

TERRITORIAL VIEW OF THE SPANISH CINEGETIC BOOM, 1970-1989

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Results of research referring to the evolution of the hunt in Spain since 1960 permit us to confirm that the hunt is an important leisure time activity and one of rural recreation with a long tradition and cultural roots. Besides, it has experienced a strong growth and expansion in Spain since the decade of the sixties, and above all since 1970, with great incidence and territorial diffusion (Spanish cinegetic boom).

Because of the particular character of the activity and the necessary bases for its development, it has been converted into a development of the land, of agrarian exploitation, and a source, therefore, of agrarian income, fundamental for the rural environment and especially in some Spanish regions. In fact, currently, in the Law for the sustainable development of the rural environment of 2007 its potential for motivating economic diversification in rural areas is recognized.

At the same time, the hunt is a natural resource that contains numerous connections with the conservation of nature as is demonstrated in the fact that zones of high landscape value, under the same measures of protection currently, coincide with large spaces of private property where hunting has been a traditional activity that has implied a form of conservation of nature.

One can not understand the extraordinary development achieved by hunting in Spain during the period of the cinegetic boom without the judicial support of the Hunting Law of 1970, which modernized the cinegetic precepts contained in the previous Hunting Law of 1902. There appears a new vision of the hunt as an «appreciable and acceptable» income so that hunting wealth would not enter into conflict with agricultural, forest and stockbreeding wealth, being compatible, at the same time, with its adequate conservation and promotion.

This period, which coincides with the cinegetic boom, is key to an understanding and analysis of the intense transformations undergone by this activity and the evolution of the hunt in Spain during the last quarter of the twentieth century and up until today: administrative decentralization, approval of regional hunting laws, insertion of the hunt into the policies of conservation of the natural resources and the protection of the wild fauna and the obligatory nature of technical plans for hunting, such as instruments of cinegetic systematization.

I. THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE HUNT AND THE SPANISH CINEGETIC BOOM

There are many facts that permit one to confirm the strong recent development, and the territorial incidence and diffusion, of the hunt in Spain since the mid nineteen-sixties until today. This phenomenon has been called the Spanish cinegetic boom by López Ontiveros and analyzed by him in its most general and basic aspects from the perspective of the geography of the hunt and in the context of Spanish agrarian geography. Also, a reduced number of geographers have studied this activity, in some cases centering on some of the most concrete aspects and, in others, on territorial studies. However, there hardly exist studies on the effects and the multiple implications that hunting in Spain has had in recent years from the territorial perspective, although with important differences, as a consequence of the application of the model of cinegetic structure established by the Hunting Law of 1970.

Thus, the only specific references —indicators, causes, and stages— to the Spanish cinegetic boom have been made by López Ontiveros, although I myself presented the principal indicators that permitted us to verify the growing development of hunting activity since the beginning of the nineteen-seventies.

In order to determine further the general aspects of the characterization of the Spanish cinegetic boom it is necessary to begin from the analysis of the situation of the hunt during the decade of the nineteen-sixties since it permits us to conclude what were the existing tendencies and obstacles to attending to the growing demand for the hunt, and, in that context, what role was the Hunting Law of 1970 going to play. This new hunting law opted for a model that sought to produce more hunting and not put too many administrative limitations on its practice, perhaps because of the populist nature of the Franquist regime in some aspects. For these two reasons it was a question of a boom that was desired by many sectors involved in this activity and, in a way, expected if a new legislative framework was approved that would promote and establish the basic necessary principles for its development. However, although it was desired that the new law favor and make possible the practice of hunting for the constantly growing demand, its effects created, in this aspect, a very different result when considering the economic possibilities of hunters.

