

## Conditioning factors for the sustainability of the agricultural sector associated with socio-political transformations in the cooperative context



### Condicionantes de la sostenibilidad del sector agrario asociadas a transformaciones sociopolíticas del ámbito cooperativo

### Condicionantes para a sustentabilidade do setor agrícola associadas às transformações sociopolíticas na esfera cooperativa

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## ABSTRACT

After several decades of strong identification of socialism with state property, the guidelines of the agrarian policy during the last years in Cuba, more favorable to the autonomy of non-state productive forms, motivated the realization of this article, focused on the strengthening of the socio-political approach of sustainability, particularly in the cooperative sector. This reality, together with the scientific consensus that the debate on the political issues involved has been unsystematic, led this paper to aim at assessing potential conditioning factors for the sustainability of the agrarian sector associated with socio-political transformations in the Cuban cooperative sphere. Theoretical and historical analysis methods were used, as well as sociological analysis of guiding documents for agrarian policy. The main result presented an ongoing diversification of the political culture, carrying unfavorable social representations of the regulatory or administrative role of state instances, the revitalization of practices not related to traditional conceptions of socialism and other sources of ideological contradictions, which reveal risks for the sustainability of agrarian policy interests, related to the preservation, even, of the socialist character of the constitutionally endorsed sector.

**Keywords:** socio-political conditioning factors; cooperative sector; agricultural sustainability

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## RESUMEN

Luego de varias décadas de fuerte identificación del socialismo con propiedad estatal, las directrices de la política agraria durante los últimos años en Cuba, más favorables a la autonomía de formas productivas no estatales, motivaron la realización de este artículo, abocado al fortalecimiento del enfoque sociopolítico de la sostenibilidad, particularmente en el sector cooperativo. Esa realidad, junto al consenso científico en que el debate de cuestiones políticas implicadas ha sido poco sistemático, hizo que este trabajo se planteara como objetivo: valorar potenciales condicionantes para la sostenibilidad del sector agrario asociadas a transformaciones sociopolíticas del ámbito cooperativo cubano. Se emplearon métodos de análisis teórico e histórico, así como

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análisis sociológico de documentos rectores para la política agraria. El resultado principal expuso una diversificación en curso de la cultura política, portadora de representaciones sociales desfavorables del rol regulador o administrativo de instancias estatales, la revitalización de prácticas no afines a concepciones tradicionales del socialismo y otras fuentes de contradicciones ideológicas, que revelan riesgos para la sostenibilidad de intereses de la política agraria, relativos a la preservación, incluso, del carácter socialista del sector refrendado constitucionalmente.

**Palabras clave:** condicionantes sociopolíticas; sector cooperativo; sostenibilidad agraria

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## RESUMO

Após várias décadas de forte identificação do socialismo com a propriedade estatal, as diretrizes da política agrária dos últimos anos em Cuba, mais favoráveis à autonomia das formas não-estatais de produção, motivaram este artigo, visando fortalecer a abordagem sócio-política da sustentabilidade, particularmente no setor cooperativo. Esta realidade, juntamente com o consenso científico de que o debate sobre as questões políticas envolvidas tem sido pouco sistemático, levou este trabalho a estabelecer o objetivo de avaliar fatores condicionantes potenciais para a sustentabilidade do setor agrícola associados às transformações sócio-políticas na esfera cooperativa cubana. Foram utilizados métodos de análise teórica e histórica, bem como análise sociológica de documentos orientadores da política agrária. O principal resultado expôs uma contínua diversificação da cultura política, com representações sociais desfavoráveis do papel regulatório ou administrativo dos órgãos estatais, a revitalização de práticas não alinhadas com as concepções tradicionais do socialismo e outras fontes de contradições ideológicas, que revelam riscos para a sustentabilidade dos interesses da política agrária, incluindo a preservação do caráter constitucionalmente endossado socialista do setor.

**Palavras-chave:** fatores sócio-políticos condicionantes; setor cooperativo; sustentabilidade agrária

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## INTRODUCTION

The transformations underway in the Cuban agrarian sector are assumed to be vital not only for the sustainability of development in this area, but also for the sustainability of the socio-political system itself, within the framework of the process officially named Update of the Cuban Economic and Social Model of Socialist Development (hereinafter, Update). This is endorsed in the programmatic documents of this process, which place the qualifier of *sustainable* at the same hierarchical level as those of *sovereign, independent, socialist, democratic* and *prosperous*, in the projected vision of the nation (PCC, 2021).

