

**Building food bridges:**

**Restaurants challenging the global food  
system in Bogota-Colombia**

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This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the Institute of Social Studies. The views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

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*What was the meaning of life?*

*He showed me circles*

*Circles of life*

*And then he showed me a flower*

*Why?*

*A plant has a circle*

*A seed becomes a plant that has a flower,*

*transforms into fruit.*

*The fruit drops*

*There's another seed*

*And the seed grows again*

*This is a circle*

*The flower is the moment that we live,*

*The most beautiful moment of the circle.*

*The most beautiful moment.*

*A chef can be a leader*

*Looking for ingredients*

*Connecting people*

*It is the way to build a better food chain*

*So I start to understand the whole chain of food*

*Is not only the inside of the kitchen.*

*It is where and how this food has been produced*

*This is the circle*

*This is my life*

*Alex Atala 2016*



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## List of Acronyms

SE	Social Entrepreneurship
FTA	Free Trade Agreements
L.A.	Latin America
DNP	Colombian National Planning Department
DANE	Colombian National Administrative Department of Statistics



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## **Abstract**

This paper discusses and analyses alternative markets of food as spaces for Social Entrepreneurship in which businesses pursuing social goals could be successful and sustainable in the long term. Alternative markets of food is one of the different ways in which public and private sectors are attempting to address the gap between the countryside and the cities. They are born as a local strategy to counter the negative outcomes and values of globalization through direct relations of producers and consumers. Even though there are good results of some samples of local food systems, experience also question the idealistic view of such developments. Notwithstanding this, there has been less said about how the enterprises that manage to be successful in these alternative markets of food deal with the challenges of compete within the market, while they keep faithful to their social goal.

Drawing on data from restaurants in the region of Bogota-Colombia, it was found that alternative markets of food can give a space for action of Social Entrepreneurs, thus generating social impacts and synergies that involve different stakeholders. The individual motivations and practices of cooks (micro-level) and the networks (meso-level) of this alternative market seem to put before the social value over the economic profit. Following theory on Social Entrepreneurship, these cases of restaurants that rely on alternative markets of food in Bogota are an example of successful entrepreneurial practices with social objectives.



## Relevance to Development Studies

The food supply and demand has been undermined by the hegemonic economic model and the discourse of development. National policies has addressed the global markets and promoted crops of high demand in international markets.

Therefore alternatives of production and consumption are need. To the extent that people get aware about the issues of the current system of food, they would be able to react. To analyze initiatives from individuals with social concerns about this, can help to generate synergies that content the negative outcomes of the system and improve or alleviate some of the bigger issues.

Social Entrepreneurship and alternative markets of food embrace this context. Analyze and discuss specific cases with features of both can give a picture of motivations, practices, enhancers and outcomes that can contribute to the improvement of the world we live.

### **Key words:**

Food, Social Entrepreneurship, Networks, Social Value, Economic Sustainability, Cooks, Small Farmers, Peasants.



## 1. Introduction

In Colombia, in 2016 on the March 31<sup>st</sup> the press said 25 indigenous children have died due to malnourishment (El Espectador 2016). How this is possible that I am eating such delicious food every day in Bogota and this is happening in the countryside just a few hours from my city; where my food is supposed to come from. What has gone wrong?

An easy answer is the government. However this is a story of common people's concerns about food issues. Some people believe that acting different they could contribute to change the system in which we live. Though it is not about philanthropy or cut throat strategies. It is about to what extent social commitment can be balanced with economic sustainability in a global market. But let's start from 'the top', from the issues of a global food market

Some authors argue that the discourse of development has relegated rural areas to a secondary role in global networks making them dependent of urban and global dynamics. Food has been detached from its cultural and ecology links with local societies, becoming in just an input for the industrial world, highly concentrated and aiming to the agribusiness industry and generating a 'system in which food travels from farm gate to dinner plate an average of two thousand miles' (McMichael 2000: 21).

Mishra argues that the global economy has been drive by neoliberal policies "dissolving the nexus between the economic and the social as it once more exalts the economic and downgrades the social, seeking to relegate it to the private sphere" (1998: 485). Consequently the cornerstone for development has been to ensure the competitiveness of countries enhancing two main pillars: productivity and growth (Helmsing 2007).

Therefore there has been a lack of interest in the cultural value of food and its power to generate consciousness among people about the countryside importance and the peasants situation. Ignoring as McMichael has pointed out that "The power of food to generate substantial critique of the myth of free markets' (2000: 21) could be a huge tool of resistance or at least an alternative to the discourse of development.

The urban and rural relations research has addressed topics of migration, poverty, land reforms, inclusion of small farmers' production in global value chains and alternative markets of food. Still, the research on the latter has raised debates about



the idealization with which its defenders view it as the antithesis of globalization and the ideal solution for its consequences.

In this context, it can be identify a polarization of two extremes to address rural poverty and inclusion: the ‘mainstream’ based in access to global markets; and the alternative in which producers (peasants, small farmers) meet directly the consumers. In the former, governments and cooperation agencies have focused their actions in the rise of productivity and reach global standards by those who has been excluded in the past (Guarín 2013: 511) to gain access to markets Nonetheless, following Bernstein, the system is driven by a ruling class that in order to increase their wealth depends on the exploitation of labor and a constant increase of productivity for capital accumulation. Therefore the solutions often are formulate to satisfy the interest of a minority in ownership of the means of production, letting the peasants as capitalism subjects (2010: 22).

This apparently economy dis-embeddedness makes politics and culture appear independent and isolated in the market of food, disregarding the powerful cultural role of food and its social implications. Therefore letting unanswered questions about who is getting the profits and to what extent are all able to participate in the opportunities of economic growth and the encompass changes in taste of consumers in ‘terms of food quality and kind’ (2013: 513-514). Questions about How is the market working? What are the impacts of the market failures? And if can it be does differently? Remain secondary.

Meanwhile, alternative markets of food have emerged as a way of contesting that hegemonic model through strengthen local agro-food networks and short food supply chains. Even though the “idealistic” view of local values has been take for granted as preconditions to the improvement of producers’ livelihoods and of these systems, the scholarships often fail into analyze the entangled social, cultural and politic relations that are also present at the meso-level (Smithers et. al. 2008).

It doesn’t mean that they can’t work as alternative to generate positive synergies between the countryside and the urban dwellers. On the contrary, more rigorous analysis of these alternative markets of food and the triggers for action of their participants should be develop.

To analyze the concerns, goals and mechanisms through which actors are working on this alternatives, would be a useful input to boost the positive spill overs and minimize the threats they face when trying to scale up their impacts.

On this paper I address the way this alternatives are working from a perspective of Social Entrepreneurship in which through local fair trade of food and daily practices,



restaurants in the Region of Bogota-Colombia aim to generate social value. This paper discusses the extent to which it is possible for social enterprises to deal with social goals and economic sustainability in alternative markets of food.

The paper is structured as follows. In the next section I present a review of the current state of research on issues of food provision: from global value chains to local food systems and why the latter may give space to analyze them from a Social Entrepreneurship perspective. The third section gives a bird's eye view of the context of my cases. The fourth and fifth sections analyze Social Entrepreneurs and networks of like-minded institutions drawing on my cases' data. This gives a broader picture of the space this kind of initiatives can have and the strategies used to deploy them. The last section draws some conclusions.

## **2. Cities and Countryside abysm: The Food Supply Chain and its 'Modern' Unsustainability**

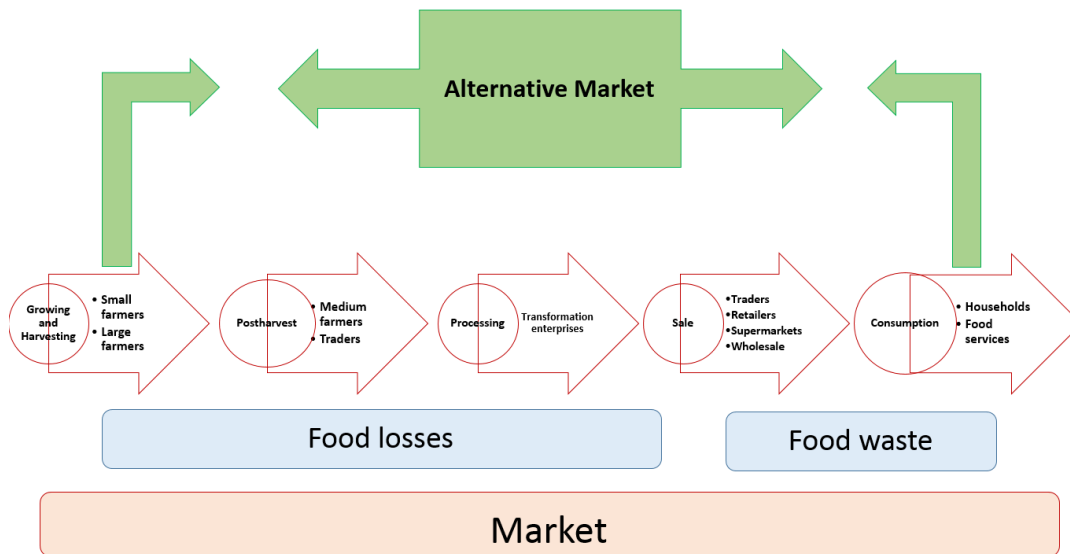
Before analyze my specific cases, it is need an overview of the main issues that motivates this paper. This sections is divide in three parts. The first one examines the global food value chain and its impacts relying on a briefly characterization of its different links and how they work in relation with the food system unsustainability. Afterwards it shows how the gap between the countryside ant the cities has been address by researchers and what is the scope of this paper. Finally with this picture in mind, I go through the puzzle piece in which I am interested in: the alternative markets of food and what is the window I see to analyze them as Social Entrepreneurships, pointing out the methodology and the cases of analysis.

### **2.1 The global food value chain**

While the promotion of international programs since the middle 50s has advocated for the rise of agricultural productivity sector to feed the urban dwellers, countries like Colombia has become dependent on imports of some products in which before were self-sufficient due to the orientation of crops to supply international markets (Gaviria 2011: 122). In this sense the food production of countries and cities of the so called third world has been not just deteriorated but their sovereignty 'jeopardize' (Gaviria 2011: 123). Therefore it is necessary to understand how the system is

working and why it is now a days define as unsustainable in relation with the different global food value chain links. To address this, I would build on a succinct chain characterization in Colombia.

Figure 1. Food Supply chain



Source: Author's elaboration based on Martinez et.al. 2014

One of the biggest issues the world is facing is hunger and famine in a context where the third part of food production is 'lost or wasted' annually (Martinez 2014: 284). In this scenario developing countries are responsible of 44% of "total food loss and waste", most of which happens on the first chain stages. Those losses are related mainly to the side of harvest and growing (first link figure 1.) in which big retailers requirements and their power of negotiation make the famers vulnerable, leading them to discard during the harvest the fruits that don't full filled with characteristics of 'shape, size, color and the time to ripeness.' (Martinez et.al 2014: 286). These set a barrier for small farmers to sell their products because of their ways of production which often lack of these kind of "standards" making them the most vulnerable.

