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Artículos Científicos

¿Es posible una soberanía alimentaria en México?

Is a Food Sovereignty Possible in Mexico?

A soberania alimentar é possível no México?

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Resumen

El objetivo de este trabajo es analizar el concepto de *soberanía alimentaria*, así como determinar si la soberanía alimentaria en México puede considerarse como una realidad, una posibilidad o es una quimera. La metodología empleada en este trabajo es eminentemente cualitativa. En primer lugar, se realizó una revisión documental acerca del concepto ya mencionado y una revisión histórica de este. En segundo, se revisó el estado que guarda la alimentación y producción de alimentos en México y se analizó la posibilidad de ejercer una verdadera soberanía alimentaria. En los resultados se observa que a través del tiempo nuestro país ha ido perdiendo su soberanía alimentaria, y dadas las circunstancias actuales, por el momento parece muy complicado que pudiera ser una realidad. Por un lado, la población ocupada en el sector primario ha sufrido un drástico cambio: de 58.32 % del total en 1950 a solo 12.6 % en el año 2019, lo que dificulta totalmente la producción de alimentos; por otra parte, las políticas alimentarias actuales en materia de alimentación tampoco ayudan en este sentido, pues actualmente se pretende garantizar la alimentación de la población a través de la compra masiva de alimentos de cualquier parte del mundo, donde sea más barato, apoyando también solo la producción de la agroindustria de las empresas transnacionales, en lugar de apoyar el campo mexicano y reactivar la producción de autoconsumo.

Palabras clave: agroindustria, políticas alimentarias, sector primario, soberanía alimentaria.

Abstract

The objective of this work is to analyze the concept of *food sovereignty*, as well as determining if food sovereignty in Mexico can be considered as a reality, a possibility or a chimera. The methodology used in this work is eminently qualitative. First, a documentary review was carried out about the concept of food sovereignty, a historical review of it was carried out. Secondly, the state of food nutrition and food production in Mexico was reviewed and the possibility of exercising true food sovereignty was analyzed. The results show that over time our country has been losing its food sovereignty, and given the current circumstances at the moment, it seems very complicated that it could be a reality. On the one hand, the population employed in the primary sector has undergone a drastic change, going from 58.32 % of the total in 1950 to just 12.6 % in 2019, which makes food production totally difficult; on the other hand, current food policies in terms of food do not help in this regard



either, since currently the aim is to guarantee the food of the population through the massive purchase of food from any part of the world, where it is cheaper, also supporting only the production of the agro-industry of the transnational companies, instead of support the Mexican countryside and reactivate the production of self-consumption.

Keywords: agribusiness, food policies, primary sector, food sovereignty.

Resumo

O objetivo deste trabalho é analisar o conceito de soberania alimentar, bem como determinar se a soberania alimentar no México pode ser considerada uma realidade, uma possibilidade ou uma quimera. A metodologia utilizada neste trabalho é eminentemente qualitativa. Primeiro, foi realizada uma revisão documental do conceito acima mencionado e uma revisão histórica do mesmo. Segundo, o estado da produção de alimentos e alimentos no México foi revisto e a possibilidade de exercer verdadeira soberania alimentar foi analisada. Os resultados mostram que, com o tempo, nosso país perdeu sua soberania alimentar e, dadas as circunstâncias atuais, no momento parece muito complicado que isso possa ser uma realidade. Por um lado, a população empregada no setor primário sofreu uma mudança drástica: de 58,32% do total em 1950 para apenas 12,6% em 2019, o que dificulta totalmente a produção de alimentos; Por outro lado, as atuais políticas alimentares na área de alimentos também não ajudam nesse aspecto, pois atualmente se destina a garantir os alimentos da população através da compra massiva de alimentos de qualquer lugar do mundo, onde seja mais barato, apoiando apenas a produção da agroindústria das empresas transnacionais, em vez de apoiar o campo mexicano e reativar a produção do autoconsumo.

Palavras-chave: agronegócio, políticas alimentares, setor primário, soberania alimentar.

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Introduction

We live in a globalized world in which liberal politics prevail, whose objective is the accumulation of capital, and the entire productive system of goods and services is oriented in that direction. Food production is not outside this context, therefore it is also subject to the laws of supply and demand imposed by the free market (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations [FAO], 2009).

Food sovereignty is a proposal that is embedded in the sphere of food production policy at the international level and that is in clear opposition to the liberal model. Both models in food production, food sovereignty model and liberal model, are irreconcilable and diametrically opposed, handle the same concepts but with different meanings (La Vía Campesina, s. F.).

Due to the policies adopted in mainly agrarian matters, underdeveloped or developing countries are hardly going to defend food sovereignty, because it is cheaper for their governments to import than to produce (Pérez, Hernández and Carmona, 2017; Román and Hernández, 2010).

In Mexico, food sovereignty is not a reality, we import approximately 60% of the total food we consume, which makes us a country with food dependence, in addition to the invasion of transnational food production and distribution chains, to the that is added to the growing implantation of agri-food industries.

