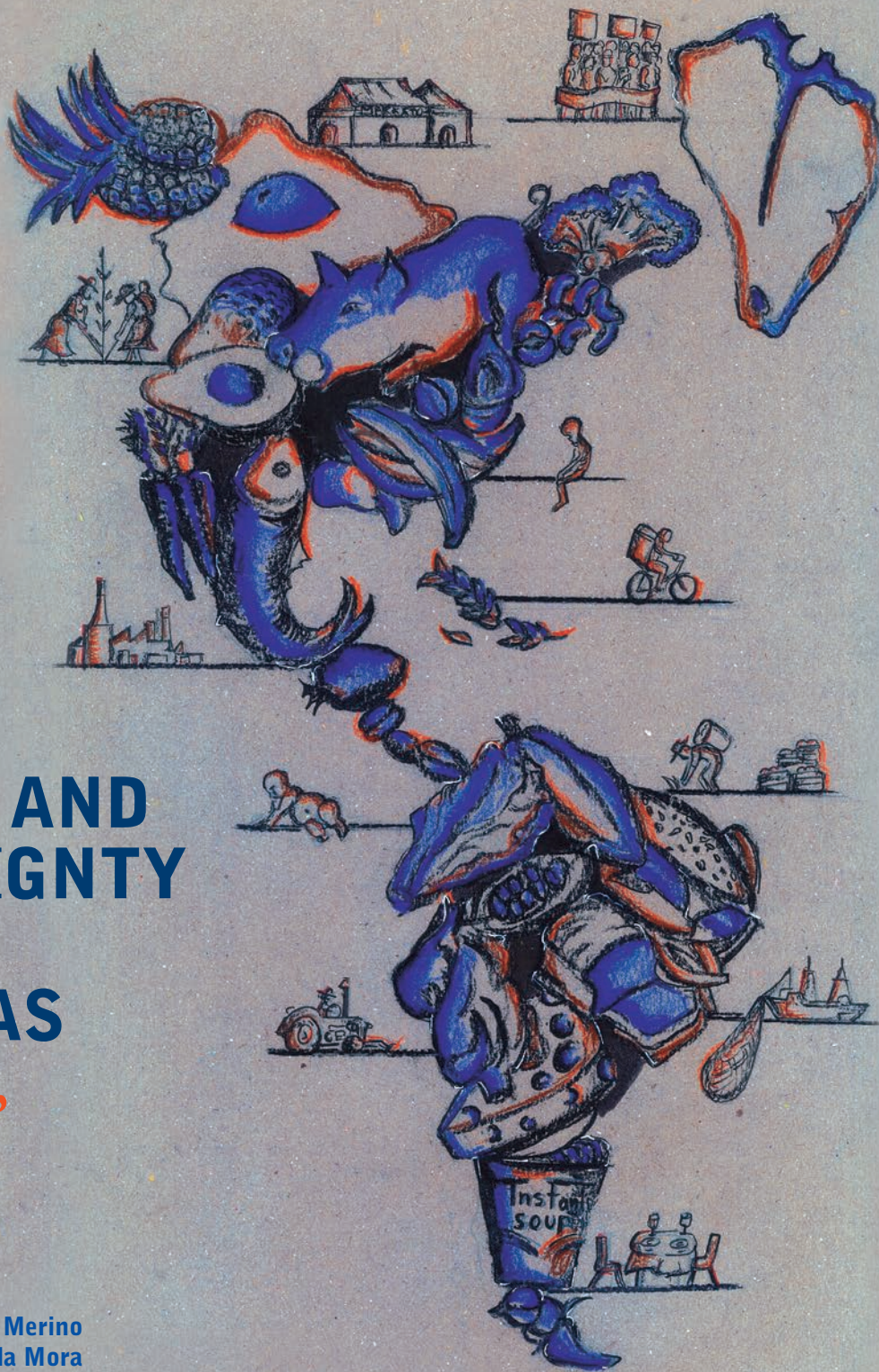


FOOD JUSTICE AND SOVEREIGNTY IN THE AMERICAS

Inequalities, Food, and Agriculture

Delphine Prunier
Julie Le Gall
Ayari Genevieve Pasquier Merino
Dulce María Espinosa de la Mora
Coordinators



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PROLOGUE

The issue of food insecurity in the Americas is the result of social, economic, political and environmental processes at both the local and global level that traverse food systems from farm to table and tend to fragment societies and territories.

This book reopens the discussions carried out during the congress which took place in Mexico City from October 28 to 31, 2019 and was a space for reflection and debate on political transformation in the Americas, global change, and the new approaches to sustainability that the Sustainable Development Goals proposed by the United Nations entail. The dialogues stemmed from the notions of food sovereignty and food justice, which come from contrasting academic, political, and geographic contexts but share a strong interest in the social consequences of the paradoxes of food systems and question, with the same level of commitment, the processes that prevent or promote the entire population's access to quality food at different scales.

The JySALA Congress was the result of significant inter institutional collaboration between the Centro de Estudios Mexicanos y Centroamericanos (Embassy of France in Mexico), l'École Urbaine de Lyon (Lyon University, France), Programa Universitario de Estudios sobre la Ciudad, Coordinación Universitaria para la Sustentabilidad (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México), and the Heinrich Böll Foundation.

The texts that compose this book were nourished by discussions held in three keynote speeches, six working groups, and three transversal round tables at the congress in which the problems the food system faces and the processes that can improve access to agriculture and food were debated from perspectives that vary in their theoretical positions and territorial references.

Renowned international speakers addressed some of the major lines of discussion on food justice and sovereignty: Renato Maluf, Ricardo Salvador, Jesús Guzmán, Salvador Cisneros, and Kristin Reynolds. The working groups held were: Land, Water, Agrobiodiversity, and Technology; Work and Employment in Agriculture and the Agrifood Industries; Distribution, Marketing, and Access to Quality Foods; Territories and Inequalities in Access to Food; Food Heritage, Identities, and Social Inequality; Bodies and Food: Beauty Standards, Health, Environment. The discussion was further enriched at three transversal round tables focused on the ethics, methods, and funding of research, public policies, and socio ecological impacts. In these panels the work of the discussion groups was reported and debated in plenary according to the particular focus

of each. While this book accounts for the discussions held in each of these spaces, it isn't a memoir of the work presented at the congress. The texts that comprise it are synthetic re-elaborations of the initial proposals that were then enriched by the collective reflection stemming from the exchange of ideas.

As part of the materials that complete this book is a selection of photographs by the Chamba Collective, whose members proposed a sensitive look at the inequalities and different forms of exploitation that transverse the entire agrifood chain, in particular in the Northamerican subcontinent. With the Exhibit 'Provecho! Geographies of Exploitation and Struggle in the Agrifood Chain' at the National Museum of World Cultures (MNC) shown parallel to the JySALA Congress, the Collective joined photographers, academics, conceptual artists, journalists, and other actors engaged with civil society to offer a striking visual platform where the social sciences, art, and activism dialogue.

This book presents a critical view on some of the most relevant current lines of discourse on food and agriculture and ultimately seeks to promote reflections on the future of food systems, its actors, the spaces and dynamics implied, as well as efforts that are currently underway in the American continent.

María del Coro Arizmendi Arriaga

Head of Coordinación Universitaria para la Sustentabilidad - UNAM

(April 8, 2019 - February 17, 2020)

Dawid Danilo Bartelt

Director of Fundación Heinrich Böll Ciudad de México - Mexico and the Caribbean

Genaro Javier Delgado Campos

Director of Programa de Estudios sobre la Ciudad - UNAM

Michel Lussault

Director of l'École Urbaine de Lyon, Universidad de Lyon, Francia

Bernard Tallet

Director of Centro de Estudios Mexicanos y Centroamericanos

INTRODUCTION

Food Justice and Sovereignty in the Continent of Inequalities

Julie Le Gall

Centro de Estudios Mexicanos y Centroamericanos (Cemca)

Mexico

École Urbaine de Lyon-

France

Delphine Prunier

Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales - UNAM

Programa Universitario de Estudios sobre la Ciudad - unam

Mexico

Ayari Genevieve Pasquier Merino

Centro de Investigaciones Interdisciplinarias en Ciencias y Humanidades - UNAM Coordinación Universitaria para la Sustentabilidad - UNAM

Mexico

Dulce M. Espinosa de la Mora

Facultad de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales, Centro de Estudios Antropológicos - UNAM

Mexico

In the Americas, food insecurity issues are presently expressed in the paradoxical coexistence of hunger, malnutrition, and obesity. This panorama is part of a scenario where there is a growing dependence on the supply of basic foods and, at the same time, reported positive agricultural trade balances. The case of Mexico is a prime example. On one hand, it's one of the nations in the Americas with the highest rates of excess weight and obesity, which, according to the National Survey on Health and Nutrition (ENSANUT), affect between 39 and 36% of the adult population over the age of 20. On the other hand, the same survey reports that 56% of the country's homes have some degree of food insecurity and 14% of children under the age of five are small for their age, which is an indicator of chronic undernourishment that has remained essentially stable since 2006 (ENSANUT, 2018). It's worth noting that these indicators are distributed unequally in the

national territory (De Schutter, 2011), with rural regions and indigenous populations being the most affected (Bertrán, 2010). Moreover, as a result of the agricultural and trade policies implemented over the last two decades, Mexico imports 45% of its food, which places it in a situation of food vulnerability and benefits the interests of big agricultural players at the expense of over four million small family units (FAO, 2016).

These phenomena, which occur throughout the continent, are the result of social, economic, political and environmental processes at a local and global scale that impact food systems from farm to table and tend to massively fragment societies and territories. Many of these phenomena have their origins in the colonial period (Slocum, 2011), with its profound repercussions on power relations, on land and resource distribution, and on current social, racial, ethnic, and gender inequalities. In a political and economic regional context traversed, in 2019 and 2020, by vehement social movements (Black Lives Matter in the United States, “estallido” in Chile, protests in Bolivia, among others) which arise and denounce the growing social injustice that exclusively affects the most vulnerable people by the system that created them, food issues emerge as powerful tools of analysis as well as alternative experiences. They’re daily practices that describe established systems, the populations’ exposure to risk, but also their capacity to resist and adapt.

