

## Scientific Paper

### Social change and transformations in the rural territorial context. Local actors' perception

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## Abstract

The objective of this paper is to facilitate the understanding about the relevance of the actors' perceptions for social change and sustainability of the transformations that are executed in the municipal agricultural sector, in the face of the complexity of current scenarios. The analysis and reflection are derived from the experience obtained during more than 15 years of field work, with tools that promote participation and interdisciplinarity in the analyses, by the research line of Agricultural and Sustainable Local Development of the Pastures and Forages Research Station Indio Hatuey, in agro-productive entities, municipalities and localities, with the contribution of their key actors. For the study the information regarding the officials, workers and decision makers' perceptions were considered; statistical documents associated to the agricultural productions of the territories were also analyzed. As a result it was observed that the established institutionality should be reformed, because it slows down the concretion of the transformation projects and actions. From this, it can be concluded that the knowledge and understanding about the analyzed actors' perceptions at municipal-local level remarkably limit that the projection and implementation of the changes are favorably visualized.

Keywords: standard of living, rural development, food production

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## Introduction

Pluriactivity, associativity and migratory processes in the Latin American countryside have originated the deagrarianization process of the rural world (Ramírez and Tejera, 2011; Vértiz, 2014). With regards to Cuba, since the late 2<sup>th</sup> century transformations are carried out with the confluence of diverse economic actors; which, although not being able to solve the existing problems, show the need to modify the relations among the development subjects and facilitate actions that contribute to the increase of agricultural production and productivity, and to the containment of the deterioration of the social and economic infrastructure at territorial and local level in the nation.

The above-explained facts reveal, among other issues and as referred by González-Díaz *et al.* (2013), assuming the challenge of social change and technical-material transformations, with the protagonist role and agreement of local actors, for the management of the different processes supported on an institutionality that: a) promotes social participation; b) considers the actors' perception to mobilize the individual and collective potentialities; c) conditions advances towards prosperity; and d) facilitates understanding about the aspects related to human subjectivity, in which the economic-productivist view is overcome and people are privileged in the transformation analyses and projects (Mora-Alfaro, 2013).

About «social change», in principle, there is no general agreement about the aspects of knowledge and methods that imply approach to their study (Torres, 2011). However, Moyano-Estrada (2013) refers that since recent years works have been conducted that state the importance of such aspects as the existing trust, information flows or reciprocity rules in community contexts, issues that are associated to the social actors' perceptions. They constitute the support in the conception of changes, and in their materialization, as social development and progress, especially if the centrality of feeding as social act is considered in development (Triches and Schneider, 2015).

De Souza (2013) relates social change with the interpretative paradigm of collective social action, with the real participation of the citizens in the management of territorial processes and local innovation with co-responsibility. Nevertheless, Suset *et al.* (2013) and Sánchez-Zamora *et al.* (2016) consider that this is associated to the improvement and solution of social problems, which includes the enhancement of competences and capacities for the sustainable self-management of transformations.

Social change demands to consider extra-economic factors in its treatment (Mora-Alfaro, 2013; Oviedo-Arévalo, 2014), also value systems and senses that get in competition for the interpretation of reality, as stated by Bahamondes-González *et al.* (2017);

and for such purpose to transform the lifestyles of individuals, groups and institutions is required, and it should be integrated, among other aspects, to the reflection about the motivations, perceptions, aspirations, competences and value system of the people, to adopt alternatives and promote initiatives which improve the quality of human life.

With regards to the above-stated elements, it is valid to mention that social perception is a crucial aspect in the process of social change because, independently from the fact that it is focused on receiving (physical, environmental and social) stimuli, it serves to select, formulate hypotheses, decide and, as every process, social perception is affected by learning, motivation, emotion, among other characteristics of the subjects in this case (Salazar *et al.*, 2012).

All this is supported on social participation, as revitalizing element of the practices of territorial arrangement and development management of the localities, and for its incidence on decision making, as sustained by Fernández-Portillo and Santos-Carrilo (2015) and Landini (2015). It is also essential in innovation, for which the result of change is the warrant of a new procedure, according to Rodríguez-Blanco *et al.* (2013), mainly if it is considered, as stated by Foronda-Robles and Galindo-Pérez-de-Azpillaga (2012), that the territory is the support of every action, it becomes a dynamic element where people with particular problematic situations live and where there are interests at stake; thus local development also emerges as a new way to approach economic development, aimed at improving the standard and quality of living of the population (Buendía-Martínez and Côté, 2014).