Geographers who have studied topics related to the hunt refer to its large recent development, a *Fac.* That has converted it into a leisure time activity that is very relevant but that has intense and varied territorial implications. There is an implicit agreement about the idea of the boom, but it is not mentioned specifically and it is not expressed in chronological detail. Research studies state, effectively, that there has been a cinegetic boom in Spain. However, the references to its beginnings present some ambiguities and contradictions, especially if it is connected to the indicators that are most utilized to verify it, since all of them, with the exception of hunting licenses, for which data exists since the nineteen-forties, stem from the decade of the seventies.

When referring to the recent growth of hunting activity in Spain, López Ontiveros affirms that in 1970, the year in which the new Hunting Law was passed, the great expansion with regard to the progressive growth of the activity after the civil war had already taken place and converted it into one of the most important activities of rural recreation. Also, López Ontiveros considers that the boom *is not a homogeneous stage but on the contrary has been configured according to periods of characteristics slightly different.* From our point of view,

the gestation of this rapid development of cinegetic activity and all that goes with is found in the second half of the decade of the sixties, although it begins in 1970 because the boom is, mainly, the result of the approval and posterior application of the Hunting Law of 1970. Perhaps the most revealing data of the *boom*, along with the number of hunters that had been growing since previous years, will be the spectacular growth of the surface submitted to a special regime with regard to that surface that was occupied until then under the measures of hunting reserves and prohibitions. Also, the model imposed by the Law is responsible for the administration and conduct of hunting during the period from 1970-1989.

It is very difficult to denote precisely the end of the boom because with the transference of responsibilities with respect to hunting in the autonomous communities and the disappearance of ICONA statistics of this organism cease to be published. However, some facts, like the drop in the number of hunting licenses after 1985, the tendency toward reduction or stabilization of the surface of terrain submitted to a special regime, especially that of private reserves, and the reduction in the rise of prices for hunting, given the high values that had been reached, all seem to demonstrate that the expansive behavior of the strictly cinegetic indicators begins to decelerate in the second half of the nineteen-eighties. Simultaneously, the effects of the economic recuperation that began in Spain in 1985-86 and the real estate boom affect the prices of rural estates and hunting until the crisis that arrives at the beginning of the nineties. As a consequence, the most operative date to denote the end of the boom would be 1989. This year coincides with the approval of Law 4/89 for the Conservation of Nature and Wild Flora and Fauna, which introduces two very important modifications to the Hunting Law of 1970—the implantation of regional hunting licenses and obligatory technical hunting plans—and with the date of the first regional hunting law, in Asturias, a new period in the recent evolution of the hunt is begun in Spain.

II. THE CAUSES OF THE CINEGETIC BOOM AND THE HUNTING LAW OF 1970

In 1981 López Ontiveros organized the causes of expansion of Spanish hunting in three groups: those that were common to hunting and recreational expansion; those that were specific to Spanish hunting: general geographic causes —physical and low demographic density— and agrarian aspects that have favored the expansion of hunting —the adaptation of the structure of the property of a large part of the Southern Subplateau and the Sierra Morena for the creation of reserves according to the dimensions demanded by the Hunting Law and the effect of the agrarian crisis on the growth of cinegetic spaces—; and other reasons: the consolidation of ICONA as an organism charged with the systematization of the hunt, the Hunting Law of 1970, and the limited taxation.

In our opinion, and using as a reference point one of the most decisive signs of the boom, the fact that about 80% of Spanish territory is affected by terrain that is submitted to a special regime, the causes set forth by López Ontiveros, and more concretely the ones denoted as specific, have to be further studied in order to explain the boom in a global manner, since they are especially valid for the justification of the transformation and principal orientation of many of the rural spaces toward a cinegetic exploitation of large scale hunting. However, if one began with the superficial distribution of the lands that are submitted to a special regime of all of our territory according to hunting exploitation —about 38 million hectares—

, one finds that approximately 86% of them, dominated mostly by private reserves, are dedicated to small scale hunting —almost 33 million hectares— and affect a surface that is considerably superior to that of large scale hunting in all of the autonomous communities, with the exception of Asturias and Cantabria. Taking into consideration the large diffusion of small scale hunting, some of whose species find their habitat on the plains, with agricultural exploitation and structures of small and mid-size properties, it would be fitting to ask what other specific reasons, of a geographic nature, might explain the large expansion of terrains that were made the object of cinegetic exploitation in Spain since 1970.