Stemming from Food Studies in the social sciences and from a perspective that aims to encompass theory, practice, and art, this book is a space for reflection and debate on the subject of inequalities in access to food, the marginalization of farmers in the continent, and the socio-environmental consequences of these phenomena. It is also a space to share, discuss, and imagine opportunities to solve these problems. The text joins efforts towards an analysis that transcends binary and normative thinking of ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ forms of food production and consumption, aiming to analyze food systems in their complexity and paying attention to the interdependence of the field and the table.

The book has the following specific objectives:

- To question, at different scales, the processes that hinder or support the entire population’s access to food, in sufficient quantity and quality, with dignity and justice (social, spatial, and environmental);
- To give an account of the transversal discussions and reflections held with a particular focus on food (in)security, justice, or sovereignty.
- To create a space for reflection and debate in the Americas about political transformations, global change, and new approaches to sustainability implied by the Sustainable Development Goals proposed by the United Nations to reach zero hunger by 2030.

Theoretical perspectives. Definitions to delve deeper into the analysis of food insecurity as we face growing inequalities in access to foods

The definition of food security proposed by the FAO in 1996 World Food Summit is one of the most common references in Food Studies. It marks that at the individual, household, national and global level, “Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.” While earlier definitions that emerged in the 1970s in the context of a population boom centered on the production and availability of food, the adoption and dissemination of this new common frame of reference keeps in mind

the physical and economic access to food and considers not only the quantity but also the quality of available and consumed food, as well as conditions related to the physical harnessing of ingested food.

In the last two decades, the conception and debates surrounding food security have changed substantially. Despite the objectives established by the main international organizations in 1996 (World Food Summit) and 2000 (Millennium Development Goals) to reduce the number and ratio of undernourished people, hunger has increased annually in the world since 2014. Parallel to that, 9% of the world population continues to suffer malnutrition (FAO, 2019). The persistence of undernourishment, along with alarming obesity rates that affect almost 6% of children and over 13% of adults in the world (FAO, 2019) and the geographic contrasts at all scales, impose the need to reassess these analytic frameworks, especially considering that global food production has increased constantly since 1960 (Since then, the production of wheat and rice has tripled and corn production has increased five-fold).

Since the mid 1990s, the definitions of food insecurity also have also focused on the transitory, seasonal, or chronic character of the nutritional insufficiency of ingested foods, in quantity or quality, and having more subjective criteria, such as cultural preferences and the impressions or representations related to this basic need, has been proposed. What stands out particularly is that food security, as a basic need, has been reaffirmed as an essential human right: in 1948, the United Nations included access to food among individual human rights and collective responsibility, and in 1996 it posed that every person has the fundamental right to be protected against hunger and to have an adequate standard of living when it comes to food.

Conversely, the debates and evolution of these definitions have led to other questions, such as: *food security for whom?* The importance of considering multiple territorialities, sociocultural diversity, and scales at play, for production as well as consumption, has always been emphasized, granting less importance to the Nation, seeking to recognize the dynamic role of peoples or communities as sovereign entities (Edelman, 2014: 967). Furthermore, the matter of borders and the reconfiguration of globalized agrifood chains appears as essential: the issue of access to food and conditions of agricultural production cannot ignore the subject of the localization of agrifood systems, the logics of interdependence in international export trade, or the future of short chains that privilege the local scale.

In this sense, new concepts have been developed with an impulse that is tightly linked to social and political movements that seek to generate alternative proposals for fighting food insecurity and its repercussions. Among these are the concepts of “food sovereignty” and “food justice.” The approach of food sovereignty emerges as an answer to the limits of imposed global strategies to guarantee food security, emphasizing the importance of the right of peoples, of their countries or States, to define their own agrarian and food policies, without ‘dumping’ from other countries. Some examples are the Mexican government’s Programa Nacional de Alimentación in 1983, Central American peasant social movements at the end of the 1980s (Edelman, 2014), and Vía Campesina at the World Food Summit in 1996. Food justice is a movement that seeks to respond to the limits of the global food system, to sustainable food alternatives, and the rise in food access differences. It highlights the need to equitably distribute the benefits and risks associated with the ways in which food is produced, processed, transported, distributed, and consumed (Gottlieb and Joshi, 2010).

After 15 years of continuous decrease, the reversal of the hunger curve in 2014 (FAO, 2020), the intensification of differences between geographic areas in relation to conflicts and natural disasters (FAO, 2018) as

well as the global situation generated by the Covid-19 pandemic (FAO, 2020) continue to pose new issues and points of reference. Two theoretical approaches deserve special attention.

In this context, it seems fruitful to encourage a dialogue on the notions of food justice and food sovereignty, which come from contrasting academic, political, and geographic contexts but share the same concerns in terms of inequalities related to access and the right to food as a basic need. In the international context in which the paradigm of sustainable development continues to dominate, these two concepts should also be questioned in light of sustainability: why do food justice and sovereignty cross sustainability without overlapping? In that regard, a double movement can be observed. On one hand, there's a growing concern for social and economic sustainability, which means that, in economic terms, proposals beyond "fair trade" or "fair price" are considered and there's now also a concern for remuneration that socially and humanely sustains producers, traders, consumers, their families, and communities. On the other hand, the theoretical frameworks and the practice of sustainability, like the alternative food movement, have been criticized by some members of the scientific community (Alkon, 2012; Tornaghi, 2014). As a matter of fact, the reservations radical researchers have towards the alternative food movement is one of the roots of the food justice movement (DuPuis and Goodman, 2005; Kato, 2013). A distortion is seen between the projects' rhetoric and their actual reach, since the absence or invisibilization of entire sectors of the population and spaces leads paradoxically to the reinforcement of the inequalities initially noted (Reynolds and Cohen, 2016) and makes the use of the concept of sustainability, including "social" sustainability, inoperative. Lastly, epistemological temporalities (and, undoubtedly, trends regarding dominant paradigms) are such that the intersection of justice and sovereignty today would resonate more with a thought framework connected to "global changes" than with sustainability.

Secondly, the definitions of both food justice and food sovereignty encompass a distributive dimension and a procedural dimension that deserve more collaborative work. While the initial approaches consider the "static" point of view of the distribution of food resources (food justice) and the associated independence and dependencies (food sovereignty), these could be complemented by a "dynamic" focus that emphasizes the spatial *processes* that created these situations (Hochedez and Le Gall, 2020). Cadieux and Slocum (2015) emphasize: "true food security is impossible without social justice being understood as one of the necessary starting points for analyses of, and solutions to, food insecurity." In this sense, "true food security" for consumers requires observing the conditions of food sovereignty and justice in the space they inhabit, which is to say, the social justice and spatial situation of these spaces. This proposal, focused on the processes that foster or limit food justice (Hochedez and Le Gall, 2016), requires, on one hand, more historical and comparative analysis in time and space and, on the other, more research centered on the same processes: marketing, political strategies, food initiatives and experiences, patrimonialization, among others. Nevertheless, beyond the theoretical proposal, the study of the processes that lead to greater food justice and sovereignty doesn't always lead to reflection on the next question, which is: how to move from food justice and sovereignty to food security? The scale of analysis is one of the barriers identified: while food justice is associated more with a scale of urban and metropolitan thought, food sovereignty refers to national spaces and is studied at the individual or social group level. There is an undeniable need to widen the interactions between these proposals, which also requires the capacity to cross scales of analysis.



▲
Bitácora de Guerra (War Log),
Stefano Morrone, 2017

Methodological perspectives. Reflection crosses agrifood systems with a focus on food and agriculture

The difficulties in accessing basic needs, as well as growing inequalities, go against all efforts to achieve greater human development. Facing the obvious limits of science as a driver of transformation, several theoretical proposals have argued for the need to develop a more integral view of the phenomena (UN, 2019). In regards to food, the relation between consumers and their diets has become more complex, which is why approaches segmented by product, discipline, sector, or institution, for example, have also become insufficient. The emergence of Food Studies has fostered the development of tools, methods, and concepts that promote multifactorial analyses and intersectional approaches. Proposing a joint work on food justice and food sovereignty means situating ourselves at a junction and, therefore, outlining common methodological frameworks.

This work invites readers to consider agriculture and food, in both rural and urban areas, from an approach that is systemic, interdisciplinary, and transversal to geographic contexts.

Agricultural systems turn out to be excellent spaces to analyze the processes that foster situations of food justice or injustice, food sovereignty or food dependency. This refers to all spaces, interactions, processes, and actors involved in food and supply (definition based on Rastoin and Gherzi, 2012). Their complexity is observed through an analysis by components and subcomponents: at the level of food production, transformation, elaboration, marketing, distribution, consumption, and recycling. Their material and immaterial dimensions are considered by including cultural, political, and legislative factors that create or reduce

food-related inequalities. By jointly considering the components of food systems, from the land to the individual and social body, according to their complexity and interdependencies, the relations between the city and the field are also included. In this respect, the problematization of relations (or absence of relation) between food, agriculture, justice, and sovereignty seem yet insufficient to be able to understand situations of food insecurity (Hochedez and Le Gall, 2016).

Encompassing the set of spaces of spaces and processes, from farm to table, from a systemic perspective, ambitiously invites us to take an interdisciplinary and transversal approach to geographic contexts. In terms of the interdisciplinary approach (a key aspect of food studies), this book proposes gathering a great heterogeneity of points of view: agronomy, nutrition, natural sciences, economics, political sciences and territorial management, social sciences related to agriculture, ecology, and food. The disciplinary panel of invited authors reflects the incorporation of ‘food matters’ to ‘agricultural matters’. In terms of the geographical, the works on food justice have been primarily conducted from the issues of Northamerican cities while food sovereignty challenges have been dealt with from the issues of productive and family farming, addressed from rural spaces in Latin America. The authors express themselves from several geographical contexts, where not just the definitions, but also the challenges and reach of food insecurity, justice, and sovereignty vary. Following an international dialogue, the results presented reflect differences to open new opportunities for common constructions, both academic and practical.

Working on food justice and food sovereignty simultaneously means, finally, summoning the common foundation of food systems: agriculture, its actors and spaces. The distribution of agricultural and productive systems, the employment conditions in agriculture, the possibilities of access, or its absence, to land and inputs as well as consumers’ markets, the modalities of spoliation or conservation or rural plots: all the entries express processes of domination and exclusion that are, too often, invisible. Following the work started on “agrifood justice” (Hochedez and Le Gall, 2016, 2020), this book then assumes a position that is not only methodological, but also represents a heuristic and political proposal.