The objective of this paper is to facilitate understanding about the relevance of the actors' perceptions for social change and sustainability of the transformations that are executed in the agricultural sector.

## Methodology

This work is part of several analyses that will be made later, from a multidisciplinary perspective, with regards to the evolution of the implementation of Municipal Integral Development Programs (PDIM, for their initials in Spanish) in municipalities of Matanzas province –Cuba–, their reach and limitations. For the study key actors and municipal level and participants in different workshops, car-

ried out in the Perico, Pedro Betancourt and Jagüey Grande municipalities, were considered.

Participatory workshops were carried out in each municipality, in which the participants' life and work experiences and views were considered for the social perception; agreement was also reached with key actors, who had living and work time experience in the municipalities, in order to sensitize them and promote their active participation in the transformations.

Most of the participants in the workshops were representatives of the organisms of Government and of the main productive and service entities established in the municipalities, that is: the Municipal Administration Council (CAM, for its initials in Spanish) and its internal dependency, constituted by the Economy and Finances Planning Direction, Municipal Health Direction, Physical Planning Direction, Delegation of Agriculture and Municipal Direction of Communal Work.

The work was framed in the so-called «case studies»<sup>1</sup>, from the sociological perspective and from notions of social psychology, which facilitates the understanding and interpretation of certain developing social phenomena and processes. It is focused on the analysis of the subjects' perception, expectations and aspirations, substantive aspect for social change, motivation and collective mobilization as support of the transformations.

Regarding the productive aspects, the agricultural production of several years was considered to show their evolution and situation with regards to yield, because the farming sector is the main economic item of the studied municipalities.

The information was obtained from the establishment of a methodological sequence, with a motivational purpose, structured as it is shown below:

- a. Introduction dynamics to stimulate participation, horizontality and transparency among the participants.
- b. Exposition of two presentations about the aspects related to social change from the perspective of the state of the art, and with the experience of field work in the implementation of participatory strategic projection in different contexts.
- c. Presentation of a video about the paradigm change and its historical evolution, from evidence of different economic and social life sectors.

<sup>1</sup>Methodological proposal for sociological analysis in particular contexts. One of the classical works of this knowledge tendency is the one by R. Yin (1994): Case Study Research. Design and Methods, Sage Newbury Park, Canadá.

- d. Discussion and exchange of ideas and analyses of the need of social change from the above-considered aspects and related to the individual and work aspects.
- e. Elaboration of the schedule and activity plan for the collective construction of the PDIM, from the sensitization and motivation achieved to support the participants' commitments and their contributions in performable activities.
- f. Review of documents of the official statistics related to the information of the productive processes of the municipalities.

### Brief characterization of the analyzed municipalities

The Perico municipality is located in the Havana-Matanzas flatland, at the center-West of Matanzas province; it has a total surface of 278,2 km<sup>2</sup>, which represents 2,4 % of the provincial territory. According to data presented by ONEI (2015), its total population is 31 148 inhabitants and is distributed in 32 settlements, four urban (25 696 inhabitants and 28 rural ones (5 452 inhabitants); Perico is the main town in the municipality and concentrates 39 % of the municipal population.

The territory has an agricultural surface of 24 892 ha; from them 11 652 are cultivated and 12 399 are uncultivated, from which 5 098 are paddocks

with natural pastures; its soils are predominantly Ferralitic Red and their main function is the cultivation of potato, food crops and sugarcane, as well as cattle and pig production.

The fundamental economic activity is represented by the Agricultural Enterprise Máximo Gómez Báez, for its productive work as well as for the quantity of labor it agglutinates in the execution of its range of agricultural processes and to which the different organization forms of production are ascribed, in this case three entrepreneurial basic units (UEBs), two cooperatives of agricultural production (CPAs), three basic units of cooperative production (UBPCs), four cooperatives of credits and services (CCSs) and four entrepreneurial basic service units (UEBs).

