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**Fourth European Symposium
IFSA. Volos, Greece, April, 2000**

Workshop n° 4

AGRARIAN TRANSHUMANT SYSTEM : CONTROLS AND RESISTANCE IN NORTHERN PATAGONIA.

Background:

In the northwest of the Argentine Patagonia, family farmers -- peasants who call themselves *crianceros*, as livestock breeders -- have developed a unique productive practice with transhumant characteristics. This article discusses the setting, history and *crianceros*' present situation in the local communities. Furthermore, it analyzes the agrarian structural conditions, the sheepherding practices, the use of public lands, state policies, and the peasants' forms of resistance. The purpose of this study is to throw light on the rationale of the peasant unit of production and to explore tendencies and perspectives for the peasant sector in this Andean environment.

Problems and possibilities rise in a new context characterized by the following:

- The institutional strengthening of the territorial perception about the peasants developmental problem
- The inclusion of public lands in the real estate market
- And the redefinition of the state.

The paper is made up of four parts:

Part I begins characterizing the *crianceros* as social agrarian actors, the history of the development of their pastoral practice in high lands and in arid plateau, and the process of land access. In Part II, the transhumant agroecosystem is described and related to the use of pastureland. In Part III, the paper analyzes the implementation of state policies in the last three decades and their social and agroecological consequences. Survival strategies of these peasant families are examined comparing their participation in product and labor markets in Part IV. Finally there are some final remarks about controls and resistance and some thoughts on problems and potentiality of the local communities of the *crianceros*.

Methodological approach

The study combines quantitative and qualitative approaches for the construction of data. Typological and comparative historic procedures (Cucullu and Murmis, 1980 ; Bendini and Tsakoumagkos, 1994) are used for characterizing the *crianceros* as well as for analysing the genesis and trajectory of their transhumant practices. Surveys collected by GESA (Research Group of Agrarian Social Studies of the National University of Comahue, Argentina) during 1982-1985 and 1997-1998 provide information on the peasant producing units. This agrarian system is analysed with ORSTOM (1985) approach of thematic node problems (land occupation, resource access, social and economic sustainability) and SANREM theoretical frame (Flora, 1999) which refers to natural resources management issues of local salience and privatization as a relating criteria.

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At the stage of the research design, the method for data collection and analysis chosen was *case study*, which “explores a single entity or phenomenon (the case) bounded by time and activity (a program, ... process, ...or social group) and collects detailed information by using a variety of data collection procedures during a sustainable period of time (Creswell. 1994, p.12).

The paper is based on a case study on transhumant agrarian system in marginal lands. The methodological approach (triangulation strategy of qualitative and quantitative methods) as well as the theoretical framework (public resources management, viability of small producers, process of privatization) contribute to comparison of worldwide forms of control and resistance to process of globalization and to the debate on trends in similar types of vulnerable agrarian systems.

I. THE LOCAL COMMUNITY OF THE CRIANCEROS

A. Who Are the Crianceros?

The primary social actors in the agroecological system from the Andean north of the Argentine Patagonia are the *crianceros*. At the local level, the term *crianceros* describes a large set of families dedicated to animal breeding, the majority being peasants or retaining peasant characteristics, mainly focused on sheep or goat breeding (Bendini, M. y Tsakoumagkos, P., 1994).

More precisely, the territory, in which these livestock breeders perform their practice, extends from the south of the province of Mendoza to the center of the province of Chubut, even though the greater *crianceros* population is concentrated in the provinces of Neuquén and Río Negro. Such territory includes valleys in the heights of the Andes south mountain range, woodland and arid steppes in the Patagonian plateau.

Within this landscape configuration, the *crianceros* consist of approximately 7,500 breeders and their livestock include mainly sheep and goat, and in smaller numbers, horses and cattle. Their rodeo size (consisting of sheep flocks or “majadas” and goat herds or “piños” and some cattle and/or horses), measured in sheep units, varies within a range of up to 1,000 units, this being the threshold for capitalization; the modal value is located in the 250-500 strata, also in sheep units. The breeder’s main objective is sheep shearing and the sale of sheep wool, mohair and goat meat. Part of the livestock breeding yields is destined for the family’s own use, yet, proportionally, the majority goes to the market. These breeders do not operate under a market with clear commercialization guidelines and cannot achieve a continuous consistent yield. The parties involved in the commercialization system extend from the walk-on buyer and the local outfits to the outsider from other provinces and even foreign buyers. Different from meat production, the hair and wool production has a longer distribution chain including intermediaries that affect the final price. For different types of products, the state government had started implementing marketing programs and a new sales approach for added value, but its intervention decreased dramatically from the mid 80’s.

