



AGRARIAN CULTURE IN THE SSAN LAW IN CUBA: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

CULTURA AGRARIA EN LA LEY SSAN EN CUBA: UN ANÁLISIS CRÍTICO

ALFREDO GONZÁLEZ MARRERO*, ARIEL HERNÁNDEZ LLERENA,
 ELAINE ARTIGAS PÉREZ, NAYIBIS DÍAZ MACHADO

Universidad Agraria de La Habana "Fructuoso Rodríguez Pérez", Cuba.

**Author for correspondence: Alfredo González Marrero. e-mail: alfredog@unah.edu.cu*

Abstract

This investigative work has as its main topic the agrarian culture in the Law of Food Sovereignty and Food and Nutritional Security in Cuba (SSAN Law). A qualitative investigation is carried out, taking into account some quantitative elements supported by the policy. The general objective is to assess the way in which agrarian culture is expressed in correspondence with the SSAN Law. The methods of obtaining information, historical-logical, analysis-synthesis, induction-deduction, document analysis and content analysis were used. Sustainable agrarian and rural development is aimed at achieving productive yields, with adequate levels of equity. Assuming this development approach socioculturally requires taking into account factors such as practices, meanings, values, heritage elements, symbols, identities, communicative aspects, social representations, among others. In the implementation of the SSAN Law, the lack of an integrative vision of culture is identified in phenomena such as agrarian cultural reproduction, community work and migration. However, potentialities are seen such as capacity building for organizations, institutions, governments, municipalities and communities.

Key words: agrarian and rural development, equity, cultural reproduction, sustainability, community work

Resumen

Este trabajo investigativo tiene como tema principal la cultura agraria en la Ley de Soberanía Alimentaria y Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional en Cuba (Ley SSAN). Se realiza una investigación cualitativa, tomando en cuenta algunos elementos cuantitativos que sostiene la política. El objetivo es valorar la forma en que se expresa la cultura agraria en correspondencia con la Ley SSAN. Se emplearon los métodos de obtención de información, histórico-lógico, análisis-síntesis, inducción-deducción, análisis de documentos y análisis de contenido. El desarrollo agrario y rural sostenible se orienta al cumplimiento de rendimientos productivos, con adecuados niveles de equidad. Asumir este enfoque de desarrollo socioculturalmente, exige la toma en cuenta de factores como prácticas, sentidos, valores, elementos patrimoniales, símbolos, identidades, aspectos comunicativos, representaciones sociales, entre otros. En la implementación de la Ley SSAN se identifica la poca visión integradora de lo cultural en fenómenos como la reproducción cultural agraria, trabajo comunitario y migraciones. Sin embargo, se visualizan potencialidades como la formación de capacidades tanto para organismos, instituciones, gobiernos, municipios y comunidades.

Palabras claves: desarrollo agrario y rural, equidad, reproducción cultural, sostenibilidad, trabajo comunitario

Introduction

Culture should not be conceived only from the artistic-spiritual point of view, since it constitutes a practical reflection of human activity, which includes everything that man as a social being creates and transforms, thus

contributing to the development of the space in which he works. as a social subject (Turros et al., 2021). In this sense, culture is projected in all social sectors: economic, political, social, educational, business, industrial, agricultural, among others.

Received: January 11, 2024

Accepted: February 22, 2024

Conflict of interests: The authors of this work declare no conflict of interest.

AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION: The authors participated in the design and writing of the work, in addition to the analysis of the documents.



This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial (CC BY-NC 4.0). <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>



“The agricultural sector in Cuba for more than two decades has experienced a continuous decrease in the traditional weight of the state sector, its majority number of agricultural workers and extensive exploitation of land, to give way to the progressive increase of usufructuary producers in roles of cooperative members or of individual private companies, with small-scale productions” (Díaz et al., 2021, p.886).

Agriculture and food play a prominent role in the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, approved by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015. This public policy establishes, among its objectives, ending hunger, achieving food sovereignty and improve nutrition, as well as promote sustainable agriculture, with the premise of achieving the economic, social and environmental sustainability of its member states, among which is Cuba.

In Mayabeque province, different authors generally identify the uprooting and weakening of peasant culture, a transforming force of multiple processes. Among the sociocultural factors incident in this area, the management of social programs for the education of the peasantry and actions to motivate young people to ensure that way of life are noted (Samper et al., 2019).