Practical Perspectives. Two movements inspiring action.

Food justice and food sovereignty are both movements born from civil mobilizations (Gottlieb and Joshi, 2010), urban or rural, of local peasant struggles taken to the global scene (Vía Campesina, 2018) as a reaction to the dominant agrifood system. Both perspectives emphasize the impacts of big agrifood companies and representative organizations of the neoliberal economic system (WTO, IMF) to the exclusion of whole sectors of the population and, increasingly so, the climate. These movements, in which “environmental, food, social, and spatial issues” are joined (Paddeu, 2015), aim to be vectors of change and, beyond their objectives, to modify that “power geometry” (Slocum et al. 2016). In this sense, one of the main questions in the cross reflection on food justice and sovereignty is “praxis”: referring to “the melding of theory/reflection and practice/action as part of a conscious struggle to transform the world” (Wakefield, 2007, pg. 331, cited by Beisher and Corbett, 2016). Two big debates in this book help sketch their outlines.

The first debate refers to the type of actors represented in these movements. The movements for food justice and sovereignty have been driven (politically, scientifically) by underprivileged minorities (poor workers, women, peasants, among others), to give voice to their concerns. Likewise, Vía Campesina recalls the

following (2018): “More than individuals or non-profit organizations that ‘represent’ them, it’s the peasants and rural populations that make up the movements, organizations, and administrative structures of *Vía Campesina*.” The communities of interest adopt a variety of forms: producer organizations, consumer associations, networks, alternative financing institutions, etc. This book offers some lines to question the ways in which these movements are joined and built. It invites readers to be attentive to their representativeness.

In that regard, one of the main obstacles to food justice and sovereignty continues to be that the agrifood systems works because a great number of individuals are left in the shadows, invisible, not because they’re insufficiently organized, but because organizing would be too big a risk given the uncertainty of their economic, political, and administrative position. The following pages place emphasis on migrant workers in the agricultural, elaboration, and distribution sector, who went from being illegalized migrants to “essential workers” during the current Covid-19 pandemic, but without any resulting changes in their working conditions. Moreover, while we work on “intermediary” organizations, the reflection on the individuals that compose them or defend them is imperative. Nutritional issues remind us that individual bodies are the first to express the consequences of food injustices and the dependence on the global food system. Finally, community initiatives must also be observed in the light of the policies and orientations of national governments, like the Brazilian “Zero Hunger” program. The circulation between what happens at the scale of the bodies, at the level of intermediary organizations, as well as at the level of administrative or political entities, is an instrument to further link food justice, sovereignty, and insecurity.

The second debate invites us to explore the type of actions that promote food justice and sovereignty. The challenge is to decipher first the normative and often binary discourse that governs the way in which agriculture or food are considered (distinguishing between “good” and “bad” foods) and which is also present in the assessment of movements and organizations. While “alternative” actions are especially represented in terms of food justice and sovereignty, it’s also necessary to give visibility to activities, actions, actors, spaces, and structures that feed the greatest number of people (Heinisch, 2017): conventional agriculture, supermarkets, intermediaries, wholesale markets, food banks... do they serve only to denounce a system or also act as starting points for proposals that lead to a more inclusive system? If we think of alternative paths without considering the “existing” and “dominant”, we run the risk of reproducing systems reserved for an elite, of limiting ourselves in our proposals to exclude the lowest possible number of people from quality food and agriculture.

The crossing of views accompanies the reflection on the norm and alternatives to the norm: how does the margin vary in the power of election, of choice, according to the location of the actors in food systems, according to their economic, educational reference? A first proposal shows the role of the science/civil society intersection. Debates on research ethics and methodology draw a line between scientists and the dominating food system which is yet to be explored, because it is yet confusing. A second proposal refers to the science/art articulation (in this book represented by photography exhibitions) as a mediation and dissemination mechanism to bring to light those people who are “invisible” and the less studied issues in food systems. Thanks to a territorial anchoring of both proposals, the articulation of the academic world with other spheres appears as a form of praxis of food justice and sovereignty. What are, finally, the places for social criticism on agricultural and food issues? In this sense, we support Tornaghi’s proposal to examine the “experiences”, in particular daily ones, that “build opportunities or incentives to learn, evaluate, commit to and take control of their own nutrition” (Tornaghi, 2017).

These debates lead to a concern related to the spatial and temporal context in which this publication exists. We cannot allow ourselves to remain indifferent to the rise of inequalities, the intensification of debates, and the rise in tensions throughout the continent. The mechanisms of export agriculture, for example, entail social, psychological, and physical violence, whether we go back to the initial traumas of plantation economies or look towards current systems of drug cultivation. What are the risks of the praxis of food justice and sovereignty? What possibilities are there to empower increasingly marginalized populations, increasingly fragmented territories? The deterioration of the democratic process inevitably poses questions about the space that remains for a food democracy, for a citizen space for critical analysis and debate on the mechanisms that improve access to a better nutrition.

Regional perspective. American integrations and transitions

The American continent plays a key role in the emergence of the concepts of food justice and food sovereignty: revindications of food sovereignty arise in the south and demands for food justice in the United States. This book proposes a common reflection from the specificities of social, political, economic, and environmental organizations that characterize the continent from North to South. It also questions the pertinence of said concepts to understand the wide variety of situations currently linked to food insecurity in the American continent and the rest of the world (Edelman, 2016). Far from limiting ourselves to American case studies and authors, research from other continents offer comparative looks, to observe the circulation and reappropriation of concepts in other contexts as well as to clarify the situations of food injustices and dependencies in North and South America from diverse perspectives.

In all of Latin America, free trade agreements and treaties— those consolidated (MERCOSUR, 1991; ALBA-TCP, 2004, CAFTA, 2006-2009), emerging (SICA-EU, 2012; TPP, 2016), or renegotiated (NAFTA, 1994, now T-MEC, 2020)— are central to the organization of intra and extra continental trade relations, to the restructuring of the role of different actors linked to production and distribution, but also in territorial and social reconfigurations. Most of these integration policies were defined with neoliberal logics of trade openness, privileging comparative advantages and the specialization of productive spaces. However, for some time now, it has become evident that these integration policies have had negative and lasting impacts on family agriculture economies, rural societies, market dynamics, while they've dramatically transformed food practices and the relation between consumer and food producer, with strong impacts on health, well-fare, and the consumer's ability to decide.

Facing the public health challenges imposed by the double nutritional burden, closely linked to inequality in access to food, national political orientations play a fundamental role, at the local scale, in big cities, for examples, as well as at the national scale, from the point of view of the food security or dependency of a given country. In the context of different recent political transitions in the continent (Brazil, Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia, Honduras, United States, Bolivia...) we must closely observe the strategic orientations and the concrete measures that aim to influence food justice and sovereignty, in different case studies. Social upheavals entail a decline in food ("cacerolazo", "tortillazo", "verdulazo") and remind us that, at the root of social injustices and unequal power relations, the ghost of food insecurity and hunger is never very far away.

Structure of the book

This book is organized into three sections. The first section is composed of syntheses and reflections by the coordinators of the working groups at the JySALA Congress, with the goal of articulating the case studies presented by the participants on the central themes that structured our working days. We sought to present the whole range of components of agrifood systems, from food justice and sovereignty, on issues as diverse as disputes over natural resources, labor markets, food distribution and marketing, food heritage, and the relation between food, health, and bodies.

The second part of the book is composed of the contributions by the keynote speakers and the coordinators of transversal round tables, texts that help us nourish the debate on the future of food and agriculture. Their experiences and perspectives, from the social sciences, public policy, or the daily practice of agrifood system governance, offer us crossed viewpoints and comprehension tools from different geographies.

Finally, in the third section, we propose a glimpse of three original ways of addressing food justice and sovereignty, based on concrete experiences and direct relationships with the actors and territories of contemporary agrifood systems. We present a sensitive look at the inequalities and different forms of exploitation that traverse the entire agrifood chain, insisting on the need to promote a permanent dialogue between art, social movements, civil society, and academia in different social groups, cultural contexts, and latitudes.

Acknowledgements

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1. WORKING GROUPS

Reading the components of
agrifood systems through the lens
of food justice and sovereignty



▲
Serie Resistiendo al tiempo
(Resisting Time Series),
Gustavo Graf, 2018

Land, Water, Agrodiversity, and Agricultural Technology

Andrés León Araya

Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Políticos, Universidad de Costa Rica
Costa Rica

The project of modernity has been built upon the premise of the separation of society and nature to such an extent that the very idea of progress is conceptualized as the process of humans exiting their natural state. This has resulted in a utilitarian approach aimed towards the domination of nature and conceiving of nature as an array of resources that are separate from society but available for exploitation.

In the decades following World War II, the modernist agricultural project consolidated into a so-called “Green Revolution” that proposed applying industrial technological developments to food production, which in practice translated into an even greater separation of society and nature and the entrenchment of

the interpretation of the latter as a pool of available resources. This has led to the imposition in most rural areas of the world of a set of production practices and technology packages that have destroyed diverse and complex ways of existing in the world, which were based on different ways of relating to nature and oriented towards the production of an equally wide diversity of crops as well as material and non-material culture.

The dispossession project and the monocultures of the mind

With the imposition of this modernizing ‘Green Revolution’ in agriculture, what James O’Connor (1998), following Marx, called ‘the second contradiction of capitalism’, or the contradiction between the forces and relations of production, became readily apparent. In other words, capitalism, because of the way it organizes production, erodes the material conditions necessary for its own existence, namely the health of workers and the environment from which it extracts its raw materials. Some of the most visible effects of this process are deforestation, the loss of biodiversity, soil erosion, the contamination of water sources, the development of chronic illnesses among agricultural workers and the deterioration of their living conditions, as well as land dispossession and the forced displacement of many communities. To this list we can add some less visible consequences, such as the growing certainty of the rise in emergent diseases through zoonosis (disease transmission between nonhumans and humans) and the expansion of industrial meat production (see Ribeiro 2020 and Wallace et al. 2020), along with the massive loss of knowledge that has accompanied the loss of biodiversity, which Vandana Shiva (2012) calls “monocultures of the mind”.