The concept of food sovereignty goes beyond food security, it represents a new angle of focus on the world food problem. The constituent elements of this conceptual view of the problem of hunger and malnutrition, without a doubt, represent a new paradigm in this theorizing. But beyond conceptualization, food sovereignty represents or means a claim to the humanization of those who suffer from hunger or malnutrition: it is the demand of more than 800 million human beings in the world to be considered as active subjects in the solution of this problem (FAO, International Fund for Agricultural Development [IFAD], United Nations Children's Fund [Unicef], World Food Program [WFP] and World Health Organization [WHO], 2018). This model of analysis of one of the most acute and lacerating negative situations of humanity blots out the consideration of those who suffer it as objects; The active and definitive participation of those who are immersed in this experience is necessary for its solution.



This new model requires, above all, a fresh content in the definitions of public policies on food, otherwise the hungry will continue to be only statistics, numbers whose objective is to decrease regardless of how (García, 2003).

To seriously analyze the implications of the semantic value of food sovereignty is, among other things, to discover the link between a ponderable situation and a whole axiological burden that drags the collective consciousness of a people, its culture and its history of elements of identity. The cultural element manifested in their culinary customs and traditions, as well as their eating habits interpreted as an interaction link between agricultural production and regional geophysical characteristics, demand unrestricted respect from those who are responsible for agricultural public policies, a respect that must translate into the conviction that it is only possible to obtain food security and sovereignty to the extent that people in rural areas have access to productive land, seeds and appropriate tools and to receive fair prices for their crops that allow them enjoy a dignified life (Carmona, Paredes and Pérez, 2017).

Prioritizing food security in a constituent element of quantity in such a way that this means relegating or ignoring the eating habits of the population is condemning it to suffer not only socio-cultural consequences, but even public health (Carmona et al., 2017).

The effects of mistaken public policies on food sovereignty sooner or later lacerate the population and become one more problem that requires important and urgent programs that could well have been prevented. Our country currently holds a disgraceful first place in obesity (Institute of Security and Social Services of State Workers [Issste], April 3, 2019). This circumstance is a clear example that in terms of food something is not working well. For those who proclaim that in their environment there is no problem of food security because everyone has enough food, it would be necessary to inquire about the quality, origin and safety of these, because the neglect of factors of this type are what have led us to suffer a health problem whose dimensions have not been sufficiently conscientious or quantitatively quantified (Acuña, 2014).

Food sovereignty is a concept that is strongly opposed to the use of food as a political element managed mainly by the great powers against developing or underdeveloped countries. Food security means that every child, every woman and every man must be certain that they have enough food every day. But the concept says nothing about where the food comes from, or how it is produced (Rosset, 2004).



Food sovereignty repeatedly points out that the massive importation of cheap subsidized food as satisfying the needs of hunger and malnutrition in a town is not enough nor the most desirable; Food sovereignty emphasizes its proposals in local markets and economies (Rosset, 2004). The feeding of a people is a matter of national security, of national sovereignty (Torres and Aguilar, 2006).

The countries that solve their food problems by opening the borders to the surpluses of the great agroindustrial powers and privileging the free import of food and also promoting, promoting and supporting the export of quality food production, with the sole objective of strengthening the macroeconomy and balancing the trade balance at the cost of deteriorating food production for self-consumption, in the long run they become more dependent, less sovereign and are exposed to the whims of their food suppliers (La Vía Campesina, nd).

Therefore, the main concern expressed in this work is to inquire about whether food sovereignty in our country is a reality or could be, or simply an illusion given the circumstances we live in and the current economic model that prevails globally and , of course, in our territory.

Methodology

The methodology used in this work is qualitative. It includes a bibliographic review and a historical review of the concept of food sovereignty, its evolution in the world until landing in the current state in Mexico. A review of the food production model is also made from the perspective of food sovereignty compared to the liberal model of food production.

In the case of the analysis carried out for our country, data were obtained on the economic production of each economic sector through the economically active population (PEA), these data span from the year 1950 to 2019. Such information provides us with a analysis of how food production has behaved; the behavior of the primary economic sector dedicated to agricultural activities serves as a balance here.

Some of the food policies are reviewed and analyzed, as well as government programs that have been implemented throughout Mexico's history, in order to analyze how much they have influenced the possibility of carrying out true Mexican food sovereignty.



Definition of food sovereignty

We face an undeniable reality: the number of hungry people, far from decreasing, continues to increase in a world where food is produced in abundance. Paradoxically, the fact that more food is produced every day and the number of hungry and hungry people grows globally every day (García, 2010). Something doesn't work. On the one hand, international organizations meet at summits, reflect, agree, and determine policies aimed at eradicating hunger; Many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and development agencies try to implement strategies to combat hunger, and yet the inability to achieve the objectives they set out is unavoidably present. The reason why this phenomenon occurs is not difficult to locate: as long as food, food continues to be handled as a political weapon of negotiation by the countries that own large agricultural industries and while food is not respected as an integral part Of the human rights declared and approved by the United Nations [UN] (1948), the number of those who suffer from hunger will continue to grow according to the plans of the large food industries.