Moreover medium and advance chain links require certain standards of quality size and quantity impose by 'market demands' that limit the capacity of small producers to continue with their own production, leaving these to medium scale farmers, traders and big corporations of food that influence the prices and condition the producers (Martinez et.al. 2014: 286-287). Here is also central the role of transportation which in countries like Colombia with infrastructure limitations



especially to access the lands in hands of peasants, became an important tool of bargaining and exclusion. Transportation on the value chain is related with the proper size and temperature conditions of vehicles but also with infrastructure that allow to connect the countryside with cities. Hence strengthen the links on the local level is essential because as Martinez et al. analyzed:

*‘Concerning distance and duration of moving, when both are enlarged, a process of ripening is triggered in food, therefore decreasing the likelihood of commercialization and some of this food is rejected.’ (2014: 287).*

Related with the food supply inequalities and the relation between rural and urban dwellers the sale is critic (link 4 figure 1.). The rising supremacy of big supermarkets and the high influenced of intermediaries is traduced in unbalances on the distribution of profits. Besides the assumptions that big retailers have over consumers’ preferences about “range of size, color and form” lead to a series of unsustainable practices in which it is usual that supermarkets return at the last moment orders leaving in a disadvantage position small farmers (Martinez et al.2014: 88).

Finally, looking at the link of consumption while the concern about the gaps between rich households and poor remain of the major attention of local governments, there is also essential the role of retailers on the management of food and improve the practices to avoid waste and get closer to the producers in order that they become providers (Martinez et.al 2014: 288).

A disconnectedness of the countryside and the cities has resulted of this dynamics and the issues or constraints related with the different current system of food links: assets, standards of quality, transport, profits distribution and asymmetries of information have been part of the causes. Furthermore it has underlie bigger problematiques as poverty, migration, famine and land concentration.

## **2.2 How to bridge the gap?**

The gap between the countryside and the cities has been mainly associated with poverty alleviation in rural areas and how peasants and small producers cope with market failures. It has been deeply analyzed from state society relations to the role of private cooperatives in agricultural production and local strategies of alternative food markets. Yet, the work of researchers has paid more attention to the food production side and how it fits into global value chains and less to the motivations



of actors to get involve in other kind of logics and the contradictions that arise from it.

In the case of alternative markets of food beyond their idealization, the lack of analysis about the behavior and triggers of concern producers and consumers has generated a “partial understanding of the actors in these systems” (Weatherell et.al. 2003, 233).

Traditional markets of food has shown to have constraints related with intermediaries and the formation of prices in urban areas. Even though supermarkets has increased their participation in the supply of local customers, traditional chains persist as consequence mainly of the consumer target of the former. For the case of Colombia the provision of food is still highly supply by peasants, however traders take advantage of the market failures to highly influence the prices of food to final consumers (Guarín 2013). Hence the necessity of analyze how can peasants reach better trade conditions in direct relations with final customers. Improving their livelihoods, while also the food supply in the local and national level.

Social drive changes plus the role of government facilitating the different processes in the countryside has been highlight as one of the main enhancers for the countryside development. In this sense Ploeg assessed in an article of 2011 the “sharply contrasting developmental patterns” of China and the Sub-Saharan Africa. While the former reached to encompass an extraordinary agricultural growth and poverty alleviation; the countries in the latter has experienced the rise in population and in rates of poverty while the agricultural sector shows to be stagnated. This differences are according to the author related mainly with the commitment of “Chinese peasant families” with the improvement of their crops and their quality of life. Besides, the government efforts have boosted the positive outcomes of that social trend by “respecting the heterogeneous development processes occurring in the countryside” (2011).

Cooperatives have been also the center of attention during a long time. They have been analyzed by their potential to mitigate socioeconomic risk and improving individual possibilities to reach better trade conditions, under a premise of a “common strategy” that arise from a “culture of solidarity”. The importance of global processes in local production and how it redefines the production in order to access international markets has been relevant as trigger for this tendency. Therefore cooperatives’ collective struggles have been widely research as other way of coping strategy of smallholders. This model has been highly promote to include peasants in the market of food either by governments and NGO’s. In L.A. they have been





acting through the former support and free trade, while in other cases relied on alliances with the latter and international buyers. Individual agency is remarked as one of the key points in cooperatives development and results (Vazquez 2010). However the lit remains too narrow as the support of cooperatives used to put forward the insertion in global markets as the ultimate goal to improve the livelihoods of small producers

The local has appeared as ideal counterweight strategy to re-embed the economy in the field and literature. The reliance in different practices that take into account the social factors that influence the market has been highlight as essential to strength the local food supply and consume practices. In this path the role of government in support technological improvements and promote local consumption of “potential glocal foods” has been point out as fundamental to response to the global challenges and compete in the “glocal food system” according to some authors (Wilhelmina et. al. 2010: 363).

Notwithstanding these different approaches have shown to be insufficient and are mostly planned to include peasants in regular markets. They appear as partial solutions that often result in the exclusion of new actors. Therefore what I am looking to analyze in this paper are the triggers of retail buyers to get involve in alternative markets in which they interact face to face with small producers and how they are working. In the figure 1 this means a market in which the relations of exchange bypass or modify the links of post harvesting, processing and selling.

Though to clarify, the retailers here are understood from two perspectives: as consumers when they are buying food to producers (small-farmers) and as producers because they run a business and through it are looking to achieve a bigger purpose as I would develop next. Nevertheless the analysis in both sides is center in the closer and direct relations in which actors get involve.

### **2.3 Alternative markets of food: An opportunity for social change with economic benefits**

In 1989 with the manifesto of Slow Food born a movement which main objective has been to remark the agrifood heritage importance and how it is being threat by the massive production and the big multinational corporations influence. This movement with roots in Italy has been spread generating networks of people



concern with the current food system and the inequalities wealth, health issues and cultural losses that it is generating (Slow Food 2016).

Under the premise that the “consumer orients the market and production with his or her choices”, the networks have worked from private civil initiatives to challenge the food system and the disinformation of which consumers are object. In this path, L.A. hasn’t been the exception and in head of countries like Mexico, Peru and Brazil which have a long cultural gastronomic tradition, it has growth taking place in almost all countries, with initiatives that goes from peasants and small producers to chefs and academics among other actors, hoping to influence a better future for agriculture and food (Slow Food 2016).

Alternative markets of food appeared as a solution to the food crisis and the apparently dis-embeddedness of economy. The direct relations of consumers with producers have been analyzed for different researchers as a way of re-embedded the market and break with capitalism anomie (Dupuis and Goodman 2005: 361). Values of trust linked with space and the local have been taken for granted in the social, cultural and political entanglement of these markets (Dupuis and Goodman 2005; Hinrichs 2000).

These alternative markets of food are supposed to challenge pre-established ideas about the consumer behavior in the hegemonic model of market exchange related with quality, standards and price (Martinez et.al 2014: 288) and that has led to a crisis on the food system that need to be analyze further.

As I has shown the role of consumers in the supply chain is essential. Thus on the consciousness of urban dwellers would rely the opportunities of success of those alternative and the way rural and urban relations can get closer and stronger.

Alternative markets of food embodied that condition in which peasants or small producers meet directly with consumers. Nonetheless these have raised debates about the gray areas that haven’t been analyze. The motivations and ambiguities that actors faced when acting in between mainstream markets logics and social values are just two of those.

Initiatives around the world have emerged with diverse objectives tied with this local food systems. From those commit with the rescue of agriculture and food cultural values in Europe to the ones promoting the sustainability of agricultural production in US (Hinrichs 2003: 34). However these dynamics has also exposed the lack of research on the politics of this kind of markets and the local.



According to Dupuis and Goodman, local values and ethics seeing as good and free of conflict have been take for granted by local movements' defenders, disregarding the "politics of localism". Thus they have become in the perfect antithesis of "global industrial agriculture of placelessness" and solutions to the undesirable outcomes of globalization. (2005: 360). However, this idealization suppose a contradiction as these markets are trying to challenge the neo-classical fix assumptions while assume the own ones irremovable. Thereby other authors would argue that consumer elections and values are never given (Cochoy 2015: 244).

Actors should diary face predicaments related with social justice and competitiveness, building new sets of particular norms and imaginaries (Dupuis and Goodman 2005: 360). Hence the way producers and consumers deal with the way they can influence a change, while compete within the market, implies a constant look for balance on the construction of meanings and the contradictions of run a business.

The polarization between localization and globalization has raised different issues concerning the motivations, ethics and values of the different actors involve in this markets. New ways of commodification and the space as "contested social constructions" have emerged. As being conceived as a market, the dynamics and networks on the local are social constructions based in trust, that are far from being perfect and intrinsically just, but are rather a political matter (Dupuis and Goodman 2005: 368).

The narrow points of view from which alternative markets of food have been analyzed, underrate the contradictions and difficulties of work within the market, while overestimate the innocence and perfectness of local cultural value.

Nonetheless these alternatives positive impacts cannot be disregard which leads to foster a better analysis from different perspectives. According to Hinrichs positive spill overs of alternative markets of food can be seeing not just in the supply side with the countryside welfare improvement; but also in the consumer side with healthier alimentation at "reasonable prices in urban areas and enterprises creation" (2000: 298).

All in all as I have shown the countryside and cities gap have been tried to bridged in different ways that encompass traditional markets of food, the work of cooperatives, the role of governments and NGO's and alternative markets. However an analysis of how the latter are working through the promotion of local and fare consumption of small farmers' products by urban dwellers is needed. Even because they have been analyze in a romantic way or with too critical lenses.



Thereby the emerging phenomena of urban actors that are joining together around alternative markets of food, building direct links with peasant cooperatives or individual suppliers, based in a fair trade for small non-standardized production in Bogota-Colombia could be an enlighten case. Moreover, while there is a growing group of restaurants and cooks commit with the rescue of the ancient knowledge of traditional food and the local communities production.

Analyzing them from the perspective of individual and networks motivations and practices would allow to identify the triggers that enable this kind of private initiatives with social impact, as well as their constraints and potential. This analysis aims to highlight how they move between economic and social objectives and how their values shape the market. Thus Social Entrepreneurship would be useful to make this analysis as I show in the next subsection.

### **2.3.1 A window for Social Entrepreneurship**

Social Enterprises and Social Entrepreneurs have been in the lit of research in the last years developing a range of definitions that allow different kind of initiatives to fit the concept. Yet some authors see this lack of agreement in the definition as a weakness, others think it helps to understand different perspectives of entrepreneurs who don't pursuit solely the maximization of profits as neoclassical economic theory would suggest. Thus organizations that vary from non-profits to for-profits, and "hybrid" kind have been analyzed as Social enterprises (Helmsing 2016: 90-91).