There are three basic types of *crianceros* that may be identified according to the number of breeders involved: (1) The transhumance *crianceros* or semi nomad breeders, that move their animals from the lower and arid fields in the winter season to the high valleys for the Andean summer season (2) The sedentary *crianceros* from the arid fields in the plateau (3) And the agricultural *crianceros* or farmers operating around small creeks and brooks where the livestock is supplemented with some precarious produce cultivation (grass, cereal, vegetable).

But in all three types, tending the flock appears as one of the common indicators of the type of social organization existing in the local communities. There are indigenous communities (with or without legal recognition), local Creole communities and mixed communities whose breeding techniques relate back to behaviors and conventions from traditional social bonds.

From here on, the focus of this study is the transhumance *crianceros* or semi-nomad breeders, for their importance in view of the number of breeders in the different areas of localization, the quantity of livestock they graze and also due to the configuration of their local identity with their historic presence and survival, the latter not without resistance.

B. History of the Development of Transhumance Practices

The seasonal migration of livestock, or transhumance, as a way of life and work goes back to native settlers. Already, travellers and scholars of the 19th century make reference to the original settlers (hunters and goat shepherds) descending from a rich history in spatial seasonal mobility. Afterwards, the settlers that stayed in the area adapted to transhumant practices as a way of life organizing themselves around livestock activities. The nearness to Chile and its pathways accessibility added to the attraction of land availability, caused immigrants to settle in large extensions of fiscal territory, setting up the bases for a rural and pastoral life with transhumance practice, becoming a land occupation in the middle 19th century.

The rich resources from the cordillera areas for the summer season and the accessibility to a market relatively profitable due to free commerce with Chile favored the advancement of livestock production with transhumance spatial system. The livestock fattened in the summer was sold in Chile impacting the economy for development in the region. Throughout the centuries, the settlers of the region (Mapuche Indians, Chileans, and Creoles) modulated an activity that, throughout time, became predominantly extensive livestock breeding in transhumance by family peasant units.

At the end of the 19th century, the settlers that began settling freely in the wide areas of fiscal land felt present the increasing pressure put on the marginal lands as a consequence of new land distribution policies at the national level. The best lands to the south of the Pampas region were taken away from the original inhabitants (expeditions and campaigns to the desert) and it was from that moment that the re population of the territory south to the Colorado River begins. The best land, in terms of receptivity and natural pasture during the majority of the year, is located in the longitudinal strip at the foothills of the cordillera. In that north-south strip, which has greater livestock breeding aptitude, and between the arid winter fields and summer fields, great extensions of land exist. These lands have been privatized since the military expeditions at the end of the 19th century and consequently the moving of the agrarian frontier, a period known as the Conquest of the Desert. Indian populations that occupied that territory, although with low density, were moved and/or exterminated by successive assignments.

The creation of customs duties and greater frontier control, in conjunction with the industrial development model at its peak in the mid 20th century, wind up fracturing this specific regional market with the subsequent subordination to the agro-industrial capital. Throughout time, and especially since the country industrialization era, national and provincial government entities instrumented controls from different angles focusing on disciplining the practices of livestock breeding in transhumance. Given the non-continuous spatial structuring, coupled with the implicit uncertainty of a dictate on land holding, a byproduct of historical, cultural, economic and physical circumstances, some provincial land distribution legislation is passed establishing legal forms of fiscal land occupation. One of the regulated items is the one that refers to the use of summer land. The issue of permits mandates the temporary use of fields for the summer season until their assignment is finalized. Strict control is exercised dictating that no person may move livestock to fiscal fields without having a personal non-transferable permit.

