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Claire Heinisch, Pierre Gasselin, Guy Durand

To cite this version:

Claire Heinisch, Pierre Gasselin, Guy Durand. Activating and creating proximities and social capitals in urban food systems: an Ecuadorian case-study. 5. AESOP Conference on Sustainable Food Planning, Institut National de Recherche Agronomique (INRA). UMR Innovation et Développement dans l'Agriculture et l'Agro-alimentaire (0951).; Institut National de Recherche Agronomique (INRA). UMR Marchés, Organisations, Institutions et Stratégies d'Acteurs (1110).; United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Montpellier, INT., Oct 2013, Montpellier, France. 109 p. hal-02746689

HAL Id: hal-02746689

https://hal.inrae.fr/hal-02746689v1

Submitted on 3 Jun 2020

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ACTIVATING AND CREATING PROXIMITIES AND SOCIAL CAPITALS IN AN URBAN FOOD SYSTEM: AN ECUADORIAN CASE-STUDY

5th AESOP Sustainable Food Systems Conference

"Innovations in urban food systems"

Claire Heinisch, Guy Durand *(Agrocampus Ouest, UMR ESO)* & Pierre Gasselin *(INRA, UMR Innovation)*

28 & 29 October 2013, Montpellier - FRANCE

Objectives, Approach and Analysis Framework

Objectives

We will show :

- Why and how urban consumers – most of them being low-income households – have linked sustainably with agroecological peasants by building a micro-local food system

- How the different actors ot this micro-local food system are now participating to the implementation of new public policies that support more sustainable urban food systems

- Based on a case-study of a "new" short food supply chain
  - ➔ The *canasta comunitaria Utopía* *(lit. "community basket")*, city of Riobamba, Ecuadorian Andes

Objectives, Approach and Analysis Framework

Approach

- "New" short food supply chains = dispositive of collective action that gathers together a **large diversity of actors** around **projects and values** that are both the **origin** and the **result** of **relational dynamics**

  ➔ **Comprehensive approach** of the emergence and the construction
  - of the *canasta comunitaria Utopía* at a local scale
  - of its insertion into national networks

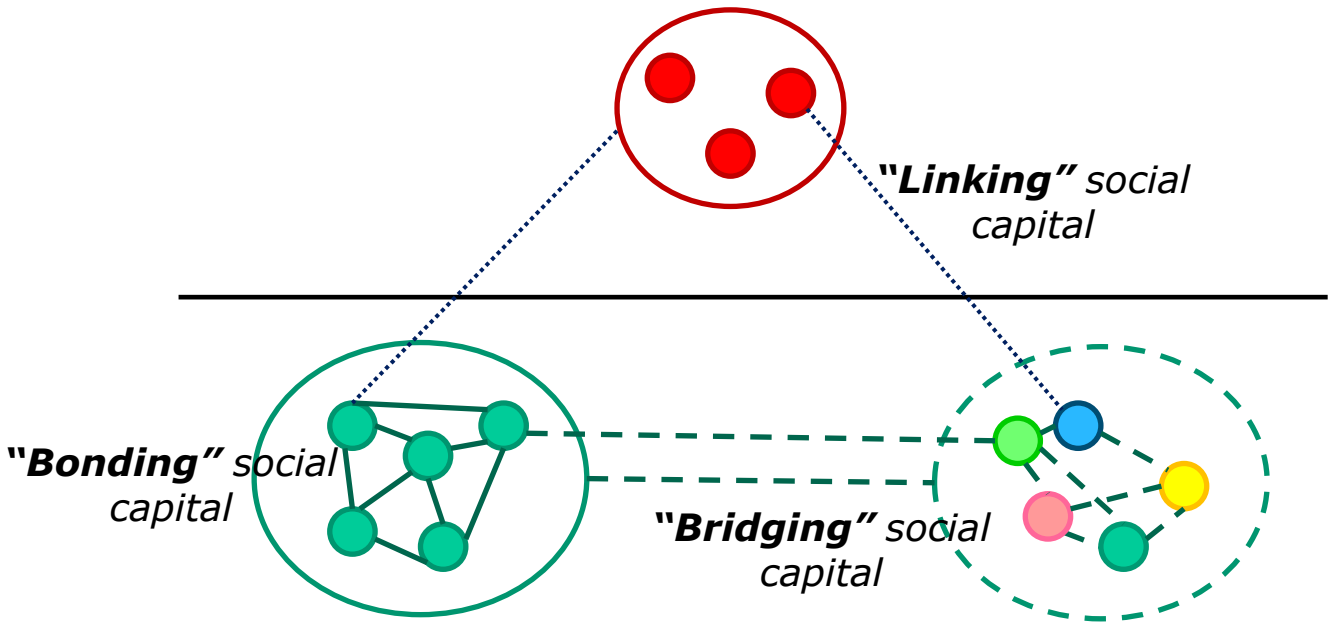
  ➔ Focus on the analysis of the relations between actors during the trajectory of the *canasta comunitaria Utopía*