This is how, in the context of the environmental, economic, food, and energy global crisis that began taking shape in 2008 but which has clear roots in the preceding decades, rural zones in Latin America have shown a growing unrest tied to the imposition of the Green Revolution project. These conflicts vary widely and include political and economic elements as well as symbolic, cultural, and environmental ones. Their background is the essential dispute over what the land and other resources like water and biodiversity are and should be, and at whose service. In the dominant sectors of practically every country in the region, nature is seen as merchandise that must circulate in markets and move to the drum of the highest bidder. Thus, under the supposed sanctity of the law of supply and demand and private property, rivers, forests, and land must be controlled by those who can guarantee the highest revenue. This has resulted in a two-pronged move of dispossession and enclosure that has been legitimized by national and transnational legislation.

It’s worth mentioning a few examples. Jazmín Solís shows how women in Villa Purificación, Jalisco face inequality that has been exacerbated by a reduction in the territory controlled by the communities and by the tendency for inheritance to privilege men. She also raises the issue of lost knowledge of the production of certain vegetables and foods because the new generations must find new forms of sustenance (Solís, 2019).

In turn, a case study based in Zinacantán, Chiapas (Llanos Hernández and Santacruz de León, 2019) looks at changes in dietary patterns as a way of approaching transformations in agriculture, particularly the move from food sovereignty to food security, as part of the transition to the imposition of neoliberalism in the 1990s. In the specific context of Zinacantán, the change entailed going from producing corn to producing export flowers, making the population dependent on food imports and thus vulnerable to the 2008 food crisis, with the rise in the international cost of corn.

Also in Mexico, research undertaken with small-scale producers in the central region of the country shows how the process of agricultural intensification, caused by the transition towards market-oriented agriculture, has resulted in soil degradation, the loss of biocultural heritage, a decrease in the nutritional quality of the food, and food insecurity in human health (Rodríguez-Bustos, 2019). Luz Palestina Llamas Guzmán and Elena Lazos (2019) reached similar conclusions when exploring the supply networks of corn, bean, and squash among farmers in the communities of Ixtenco and Huamantla in Tlaxcala, Mexico. One of their main findings is that most producers in these communities continued to use their own seeds. Nevertheless, the use of “improved” seeds is increasingly growing, their trade controlled by big private companies and with the reduced participation of the state.

Finally, Zahara Lucía Lasso Paredes and Fabio Alberto Pachón Ariza propose an analysis of the state of agrobiodiversity in Colombia and find that the process initiated by the green revolution following World War II led to a process of agricultural intensification and agrobiodiversity simplification. The communities’ seed recovery and conservation processes have become, in this context, a strategy for resistance and survival.

Alternatives from below and from before

These processes of dispossession, which must be understood as part of a process taking place over several centuries, are concentrated in spaces and territories controlled by groups that have succeeded in protecting and taking care of their resources by operating under logics that differ from those based on profit and revenue. We refer in particular to the different types of peasant, indigenous, and afro-descendent groups that have, since the invention of the Americas, existed in the region and had to fight various states for their right to continue existing. That is how, at least since the 1980s, a set of epistemologies and lines of thought that question commercial logic have made their way into the public and academic spheres to propose different types of relationships between people and between people and nature. They have different names in different places, but what these epistemologies have in common is the effort to recover non-Western ways of thinking, to propose other possible worlds. Leonardo Esteban Figueroa Helland and Abigail Pérez Aguilera (2019) posit, for example, that there is an indigenous cosmology, based on the ancestral management of territory, that has allowed for the defense and protection of biocultural diversity through time, which is now threatened by the hegemony of industrial monoculture that expands through a bio-colonial model. In this sense, the researchers propose that indigenous cosmologies are more sustainable than Western ones, and that in them we can find keys to face the challenges of the Anthropocene crisis.

Additionally, Ana Dorrego Carlón (2019) presents that in recent decades the Andean region has experienced a process of cultural erosion in which much of the knowledge associated with agrobiodiversity has gradually been lost. This is especially serious at this moment, as climate change has transformed the fragile ecosystems of the Andean highlands. In this context, the researcher formed part of a process that, based on participatory action research (PAR), sought to generate a process of dialogue among different types of knowledge with elementary school teachers to promote the conservation of traditional systems of native agrobiodiversity management and their associated traditional knowledge. Here we see again the idea that recovering ancestral knowledge is crucial for considering other possible futures.

These types of arguments propose ways out of our current crisis that aren't based on an absolute faith in science and technology, which was the premise of the green revolution project and now powers current efforts to return to more "sustainable" agriculture (Winner 2016). Rather, they propose approaches to the current crisis based on dialogue and the combination of different forms of being, knowing, and taking care of the world. In a context like ours, marked by the Covid-19 environmental and health crisis, it has become evident that we must reconsider the way in which the reproduction of life on Earth is organized. To continue with a scheme that places human society and nature in opposition, with nature being understood as external and exploitable, even in a "sustainable" way, will only extend the trail of material and symbolic destruction that has become so palpable in recent years. Learning from the groups and communities that have managed to survive despite 500 years of siege, and which have done so through alternative ways of organizing life, seems to be our only option.

Presentations at the Food Justice and Sovereignty in the Americas Congress (JySALA)

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▲
Trabajadores mexicanos en los campos
de California (Mexican workers in the
fields of California), David Bacon, 2018

Work and Employment in Agriculture and the Agrifood Industries

Matías García

*Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas,
Universidad Nacional de la Plata,
Universidad Nacional Arturo Jauretche
Argentina*

*“Inequality is cause and consequence of the failure
of the political system, and it contributes to the instability
of our economic system, which in turn contributes
to increased inequality”
Joseph Stiglitz (2012)*

Food issues in the Americas can be synthesized as an epidemic of malnutrition. The term refers to extreme states of undernourishment as well as to a series of problems associated with excess weight. This apparent paradox is added to another one in which there's a scenario of agricultural surplus and, at

the same time, significant barriers of access to this food for a large part of the population. These phenomena result from complex social, economic, political, and environmental processes that occur at the local, regional, and global levels and which can be explained through the lens of inequality.

Without losing sight of structural matters, one of the main areas of discussion relates to work and employment in agriculture and the agrifood industries, allowing for a reflection on the practices and employment conditions associated with food production and circulation in both small peasant production and global production chains.

In this succinct chapter we aim to share some of the analysis and discussion that arose at the panel “Work and Employment” of the Food Justice and Sovereignty in the Americas International Congress (JySALA) along with remaining challenges in which work situation turns out to be a key variable for interpreting and eventually modifying current modes of production, circulation, and consumption of food. Including the subject of work in this discussion is undeniably fundamental, to resignify the right that populations have of defining their own agrarian and food policies from the point of view of the men and women who make up the workforce in the different stages of agrifood systems, from migrant fruit harvesters to the table and including the delivery workers that distribute processed food in the streets of our major cities.

International migration and working conditions

In recent decades, we’ve seen the emergence of agroindustrial enclaves and complexes that carry out activities related to extraction and food production in rural spaces. These economic agglomerations compete not only for natural resources but also for the local peasant workforce, generating national and international migration towards these job markets.

Including the subject of work in this discussion is undeniably fundamental, to resignify the right that populations have of defining their own agrarian and food policies.

In this context, criticisms of circular or temporary migration treaties arise, questioning the supposed “triple win” that these programs generate: for the migrant, access to work and, importantly, better-paid work; for the employer, the availability of qualified, flexible, and cheap labor force; for the the country of origin, the remittance flow that the process generates. An example of this is the PTAT temporary foreign worker agreement, through which Mexican

migrants work primarily in horticultural export enterprises in Canada. What characterizes this program is that it guarantees the circulation of migrants through different mobility control mechanisms, covering destination as well as origin (immobility within mobility), based on the existing power relations between employer and employee as well as between the states that make up the treaty (Candiz and Bélanger, 2019).

Another case of quantitative relevance is that of Mexican migrants in the United States. Among available perspectives, pondering the subjective motivations behind the presence and permanence of these workers in U.S. agricultural activity is at the very least novel. Moreover, it entails confronting the rationality and reasonability of Mexican immigrants that live in a foreign and hostile country (U.S.), working in poor conditions and risking their physical and mental health (Cordero Ocegüera, 2019).

Both cases confirm the prevalence of migrant workers that accept terrible working and living conditions rejected by the local people. This phenomenon isn't skewed towards regions with reduced regulations, but is even more present in de-

veloped countries, with high technological investment, leading to a dependence on foreign, flexibilized, and extremely cheap work force as a condition not only for the existence/persistence of some economic activities, but for the possibility of high profitability and/or exportation niches.

...the prevalence of migrant workers that accept terrible working and living conditions rejected by the local people.

The methodology and mechanisms that allow for the identification, examination, and assessment of women's exclusion, discrimination, and inequality are gaining space and acceptance in social as well as academic spaces. This perspective goes beyond description, aiming to discuss the actions required to influence gender factors and create conditions for change that allow for advances towards greater equality. A good example of this is the study by María Luz Cruz Torres (2019) on the strategies and motivations that led a group of migrant women to successfully insert themselves in a labor market dominated by men. These women assumed the role of informal sea-product merchants in southern Sinaloa, creating their own market and forming a union. The adoption of a gender perspective allows us to identify situations of "loud silence" or paradoxical use. This occurs when certain heteronormative situations are reproduced even from a feminist point of view, like when child-rearing is naturalized as women's responsibility (Cordero Ocegüera, 2019), or when the seeming absence or limited relevance of women allows us to induce their key role. Such is the case of the PTAT, where women are in charge of taking care of the children during their migrant husbands' six to eight months of absence. Children (and women) are in turn an extremely positive factor in the selection of migration candidates, since they become an instrument that guarantees migratory circulation (more precisely: they prevent illegal permanence in Canada) (Candiz and Bélanger, 2019).

Work in the time of the Gig Economy

A currently booming work modality is that of task assignments mediated through digital platforms. Also known as the gig economy, it can be defined as an employment situation in which a person is hired intermittently for sporadic jobs. The person provides everything that is needed for the activity (knowledge, workforce, and means of production), charges for the service, gives a percentage of that to the mediating

company, and waits for the next “assignment.” It’s not a new work category, but it has resurfaced powerfully due to technological development.

