



SIMPOSIO INTERNACIONAL HÁBITAT Y DESARROLLO COMUNITARIO SOSTENIBLE

**How can organic farming, developed from a Social Control
Organization, promote sustainable community development?**

*¿Cómo puede la agricultura orgánica, desarrollada a partir de una
Organización de Control Social, promover el desarrollo comunitario
sostenible?*

Sabrina Lorandi¹, Sérgio Botton Barcellos²

¹ Sabrina Lorandi. Federal University of Rio Grande (FURG), Brazil. E-mail: sabri_lorandi@hotmail.com

² Sérgio Botton Barcellos. Federal University of Paraíba (UFPB), Brazil. E-mail: sergiobbarcellos@hotmail.com

Abstract: This study aims to analyze the discussion around sustainable community development of organic farming, structured from a Social Control Organization (SCO), considering members motivations, social-historical events and political elements. This research is an exploratory study of qualitative perspective, carried out in Morro Redondo, a rural municipality located in the South of Brazil. Data was collected by field notebook records and participant observation within the “SCO Renascer” reunions, composed by six families and a rural extensionist. In this context, we identified life history events that drove the families toward organic farming, such as intoxication, material losses, and the shutdown of an important meat-packing plant in the region. Besides economic motivations, the group showed environmental and health concern, longing for recognition and protagonism, better life condition and food security. Regarding political elements, in Brazil we have been witnessing, in the last five years, the dismantling of public policies involving organic production, as well as other social assistance policies that guaranteed institutional markets for organic farming. We consider the experience of the “SCO Renascer” as a means to sustainable community development, due to the environmental

1



**III Convención Científica Internacional “Ciencia, Tecnología y Sociedad” 2021
Universidad Central “Marta Abreu” de Las Villas
“SIMPOSIO INTERNACIONAL HÁBITAT Y DESARROLLO COMUNITARIO
SOSTENIBLE”**

education character, self-management, trust relations, social commitment, food security, and the sustainability of the production system. Nonetheless, we consider that the strict regulation of organic farming may threaten the autonomy of farmers. Moreover, the numerous requirements, such as written records, challenge the involvement of farmers with low levels of formal education.

Resumen: *Este estudio pretende analizar la discusión en torno al desarrollo comunitario sostenible de la agricultura orgánica, estructurado desde una Organización de Control Social (OCS), considerando las motivaciones de los miembros, los acontecimientos histórico-sociales y los elementos políticos. Esta investigación es un estudio exploratorio con perspectiva cualitativa, realizado en Morro Redondo, un municipio rural del sur de Brasil. Los datos se recogieron mediante un cuaderno de campo y observación participante en las reuniones del "OCS Renascer", compuesto por seis familias y una extensionista rural. En este contexto, identificamos las experiencias que llevaron las familias a la agricultura orgánica, como intoxicación, pérdidas materiales y el cierre de un importante frigorífico de la región. Además de las motivaciones económicas, el grupo mostró preocupaciones ambientales y de la salud, deseo de reconocimiento y protagonismo, mejores condiciones de vida y seguridad alimentaria. Sobre los elementos políticos, en Brasil hemos sido testigos, en los últimos cinco años, del desmantelamiento de las políticas públicas relacionadas con la producción orgánica, así como de otras políticas de asistencia social que garantizaban mercados institucionales para la agricultura orgánica. Consideramos la experiencia de la "OCS Renascer" como un medio de desarrollo comunitario sostenible, por el carácter educativo ambiental, autogestión, relaciones de confianza, compromiso social, seguridad alimentaria y la sostenibilidad del sistema productivo. Sin embargo, consideramos que la estricta regulación de la agricultura orgánica puede amenazar la autonomía de los agricultores. Además, los numerosos requisitos, como los registros escritos, suponen un reto para la participación de los agricultores con baja escolarización.*

Keywords: Family farming; Self-management; Rural community; Sustainable development

Palabras Claves: Agricultura familiar; Autogestión; Comunidad rural; Desarrollo sostenible



III Convención Científica Internacional “Ciencia, Tecnología y Sociedad” 2021
Universidad Central “Marta Abreu” de Las Villas
“SIMPOSIO INTERNACIONAL HÁBITAT Y DESARROLLO COMUNITARIO
SOSTENIBLE”

1. Introduction

Alternative agriculture for a sustainable production and consume system gained worldwide attention along with the ecological movement of the 60 and 70 (Assis & Romeiro, 2002). This movement was a response to the environment crisis as a result of the modern civilization. Questioning the limit of economic growth due to pollution from industries, unlimited exploitation of natural resources, ecosystems destruction and loss of biodiversity, the growing social inequality and the effects of modern agriculture as of the green revolution (Leff, 2015).

The green revolution is the latest step in modern agriculture, that aims to improve the performance of the agricultural productivity indexes, from the adoption of technological practices, such as the use of genetically modified varieties dependent on chemical inputs, soluble mineral fertilizers, biocide pesticides, and mechanization of the irrigation, planting, and harvesting processes, focused on the production of monocultures (Luzzardi, 2006).

The consequences of this process are the exclusion of smallholder’s family farmers that cannot invest in these technologies. Besides it increases inequalities and rural poverty, threat food security, due to the substitution of subsistence production for commodities (Leff, 2002) and the abandonment of the rural way of life in addition to the loss of biodiversity and environmental impacts (Altieri, 2010). For those who manage to insert themselves into this production model, they experience the loss of autonomy and the application of traditional knowledge of rural communities, because they no longer control the means and processes of agricultural production. They depend on technical knowledge, capital to invest in machinery and inputs, applying reductionist, standardized and massified cultivation protocols (Soglio, 2016).