Objectives, Approach and Analysis Framework

Analysis Framework

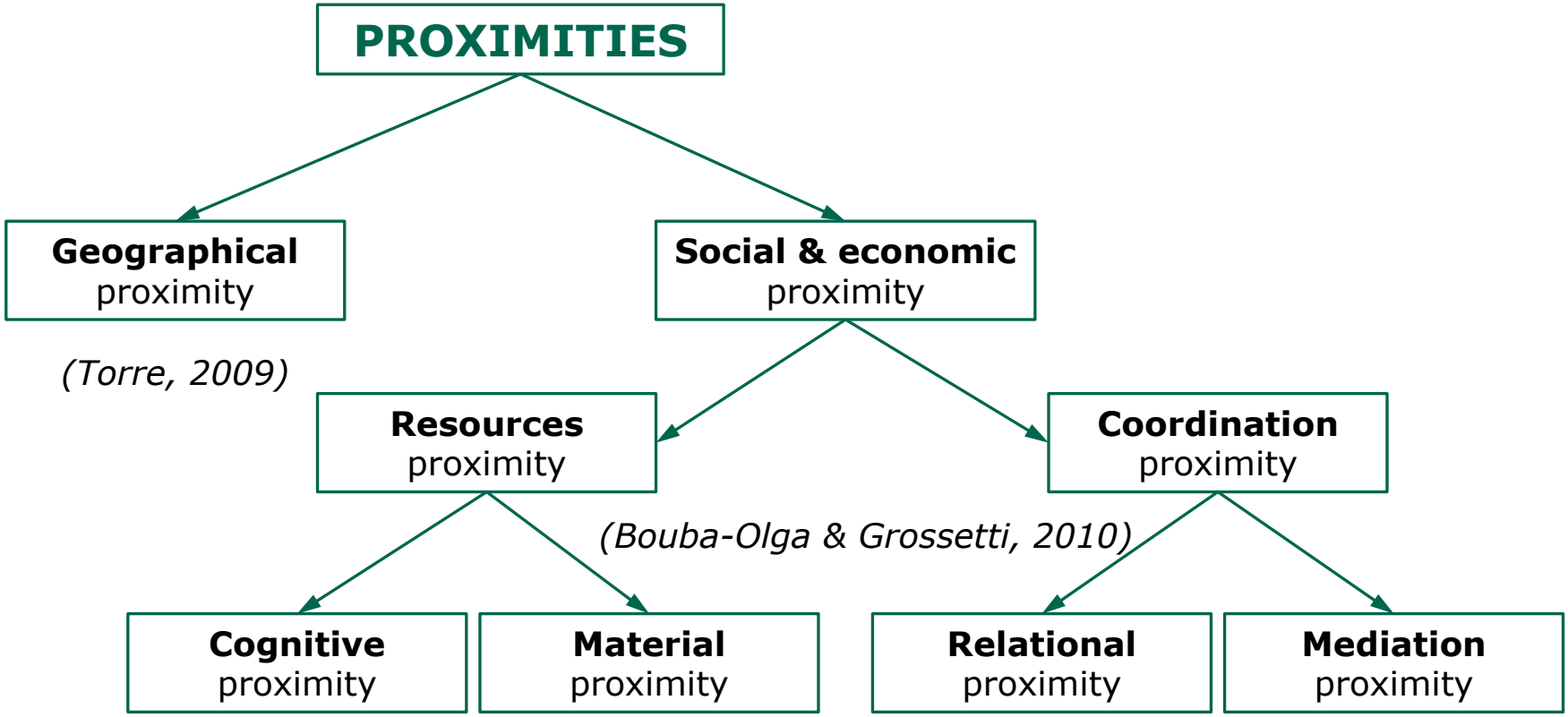
SOCIAL CAPITAL

(Putnam, 2000, 2002)