The Pedro Betancourt municipality is located in the southeast of Matanzas province and has a surface of 387,02 km<sup>2</sup>, which represents 33 % of the total area of the province (fig. 1). It limits to the North with the Jovellanos municipality, to the South with Jagüey Grande and to the West with Unión de Reyes. According to ONEI (2015) it has a population of 31 422 inhabitants, from the 25 189 are urban inhabitants and 6 233, rural dwellers. The main economic activity is the production of food crops, it has three CPAs, six CCSs and four UBPCs, which belong to the tobacco production enterprise located in the territory.

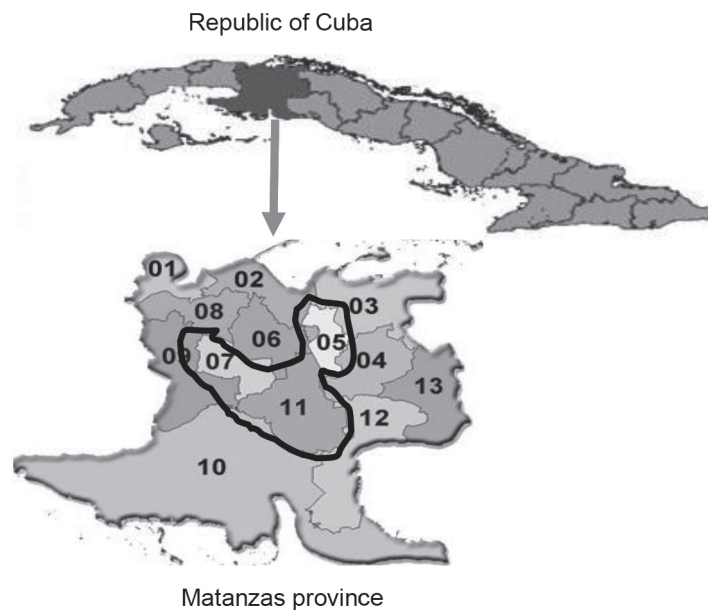


Figure 1. Map of the Republic of Cuba and of Matanzas province, where the Perico (05), Pedro Betancourt (07) and Jagüey Grande (11) municipalities are located.

More than 60 % of the Pedro Betancourt lands correspond to agricultural surface occupied by food crops, sugarcane and animal husbandry, fundamentally. The agricultural structure contributes more than 50 % of the mercantile production of the municipality (ONEI, 2015).

On the other hand, the Jagüey Grande municipality is located in the central-South area of Matanzas province (fig. 1), in the Havana-Matanzas flatland, at 10 meters above sea level. According to the ONEI (2015), it has a total population of 60 158 inhabitants, distributed into 48 953 urban residents and 11 205 inhabitants in rural localities. The main economic activity is citrus fruit production and for such purpose it has an agroindustry which processes the citrus fruit harvest of the entire municipality, in the territory there are also four establishments where the fruit is selected for exporting.

From the Jagüey Grande lands, 66,8 % corresponds to agricultural surface occupied by citrus fruit trees, food crops, animal husbandry, sugarcane and forests, and fruit plantations are progressively increased. The agricultural structure, composed by 13 CCs, one CPA and 11 UBPCs, in this case seven of food crops and four sugarcane production ones, contributes more than 61 % of the mercantile production. The citrus fruit production represents more than 89 % of the municipality production; this activity has the favorable technological and financial levels, which have guaranteed the recovery of productions, the increase of yields and the utilization of labor (ONEI, 2015).

## Results and Discussion

### Perception about the context or the “game rules” (the established institutionality)

In this topic the elements that, from the social perception of the actors who participate in the workshops, are associated to the established reality and have incidence on the performance of the municipal structure to face challenges and stimulate changes, were taken into consideration.

1. The role played by salary in everyday life.
2. Involving actors (sector of «self-employed» workers<sup>2</sup>).
3. In the agricultural sector, substituting the logic and mentality of conventional agriculture by a sustainability-trending alternative.

4. Overcoming the logic of work in agriculture as an industrial process.

5. Improving or changing the game rules (institutionality) to transform everything which blocks development.

Institutions are the society's game rules. Manzanal (2006) acknowledges that the function of institutionality is to reduce uncertainty at social level, because it provides a stable, although not necessarily efficient, structure to the routine of human interaction.