On this historical context, the concept of sustainable development was proposed by the United Nations in 1987 as a new development strategy for the governments to ensure that the needs of present populations are met without compromising those of future generations (Brundtland, 1987). In this perspective, the development is understood as economic growth, which, supposedly, would lead to better living conditions (Sena et al., 2017). This assumption ignores that the capitalistic rationality that drives our system



**III Convención Científica Internacional “Ciencia, Tecnología y Sociedad” 2021
Universidad Central “Marta Abreu” de Las Villas
“SIMPOSIO INTERNACIONAL HÁBITAT Y DESARROLLO COMUNITARIO
SOSTENIBLE”**

negates the very logic of sustainability, because its center in the capital accumulation, industrialization process and technologies require the exploitation of resources and expropriates the environmental debts impacting mostly the socio-environment of the Third World countries (Carneiro, 2005; Layrargues, 1997).

At the same time, the term ecodevelopment (first proposed by Maurice Strong in 1973), refers to a development adapted to the rural areas of the Third World, considering local conditions and the fair use of natural resources (Layrargues, 1997). Later, Ignacy Sachs (1982) used this concept to propose a development with ecological prudence assumptions, economic efficiency, and social justice. To do so, it would be necessary to know the conditions and needs of communities, their culture, and the characteristics of the ecosystems where they live (Layrargues, 1997). In this sense Leff (2015) argues that development should value a sustainable economy, considering the productive potential of ecological systems, cultural values, and especially the participatory management of communities.

In this study, the aforementioned ecodevelopment principles are considered for understanding the concept of sustainable community development, which diverge from the sustainable development as argued above.

Organic farming represents an alternative and sustainable agriculture system, based on production of healthy food without the use of pesticides, whose practices involve knowledge about the plant, soil, and climate conditions (Assis & Romeiro, 2002).

On this matter, the work of Albert Howard (1943) is an important literature reference. According to him, the efforts on organic agriculture must value soil fertility, plant diversity and the integration between crops and animal husbandry. He proposes that we learn by the knowledge and techniques of the rural communities, because there is always a meaning for what is done in farming by those who live in it. He highlights his opposition on chemicals input and monocultures in agriculture systems because of their impacts on soil's health (Howard, 1943).

Some authors criticize organic agriculture due to the emphasis on meeting the demands of the consumer market for healthy food (Zamilpa, Rindermann & Ortiz, 2016). However, the purpose and development of organic agriculture depends on the relationship



**III Convención Científica Internacional “Ciencia, Tecnología y Sociedad” 2021
Universidad Central “Marta Abreu” de Las Villas
“SIMPOSIO INTERNACIONAL HÁBITAT Y DESARROLLO COMUNITARIO
SOSTENIBLE”**

with the consumer market and the social context where it is developed (Assis & Romeiro, 2002). In this sense, the role of public policies and the State is fundamental to encourage organic agriculture and ensure the market and local development of rural communities (Zamilpa, Rindermann & Ortiz, 2016). Organic agriculture has great potential to combat inequality and ensure food security, promoting local solidarity trade networks, providing employment and the protagonism of farmers in the production process, without dependence on industries and intermediary agents (Zamilpa, Rindermann & Ortiz, 2016).

In Brazil, organic farming has been legally established through the Law n° 10.831 of 2003 that considers organic systems of production for those that optimize the use of natural and socioeconomic resources, with the aim of warranting economic and ecological sustainability, minimizing dependence on non-renewable energy and the use of synthetic materials (Brasil, 2003). Four years later, the Decree n° 6.323 of 2007 regulated the conditions for commercialization of organic products, which can occur through organic certification by auditing or through Participatory Guarantee Systems. The third possibility is through the constitution of a Social Control Organization (SCO), which does not guarantee the organic certification, but allows direct commercialization to consumers by farmers and institutional markets¹ (Brasil, 2007).

The SCO is a social group of family farmers registered at Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply (MALS), organized in a process of generating credibility, through participation, commitment, transparency and trust, recognized by society (Brasil, 2007). The SCO must guarantee a transparent tracking system so that consumers and the inspection agencies can verify the organic process of production (Brasil, 2020).

Although it has been 14 years since the regulation of organic agriculture in Brazil, there are few researches about SCO experiences. Here, we present the work of Becker et al. (2020) that sought to identify the difficulties for regularization of organic production

¹ There are two main public programs essential to maintain the institutional market for the SCO organic products. the Food Acquisition Program (FAP) and the National School Feeding Program (NSFP). The first one was created in 2003 through the Law n° 10.696 with the objective of guaranteeing access to food for socially vulnerable families and supporting family farming. The NSFP was created to guarantee the constitutional right to nutritional security and offers school meals for all stages of basic education. In 2009, Law 11.947 ensures that 30% of the value of NSFP is destined for direct purchases from family farming, prioritizing agrarian reform settlements, traditional indigenous communities and quilombola communities



III Convención Científica Internacional “Ciencia, Tecnología y Sociedad” 2021
Universidad Central “Marta Abreu” de Las Villas
**“SIMPOSIO INTERNACIONAL HÁBITAT Y DESARROLLO COMUNITARIO
SOSTENIBLE”**

by family farmers of a SCO located in the South region of Brazil. The challenges pointed by the participants involved the management of the production system, due to low income, and the requirements of written technical records to maintain the SCO itself. Marques, Gaspari & Almeida (2017) report in their work the experience from a SCO in a settlement in Southeastern Brazil. They point out that the SCO promoted financial independence for the women of the group, integration and mutual help among the families to face difficulties, approximation with consumers, self-recognition and appreciation, in addition to reinforcing respect for the environment and knowledge about ecologically based practices. Santos (2018) reports the experience of a group of quilombola women, organized from a SCO, who indicated the difficulty of commercialization and the lack of technical assistance and rural extension that could contribute to enhance the group's work.