Historically, the tendency has long been towards the livelihood of family labor from the social form of land-livestock production. The *crianceros*' domestic breeding unit has been maintained until today. This persistency is not only explained by the internal logic of this agrarian social type, i.e. family labor intensification, maximization of their income (Cucully and

Murmis, 1980), but also by the logic of an economic system, given the low level of local commercial and agricultural capital development (Tsakoumagkos, 1993).

Upon raising the issues of social representation and the participants perspective, it's been mentioned, reiteratively, the general tendency of the *crianceros* is to stick to the land and the animals and to their will to remain in the same activity. This explains the continuity between generations of the social structure for livestock transhumance work. The sons, or at least one of them, whom the father generally picks at eighteen years of age or upon marriage, solicit the signal ticket and the pasture permit.

During crisis periods, the family unit acts as a refuge in a survival strategy that includes those who migrated and those who permanently reside in the unit. However, the tendency, since the middle of the 20th century, has been to emphasize the differentiation processes and social vulnerability with great weight towards labor dependence, thus converting the *crianceros* into peons, workers or employees, mostly subemployed or under precarious conditions.

The resistance of the *crianceros*, even within a diversity of processes (Cucullu y Murmis, 1980, Bendini, M. y Tsakoumagkos, P., 1994), may be explained fundamentally by the restriction on capitalistic expansion due to the existence continuance of great extensions of fiscal land, and by the inability of an economic system to absorb them in alternate activities. Currently there are signs of incomprehension of this land retention arrangement when projecting the privatization of fiscal land through entitlement programs.

The *crianceros* relationship with the rest of the local community adopt the following characteristics:

1. Inequality in access to resources
2. Lack of negotiating power in the product market
3. Pluriactivity and the combination of praedial and extrapraedial income as survival strategy.

C. Behavior and Conventions of Local Communities and The Territorial Arrangement

There exist two modes of access to the territory and several types or degrees of legal formalization in regards to property:

1. The natives' communal properties framed in legislation for Indian Reservations which present diverse degrees of formalization in regards to ownership title.
2. The groups occupying fiscal lands or *fiscaleros* whom their respective provincial government recognizes upon adopting two basic processes: the sale of the allotment and the pastureland permits.

The term Local Community here used refers then to indigenous communities as well as to groups of shepherds in a some location. In both cases, the behavior and conventions existing at the center of these communities include a certain number of livestock breeders that practice the tending of flocks common to a defined territorial cut.

Now then, the renowned text of G. Hardin (1968) "The Tragedy of the Commons" uses precisely the common shepherding as an initial example. This example describes a situation in which the maximization of utility includes a positive component, associated with the gains obtained through the increase in livestock existence, and a negative component associated with the cost generated by the same increase via too much grazing. According to the author, the tragic characteristics of the unavoidable ruin to which a consistent rationality would lead from the unlimited increase of the existing livestock, could be explained by the individual freedom - often framed in the smithian "invisible hand" - to use the public goods. Hardin's solution includes an ethical aspect (the "reciprocal coercion" naturally agreed by the majority affected, or the suffering from a common agreement on coercion) and a legal aspect (the private individual property attached to a legal inheritance).

Almost without a solution for continuity, the majority of the recommendations presented in environmental economics texts include the public pastureland as a particular case of those often called indistinctly “public property resources” or “free access resources”. Therefore, its basic characteristic would be “no exclusion” and the consequences would be abuse of resources and the associated social inefficiency, the lack of incentive to invest in production improvement and the improbability, difficulty and/or violability of agreement on use reduction.

However, the systematic criticism that Hardin’s text and its application underwent, has shown that such attempts bring, between various formal fallacies and tactics, a double confusion overall.

On one side, the issue is the nature itself of the problem in regards to property since its absence and the private, public or communal property differ notoriously between each other. In particular, the communal property would basically remit to: (a) the adjustment of owner’s usage rights and (b) the exclusion of non-owner’s usage rights. This second aspect is particularly important for the distinction between common shepherding and public property.

On the other hand, the distinction between the type of property and type of territorial arrangement that require an agreement is crucial for the owners and the users, these being private or public owners. The common property or some characteristics of the common property, however, could facilitate a better territorial arrangement.

