Vulnerability

Vulnerability, as some kind of lack that puts a group of people in a situation of disadvantage or risk, is a social builded concept, not only as all concepts in theory, but also in fact.

Vulnerability construction responds to diverse causes:

- Development model (Calva, 2001; Dabat, 1994; Stiglitz, 1996)
- Exclusion and margination of sectors of society (Castel, 2001; Sen, 1989; Singer, 1998; Forester, 1997)
- Position of control and domination over nature (Penings, 1991)
- Type of energy and technology (Davies, 2004, Urqidi, 2001, Graizberg, 2004; Perrings, 1991)
- Enterprise investment Interest (Aglieta, 2000; Sullivan, 2004)

All these causes refer to groups, classes, and interests that decides public politics
Cultural Problem

Development model is also a *civilization model*, that builds consensus, and becomes *culture*: the way in which things are done (Goodenough, 1971, De Certau, 1996), and also in *habitus* (Bordieu, 1995)

*Ways of living* working against people without its consciousness

- Fetishist of money (Lopezllera, 2001 Greco, 1989 Lietaer, 2001)
- Consume system (Sahllins)
- Abandon of self consumption activities (Shiva, 2005, Stren, 2001)
- Comfort as less effort (Baudrillard, 1969; Foucauld, 1970 Sarlo, 1998)
- Garbage as trash (Mena, 1985)
- Problem concerns to everyone
Xochimilco: natural and cultural patrimony of humanity is in a serious risk of extinction.

• Located in the south of Mexico city, and almost the only remaining part of the great lake of Mexico.
• The lake begins at the bottom of the chichinautzin sierra that divides the state of Morelos from the valley of Mexico, and it is an important area of aquifers recharge.
• Since the XI century it was used for agricultural production in a unique system of floating islands.
• The Xochimilcas an indigenous pueblo, were in Mexico valley long after the arrival of Mexicans and they are probably the remainders of Teotihuacán Empire.
• Xochimilcas build chinampas, artificial islands of about 1 hundred meters large and 20 wide, surrounded by apantles (narrow channels) and canales, used for transportation of people and food.
• Till the beginning of XX century it remained one canal that join Xochimilco with the center of Mexico city, today it is a cars way.
Mexico Lake
Channel
The beginning of the end

- Xochimilco is a lake under which runs underground water
- At the beginning of XX century as Mexico city begun to grow the authorities exploit the resource.
- The continuous extraction of water from the underground, produce that some parts begun to subsidence while others seem to emerge as the water that cover the subsidence islands was at less level
- Almost all the *ejido* (a social form of owning land) was lost as a production area.
- As the lands are inside of Mexico city near a highway, part of the ground was sold, but in appearance invaded by urban settlements and it terrifying way of consumption and living.
- Soon the *canales and apantles*, so important for transporting and keeping the humidity, were covered with all kind of trash
- Not much longer the water was contaminated and the lake in process of euthrification. Some unique spices, as white fish and axolote, in risk of extinction, and the agricultural activity seriously damage by the contamination of water and soil
In search of solutions

- In 1991 the authority of Mexico city expropriated almost all the remaining area of Xochimilco ejido and build a park

- As the peasants said that they still wanted to produce, in the other side of the lake near Iztapalapa, a productive area of 120 has with irrigation was habilitated, but never used, because it seem to be more interesting its commercialization for urbanization, so one political leader begun to used as a deposit of solid trash and construction rubble.
• This is hard to stop because in Xochimilco there is no law.
• The rivers, lakes, islands, and coast seem to be under the rule of federal authority, but in 1942 there was a decree that transferred the jurisdiction of the lake to the city government, that by that time was also federal. Now the city is autonomous and the local authorities are elected but still don’t have jurisdiction over police.
• Besides under definition about who concerns application of law, there is neither no law that regulates what to do or not in the lake.
• So no one rules in Xochimilco Lake and leaders and individuals continue speculating with land.
What will happen if the Xochimilco Lake disappears?

