cebada*, roasted barley flour that have been the basis of traditional Andean peasants' food and that had been run down by the urban consumers as "Indian food", has become the symbol of quality food for both the Utopía basket and the Macají market. In this way producers and consumers build together, and with other actors, new and shared quality criterions. Those actors are all "eaters" of what peasants produce, and being "agroecological", "traditional" or "half-specialized" peasants (Fig. 4) it is the diversified and

the part “*without chemicals*” of the farming systems that is designed for the peasants to feed their family and that is looked for by consumers on LFS, which contributes to reinforce diversified and ecological farming systems (cf. 0)

As for prices, LFS are spaces of social construction of fair and stable prices, which expresses explicit recognition of the work of peasants and of the quality of their products. In the name of the principles of solidarity economy, the Utopía basket and the citizen markets have explicit objectives of fair and stable prices, independent for the highly volatile market prices, for both producers and consumers. In both cases, prices are determined under costs of productions. In the case of Utopía, those costs have been calculated and proximity relations, transparency and trust have then progressively become the medium of price-setting. In the case of citizen markets, limited prices for the consumers are a legal obligation: the MAGAP contributes to the calculation of production costs and the Ministry of Interior controls the prices on the markets. Those prices are advantageous for the peasants, as Utopía’s peasants get a price 80% than if they were selling their products on conventional markets. Besides, against the received idea that quality peasant products would be accessible only on niche markets frequented by “*privileged consumers*” (Rebai, 2015), our results show that those prices are also advantageous for consumers. Thus, a study conducted by the Utopía foundation showed that the price of the basket was 50% cheaper than on conventional markets. Socially controlled prices make the products accessible even to low-budgets and it appeared that the LFS we studied are mostly frequented by low-middle classes. Thus, LFS experiment, demonstrate and make recognize the fact that peasantries, when they have fair access to markets, can play a major role in food security of cities, through their capacity to provide quality food at accessible price.

LFS as space of construction of multi-stakeholder alliances around the peasants

Recognition of peasantries also plays out in the construction of multi-stakeholder and continuously enlarged alliances around peasants.

In the early stages phase, small local collective of peasants supported by NGOs seek to live off traditional or agroecological production. Through LFS, NGOs have considerably diversified their mode of actions, which contributes to enlarged recognition of peasantries. Thus, from a technical and value-chain-based support to peasant production, NGOs have extended to a global and territorial access-to-market approach. Moreover, from a punctual action with some peasant organization or communities, in the later phases of spreading of the dispositives they participate actively to the local and national debates on food sovereignty, agroecology and solidarity economy.

In the development phase, producers and consumers meet around common interests. Consumers express their recognition of peasants by buying their products of which they evaluate the quality positively. Some even engage themselves along with peasants in the defense of food sovereignty, agroecology, solidarity economy. Enter also the dispositive other actors, the “*proximity intermediaries*”, that have a key-role in the democratization of access to LFS for peasants. They buy and commercialize, sometimes transform the products, but their role goes far beyond logistic and selling. Far from the character of the intermediary of the conventional urban market, they play a role of social and economic proximity mediators between consumers and peasants and between cities and the countryside. These “*proximity intermediaries*” can be retailers, or peasants who sell, even

transform, their own products and those of their neighbors, or NGOs who transform and sell the products of the peasants they support. They are mediators of acquaintance, of trust, of learning between producers and consumers, in particular for the construction of quality and prices. Moreover, they allow a higher number of peasants to access indirectly to LFS and, thus, to escape from the conventional markets. Finally, local and national public authorities join the dispositive and enter into various forms of support, from punctual support to peasants and LFS dispositives through a stronger presence in the field, to provision of urban selling spaces, and until the implementation of territorialized food policies associating the peasants. Those different forms of engagement of public authorities express an explicit support to peasants who are being recognized as socio-economic actors of sustainable food systems, and not only as mere recipients of social policies designed for the poor.