One of these work modalities involves the creation of a distribution system of prepared-food delivery that expands throughout Mexico (and the entire world) and in which a “low cost” economy implies a “low

cost” welfare state for the workers, especially for food-delivery workers (Rappi, Uber Eats, etcetera) who move around the city in a bicycle or motorcycle (Morbiato, 2019).

A “low cost” economy implies a “low cost” welfare state for the workers.

This model is gaining numerous adherents in supply as well as demand. Those who defend it un/consciously argue that it allows people to have the freedom to work whenever and however much they want, and to determine their own income. Reality

makes this hard to verify. Incomes depend on commissions and available work, two variables that are controlled to a greater or lesser extent by the companies/platforms. For this model to work, scale is required. Which is to say, it requires many people who are willing to work without a salary or insurance, providing the means of production and covering expenses as well as risks.

This phenomenon explains more than the surge of the gig economy. It’s also manifested in the migration of Mexicans to the US analyzed by Cordero Ocegüera (2019), in the more organized migrations to Canada discussed by Candiz and Bélanger (2019), and even in the internal migrations described by Cruz-Torres (2019). These different studies converge in showing that the contemporary global agrifood system is built upon the availability and willingness of the labor force to work in precarious conditions that require flexibility and vulnerability within an economy characterized by injustice and instability. In other words, the cost of the workforce, ultimately a commodity, lowers because of the inequality and bidding that result from its inverse relationship with capitalistic gains. This scenario is exacerbated in the era of Covid-19, as the ILO economist Patrick Belser explains, showing that the impact of the pandemic depends upon society’s prevailing inequality: from getting sick with the virus to staying alive or suffering dramatic economic consequences.

What (not) to do?

Finally, the subject of public policy tends to transverse every discussion. Policies are deemed insufficient or inexistent or even actual enablers of inequality and exclusion. For example, and in the words of Cordera Ocegüera (2019:11): “The current anti-immigrant rhetoric coming from the presidency of the United States and the harsh, systemic application of immigration policies have created a crisis in agriculture. It’s no secret that farms in the United States depend on the work of undocumented immigrants.” What is the purpose of the rhetoric of the American president, which translates into hostility towards migrants, restrictive entry policies, and the encouragement of xenophobia as the cause of many evils? Is it a way of enabling the greater

exploitation of migrants? Or is the rhetoric simply xenophobia and false nationalism, and harms to the agricultural sector are just collateral damage? Facing this level of conflict, could we think of mechanisms to moderate it— like the PTAT in Canada— even if they don't transform the underlying inequality? In this middleground, which is easier to implement but less transformative, some matters that can be proposed are an increase in the visibility of the labor issues faced by Mexican migrants in the United States and Canada, the reduction of hostile policies that limit mobility, the regulation of these 'new' booming hiring models, and even the proposals put forward in the "First Report of the National Agricultural Worker Network" (Nemecio Nemesio and others, 2019).

Policies that would simply block migration or prohibit the work of migrants, besides being more radical, seem also ineffective. More than solving a problem, they'd be generating another. After all, what option do choiceless people have?

Structurally transformative policies are those that would create options. Concretely, these are policies that propose alternatives to migration, that demand dignified conditions for the workforce. That's what Cordero Ocegüera proposes, stating that "If small rural farmers could make a decent living in Mexico and live in safe conditions, they wouldn't face the need to emigrate to the United States and to have to work for miserable salaries in dangerous and exploitative conditions." It's therefore necessary and urgent to implement policies for agroecological production requiring labor in the places of origin.

That is the paradox of an inequitable model, which generates food insecurity while forcing workers to migrate, which creates food injustice, preventing people from working the land in their place of origin, in turn generating environmental and social unsustainability. To break this vicious cycle we must understand that "inequality in our societies is a political choice more than an economic consequence" (Stiglitz, 2012).

Presentations at the Food Justice and Sovereignty in the Americas International Congress (JySALA)

Candiz, Guillermo and Bélanger, Danièle. "Los procesos de marginación territorial transnacional de los trabajadores migrantes mexicanos: el caso del programa canadiense de trabajadores agrícolas temporales". Presented at the Instituto de Investigaciones Económicas, UNAM, October 29, 2019.

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▲
Trabajadores de Walmart en San Pedro, California (Walmart workers in San Pedro, California). David Bacon, 2012

Distribution, Marketing, and Access to Quality Food in the Context of Urban and Rural Inequalities: Beyond Alternative Networks

Sebastián Grenoville

Conservation Technical Director

Administración de Parques Nacionales

Universidad de Buenos Aires,

Argentina

Three themes: relation to the State, informal economy, assessment of experiences

Discussing the issues of distribution, marketing, and access to quality food with a focus on food sovereignty and justice leads us to reflect upon three common themes.

The first theme focuses on the State's relation to the experiences of marketing and distribution of food in different Latin American countries. Understanding that the State unfolds at different levels and is traversed

internally by multiple contradictions and by profound differences between countries in the region, it's worth examining the role the State plays in the development of different marketing experiences. Have the different levels of government served as support or catalysts of the deployed commercial strategies, or have they actually become a barrier? Have collaborative relationships been established, or, on the contrary, have confrontation and competition been fostered?

The second theme considers the connection between the experiences of marketing and informality, marginalization, exclusion, and limited inclusion observed in many cases. What approaches can we use to address these processes? What strategies do we follow in relation to these dimensions? The actors in the territories employ multiple strategies in their daily reproduction to place their food in markets, from production for self-consumption to short food supply chains and all the way to conventional channels. Nevertheless, in academia we tend to segment the analysis, studying each channel separately and missing the opportunity to understand the complementary nature of the practices that the actors themselves develop.

The third theme refers to the results of the marketing experiences and the work methodologies employed to assess these experiences. Have they managed to reduce the vulnerability of participating actors? Do they, instead, have a neutral effect or even reinforce preexisting conditions of vulnerability in these organizational experiences? It's assumed that some channels are more beneficial than others, by being more equitable, inclusive, or solidary. What evidence do we have to back these claims? What factors do we study to determine solidarity?

These three themes were chosen because in much of the bibliography on alternative food networks (Malagón-Zaldua, 2018; Oñederra-Aramendi, 2018), social and solidarity economy (Coraggio, 2016; 2007, Singer and Schiochet, 2016), and short distribution channels (Feito, 2017; Barsky, 2011; Rodríguez Casallas, 2019) there is an important consensus on the virtues of these initiatives, support strategies, and the positive appraisal of the results.

The consensus reached by researchers committed to the search for greater sovereignty or social justice contrasts with the food insecurity in which many of the family farmers and indigenous people of the region live. Could this indicate that the debate is limited to thinking about alternative channels as a response to the limitations of the hegemonic economic model? Shouldn't we allow ourselves to consider other possible alternatives?

Innovations originating in the territories

This apparent coincidence of focus doesn't, however, imply uniformity in the strategies deployed by the organizations themselves. Associative experiences of agricultural producers as well as consumers present interesting innovations, among which stand out: rural tourism that complements production, online or Whatsapp markets (Fernández K., 2019); the development of social currency equivalent to man/woman-hours of work, the elaboration of a participatory guarantee system (Orozco Hernández and Orozco Meléndez, 2019), different experiences of financing through a system of microcredits or input purchases, agroecological food elaboration (Távora B., 2019); and the acquisition of lands by consumer associations to enable agroecological production and ensure regular and high-quality supply (Noel J. et. al., 2019).

In general terms, the assumption behind these works is that short channels are more sustainable than regional or national markets. Patricia Natividad introduces another issue by presenting some of the limits faced by the organizations participating in short supply chains in Ecuador, but which helps us delve deeper into the analysis of these approaches (2019). Her work indicates that one of the challenges set by the pro-

Could it be that we are somehow promoting new forms of inequality?

ducer organization is that of reaching new markets with greater purchasing power, like those in big cities or even international markets. This work is interesting because it engages with participation in wholesale as a complementary marketing strategy for family farming. It's a central channel in the procurement of great urban centers that is rarely addressed by academics and advocates.

As final reflections we can say that inside short supply chains there are multiple accumulated knowledges that stem from the traditions of indigenous people, peasant struggles, and family agriculture which, when creating ties with cities, generate organizational and commercial innovations that are very interesting in economic and social terms, as some of the cases presented in this brief chapter demonstrate.

As far as forms of resistance or alternative channels to the hegemonic economy go, we probably have a long way to go. Torres Salcido, Campos Tenango, and Martínez Duarte point this out in their work on "short food supply chains and alternative markets in Mexico City" (2019), where they clearly show the flip side of alternative marketing channels, studying the protagonists of these processes. Many of the farmers that participate in these experiences are new to the field, which is to say, they don't come from rural environments and don't have previous experience in agricultural production. At the same time, the consumers supplied by these channels belong, to a very high extent, to wealthy sectors of society. Could it therefore be that we are somehow promoting new forms of inequality? What happens, in terms of food justice and sovereignty, in the supply of lower-income sectors?

At this point it is perhaps necessary to make an effort that lets us move forward on deeper questions concerning the results that we are getting with these experiences and the impact on vulnerable populations. Are we contributing to diminishing any of the conditions of vulnerability – in economic, social, organizational, or environmental terms– or at least relieving some of its effects?

Presentations at the Food Justice and Sovereignty in the Americas International Congress (JySALA)

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- Rodríguez Casallas, G. “Experiencias que aportan a la construcción de sistemas alimentarios de intercambios alternativos para la consolidación de la soberanía alimentaria y la seguridad alimentaria y nutricional-SSAN”. Presented at the Instituto de Investigaciones Económicas, UNAM, October 29, 2019.
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Pueblos hechos de maíz
(Peoples of corn). Nayeli
Cruz Bonilla, 2017/2018

How Sustainable is Tradition? Cultural Heritage in the Context of the Food Crisis

Sarah Bak-Geller Corona

Instituto de Investigación Antropológicas- UNAM,
Mexico

Ayari Genevieve Pasquier Merino

Centro de Investigaciones Interdisciplinarias en Ciencias y Humanidades- UNAM
Coordinación Universitaria para la Sustentabilidad- UNAM
Mexico

For two decades now, the patrimonialization of cuisines has become one of the most common cultural projects throughout Latin America. These initiatives consist of identifying both material elements (ingredients, recipes, utensils, dishes, among other things) and immaterial elements (knowl-

edge, skills, forms of consumption, sociabilities, symbolisms, cosmogonies) that characterize a particular cuisine, which is conceived as the shared heritage of a group or society and closely tied to a territory.