The National Assembly of People's Power (ANPP), taking into account problematic situations that exist today, achieves a specific framework to achieve food sovereignty and safeguard food and nutritional security through the Law on Food Sovereignty and Food and Nutritional Security (SSAN Law).), as continuity of the implementation of the Food Sovereignty and Nutrition Education Program (SAN Plan).

The SSAN Law defines the local food system as the central axis to achieve food sovereignty and security, with the multi-actor and multi-sector creation of productive chains. Therefore, it establishes the general legal framework based on the protection of the right of every person to healthy and adequate food.

The above is used as justification for this scientific work, where the following General Objective was proposed: Assess the way in which agrarian culture is expressed in correspondence with the SSAN Law.

Materials and Methods

This research is classified as qualitative, focused on understanding both individual and collective reality, from the general to the particular. Thus, it contributes to the formation of a comprehensive approach to reality in a dynamic, diverse and multidisciplinary way. The use of this paradigm allowed the study of the modes of expression of agrarian culture, as a mediating and transforming force of processes that affect the SSAN Law (Hernández and Mendoza, 2020).

In the research, the following methods were used to obtain theoretical level information:

Analysis-Synthesis: It was applied as a method to the analysis of the evolution of the concept of culture and agrarian issues in different contexts.

Historical-logical: It was essential to search for relevant sources and analyze the historical perspective of the formation process of agrarian culture from its origin to the present. In addition, it was used to systematize the background of the SSAN Law.

Induction-Deduction: In this study, a mainly interpretive approach of some particularities in the treatment of agrarian culture prevails.

The following empirical level methods were also used to obtain information

Document analysis: It was used in the review and analysis of regulatory documents related to the research topic; fundamentally in a critical analysis of the Law on Food Sovereignty and Food and Nutritional Security.

Content analysis: It was used in the interpretation of the way in which modes of expressions of agrarian culture identified in the SSAN Law are conceived, to strengthen the sustainable agrarian and rural development of the country.

This scientific work contributes a fundamental role to the food security and agricultural development of the country, from a cultural point of view. In this regard, some cultural expressions are set out in the SSAN Law that favor or disfavor some development processes in the sector.

In the current implementation of the SSAN Law, adequate management and treatment of the agrarian culture component is needed, with a strong perspective on agrarian sustainability, as well as the promotion of qualitative research, which validates its relationship with the agrarian and integral development of the nation.

Results and Discussion

Development as a management process is the object of analysis by scientists and researchers. From this perspective, it integrates technological, economic, social, ecological, environmental, political and cultural elements. This work must satisfy different social needs of groups and/or individuals, through the rational use of means and resources. Every development process brings changes that can positively transform the factual reality of the context.

For the generation and sustenance of sustainable human development, it is necessary to take into account the “sense of identity with the community, with its purposes and objectives” (Santa Cruz et al., 2019, p.4). The creation of conditions for economic and social progress serves as a starting point for improving the population's standard of

living, conceived from the participation of actors, equity, productivity, security and empowerment (Sáez, 2019).

“Economic growth is not compatible with income redistribution, environmental preservation, or gender equality. Each of these studies or arguments must be evaluated based on the premises raised by both perspectives. There are many criticisms in reference to both issues, however, the capabilities approach has been gaining ground in academic discussions and in the field of public policies designed by national and international organizations in recent years” (Ruiz, 2019, p.123).

Human development represents a development model that more strongly highlights the sociocultural dimension, placing the human being as the central axis of the process (Corzo and Cuadra, 2020). This generates a favorable climax in the formation of an environment in such a way that it promotes equity in opportunities and access to resources, from their accessibility, to their sustainable use, respecting harmony with nature, and guaranteeing life for subsequent generations in local or territorial scenarios (Hidalgo and Fonseca, 2021).

In the case of Municipal Development Strategies (EDM) and Provincial Development Strategies (EDP), they are assumed as a necessary condition for achieving comprehensive and sustainable development. In Mayabeque, a highly scientific, technical and agrarian province, line number one, corresponding to Food Security and Sovereignty, an indispensable pillar of sustainable agrarian and rural development, is identified as a priority in development strategies.

“Rural development must consider a concordant relationship between economic growth and community well-being; It must involve the efforts of various economic, social and political agents to transform the context and increase productive capacities, and, therefore, a correlation between income, wealth and quality of life; favoring development opportunities for the population. This criterion implies better education, health services, equal opportunities, social and ecological values, among others” (García et al., 2020, p.3).