Therefore, the objective of this work is to analyze the discussion around sustainable community development of organic farming, structured from a Social Control Organization (SCO), considering members motivations, social-historical events and political elements. This work is part of an ongoing master's research in the Postgraduate program in Environmental Education of Federal University of Rio Grande (FURG). The research proposal was properly submitted and approved by the ethic committee of the referred university under the number 47682421.4.0000.5324.

2. Methodology

2.1 Study area

This research was carried out in Morro Redondo, a countryside municipality of Rio Grande do Sul state, in the south of Brazil. Morro Redondo is located in Serra dos Tapes, in the Pampa biome. According to Salamoni et al. (2021) the Serra dos Tapes region was originally occupied by the Guarani indigenous people that practice agriculture in the forested areas. With the advance of Portuguese colonization in the 18th century the landscape was transformed into big areas for cattle raising and pasture lands. The cattle raising originated the Charqueadas² system based on slave work. The enslaved people

² Charqueadas are a local where cattle are slaughtered and charque meat is produced, a form of dry meat preserved with salt and exposure to the sun.



III Convención Científica Internacional “Ciencia, Tecnología y Sociedad” 2021
Universidad Central “Marta Abreu” de Las Villas
“SIMPOSIO INTERNACIONAL HÁBITAT Y DESARROLLO COMUNITARIO
SOSTENIBLE”

that fled those ranches established quilombos on the top of the mountains, trading knowledge with the remaining Guarani people.

In this period there was a prevalence of subsistence agricultural production and outsourced work on large farms in the region. For black and indigenous people there was no guarantee of land tenure, and they were excluded from the land tenure and demarcation done through European colonization project in the 19th century. This project was promoted by the government and private initiatives, which aimed at the diversified production of food and the whitening of the population (Anjos & Caldas, 2009). In this scenario of small family farming, families invested in primary vegetable production associated with animal husbandry, handicrafts and the artisanal production of colonial sweets, cheeses, canned food and juices (Salamoni et al., 2021).

In the 20th century there was a great investment in national industrialization which transformed the agrarian scenario as well. According to Gois (2018) the modernization of agriculture has replaced the artisanal family production with industries processing agricultural products. Early 1960s, in the Morro Redondo’s region, there was the establishment of large industries of canneries and meatpacking plants that, along with the advent of the Green Revolution, made the farmers become suppliers of raw materials and buyers of industrial products. This relationship of dependence and vertical contract (Anjos & Caldas, 2009) promoted the simplification of the production system, adherence to the technological package, and subordination to the market, leading to loss of productive autonomy, health exposition due to the use of agrochemicals, and decrease or extinction of subsistence production.

Today Morro Redondo has a territorial area of 244,645 km² and the estimated population is 6.589 people of which 60% represents rural population (IBGE, 2021). Almost 90% of the rural establishments are characterized as family farming (Emater-RS, 2021). According to the 2021 report elaborated by Emater³, regarding family farmers social organization, there are five associations and cooperatives, of which, one is specific for agroecological production and two are focused on the quilombola community. Some

³ EMATER-RS is a public enterprise for technical assistance and rural extension of Rio Grande do Sul state, which aims to promote sustainable rural development. EMATER is a result of a Public Policy crated in 2010 by Law 12.188, with emphasis on supporting family farming (BRASIL, 2010).



*III Convención Científica Internacional “Ciencia, Tecnología y Sociedad” 2021
Universidad Central “Marta Abreu” de Las Villas
“SIMPOSIO INTERNACIONAL HÁBITAT Y DESARROLLO COMUNITARIO
SOSTENIBLE”*

farmers participate in organic production associations in Pelotas, the neighboring municipality and reference in alternative agriculture.

The alternative agriculture movement in Pelotas' region is represented by associations and cooperatives of farmers with more than 20 years of history working along local family farmers. There are also solidarity trade networks that operates through virtual markets. These organizations support agroecological and organic farming in the region, street markets, as well as sustainable rural development (Cruz, 2015).

Even though there are an increasing number of families working in organic and agroecological systems of production, the main production of Morro Redondo relies on peach fruit, soybean and corn that are produced in the conventional model with the use of agrochemicals (IBGE, 2020). According to Bombardi (2017), about 50 to 60 percent of rural establishments in the Morro Redondo region use pesticides on their crops.

2.2 Study methods

This research is an exploratory study of qualitative perspective, that seeks comprehension of the subjective meaning of a certain reality, considering the everyday experience and the socio-historic dimensions of the social context (Flick, 2009). Data was collected through participant observation (Flick, 2009) in three reunions of the SCO Renacer, during the months of July and August of 2021, using field notebook registration and recording. The records were transcribed and data was analyzed through content analysis according to Bardin (1977). From the floating reading of the transcripts, the body of analysis was coded from the repeated words and phrases, as well as the most emphatic ideas and opinions. Then, these codes were grouped into primary categories, according to the emerging themes. In a third step, the final categories were elaborated from the association between the emerging themes and the pre-established objectives.

3. Results and Discussion

According to the emerging themes, we found five primary categories: Perceptions about SCO Renacer (1); Understanding about organic farming (2); Engagement with organic farming and SCO Renacer (3); Life history and transition process (4);



III Convención Científica Internacional “Ciencia, Tecnología y Sociedad” 2021
Universidad Central “Marta Abreu” de Las Villas
“SIMPOSIO INTERNACIONAL HÁBITAT Y DESARROLLO COMUNITARIO
SOSTENIBLE”

Difficulties regarding SCO and organic farming (5). These categories were associated with the objectives of this work (motivation, social-historic events and political elements) and we elaborated two final categories as described below.