Heritage is almost always associated with the values of authenticity and tradition and is often accompanied by a narrative of the unique ancestral origins of the cuisine in question. While patrimonialization implies the recognition of the value and originality of a culinary culture, we mustn't lose sight of the fact that it is, above all, a political project: the proponents of heritage establish the idea of a common origin for an entire group or community while fabricating a collective memory that excludes other narratives of identity and social and cultural belonging. Behind every patrimonialization process there is a careful selection of the objects, subjects, and stories to visualize, while other elements are excluded from the tale. The construction of heritage thus implies the creation of a narrative of the origins and past of a particular group or society, but also a look at its present and projection into its future.

At present, “traditional” and “authentic” cuisines are being valorized and promoted by a wide range of actors (states, tourism developers, NGOs, civil associations, ethnic groups) who see food heritage as an economic, political, cultural, and social resource operating in different sectors, including tourism (Medina, et. al, 2018; Medina, 2017; Ayora, 2012), agroindustry (Hassoun, 2017), and development (Suremain, 2014; Matta, 2011), as well as at local and grassroots levels (Bak Geller, 2019). At the same time, the promo-

tion of ingredients and production methods of foods deemed “traditional” have been identified as key elements to improve the sustainability of food systems, while their patrimonialization is considered, in the context of public policy, a strategy to promote healthier and more sustainable production systems and to benefit small producers. In this essay, we reflect upon the processes that consist of presenting certain foods as emblematic, assigning them a traditional and authentic character, whether the purposes be commercial, political, tourism-oriented, identity-reclaiming, or sustainability-focused. From this, we delve into a little-explored aspect of the food crisis that we're currently experiencing, which is the relationship between food and the political uses of identity.

What role does food heritage play in the context of the continued loss of biodiversity and agroecological knowledge, crop hyperspecialization, diet homogenization, and the rise in the consumption of ultra-processed products and diet-related illnesses? Can we argue that authentic and traditional foods contribute to sustainable development and food justice? Or, to the contrary, should we think of food heritage as another factor of this crisis, present in social inequality, competitiveness, and food uniformity?

Stemming from the discussion of four case studies, analyzing food patrimonialization processes in three Latin American countries (Mexico, Argentina, and Colombia), we will show that the link between heritage

Proponents of heritage establish the idea of a common origin for an entire group or community while fabricating a collective memory that excludes other narratives.

and food crisis is manifested in diverse and contrasting ways, which include cases of dispossession and reproduction of social inequities as well as territory conservation initiatives and nutritional education programs. It's for this reason that, more than propose an unequivocal and defining interpretation of the role of heritage in current food systems, we will explore the patrimonialization processes themselves, along with the reasoning and perspectives of the different subjects that participate in them, aiming in this way to understand the reach of heritage in the different stages of the food system: production, preparation, and consumption.

Food modernity: risks, challenges, opportunities

In most cases, proponents of heritage construct the notion of traditional food in opposition to the idea of modernity. Food heritage is seen in this sense as knowledge inherited from a long time ago that has remained intact through the years. According to this imaginary, heritage food belongs to the realm of the intimate, where time doesn't pass but has been paused at an idyllic age, where social relationships are harmonious and there is no dissent within the community.

The case analyzed by Gloria Sammartino (2019) on the 2003 UNESCO patrimonialization of Quebrada de Humahuaca, in the northeast of Argentina, clearly exhibits the issues related to the tourism market's appropriation of the notion of traditional food. With its establishment as a World Heritage Site, tourism developers and chefs became interested in "rescuing" traditional dishes and making them one of the tourist attractions of the region. That was how, Sammartino explains, small entrepreneurs from the big cities opened signature cuisine restaurants, where local recipes are clad in a new aesthetic that "hides the otherness that references indigenous and peasant roots." This is exemplified by dishes with names like "kiwicha crepes filled with creamy corn sauce," "glazed llama," and "llama a l'orange with crispy Andean potatoes," which aim to evoke a sense of "the typical" and "traditional" food of the site. Local people, however, haven't benefited from this new market. Needless to say, this cuisine is inaccessible to the native population, whose daily food isn't featured in the repertory of heritage gastronomy because it lacks value according to the criteria imposed by outside agents. What the case of culinary heritage in Quebrada de Humahuaca shows is that these processes of patrimonialization internalize "historically-constructed racial categorizations, legitimizing relationships of superiority/inferiority, reproducing colonial legacies that perpetuate social inequality and undermine the food systems of these populations" (Sammartino).

A similar case, where food heritage has spurred an imbalance in the concentration of resources and masked economic and social inequalities, is presented by Diego Jamarillo and concerns the program of 'Cocineras Tradicionales', or 'Traditional [Female] Cooks', in Oaxaca, a state in southeastern Mexico, that followed the designation of Mexican cuisine as Intangible World Heritage by UNESCO in 2010. The creation of the figure of 'traditional cook,' whose role consists of serving as "ambassador" of their locality's culinary heritage in tourism and cultural promotion events, has caused a series of tensions and conflicts in many of the state's localities. Jaramillo observes that heritage policies act like civilizing missions by imposing, from above, the criteria that define authentic and traditional cuisine, depriving local populations of a central role in the decision-making processes of the projects of valorization of their culinary heritage. The notion of "authentic cuisine" thus becomes a concealed instrument of domination and segregation that impedes the populations from appropriating their knowledge and managing it on their own terms. Furthermore, these programs foster competition and dissent within communities, facing women off in their efforts to obtain the

recognition of ‘traditional cook’ and the economic resources that often come with the title. The proponents of the patrimonialization of Mexican cuisine build “fixed archetypes around simplified notions of what’s indigenous and traditional” (Jaramillo), thus forcing communities to reproduce behaviors and practices that only make sense in a logic of commodification of culture. Heritage, seen in this context, “nullifies any recognition of the capacity for innovation of the bearers of tradition.” Jaramillo offers the example of the cook that uses Guajillo and Ancho chilies in response to the impossibility of buying Chilhuacle and Chilcostle chilies, ingredients that purists claim as imperative for the ‘true’ yellow mole but which these days are too expensive for many women to use in their dishes. This case reminds us that the cooks are equipped with a great capacity for improvisation and adaptation that allows them to reproduce their culture and guarantee its transmission over generations. Culinary knowledge oftentimes derives from creative survival strategies developed in precarious situations.

Audible voices of heritage

The uses of heritage are, nevertheless, not limited to commercial or tourism interests, as illustrated by the work of Leidy Viviana Sandoval Jiménez in Colombia and Laura Montesi and Pedro Ramón Celis in Oaxaca, Mexico. These authors convey the efforts of certain groups to adapt their food culture to new environmental and nutritional circumstances. Such is the case of the Huave community of San Dionisio del Mar in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. Facing the excessive exploitation of timber resources and subsequent soil erosion, this community has chosen to experiment with alternatives to their traditional clay ovens, called *comixcales*, which require great amounts of firewood. The introduction of solar ovens allows the cooks to make their customary recipes while reducing the harm done to the natural environment and to their own health from the use of firewood and the sustained inhalation of the smoke produced by the *comixcales*. The implementation of solar ovens was possible, Montesi and Celis point out, after a long process of dialogue and collaborative work between a civil association and the Huave women of San Dionisio del Mar, in which the needs of the women were considered first and foremost.

Dietary homogenization, the rise in the daily consumption of ultra-processed foods, the loss of traditional subsistence practices, and food insecurity are other issues faced by many indigenous communities in Latin America. The case of the Nasa, in the Cauca region of Colombia, is no exception. For this reason, the community has undertaken a program to rescue traditional foods and regimens that gives value to a great variety of natural foods, knowledge, and practices tied to the recovery of agrobiodiversity. The main goal of the community is to guarantee food for students during the school year. Thus, Sandoval notes, pedagogical farming projects have been introduced in the school with the aim of raising awareness and familiarizing the children with what has locally been defined as the traditional indigenous food system.

As we’ve been able to gather through these four examples, the values of coexistence and tolerance among cultures are promoted in the name of food heritage and traditional cuisines, but the causes of asymmetry, social inequality, cultural dispossession, and environmental deterioration are rarely addressed. Conversely, food is part of a strategy of political and social struggle for many communities that see the culmination of their culture, territory, and beliefs in their culinary heritage. How sustainable is tradition, then? Undoubtedly, much depends on how well integrated heritage projects are to local food systems; on the decision-making capacities of local people in relation to the systems of production, distribution, and consumption; and

on the access and patterns of use of the natural resources tied to their practices, so that they have a positive impact in terms of biodiversity, health, and social justice.

Presentations at the Food Justice and Sovereignty in the Americas Congress (JySALA)

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The Workers' Studio,
Roberta y sus pasteles
(Roberta and her cakes).
Sol Aramendi, Proyecto
Luz, 2016

Food Systems for Health: Towards a Conceptual Framework to Better Understand the Links between Food, Health, and Territory

Braulio Torres Beltrán

Proyecto La Guajolota,
México

The simplistic narrative that obesity and diabetes are issues related to “lifestyle” and “individual responsibility” has prevailed for many years. It places food as merchandise, sold and bought far from the story of who produces it and how, and far enough to avoid facing the environmental impact that agriculture has on production territories.

Our current system of food production and consumption has had disastrous effects on the natural environment and human health, which is why there is an urgent need to lay the foundations to transform it. We

must change our understanding of food challenges. The question is: what conceptual framework should we aim for to better understand the links between food, health, and territory?

The year 2019 provided various global references that explain these connections and are helping change the prevailing simplistic narrative. The report “Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems: Food, Planet, Health” (EAT-Lancet Commission, 2019) was the first review of scientific literature to integrate criteria for healthy as well as sustainable diets. This report analyzes human health and the natural environment as different facets of the same food system and makes it clear that it’s pointless to look at one sector without considering the other. Another exemplary document published that year was “Climate Change and Land” (IPCC, 2019), a report that explains the links between climate change, food security, and land management and describes the effects that agriculture has on climate change.