Social entrepreneurships (SE) definitions fall into a continuum that include from innovative initiatives generating social value (Austin 2006: 4) to institutional settings that rely on a mixture of economic goals and "substantive values" (Cho 2006, 4). It is argue by some authors that Social Entrepreneurs can influence a change in society (Perrini and Vurro 2006: 4). Hence the entrepreneurial definition would not be enough as what gives meaning to these kind of enterprises would be the social aim (Mair et al. 2006).

From individual concerns or collective constructions about particular social issues emerge the SE (Mair et al. 2006) and therefore encompass an amalgam of initiatives. Then, the different ways of bridge the gap between the countryside and the cities are part of the roots or fit in different ways with this definition. Different institutional configurations fit Social Entrepreneurship goals: from the ones that operate in the market and other outside the market to social business ventures (Helmsing 2016: 90). But always "trying to create bottom-up alternatives to the



dominant system, which keeps people poor, and are thus striving to alter power relations” (Bieckman 2013).

Nonetheless, social concerns can be internalized by the hegemonic model and be marketed as they emerged within the market (Cochoy 2015: 242-243). Even the most social center or the most market oriented of these initiatives faced the dilemmas of ‘dancing with the market’<sup>1</sup>.

SE can be understood in numerous ways that through the creation of social value can shift capitalism and its interaction with individuals (Porter and Kramer 2011). These enterprises respond to the necessity of re-balance the individual so call self-interest (private) and social welfare (Cochoy: 2015, 245)

However authors like Bieckman and Cho are more skeptic about the scope of SE and the possible change they can influence without displace the role of government and social processes (2013; 2006). Therefore the articulation with government at the different levels of policymaking is indispensable to boost its impact and make them “complementary rather than conflicting” (Helmsing 2016: 97). Only if they (SE) can managed to work within the forces of macro-micro tensions, they would success in the long term and be an actual alternative (Bieckman 2013).

In this path the highly embeddedness in community concerns and goals of SE features make it deeply involve within the local (Depedri 2010: 37) and would help to manage the tensions described above. The actors’ relations entanglement and its actions shapes up front the market and in the case of alternative markets of food it can be understood in the sense that gives food “multiple connotations” (Onyas and Ryan 2016: 185-196). Thus concerns and objectives are being transform constantly through time and the interaction of actors (Onyas and Ryan 2016: 180).

### **2.3.2 Networks as outcome and enhancer of SE**

Regarding the construction of networks these have been seen as enhancers of the action and the impact of Social Enterprises scope (Cho 2006: 54). Therefore the entrepreneurships that remain solely from other stakeholders are due to stay as isolated actions.

Even though as it has been previously argued the Social Entrepreneur is led by an individual perception of some social need, in the search “for opportunities to

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<sup>1</sup> Expression that came into the conversations during the construction of this paper.



cooperate with and support their partners” (Helmsing 2016: 95) relies the potential to generate a sustainable change in society (Cho 2006: 55).

The social objectives and the nature of values in which is based the individual motivations for SE lay the foundations for Social entrepreneurs to share “their ideas and knowledge”. This is seeing as one of the principles to pursuit their objectives (Helmsing 2016: 93). Therefore networks constitute also and outcome.

The social characteristics that underlie this kind of business requires the participation of the different actors that intervene in the value chain to overcome the social issue. This helps to improve the proposal formulation of social value and identify the barriers (Helmsing 2016: 97). Then the networks allow entrepreneurs to understand better the social needs and context, taking advantage of the economic embeddedness in social relationships (Helmsing 2016: 97).

As transformations in the social sphere are expected, SE can result in different outcomes like capacities building, products or giving voice to movements. These are seeing as product of the social innovations multidimensionality (Helmsing 2016: 99). Therefore the construction of networks through values of trust is see as a positive spillover of social capital that derive from the initial social goal of companies (Tortia 2010: 69).

Here the social capital is understand as the result from the construction of networks that are embedded in relationships among individuals. As contextual, it is reflect in specific expressions of trust and certain values that support the practices and decisions in the ecosystem. Therefore these specificities are influenced by power relations and generate either positive or negative outcomes as networks include some actors in the benefits and exclude others (Knorringa and van Staveren 2008: 3-5).

Social relations or institution would shape and be shape by the trust of actors. Thus, it is changeable across time and also related with the level need of control. Depending on the degree of trust existing in a network, actors’ behavior would be more trustworthy and agents of control would be less necessary. To the extent that actors feels the others are more or less reliable the costs of transaction would tend to diminish (Nooteboom 2008). Then networks would be strengthen by high levels of trust as it also influences them through social capital.

Then dynamics of inclusion and exclusion would happen as social capital is define by human relationships and is context dependent. In this sense two forms of social capital has emerged as a way of understand how are building the networks: bonding and bridging.



To be clear, these two make reference to the kind of links that enhance the networks construction. The former makes reference to strong ties based on the individual similarities of any kind (family, community, gender etc.). While the second refers to weak links between different groups or individuals that join together for specific interests. Though often one can't be understood without the other. The majority of networks would rely on both just changing the level of one or another. So their interactions would help to understand the level of networks stability and potentials to be successful over time (Schuller 2008: 17).

### ***2.3.2.1 Up-scaling and long term commitment***

The construction of strong networks give space to “collective action” as actors join together and make critical consensus about specific topics (Helmsing 2016, 100). As Social Entrepreneurs are moved by a desire of change in the social spheres that they perceive as wrong, they are due to cooperate instead of act individually. Then the success of them would be directly linked with their ability to build bridges (Perrini and Vurro, 69).

In this path to generate social change and make their initiatives sustainable and up-scalable, the backup of social movements and alliances with other actors are fundamental. The legitimacy of the social objectives that are pursued by the businesses raise as they are supported by social movements. This as a result of the help movements can give them (Entrepreneurs) through lobby and advocacy to overcome “institutional and cultural constraints”. Thus SE acquires a new meaning and dimension in which it would not be only value by its mission but by its “process of civic engagement” (Helmsing 2016: 100-105).

Regarding the critiques about the possible crowding out of social processes and the government role already mentioned above, the articulation of networks is essential. If in fact the commitment social gains are great it should not displace the responsibility of public policy and people engagement (Cho 2006: 53). Thus the articulation is supposed to maintain the long term commitment of society with specific social issues that are embraced from collective processes (Helmsing 2016: 95).

As it has been analyzed the proposal of social value born from the perception of gaps generated by public policy. Therefore an outcome of this processes of SE if they are effective and successful should be look for businesses model opportunities of articulation and scalability. In this sense SE has to be seen as a mean to resolve



specific needs, but without the power to substitute “processes of governance and deliberation” (Borzaga and Tortia 2010: 53).

Summing up, alternative markets of food seem to embody the main features of SE because its social triggers and local nature. Moreover in the restaurants specific cases that are analyze in this paper. They embrace in their mission a deeply root social goal product of the concerns of their cooks. The work of restaurants is drive by the commitment of cooks with the rescue of food and the gap reduction between the countryside and the cities; generating awareness among the urban consumers about the importance of small agriculture.

This research paper looks to analyze how are working this alternatives to build cohesion in the country through the power of food and the links of the city and the countryside. The conditions under which these closer ways of food trade can emerged take particular relevance. Analyze them in the micro-level from a SE perspective would allow me to identify which are the constraints that they face in diary practices to compete within the market. Notwithstanding this isn't an attempt to overrate the restaurants and individual action of cooks impact, conversely it looks to avoid an “under socialized view” (Helmsing 2016, 104).

Furthermore through the analysis of how they balance their social objectives and the businesses sustainability, I would be able to analyze and discuss their potential and the framework that can boost their transition to strong networks and scale up their goals in the meso-level. Nonetheless, this paper doesn't pretend to romanticize the local role over the global and is cautious about the necessity of more than a reform in the countryside.

## **2.4 Methodology: Approaching cooks of commit restaurants in Bogota-Colombia: Who, How and Why**

This paper is based on information about the specific cases of restaurants in Bogota-Colombia; during one month I had the opportunity of interviewing cooks and co-owners of restaurants situated in Bogota and its region.

The way to approach the talks was through semi structured interviews via Skype to different actors which in some cases I had previously identified while others were contact thanks to the ‘snowballing’ technique with the references of the interviewed and the information of articles in press releases. The latter were used to review which





has been the movement evolution and how they have won recognition and space with their philosophy.

This paper is based on the work of 8 cooks and their respectively 14 restaurants.

- Leonor Espinosa: Leo y Mercado
- Camilo Zarate: Suburbio
- Alejandro Gutierrez: Salvo Patria
- Antonuela Ariza: Mini-Mal
- Jennifer Rodriguez: Mestizo
- Tomas Rueda: Tabula, Donostia (2) y Calderón
- Luz Beatriz Velez: Abasto (3) and
- Julian Estrada: Queareparaenamorate.

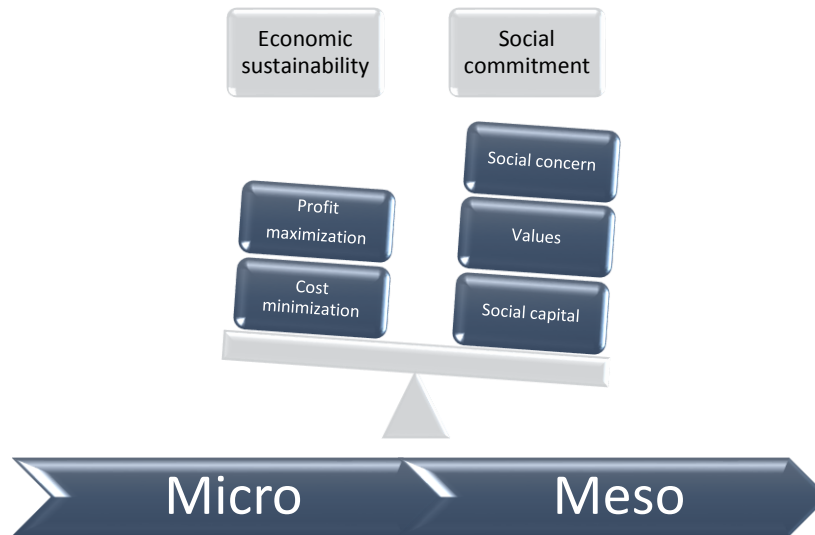
This restaurants were choose as they appear once and once again in articles and in the interviewed narratives as the ‘members’ of formal and informal spaces/networks in which they are working with common purposes around the rescue of traditional food.

In order to respond to what degree might Social Entrepreneurs introduce social goals and still run sustainable firms in local food systems, the talks addressed two main topics: the motivations that trigger their entrepreneurships and the daily practices and decisions that support their social goal and business.