3.1 Group origin: perceptions about SCO Renascer, organic agriculture and the transition process

The SCO Renascer group originated from the periodic meetings held between Emater-RS extensionists with families from each location in the municipality, linked to the Community Development Association of Rural Producers of Morro Redondo (CDARP-MR)⁴. Specifically in Afonso Pena locality (where four of the six families of the SCO reside), families in the process of transition to ecologically based agriculture have shown interest in legalizing their organic production. The SCO families are at different levels of transition to organic production. Some of them have been working for more than five years with a focus on agroecology, while others still produce simultaneously, using conventional and organic practices.

In 2020 the group started the registration process with MALS, they had to create a statute, a name and submit the documents required. The approval was granted in March 2021. Since then, the group have held monthly reunions to comply with the organic regulation, such as the elaboration of a management plan for the properties, daily recording of activities in a field notebook, peer visits to evaluate the conformity of the members' practices and the production units, followed by the elaboration of visits reports.

In their speeches, the members declare that the SCO represents a dream, the result of much struggle and an achievement of small farmers, which can serve as an example and inspiration for other families. The principles of the group involve mutual trust, ethics, individual responsibility and dedication, unity, and transparency. The objective is to promote the development of everyone as a group, to guarantee income, permanence in the countryside, autonomy, and better living conditions.

⁴ The CDARP-MR is the oldest association in Morro Redondo. It was created more than 30 years ago and assists in the acquisition of machinery for community use at more affordable prices than the outsourced service. Besides, the association held periodically meetings with representants of each locality of Morro Redondo (EMATER-RS, 2021).



**III Convención Científica Internacional “Ciencia, Tecnología y Sociedad” 2021
Universidad Central “Marta Abreu” de Las Villas
“SIMPOSIO INTERNACIONAL HÁBITAT Y DESARROLLO COMUNITARIO
SOSTENIBLE”**

Through the history of the SCO Renascer group, we can visualize the social commitment with the formation of a network of families working together to guarantee the quality and conformities of organic production. Moreover, it shows the importance of associations, groups and social movements that creates space where the communities can analyze their own reality and elaborate plans to manage their natural resources and new forms or strategies to accomplish collective goals (Zamilpa, Rindermann & Ortiz, 2016). This social involvement represents the cultural and social pillars for sustainable rural development, because integrate their traditional knowledge, values and culture and the possibility of participatory and self-management of natural resources (Leff, 2015). Furthermore, we can observe the expression of the identities of the rural community, which represents the cultural pillar for a local sustainable development plan (Sena et al., 2017).

Regarding organic agriculture and the agroecological transition process, they state that there are many challenges to be faced. The replacement of practices, the recuperation of the biological fertility of the soil until it reaches the "equilibrium" takes some years, and during this period there may be a decrease in production. They also emphasize that the transition process occurs not only on the farm itself, but in the people as well. It is necessary to be open to new ideas and diversity of knowledge. One must constantly learn through practice, experimentation and by observing the ecological processes of nature. The group demonstrates that they understand the importance of producing without poison and agrochemicals for their own health and the health of their consumers, as well as the importance of environmental conservation of forests and water.

Here we can visualize the expression of the environment pillar for sustainable development (Sena et al., 2017). The group demonstrates the awareness about the environmental impacts of conventional agriculture and the importance of water, forest and soil preservation. Although there are differences between organic agriculture and agroecology (Assis & Romeiro, 2002), we can observe that the pursuit of constant learning and the acknowledgement of the transition process on themselves, can indicate that is possible that people who engage in organic agriculture can evolve to agroecology and to grow beyond of a simple practice that seeks to attend the demands of the market.



**III Convención Científica Internacional “Ciencia, Tecnología y Sociedad” 2021
Universidad Central “Marta Abreu” de Las Villas
“SIMPOSIO INTERNACIONAL HÁBITAT Y DESARROLLO COMUNITARIO
SOSTENIBLE”**

In addition, organic agriculture represents an opportunity for a better quality of life and a guarantee of food security, due to "clean production" and the practice of subsistence production that, according to one of the farmers, ensures their survival and independence in the *system*. The food security is essential for a sustainable development and for the rural social reproduction. According to Grisa, Gazolla & Schneider (2010) in Morro Redondo the family farmers save about 32% of their average annual income due to subsistence production, which ensures a caloric minimum for nutritional security and still provides food according to local customs. Besides, in regard of the “survival and independence of the *system*” statement, we can understand that the farmers themselves are aware of the alternative system that they are creating with the organic agriculture associated with communitarian development and solidarity networks trade. This represent the economic pillar for sustainable development, which values people the most, instead of capital, with a cooperative, communitarian initiative that are self-managed (Sena et al., 2017).

3.2 Development perspectives: motivations, engagement and difficulties

3.2.1 Motivations

As for the motivations to engage into organic agriculture, two families report the dependency relationship with tobacco industries and a meatpacking cooperative of the region, the Cosulati⁵. The shutdown of Cosulati in 2016 had a great impact in Morro Redondo, generating unemployment and hopelessness in many families, forcing them to redesign their lives. One of the families in the group had invested in a poultry aviary and continues to pay the financing even after the company's closure.

This production chain of industrial agriculture model and agribusiness reduces the role of farmers as suppliers of raw materials and consumers of inputs and agrochemicals according to the requirements of industries such as tobacco and poultry industries. On this chain, their production gain is subordinated to the market prices fluctuations and the

⁵ COSULATI is a cooperative from the South of Rio Grande do Sul state that processes the raw material produced by the cooperative members. Its mission is to strengthen the local dairy, poultry and grain chain. Available in: <<http://www.cosulati.com.br/site/content/cosulati/index.php>> Accessed in: 11 out. 2021.