In fact, the World Bank has taken into consideration these distinctions (BIRF, 1992). On one hand, the cited text discriminate the “common property resources” from the “free access resources”; on the other hand, it centers its attention to different types of “resource organization” according to the person in charge of doing it. Particularly, there is an entire section on communities (p. 149-151). Within the train of thought in this document, there is a variety of problems when the “communal properties” become “free access resources” as a consequence of their nationalization, thus there exists the need to take advantage of the local organizations potentiality (village or shepherds associations) for a better territorial arrangement.

In short, an adequate case proposal for the Patagonia *Crianceros* would be one that recognizes the following:

1. That the local communities (*crianceros* in indigenous communities or sets of *crianceros fiscaleros*) constitute traditional organizations with strong social bonds, one of them being the behavior and conventions linked to the common shepherding. This aspect is the one that presents a significant connection with the problem of territorial arrangement and therefore with reciprocation and mutual agreements at the local level on livestock management.
2. That these local communities bar the access to a determined territory or bar the common shepherding to all the “non *crianceros*” from the local area or other areas. This infers that the common shepherding as practiced by the Patagonia *crianceros* differs qualitatively from the problem of free access to resources.

II. TRANSHUMANT AGROECOSYSTEM IN THE ANDES OF NORTHERN PATAGONIA

A. Transhumance

The transhumant system related to livestock activities constitutes a unique breeding pattern that appears in different cordillera areas of the country. Yet the transhumance phenomenon is found in its highest expression in the province of Neuquen, on the northwest of the Argentine Patagonia.

The word transhumance indicates a recurring movement, pendulous and functional. The frequency of movement is regulated by the cyclical rhythm of the seasons and the activities in the households adjust to it. This originates a temporary change of settlement followed by a return that marks the beginning of a new cycle. The transhumant system remains attached to the

landscape, weather, and fields' receptivity. Having had, at other times, three or four moments, there are two in actuality -- the summer season and the winter season in favor of complementing different ecological floors. From this, the movement may be classified as vertical transhumance (ascending and descending herd movement).

The summer season, the winter season and the livestock route conform the circuit of this productive system and indicate territorial surroundings under different situations for natural aptitude and land holding. The summer season takes place in the height valleys, exceeding the 1,200-meter's quota in many cases. This environment provides pasture and water to the flock during the summer days. The length of stay varies as a function of the distance from the winter fields and the height of the summer fields, possibly varying among three to five months. The winter season takes place in the plateau and lower valleys where the scarcity of water and pasture becomes critical at the end of the spring.

The circuit does not have a regulated length. The distances vary considerably from area to area, from a few kilometers up to more than 200 km. Livestock feeding, livestock composition, number of heads, landscape characteristics, etc. condition the cycle length. The *crianceros* accompany the migration on horse, with cargo animals (mules saddled with cargo baskets), or with old model and deteriorated pick up trucks or trucks (Bendini, M. y Tsakoumagkos, P. 1994).

This livestock practice, localized between the arid and semi-arid plateau and the Andes cordillera, includes, in the region under study, 90% of the rural population of the area. These poor peasants known as *crianceros* and *puesteros* (livestock companions) are in their majority *fiscaleros* (occupants of fiscal land) and, in fact, do not represent the typical Argentine agricultural producer. However, these Andean producers are predominant in the northwest of Patagonia and constitute an example of the peasants' will for livestock breeding in growing conditions of poverty and ecological precariousness.

B. The Territorial Occupation and the Trajectory of the Criancero's Use of Pastureland

The common shepherding is usually treated as identical to the unlimited increase of livestock existence with the ecological and economical consequences already mentioned; therefore, the *crianceros* real process should be explained.

In effect, transhumance has its historic roots in pre-Columbian, colonial, and 19th century practices, destined to adjust to the limitations of the lower fields' aridity by combining with the pastures of high receptivity during the summer.

However, the conclusion of the military campaigns against the Indians and the posterior formation of large farms in the pre-Cordillera fields of major receptivity conditioned drastically the transhumance efficiency. Such efficiency is now confined to the worst winter seasons and the most reduced summer season.

Throughout the decades of the last century, the behavior and conventions of common shepherding and transhumance were insufficient to counteract the deterioration of pasturelands and the process of depopulation.