The interviews gave me important insights to analyze how they are acting through alternative markets of food and shaping their proposal of social value. I also enquire them about their perception of the role of food on the construction of social cohesion in Colombia. This gave them space to tell me about their political stands and how are they constructing or getting involve in networks with bigger purposes. The questions extent version that guide the interviews appear in the Appendix 1.

To analyze the collected information, I managed to systematize it in to two levels and two different sources of motivations for the interests of this paper. The two level are as it has been already mentioned the micro and the meso-level, which are transversal to the sources of motivations. The latter helped me to differentiate the interactions of the behaviors and decisions trigger by economic objective from those based in social concerns.

Figure 2. Sources of motivations and Levels of analysis



Source: Author's elaboration

The information allowed me to identify which are those specific considerations that individuals take into account in daily decisions and practices. How it shapes and supports the alternative market development, keeping it balance with the business sustainability. And how their practices looking for the cultural value of food rescue rebound in the construction of networks and social capital that can boost their potentiality and sustainability.

In this section I have shown why this paper would rely in theory of SE to analyze the individual motivations to get involve in alternative markets of food and how this result in networks. Even though researchers have shown the government role importance, cooperatives and alternative markets as solutions to the gap of the countryside and the cities, they haven't been sufficient.

Here the analysis makes zoom in a puzzle piece to see to what extent Social Entrepreneurs can play with the 'market rules' while make prevail the social. The local relations are seeing beyond the 'ideal'. The SE framework adds to the discussion as long as it help me to disentangle the relationships and to focus in the motivations and practices through which individuals balance their economic needs and social objectives. Before go into the data, the next section gives a birds' eye view to the local context of food in which the actors of this paper emerged.



### 3. Colombia: a rural country in the food crisis

“There is not anymore wheat, barley, sorghum; there is *NO BREAD*, that means there is *NO BREAD*, a country that has *NO BREAD*. That’s a really sad conclusion. A country that buys the flour in other side, when we have the opportunity of harvest our own”  
(Tomas Rueda in Señal Colombia 2016).

In this section the reader can find a brief context of the state of food in Colombia and how the international policies have conditioned the national and local level performance. Following the international pathway this has resulted in a food crisis that underlies the emergence of alternatives as the ones are analyze in this paper. Finally it gives a description of the cooks that are the center of analysis in sections 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>.

Colombia. A country of 49 million people (DANE 2016) situated in the north of South America. While more than 30% of the population lives in the countryside, the public policies has been focus in the development of urban areas. This has led to the impoverishment of peasants, that according with poverty figures, it is higher than in cities and the national average. Even though the situation is the same if measure by income or the multidimensional poverty index, in the case of the latter is worst. As the multidimensional index is related with the access to basic goods and services, this reflects the policies bias that has been running in the country (DNP 2015). Therefore the people in rural areas has been condemned to the institutions abandonment and the invisibility to the eyes of urban dwellers.

With this scenario the national government decide in the last decade to update the national agricultural census, aware of the unbalance that exist within the Colombian territory and the unrecognition of the situation in the isolated areas of the country. Related with the production of food it showed that more than a third of the countryside is destine to agricultural uses, with 80% destine to grass though (DANE 2015).

This has undermined the rural sector economic performance triggering processes of migration and changes in the occupation of peasants from agriculture to mining or others. Besides this has been encompass with other issues as the arm conflict that deepen the precarious situation of small farmers, the displacement and the concentration of land (DNP 2015). Therefore a country of rural roots has faced the global dilemma of food supply that has been permeating the discourse of food sovereignty and security. Furthermore the model that is analyze in the next paragraphs has generated a disconnectedness in which the cities inhabitants have lost the sense of where the food they consume come from.



### 3.1 The Colombian translation

Following the guiding thread, to understand the unsustainability of food supply it is necessary to see it intertwined with the crisis of agriculture as a hegemonic economic model outcome that relies on free markets (Ploeg 2010). During the last five decades the country has experienced a constant transformation and transition in which farming has transited towards an even more large scale kind of production. As consequence the life conditions of small farmers that often can't reach competitive levels of technological and innovation standards has gotten worst. Furthermore the country has become highly dependent on cheap imports by the implementation of diverse policies (Gaviria 2011: 134).

Moreover the vision of Lauchin Currie has driven the planning processes in the country since the early 50's, with a perspective in which migration from the countryside was consider an important asset to reach the desire competitiveness and development. In this sense alternative solutions to the agrarian problem as make more efficient small-holder food producers weren't given a space (Mondragon 2007: 96-97).

In the early 70's in a scenario of a failed land reform and an international food crisis, Colombia became one of the first countries to implement a "multi-sectoral food policy" aiming to ensure food accessibility and availability. In the meantime, the term food security started to become trend and used in the international arena. Yet, in Colombia the issue was relegated two a second layer during the next two decades, just taking a protagonist role again around the year 2000. Even though it is still state that Colombia is self-sufficient regarding the food production, the availability of it appears to be blurred in the national level which usually leaves the responsibility of food policy to the local levels (Nussio and Pernet 2013: 642-643).

However the local level remains subject of the consequences of national policies. Policies to attack rural poverty have been addressed to raise their production and access to markets. Thus food accessibility and availability has been also permeated by globalization (Guarín 2013: 511). Furthermore, the food regime has generated a context in which the owners of capital has moved to investments in "agribusiness food chains" (Boyer 2010: 340).

In L.A. supermarkets has reached the retail sector majority going from around 20% of participation in the early 90's to more than 60% in the middle 2000's. This tendency has generated dynamics of exclusion of small farmers' production (Reardon and Berdegúe 2002: 371). In Colombia, the role of supermarkets and the



intermediaries costs in the traditional food supply chain have a high influence on the accessibility of food. Then it is important to be addressed by the different organizations because diary relations and power relations keep generating an unequal distribution of profits (Guarín 2013: 513-514).

Moreover, Ploeg would argue that the current system has broken the links between 'farming and nature and locality' while relies on capital markets rather than 'ecological capital' damaging the environment and the relations in the countryside (2010: 100).

Global dynamics have threatened the supply of food in local scenarios and have dissolved the traditional social relations leading to deepening problems of hunger, food waste and even obesity among others. Notwithstanding the supply of food in Colombia remain mostly in responsibility of peasants and small producers due to the international orientation of large scale farmers (Guarin 2011; Pesquera 2011); small scale kind of production that according to Ploeg can be even a better way of production in terms of income and environmental sustainability (2010: 2). However Colombia following the agrarian 'modernization' has remained in a path where during the last two decades has promoted the substitution of illegal crops with bio-fuel crops like cassava, palm oil and sugarcane competing for land that otherwise would be destiny to food, destabilizing even more the country food sovereignty (Gaviria 2011: 136).

### **3.2 National performance**

Colombia has been since the 90's making free trade agreements and promoting agricultural products with high demand in international markets. Given the lack of competitiveness of small-farmers due to endogenous and exogenous factor some research has estimated an impact of likely 50% less in the surplus of small farmers as consequence of the FTA with the United States of America (Garay et.al. 2009), the biggest agreement sign by Colombia.

Though national policies to overcome poverty aware of some of the issues in the countryside and the local importance have tried to implement some complementary strategies addressing hunger and food sovereignty.

The Department for Social Prosperity is the entity in charge of social inclusion and poverty. As one of their strategies they has looked to improve the access to food for self-consumption through programs like IRACA (program of differential attention to black and indigenous communities) and ReSA (Food Security Network) (DPS



2016). Notwithstanding as these projects are not running by the Ministry of Agriculture, often result to be residuals and in isolate rural areas. Therefore in the long term small producers and peasants keep being dependent on government assistance as consequence of short term solutions. Furthermore as it has been already mentioned the real deal is let to local governments that often lack of resources and capacity to have a real impact.

### **3.3 The Local level: Bogota**

Bogota with almost 8 million inhabitants is the biggest city of Colombia and center of the national government and the biggest national and international entities. Therefore is also the biggest receptor of migrants from the countryside due to the search of opportunities and the displacement by the arm conflict. In the year 2014 the city already account for more than 400.000 arm conflict migrant victims (Gómez 2015). This has constituted a challenge for the public policies of attention to communities that are used to live from their agricultural production and knowledge.

One of the main issues that the local government has faced is poverty and the precarious conditions of people in the suburbs. These have driven the policies of food and inclusion of people in the city market. More than 60% of the provision of food comes from small farmers and peasants production (Pesquera 2011: 41-52). One of the initiatives has been the peasant markets aim to bring the production of small producers and peasants to the city at better prices. Notwithstanding its main objective has been to highlight the cultural value of peasant and indigenous communities in Bogota and the central region. While they started to be made every first Sunday of June since 2010, during 2015 they were made twice a month. However this initiative has had problems of budget (Cruz 2016) which led to its cancellation for the expected dates during 2016 (Cruz 2016).

In urban agriculture the city and academy has also given capacitation to the most need people (Gómez 2014). Though it often lack of a value chain integral view and the importance of diversification that led the producers to excess of the same product that after harvest they can't commercialize. Therefore a policy of long term for the small agricultural production seems to be inexistent (Pesquera 2011, 41-52).

This has raised the concern of different private actors commit with the local promotion. These initiatives go from private peasant markets, cooperatives of producers that bring their production to cities, to restaurants that get involve directly with providers in closer and fairer relations. Furthermore these actors has recently



joint together in different movements as Slow Food and 'Fogón Colombia' to boost their message as it would be further discuss in the next sections.

### **3.4 The restaurants**

In Bogota a bunch of restaurants have been working in alternative ways to supply their needs of food. These restaurants are the main actors of analysis in this paper. They was born from the initiative of middle age cooks between 25 and 35 years old. Cooks that concern with the abandonment and the absence of policies about the cultural rescue of food and the impact that it has in the countryside, decided to run businesses that include this as social goal in their value proposal.

Their concerns are related as in the quote at the beginning of this section with the most essential things of people daily lives; the bread and the raw materials need for its production are a representation of all what they think is wrong with food. Following this philosophy they have managed to be successful for more than a decade and have won recognition not just for their food but for their social purpose.

Cooks appear to be of middle-high class origins. They had the opportunity of study at the university and some of them went abroad the country. While some of them didn't end their careers, they came from diverse streams of knowledge: agricultural engineer, plastic arts, economy, anthropology, electronic, biology and those that formally study to became chef. This has given to their networks a variety of perspectives of the rural issue that enrich the debate and their action.

All these restaurants are target to people of a middle-high level of income as their prices are in average what would be the 5% of a minimum wage in Colombia. As this appear to be one of the factors that enhance their sustainability in the mid and long term, it also raises questions about the ambiguities they have to manage and how they balance their objectives.