From the expositions and criteria approached by the subjects, who perceive the need of social or institutional change according to the established reality (which is maintained as legal support, and sometimes material support), it could be observed that in the new scenario of «updating the Cuban economy model»<sup>3</sup> is a blocking element of the transformation needs in the diverse aspects of national life, particularly at territorial (municipal) and local level. This limits the acting options different from what is established for performing agricultural processes, as economic support of the studied municipalities.

Regarding this, the territorial management of development frames the set of actions of individual, collective and institutional actions to generate the capacities that allow to satisfy specific needs (González-Díaz *et al.*, 2013).

It is corroborated that tradition and force of habit constitute aspects of human nature, while they can serve as obstacles for new challenges or changes; which, in combination with the established rules, becomes potential determinant to slow down the actions of organizational and technical-productive transformations, of mentality change and of procedure in the actors at local level in the analyzed municipalities. In this case, the citizenship, represented in the considered actors, perceives the solutions from the higher level (national or provincial) level organs, because due to social and historical practice are not assumed as participants and generators of changes.

The above-explained social perception is related to the life lessons and daily and past experiences, but also, essentially at present, with the lack of co-respon-

<sup>2</sup>The Cuban Center of Demographic Studies (CEDEM, for its initials in Spanish), defines self-employed workers as economic agents, outside the two fundamental social sectors of the Cuban socialist economy –the state and the cooperative sectors–. Self-employed work is within the private sector, although it only constitutes part of this sector, because in the Cuban society the mixed sector also operates, resulting from associations between foreign and national state capital, individual farmers, among other private figures which do not represent self-employed work.

<sup>3</sup>See the Guidelines on the Economic and Social Policy of Cuba, results of the analyses made at the 6th Congress of the Cuban Communist Party.

sibility, decentralization, excessive and bureaucratic processes, and also with a considerable structural framework of limited usefulness for efficient management in the face of the present complexities. In this regard, a performance is not perceived that is materialized in an approximation, by systematicity or persistence, to the changes required in the current scenarios where the topics associated to the territorial and local rural development are privileged in the discourse about the updating of the Cuban economic model.

One of the issues perceived with higher attention by some of the social actors linked to the agricultural sector, is referred to the role the salary should play in the everyday life of labor force and as an aspect that contributes to its reproduction. González and Suset (2011) and Suset *et al.* (2011), in works conducted about the topic, sustain that the unutilized productive reserve of labor force is due, among other points, to the limited and insufficient incomes to guarantee its productivity and the better utilization of the workday, aspect observed in the studied municipalities.

In the context of the considered actors' perception, it was corroborated that the structure established in the municipalities in question, specifically in the agricultural sector, does not favor the articulation of actors or the activities that would result from it. In this case, an essential role for its self-management capacity in the rendering of services is played by the self-employment sector, which constitutes a key actor with strong presence currently in the studied municipalities. In this regard, and although they are part of the network of actors that contribute to the territorial-local economies, it is perceived that the existing regulatory framework does not facilitate their natural insertion in the implemented transformations; hence they are not taken into consideration with relevance in the foreseen and projected changes, because, to a large extent, of the lack of legal authority of CAM and of the organisms of the territories on this actor of economy; there are no conditions either in the established structure that allow an articulated functioning, with territory vision, of the different sectors and organisms, so that it propitiates synergies, collective construction and agreed (multidisciplinary and multisectoral) work.

As it was mentioned above, agriculture has a substantive bearing on the economy of the analyzed municipalities, for which to replace the logic and mentality of conventional agriculture by an alternative, aimed

at sustainability, coherent in productive systems, which acknowledges the presence and usefulness of a diverse rationality, and that overcomes its understanding as a mechanical and not a natural process. The above-stated fact is an aspect which propitiates the subordination of the elements linked to the human subjectivity and privileges the technical-productivist issues, one of the reasons that stress resistance to change and to the required transformations.

The idea of social change is not translated into concrete actions; the follow-up and persistence for its achievement, necessarily, pass through the experimentation of the individual and collective mentality change, to manage an institutionality which facilitates relevant contributions in the solutions of the existing problematic solutions.

In the conducted analyses, the common aspect is the need for personal, institutional and work change, considering the current conditions of the country and the municipalities, where, since several years ago, a rupture and paradigmatic emergence process is experienced (De Souza, 2013), shown, in the case of agriculture, in legislation associated to land leasing, creation of municipal agriculture delegations, commercialization in the local context, among other aspects. These processes are accompanied, as referred by Suset *et al.* (2013) by a gradual change of paradigm in which mixed practices from the coexistence of elements of organic, agroecological and conventional agriculture are privileged in productive systems.

