

Sugar and Globalization. The Changes in the Tucuman’s Agroindustrial Sugar Complex during the Nineties.

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Abstract

Rationale: The sugar agroindustry has been during more than one century the main economic activity of the Tucuman province. The agroindustrial complex that was developed there was characterized by the separation of the agricultural and the industrial tasks, where sugar cane producers (with a strong presence of small exploitations) and industrial cohabited in a conflicting form together to the workers in a State strongly regulated system. The application of neoliberal policies at the beginning of the 1990 decade, intended to insert the Argentina’s economy in the world, affected the Tucuman’s agroindustrial sugar complex, breaking the old scheme based on a strong state regulation.

Objective: This paper intends to analyze which have been the changes that have taken place in the Tucuman’s agroindustrial sugar complex after the application of policies oriented to the markets deregulation and liberalization as well as to the labor flexibilization.

Methodology: Are used data coming from the surveys performed in the years 1988, 1996 and 1999 starting from which has been carried out a stratification of the exploitations considering the size of the same ones. This classification has been used to compare among the different strata through temporary cuts aspects as: number of exploitations, crop type, agro-chemicals use, labor links, commercialization forms, etc.

Results: At the same time of a decrease of the surface sowed with sugar cane, an increase has taken place in the yields, consequence of the application of new technologies, but also a decrease of the total number of sugar cane exploitations, mainly of the small ones, an increase of those of more size and deep changes in the labor environment, consistent in a marked decrease and precarization of the employment.

Conclusions: The result was that the agents of more span were favored in detriment of the smallest sectors whose number diminished sensibly and their permanency conditions in the system have become extremely precarious. These agents, however, have appealed to a series of strategies that have allowed them to remain and to subsist.

Keywords: Agroindustry, globalization, labor market, sugar cane