For more than two decades, the agrarian sector has experienced a continuous decrease of the traditional weight of the state sector, of its majority of agricultural workers and extensive exploitation of the land, to give way to a progressive increase of usufructuary producers in cooperative or individual private roles, with small-scale productions. At the same time, among the cooperative organizations, the amount of land which productive management is carried out by Credit and Service Cooperatives (CCS in Spanish) has increased, above the areas controlled by Agricultural Production Cooperatives (CPA in Spanish) and Basic Units of Cooperative Production (UBPC in Spanish).

Specifically, on the complexities faced by agricultural policy in the sector, scholars from various scientific disciplines agree that the greatest complexity of the problems lies in production relations, without underestimating the limited availability of resources, while, in parallel, the debate on socio-political and socio-structural issues involved has been postponed due to the priority given to structural and managerial transformations (Espina Prieto & Echevarría León, 2020; Pérez Villanueva et al., 2013).

One of the main changes currently foreseen in agrarian policy is the orientation of the management model towards a higher level of protagonism and autonomy of non-state forms, with emphasis on cooperatives and, within these, the CCSs, taking into account the historical private component of their bases<sup>1</sup>. This vision also seeks to correspond to

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<sup>1</sup> Although at present private management predominates in the CCSs only in terms of economic management of their lands, and not in terms of their legal ownership (since this patrimony is not inherited after the death

the growing plurality of social origins of the new members of these organizations in recent years. These new members are individuals and families of different structural and occupational origins, incorporated through the revival of the practices of handing over state lands in usufruct, since the end of the first decade of this century, within the framework of the Update and its strategy of productive revitalization.

However, these projections favoring the autonomy of producers are instituted after successive decades of identification of socialism with state property, not only in legal terms, but also in the collective imagination. This encounter between traditional and emerging representations, regarding the decision-making power of non-state productive forms, makes it necessary to follow sociologically the transformations of the political universe of social actors in the cooperative context in order to visualize and objectively manage potential sources and impacts of ideological contradictions in the processes for agrarian development.

On the one hand, this scientific support favors the integral and critical approach of the economic, political and cultural practice, in a country which government declares the intention to update its economic and social model, ensuring sustainability that, precisely, includes those three dimensions mentioned above, in addition to the environmental one.

For the sake of a definition of sustainability related to the agricultural sector for this article, it is noted that, conceptions derived from the "Earth Summit", in Rio de Janeiro, 1992, and from the United Nations Development Program in 1994, sought to take the analysis beyond the traditional ecosystem production link to integrate ecological, socioeconomic and political purposes. This led sustainability visions to begin to consider not only the achievement of productive growth, but also indicators of social equity, political inclusion and participation of cultural diversity, preservation of environmental recovery capacity, and valuation of the contribution of native and traditional cultures to ecosystemic preservation.

This integration is also progressively inserted in the agricultural sector. In the Latin American context, socio-cultural and political components to be prioritized are valued,

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of its founding owners), their origin and identity of private character is recognized, which has historically conditioned their identification with the search for autonomy in their productive and commercial management.

such as: cognitive, technological and socio-political dialogue with farmers' organizations and movements (Altieri, 2016), guarantees of social justice on the basis of representation and equitable opportunities for the socio-structural diversity of the countryside (Ceroni Acosta, 2018). However, the approaches focus on agrarian microsystems (farms, productive organizations, peasant groups), not on the sustainability of the agrarian sector as a whole.

In Cuba, especially in agricultural extension, when the decrease in the number of peasants is perceived as a problem, since the beginning of the 21st century, the socio-cultural pattern is strengthened, expressed in the strength and necessary continuity of the agrarian way of life, in the analysis of sustainability. This begins to be visualized, according to Romero (2017), as the confluent achievement of the goals of economic efficiency, equitable social participation, recovery of productive and innovative traditions that are environmentally friendly, generational relay. Such meaning can be understood as a scientific awareness that the self-perception of individual and family producers, with emphasis on young people, as managers of an agrarian culture and as guarantors of its reproduction, is a key condition for the achievement and preservation of agrarian development.