Eventually, in the spreading phase of the dispositives, other actors, in particular other public authorities, but also local universities, media, health actors etc., join the dispositives and, thus, strengthen their anchorage, within their territories or even at larger scale. Indeed, the spreading trajectories are different according to the dispositive. Utopía has adopted a networking strategy at national level with an objective of political impact and public awareness on food sovereignty, agroecology, solidarity economy and responsible consumption. As for the citizen markets they have multiplied in the territory and, thus, have enlarged the access to LFS to a higher number of peasants. While the first citizen markets were created on the initiative of civil society and then supported by the MAGAP, the more recent were created on the initiative of the MAGAP associated with peasants' organizations and with interinstitutional cooperation. Besides, the citizen market network has built a partnership with the University of Riobamba, as well as with a local radio which grant it with a weekly program, which contributes to its visibility. Even more, citizen markets have become one program amongst others which are part of unprecedented territorial multi-actor food governance that is emerging in Chimborazo. Finally those two types of spreading strategies contribute, on a complementary way, to visibility and enlarged recognition of peasantries beyond the only scale of the dispositives.

Discussion and conclusion

The different forms of recognition we have identified along the trajectories of the LFS are in interaction and mutually reinforce each other. What is playing out in the LFS is a reshaping process of ancient socio-spatial polarities between urban and rural areas. LFS are laboratories that experiment spatial, socio-economic and cultural rapprochement between urban society and peasants from the countryside. Through LFS, traditional oppositions between urban and rural turn into dialectic. Cities and countryside become complementary, through belonging to the same territory and living area, in which polarities come undone through proximity collective actions that gather multiple actors who built together territorialized food systems where everyone, in particular the peasants, have a position and a role. Territory, proximity and food, articulated between local action and global project, have become the anchorage points of the contribution of LFS to recognition of the role and position of peasants in space and society.

Recognition of peasantries is closely linked to agroecological transition, the Andean countries, especially Ecuador, being one of the poles of the Latin American agroecological revolution (Altieri & Toledo, 2011). Indeed, what we identified as forms of recognitions

correspond, for some (ecologization and diversification of farming systems) to the agronomic and ecologic principles of agroecology (Altieri, 1995), and for others (autonomy from the market, fair price, socially-constructed quality, multi-actor alliances, democratic governance) to the socio-economic principles of agroecology (Dumont *et al.*, 2015).