III. POLITICAL ORIENTATION IN THE REGION

A. In the 70's and 80's

In the rural sector of the area of study, two policies are most notable in the 70's for their relevance and extension: wool commercialization and technology education with agricultural extension. Since 1974, a new commercialization system is gradually implemented through the

increase in sales and through the producers' association, starting it from the shearing process and extending it to the sales transaction of the product, in which the government and the producing associations participate.

In these programs, the government participated not only as an agent for technical training (shearing machines) but also absorbing some expenses and financing others. It was intended then to compensate the relatively small negotiating power of the *crianceros*. The program's producing and commercialization objectives tended to improve the quality of the product for its later concentration and sale, and to increase the producer's income through a better price obtained by eliminating the intermediaries. These policies were incorporated into a global development strategy, for it implicitly led to income redistribution without a major definition regarding the support of peasant development. The agrarian policy in this decade associated to the formation of a motivating and protecting government was not questioned by the traditional agrarian commercial bourgeoisie (Pescio et al, 1993). This general improvement of status, in the standard of living and in the population income, widened the proprietary sector perspectives that helped in the formation of a new market - a fundamental outcome from the region's demographic growth.

The expansion era of the discussed programs lasted until the years 1983 and 1984. Since then, a stage of inertia began as a result of lack of emphasis in its execution. Despite the reinstitution of democratic governments in Argentina in those years, these programs did not receive a renewed force. Due to a lack of definition for the provincial development model, the government cut subsidies and a social and spatial redistribution of income occurs upon the consolidation of urban structure in the province. In regards to the specific program of commercialization, the conditions of subordination to the local commercial capital did not allow an expansion towards the producers group because they are immersed in a complex entirety that involves what they sell, what they buy, and what they consume. Furthermore, their needs connected to basic services coincide with only one commercialization channel -- i.e., supply, demand and credit in the product market. Thus, paternalism, "assistism" and voluntarism in the execution of this program restricted its general expansion.

By the end of the 80's, there is on going debate on the viability of self-sufficiency from these producers related to two intervening variables: volume and peasant homogeneity, and quality and intensity for agrarian expansion. Under terms of unresolved structural issues, an unstable situation lingers around real land control that causes in this period an increase in private appropriation of fiscal lands occupied by the peasants without defense mechanisms in place to update the land existing laws on behalf of the true occupants. The debate generalization around resource deterioration attributed to transhumant practices moves the attention away from these conflicts.

B. In the 90's

The implementation of national adjustment policies leads, in all the years of the 90's decade, to a profound crisis in the region upon restricting the main pool of resources (the national government transfer of rights, federal co-participation, etc.). Also, the role of the government as a major investor in public work ends -- a predominant role in the previous decade. The social policies as redistribution mechanisms weakened in the face of a new accumulation model (Barsky, 1993). In the agrarian sector, transformations occur at the institutional level and in the political tendencies, with an emphasis in control - control in livestock activities and control in the use of resources, mainly the land, within a frame of general deregulation. These controls present characteristics of a tendency towards a policy of exclusion in regards to the *fiscaleros* and, in principle, the actual expansion of the local landowners sectors appears predominantly speculative. The competition for land has ideological backing in an environmental speech on the care for the environment (erosion control and land despoliation), and it is translated in proposals to offer

technology to go to production. In view of its high cost, this could only take place in the sectors with more capital

At the beginning of the 90's, the tendencies for productive activities (especially in livestock and forestation) are not totally defined and it creates space for controversy. In this realignment of forces, advancement from the dominant groups occurs with some resistance from the peasants, especially from the indigenous organizations. This space for controversy is encased in the ideological heterogeneity of the provincial government of the time that in those years would feel the pressure to implement different proposals and alternatives.

Currently, the general situation in the region worsens with the increase in unemployment and poverty, channeling the social programs to the urban sectors where all major emergencies and social eruption concentrate (Murmis, 1997). In this context, there is less inclination in the social policies towards the rural areas.