### **Agroproductive aspects**

Tables 1, 2 and 3 show the productive performance of each municipality during the last years, mainly obtained by the collective-cooperative sectors, in which a more efficient use of labor and of the area dedicated to agricultural production is estimated; it is considered that this is influenced by the self-management and innovation capacities in the face of the imperatives imposed by the contextual reality (socioeconomic and of access to diverse resources). A relevant issue is that most productions, in the three cases, contribute to the provincial and national balance, which does not favor the production-productivity-local consumption relation, and, thus, indisposes motivation towards change with regards to considering productive practices, alternative organizational forms and management, which shows a negative perception about the productive processes that are not of territorial control and consumption, as referred by the actors from the municipalities.

Table 1. Physical indicators of the main productions. Perico municipality (including state sector, UBPCs, CPAs and CCSs)

Product	MU	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Roots and tubers	t	21 803,0	21 221,2	22 406,8	17 270,4	26 346,1	22 789, 8
Vegetables	t	6 047,0	6 801,8	5 593,9	1 492,9	5 353,4	5 967,5
Rice	t	46,8	253,3	135,2	217,5	390,9	460,3
Corn	t	640,1	1 091,1	1 726,4	1 381,9	3 362	3 683,5
Beans	t	95,9	178,1	623,0	748,8	959,8	1 474, 4
Citrus fruits	t	2,6	6,2	5,2	23,2	0,6	0
Beef production	t	251,7	744,7	256,1	440,1	506,7	644,7
Pork	t	137,9	116,6	423,4	387,5	422,6	8,2
Poultry meat	t	0,3	0,3	0,2	0,5	0,3	0,4
Sheep-goats	t	12,5	9,5	7,3	4,1	4,9	2,1
Milk production	L	2 166,0	2 216,1	2 354,9	2 428,7	2 522,3	2 525,3
Eggs	U(mil)	8,6	33,1	334,4	317,8	314,6	328,2

Source: Anuario estadístico municipal (ONEI, 2015).

Table 2. Physical indicators of the main productions. Pedro Betancourt municipality (including state sector, UBPCs, CPAs and CCSs)

Product	MU	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Roots and tubers	t	971,9	2.107,1	1 544,1	94,7	7,5	71,4
Vegetables	t	1.233,9	1.261,4	1 213,2	41,5	73,1	74,7
Rice	t	1 396,5	2 308,2	1 370,0	11,4	17,8	58,8
Corn	t	329,6	372,0	334,9	104,3	72,5	41,4
Beans	t	46,2	39,5	163,3	16,7	12,4	9,0
Citrus fruits	t	1,6	3,2	0,2	-	-	0,1
Beef production	t	133,6	248,8	191,4	35,8	117,2	104,2
Pork	t	40,8	4,8	77,3	3,9	18,4	6,2
Poultry meat	t	66,5	58,5	101,3	85,9	121,4	270,2
Sheep-goats	t	5,2	1,6	12,5	-	-	1,0
Milk productions	L	1.072,3	1.591,9	979,7	551,6	412,4	330,1

Source: Anuario estadístico municipal (ONEI, 2015).

With regards to the above-stated facts, the authors agree with the criteria expressed by Gómez-Vargas and Giraldo-Calderón (2014) and Molano-Cruz (2017), who refer that in the feeding processes and systems, in spite of the existence of structuring economic relations and the specific physical and cultural conditions which configure the territories, the actors are the ones who generate, re-configure or limit, individually and collectively, the relations that attenuate the structures of feeding systems, combined with the public policies which have incidence on the consolidation and re-configuration of the existing capacities. On this, the new technologies that have been able to relatively disengage

agriculture from its natural cycles, reduce production times and introduce new rhythms and contents to work processes, also have incidence (Acosta, 2013).