The most specific geographic causes noted by López Ontiveros regarding rehazos for the boom are based on the fact that the few territorial studies of recent hunting exploitation centers on midsize mountainous areas of the southern half of the country. To these one would have to add, besides widening the physical geographic causes to add those that constitute the particular habitat of small scale hunting, other reasons that from our point of view have been fundamental and essential to the production of the cinegetic boom and that are contained in the regulations of the Hunting Law in two concrete aspects: the need to obtain a hunting license and the creation of a measure regarding private hunting reserves. Two conditions established by the Hunting Law of 1970 for the institution of private hunting reserves have been definitive in the explanation of this expansion of hunting: the possibility of an association of owners of cinegetic terrain and the demand for minimal elevated surfaces. However, although it was hoped that this law would favor and make possible the practice of the hunt so as to meet the constantly growing demand, its effects produced a situation of *chiaroscuro* related to the economic possibilities of hunters and brought about a failure of the so called «social» hunt because of the strong competition of the private reserves.

There are three fundamental aspects in the Hunting Law of 1970 that allow us to understand why the so called Spanish cinegetic boom came about: 1) the administrative facility for obtaining a hunting license and its low cost; 2) the creation of the measure of the private hunting reserve and in particular certain aspects of its regulation: the possibility of the land's belonging not to just one proprietor but to many who have joined together voluntarily, the demand for minimal elevated surfaces and the addition of interlocking estates; 3) the low taxation that would be imposed on hunting lands.

This cinegetic boom presented two contradictory faces. Together with the indicators of strong growth appear data that the predicted growth did not take place and that even signify, although there were many expectations placed on it, the failure of the so called «social» hunt, that is to say, the opening of the hunt to an innumerable collective of modest hunters. Another of the main theoretical objectives of the Hunting Law of 1970. This is clearly demonstrated by the evolution suffered by the surface that was dedicated to social hunting reserves and the lands submitted to hunting norms controlled once the Law was approved.

However, although the purpose of the law was to open the possibilities for hunting to all hunters, regardless of their economic status, by means of a diversified model of hunting lands —lands of common exploitation, private, social and local reserves under the supervision of controlled measures for the hunt—, in practice the failure of the theoretical model conceived by legislators to offer hunting to the least wealthy, stems from the effects that legalization had, and even more the means of regulation of the former municipal reserves.

The measure for local reserves was hardly developed due to the possibilities of the institution of private reserves through the grouping of lands of several proprietors, a more simple mechanism for creating municipal boundaries. The private reserve was considered, definitively, as a type of lever that made it possible to mark off lands of many different types of owners.

III. INDICATORS OF THE CINEGETIC BOOM

The analysis of the cinegetic boom is carried out using three types of indicators: hunting licenses, cinegetic terrain, and its ownership and economic indicators.

The evolution of the number of hunting licenses constitutes one of the clearest and most useful indicators for the analysis of the scope of the cinegetic boom for two fundamental reasons. In the first place, because although the number of licenses does not coincide exactly with that of hunters, it does show the level of interest or demand to practice this activity in each province or region. Until 1988 the approximate number of hunters was equivalent to 95% of the total number of licenses, a percentage that is represented by licenses of the A and B classes. Secondly, because we have access to a statistical series of the total number of licenses for Spain since the nineteen-forties, even though its separation by provinces only exists since 1973.