Specifically on social participation and generational change, Samper, Jiménez and Díaz (2019) add elements related to young people in productive roles such as: support for their innovative projects on a small scale, strengthening their sensitivity to the needs of endogenous development of their localities and the conception of agricultural policies that visualize these young people, not as subjects to be assisted, but as actors with the right to demand certain benefits and institutional behaviors.

In these and other theoretical references consulted in general, the visualization of the socio-political as a component of sustainability is a minority, however, in them it is found assessments of the importance of dialogic relations, guarantee of consensus and reciprocal credibility, between producers and institutions. This aspect acquires an additional connotation in Cuba when the guidelines of the Update place at the center the continuity of the socialist character of the processes for economic development (PCC, 2021).

Based on these theoretical criteria, this paper defines sustainability for the agricultural sector as: the achievement of processes and results that integrate satisfactory productive yields, equity in economic participation and in the recognition of the plurality of social actors involved (individual and family producers, organizations and institutions), respect for the preservation of the environment, the sense of identification with the agrarian way of life and the basic consensus between the productive sector and the governing institutionality.

As for the definition of conditioning factors associated with socio-political transformations, it is assumed with this qualifier the transformations of social stratification and political culture, two important categories in the analysis of Political Sociology, which emphasizes power relations as an instrument or purpose of the State and of the various social groups.

In terms of social structure, significant references are found in Cuban studies (Espina Prieto, 2015; Espina Prieto & Echevarría León, 2020), on the progressive diversification of groups of people visualized as economic subjects. In this sense, they refer to the differences in economic and social status conditioned by their roles and interrelations in the labor market, by their sources of income, starting conditions for access to enterprises and productive forms and, in parallel, as subjects belonging to a certain age group, ethnicity, gender or territory, etc.

Regarding the analysis of political culture, it is assumed a conception contributed from Cuban sociological studies, that of Cabrera (2015, p. 62): "set of orientations, patterns and relatively stable socio-psychological values that characterize the relationships established between the different social subjects with respect to political power and that condition the experience of political development of society". This has the additional value of placing culture beyond the frameworks of the classic system of political institutions, alluding to its mediating effect on processes in the different spheres of development.

The analysis of these socio-political transformations as conditioning factors for the purposes of agrarian policy and its sustainability, assumes Grimson's (2014) description of sociocultural as a set of axiological, cognitive, guiding and regulating mechanisms of

experience. It also takes up Cabrera's (2015) own description of political culture as a force that symbolically configures value positions and forms of participation in the various processes, expressed as collectively legitimized values and, at the same time, confronted with other values that guide individuals and groups towards the assumption of certain behaviors, patterns of choice, defense or delegitimization in the face of the exercise of institutional authority.

These supports allow defining as conditioning factors for agrarian sustainability, associated to socio-political transformations of the Cuban cooperative sphere: the possible effects of the current diversification of cooperative economic actors and the reconfiguration of their collective representations, values and behavioral orientations regarding power mechanisms for the course and result of productive and political stability, environmental and cultural preservation of the agrarian sector, according to ethical and ideological priorities promoted by the socialist system of the nation. In this case, the analysis will focus on the unfavorable conditioning factors.

The aspects introduced so far lead to the objective of: assessing potential conditioning factors for the sustainability of the agrarian sector associated with socio-political transformations in the Cuban cooperative sphere.

Obtaining the necessary information to meet this objective contributes to making visible the weight of subjective and cultural aspects in the implementation and results of the economic practices of the Update. In this way, a prospective vision of medium and long term conditions for the achievement of the strategic goals of the agrarian policy is sustained, with emphasis on the cooperative context. Among these goals, the preservation of the socialist essence of agriculture and, with this, the socio-political sense of sustainability is key.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

In order to obtain the necessary information for the purpose of this work, a series of theoretical and empirical studies carried out in Cuba since the end of the first decade of this century were taken as a unit of analysis, with an interdisciplinary perspective and critical views on the agrarian policy, its ongoing transformations, with greater interest

in the cooperative sector, as well as the growing socio-structural heterogeneity of the productive forces of agriculture.