Regarding sustainable agrarian and rural development, and the sustainability of this process, specialists with a sociological approach maintain that: “the achievement of processes and results that integrate satisfactory productive performances, equity in economic participation and in the recognition of the plurality of social actors involved (individual and family producers, organizations and institutions), respect for the preservation of the environment, the sense of identification with the agrarian way of life and the basic consensus between the productive sector and the governing institutions” (Díaz et al., 2021, p.889).

The current Constitution of the Republic of Cuba, which in its article 77 states that: “All people have the right to healthy and adequate food. The State creates the conditions to strengthen the food security of the entire population.” Together with the above, article 78 states that, “All people have the right to consume quality goods and services that do not threaten their health” (De Estado, 2019, p.6).

The Guidelines of the Economic and Social Policy of the Party and the Revolution for the period (2021-2026), in its article 127, states that it is necessary: “Implement the National Plan for Food Sovereignty and Nutritional Education (SAN Plan), to the sustained increase in agricultural and forestry production, and its effect on the quality of life of the population, with the integration of the country's organizations and entities, in coordination with the territorial development management processes. Promote international collaboration” (PCC, 2021, p.75).

Currently, as a result of the intensification of the commercial economic blockade, an increase in imports, low levels of production and the need to strengthen national food security, elements that are confirmed in the SAN Plan (MINAG, 2020), it was reported in 2022. the implementation of the SSAN Law. This law grants strict compliance to key elements expressed in the SAN Plan, aimed at the sustainable human, agrarian and rural development of the nation.

In the case of the San José de Las Lajas Municipality, belonging to the Mayabeque province, Local Food Sovereignty is identified as the number one strategic line of the Municipal Development Strategy (Municipal Administration Council, 2022). This line, based on agricultural sustainability, calls for long-term attention on the need for productive and responsible increases in healthy and safe food as a way to face the difficult circumstances that the country faces in terms of challenges in this sector.

“Culture as an end constitutes an engine for diversity, personal and collective self-realization, a stimulus for creativity and innovation. Polarized visions of development limit the dimension of culture by disconnecting it from its treatment as a resource. Cultural activities, goods and services, linked to heritage, identities, meanings and values, represent a basis for entrepreneurship” (Alcívar et al., 2020, p.6).

“Conceiving social development from a cultural dimension implies assuming development linked to science, technology, health, education, arts, ecology, social relations and quality of life, integrating economic, political and social factors. and ecological, taking man and his culture as the axis” (Turros et al., 2021, pp.166-167).

Agrarian culture, expression and way of life of communities, is considered above all a social process, where it is interrelated with different dimensions and conceptions

of development (Feito, 2020). These conceptions are mediated by modes of expression, individual and collective behaviors, ways of doing, producing and reproducing that system of agrarian activities. According to what was previously stated, agrarian culture mediates multidisciplinary and multidimensional sustainable agrarian and rural development.

In the Cuban agricultural sector, from a cultural point of view, a social legacy is visualized, which today has been renewed and modernized, mostly preserving its essence, and carrying a high value and usefulness for that way of life (Fonseca et al., 2019). This relearned knowledge provides generations of family units with knowledge, knowledge, forms of production and a sense of identity.

For the conceptualization of expressions of the agrarian culture component as a grouping of processes that offer meaning to sustainable agrarian and rural development, the postulates of (Díaz et al., 2021) are taken: agrarian cultural reproduction, migrations, senses of identity, gender approach, good agroecological practices, capacity building for agricultural work and civil servants, community work accompanied by extension actions, and the promotion of good nutritional practices.

In the current Cuban agricultural sector, the gender approach, as a strategic axis, must mediate and sustain levels of equity and access to resources, goods, services, increasing job and food opportunities, through popular participation, and dialogic communication. Empowerment is a fundamental component to enhance scientific production and research, since, if the individuals who study and produce goods and services in this area, carry out the activity identified with current needs, there will be higher levels of commitment, awareness and contributions from different social sectors. On the other hand, migrations, as social phenomena that hold in their essence a group of cultural factors, and on which, they carry out movements from one place to another on a temporary, or defining basis; Aspects such as economic improvement influence the phenomenon, strongly marked by work motivation, which generates a shock in their cultural identity, providing new experiences, experiences and meanings.