**III Convención Científica Internacional “Ciencia, Tecnología y Sociedad” 2021
Universidad Central “Marta Abreu” de Las Villas
“SIMPOSIO INTERNACIONAL HÁBITAT Y DESARROLLO COMUNITARIO
SOSTENIBLE”**

enterprise stability (Anjos & Caldas, 2009). This production system takes the autonomy of the farmers away because they have to adhere to the technological package of production, reducing plant diversity and the areas destined to subsistence production, which even threatens their food security (Soglio, 2016).

The pursuit of autonomy and the non-dependence on middlemen to commercialize the production were two important motivators that led some of the members to seek training and participation in events to start the agroecological transition process through organic farming. According to Leff (2015), the autonomy and participation in the management of local resources based on communities' needs is fundamental to create a sustainable community development.

Another family's motivation was the event of intoxication when working as an outsourced worker for a conventional peach farm. Peach is one of the main products of Morro Redondo and most farmers grow it in the conventional way. According to Lima et al. (2009) about 60% of the peach farm workers interviewed in Morro Redondo use Personal Protection Equipment irregularly, and 20 percent do not use it at all. According to the authors, the lack of knowledge, instruction and technical assistance contribute to the irregular use of pesticides, from sale to application.

Besides, since 2012 Brazil is the world's largest importer of pesticides and between 2007 and 2014 there were more than 68 thousand cases of pesticides intoxication in the country (Mattei & Michellon, 2021). In the last four years, the government have worked to make the insertion of pesticides in the country more flexible, and between 2019 and June 2020 about 680 agrochemicals were approved. Some of the government's strategies for this flexibilization were changing the technical and scientific criteria for evaluating pesticides (excluding toxicity evaluation tests and changing the risk category of the products) and lowering taxes on the purchase of pesticides (Souza et al., 2020). Most of these decisions were made in the midst of the covid-19 pandemic, which was seen by the Bolsonaro's government as an opportunity to meet political and economic demands that threaten the constitutional rights of access to a balanced environment, health, food and nutrition security.



III Convención Científica Internacional “Ciencia, Tecnología y Sociedad” 2021
Universidad Central “Marta Abreu” de Las Villas
“SIMPOSIO INTERNACIONAL HÁBITAT Y DESARROLLO COMUNITARIO
SOSTENIBLE”

3.2.2 Engagement

Organic production and the maintenance of the SCO require engagement of members, willingness to learn continuously and participation in formative activities with institutions such as Emater, universities, social movements and other social organizations. Besides, the SCO Renacer experience of shared self-management, periodic meetings, interchange of knowledge and identity construction represents a process of popular education (Brandão 2005; Freire, 2013) based on the dialogue about daily knowledge of social practices, which seek to build autonomy and emancipation of individuals as a group (Santos & Chalub-Martins, 2012).

Furthermore, the group highlights the role of institutions that work with rural communities, such as Emater to encourage and enable new opportunities for family farmers. Sustainable rural community development depends on the social organization of families and the technical support of public companies to encourage sustainable initiatives and bridge the gap between public policies and new development opportunities such as the agroecological transition process (Canavesi, Bianchini & Silva, 2017).

Currently, each family commercializes independently, participating in virtual trade fairs and institutional markets (NSFP and FAP). However, the group is discussing the possibility of creating a virtual trade fair specific to SCO Renacer members, along with visual identity and is also building a partnership with the Quilombola Association Vó Ernestina of the municipality to create a presential fair in Morro Redondo. The association with other organic and agroecological groups is fundamental to strengthen the alternative agriculture movement in the region and ensures market for direct sales. Norder et al. (2016) say that the sustainable agriculture that considers ethical and social aspects represents a strategy for social and political mobilization which can contribute to establish a sustainable community development.

The family with the longest experience in agroecology constantly encourages the others to participate in associations and institutions to ensure partnerships and access to solidarity trade networks and virtual trade fairs. For sustainable community development, the connection between the SCO Renacer and a solidarity trade network is essential, because it ensures the foment of sustainable production and the maintenance of these



III Convención Científica Internacional “Ciencia, Tecnología y Sociedad” 2021
Universidad Central “Marta Abreu” de Las Villas
“SIMPOSIO INTERNACIONAL HÁBITAT Y DESARROLLO COMUNITARIO
SOSTENIBLE”

families in the countryside (Zamilpa, Rindermann & Ortiz, 2016). In this way it is possible to build a new paradigm of production and consumption that values the families' work, guaranteeing healthy food to the consumer and fostering collective learning process through a social-environmental co-responsibility (Santos & Chalub-Martins, 2012).

In addition, the group demonstrates responsibility in regard to compliance with the legislation to ensure the traceability of products, through identification and the presentation of SCO documents when transporting and selling the products SCO. We consider important to highlight that the organic production legislation does not permit organic seal for SCO products (therefore they can only sell their products through direct sales). This conditionate may cause confusion and doubts for consumers who unaware of organic legislation details, and can devalue the ethical commitment of SCO groups.

3.2.3 Difficulties

Regarding the difficulties, the families reported that adverse weather events such as wind, heavy rains, and hail generate periodic material damages, such as loss of production, destruction and ruin of houses, sheds, and greenhouses. In addition to this, the families have little financial resources to overcome these situations and there is a lack of machinery to facilitate agricultural work. Although diverse systems of production such as organic have a great resilience capacity (Altieri, 2010) due to different spatial and temporary arrangements of polycultures and sustaining of stable ecological relationships, this social context requires government support and funding policies. As adverse events will be increasingly frequent due to climate change, a proposal for sustainable agriculture needs to consider the conditioning factors of the environmental crisis.