Although these studies were not oriented towards the same objective as the present research, their contributions in terms of criteria, questioning and scientific warnings are obtained through the methods of analysis-synthesis and history. The sociological analysis of programmatic documents of the Update, the basis of the strategic priorities of development and sustainability for the agrarian sector, is also a contribution.

The method of analysis-synthesis was applied, in the first instance, through the identification of descriptive and explanatory criteria, provided from the sociological and economic perspectives, closely linked. From these criteria, taken as supports, key arguments were selected in order to establish both current assessments and reflective projections in the medium and long term. In this way, the systematization of the resulting knowledge led to a comprehensive assessment of socio-political conditions in the first instance, from the cooperative sphere for the sustainability of the agricultural sector.

The use of the historical method was concretized in the systematization of essential aspects of the evolution of the Update and, within this, in particular, of the transformations in agrarian policy and the social recomposition in the sector, with emphasis on the cooperative sector. These analytical procedures took into account the criteria of García, Ibáñez and Alvira (1989) on the sociological need to analyze integrally the conditioning factors of the phenomenon, in this case, of the growing socio-political plurality.

The sociological analysis of the basic documents of the Update focused on the "Conceptualization of the Cuban Economic and Social Model of Socialist Development" (hereinafter, Conceptualization) and on the "Guidelines of the economic and social policy of the Party and the Revolution" (hereinafter, Guidelines), with ample reference to the agrarian sector and its strategic transformations.

Considering the explanations of Jiménez and Carreras (2002) on this method, its application was focused on identifying, preliminarily, to what extent the socio-political

transformations of the cooperative sphere were visualized in the official conceptions and guidelines, in terms of potential conditionings for the sustainability of the agrarian sector. But before that, the first moment of results of this article also made it possible to summarize the main aims and lines of action of the current agricultural policy.

This research, with bibliographic-documentary characteristics, assumed the risks of the objective existence of a main limitation: the fact that, above all, in the context of the restrictions of physical mobility imposed by the pandemic in Cuba during the years 2020 and 2021, it was impossible to systematically carry out a field work, important to characterize other indicators of sociopolitical transformations, more diverse and recent, in the producers of the agricultural cooperative sphere. Hence, it was necessary to resort to studies published in the last five years on issues related to the one reflected in the objective of this research, in addition to the already mentioned analysis of guiding documents.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the Guidelines document, which in 2021 updated the 2016 edition, allowed, in the first instance, to visualize among the main lines of action in agrarian policy the search for alternatives towards greater autonomy of cooperatives, considered as a form of property functional to socialism. In this sense, the elimination of intermediaries in commercialization was established, although under the preponderance of the state enterprise in technological, productive and commercialization management. In this regard, it was declared the state's intention to increase the correspondence between the prices to be paid and those of the international market, as well as the concentration of investments in the most efficient producers, with the necessary specialization of banking services.

Provisions were also established to strengthen the chain approach between primary production and the different links of the agro-industrial complex, in activities that generate external income or import substitution, which in turn would represent greater export options for cooperative producers. Likewise, in response to constant questioning by producers and organizations, the terms of the economic management contract were

redefined to be more favorable to its bidirectional observance between the productive forms and the State.

In order to boost the production of traditional and emerging exportable items, together with the necessary incentive to non-state producers, a strategy of technical-commercial and legal advice was established for those with greater solvency and better production results, for their progressive insertion in export dynamics. Actions were also implemented to revitalize traditional agroecological practices, in integration with extensionist proposals of scientific and technical advances.

In order to strengthen sustainability in its socio-cultural component, a comprehensive strategy was implemented to encourage the incorporation and permanence of the labor force in the countryside and permanent family settlement, with emphasis on young people. This was materialized through the delivery of state lands in usufruct, which since 2008 began to be reorganized, regulated by successive Decree-Laws (No. 259/2008, No. 300/2012 and No. 358/2018)<sup>2</sup>, in order to reduce the amount of idle land, repopulate rural contexts with individuals, families and communities in the condition of productive forces. These were legally incorporated as partners in the existing cooperatives in their respective areas of land obtained.