The fundamental premise, rather, the condition that guarantees an effective fight against hunger and malnutrition is that the actions and policies carried out for this purpose must be based, first of all, on the recognition that food is a fundamental human right. The importance of this base, of this starting point, is that its consideration and full respect generates conditions and consequences that would detract from the political and economic power of the large transnational food industries because, among other things, those practices exercised by companies would be legally denounceable. , governments or organizations of any kind that hinder the exercise of this right (García, 2003).

Food sovereignty not only strives to eradicate hunger and malnutrition “whatever”; This model goes further, it seeks to guarantee the durability, efficacy and sustainability of this combat through the production of food that is based on local development and respect for everything that the locality implies.

Different definitions can be found in relation to food sovereignty, but the weight of these will always be based on the concept of sovereignty. One proposal is as follows:

The right of each people to define their own sustainable policies and strategies for food production, distribution and consumption that guarantee healthy eating, based on micro, small and medium production, respecting their own cultures and the diversity of rural ways , fishing and indigenous agricultural



production, marketing and resource management (Gordillo y Méndez, 2011, p. 34).

For their part, Ortega and Rivera (2010) point out that food sovereignty is:

The right of peoples, communities, and countries to define their own agricultural, labor, fisheries, food, and land policies in ways that are ecologically, socially, economically, and culturally appropriate to their unique circumstances. This includes the true right to food and food production, which means that all peoples have the right to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food, and resources for food production and the ability to support themselves. and their societies (p. 55).

These definitions, as it is verifiable, do not intend to comply with the requirements that formal logic demands for a good definition, but in terms of operability and descriptive breadth, they undoubtedly fulfill their objective, because they provide us with all the elements that unequivocally lead to knowledge of the concept of food sovereignty.

Breaking down these definitions is an exercise that helps your understanding:

- First, it highlights the inescapable obligation to respect the right to food and food production for all peoples and communities.
- Programs aimed at food production must respect traditional models of agricultural production and culturally accustomed food consumption.
- That governments put in place policies and plans that guarantee access to productive resources: land, water, credits, biodiversity and technology on equal terms for men and women.
- Actions that aim at the social and labor protection of agricultural workers.
- That the protection of indigenous and rural populations is based on respect for their customs and traditions, their means of survival and their integral way of life.
- Prioritize food production oriented to domestic markets.
- Reject the privatization of productive and genetic resources.
- Policies and programs must take into account the active participation of farmers for their elaboration.

Regarding the modes of food production, food sovereignty emphasizes that indigenous farmers and peasant families have guaranteed food for their communities for centuries. And this model, which demonstrated its effectiveness and its important potential



for performance until before the arrival of liberal models, should receive determined support from local and international-driven agrarian policies.

This analysis or discussion is not recent, it has been the struggle for decades that those who handle food as one more commodity, manipulate its production according to the needs, not of the people, but of supply and demand within a globalized market against agencies that demand respect for food access and production as a right and as an effective way to combat hunger and malnutrition.

Food sovereignty vs. liberal model of food production

Food sovereignty rests on the premise that public policies on food production assume their role as autonomous directors and are not subject to following the lines dictated by the great powers in the field of agricultural industrialization. The reality we face is the contrast between the model based on agro-exports, neoliberal policies, and free trade versus the food sovereignty model. The first model sees small farmers as an inefficient anachronism that should disappear. The second model sees these small farmers as the basis for local economies and economic development at the national level (Rosset, 2004).

It is easy to gather that these two models hold irreconcilable positions, their doctrines preach totally opposite principles and foundations. The globalizing avalanche that engulfs the economies of the developing countries and the underdeveloped countries themselves have not allowed a proper defense of their historical food production systems and have been devoured by the food industrializing monopolies that have sidelined them. to targeted food production for export purposes while flooding them with their poor quality surpluses.

These large food industries have effectively taken advantage of the great economic crises that most severely affect the least protected countries and have imposed policies of economic and agricultural behavior using food as one of their most effective weapons. This way of doing politics has fractured at the root the diversity in the production of food for self-consumption, which has been one of the fundamental pillars of peasant agriculture because it has allowed them, in addition to being adequately fed, to promote seasonal local-regional trade, to form rich, sustainable and diverse agroecosystems, to strengthen a local and regional economy that has allowed them to be autonomous and sovereign in their diet and in their development.



This treasure, which the peasant peoples have cared for and respected for thousands of years to procure food, should be defended because it represents the essence of food sovereignty; however, today it is in agony (García, 2003).

The models in conflict, food sovereignty vs. Liberalism, handle the same concepts but with different meaning and, in some cases, totally opposite. In an analysis of meaning exercise, some concepts proposed by scholars and specialists in the subject are rescued, such as Rosset (2004).