Concomitantly a new player appears -- the great international corporation, originally of industrial characteristics with an integration strategy going backwards, occupying great extensions of the territory. Policies for fiscal land entitlement crop up for the land mainly occupied by the peasant *crianceros*, which infers 8,500,000 ha in the provinces north of Patagonia. With an argument for title provision mindful of the occupants' legitimate rights, regulated changes are designed that prioritize the incorporation of vast territories in the real estate market over the peasant rural development. Even though the control for regulating activities and the process for the *crianceros* citizenship process was increased since the 50's, it is with the land entitlement that this process ends, converting these subjects into contributors more than citizens. Until today, the allotment of land is not revealed directly connected to the obligations of the government in a way that would guarantee the permanence of the *crianceros* as direct viable producers. Not only a impoverishing situation is becoming clear but also signs of exclusion are rising to the surface. (Murmis, 1994).

IV. PEASANTS POVERTY AND SURVIVAL

In this section, a set of primary data, gathered in the beginning of the 80's and at the end of the 90's², is analyzed in order to establish comparisons and tendencies. For such objective, those conditions are identified and related to the social way of work and the survival strategies connected to the insertion mode in the product and the labor markets. The most relevant indicators selected to explain the operation of the peasant producing unit are the incidence of family labor in the total unit, the destiny of agricultural production and its value in terms of opportunity salary.

The stage for peasant families in the Creole and Mapuche communities at the beginning of the 80's had the following characteristics:

- The average household size was high, with a modal value of 7 members.
- The relationship between family labor and total labor employed in the family unit ranged between 0.80 and 0.98.
- The production gross value for the market in relationship to the total production gross value was 79%, varying between 72% and 91%.
- If the total production gross value is compared with the opportunity salary, these family labor units obtained an income of one to three salaries, i.e. from the worst to the best situation.
- An analysis of the range or income dispersion from different families indicates that the lower incomes are located between the ones with higher participation on extra-praedial income. The

² Transhumant area relief done by GESA (Agricultural Social Studies Group in the College of Law and Social Sciences) for the study on Transhumant Labor 1982-1985 and for the corresponding Social Diagnosis in the Executive Project on Fiscal Land Entitlements in the province of Neuquén 1997-1998

families that have a larger component in praedial work exceed 3 to 7 times the income from families that have predominantly extra-praedial work.

- Income from indirect salary (pensions, retirement income, food boxes i.e. PAN, and other types of subsidies) was lower than the one generated by salaried extra-praedial activities.

The corresponding characteristics at the end of the 90's are the following:

- The average peasant household size is 4.8.
- The relationship of praedial family labor over household unit total labor ranges between 0.78 and 0.90.
- The production gross value for personal consumption is 53% with a variance range between 33% and 67%. In other words, an average 47% of the production goes to the market.
- The median of praedial income (due to commercialization and personal consumption of agricultural products) is equivalent, in average, to 1.8 opportunity salary with a variation between 0.9 and 2.9.
- The heavier weight in the income group from work outside production comes from retirement income and pensions. This title generates income for 43% of the households, being much more significant than the one generated by extrapraedial labor or external aid from relatives.

Table n° 1 : Family labor, uses of agricultural production and its value in terms of opportunity salary of peasant *criancero* producing unit.

Indicators	In the '80s	In the '90s
Average Household Size	7.0	4.8
Household Unit Family Labor/ Household Unit Total Labor	0.9	0.8
Production Gross Value for the Market / Total Production Gross Value (Consumption and Market)	79%	47%
Praedial income	2.4 opportunity salary	1.8 opportunity salary

Source : GESA -UNCo Reports: Trahshumant Labor, 1982-1985 and Social Diagnosis in the Executive Project on Fiscal Land Entitlements in the province of Neuquén, 1997-1998

Some of the indicators present subtle variations that may be considered significant in terms of tendency like in the case of the relationship between praedial family labor and total labor for the peasant definition. Even though this relationship decreases within the *crianceros*, the peasant's presence as a social form of labor is maintained predominantly in the *crianceros* peasant households.

The *criancero*'s goal is to balance, while it's possible, the initial term of that operation (sell merchandise) with its final term (buy merchandise). It is about a qualitative goal that the *criancero* tries to achieve by obtaining the maximum possible income through the use of total family labor availability with three ends in mind - production for the market, production for domestic use and extrapraedial labor. In this manner, he achieves maximum satisfaction of needs compatible with sparse resources and with available family labor, responding to circumstances imposed to them by the initial endowment of productive resources (Wettstein, 1982).