Although the approval of new legal actions for the agrarian sector continued, such as the package of sixty-three measures<sup>3</sup> of 2021, aimed at solving productive, structural, organizational, financial and marketing problems, the official commitment to economic-financial decentralization, with the participation of non-state productive forms in national and export market dynamics, with an integral management of sustainability in terms of

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<sup>2</sup> These Decree-Laws for the delivery of land in usufruct appear respectively in the Official Gazettes of the Republic: No. 24 Extraordinary of July 11, 2008, Ordinary No. 43 of October 9, 2012 and No. 39 Extraordinary of August 7, 2018. To this is added Resolution No. 60/2020, published in Gazette No. 20 Ordinary of March 12, 2020, as a special directive for the delivery of idle land in usufruct to young graduates of the Military Service.

<sup>3</sup> The newspaper Granma, official organ of the Central Committee of the PCC, on June 17, 2021, summarized the essence of the package of 63 government measures to solve persistent problems in agriculture: low productivity, oversized structures, excess of intermediaries increasing costs, financial, investment and income limitations, state non-payments to farmers, high prices of electricity, water, bio-products, etc. Details of these measures appear on the official website of the Ministry of Finance and Prices (<http://www.mfp.gob.cu>), one of the main parties involved, together with the Ministry of Agriculture.

production, agroecology, generational replacement and preservation of the institutionalized social system, was kept explicit.

The studies from the results of which information was deduced according to the objective of this work were carried out from the interdisciplinary dialogue between sociological and economic sciences by Cuban researchers in the last seven years, with critical views in the follow-up to the implementation of public policies, especially those in the agrarian field.

In the context of increasing social mobility from the state sector to the cooperatives, the new and traditional producers that converge are described by González (2017, p. 26) as: "cooperative members of salaried origin, cooperative members of peasant origin, small peasant producers, new peasants, the state enterprise". This author's analysis in this regard were taken as a descriptive synthesis of the ascending plurality, where the legal and social recognition of the small farmer grew rapidly, empowered on the basis of a private management of land in usufruct and, consequently, in frank reworking of projects different from the traditional tendency of state collectivism.

Progressive social stratification in agriculture, facilitated by factors such as the location and quality of farms and soils, the connection or not with national and international market opportunities, access to sources of financing outside the credit policy, the possibility of adding value to primary production, among others, has rapidly surpassed the level of traditional family reproduction.

This phenomenon was described by Arias and Leyva (2019) in a recent study on new social dynamics and, in particular, agricultural cooperation, in the context of agrarian transformations. The structural diversification visible in these social dynamics was directly and indirectly focused as a source of challenges for public policies, in terms of differentiated treatment and support to the actors of agrarian development, taking into account the centralist culture of managers and of many of the subjects themselves who have become producers and cooperative members.

From the above, it was possible to deduce in this article another challenge: these transformations of social composition and stratification led to a greater coexistence of

diverse expressions, associated to a greater or lesser extent with the political culture of the social actors involved. In particular, in the CCS, preferred by the new and diverse usufructuaries from 2008 onwards, new contradictions emerged in terms of interests, conceptions of participation in decision-making and individual and family socio-economic projects.

A previous study by Cruz (2015), regarding some transformations evidenced in agricultural cooperatives until the first decade of the 21st century, provided illustrative elements of the strengthening of unfavorable or not very advantageous social representations in many CCS members regarding relations with the State. In his research, the author attributed the criteria of delegitimization of state procedures to the requirement that the cooperatives provide services at prices with low profits at the time and to the payment of taxes that were considered high for a long period of time.

As axiological effects or features associated with these representations, it was visualized, according to the objective of this article, not only the disinterest in contributing from the commercial and other cooperative services to local and national development, but also, more significant for its potential implications, the weakening of the sense of social responsibility in front of monetary interests, internally in the organization and in relation to the community. Both effects, especially among private CCS members, would have negative repercussions on the purposes of ideological synergy with the rest of the key actors in agricultural development.

From a similar perspective, research by Anaya and García (2017) identified evident manifestations of rejection of state mediation in the act of hiring temporary labor force, based on the perception of high, attributed by these producers to the level of organizational centrality that the state has exercised, particularly in terms of marketing. Associated with these visions, according to both economists, there was an increase in the level of informal private practices of exploitation of salaried labor as a sign of the rootedness of institutional arrangements opposed to state legal norms, but functional to the daily relationship of many producers with their labor force.