Likewise, IPES-Food (2019) published the report “Towards a Common Food Policy in the EU”, which brings to light the complexity of food systems and analyzes the contradiction of having sectoral food policies. These reports are frameworks to consider food, health, and the environment as sectors that are tightly intertwined. Inspired by these global references and contemplating the challenge of systematically studying these three sectors, which are normally analyzed in isolated ways, we proposed weaving a regional analysis (for the Americas) on food and nutritional health, thus joining the effort to reinterpret food challenges.

The purpose of the dialogue was to share ideas and analysis on what directions we should take the debate on health, food, and environments. Convinced that creating bridges between disciplines is essential to examining nutritional health beyond a matter of lifestyle and healthy consumption, we invited economists, anthropologists, and specialists on economic policy and nutrition to the discussion table. We posed a specific question for reflection: should we think of a radical paradigm change for prevention policies for obesity and diabetes? From that specific point, we proposed a more general debate on health and food.

Prevention policies in relation to obesity and diabetes

Prevention policies have focused on obesity and diabetes as diseases that require early diagnosis, timely care, and treatment. Emphasis has been made on clinical presentation and the individual problem, Gracia (2019) expressed when presenting on prevention policies, suggesting then that obesity should be approached as a social and cultural problem. Gálvez (2018) has also argued that diet-related diseases are not a clinical issue; these health conditions—obesity and diabetes—are rather the logical result of policies that have prioritized industrial agriculture over family agriculture, facilitating physical access to junk food and giving access to money through cash transfer programs.

There are increasingly more voices and studies that explain how the health of our bodies is a direct consequence of the food environments we inhabit. In other words, obesity and diabetes are diseases caused primarily by the food system, by the type of available food supply, and not due to unhealthy lifestyles that individuals choose to adopt. It’s easy and cheap to eat poorly. It’s difficult and expensive to eat well. Our bodies, then, are the result of this situation.

It's been shown that a diet low in whole grains, fiber, fruit, nuts, seeds, vegetables, and legumes is a primary predictor of diet-related diseases (GBD, 2017; Diet Collaborators, 2019). What we eat makes us sick. Unfortunately we have stopped eating protective foods because they're increasingly harder to access. Nevertheless, prevention policies from the health sector are not taking this into consideration. The health sector in the countries of our region has driven prevention through a logic of individual responsibility, of "check yourself, weigh yourself, move your body" (IMSS, 2014). Our dialogue was a space to question this individualistic take on prevention.

Pérez-Gil (2019) offered a critical eye on food, gender, and nutrition, explaining that current beauty standards have affected our understanding of healthy eating and how these models are not applicable in the context of Mexican women in rural communities. If the challenge is designing different policies, removing emphasis from early diagnosis and interventions to improve "lifestyle and healthy diet", what then is the future of prevention policies?

Villalobos (2019) presented a bold view of diabetes prevention and control based on fasting, and explained that diabetes is a disease that can be prevented and kept in remission with a low-carbohydrate and caloric-restriction diet.

In turn, Gutiérrez (2019) expressed criticism of the soda tax, arguing that empirical analysis on the tax in Mexico shows that it hasn't done much good. This presentation was useful for thinking about whether to focus the discussion on nutritional health and environments on soda taxes and nutrition labeling. Has this fostered a good debate to improve nutrition, or not? In other words, are these measures solving the problem of obesity and diabetes or have they inhibited a complex, systemic understanding of diets and environments? Regarding the soda tax, Gálvez (2019) states that, while the debate on the reach and implications of this measure is still in progress, there is overwhelming evidence that the tax has actually been useful.

The future of the prevention policies requires that we improve our understanding of obesity and diabetes as a social problem and with a systemic view, Gálvez (2019) argued, also referencing a study on migrant Mexican women in the United States that analyzes the links between depression, diabetes, and stress (Mendenhall, 2016). Gálvez introduced the concept of "syndemics" to describe how the simultaneous presence of several diseases coexist, interact, and have a multiplier effect, and proposed that it's necessary to move towards this type of complex analysis to be able to appropriately analyse subjects like nutritional health.

Food systems for health

The growing global consensus on the links between food environments and health has contributed to the bolstering of new analytic frameworks. Hawkes & Ruel (2011) have promoted the concept of 'value chains for nutrition,' as a vehicle to make the consumption of nutritious foods more easy and available. There are many voices that argue that obesity and diabetes prevention requires better food environments, where it's easier to make better food choices. We must take advantage of this moment to boost the analysis and proposal of solutions to improve nutrition.

FAO (2019) has promoted a conceptual framework of food systems that includes: food supply chains, food environments, and consumer behavior. These three analytical dimensions are a useful point of departure to display the menu of solutions and public policies. To have health-oriented food systems, some essential points of actions are: redirecting agricultural subsidies towards the production and marketing of high-fiber whole grains, nuts, and seeds; using the power of public procurement; strengthening regulation; investing in food and nutrition education and aligning the budget of school breakfasts to local and organic production; subsidizing agroecology; and facilitating conditions to multiply local markets and social economy initiatives, among other things.

Now, if we must design health-oriented food systems and, for that, must reinterpret the cause of diet-related diseases, Fenton offers this warning:

Dualisms like conventional food vs alternative food, traditional agriculture vs modern agriculture, junk food vs healthy food, and global food systems vs local food systems are useful analytic tools. They help researchers navigate the complexity of the food worlds. Nevertheless, they can hide as much as they reveal. They divide people through a politics of the perfect, which places irrational expectations on all of our daily lives. [...] We need to move away from conceptual frameworks of good and bad foods, good and bad consumers ... Recognizing each individual and social body as a site of multiplicity, contradiction, and struggle can help lay the foundation for a more inclusive theory for the transformation of food systems. Fenton (2019).

Likewise, Walters (2019), who presented a political perspective on natural resources, explained that territory, natural resources, and diets must be considered from a context of power relations. If we fail to do so, Walter warned, we end up with an incomplete picture of reality. The speakers brought social and political perspectives on food and nutrition to the discussion table, which is fundamental. If we forget that our current production and consumption system is a political matter, we won't be able to transform it towards health. Because what's available to eat today is the result of political and economic decisions.

These reflections have brought us to place pending debates on the table. One of these is: how can we bring the concepts of food justice and sovereignty to the debates on nutritional health?

Pending debates

The discussion "Bodies and food" was a starting point to foster a systemic view of food and to change the narrative of nutritional health that presently prioritizes arguments on healthy lifestyles. The dialogue helped highlight remaining challenges. What must academia offer to public policy to improve food systems and environments? What must be done, in public policy, to move the narrative of obesity and diabetes as a disease of individual choices and will-power towards the narrative of a disease caused by food systems and environments?

The remaining challenge is transforming the prevention paradigm for obesity and diabetes, so that prevention stops being discussed solely in terms of improvements in health systems and moves to a discussion anchored in new designs for food systems. Diabetes will be solved when it's easier to eat better.

The pending debates must steer academics and decision-makers towards the construction of food systems for health. Academia can do so by building a new understanding of food challenges. Public policy can contribute by implementing solutions that are different from those currently bolstered, by promoting solutions that thoroughly transform the structural causes of why we have people with excess food and people who lack food.

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II. PER- SPEC- TIVES

New lines of
reflection on food
security in 2020



▲
En los campos del norte
(In the Fields of the
North). David Bacon,
2018

Justice, Sovereignty, Inequalities, and Food: Political Challenges in Adverse Contexts

Renato Maluf

*Postgraduate in Ciencias Sociales en Desarrollo, Agricultura y Sociedad,
Universidade Federal Rural de Rio de Janeiro
Brazil*

This text presents the main contents of the opening lecture at the JySALA Congress on food justice and food sovereignty challenges in synthesized form, addressed in three blocks. The first block seeks to articulate both notions in the framework of referents or concepts disputed at the global level and in Latin America, including a brief summary of the construction of referents in the Brazilian experience. The second block introduces the subjects of inequality and poverty in Latin American countries and their manifestations in food systems. Finally, the third block addresses the different challenges faced by the promo-

tion of food justice and sovereignty in adverse contexts, like those that afflict many countries in Latin America and at the global scale.

It's certainly important to clarify my use of the dual denomination that differentiates foods (goods or products) and food (the way in which foods are appropriated), aiming to place two terms side-by-side that aren't synonymous but that integrate and complement each other.

Disputed concepts or referentials

The international debate on food has the following four primary referents or concepts, whose meanings or connotations are in permanent dispute: food security and nutrition (FSN), food sovereignty (FS), human right to food (HRF), and, more recently, food justice (FJ). Social movements and organizations, governments, corporations, and private institutes utilize these concepts according to their own understanding and interests, to which is added the contribution of a growing academic reflection on these subjects.

It is possible and, I believe, necessary to identify the complementarities between these concepts –undoubtedly relevant, especially in terms of actions and public policies– without omitting the differences and conflicts that arise depending on who is using them. We must delve into the social constructs that underlie assignments of meaning, as can be noted in the way that these were used in Brazil in the democratic period of construction, considering the natural conflicts that arise during these processes (Leão and Maluf, 2012).

The redemocratization that followed the end of the military regime (1985) promoted forms of participative democracy and assisted the construction of a social field around FS and FSN, finally joined under the referential food security and sovereignty (FSS), in addition to HRF. The role of the Brazilian Forum on Food and Nutrition Sovereignty and Security (FBSSAN) created in 1998 was key. These were important precedents to the Zero Hunger Strategy of the *Lula government* (2003-2010) and its follow-up in the *Dilma government* (2011-2016), a period that saw the discussion of concepts that served as foundation for the creation of spaces for participation and social control (Food and Nutritional Security Councils- CONSEA) and integration of public policies (Interministerial Food and Nutrition Chamber- CAISAN). Social participation and intersectionality were encouraged (integrated program), dealing with emergencies (hunger) and promoting more structural actions. In terms of legal frameworks, the Organic Law on Food Security (LOSAN, 2006) was enacted and HRF was included in the Federal Constitution (2010).