The more traditional and generalized tendency is that in face of lower prices, these producers will try to increase production, increasing the number of heads in order to ensure minimum income, which in many cases it coincides with the saturation threshold from the land and pasture resources. The work for agricultural extension from government and non-government institutions to improve livestock management has partially reversed this situation.

The change in the relationship between those who sell and those who buy is too eloquent. In the 80's 76% of the total production went to the market, while in the 90's only 47% is offered to the market. The increase in personal consumption over the total production expresses the impoverishment process defined as downward social decomposition. However, this decomposition is not a riddance of peasants since the context conditions do not facilitate salary creation. In spite of it, expulsion processes occurred, so expressed in the household size indicator going from 7 to 4.8. The strategy of combining family labor

inside and outside of the household production unit explains the capacity for resistance in this type of producers.

The *crianceros* participate in different markets. In the product market they participate as sellers. In the supply and demand market, they participate as buyers. And in the labor market, they participate as permanent sellers or as an occasional work force. Their participation in the bank credit markets and real estate markets has been almost nonexistent (remaining subscribed to low amount subsidized credits and to improvement purchases from those who opt to migrate). Even though some form of payment in specie exists, these *crianceros* are immersed strictly in a mercantile economy. The scarce circulation of money has a greater relationship with the general poverty that goes beyond the rural areas than with the supposed non-monetary character of such economy.

Even though the total income for the peasant unit considered under terms of opportunity salary faintly declines, the decrease in income due to the fall in the salary buying power is much more significant as the growing rate of personal consumption over total production so indicates.

IV. FINAL THOUGHTS

A. On Control and Resistance

Historically the participation in the market from these livestock producers has not been marginal, especially those originally tending goat flocks. However, the dynamics of the internationalization and concentration processes, the environmental policies and the unavoidable advancement of selective territorial appropriation modifies and risks their participation in the product market and also restrict the possibilities for regional labor insertion in the market. The implementation of policies and programs in the historical process threatens to worsen the survival crisis for these peasants' producers.

In holding terms, up until this decade, the best lands of private property remained coexisting with the fiscal land occupation by the peasant producers - Mapuches and Creoles. This arrangement is ending to become the most eloquent indicator of a capitalist expansion era in marginal areas.

The historic survival of these peasants from the colonization and initial appropriation processes and from the citizenship and reorganization next processes becomes highly vulnerable within the present territorial configuration, state redefinition and land privatization.

The perspectives for incorporating land from rural areas into the market intensifies the differentiation between viable producers and non viable producers and rise in the *crianceros* horizon like a menacing sign (for exclusion). However, the development of the diversity here presented is not an argument based on agrarian neo-dualism.

The impoverishment and depopulation, however, could not invalidate the social bonds at the local community level. The different modes of resistance under structural conditioning and clientelism prone policies reveal the existence of strong social liaisons organized around labor practices.

The long-term performance from the transhumance *crianceros* can be given epic characteristics (Bendini and Tsakoumaglos, 1994) since they succeeded to persist under the already mentioned structural conditioning and almost without subsidy. The latter is true despite the existence of clientelism prone policies at the local government level.

B. On Problems and Potentiality

As a result of what this text previously presented it can be concluded that the main problems that the *crianceros* face are:

- The restrictions placed on soil, pasture land and water.

- The institutional restrictions in the matter of legalization for access to the land not taking account behavior and conventions typical of the local communities.
- The impoverishment process of the last two decades.
- And the scarce development of economic alternatives for the producers and their families.

At the same time the potentiality of the *crianceros* local communities in the Patagonia to consider for different rural development initiatives are the cooperation in livestock activities, the social network under conditions of poverty and resource scarcity and the resistance to external control.

This case reviews the social diversity in a territorial configuration with specific patterns of public pastureland as well as the fragility of the agrarian system related not only to the environment but also to the social vulnerability of the producers in a context of redefinition of the state and of privatization. In this way, my final thoughts call attention to control and resistance and also to problems and potentialities of this kind of rural communities.

This paper attempts to share information about land use, land property, forms of privatization and strategies used by local communities for resource management and decision making processes.

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