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“Solidarity in a competing world —
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Rural Land Management: Challenges for Family Farming and its Contribution to Food Production in Argentina

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Abstract

In the past decade, public policies concerning family farming promotion have been developed in Argentina and the rest of Latin America with the goal of contributing to local food supply and, ultimately, food sovereignty. However, these policies are geared toward rural and peri-urban areas where, at the same time, other government actors encourage commodity production and tourism and real-estate business endeavours which reproduce unfavourable conditions for small agricultural development. In particular, the expansion of activities mobilised by large companies exerts pressure on land access, resource use, and alternative types of production and commercialisation with regards to family farming. In this context, territorial analysis is key to understand and account for conflicts and different actors' strategies in the pursuit of imposing their own projects.

Our ongoing research is based on a perspective which centres the political dimension of territorial production; that is, the different ways in which power is exercised over territory, which are manifested not only by hegemonic actors' practices of government but also by the resistance practices which question them. Our overall purpose is to identify and analyse the land management process configured by the practices of state and non-state actors in rural areas where family farming is prevalent, through observing the disputes around territorial control and management. Specifically, the main questions which guide our inquiry are: Through which mechanisms and instruments do state and non-state actors reproduce, modify or dispute the established territorial order? What socio-spatial inclusions or exclusions do they entail for the family farming sector?

Our analysis centres on case studies in different Argentinean provinces, which represent land management issues in which family agriculture and food production are threatened by the revaluation of agricultural spaces for the purpose of real-estate development, by the development of tourism and/or by the expansion of economic activities aimed at foreign markets.

Keywords: Argentina, family farming, food production, rural land management