To sum up, the international model of 'modernization' via industrialization of agriculture, has brought attached and agricultural crisis strictly link with a food crisis (Ploeg 2010). Not to mention, it is now eroding the 'ecological relations' by processes of local extraction (McMichael 2013:9). This has been traduce in the national level policies and leaving the issues responsibility to the local level. However the latter often lacks the resources to address effectively the problems. Thus, the necessity to look for alternative ways in the local level to the hegemonic model. Private initiatives of cooks commit with a social impact in the market of food is



highlighted as a window of opportunity. In the subsequent sections I would develop further the ideas stated in this section relying on the cooks and restaurants data at the micro and meso-level.



#### 4. Concern cooks: Sustainable enterprises with social objectives

“Gastronomy must transcend ingredients by respecting fundamental values. ‘You can’t cook with your eyes on the cash register’” (Emblin 2015)

‘Suburbio’ (Suburb): “The periphery of the city, where the rural begins or where the urban begins. The meeting point between the countryside and the city.” (Zarate<sup>2</sup> 2016, personal interview)

‘Mini-Mal’ (Minimum- Bad): “It is precisely about do things minimizing the damage, about cleaner agriculture, fairer trade and closer relations.” (Ariza<sup>3</sup> 2016, personal interview)

‘Salvo Patria’ (I Save the Homeland): The name has explicit the message.

Tabula (Invented work that makes reference to the table): “Big tables to share food, because that premise of I ask for my dish and yours is yours, reflects the individualistic contemporary society. We forgot to share. That concept of private property has been translate to the dish. NO, let’s share.” (Lugares extraordinarios 2016).

These are the names’ meaning of four of the restaurants working in Bogota with local production of food. They put up front the social message that is behind their gastronomical proposal. It is not a matter of culinary, instead they promote the values of a conscious GASTRONOMY. Word which by definition includes the political, social and environmental context of food (Entrevistas con Echandía 2015).

Here I would analyze the way the restaurants and cooks has handled to manage sustainable businesses with social goals, based in a model of provision that rely in alternative markets of food. The fact that they should compete within the market with other restaurants -enterprises- that don’t share their values entails challenges in their practices and commitment with their objectives.

Keeping this in mind, this section draws on the information of the cooks and restaurants at the micro level as Social Entrepreneurs. The analysis of their motivations and practices is used to understand the two sides of the coin: one that

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<sup>2</sup> Interview with Camilo Zarate

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Antonuela Ariza



is faithful with a social goal. And the second one that demand from the cooks make the business economically sustainable.

#### **4.1 An alternative market of food: restaurants bringing together their business and concerns**

As it has been already mentioned above, SE are the result of the individual perception and also collective consensus about the needs of certain groups of the society. Then alternative markets of food can be understood in a broad spectrum as the result of the concern with developmental and globalization outcomes (Helmsing 2016: 89) and the invisibilization of agriculture in trade liberalization (Becchetti and Borzaga 2010: 2).

In a glimpse, consumption of local production of food in alternative markets is the result of the commitment and concern of urban dwellers with the local farmers' situation (Hinrichs 2003; Weatherell et al. 2003). The restaurants on this paper born from the reflections of cooks about the current system and the gap between the countryside and the cities in Colombia.

Consistent with their objectives, cooks has set provision systems based on local products attempting to challenge issues of: distance, health, fairness, quality and presuppose standards of the mainstream market. In this sense they relate directly with small producers, building closer relations and avoiding the intervention of intermediaries. Then here the cooks are the entrepreneurs based in a model that raise from a concern with specific social issues and that is commit with generate an impact that goes beyond their own profit.

To be consistent with their objectives they have to work in different ways and reflect their vision in everyday practices. To understand how these entrepreneurship have worked so far, it is need to disentangle the individual perceptions about the system and the social commitment in their businesses.

#### **4.2 Making food matter: The social trigger of the endeavor**

Here the model of SE follows the definition by Becchetti and Borzaga: they are the result of the balance of an economic objective and the increasing awareness about



“the impact that individual behavior and action can have” in it (Bechetti and Borzaga 2010: 3).

Adding, the Social Entrepreneurs success is measure depending on the extent to which they create social value more than profit. They can be seeing as “change agents” that devise new “social structures” to support social change in determine context (Dees 2001: 5).

To make this model feasible a different set of values appear to be present at the heart of cooks’ actions. Different from those developed by neoclassical economy of self-interested actors aiming to maximize their profits (Hockerts et al. 2010: 2).

Moreover, to start an entrepreneurship implies an investment of time and resources than when it comes to a social objective are mainly motivated by values (Dees 2001, 99). Notwithstanding such values can be take it for granted and would depend on the social concern and the motivations of the different actors.

Besides it is important to note that the model relies in its economic sustainability as I would be address in the next section. Even though in alternative markets of food and local initiatives it has been take it for granted principles as reciprocity and trust (Weatherell et al. 2003: 234), it is need to understand how they operate and why food matters in this specific cases.

In entrepreneurship, vision as a “desirable state” has been identified as one of the main drivers to make a startup (Grenier 2010: 55). In this sense the vision about the social concern should act as the trigger for SE. It implies that values in this alternative market of food can be different related with some issues and actors as well as they would converge in other.

Nevertheless, the vision and then meaning of food has transcended its economic value in the way it is frame in the hegemonic system. It embraces other meanings that are socially constructed with cultural, political and social relevance. Therefore the importance of unpacked the social values related with food for different perspectives.

For Rueda for instance the motto of his restaurants and his actuate is what he has called ‘Cocina de Mercado’. It is the conviction of cooks about stop one moment and reflect about the territory and what is there regarding food culture and heritage (Señal Colombia 2016).

In this path cooks have started to look for rescue traditional products with the help of peasants to face the complex context of the latter. Referring to this, Rodriguez<sup>4</sup> said she has realized the complexity of the issue:

*“...the reality of the countryside, the lack of many things, the lack of culture, the lack of identity, how people is migrating to cities abandoning all the things that were happening here, but also marvelous products that were not produced anymore because people don't saw them as lucrative as other products”* (2016, personal interview)

Nonetheless, she feels that from the restaurants' work they can give example through the rescue of native food in innovative ways, based in ancient agricultural and gastronomic knowledge (Rodriguez 2016, personal interview).

For Gutierrez the crowding out of peasants' agriculture is the result of an impose system of production, in which they are the most vulnerable being relegated by big corporations and the government to favor certain agro products and seeds.<sup>5</sup> Commit with this social issue, he said the restaurant philosophy was thought during one year. This includes adapt the menu to a vision of local ingredients and get closer with providers to have a first quality product with Colombian own native food and leaving the profit to who “really deserve it” (2016, personal interview).

Other of the sources of their commitment raise from the concern with the influence of big retailers and the importations of products that can be harvest in the national agriculture. Zarate referred to this by reflecting about what I would call the dichotomy between practicality and consciousness. He said that even though you can find at the supermarket vacuum packed slice potatoes, which makes life easier for people with too little time, it comes from Brazil. So if Colombia is a country producer of potatoes “why would I use import potatoes” (2016, Personal interview).

Luz Beatriz Velez is even more straight forward and says that she prefer to talk directly with the providers because supermarkets result to be many times a lie. The perfect products of specific colors, shapes and sizes are not what they really should be (Chinchilla 2016).

As press has highlighted, this movement has been pull by a new wave of cooks believing that a conscious gastronomy can improve the world in which we are living (Arboleda 2013). The social value of cooks' work is about the rescue of traditional food. It is about the consciousness of the importance of peasant's work. The importance of cleaner production. The inequalities in the country. The livelihoods

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with Jennifer Rodriguez

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Alejandro Gutierrez



of small producers. The need of healthier food. The awareness about what is wrong with the current system. The respect for the “fundamental values of food” (Emblin 2015), refers to all this approaches to the social value of these businesses. Individual perspectives and practices that converge in this alternative market of food.

These thoughts and behaviors of cooks shape the market as a socially constructed institution. It reflects the expectations of the different actors that intervene. The social value of food is the result of certain social and cultural patterns (Beckert 2009: 247-256). Then the profit is supposed to be subject of all the individual views and concerns.

Prices and then profits concern goes beyond mainstream assumptions, recognizing the differences between the economic value and the “multifaceted dimensions” of food (Onyas and Ryan 2016: 179) that are related with the social values analyzed above. While the current model has commodified food and make ‘easier’ life for consumers that goes to the closer supermarket, these restaurants are commit with their social value.

Nonetheless to make sustainable this vision, the entrepreneurs should keep an eye on the business to support their actions in the social sphere. Therefore this is the side of the coin I analyze in the next section, thinking in how it is essential to produce social impacts of long last duration.

#### **4.3 Make things matter has a cost: Profits out of the generation of social value**

According to Helmsing the creation of “social value” is not and should be not understand as the antithesis of seek “economic value”. Conversely, the sustainability of entrepreneurship relies on the ability of business to keep balance both (2016: 96).

The challenge for this entrepreneurs is to address the gap that has been set by the current food market into “reconcile economic development with social and environmental sustainability” (Bechetti and Borzaga 2010: 5).

Notwithstanding other authors like Bieckman would argue that models as these would not survive in the current system until they don’t get recognition in a global context for their social values. So if they should compete on the traditional market



based on costs reduction and profit raise, their principles of fair prices would become barriers for their success (2013).

Cooks as Rueda, Velez and Espinosa are each owners of more than one restaurant after more than a decade of work. And in all the cases the oldest restaurant accounts for more than ten years. Mini-Mal, has turned this year 13 years old maintaining the model of buy to small producers and peasants (Ariza 2016, Personal interview). Therefore it is important to analyze how the restaurants has managed to make sustainable their business and expand their approach in an alternative market of food.

There are different ways in which cooks are playing with the market opportunities and limits. The strategies to compete within the market can encompass a set of features specific of the Social Entrepreneurship model: Innovation and publicity, target customers, shorten the change, prices and standards are some that can be identify in this cases.

#### **4.3.1 Publicity resulting from innovation**

According to Desa, Social Entrepreneurship would need of innovative ways of use the raw materials of x or y business to address a social concern in a “sustainable manner” (2010: 12). Even though Social Entrepreneurs action is drive often by disappointment about the impact of public and private initiatives addressing social issues, personal or professional realization become relevant to the sustainability of the business (Helmsing 2016: 91-92).

SE can be understand as an ingenious process or activity which through the recognition of some needs would create social value (Desa 2010: 11-12). Restaurants in L.A. have won recognition relying in non-usual food and recipes of ancestral origins: products as ants, exotic fruits and all kind of wild species. This traditions have been bring by cooks from the mountains and valleys of Oaxaca, the Amazonas jungle and the Caribbean and Pacific coasts to the cities.

Alex Tala and Enrique Olvera with their restaurants D.O.M. in Sao Paulo and Pujol in Mexico respectively, have achieved with similar models to be in “The World’s 50 Best Restaurants” (2016) and get recognition through TV series as Chef’s Table on Netflix. In the case of Colombia the restaurant ‘Leo’ one of the forerunners of this model was recognized as the best in the country and 16<sup>th</sup> in L.A. in the last year (Portafolio 2016).