Another difficulty for the group is the various manuals, the continuous publication of technical standards, and the countless forms to be filled out to prove compliance with the legislation. This demand requires significant effort and time in the operationalization of accreditation, to the detriment of using the common time among families to improve the educational processes that occur in this social space (Niederle et al., 2021). It is important to highlight the relevant role of the rural extensionist that work with the group to facilitate the bureaucratic process. Besides the written records requirements represent



III Convención Científica Internacional “Ciencia, Tecnología y Sociedad” 2021
Universidad Central “Marta Abreu” de Las Villas
“SIMPOSIO INTERNACIONAL HÁBITAT Y DESARROLLO COMUNITARIO
SOSTENIBLE”

a challenge to the farmers, especially due to the low schooling level of some members, which was also reported by Becker et al (2020). Alternatively, instead of written technical reports, the legislation could consider the use of cellphones audiovisual recordings as it represents a widespread and well-known practice among farmers.

Regarding political elements, the national agroecology and organic production policy in Brazil (Brasil, 2012) brings together different public policies and social actors such as the technical assistance and rural extension service, the National (NCOrgP) and State Commissions for Organic Production (SCOrgP) and institutional markets such as FAP and NSFP. Currently, the country is witnessing the rise of a conservative and authoritarian political coalition that threatens democracy with the emptying and extinction of participatory management spaces and transfers state control to companies and corporations (Niederle et al, 2021). In this sense, since 2016 (after the Impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff) the government has adopted different strategies to dismantle public policies favoring the interests of its allied bases.

According to Niederle et al. (2021), among the strategies that specifically impact organic production, we can cite the changes in the representations in the NCOrgP which, together with changes in the technical instructions for the use of substances, presents a project to favor large-scale organic production and companies producing organic inputs. The II National Plan for Agroecology and Organic Production (II NPAOP), which ended in 2019, did not have continuity, and there were budget cuts and reduction of the number of workers linked to technical assistance and rural extension.

In addition, there were strategies to delegitimize the FAP through investigations and bureaucratic tightening, and attacks by the agribusiness sector on NSFP, demanding changes in the Food Guide for the Brazilian Population (which guides the purchases) because it restricts the use of ultra-processed products and encourages local, healthy, and sustainable consumption (Niederle et al., 2021). These are just a few examples of the scenario that constitutes the Brazilian political crisis that threatens the support structure for organic agriculture, sustainable development, and the democracy itself.



III Convención Científica Internacional “Ciencia, Tecnología y Sociedad” 2021
Universidad Central “Marta Abreu” de Las Villas
“SIMPOSIO INTERNACIONAL HÁBITAT Y DESARROLLO COMUNITARIO
SOSTENIBLE”

4. Conclusions

The origin of the group demonstrates the families' interest in the process of agroecological transition from organic agriculture and the importance of social engagement for the construction of local initiatives for sustainable community development. The trajectory of the group represents a collective achievement guided by the ethical commitment of the families, with adherence to the norms of organic production, as well as the feeling of unity that promotes collective growth. Moreover, the concern about the environmental impact of agricultural practices, the preservation of natural resources, their health and that of consumers reveals a feeling of socio-environmental commitment, along with the struggle for better living conditions.

It is possible to see that the families recognize that they are experiencing a process of agroecological transition, beyond changes in agricultural practices, they are building a new way of life in the countryside as a collective, ensuring food security and a continuous learning process, considering their culture and traditional knowledge and self-management of resources in their life territory. In this sense, the experience of the SCO Renacer presents characteristics of the four pillars for sustainability (Sena et al., 2017): economic, by seeking solidarity trade networks; environmental, by the notion of socio-environmental factors that involve their life territory; social, by the engagement and building bridges with other organizations and social movements; and cultural, by valuing traditional knowledge and building an identity as a group.

As for the motivations, it is possible to perceive an intrinsic relationship between their life stories and the impacts of the agro-industrial model of production, which threatens their health, autonomy, and stability due to the relationship of dependence in this model. These factors are inscribed in the history of the modernization of agriculture in Brazil, and by the close relationship of the current government with its allied base, which invests and profits heavily from export monocultures. This can be observed by the political investment in recent years to promote the loosening of legislation on the use of pesticides that favors this agricultural sector to the detriment of small family farmers who resist in the field seeking sustainable alternatives.



**III Convención Científica Internacional “Ciencia, Tecnología y Sociedad” 2021
Universidad Central “Marta Abreu” de Las Villas
“SIMPOSIO INTERNACIONAL HÁBITAT Y DESARROLLO COMUNITARIO
SOSTENIBLE”**

The social engagement that keeps SCO Renascer going reveals that, besides the compliance with legislation and the search for a market for its products, this space has promoted processes of popular education, where they discuss reality in a critical way, exchange knowledge and experiences, and seek to improve their daily practices. In this sense, it is worth mentioning that, in the reality of the study, the extensionist who accompanies the group does an essential job to meet the bureaucratic demands and, at the same time, encourages the exchange of knowledge without imposing her technical knowledge. The search for insertion in solidarity trade networks and the partnership with other groups to build local fairs demonstrate that the group opposes the hegemonic agricultural model and seeks collective development, thus being able to contribute to sustainable community development at the local and regional levels

Regarding difficulties, material losses due to extreme weather events tend to be even more frequent due to climate change. In this sense the role of the State is fundamental to remedy these situations and needs to invest in research adapted to local realities in order to guarantee national food security. As for the organic legislation, the excess of manuals and forms is a great challenge to the OCS groups, therefore investing in rural extension work is fundamental to guarantee the permanence and engagement of the groups. We highlight that the requirements should consider the reality of rural families and therefore the spaces for participatory management should be expanded and not reduced as we are experiencing in the current government.