Tabla 1. Modelo de soberanía alimentaria vs. modelo liberalismo

Concepto	Modelo soberanía alimentaria	Modelo liberalismo
Alimentos	Un derecho humano; deben ser: saludables, nutritivos, asequibles culturalmente apropiados y producidos localmente.	Una mercancía. El único objetivo es que produzcan mayores ganancias.
Hambre	Un problema de acceso y distribución debido a la pobreza y a la desigualdad.	La padecen quienes no son productivos.
Producir	Un derecho de los pueblos rurales	Una opción para los más eficientes
Campesinos	Productores de alimentos para autoconsumo. Guardianes de la biodiversidad de los cultivos. Base del mercado interno para el desarrollo local. Productivo. Administrador de los recursos naturales.	Anacronismo, deben desaparecer por ineficientes.
Recursos naturales	Controlados y administrados por la comunidad.	Deben privatizarse.
Semillas	Una herencia de los pueblos al servicio de la comunidad.	Una mercancía patentable.
Subsidios	Deben otorgarse a los agricultores familiares para la comercialización directa, el apoyo de los precios o ingresos, la conservación del suelo, la	Deben darse a los agroindustriales a gran escala con fines de

	práctica de una agricultura sostenible, la investigación, etc.	explotación y práctica del <i>dumping</i> .
<i>Dumping</i>	Debe prohibirse y castigarse.	No es un problema.
Monopolio	Debe prohibirse y castigarse.	No es problema, es parte del libre mercado.
Comercio	Alimentos, agricultura y recursos naturales deben quedar fuera de los acuerdos comerciales	Todo queda supeditado al libre mercado.
Prioridad productiva	Alimento para mercados locales como prioridad.	Agroexportaciones a gran escala.
Precios de los cultivos	Precios justos que cubran con los gastos de producción y permitan a los agricultores una sana vida.	Los que el libre mercado dicte.
Crédito e inversiones rurales	Del sector público, dirigido a la agricultura familiar, principalmente para autoconsumo y abastecimiento de los mercados locales.	Del sector privado con fines de privatización.
Seguridad alimentaria	Es posible cuando la producción de alimentos está en manos de los propios campesinos, y cuando los alimentos se producen localmente.	Se logra importando alimentos desde donde son más baratos.

Fuente: Elaboración propia con base en Rosset (2004)

The discrepancy or antagonism that exists between these two models, in terms of food sovereignty, is clear and leaves no room for doubt. It is not just about meaning, theorizing or concepts, it is about unfair practices of the great agro-industrial powers and the laws and regulations that govern international organizations that are not favorable to their most vulnerable affiliates, whom they force to produce exclusively for export (Altieri, 1999).

Food sovereignty in international public tribunals

World Forum on Food Sovereignty. Havana, Cuba, 2001. "For the right of the peoples to produce, feed and exercise their food sovereignty"

From September 3 to 7, 2001, the World Forum on Food Sovereignty was held in Havana, Cuba. In its final declaration, the deep gaps that separate the conceptualization of food sovereignty from the conceptualization of the neoliberal economic model in force in the world are contained.

An element that it is undeniable to recognize as a contribution to this statement, the result of reflections and analysis of the theme of this forum, is the freshest, least technical, most accessible language, as well as the emotional charge that accompanies the contents of its conclusions.

The final declaration of the forum emphasizes that the right to food and nutritional well-being, despite being contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is a dead letter in most countries of the world. He emphasizes that the objective of the forum is the analysis and collective construction of the problem and its solutions from the perspective of the peoples and not of the transnational food corporations.

The real causes of hunger and malnutrition are:

The economic, agricultural and commercial policies on a global, regional and national scale that have been imposed by the powers of the developed countries and their corporations, in their eagerness to maintain and increase their political, economic, cultural and military hegemony in the current process of global economic restructuring (Foro Mundial sobre Soberanía Alimentaria, 2001).

Among his ideological approaches contained in his final declaration, they must be mentioned among the most important:

- Food is not just another commodity and the food system cannot be treated with the logic of the free market.
- Underdeveloped countries are capable of producing their own food.
- The importation of "cheaper" basic foods dismantles domestic production.
- It is a lie that importing food solves any problem of food security.
- It is a lie that peasant and indigenous agriculture are inefficient and incapable of responding to the growing needs of food production.



- It is rejected that the way to meet the world's growing food needs is through large-scale, industrial and intensive agriculture and fishing.

These final declarations pour out concepts that, by dint of being repetitive, no longer seem to impress, but it is a reality whose pernicious effects should be better made aware. We cannot deny the existence of a concentration of the international agricultural market in a few transnational companies that are protected by their countries, at the same time that food dependency on peoples, mainly in Latin America and the Caribbean, increases (World Forum on Food Sovereignty, 2001).

Currently, even in countries whose official discourse is to consider the countryside as a priority, export agriculture and fishing are being heavily subsidized while the small producers that mainly supply local markets are left totally unprotected.

II World Social Forum. Porto Alegre, Brazil, 2002. “Another world is possible. Mexican declaration of social movements”

This forum was held from January 31 to February 5, 2002 and its primary objective was to discuss, analyze and build proposals emanating from peoples and social and civil organizations in the face of a neoliberal model that causes the destruction of our cultures, economies and the environment. .