To use food that nobody else in the business was using when they start, has given public recognition to cooks. Thus the innovation based in the social value that restaurants give to food has rebounded in free publicity. Cooks are interviewed constantly in programs of the main media channels in Colombia. Spaces from which they take advantage to reinforce their message and tell about the model of their businesses. This has also influenced the emergence of other initiatives to highlight their work as 'Cocina Semana' from Semana Magazine one of the biggest and oldest of the country. This initiative has through small short films inquire about the restaurants and the objectives of most of the cooks involve in this model so people can know them.

So, even though according to Rueda it took for him 8 years to positioning 'Tabula' and manage to have profit of it, the process has led to the recognition of cooks by their work, getting free publicity and assuring sustainability regarding clients in the long term.

#### **4.3.2 Target customers**

To keep on the business and faithful with their model restaurants have targeted more likely high class customers. The average cost of a dish in the interviewed restaurants is of 10 euros compare with regular restaurants in which the average cost can be of 3 euros.

Regarding the number of customers it varies from 5 hundred to 3 thousand a month (2016, Personal interviews). Therefore this alternative market of food seems to be sustainable in the long term based in what theory calls the "competitive advantages that find on the local solutions and closer relations with customers" (Helmsing 2016, 90).

This can also represent one ambiguity of the model. One of the cooks talked about democratize the access to food as one of their objectives (2016, Personal interview). However as it was already mentioned the prices of the restaurants are hardly accessible for low income people.

Notwithstanding it can be understand as a process of democratization backwards. A process in which the countryside receive a revulsive through the synergies of consumers' awareness. Thereby the accessible production and the return to the agricultural ancient traditions can rebound in such democratization.



Thus as it was remarked neither researchers nor entrepreneurs should overestimate or underrate the social impact and the work of individual initiatives, on the contrary their sustainability depends on keep the feet on the floor and the balance with the economic objectives.

### 4.3.3 Shorten the chain

As the generation of profits is need, according with the model it should be fairer for everyone who intervenes in the alternative market.

This strategy born from the commitment of restaurants with their social goal of rescue the national food production. Nevertheless the universe of decision is the national production -i.e. potatoes-, cooks need to ask who is producing it, how and where within the country (Zarate 2016, Personal interview).

When conceptualizing this perception of the markets the approach of Beckert is helpful. Cooks embrace the dynamics of competition and challenge them as product of historical, political and social power relations (2009: 256). Therefore for them it would not be the same buy the potatoes to a big scale farmer with a history of land concentration and massive production, while there are small producers struggling to reach the market.

In this sense intermediaries are also recognize as one of the main issues and that's why restaurants have focused their work on it to balance the relation of price and quality. Eradicating the intermediaries in the provision of the restaurants they can guarantee better prices for small producers, and strengthen the message about the benefits of go directly to the producers.

In this path “the social structure of the market” is not independent of the quality and the price (Beckert 2011: 764). Thereby restaurants are looking to change this harmful practices working closed with the providers. Cooks are deploying practices that adjust the needs of the restaurants to harvests and possibilities of producers (Gutierrez 2016, personal interview).

This can be seeing in the motto of restaurants as in Mestizo where “the products go from the countryside to the dish” (Rodriguez 2016, personal interview). Others have flexible menus that work with the products that are available. This movement is set around what is found and produce in the local level giving more importance to the product and the producer, putting at front the ingredient and then the dish as Velez has explained (Chinchilla 2016). Notwithstanding the cooks ask to the producers to





improve constantly in their ways of production and their harvest (Zarate 2016, personal interview).

Additionally, as Velez has remarked, for them it is preferable to go and talk directly with the providers and the workers in the open air markets than go to the big supermarkets where what you see are “enormous plastic boxes with non-national products” (Chinchilla 2016). Though they’re also aware that it isn’t possible to change the entire system as not everyone can go directly to producers; it is instead a matter of informed decisions (Zarate 2016, personal interview).

Then all these dynamics are related with prices. Commercialization and the power exercise by intermediaries constitute two of the main bottle necks for small producers regarding price formation due to their “precarious capacity to bargain and lack of information” (Oxfam n.d.)<sup>6</sup>. Then in the next subsection is analyze how cooks are dealing with it as one of the biggest distortions on the chain of food.

#### **4.3.4 Prices and standards**

The configuration of this market appear to need of people who want to spread the benefits to: producers, final consumers and themselves; because according with Ariza this “is the only way this can work” (2016, personal interview). Notwithstanding this would also require to set parameters about prices and standards of quality and quantity in which power relations play and important role, even if they appear to be better that the conditions of mainstream markets.

Restaurants would through the promotion of national and cleaner production consumption ensure producers get a good price (Zarate 2016, Personal interview) following the principles of Slow Food meaning good, fare and clean food (Slow Food 2016).

Though it could be more expensive in some cases, in which they have to ponder what they are willing to pay and how are they contributing with the livelihoods of peasants (Gutierrez 2016, personal interview). Nonetheless all the cooks coincide about no bargaining the prices with the producers. As one of them argue “you don’t go to ‘Carulla’ or ‘El Exito’<sup>7</sup> and bargain the price of what you are shopping, then

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<sup>6</sup> Unpublished document send to me by Laura Espinosa. ‘Marketing experiences with restaurants: an opportunity to articulate small production to urban markets’. Oxfam.

<sup>7</sup> Two of the biggest supermarkets of Bogota

why are you going to do it with the peasants?” when you are getting better quality products (Ariza 2016, personal interview).

Then the premise is the existence of trust between cooks and producers. The restaurants know that small producers can't give them 'competitive' prices of the agroindustry. Yet what has occurred is that providers can sell them even cheaper) as in Mestizo case where Rodriguez said providers have never passed the roof top they have, because they are going directly to them (Rodriguez 2016, personal interview) so they ensure sustainability through the shorten of the chain.

However the cooks are less aware about the relation price/costs of production of producers. Except for Laura Espinosa of 'Leo', none of the cooks talk about get involve or help the restaurants to set fair prices<sup>8</sup>. Then even when the objective is to make all the chain win as the producer gets a better price, the restaurant get a better product and the final consumer gets a more nutritious meal with the best ingredients of Colombia; it is less clear if that better price for producers is enough. Nevertheless, this model from the perspective of 'Suburbio' shouldn't mean neither the price is going to be translate to the client, so the restaurant “pay a little bit more and charged a little bit less, because that's exactly the philosophy of a fair commerce, in which everybody pays, everybody puts and everybody wins” (Zarate 2016, personal interview).

Regarding the fluctuation of prices and the scarcity of some of them there are different strategies to cope with. Some cooks recognize how prices can be a little bit more expensive, because of distances (infrastructure mostly) or the kind of production of the farms. However to keep going with the business in a manageable way, they have 2 or 3 producers of every product. Then they work with a system of rotation in which they buy one time from one farm and the next time to the other and the producers are aware of it.

So even though the prices are different during different seasons, it also happens sometimes that farms have over plus of production and let products half the price to the restaurants, cases in which it works as a kind of compensation in the prices they pay (Ariza 2016, personal interview).

Although there are some cases where they can't work with certain products and projects because they are too expensive. Then to pay two times the price of something that they are already getting of good quality is not an option. Consequently Gutierrez said that cooks in order to make prices viable along the chain should keep the balance because “you can neither abuse of this kind of things”

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<sup>8</sup> Interview with Laura Espinosa



referring to pricing and high valuation that is given to food by some producers (Gutierrez 2016, personal interview).

#### 4.3.5 Education

For cooks, awareness of consumers about buying out of the hegemonic model and go with the producers is essential. According to Ariza to make this kind of initiatives (alternative markets of food) public and explicit can help to reshape the preferences of consumers. It is the opportunity to buy products of better quality, understanding that “they don’t need to pay three times more the price. It’s about promote all the VALUES together” (2016, personal interview).

The influence of restaurants and the way they are able to transmit its philosophy would be essential to challenge mainstream assumptions about standards. Thus they believe they should be a model to follow and with this in mind they have a commitment of not bother and receive the products as they are.

According to Velez it has to be with the feel that people get from countryside about “how the food is for real, vegetables are irregular and eggs are green” (Chinchilla 2016). Contrary to the attitude of big supermarkets they don’t ask for carrots that are “all the same of 12 cm and quite orange”. Cooks are conscious that in agro ecological crops the outcome would depend on many other natural factors and have clear from the beginning that all products have their season (Ariza 2016, personal interview).

Cooks are constantly in the search of “kind of educate *the* clients, showing them the value and quality of food that is not common to the Colombian homes, but are native and traditional” (Rodriguez 2016, personal interview). According to Gutierrez they see their restaurants as a pillar to educate consumers so they start to choose. He said “What we need is that people learn from the restaurant, to know some food and start to generate a culture of consumption in all the homes that is what we pretend” (2016, personal interview).

Furthermore he thinks it is need “that political classes get educated because it exists a big ignorance about how agriculture should be drive, because they don’t realize that the actual massive production is damaging everything and is screwing us” (Gutierrez 2016, personal interview).

They are working to increase the level of awareness by telling the people what they are doing in different ways. Some of them have systems in which “trough the



waitress *they* tell to customers the story about where the products come in order that they also get more related with the model” (Rodriguez 2016; Gutierrez 2016; Ariza 2016, personal interviews). The messages and stories in the menus and walls of the restaurants are other ways to make think the customers (Ariza 2016, personal interview). As well it is possible to find various TEDtalks of Zarate or Espinosa for instance, about the rescue of traditional food in Colombia that sum with the already mentioned interviews help to spread the message and achieve the awareness they look for. This would be further develop as in the next section I analyze the way they joint together in networks and the activities aiming to this objective.

These strategies resulted of the daily practices show the business side of the restaurants in which they have to deal with ambiguities about the message they give, the way they relate with providers and customers and the way they make a live of their business without fall in mainstream practices that they despise. As Rueda said “too often we confuse service with snobbery. This is a business about people. The way we attend others, the way we can construct a better nation.” (Emblin 2014).

So far I have discussed and analyzed how cooks as Social Entrepreneurs in an alternative market of food specific context, can act as change agents balancing their economic and social objective. This decision is led by individual and collective perceptions about what is lost in social offer from public and private spheres. Nevertheless as the objective of supply those gaps is pursuit trough particular businesses the way they generate economic value is essential in the analysis. Consequently, this shows that despite the values of the entrepreneurs are strong and respond to a social objective, they are constantly challenge with business considerations and normative contradictions to reach profits.

Notwithstanding to define what local means, what is quality and who participates of the market (Dupuis and Goodman 2005: 361) set barriers and opportunities for the actors of this market. In the next section I analyze how the cooks has been building networks and how this has helped to the recognition of their SE. To research on what are the constraints that they face in the current system would help to boost the characteristics that make them sustainable and see the potential to scale their social impacts.