Finally, the biggest challenge for agroecological transition and organic production is the dismantling of public policies that support the functioning of local initiatives. In the current political context, Niederle et al. (2021) state that it is necessary to invest in spaces of daily resistance, such as the SCO Renascer that seeks to build and strengthen networks and processes of social participation at the local level. This paper presents a reading of a reality regarding possible sustainable community development. More research investigating these initiatives is needed to understand the directions of organic agriculture in the country and its potential to promote a sustainable model of production and consumption.



III Convención Científica Internacional “Ciencia, Tecnología y Sociedad” 2021
Universidad Central “Marta Abreu” de Las Villas
“SIMPOSIO INTERNACIONAL HÁBITAT Y DESARROLLO COMUNITARIO
SOSTENIBLE”

5. Bibliographic references

Altieri, M. A. (2010). Agroecología, agricultura camponesa e soberanía alimentar. *Revista Nera, Ano 13*(16), 22–32. doi: 10.47946/rnera.v0i16.1362

Anjos, F. S. Dos, & Caldas, N. V. (2009). A Horta Agonizante: Mercantilização Da Agricultura E Transformações Nas práticas de autoconsumo entre famílias rurais do extremo Sul gaúcho. *Pensamento Plural, Ano 3*(5), 151–169. doi: 10.15210/PP.V0I5.3666

Assis, R. L. de, & Romeiro, A. R. (2002). Agroecologia e agricultura orgânica: controvérsias e tendências. *Desenvolvimento e Meio Ambiente, 6*, 67–80. doi: 10.5380/dma.v6i0.22129

Bardin, L. (1977) *Análise de Conteúdo*. Lisboa: EDIÇÕES 70, LDA.

Becker, C., Crosa, C. F. R., Nascimento, S. G. da S., & Ávila, M. R. de. (2020). Processo de regularização da produção orgânica pelos agricultores familiares: um estudo de caso sobre o OCS – Santana do Livramento, RS. *Navus - Revista de Gestão e Tecnologia, 10*, 1–11. doi: 10.22279/navus.2020.v10.p01-11.944

Bombardi, L.M. (2017) *Geografia do Uso de Agrotóxicos no Brasil e Conexões com a União Europeia*. São Paulo, Brasil: FFLCH – USP.

Brandão, C. R. (2005) Comunidades aprendentes. In: FERRARO Jr., L. A. (Ed) *Encontros e caminhos: Formação de educadoras(es) ambientais e coletivos educadores*. Brasília, Brasil: MMA, Diretoria de Educação Ambiental.

Brasil (2003). *Lei nº 10.831, de 23 de dezembro de 2003. Dispõe sobre a agricultura orgânica e dá outras providências*. Available in: http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/leis/2003/110.831.htm Access in: 20 jul. 2021.

Brasil (2007). *Decreto nº 6.323, de 27 de dezembro de 2007. Regulamenta a Lei no 10.831/03*. Available in: http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2007-2010/2007/decreto/d6323.htm Access in: 20 jul. 2021.

BRASIL (2010). *Lei nº 12.188, de 11 de janeiro de 2010. Institui a Política Nacional de Assistência Técnica e Extensão Rural para a Agricultura Familiar e Reforma Agrária (PNATER) e o Programa Nacional de Assistência Técnica e Extensão Rural na Agricultura Familiar e na Reforma Agrária (PRONATER)*. Available in: http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_Ato2007-2010/2010/Lei/L12188.htm Access in: 20 jul. 2021.

Brasil (2012). *Decreto nº 7.794, de 20 de agosto de 2012. Institui a Política Nacional de Agroecologia e Produção Orgânica*. Available in:



III Convención Científica Internacional “Ciencia, Tecnología y Sociedad” 2021
Universidad Central “Marta Abreu” de Las Villas
“SIMPOSIO INTERNACIONAL HÁBITAT Y DESARROLLO COMUNITARIO
SOSTENIBLE”

http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2011-2014/2012/decreto/d7794.htm Access in: 20 jul. 2021.

Brasil (2020). *Guia prático de organizações de controle social (OCS)*. Secretaria de Agricultura Familiar e Cooperativismo, Ministério da Agricultura, Pecuária e Abastecimento. Brasília, Brasil: MAPA/AECS.

Brundtland, G. H. (1987) *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future*. United Nations General Assembly document A/42/427. Available in: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/139811>

Canavesi, F. de C., Bianchini, V. & Silva, H. B. C. de. (2017) Inovação na agricultura familiar no contexto da extensão rural e da transição agroecológica. (pp.383-401) In: Sambuichi et al. (Ed) *A política nacional de agroecologia e produção orgânica no Brasil: uma trajetória rural de luta pelo desenvolvimento sustentável*. Brasília, Brasil: Ipea.

Carneiro, E. J. (2005) Política Ambiental e a ideologia do desenvolvimento sustentável. In: Zhouri, A.; Klemens, L.; Pereira, D. B. (Ed) *A insustentável leveza da política ambiental: desenvolvimento e conflitos socioambientais* (pp. 27-46). Belo Horizonte, Brasil: Autêntica.

Cruz, P. P. (2015) *Mapeando a rede ecológica na região de Pelotas: um estudo etnográfico sobre a organização e a construção de sentidos da rede local (master's thesis)*. Federal University of Pelotas, Pelotas, Brazil.

Emater-RS (2021). *Cenário Municipal – Morro Redondo*. Internal document with no public access.

Flick, U. (2009) *Introdução à pesquisa qualitativa*. 3 ed. Porto Alegre, Brasil: Artmed.

Freire, P. (2013) *Pedagogia do Oprimido*. 54 ed. Rio de Janeiro, Brasil: Paz e Terra.