Objectives, Approach and Analysis Framework

Analysis Framework



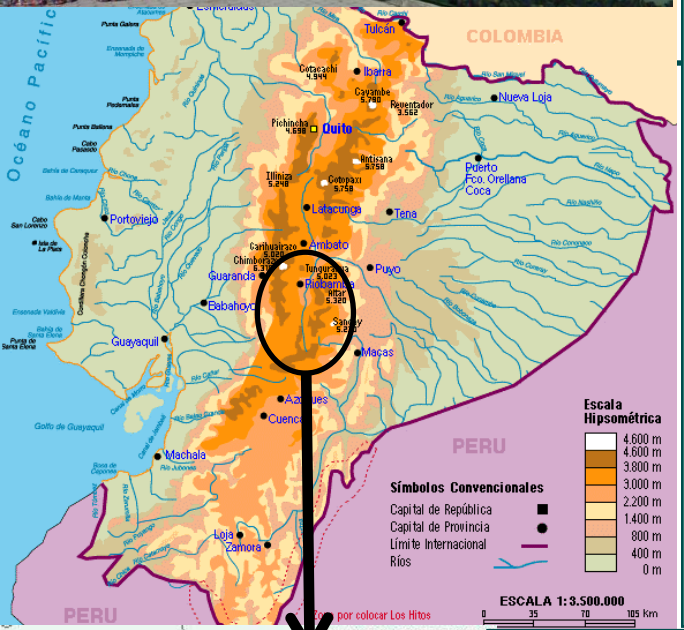
NATIONAL CONTEXT OF THE CASE STUDY

A NEW POLITICAL CONTEXT

- Rise to power of the radical left (2006)
  - Rafael Correa and the "Citizens' Revolution"

- New Constitution (2008) that incorporates:
  - Food sovereignty
  - Social and solidarity based economy
  - Citizen power
  - Continuation of the process of decentralization

LOCAL CONTEXT OF THE CASE STUDY



Province of Chimborazo

The Province of Chimborazo

*One of the poorest regions of Ecuador, 500,000 inhabitants (2013)

*An important peasant and indigenous population

*More than 200 local and international NGOs

*Riobamba (capital of the province)

- Population: 230,000 inhabitants
- Elevation: 2700 m

The *canasta comunitaria* Utopía <u>today</u>

*110 families of urban consumers in Riobamba

*100 local agroecological peasants (individuals or organized)

*Local NGOs (rural or urban)

*1 basket

- *Contains 20 different products, 60% agroecological*
- *Provides for food to a 4-people-family during 15 days*

*Price = 12 $. => Compared to the conventional market:

- *Consumers pay 50% cheaper*
- *Producers earn 80% more*

THE EMERGENCE AND CONSTRUCTION OF A MICRO-LOCAL URBAN FOOD SYSTEM

PERIOD	MEMBERS OF THE GROUP	NUMBER OF MEMBERS	LOCALIZATION OF THE MEMBERS	RELATIONS WITHIN THE GROUP	RELATIONS OUTSIDE OF THE GROUP	VALUES OF THE GROUP	PROJECT OF THE GROUP
1987 - 2000	Members of a Basic Ecclesial Community ("Solidaridad")	25 families	A popular neighborhood of Riobamba	**Bonding** social capital **Material, cognitive and relational** proximity	–	Solidarity within the group	Food security = Quantity and diversity at a lower cost
TRANSITION : Ecuadorian economic crisis (2000) ⇨ 2 types of new members join the initiative - Members of a local NGO : the **Utopia Foundation** => Activation of **relational proximity** (with 1 member of "Solidaridad") - Inhabitants of Riobamba => Activation of **material** (at least temporary) **proximity** + **mediation proximity**							
2000 - 2002	" *Canasta comunitaria Utopía*" = =>Urban consumers =>Members of the Utopia Foundation (also consumers)	100 families	RIOBAMBA	**Bridging** social capital **Material** proximity	–	Urban solidarity	**Idem before**
TRANSITION : **Emergence of the idea of buying products directly to producers, reinforced with a collective reflections on the quality** (sanitary concerns, cultural identity) ⇨ **New** reflections allowed by **bridging capital social** within the group							
2002 - 2005	**Idem before**	100 families	RIOBAMBA	**Bridging** social capital	Activation of **linking** social capital + **relational and geographic** proximity to link with **local** agroecological peasants	Urban solidarity	Food security = Quantity, diversity **and quality** at a lower cost
FAILURE OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF SUSTAINABLE RELATIONSHIPS WITH LOCAL AGROECOLOGICAL PEASANTS **TRANSITION : farm visits** ⇨ **First step towards the construction of sustainable linkages between urban consumers and peasants** ⇨ **Progressive construction relational and cognitive proximity**							
Since 2006	"***Familia Utopia***"			**Bonding** social capital **Relational** and **cognitive** proximity	Mobilization of social capitals and proximities **at national level**	Urban-rural solidarity Producer-consumer reciprocity	Food sovereignty Social and Solidarity based Economy Agroecology
	Canasta comunitaria Utopia	100 families	RIOBAMBA				
	Local agroecological peasants	100 families	Province of CHIMBORAZO				

« UTOPÍA » FROM LOCAL TO GLOBAL…

Universal character of the project of "Utopia"

- goes **beyond the local level**
- **responds to national debates**, particularly active since the recent political changes

↓

Activation of **cognitive and relational** proximities

↓

Active participation in (and even creation of) **national networks**, **movements**, **forums**… that gather together the **civil society**, **NGOs**, **peasant's organizations** and the **public sector**

↓

Creation **of bridging and linking** social capital

↓

In a **context of great political changes** ➔ Active **participation in the debates around the formulation of new agro-food policies**

… AND FROM GLOBAL TO LOCAL

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW ECUADORIAN AGRO-FOOD POLICIES IN CHIMBORAZO

MAIN OBJECTIVES

- ➔ Reach the **precarious and/or vulnerable** categories of the population (small peasants, poor urban consumers, children)
- ➔ Support **sustainable and peasant and family farm agriculture**

EXAMPLES OF APPLICATION IN CHIMBORAZO

- ➔ **Implementation of "*citizen markets*"** (Ministry of Agriculture, NGOs, peasant's organizations, urban consumers, local universities…)
- ➔ **Program of provision of school canteens directly from peasant's organizations** (Ministry of Social & Economic Inclusion, Ministry of agriculture NGOs, peasant's organization, schools, local public actors…)
- ➔ **Support to agroecological systems** (Provincial Council of Chimborazo, Ministry of Agriculture, NGOs, peasant's organizations…)

➔ **PROGRESSIVE** IMPLEMENTATION OF **MULTI-ACTOR GOVERNANCE** BASED ON **LINKING SOCIAL CAPITAL** AND ON **GEOGRAPHICAL** AND **MEDIATION** PROXIMITY

CONCLUSION

About new SFSCs

- Strong means to **reconnect civil society, the public sector and the market** around the question of sustainable food systems, and **even much beyond the micro-local scale** of theses initiatives
- They result from **processes of construction** in the medium or long term
  - ➔ They involve **multi-actor, multi-level** and **multi-sectoral** governance in which **proximities** and social capitals, that are activated and constructed through complex processes of interactions between different actors, seem to play an important role

About the new agro-food policies

- **Influence** of the civil society and the ideas and innovations emerging from grassroots initiatives
  - ➔ Grassroots initiative as drivers for change…
- Do not correspond exactly to the "radical" project carried out by the grassroots initiatives **BUT** reach more people
  - ➔ …but importance of putting in place an effective **public action**

THANKS YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

CLAIRE HEINISCH – Agrocampus Ouest – UMR ESO
claire.heinisch@agrocampus-ouest.fr

GUY DURAND – Agrocampus Ouest – UMR ESO
guy.durand@agrocampus-ouest.fr

PIERRE GASSELIN – INRA – UMR Innivation
pierre.gasselin@supagro.inra.fr

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