## 5 Working together for food: networking and social capital

“I believe more in some kind of sisterhood, I feel like if we work together with other restaurants, the country can really improve in this matters and this can rebound in better practices around tourism and gastronomy” (Rodriguez personal interview 2016)

Networks might boost the level of impact and the frame of action for enterprises and in particular for those with social goals. They give a space to test the social value proposal and the perception of the entrepreneur about specific social issues. Thus enabling to identify better opportunities and limits and improving the outcomes (Cho 2006, 54).

To generate social value is the driver of SE based in the concern and vision of an individual. Even though the economic objectives can be reach solely regarding different strategies of the singular entrepreneurial side features, the social impact would find its barriers in an individualistic behavior. Conversely, to rely in networks can potentiate not only the social impact, but also the economic outcomes of the business. To overcome social needs requires more than individual, scattered initiatives.

This section point out the possible externalities that SE can have in social capital. Following Pelligra, trust constitutes a central foundation in this path as it mediates the social relations bringing together social, political and cultural features of networks that shape the economy beyond self-interest and opportunistic behavior assumptions (2013: 411).

In this sense restaurants have shown to be successful as SE by being profitable enough and faithful with their social value proposal. However they haven't keep isolate consistently with theory about their propensity to share knowledge and look for new spaces to boost their message.

Cooks have joint together in different formal and informal spaces/organizations that look to boost the impact of their individual work. Besides, the closer relations with producers and consumers are analyzed as an outcome and antecedent of social capital. Notwithstanding it is also discussed how this dynamics far for being perfect exclude as they include actors. Latter it would be argue how the networks constitute a trigger for collective action and legitimacy to finally briefly reflect about the SE up scalability.



## 5.1 Getting closer with producers and colleagues: Trust and social capital

One of the main characteristics of Social Entrepreneurs is to build links with different stakeholders that intervene in the social issue (Helmsing 2016, 99). Links with civil society are supposed to support the stability of SE and encourage them in their emergence and changes through time (Borzaga et.al. 2016: 8).

In alternative markets of food the local disconnection and unrecognition of peasants work and nature (Ploeg 2010: 100) appears as one of the main concerns for cooks to get involved in these businesses. Then looking to bridge this problem, the restaurants have been working closely among them and with small producers.

The construction of networks has become in a corner stone for the success of the market. The way the agents relate with each other in terms of power, trust and status differentiation (Beckert 2011: 760-766) has allowed them to evolve and work closer.

In this alternative market the youngest or newest cooks attribute this to a more “relax and altruist” way of think and work. Thus they have been able to strengthen their links becoming a network of friends that support each other, share providers and work together, overcoming the professional egos from the past and understanding that they “have a huge responsibility taking this (the movement) forward” (Gutierrez 2016, Personal interview). Hence they believe that working “together with other restaurants, the country can really improve in this matters and this can echo in better practices around tourism and gastronomy” (Rodriguez 2016, personal interview). This has allowed them to converge into a similar set of guiding lines through time, even though the restaurants born from different objectives and visions as it was explained earlier.

Accordingly to the network dynamics in the beginning the way to meet the small producers was by references of the forerunners of this model. This has been allowed by the bonding links of cooks because of their similar concerns, their occupation and their businesses. Espinosa, Velez and Rueda, are recognized as the people who have helped the rest to meet the first providers. In this sense beyond the competition of restaurants exists a relation of trust in which they go to the recommend producers by word of mouth.

As restaurants have won recognition they received offers from producers that try to get close with them. Nonetheless as one of the main objectives of these cooks is “to



rescue our things first, our cultural knowledge” they don’t buy everyone despite they can accomplish with the other requirements of production (Ariza 2016, personal interview).

Through the years all the chefs have become more experienced and based on their expectations and preferences they trace the producers (Ariza 2016, personal interview). Hence instead of go to the mainstream market, they go to small peasant markets and meet different options that help them to buffer with the limit production of small producers.

Through cooperation practices they has been sharing their experience generating spill overs to challenge the system and its representations of legitimacy and preferences (Beckert 2011: 771-778). Consequently it has led to a closer relation of producers and buyers in which they help them in economic or transport issues and reduce the social risk of incomplete knowledge (Beckert 2009: 259). They have been building bridges with the countryside. Despite their origins and the differences with peasants and small producers their social goal has allowed them to build trust in this closer relations.

All this work on the ground for the cooks is driven by the central motivation of highlight the cultural importance of food and the labor of the peasants in the countryside. By working with them and see all the labour that is behind the harvest and take care of all the plants, people can value different things taken for granted in super markets or the open air markets. This way, Zarate remarks, you not just get to know what they are doing, but make them feel as important as they are, which they also thank (2016, personal interview).

Through the networks cooks are generating strategies of local development, buying the products to this producers and getting involve in other initiatives of promotion and rescue of native seeds. The synergies have reached the point that some people look for chefs like Rodriguez and ask her to work with them in their soils and help them to commercialize the harvest. Now she, her team and the people that contacted her are starting projects to grow native potatoes to provide restaurants in Bogota. The benefit for the restaurant in this case is to get part of the production while help them to sell the rest.

This has also had a contagious effect that rescue and exalt the value of some local recipes and knowledge, as people has again encouraged to make things artisan, instead of buying everything made as they get used to. Rodriguez said initiatives are aim “to make more conscious people and make them fall in love again with this



(*agriculture*) and strength the production and trade with Bogota (2016, Personal interview).

Cooks recognize that some of the small producers has had better opportunities like higher levels of education and even gone out of the country. These have gave them better access to information and awareness about the system. Based on what they see as wrong they decided to establish farms with cleaner and better ways of production through practices different from those of the hegemonic model (Zarate 2016, personal interview). Then this can be seeing also as bonding among networks of Social Entrepreneurs with similar concerns but different initiatives.

However it doesn't mean neither that this projects don't have a peasant component supporting the functioning of all the farms. The small producers are always relying on peasant families who have "all the empirical, historical and cultural knowledge" of how the countryside works, said Gutierrez (2016, personal interview). Peasants that have been all their life taking care of their crops and their seeds (Zarate 2016, personal interview). But the lack of livelihoods, infrastructure and information don't allow them to go directly to consumers, reason why they joint with other small producers.

Thereby as part of the commitment of cooks, when they go to the farms, they realize that the conditions of this peasants are great compare with others in Colombia. They have social security, good wages and good homes while they remain living in the environment that they know, and "doing what they love in beautiful lands and soils" (Gutierrez2016, personal interview).

Other outcome of these relations based in networks is the stabilization of expectations and long duration relations of trade (Beckert 2009: 261). All the restaurants are characterized by their closeness with the process of production and commercialization, which includes peasants' livelihoods. Ariza spoke about providers that have been working with Mini-Mal for 13 years and that at the beginning don't have their own transport and now have. Thanks to the stability and trust of the relation, they choose to buy with credit some transport because for they is better (2016, personal interview).

Besides for peasants, the creation of a network of buyers obligated themselves to organize the logistics of delivery going to different zones in the city in different days in which restaurants have been also helpful. Thus if Mini-Mal runs out of lettuce after they already have received their delivery of the week, they don't take advantage of their position of client. Instead they ask suppliers where are they going on the next days and, they agree with some restaurant in that zone to pick what they need there. So it is a matter of "make things fair for everyone" (Ariza 2016, personal interview).





Networks help to prevent opportunistic positions that can undermine the relations with and the situations of the peasants, raising the legitimacy which is traduce in other spaces as it is develop in the next section.

## 5.2 Reaching legitimacy: action and commitment

I argue in the previous section that the sustainability of social change pursuit by cooks needs of cooperation among actors. In this sense the individual actions and the spaces generate by the restaurants generate synergies for collective action that relies in pre-existing social movements and create new ones.

The success of Entrepreneurs acquire new meanings that goes beyond the mission of enterprises. To the extent they engage with civil processes it gives legitimacy to their social objectives and transform them.

Theory talks about the bottom-up processes of collective action that are present often in social enterprises context (Borzaga et.al. 2016, 3). However in the cases of these restaurants it appears as collective actions that raised from private initiatives and after, started to generate networks backward and forward: With producers that are the ones who experienced the main issues, and with other cooks and consumers responsible for the social and economic sustainability.

This context allowed them to boost their economic sustainability but also their message and encourage cooks to commit in new strategies that fall apart of their work in the restaurants. Commitment that is drive mainly by the political meaning they give to food.

The articulation with Slow Food and the creation of new movements as ‘FOGÓN Colombia’ have given more legitimacy to the social value that the restaurants propose. The latter Is a recently organization that looks to give a hand in the Colombian post conflict scenario from a food perspective through a change in the relations between the urban and the rural worlds that supports the construction of peace on the territories.

They have built a political message that can be frame by the “pan revolution” as Tomas Rueda has called it (Los Nuestros 2016). Through the action and awareness of people they believe that these initiatives can be scale up by public policy, at least in ways that allow consumers to be better inform when buying food and act in a globalize world. In this regard as Estrada has remarked in his work “in cuisine, the



recommendation is not talking about the national, the correct thing is to talk about the regional, and the regional needs to be support on the popular” (Estrada 2016).

Referring to the deaths describe in the introduction, cooks have found that government solutions –give them water and baskets of food- have made the problem of hungry worst. Not just because people is receiving food that don’t nourish them, but because it has made them to stop harvest their fruits, beans and native things, which is really grievous for them. According to Ariza now you can only find such crops in farms of old woman that are “rebels to say it so”. Thus with those woman is that you have to go to promote and rescue the cultural value of food. There is the opportunity to do gastronomic activism (2016, personal interview).

For cooks, all the issues surrounding food are a matter of hungry. Then women should say “we keep growing these because otherwise my kids won’t have something to eat” (Ariza 2016, personal interview). There is the political stand around which society can joint together in different collective initiatives. This requires to accept hungry as the root of Colombian conflict and that’s a matter of what mean we give to food and how it can “seek to redefine social power” (Alvarez, Dagnino & Escobar 2008: 7). People “kills for food. It is not about if you are guerrilla or paramilitary or whatever”. In the current system people needs to earn money to be allowed to eat and give their families to eat “it’s not about the ideology of being from one group or another” (Zarate 2016, personal interview).

Therefore the cooks involve in this alternative market believe in the central role of the Colombian popular cuisine for the consolidation that the peace agreements demands (Estrada 2016). According to Rueda “gastronomy is political, everything is political” and “with the peace talks in La Havana, if chefs can unite to generate a consciousness of the abundance this nation has to offer, it’s an example others could follow.” (Emblin 2015). Hence they expect from their cooks position to influence politically the society in a positive manner (Zarate 2016, personal interview).

Cooks play a central role because in the construction of meanings on “what she decide to put in the menu depends what people is going to eat”. So start to use Colombian products and build menus with those can “make more sustainable everything” and “start little by little to change the world”. That’s why restaurants have articulated to make talks about slow food, events with traditional cooks of the country and visibilizing certain products (Zarate 2016, personal interview).