Gois, G. R. (2018). Evolução E Diferenciação Dos Sistemas Agrários Na Serra Dos Tapes, Rio Grande Do Sul. *Geographia Meridionalis*, 4(1), 57–83. doi: 10.15210/gm.v4i1.13360

Grisa, C., Gazolla, M., & Schneider, S. (2010). A “produção invisível” na agricultura familiar: autoconsumo, segurança alimentar e políticas públicas de desenvolvimento rural. *Agroalimentaria*, 16(31), 65–79.

Howard. A. (1943). *An agricultural testament*. London, England: Oxford University Press.

IBGE (2020). *Produção Agrícola Municipal 2020*. Rio de Janeiro, Brasil: IBGE.

IBGE (2021). *IBGE Cidades – Morro Redondo. 2021*. Available in: <https://cidades.ibge.gov.br/brasil/rs/morro-redondo/panorama>. Access in: 20 aug. 2021.



**III Convención Científica Internacional “Ciencia, Tecnología y Sociedad” 2021
Universidad Central “Marta Abreu” de Las Villas
“SIMPOSIO INTERNACIONAL HÁBITAT Y DESARROLLO COMUNITARIO
SOSTENIBLE”**

Layrargues, P. P. (1997) Do Ecodesenvolvimento ao Desenvolvimento Sustentável: evolução de um conceito? *Proposta*, 25(71), 5-10.

Leff, E. (2002). Agroecologia e saber ambiental. *Agroecologia e Desenvolvimento Sustentável*, 3(1), 36–51.

Leff, E. (2015) *Saber Ambiental: sustentabilidade, racionalidade, complexidade, poder*. 11 ed. Petrópolis, RJ: Vozes.

Lima, C. A. B. de, Grützmacher, D. D., Krüger, L. R., & Grützmacher, A. D. (2009). Diagnóstico da exposição ocupacional a agrotóxicos na principal região produtora de pêssego para indústria do Brasil.PDF. *Ciência Rural*, 39(3), 900–903.

Luzzardi, R. do E. S. (2006) Educação Ambiental: Sustentáculo Para O Desenvolvimento Da Agricultura Sustentável. *REMEA*, 17, 52-70. doi: 10.14295/rema.v17i0.3024

Marques, P. E. M., Gaspari, L. de, & Almeida, B. (2017). Organização de Controle Social (OCS) e engajamento agroecológico das famílias do assentamento Milton Santos no estado de São Paulo. *Estudos Sociedade e Agricultura*, 25(3), 545. doi: 10.36920/esa-v25n3-4

Mattei, T. F., & Michellon, E. (2021). Panorama da agricultura orgânica e dos agrotóxicos no Brasil: uma análise a partir dos censos 2006 e 2017. *Revista de Economia e Sociologia Rural*, 59(4), 1–23. doi: 10.1590/1806-9479.2021.222254

Niederle, P., Petersen, P., Coudel, E., Grisa, C., Schmitt, C. et al. (2021). Rupturas na transição agroecológica: mudança institucional e desmantelamento das políticas públicas no Brasil. Preprint July, 1–27. doi: 10.13140/RG.2.2.25591.34728

Norder, L. A., Lamine, C., Bellon, S., & Brandenburg, A. (2016). Agroecologia. Polissemia, pluralismo e controvérsias. *Ambiente & Sociedade*, 19(3), 1–20. doi: 10.1590/1809-4422ASOC129711V1932016

Sachs, I. (1982) *Ecodesarrollo: desarrollo sin destrucción*. México: El colegio de México.

Salamoni, G., Drehmer, A. C. B., Wassmansdorf, L. F., Sodr , M. T. et al. (2021). A Geografia da Serra dos Tapes: natureza, sociedade e paisagem. Pelotas, Brasil: Ed. UFPel.

Santos, F. P. dos & Chalub-Martins, L. (2012). Agroecologia, consumo sustentável e aprendizado coletivo no Brasil. *Educação e Pesquisa*, 38(2), 469–483. doi: 10.1590/S1517-97022011005000008

Santos, K. M. P. dos. (2018) Formação dos Grupos de Organismo de Controle Social em Comunidades Quilombolas do Vale do Ribeira, SP: estudo de caso do grupo de mulheres de São Pedro. *Redes*, 23(3), 336-352. doi: 10.17058/redes.v23i3.9238



III Convención Científica Internacional “Ciencia, Tecnología y Sociedad” 2021
Universidad Central “Marta Abreu” de Las Villas
“SIMPOSIO INTERNACIONAL HÁBITAT Y DESARROLLO COMUNITARIO
SOSTENIBLE”

Sena, A. M. C. de, Matos, F. R. N., Mesquita, R. F. de, Machado, D. de Q. (2017) Abordagem *grassroots* e resistência: atualizando a concepção de desenvolvimento sustentável. *Cadernos EBAPE.BR*, 15(3), 651–666. doi: 10.1590/1679-395152097

Soglio, F. K. D. (2016) A agricultura moderna e o mito da produtividade. In Soglio, F. K. D. & Kubo, R. R. (Ed) *Desenvolvimento, agricultura e Sustentabilidade* (pp. 11-38). Porto Alegre, Brasil: Editora da UFRGS.

Souza, M. M. O. De, Gurgel, A. Do M., Fernandes, G. B., Melgarejo, L., Bittencourt, N. A., & Friedrich, K. (2020). Agrotóxicos e Transgênicos: Retrocessos socioambientais e avanços conservadores no governo Bolsonaro. *Revista da ANPEGE*, 16(29), 319–352. doi: 10.5418/ra2020.v16i29.12561

Zamilpa, J., Rindermann, R. S., & Ortiz, D. A. A. (2016). Estado de la cuestión sobre las críticas a la agricultura orgánica. *Acta Universitaria*, 26(2), 20–29. doi: 10.15174/au.2016.854