This identification facilitated the interpretation of another significant element: the progressive existence of evaluative positions of delegitimization of legal regulations,

indicators in turn, in the medium term, of the delegitimization of an institutionality that guarantees the interests of the State and of socialist property in agriculture.

Another alert in this sense was exposed in the studies of Donestévez (2017) and Donestévez and Muñoz (2017), on some particularities of the agrarian policies and regime, with emphasis on those of the cooperative sphere, in the Cuban context of socialist transition.

In his concrete references to the problems of cooperatives, in the first case, Donestévez (2017), taking up again the arguments of the classics of Marxism, argued persistent gaps in terms of the culture of cooperation in these organizations, still marked by the coexistence, on the one hand, of traditional conceptions of the state worker subordinated to an administration and, on the other hand, values attached to the mercantile interest above the social one.

In the second case, referring like Anaya and García (2017) to the rising trend of exploiting agricultural labor force without formal contract, together with the persistence of high prices and intensive exploitation in some crops, Donestévez and Muñoz (2017) visualized the possible reedition of the strengthening of an agrarian bourgeoisie, outside the instituted normative frameworks.

Such assessments gave support to the direct identification of the indicator of a political culture detached from traditional values, promoted by the State, such as social responsibility and solidarity, considered significant as a support for the socialist character of Cuban agriculture.

Another gradual socio-political change was interpreted from the results of a study by Elías (2017) on the growth of the diversity of young Cubans as cooperative members in recent years. At first, the little sense of identification of these social actors with the agrarian as a way of life had clear expression in almost strictly monetary motivations in many cases, detached from the possible long-term permanence in that socioeconomic sector. These expectations were later manifested, according to the analyst, in the scant interest of young people in other forms of social participation beyond the production-profit logic.

The analysis of the criteria of Elías (2017) revealed elements that allow to assess as a challenge to sustainability, in ideological terms, the prevalence of youthful values associated with monetary-individual, short-term gain, to the detriment of traditional values of state policy, of defending agrarian identity as a sustenance of national sovereignty.

In the same year as the study by Elías (2017), an individual research by Leyva (2017) on the ongoing transformations in the cooperative sector, with emphasis on the CCS, characterized the majority non-farmer composition frequently found in the boards of directors or the presence in these, of subjects without direct link to production. In this regard, he warned of the possible non-recognition of leadership in these boards by the assembly of associates. This would represent a potential source of ideological contradictions within the organization due to the image of control and not representation of the board for the community.

From the analysis itself, it was possible to deduce for this article another source of ideological contradictions, with greater political scope, outside these organizations: the erosion of the role of the board of directors as an effective channel of communication between the CCS and the administrative bodies of agriculture at the local, provincial and national levels, when the sustainability of the current transformations will depend, to a large extent, on these representing plural characteristics and interests involved in the processes of development.

An alert contained in the same research, with increasing validity at the beginning of the third decade of this century, summarized the need to recognize peasant organizations as: "a field prone to conflict and a complex system of relations not only economic, but also political, ethical, symbolic and institutional" (Leyva Remón, 2017, pp. 81-82). Such recognition, due to its comprehensive foresight, synthesizes a necessary sociological basis for the timely redesign of public policies aimed at the agrarian sector.

This redesign began to become evident gradually, with the progress of the reforms of the Update, but it remained urgent to systematize analysis of the changes in socio-political terms, of the various actors of production and what this would represent in the medium and long term systemically.

In order to appreciate the space of reference to these changes in the programmatic documentation, the analysis of the document of the Conceptualization allowed to evidence in the principles conceived as supports of the economic and social model for the consolidation of the socialist system the lack of concrete references to the diversity of political expressions and cultures participating in the current reforms.

It was also noted that the allusion to behaviors considered negative or divergent with respect to the essential principles and values of the Cuban social system was reduced to mentioning disinterest in working efficiently, individualism, corruption, crime and indiscipline. In addition to focusing only on what should be controlled and penalized, these behaviors are not included as part of the ideological and value changes experienced by a society and that should be better studied in the interest of dialogue between public policies, such as agrarian policy and the different social sectors such as cooperativism.