The large difusión throughout all our country of surfaces that are susceptible to cinegetic exploitation constitutes one of the fundamental, if not the most important, indicators of the so called cinegetic boom because of the important territorial and economic repercussions it has had. With regard to the evolution of cinegetic terrain in the period under analysis, 1970-1989, it is fitting to underline the following conclusions: an elevated surface submitted to a special regime and the scarcity of lands for common exploitation; the tendency toward stabilization and smaller increments of the surface marked off since 1987; and the existence of a varied typology of hunting lands with a very unequal territorial diffusion along with the dominant protagonism of private hunting reserves. Although given their denomination of private reserves it would seem that their ownership is private, in fact it is not always the case since the typology of the ownership is very varied in these types of reserves. As we have seen during the period of the boom in the private hunting reserves of the province of Ciudad Real, although the ownership of the majority corresponds to physical persons, others also appear: anonymous societies, societies that organize hunts, associations of hunters, municipalities—and other public institutions—, associations of proprietors, local boards, former agrarian chambers, hunting committees, limited societies, religious institutions or financial entities. Thus, during this period, and before the approval of the regional hunting laws, under the measures of the private hunting reserve there were hidden ownerships of many different, and in consequence, diverse form of the management and exploitation of the hunt.

With regard to economic indicators, the following may be identified: economic evaluation of the activity; cinegetic evaluation of the species of wild fauna given the norms that were set by the standards in order to define the cinegetic value of the animals being hunted; the value of the cinegetic exploitation with regard to the taxes placed on private hunting reserves; the value of the hunting activity; the reevaluation of the hunting terrain; the rise in the number of

hunting organizations; the appearance of associations of producers of hunts; and the diffusion of hunting networks.

IV. STAGES OF THE CINEGETIC BOOM AND ITS REGIONAL INCIDENCE

Motivated by the Hunting Law of 1970, the cinegetic boom in Spain coincides, thus, with the period of the general application of the law in the entire nation until 1989. Together with the expansive indicators of the development of hunting activity in those years and the increment of the economic value of hunting, the analysis of what happens in this sector during this period is articulated, from out point of view, starting from three fundamental factors—the transferal of authority with regard to hunting to the autonomous communities, the rise, from 1973, in ecological pressure and the attacks against hunting and hunters, and the ratification of international agreements regarding the conservation of wild fauna—that result in the approval of the Law of Conservation of Natural Spaces and the flora and Wild Fauna that, in a certain manner, marks the determination of one of the sharpest conflicts that affected hunting since 1975, which was the pressure of ecologists that placed antithetically hunters on the one hand and those who search to protect and conserve nature on the other.

In general terms, this period of rapid growth and development of the hunt was marked by numerous problems on two fronts: the internal, within the activity itself, with diverse types of conflicts, and the external, since hunting is attacked, above all by ecologists, as being responsible for many environmental problems.

In turn, the period may be subdivided into three stages: 1970-1980; 1982-1985; and 1986-1989.

The establishment of autonomous licenses beginning in 1989 allows us to know, from the the beginning of the nineties, to what regions hunters go to hunt outside of their own region, and, therefore, the autonomous communities that have emigrating or immigrating characters. Of those regions that receive hunters from without, Castile-La Mancha stands out markedly, given its important potential for cinegetic resources, with an offer of diversity and quality, and also given its geographic location and proximity to Madrid. In the analysis realized of the flow of hunters among regions, these other regions also show to be receptors of hunters: Castile y León, Extremadura, Aragón, La Rioja, Navarra, Andalusia, and Asturias. On the contrary Madrid, the Basque Country, Catalonia, and the Valencian Community appear as clearly emigratory.

If these data are placed in relation with the surface occupied by the different types of terrain controlled by special norms until 1989, especially private hunting reserves, and with what these latter signify with regard to their respective regional geographical surfaces, one may conclude that there are autonomous communities —Castile and León, Castile-La Mancha, Andalusia and Extremadura— in which the surface of private reserves totals almost 65% of the total occupied by this type of terrain in Spain. Furthermore, the four cited regions reach elevated percentages of the regional surface occupied by private reserves: in the case of the first two it is 75%, Extremadura 69%, and Andalusia 63%.