The origin of networks even transcend the national borders. Zarate for instance had the opportunity of work previously with the chef Jamie Oliver and its foundation<sup>9</sup> in Australia. Then he went back to Colombia with a clear idea in mind, a restaurant where the good food is for everyone, with simple cooking, fresh and where food is not pretentious. Therefore if the country can have the best coffee, potatoes and the carrots “why should I go to other markets” argued (2016, personal interview). These all together shows the vision and commitment of the restaurants in build food bridges between the countryside and the cities that strength the social cohesion.

Even though networks in Colombia has been aligned with movements as Slow Food, the restaurants concern with this issue appeared even before according to Ariza, who is also the convivial leader of Slow Food for Bogota. While the organization appeared ten years ago in Colombia, there have been many people working with urban agriculture, restaurants working with small providers and small retailers and other kind of initiatives since earlier years (2016, personal interview).

One sample of concrete collective actions, can be seeing in the recently founded collective ‘FOGÓN Colombia’ (Colombian Stove) which by a manifesto of twelve points, sign by more than 50 chefs, call to action to build a better country through the rescue of food; this manifesto points out sensible issues like the food sovereignty, the need to exalt the peasants work, the responsibility with the environment and the commitment with the construction of peace in the country “convince of the transforming and healing power of the national gastronomic culture” (Chinchilla 2016).

Their political stand has been explicit in different scenarios like the recent national peasants strike where they state in a short video that “This is not a politic message, this is a message of life” (Fogón Colombia con los campesinos 2016) showing their support to the peasants petitions. Thus this initiative has shown that beyond the current food market logics, the country has a reality with which they are commit because on the recognition of peasants work depends the construction of social cohesion in the country.

In this sense what these networks are promoting is another way of protest, of resist and challenge the current model from the cultural rescue of food. They are promoting the awareness about the importance of peasants agriculture and food without really commit into politics (Ariza 2016, personal interview). It is about

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<sup>9</sup> Jamie Oliver food foundation is aim “to provoke debate and inspire real, meaningful, positive change in the way our children access, consume and understand food.”



reflect about our food and make it really a matter of life not just fashion; it is about eat more arepa<sup>10</sup> and tamal<sup>11</sup> and less fast food (Ariza 2016, personal interview).

Notwithstanding to get impact on the national level this kind of initiatives need to get redundancy at the government and on the articulation with this would depend is scalability as I analyze in the next section.

### **5.3 Reflections on Up-scaling: Scope of SE and articulation with governments**

The restaurants product of these SE have shown to be profitable enough. Hence it can be assume that cooks-owners have the time and commitment to strength their political message and social goal trough networks.

Networks have shown to boost the impact of the social value as well as they strengthen for it. Notwithstanding the generation of social value from SE would find also its boundaries in institutional barriers and changes of stakeholders and their preferences through time.

The construction of networks means the construction of links either by embedded specific characteristics of communities or by interests of individuals that converge facing social issues. Thus their size is finite and reduce, implying that as it include stakeholders, exclude others. Formal and informal arrangements set an institutional framework that determine standards that respond to their social value proposal. Therefore the impact of the SE is finite and questions about their scalability arise.

The networks here play a key role in bring together all the different actors with a commitment in the long term. However the social impact shouldn't displace the responsibility of public policy. Cooks might look for articulation and alliances with different government levels to look for possibilities of scalability and see to what extent this kind of alternative markets can reach a higher impact within the current system.

In this sense the cooks can look for spaces, but the government should also enhance their action through public policies and alliances that massify the offer and demand of small farmers' production. In this regard Gutierrez said "now we're starting with

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<sup>10</sup> Traditional food made of Maize

<sup>11</sup> Traditional food made of corn with different recipes in different regions of the country that includes dry peas, carrots, chicken, pork etc.



a program to buy food from restitution lands and to generate a special stamp. But again if this doesn't get massive it wouldn't be sustainable, so that's the labour of the restaurant to communicate and massify an idea" but the scalability on the production side might be only potentiated by the government (2016, personal interview).

Other way to boost the impacts is through regulation. According to Zarate and as it has been already discussed in this paper they don't pretend to change the entire system. Rather is about

"Make agroindustry a lot more responsible, there is space for everybody, but there is need more responsibility and information concern with food; the supermarket is a place where both positions can converge. So it should be regulated. If you don't warn people with labels, of course the winners would be always the big multinationals that through advertisement convince people of anything... because advertisement allow it and governments too" (2016, personal interview).

Therefore through small changes cooks believe that from a food perspective there is a lot of things that can be made, it can really improve the quality of life for everybody.

Recapitulating, networks are a positive outcome and antecedent of SE through which actors share their knowledge and join efforts to boost the impact of their social value. The social capital related with trust in social relations are a positive spillover of how this initiatives can re-embed the economy.

Nonetheless not everything is rosy. The networks dynamics institutionalize perceptions and practices that would include as exclude actors of the links they build. Therefore the articulation with other levels as the public sector are essential for the scalability of the social impact that is the main objective of SE. Thus the role of networks building legitimacy through collective action should aim to include the government in the discussions so it can take the good practices and incorporate into their plans.

Furthermore the networking has strengthened the legitimacy of the social value and the articulation with previously existing social movements and the creation of new ones. The political meaning that cooks give to food has enabled their cohesion and action in this movements looking to generate social change and the improvement of the countryside livelihoods.

Finally to enlarge the social impact means to up-scaling. To scale up small private initiatives that rely in different value from those of the hegemonic model can always



generate conflict. SE can't be understood as total solutions for social issues, neither they constitute a replacement for public policies.

On the articulation that networks can generate with governments can rely the scalability and broaden up of the model that provide these initiatives. On the will of policy makers would depend to overcome the constraints of the traditional market and promote bridges for the gap between the countryside and the cities.

## 6 Conclusions

Alongside this paper I discussed and analyzed how alternative markets of food constitute a space for successful Social Entrepreneurships. I addressed my research drawing on the cases of restaurants in Bogota-Colombia. The analysis start from a perspective in which actors look to re-shape the unbalance between self-interested behavior and social welfare (Cochoy: 2015, 245). In this sense I unpacked the motivations and values that can underlie endeavors in this market; secondly I showed under which conditions and strategies this alternatives can be success; and finally I set the stage for further research on the opportunities for the scalability of this alternatives.

The SE ideas help me to understand how actors faced ambiguities and under what strategies balance economic and social goals. In alternative markets of food SE rise from the concern about certain social issues that public and private initiatives haven't been able to address. The concern of cooks born from their individual perception about the gap between the countryside and the cities regarding food production and supply. In this sense movements around the world has been struggling to highlight the importance of food and the negative outcomes of industrial agriculture.

In this context the empirical data suggests that there is a space for economic sustainable business in alternative markets of food. Even though the scope of this research doesn't allow to state with percentage of the market they can reach, it shows the social commitment can boost their success. Their reliance in different practices act as strategies of profit generation and can be drivers for social change. The level to which it can be extent would rely on the enhancers to deploy those strategies that are analyze in the sections four and five.

The micro and meso-levels find their links in the commonalities that trigger the collective action. Where there is individual concerns and motivations social changes that value better the social, cultural and political context of food can happen. Even though the motivations and strategies can be different from one to another actor, they build networks with positive social capital spill overs.

Notwithstanding an important aspect that emerged is the way these alternative markets can exclude as include people in those networks. Therefore it is necessary to reflect about the broader picture.



Facing the global versus local dichotomy these enterprises appear as Social Entrepreneurships that put at front the creation of social value. Their commitment with the rescue of the local set new parameters that highlight some values as underrate others. Therefore as it was mentioned at the beginning of this paper the analysis here didn't attempt to romanticize the values of the local or the role of social entrepreneurs.

With this in mind, actors relate with each other and create networks based in trust that build strength links attached with their proposal of social values. However as far as they move the border of the local and frame the meaning of alternative, there would be always an 'us' and 'them'.

These different levels of 'us' and 'them' are related with the pursuing goal. While for some actors motivations can be related with the quality of the product, for other it could be with the rescue of traditional food, for other with the environment impact, for other with healthier alimentation and for other with the awareness of the countryside and peasants work importance.

Thus, the positive spill overs can't make invisible the other pieces of the puzzle. The farmer, the cook, the small retailers in the city, and even the intermediaries that can't fit the networks can't be leaved behind. The ambiguities in the balance of social and economic are traduced also in the outcomes.

Furthermore, the territoriality of this alternative bring attached ambiguities related with the good and the bad, the closer and the farther and so on. Thereby here the local can't be understand as the cornerstone of the success. Rather, to understand that there are various levels of the local can embody the opportunity to identify complementarities between meso-levels.

The extent to which SE can be successful has been shown. The practices and characteristics that underlie it to. However the ambiguities on the barriers and those people excluded set the stage for a more critical analysis of SE opportunities to make a change.

Then, awareness can't be only generated from the actors involve in networks. It is need to be aware of how strategies as innovation and publicity can act as factor of exclusion of other restaurants. As social accountability is also at the heart of SE it can be a way to see that restaurants remain faithful to their social goal and aren't clustering as a trend that give them more clients.

This reflection trace a path for further research. The barriers and opportunities of the local can be addressed in different ways that explore the networks that are being





constructed through these alternatives. Besides to make a deeper research from the countryside can give insights about what is happening with those that are being excluded. Analyze their politics could allow to see how the social fabric in the countryside is influenced through this initiatives.

Nonetheless the intention of this paper hasn't been to see the glass half empty. Social Entrepreneurship has shown to be a coin with two sides. In this scenarios would be always people that would say the social impact is marginal and the final objective of business are profits. However further research in SE implies for me, to believe in the power of small changes. In depth analysis can allow to boost the possibilities of SE to generate social change.



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## Appendix 1 Questions that guide the semi-structure interviews

<b>Motivations</b>	<b>Standards</b>	<b>Price and market configuration</b>
What is your background?	How many times have you change the providers?	What are the prices you pay to your providers?
Why did you start to buy local?	Why do you change providers?	Are there any kind of bargaining?
How did you contact your providers?	Which are the minimums you require to your providers?	How do you guarantee the sustainability of your business and the relation with the providers?
Do you go to the farms regularly?	What happen when the products don't reach your requirements?	How many clients do you have In average in a month?
What do you know about your providers?	Are you promoting/training in any kind of production?	How old is the restaurant?
Do you advertise the approach of your business?	What do you get from supermarkets?	How do you calculate the prices of your food?
Do you have any political stand?	What do you think is need to people consume more local? And supermarkets?	Do you transfer the benefits of the business to your providers in some additional way?
	What are the pros and cons regarding other restaurants that don't manage your approach?	Are you getting involve in other dynamics besides the restaurant?
	How was the beginning with this approach and how is it now?	Are you getting articulate with other restaurants or initiatives?