It was observed that productive increases vary according to the products and that there was instability with regards to the analyzed years (tables 1, 2 and 3). In this case it is inferred that there is not a territorial rationality for agricultural productions and there is a particular logic per products, according to the combination input warrant-climate affections in certain productions and cultivation areas, which has incidence on the productive yields and the use of the existing potentialities, which includes

Table 3. Physical indicators of the main productions. Jagüey Grande municipality (including state sector, UBPCs, CPAs and CCSs)<sup>4</sup>

Product	MU	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Viandas	qq (mil)	73,9	66,8	328,3	164,6	222,0	215,5
Roots and tubers	qq (mil)	121,3	150,5	157,7	186,0	269,0	270,7
Vegetables	qq (mil)	1,0	3,0	4,4	16,2	6,5	6,7
Rice	qq (mil)	15,1	16,2	22,4	35,6	32,2	50,9
Corn	qq (mil)	8,1	9,8	31,5	16,5	19,3	23,8
Beans	qq (mil)	5 412,1	2 225,4	3 392,8	2 440,0	2 201,6	1 080,9
Citrus fruits	t	1.117,4	696,7	485,6	672,3	781,9	830,0
Beef production	t	178,1	277,6	340,5	372,9	533,5	518,4
Pork	t	34,9	93,1	118,0	130,0	178,0	168,8
Poultry meat	t	9,6	6,4	6,6	12,5	11,7	9,7
Sheep-goats	L	2 196,7	2 549,7	2 828,6	2 628,0	2 609,0	2 451,7
Milk productions	U	2 187,3	2 561,7	3 892,9	3 041,0	2 399,2	3 150,6

qq=0,1 t

Source: Anuario estadístico municipal (ONEI, 2015).

the labor force. This also receives the influence of the low work productivity and limited technical-productive innovations that are made, mainly in the state agricultural sector of the municipalities, as consequence of the rules established for the self-management of the required changes and in the promotion of continuous improvement processes.

The relations that configure, or re-configure, forms of participation in the design of strategies to guarantee productive increases and food security do not allow, favorably, to understand and explain the existence of a social fabric, in the analyzed municipalities and actors, which supports the feeding system at territorial level. This is influenced too by the economic vulnerability and the deterioration of the living and working conditions in rural and agroproductive contexts of the studied municipalities, with remarkable asymmetries with regards to their respective urban scenarios, in agreement with the report by Altschuler (2012), although these territories are adequate spaces for food production.

The above-explained facts shows the complex socioeconomic and technical-productive problems associated to the agricultural sector of the analyzed municipalities, for which the solutions decisively depend on external intervention, in which the rigidity of the established institutionality disqualifies the potentialities for self-management of the local

government. In this regard, Mora-Rivera and Cerón-Monroy (2015), in a study about diverse income obtaining forms, proved that one of the solutions can be the diversification of productions, as accumulation means and not as survival alternative.

From the obtained information and the above-expressed ideas, social changes, from the actors' vision, are essentially focused on two areas, in which the criteria of the municipalities because, among other aspects, they base their economy mainly on the agroproductive sector. In this regard, the participants' perceptions were selected paying attention to their evaluations about: a) the context or game rules, specifically associated to the established institutionality, and b) social change and personal improvement, referred to the change in the people's attitudes so that they change things.

### **Perception about social change and personal improvement. The need of change in people for them to change things**

The following aspects should be considered to promote changes from the performance of the actors' life and work experience:

1. Improvements in the workplace and work position; change of personal mentality.

<sup>4</sup>In CPAs the farmers own the land and use it for common purposes; while in CCSs their members are owners and use their farms individually, although for the access to services and credits they do it collectively. UBPCs use usufruct the lands aimed at production.

2. Higher awareness, commitment and degree of responsibility to promote development.
3. Higher motivation of people, which facilitates better attitude in the face of the considerable apathy.
4. Improvements in communication.
5. Improvements in formal education.
6. In decision-makers, acquisition of better preparation and work methods for the achievement of a wider view.
7. Assumption of the change with responsibility.
8. Change in young people's mentality.
9. Protagonist role of the family in children's education.
10. Need of change and synergy to articulate actions, processes and actors.

It was observed that social development leads to a process of change, which in turn implies conflicts caused by the need to readjust the precedent balance; however, it does not occur separately from individual development. There is great discussion, between analyzed actors and decision-makers, about whether the actions should be aimed at the increase of productivity, so that the benefits and the improvement of labor force result from it or conversely; in these municipalities, necessarily, a simultaneous process should be collectively constructed, with incentives in both senses and from their complementarity; hence that, as suggested by Max-Neef (2001) in his proposal of development at human scale, healthy societies and organizations should set up, as unavoidable objective, the joint development of all people and of every person.