Regarding our issue of food sovereignty, the contribution of the Mexican delegation was as follows:

Mexico, the center of origin of seeds and basic grains such as corn and beans, which constitute part of our identity and our life, has already been invaded by transgenics and has been robbed of patents and knowledge that were the heritage of the communities and of The humanity. We demand the protection of native seeds and biodiversity and that genetically modified organisms are prevented from entering the country (II Foro Social Mundial, 2003).

In other sections, the Mexican delegation itself decisively joins the fight for the right to land and for the right to sufficient and balanced food.

The objectives of this type of forum that are not official in nature because they are not endorsed or convened by internationally recognized organizations such as FAO, Unicef, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), to name a few, are eminently broadcast and they amply fulfill their purpose, because otherwise the issues being



discussed would not be known or would not have the opportunity to raise concerns. As for the content of the statements made by the Mexican delegation, it is not out of reality; The important thing would be to properly channel the demands in such a way that they have a margin, even a minimal one, of attention.

III World Social Forum. Porto Alegre, Brazil, 2003. "Position on food sovereignty of peoples. Our world is not for sale, first is the food sovereignty of the peoples"

The content of this forum reiterated and reinforced the existing ideas about the threat posed by neoliberal policies that undermine family farming and, therefore, food and food sovereignty.

The terms used to define food sovereignty have a load of meaning that wisely reiterates its generalized conceptualization.

Their conclusions claim that governments must support and apply policies that promote sustainable production, based on peasant family production, instead of an industrial model with high inputs and oriented to exportation.

These policies must have characteristics and guidelines that primarily seek food sovereignty as a result of local and regional development.

- They must exercise the right to protect national markets against imported products at low prices.
- Provide support for sustainable agricultural and fishing practices and comprehensive agrarian reform programs.
- Protect the environment in order to guarantee food safety and safety.
- Promote and protect access to productive resources for small producers.
- Laying appropriate foundations to develop local economies.
- Ban the production and marketing of genetically modified seeds, food and feed.
- Report and prevent the use of transgenic foods as food aid.
- Set agricultural standards that allow knowing the origin and contents of food intended for human and animal consumption.
- Enact severe laws against the practice of dumping (III Foro Social Mundial, 2003).



There is no denying the existence of networks, movements and NGOs that strive for a universal awareness of the dire consequences that neoliberal policies have on the sustainable development of rural communities, mainly on their historical production systems, on their access to natural resources, in short, on basic food security and sovereignty. The enemy they face is very difficult to defeat because, as the current predominant model, they are the owner of power and money.

The world panorama shows a network of interests that makes it difficult to achieve food sovereignty, especially in developing countries. These difficulties seem impossible to overcome, especially since the contenders are very asymmetrical: on the one hand, there are rural peasant families that produce for local consumption and supply, and on the other, there are agro-industries and massive imports of cheap food surpluses from others. countries. The result is predictable: the deterioration in the capacity of food production for self-consumption and local supply, which means loss of food sovereignty.

Food sovereignty in Mexico

Mexico is a privileged country in terms of its potential as a producer in the primary sector, which is why in the 1970s it was said that ours was not an underdeveloped country but under-administered (Melgoza, 1972), and they are precisely the policies in farming of the different governments which have brought the Mexican nation to a situation of food dependency. Until the last decade of the last century, Mexican peasants, both ejidatarios and smallholders, represented an EAP in the majority primary economic sector, only decisive government policies were needed to boost agricultural production and guarantee internal supply through local and regional markets. in such a way that not only the production of food for self-consumption was guaranteed, but even an objective and frontal attack against hunger, malnutrition and poverty; far from this, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is signed, which chains our country to the powerful in the North in food matters. The signing of this treaty seems to mark the beginning of an unstoppable march towards the loss of food sovereignty in Mexico.

If we refer to historical data, we can see how gradually the sector corresponding to agricultural activities, that is, the primary sector, has been decreasing. In table 2 we can see how economic activities with respect to the economic sector of activity have changed radically and there has been an investment between the primary and tertiary sectors. In fact,



this sector is the one that has grown the most and the primary sector is the only one that has decreased dramatically, which has generated a decrease in food production and the need to import everything that is not being produced.

Tabla 2. Población ocupada por sector de actividad 1950-1990

Año	1950		1960		1970		1980		1990	
Total	8272093		11332016		12955057		21393250		23403413	
Sector	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Primario	4823901	58.32	6143540	54.21	5103519	39.39	5519979	25.80	5300114	22.65
Secundario	1319163	15.95	2147343	18.95	2973540	22.95	4424826	20.68	6503224	27.79
Terciario	1774063	21.45	2959342	26.11	4130473	31.88	5197712	24.30	10796203	46.13
No especificado	354966	4.29	81791	0.72	747525	5.77	6250733	29.22	803872	3.43

Fuente: Elaboración propia con base en el Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía

[Inegi] (1999)

This decrease in the production of agricultural activities has continued uninterrupted, while the sector corresponding to trade and services has continued to increase, as has happened in recent decades, as evidenced by data from official agencies.