Therefore, agrarian identity constitutes a logical and articulated construction of what it means to be and feel "agrarian", which varies and modifies, according to structures, meanings, policies and lifestyles. These senses of identity are a conditioned reflection of one's own life, and express the form that behavior takes, after cultivating new experiences and conceptions, based on accumulated experiences, which start from the way of producing food, to the way of eating daily, in a sustained manner.

On the other hand, in Cuba, on July 22, 2020, the Ministry of Agriculture, in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Trade, and the Food and Agriculture Organization

of the United Nations, begins the implementation of the Sovereignty Program Food and Nutritional Education in Cuba (SAN). The SAN provides the municipality with autonomy and regulatory personality, for the strategic management of said agrarian policy. The SAN, as a national and territorial platform for food security and subsequent sovereignty, directs its management efforts towards the achievement of sustainable local food systems, where the multi-actor and multi-sectoral participation of all actors linked to this task are taken into account, as well as the promotion of agricultural and food cultural practices that improve the current health of the Cuban population.

As a result of the current economic crisis facing the country, and the exchange promoted by multidisciplinary specialists, the Cuban government incorporates greater legal scope and strict compliance with those supports proposed by the SAN. In correspondence with what was explained above, on July 28, 2022, in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Cuba Number 77, the National Assembly of the Republic of Cuba, Law 148/2022, approves the Law on Food Sovereignty and Food Security and Nutrition (SSAN Law).

The implementation of the SSAN Law involves promoting sustainable agricultural practices through technological and cultural updating of the means of production. Spaces must be created aimed at training agricultural producers' capacities, equitable access to land, avoiding the retention of time and bureaucracy, and the promotion of international cooperation that guarantees investment in the infrastructure and technology necessary for the improvement of agricultural productivity.

In the country, this agrarian policy requires the creation of provincial and municipal commissions for security, food sovereignty and nutritional education. Each provincial commission must be composed of the Governor, who acts as main coordinator, then, a vice coordinator, secretary, and representatives of organizations of the Central Administration of the State, and of the local bodies of People's Power.

In the case of municipal commissions, the Mayor will be the main coordinator, accompanied by a vice coordinator, and secretary, in addition to the central administration bodies and local bodies. The commissions according to the SSAN Law will take into account communities and rural areas as key scenarios for the agricultural production of meat, milk, poultry, meats and vegetables, among others.

The application of document analysis to the current SSAN Law confirmed the presence of complex problems in the Cuban population. This situation is marked by the presence of equity barriers in terms of availability, access, stability, and use of food. The above makes us rethink the role that culture plays, as a set of factors - value system - that mediate agrarian development.

On the other hand, regarding the treatment of another factor that affects agrarian culture, the lack of management of agrarian cultural reproduction is distinguished as a phenomenon that guarantees, in terms of sustainability, continuity of that way of life and production. Not only is the promotion of these work practices part of families and communities, but the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Culture, among others, must participate in the task.

In summary, some limitations and potentialities were identified conceptually, which constitute the object of critical evaluation in the current analysis of the SSAN Law, where the agrarian culture component mediates:

Potentials

- Training as a decisive cultural factor in the formation of capacities for organizations, institutions, governments, municipalities and communities.
- The promotion of agroecological culture as a priority for the positive impact of the country's food security and sovereignty, at a productive, scientific and research level, supported by a government of science, technology and innovation.
- Leading participation of key actors such as the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment, the Ministry of Public Health, among others, for the establishment of multisectoral links.

Limitations

- Poor integration of factors from the agrarian culture component, which affect policy management such as agrarian cultural reproduction, community work and migration.
- Little participation of cultural sector actors in the management of the SSAN Law.
- Low priority to community work, as a cultural phenomenon that conditions popular participation, changes in mentality, decision making, and with it, agricultural productivity in rural communities.

Conclusions

The systematization of theoretical and methodological references related to agrarian culture, an essential component for sustainable agrarian and rural development, confirmed the transforming and energizing role of this element, in agrarian development processes, with emphasis on the management of agrarian policies to national, territorial and local level. In correspondence with what was previously stated, it is amplified that, in every agrarian and rural process, needs, interests, daily

practices, heritage elements, production and reproduction of meanings, communication, migrations, identities, among other sociocultural factors, play a leading role. .

The critical determination of the way in which agrarian culture is conceived from elements prioritized in the SSAN Law demonstrated, above all, the high interest of the Cuban government in the safe and sustained production of food, as ways to achieve security and food sovereignty. In that sense, articulating production chains in a multisectoral way, and local food systems in an intersectoral and interinstitutional way.