With regards to this, it is considered that the prevailing centralized model during decades, in the Cuban case, with the predominance of values that violate functional organization and articulation forms, which have promoted the advance of innovation against tradition, of productivity against sustainability, of disinterest against mobilization and of illegality against ethics and values, as referred by Manzanal (2006), issues perceived by the analyzed actors. This proves that development as transformation should be focused on integral improvement, for which parallel to all change in the social aspect there must be a change in people, in their mentalities, which is more than being willing or having the will to have things change. Social change cannot be made in the framework we have; that is a technical, not an ideological, reality (Ramonet, 2014).

Among the statements and reasoning made by the social actors, the need was acknowledged to experience individual mentality changes for a better performance in each work position, and to contribute to stimulate commitment and responsibility, as long as the premises are trust and transparency.

The important role played, in social practice at territorial (municipal) and local level, by focusing on the ethics of the character based on integrity, fidelity, humility, effort, patience and the «golden rule»<sup>5</sup> as basis of lasting changes for personal and collective success could be appreciated, and also confirmed (Covey, 2005). The above-stated facts are related to: a) the risk perception capacity in order to solve problematic and complex situations associated to agrop productive processes, for which the context and established structure do not offer the warrants of the basic required inputs, and b) the vulnerability in the citizenship due to the perception of threat in face of the already rooted choice of finding solutions only in the established mechanisms.

The essential role of motivations and behavior change, from modifying paradigms, that is, the way of interpreting reality so that people behave proactively, was proven, in the analyzed municipalities; this also allows to recognize the importance of inculcating values in young people, as warrant mechanism of systematicity and continuity and to generate commitments with the transformation process that is being implemented.

It is also considered that decision-makers should have tools and competences that allow them a projection towards changes (at medium and long term) based on the possible scenarios of contextual reality, aspect which includes considering the material inputs and the competences of labor force, issues not perceived in the analyzed municipalities.

In the face of the process of updating the economic model that is being experienced in the country, traits of «resistance, rupture and paradigmatic emergence» are appreciated, for which the option of showing evidence, from the socialization of learnt lessons and successful experiences, constitutes a favorable way to have incidence on the implementation of innovative proposals at territorial-local level, in correspondence with the context and the

<sup>5</sup>It is also known as «reciprocity ethics», denomination that expresses a moral principle: «treat the others as you would want to be treated» (in its positive form) or «do not do to others what you do not want to be done to you» (in its negative form). It is found under different formulations in many cultures, religions or philosophies, as a fundamental rule. It is suggested to read epigraph «La personalidad y la ética del carácter» (pp. 12-13) in *Los 7 hábitos de la gente altamente efectiva*, of Stephen R. Covey (2003).



actors. In this sense, De Souza (2013) sustains that in human processes it is relevant to understand social interaction through which groups of actors construct their different perceptions of reality.

This explains the need to generate and promote higher participation and socialization of information and knowledge, establishment of synergies and collective construction, based on an integrating and functionally coherent organizational institutionalality.

With the promotion of a social and institutional change, the behavior choices are favored and require revision, with regards to the established rules, for performing the agricultural processes as fundamental economic support of the studied municipalities.

### Conclusions

- The approach of the theoretical-conceptual models related to social change and the associated concepts are considerably useful for understanding the subjective aspects present in the processes and transformations to be implemented in the analyzed municipalities.
- The methodology used allowed the establishment of a very favorable environment, which facilitated an approach to the knowledge about the participant actors' perceptions and the exchange of criteria and information.
- Although the analyzed municipalities are predominantly agricultural, from the key actors' perception there is not global stability of their productions, aspects which limits their agropredictive projections for the future and shows the influence of the established rules and extraterritorial intervention.
- From the knowledge and understanding of the actors' perception at municipal level, the need of social change is perceived; it should be collectively constructed, from the sensitization, real participation and articulation of actors within the territories.
- Social change as recurring topic in the current discussion shows, for the analyzed municipalities, a resistance-rupture-paradigmatic emergence process with strong presence in a key sector such as the agricultural one, which demands primordial attention.

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