- It is only important as a cultural and natural patrimony of humanity?, definitively not.
- It’s also useful as a water mirror next to the city that provides humidity.
- Is useful to conserve green areas that process de air.
- Is useful for producing food near the city.
II the Mexican way of urbanization

- Call invasion, in fact was a planned a tolerated process organized by leaders of political parties or social organizations.
- What happened: the private urbanization was expensive and government couldn’t or didn’t want to offer urban soil at lower prices.
- Besides the soil available was illegal or not able to be sell, federal zones or ejidos, the owners were only possessors.
- The solution was “darle la vuelta” make a turn, create a fact. Some people build their houses in a not legal area, but in reality they buy it to ejidatarios or leaders, and throw a long time of negotiation the authorities recognized them, and permit them to build the urbanization, introduction of water, drainage, streets.
This way was useful for every one

- The immigrants got a house
- The government didn’t need to invest in urbanization
- The leaders own money and power
- And people was strongly controlled because they were afraid of being removed

Consequences still now
Why a Water problem?

- The new neighborhoods begun to grown in hills, and as they made their urbanization as they could, without technical assessorial, designed it as is it was in the plain in grid, instead of circuits. streets come down from high in a straight line.
- As immigrants come to the city to be modern they cover all with concrete and didn’t live ground to absorb water.
- When it rains the water look for its way to the streets, that become in caudal rivers or falls, that carry down cars, people, and trash that cover the drainage, and form lakes in the lower parts.
- Rain becomes a problem to people because it is dangerous, but people becomes a problem for water because they cover every space with concrete and didn’t leave water what it ought to do, come inside the ground and become underground water.
- A large part, almost all the rain water goes to de drainage and not to underground, and there it joins with black waters and is through out of the valley and send to Hidalgo state.
- While for the needs of Mexico population water is imported from far away, with serious risks for population that suffers lacks of the liquid in dry station.
- People need to buy water it and carry home.
Cultural patterns or social facts that impact vulnerability

- Lack of law and regulation
- Broking existent law
- Development policy
- Modernization
- Cultural patterns
- Trash
- Concrete
- Ambition and money as a goal
What to do

**Services: eco-efficiency regulation**
- Avoid soil impermeabilization by concrete.
- Adequate Technologies

**Urban administration**

**Construction Regulation**
- Build surface
- Green areas
- Materials
- Ecothechnics

**Territorial Planning**
- Builted and open areas
- Central and peripheral areas
- Low density areas with biological corridors

Nothing will be useful or enough if the urbanization and business interest persist with its pressings corruption of leaders, authorities and even people when they ought to do “good business”
Cultural problem

- Capitalism (and its extreme version neoliberalism) as a model focus in profit is bad
- Modernizing ideology is worse

Makes people accomplice its own vulnerability and risk

If profit is important, to exploit nature and people becomes a rational choice

New culture and ideology towards “dignified and sustainable livehoods

Different logic (Sahlins, 1998)
A new economy: different names, same search

- **Social** (Wautier, 2003);
- **Solidarity** (Hascoët, 2000; Mance, 2003; Singer, 2003; Gaiger, 2003; Cohelo, 2003; Melo Lisboa, 2003; Del Río, 1999);
- **Moral** (Lechat, 2003);
- dignified and sustainable (Barquin y Collin 1996; López Llera, 2004);
- **Autogestiva** (Alburquerque, 2003; Castro Trajano y Alves de Carbalho, 2003);
- **Participative** (Albert, 2002 y 2003);
- **Popular** (Sarria Icaza y Tiriba, 2003);
- **Sustainable** (Milanez, 2003);
- **Local** (Hernan y Olguin, 2002; de Jesús, 2003; Vargas Hernández, 2002; Schönwälder 1997);
- **Comunitary** (Esteva, 1994);
- **Endogeno** (Godart, Ceron, Vinaker y Passaris, 1987); **Economía de Trabajo** (Coraggio, 2003);
- **Social and solidarity** (Reas, 2004; Foro Social Mundial, 2004, Rippes, 2005).
Different logics

- Production: money
- Free trade and competition, credit as debt
- Consume: waste, use and throw, comfort
- Work, as human realization,
- Fair trade. Reciprocity, hospitality, alternative money
- Responsible
Social and solidarity Economy

Social: builds society, relations
- asociation: producers-consumers
- Object: satisfaction needs. (basic-simbolic)

Solidarity with
- Human being: new jobs for future generations
- nature: reproducción and conservation
- Culture: identity, diversity
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