In Mexico, the abandonment of the state's stewardship of the primary sector of economic activities, mainly agriculture, was the signature that allowed this sector to enter the free market and, therefore, the sharpening of the process of extinction of small farmers and, even more, the acceleration of the loss of food sovereignty due to the invasion of transnational agro-industrial and food chains. This seizure that capital exercises over the primary sector in our country begins uncontrollably in the six-year term of Salinista and until the immediate previous period, its growth and sharpening have not stopped.

Results and Discussion

The decrease in the mass production and import of food for basic consumption in Mexico is a serious problem that must be among the national security priorities. Cereals such as corn, wheat and rice or cow's milk, which are elemental in the daily diet of Mexicans, are purchased in significant quantities to supply demand. For example, in 2016, Mexico imported 14.2 million tons of corn (34.9% of national apparent consumption) and 2541 million liters of milk (18% of national apparent consumption), amounts that over time have not been reduced, and rather have remained at least in the last decade (Agri-Food and Fisheries Information Service [SIAP], 2017).

The deficit of these basic foods for human consumption (among others) is due to various factors, such as the signing of NAFTA, which has implied that thousands of peasants have abandoned agricultural land because imported products are much cheaper (Although of dubious quality), they have emigrated and sought other alternatives or, even more recently, they have left their places of origin as a result of the insecurity and organized crime that exists in various areas of the Mexican Republic.

Peasant households have also reduced their production of corn, beans, wheat, milk and other foods due to high production costs and low prices, which has meant a decrease in their productivity. Now the purchase of food has increased because it is cheaper than producing it or because the knowledge of how to produce it has been gradually lost. (Pérez *et al.*, 2017; Pérez y Hernández, 2019; Román y Hernández, 2010;).

During the 2000-2006 presidential term, the country stopped being self-sufficient in the production of its basic grains; Despite maintaining corn self-sufficiency, cereal imports increased by 157%, reveals the Executive General Report. Public Account 2016 prepared by the Superior Audit of the Federation [ASF] (2008, cited in Ramírez, 2008). During the same sexennium, the performance evaluation applied to the Agricultural Development Program (instrument in charge of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development [Sagarpa]) shows that the balance of agricultural products for the period 2000-2005 becomes deficit mainly due to the growing imports of cereals and oilseeds. Data from the same period show, according to ASF calculations, that food dependency continued to increase, since, according to SIAP figures in 2002, 41.2% of the food consumed in the country was imported, while for 2006 it was already imported 42.5% (Ramírez, 2008).



In the six-year term of President Felipe Calderón (2006-2012), the food sovereignty situation did not improve: by announcing the free importation of corn, rice, wheat, sorghum and soybeans from anywhere in the world and giving excessive support to the large agricultural producers for export purposes, as the federal government did (Rubio, 2008), at that time they renounced to ensure food sovereignty.

These announcements aroused immediate reactions such as those of the National Association of Rural Marketing Companies (ANEC), which regretted that the Government “does not recognize that there is already a food crisis in Mexico; who also actively promotes it with the initiative to bring food from anywhere in the world without a tariff” (Ramírez, 2008, para. 6). The president reinforces the model of depositing food security for Mexicans abroad. At the beginning of President Vicente Fox's presidential term (2000-2006), the Government imported 42.5% of food and it was calculated that by the end of his mandate, food dependency would increase 60% (Ramírez, 2008). These figures reveal a significant decline in terms of food sovereignty, especially if a country is considered to be food dependent if its food imports are 45% or more. (Ramírez, 2008).

The situation of food sovereignty in Mexico could be summarized as follows: the existence of two types of agricultural producers: on the one hand, a highly capitalized, modern, monopolistic sector, employer of the labor force, etc., and in contrast, another sector characterized by little or no capitalization, technologically backward with subsistence production, gradually launched into wage labor, emigration, or begging (Salinas, 1990).

