

25 years of *Canastas Comunitarias*: conflict between civic- and state-led food sovereignty in Ecuador

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Abstract (max 1,015 characters)

Faced with growing concerns over modernization, there is growing international interest in institutionalizing healthier, more sustainable food through state-led initiatives. The authors summarize 25 years of *Canastas Comunitarias* (Community Food-baskets) - a wholesale purchasing system that emerged in Ecuador in 1987. Initially, 25 families from poor neighborhoods in Riobamba created the *Canastas* for cost saving, leading to substantial reductions in food outlays and other benefits. Tied to Ecuador's historic financial crisis in the early 2000s, word of this experience spread, giving birth to the *Canasta Comunitaria Utopía*, a foundation charged with enabling a national movement. Following a 2008 Constitutional mandate for food sovereignty, the *Canastas* entered a third phase: government appropriation. In examining this evolution, we find fundamental conflict between civic and government-led *Canastas*, placing into question the possibility of seeking the required institutional change through state means.