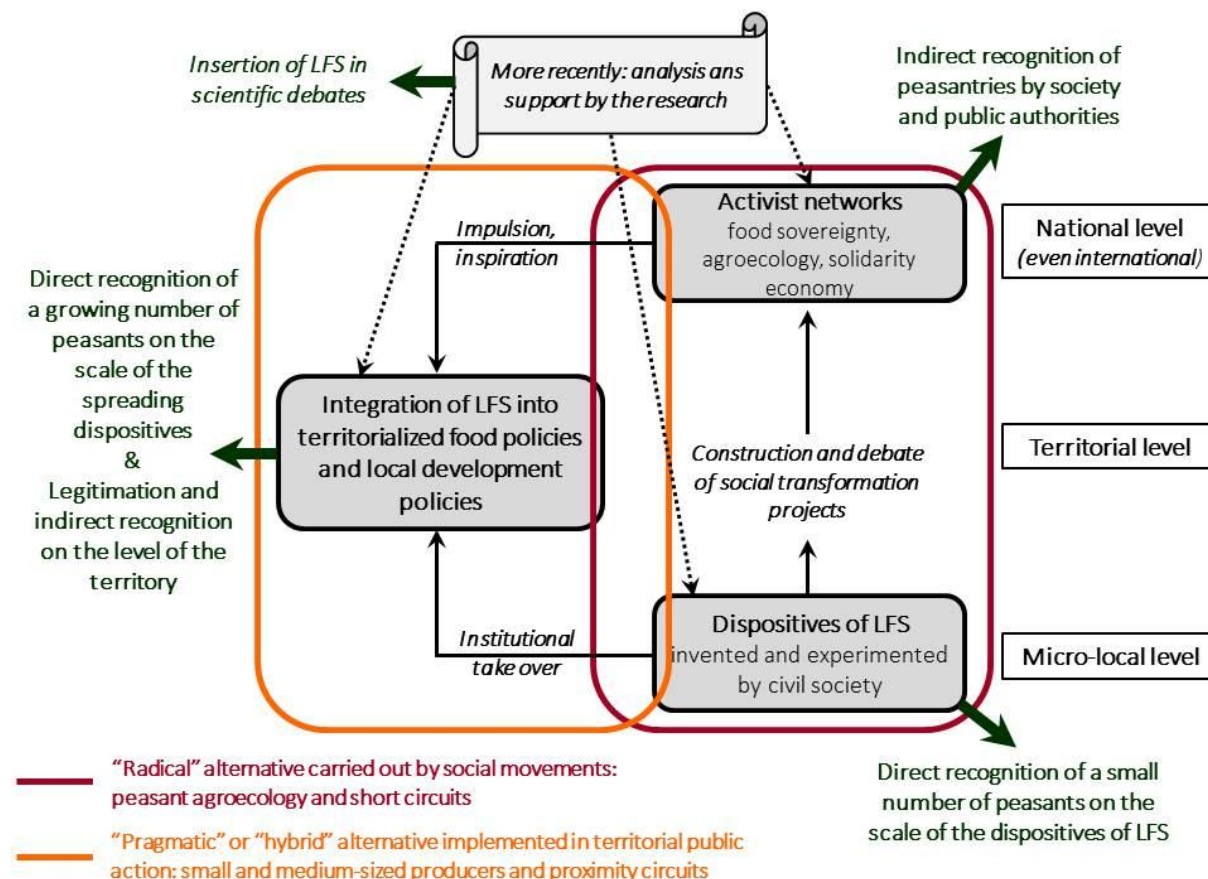


Fig. 5 - LFS, peasantries and agroecology from local to global: complementary dynamics of recognition and transition

Finally our results reveal two main dynamics of recognition of peasantries embedded in agroecological and food system transition dynamics which design two alternatives to the dominant agro-industrial system (Fig. 5). The first one is an alternative we call “radical”, based on peasant agroecology and short circuits. It is carried out by peasant and citizen social movements, through small local initiatives and national activist networks. The second one is an alternative we call “pragmatic” or “hybrid”, based on small and medium-scale agriculture and proximity circuits. It is carried out by public authorities, in collaboration with diverse local actors, who take over and take inspiration from local initiative of LFS and/or agroecological practices to develop them in the frame of their territorial policies. These two dynamics are strongly interconnected. They are complementary but also generate controversies, inherent in the process of transition, on the desired and possible “alternative” model, on the “right” peasant, on the “right” LFS. The first one invents and experiments on a small scale, wishing to be free from the dominant food system, innovations of agroecological production, responsible consumption and solidarity relations between cities and countryside. Doing so, it prepares the grounds for the second dynamic which, facing the challenge of

scaling-up, develops policies and actions which hybrid and confront, within their specific territorial contexts, the visions and the projects of the radical socio-ecological transformation with the current organization of the dominant agricultural and food systems.

Of course these two dynamics and the controversies they produce are embedded in the specific socio-ecological context of Ecuador and of the Andean countries we analyzed before, however, what we observe in Ecuador illustrates more generally the institutionalization dynamics of alternative proposals to the dominant agro-industrial system that take place in various regions in the World. In particular, these dynamics can be related to the debates of the conventionalization of organic farming (Darnhofer et al., 2010) and of local food systems (Le Velly *et al.*, 2016) in Europe and to the raising question of coexistence and confrontation of food and agricultural models (Hervieu & Purseigle, 2015).

Thus, these two transition dynamics raise questions about the phase of institutionalization of “agroecological” initiatives in which Ecuador has recently moved. The challenge of institutionalization consists in avoiding the trap of a too important normalization, and, to do so, it is essential not to reduce *a priori* the diversity of new forms of production and exchange of food whose project is to be alternatives to the agro-industrial model, in particular by considering them in a dynamic perspective of progress and transition, through situated and collectively debated challenges of social, ecological, economic and governance sustainability.

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