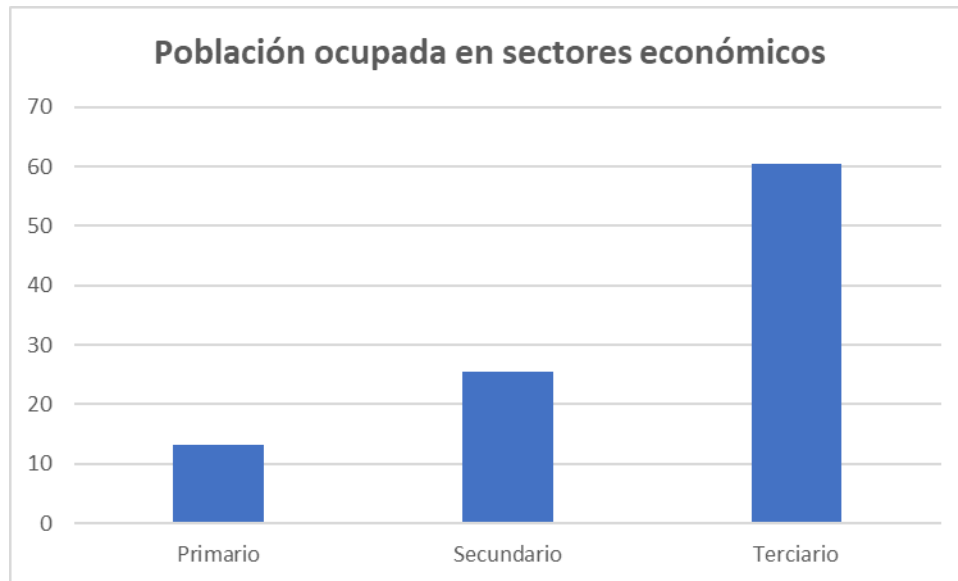
Algeria Salinas Ontiveros, Master in Agricultural Economics from the Institute of Economic Research of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), in an interview that she gave to Radio UNAM in the framework of the theme “The Mexican countryside in the plans of the administration of the Government of President Felipe Calderón Hinojosa”, carried out on February 13, 2014, is frankly pessimistic about the future of the field; He recognizes that it is early to give a categorical rating, but if things do not change we are sending small farmers to join the ranks of the poverty belts of the big cities.

Ms. Salinas's appreciations are realistic. The hard data show us in different studies similar information: the PEA is changing its economic activity in a spectacular way: the primary sector that represented the highest percentage of employment in the rural populations studied has been decreasing since the 1970s to such a degree that already in 2000 the PEA of the primary sector in these localities was in second place, and while the trends of the



secondary and tertiary sector were already growing, the primary sector showed a significant drop (Carmona, 2008, 2013).

Figura 1. PEA por sectores económicos correspondiente al cuarto trimestre de 2017



Fuente: Elaboración propia con base en Inegi (2018)

Figure 1 definitely shows this marked trend. The employment of the PEA in our country, according to the figures provided by the Inegi for the fourth quarter of 2017, shows a very clear contrast: on the one hand, 60.5% of the total population stands out, which is now dedicated to the tertiary sector, while the primary sector only represents 13.3% and the secondary sector corresponds to 25.6% (0.6% of the population did not specify their economic activity). Undoubtedly, these percentages make clear the enduring abandonment of the activities of the primary sector.

For the year 2019, the population dedicated to the primary sector continues to decrease: it corresponds to 12.6%; while the sector that continues to increase is that represented by trade and services activities, that is, the tertiary sector, which has 61.6%, while the secondary sector presents 25.16% and 0.64% that did not specify its activity (Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare [STPS], 2020). The abandonment of agricultural activities leads to the loss of food sovereignty, food production has ceased and, consequently, food dependence on supplier countries is increasing.

Another variable worth considering, which in some way influences the pessimism of a possible rescue of food sovereignty in Mexico, is that as long as government programs do not overcome deficiencies in their operation through continuous monitoring and evaluation, they will not achieve their objectives. For those who are created. It is already a custom that government programs for agricultural development are almost perfect in their planning logic, but they fail in their management logic, rendering them inoperative (Center for Studies on Sustainable Rural Development and Food Sovereignty [CEDRSSA] , 2007).

In an article by Erika Ramírez that dates from 2005 but whose content is still in force, the author states that 13 large food-producing transnational corporations, including Walmart, Bayer, Dupont, Nestlé, Carrefour, among others, are deteriorating the productivity of the Mexican countryside at the level of small farmers. These agribusinesses in the international arena have had Mexico as one of their objectives to position themselves in their market, according to experts in the field, which will lead to consequences, according to Ramírez (2005), the loss of food sovereignty and more misery in the countryside, misery that, at that time, added more than 25 million Mexicans to its ranks.

The researcher Ramírez (2005) quotes the then president of CEDRSSA, who comments that the Mexican agri-food sector has been handed over to large foreign transnationals, which are establishing consumption patterns throughout the nation. The content of this declaration is extremely serious, indicating that we not only depend on food from abroad, but that we even have dietary patterns imposed on us at the whim and convenience of the transnational corporations.

The frontal attack on the causes of hunger and poverty requires a real combination of the productive capacities of peasant agriculture, with a sustainable management of productive resources and with government policies that guarantee adequate food for citizens, regardless of the laws that govern international trade. This goal or proposal seems platonic in a world so infected by economic liberalism.

The powerful countries that have a food industry created expressly for export will never allow third world or developing countries to stop being their captive customers, they will use permitted and not allowed strategies, but they will always have these countries as an assured destination of the population of its food industry.

Poor countries are unlikely to risk losing the "protection" provided by food-supplying countries, and it only remains for them to respect the "line" of economic behavior that most



developed countries dictate. These countries definitely "cannot", in practice, establish sovereign food policies.

Food sovereignty in underdeveloped and developing countries is definitely a pipe dream. The administration of poverty practiced by the owners of political and economic power has as one of its objectives to maintain in these countries an appropriate status for their interests of expansion and enrichment.