Closely related to the above, in terms of values and predominant socio-political traits in Cuban society, the document only identified strengths and opportunities, not conditions in terms of challenges and risks for the purposes of current public policies. In this regard, with a high level of abstraction, the following elements were mentioned: political will favorable to updating, firmness of humanist, patriotic, responsible and honest values, as well as a culture based on the best historical traditions. The only reference to the diverse civil society was in function of highlighting its unity around the defense of the revolutionary process represented by the State and the Communist Party of Cuba.

This abstract mention blurred any form of involvement or conditioning of the growing socio-political diversity in relation to strategic sectors for integral sustainability such as agriculture.

The findings of the Guidelines and the Conceptualization revealed a wide distance with respect to the assessments and warnings deduced from the scientific studies that were analyzed in terms of visualization of transformations in social stratification and political culture. The studies described or suggested indicators of socio-political changes in Cuban society in general and, particularly, in the productive forces with emphasis on the agrarian and cooperative sector, which were not reflected with the same level of

recognition in the referred programmatic documents, even being these in 2021, as already mentioned in this article, an update of previous editions.

The analysis of sociological and economic studies, above all, provided information on the processes of social mobility of groups of agricultural producers, due to their different sources of origin towards the role of cooperative members and due to the geographical conditions and access to financing and market of their respective farms. It also facilitated a scientific approach to the progressive complexity of the social composition and of conceptions and values in the cooperative organizations and the consequent widening of the heterogeneity of individual and group interests, of economic projects, of aspirations and ethical positions vis-à-vis the governing bodies of the agrarian sector.

In conclusion, with respect to the cooperative sphere, it was identified that the collective representations unfavorable to state regulatory procedures, the extension of informal private practices of exploitation of wage labor, the increase of institutional arrangements between producers and agricultural workers in ignorance of the socialist legal framework, the strengthening of youth values driven by short-term profit, the erosion of leadership of CCS boards of directors and the growing rejection of homogenizing institutional treatments, are the most important socio-political transformations in the cooperative sphere, the strengthening of youth values driven by the desire for short-term profit, the erosion of leadership of CCS boards of directors and the growing rejection of homogenizing institutional treatments, are socio-political transformations most visible, directly or indirectly, from the recent interdisciplinary analysis of the sociological and economic sciences in Cuba.

These transformations, insofar as they express individual and group interests that reduce identification with state interests, reveal potential sources of contradiction and delegitimization with respect to traditional principles and values of agrarian policy, promoted by the socialist institutional system through the organs of relations with the cooperatives (Ministry of Agriculture, National Association of Small Farmers). Among these principles is that of considering socialism as the way to solve the country's difficulties and, therefore, as the guiding political character of the agrarian model.

From this perspective, there are conditioning factors in terms of risks to be assumed for the strategic objectives of the Update, that is, for the irreversibility and continuity of the socialist system, of planning over the market, of collective interests over individual ones, which must find in the agrarian sector an essential support. Therefore, the growing diversity, marked by the socio-political transformations of the cooperative sphere, should not be ignored by the governing bodies and institutions of the agrarian policy, due to its foreseeable effects in terms of conflict of emerging political cultures, in different social groups within the changing productive forces.

Hence the need for more in-depth empirical research and theoretical updates in order to enrich public policies on the equitable participation and differentiated treatment of the various key social actors for development in the agricultural sector and its integral sustainability. These scientific contributions, in turn, would support institutional foresight and monitoring of demands, implications and potential unfavorable effects, in a context of growing symbolic confrontation between the principle of collectivity and that of individual competitiveness. Such confrontation acquires a special connotation in the cooperative sphere, where the protagonists are generations already distant from those who, at the beginning of the revolutionary process in power, came out of poverty as a result of the delivery of land in legal ownership by the action of the State.

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**Conflict of interest:**

Authors declare not to have any conflict of interest.

**Authors' contribution:**

*Nayibis Díaz Machado* designed the study, was involved in the collection of information, its analysis and interpretation, and in the drafting and final revision of the manuscript to be sent to the journal.

*Marielys Moore Pedroso* was involved in obtaining, analyzing and interpreting the information and in the final revision of the manuscript.

*Alfredo González Marrero* was involved in the collection of information, revision and final approval of the manuscript.



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