It is considered important to pay attention to the presence of elements that have a positive impact on policy management. In this regard, the main limitation is the lack of integrative vision of elements that carry agrarian culture that affect the management of policies such as agrarian cultural reproduction, community work and migration. However, as potentialities, training is reflected as a decisive cultural factor in the formation of capacities and the leading participation of organizations and ministries, despite the limited participation of the Ministry of Culture in the management of this policy.

References

- Alcívar, S. A., Paz, L. E. y Martínez, M. (2020). Dimensión de la cultura popular y tradicional como recurso para el desarrollo local. *Revista Márgenes*, 8(3), 1-14. ISSN: 2664-1190.
- ANPP. (2022). Proyecto de Ley Soberanía Alimentaria y Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional. ISSN: 1682-7511.
- Consejo de la Administración Municipal. (2022). Estrategia Municipal de Desarrollo Local. San José de las Lajas, Mayabeque.
- Corzo, D. y Cuadra, R. (2020). La integralidad del desarrollo territorial, un proceso entendido desde los conceptos: multiescalaridad, multisectorialidad y multidimensionalidad. Grupo de Investigación LIS (Liderazgo, Innovación y Sociedad). Dirección de Educación e Investigación. Centro Latinoamericano del Propósito.
- De Estado, C. (2019). Constitución de la República de Cuba. La Habana: Política, 5 de julio del 2023. ISSN: 1682-7511.
- Díaz, N., Moore, M. y González, A. (2021). Condicionantes de la sostenibilidad del sector agrario asociadas a transformaciones sociopolíticas del ámbito cooperativo. *Revista COODES*, 9 (3), 883-904, ISSN: 2310-340X.
- Feito, M. C. (2020). Comercialización de la agricultura familiar para el desarrollo rural: feria de la Universidad Nacional de La Matanza. *Revista de Economía e Sociología Rural*, 58(1), 1-19. ISSN: 1806-9479.
- Fonseca, N. E., Salamanca, J. D. y Vega Z. Y. (2019). La agricultura familiar agroecológica, una estrategia de

- desarrollo rural incluyente. Una revisión. Revista Temas Agrarios, 24 (2), 96-107: ISSN: 0122-7610.
- García, J. R., Aldape, L. A. y Esquivel, F. A. (2020). Perspectivas del desarrollo agrario y rural en México. Revista de Ciencias Sociales (Ve), 26 (3). ISSN: 1315-9518.
- Hernández, R. y Mendoza, C. P. (2020). Metodología de la investigación: las rutas cuantitativa, cualitativa y mixta. McGraw-hill. ISSN: 978-1-4562-6096-5.
- Hidalgo, J. L. y Fonseca, F. (2021). Educación y Desarrollo Humano: aprendizaje basado en buenas prácticas de sostenibilidad. Revista Entrevista Académica Electrónica, 3 (8), 116-135. ISSN: 2603-607X.
- MINAG. (2020). Plan De Soberanía Alimentaria y Educación Nutricional cubano. Disponible en: <https://www.unah.edu.cu/universidad/plan-de-soberania-alimentaria/>
- PCC. (2021). Lineamientos de la Política Económica y Social del Partido y la Revolución para el período 2021-2026.
- Ruiz, J. (2019). Desarrollo y calidad de vida. Una perspectiva crítica a partir del pensamiento de Amartya Sen. Revista Aletheia, 11(2), 107-126. ISSN: 2145-0366.
- Sáez, L. A. (2019). Despoblación, desarrollo y cultura: triángulo cómplice. Revista PH Boletín del Instituto Andaluz del Patrimonio Histórico, 27 (98). ISSN: 2340-7565.
- Samper, I., Jiménez, R. y Díaz, N. (2019). Impacto de las políticas de usufructo agrario en la juventud rural de Santa Cruz del Norte. Revista Observatorio de la Economía Latinoamericana. ISSN: 1696-8352.
- Santa Cruz, D., Ojalvo, V y Velasteguí, E. (2019). Desarrollo local: conceptualizaciones, principales características y dimensiones. Revista Ciencia Digital, 3(2), 319-335. ISSN: 2602-8085.
- Turros, A., Ferreiro, J. F y Piñeiro, S. (2021). El aporte de la extensión universitaria en función de la cultura agraria en Cuba. Revista Observatorio de las Ciencias Sociales en Iberoamérica, 2 (13), 157-174, ISSN: 2660-5554.