Large agribusinesses and transnational food chains will no longer release their prey, their expectation is that the very dynamics of capitalist mobility and the ineffectiveness of domestic agricultural production due to mistaken agricultural policies will lead them to become a satisfactor rather than an invader in the countries where they have settled.

Food sovereignty is a chimera in these countries because it is fantastic to think that there is a president who, against all logic, bets his political capital assuming the leadership of food production, promoting agricultural production at the local, regional and national level with the necessary support, from access to land and natural resources, inputs for crops to appropriate markets. Any president "comes out cheaper" to import than to produce.

It could go from being a chimera to being a possibility here in Mexico if rescue programs for agricultural activity are established at the level of small farmers, that is, putting in place programs whose objective is to make the countryside attractive. It is known to all that, at the level of small farmers, the current ones are over 45 years old and their children do not intend to continue with this activity because it is not profitable, they have no incentive to encourage them to continue with the activity. of the father; The peasants themselves have currently had to look for other income earning alternatives: now they are anything but peasants (Carmona, 2008, 2013). The possibility of food sovereignty being rescued, at least partially, through this practice is distant and also not in the short term, but after all it is a possibility.

In sum, food sovereignty, at least in our country, is not a reality, and it is not due to the fact that we are invaded by transnational companies in the field of agriculture and in the field of food production and distribution chains and also because the free import of grains and other cultivated products grows more every day.

Altieri's (1999) reflections are sensible and real when he warns that the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in the past have been sovereign in their diet, however, today there are few and, to a lesser extent, those that continue to be so. The cause is increasing



globalization, which brings with it the application of liberal policies and association with international organizations that apply their regulations and obligations that favor the most powerful countries, in this way the least developed countries fall into the paradox of producing for export and import for internal consumption.

In industrialized countries it is possible that food sovereignty is a reality, however, even in these some constituent element of the definition of food sovereignty is absent, be it sustainability, access to production without gender discrimination, respect for food preferences, free choice of crops, the use of genetically modified seeds, natural resources privatized or administered by the states, etc. The strongest argument to affirm that even in the most industrialized countries there is no true food sovereignty is that they are practitioners and maintainers of free trade in which capital is the sole engine of development. In our globalized world, it is difficult to find a country with food sovereignty as defined conceptually and operationally.

Conclusions

This work meets the objectives that were set at the beginning. An exhaustive review of the concept of food security was carried out, the different forums in which this concept has been discussed and the conclusions of each of them were analyzed. In addition, the liberal model of food production is mentioned and discussed against the model of food sovereignty. Subsequently, the state of food sovereignty in Mexico is reviewed. And it is concluded that, for the moment, in our country it is not possible to achieve food sovereignty. The causes are too many and too varied. On the one hand, the decrease in the population employed in the primary sector decreased drastically, that is, the abandonment of agricultural activities is almost total. As mentioned, in 2019 only 12.6% of the total is dedicated to this sector, according to official figures. The reform in 1994 to constitutional article 27 contributed to the abandonment of this activity, since it allowed the sale of ejidos that somehow guaranteed the production of food for self-consumption and trade in the surplus in local or regional markets. After this reform, the peasants not only do not produce food, but now they also demand it. Once this food production capacity deteriorated, and given the increase in demand for these products as a result of their reduced production, the Government chose not to compensate for this lack of food production and reactivate the countryside with favorable



policies, but rather to He decided to import all those shortages, because it is also cheaper to buy them than to launch programs to produce them.

We have to recognize that food sovereignty in Mexico is a pipe dream with a very low percentage of possibilities. However, although it is not realistic to completely reverse this situation at present, it is realistic to reduce it and achieve at least partial food sovereignty. To achieve this, it is essential to create aggressive programs that make the countryside profitable, establish fair prices and motivate new generations to practice agricultural activities, because, as has been seen in previous studies, new generations do not The field interests them, they know that it is not profitable, that they cannot live on it, and the current farmers, unfortunately, due to current policies, are forced to look for other alternatives to obtain income to survive, forcing them to abandon the field and often its own place of origin.

The main strengths of this work, in addition to the meticulous and detailed review of the theory on food sovereignty, is that it resumes the research carried out in various rural localities in the states of Puebla and Tlaxcala, where the results already described were observed, namely, abandonment of agricultural activities, lack of interest of new generations for these activities, as well as change of land use, and ineffective support from governments, among others.

On the other hand, the issue of food sovereignty is very broad, so one of the limitations of this study is not to cover all aspects of this concept, for example, food safety, cultural preferences regarding food, among others. In this work, emphasis was placed on the deterioration of food production, mainly for self-consumption in the country, abandonment of agricultural activities proven by the modifications that the employed population has undergone in terms of the economic sector. The main weakness considered in this research has to do with its own limitations. It would definitely be much richer to present studies on diet changes in rural populations derived from this deterioration in the production of food for self-consumption, which foods are being substituted and by which ones, as well as studies on their safety. However, although exercises have been carried out in some localities, the length of the work does not allow presenting them.



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