The idea was to institute a system of public policies (National Food and Nutritional Security System-SISAN) to promote HRF through a FNS sovereign policy, which is to say, right and sovereignty are principles that guide the reach of FNS as an objective of public policy with the following definition enshrined in the law:

[“...] food and nutritional security consists of the realization of every person's right to regular and permanent access to quality food, in sufficient quantity, without compromising their access to other essential needs, having as a foundation food practices that promote health and respect cultural diversity while being environmentally, culturally, economically, and socially sustainable.”

The FNS national plans and politics were, therefore, an intersectoral construction established within the government, based on the voices of civil society organizations, resulting in a combination of deployment of a social field with distinct public policies. This national conception and institutionality was reproduced, to varying degrees, in the states and many municipalities that make up the Brazilian federation. Important definitions were even enshrined in Brazilian legislation, though with limited efficacy. Nevertheless, the possibilities and limits of a counter-hegemonic social field were always positioned in conflict within the government and in the territories with the powerful interests of agribusiness and the food industry. They were overcome by the gradual retreat of the 2016 parliamentary coup and the complete dismantling by the *Bolsonaro government*, in power since 2019.

The concept of food justice isn't utilized much in Brazil or in almost all of Latin America. Inequalities and justice in the domain of food are subjects that have been driven by urban movements in the United States, with emphasis on food access issues and different types of injustices, in particular those related to ethnicity (Gottlieb and Joshi, 2010). A quick look at the literature takes us, first, to the idea of justice formulated by Sen (2009), who suggested identifying fixable injustices (to improve justice and eliminate injustice) instead of proposing solutions for perfectly just societies. The risk of idealism is evident in the definition of Gottlieb & Joshi (2010), for whom food justice consists of guaranteeing the equitable distribution of the benefits and risks of where, what, and how foods are cultivated, produced, transported, distributed, accessed, and consumed. More close is the formulation by Cadieux & Slocun (2015) on doing food justice, meaning finding ways of taking action against structural inequalities and promoting transformative change, which implies institutionalizing equity in the food system and amplifying control of food production and consumption. Finally, and more appropriate in my view, is the proposal by Goodman, et. al. (2012) of a 'reflexive food justice', which implies admitting contradictions, emphasizing processes, not choosing a favorite scale, redefining localism, and considering the existence of different points of view, not only on justice, but also on community and good food. In every case, it's about promoting food justice through foods, which connects to identifying manifestations of inequalities within food systems.

Congress promoted the "meeting" of the perspectives of food justice and food sovereignty. These are not absolute substitutes since they have different emphases, the first being markedly urban and the second rural, though they can complement each other. The meeting of different strategies and actors requires examining the links between the urban and the rural, while demanding a widening of the meaning of sovereignty and the focus of justice, to address the entire food system and reflect the whole of society. It's an important point highlighted in the literature, the possibility that these movements have different perspectives on autonomy or collaboration in their relation to the State.

I propose facing the challenge of the political and conceptual conjunction of the aforementioned four main referents: security, sovereignty, right, and justice. At the center of this conjunction is the political dimension expressed in food politics. Regarding specific challenges, we must distance ourselves from the predominant use of security and highlight its requirements, expand the meaning of sovereignty beyond rural populations, deal with rights in societies without a human rights culture, and assess the notion of justice in societies with deep inequalities.

Inequalities, poverty, and food systems

Latin America is considered the continent of inequalities, with factors of inequality that lend complexity and result in a variety of conflicts. These include income, gender, ethnicity, generation, education level, and access to resources (land, heritage, biodiversity, public services, etc.). While poverty has been urbanized, its highest incidence is still in rural areas. Therefore, hunger and nutrition-health reflect a context of poverty and inequalities, which is to say, there are unequal manifestations of hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition. Hunger depends on the monetary access to foods, but we must also pay attention to nutrition and food (and not just nutrients). Producing for self-consumption is a vital condition that has been hindered for many rural families. The access to adequate and healthy food for every person isn't a given. Among other factors, urbanization promotes socio-spatial inequalities and implies physical and economic barriers to access adequate and healthy food for marginalized or low income populations.

The interruption of the downward trend of poverty and hunger is part of the adverse context. Once updated data on the continent is available, it's feared that we'll have records showing increases. Unemployment, low wages, withdrawal of rights, and conflicts are among the primary determinants. At the same time, excess weight and obesity are on the rise, due to the spread of food consumption habits that are harmful to human health but lucrative for hegemonic agents in food systems.

These processes show us the manifestations of inequalities in health systems. In the backdrop there are: large scale agriculture (food exporters) in a continent that is home to a significant contingent of peasants and family farmers, an urbanization pattern that fosters marked socio-spatial inequalities, and the growing control by corporations of every part of the food systems (exports, processing-transformation, seeds, technology, wide distribution-supermarket networks).

The different types of agriculture that coexist in many countries lead to conflicts in public policies and in the territories that are almost always settled in favor of agribusiness, at the expense of peasant and family farming. Omitting this differentiation means ignoring agricultural model distinction, seed control, the abusive use of chemicals, and the spread of GMOs. Productivist models of specialization endanger food diversity and the reproduction of rural social grupos, superimposing economic reasons (deceitful efficiency) on society projects, a well-noted contrast in the Mexican motto "without corn, there's no country."

A matter of growing relevance is the links between food systems, human health, and nature, equally permeated by inequalities (IPES-Food, 2017; HLPE, 2017). Instead of dichotomous approaches that isolate society from nature, what's sought is the articulation of healthy and sustainable diets and habits with production models, as agroecology aims to do. The denominated 'food environment' is highlighted in the constraints of the food options available to individuals.

Food justice and sovereignty in adverse contexts

I end this text with some notes concerning the quest for food justice and sovereignty in the adverse contexts we are facing. We must certainly reiterate that the food politics in which aforementioned disputes take place is closely linked to politics in general. In other words, the issues involved in food politics (interaction of so-

cial players, conflicts, options-strategies, and food policies) don't unfold, but affect and are affected by general politics, as is evident in political changes in the continent of inequalities, which seems to resume neoliberal options combined with the rise of authoritarianism, not without inciting protests and big popular mobilizations.

Once again I turn to Brazil, now as an extreme case in which a parliamentary coup (2016) launched a long period of perspective lows in dark times of authoritarianism, culminating in the rise of the Bolsonaro government (2019). These are times of deconstruction and attacks on human rights, of "resignification" and disputes of narratives regarding foods and food, health, and the environment. To the prevalence of neoliberal policies and their repercussions in unemployment and poverty is added the closure of spaces for social participation and dialogue, including the shutdown of CONSEA. The return of Brazil to the FAO Hunger Map wouldn't be surprising. The list of setbacks includes, among other things, attacks on indigenous groups and other rural social groups, denying the differentiation of types of agriculture/farmers, parliamentary initiatives in multiple fields, setbacks in foreign policy, and indicators of approaching barbarity (political violence).

The myriad initiatives that characterize resistances to authoritarianism in Brazil are carriers of different concepts that are still weakly articulated. Concerning our subject, I want to highlight a motto launched in 2015 from the social mobilization for FSS and HRF that goes: "Real food" in the country and the city: rights and sovereignty." It aims to connect hunger/malnutrition, adequate and healthy nutrition, and real food, which requires: protecting life and the planet, health, environmental justice, and human rights; emphasizing the sociocultural dimensions of food sovereignty; bringing food production and consumption closer together; building bridges between the urban and rural; valorizing biological agricultural diversity and fresh regional foods; respecting indigenous and black ancestry and the traditions of every traditional population and community; rescuing identities, memories, and food cultures. Furthermore, it's important to look after those who produce and distribute food, considering the appropriation of protest referentials by corporations. These and other points will be debated in the National Democratic, Popular, and Autonomous Conference on Food and Nutrition Sovereignty and Security (August 2020), summoned by civil society organizations in the context of the federal government's denial of social participation and its offensives.

All of the above leads us to a few avenues of reflection, research, and action that I'll mention briefly. As a matter of fact, debating the roles of research and academia in the current context of increasing attacks on critical thinking is more than necessary. To the vindication of research as a public good (IPES-Food, 2017), I add the challenge of what it means to practice citizen science, as the Red Brasileira de Pesquisa em SSAN has proposed (<http://pesquisassan.net.br/>). This requires recognizing the different ways of generating knowledge and promoting dialogue between academic research and social organizations.

I highlight the challenge of translating, for the "continent of inequalities," the formula that was transformed into a global approach by governments, international organisms, and private institutes, namely, promoting a "fair transition towards sustainable food systems through changes in diets." This forces us to consider: the tensions between transitional processes and development intentions facing the iniquities of the immanent economic dynamics; that there are injustices in the realm of the promotion of justice; conceptions of sustainability, the resource of agroecology, and other referentials; the direction(s) of changes in diets; links between food systems, cultures, territories, and diets; and what the place(s) is for sovereignty, security, and human rights, along with what kinds of politics they require.

Regarding the roles of the State, there remains the challenge of conceiving intersectorial and participative public policies; combining instruments for emergencies (hunger), regulation, and transformation; and supporting non-governmental public actions, beside strengthening public spaces that give visibility to conflicts and different understandings and allow those who have been made vulnerable to speak out.

As is emphasized in this text, foods and food are pending subjects in democracy. In Amartya Sen's words: "no major famine has ever occurred in a functioning democracy with regular elections, opposition parties, basic freedom of speech and a relatively free media" (Sen, 2009)

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Pueblos hechos de maíz (Peoples of corn), Nayeli Cruz Bonilla, 2017/2018

Food Justice, Sovereignty, and Policy

Ricardo Salvador

*Food and Environment Program, Union of Concerned Scientists,
United States*

Braulio Torres,

*La Guajolota Project,
Mexico*

The food system could offer abundance for everybody, with healthy food and respecting the limits of the planet. Instead, it is harming our health, our land and water, our communities, and the people who produce food. This has to change.

In this text, as over the course of the JySALA Congress, we join the quest for new food horizons in our continent. Food justice, sovereignty, and policy are three linked but distinct concepts that deserve clarity and, considering the current food situation, require elevation to be recognized as what they are: political concepts.

The year 1450 marked the beginning of five consecutive years in which the harvests of crops planted in the Valley of Mexico failed. This was due to a series of plagues, frost, and droughts. The main crop was corn, produced in a complex polyculture system called *millpan*, practiced on the banks of the lake that occupied the valley and on the slopes of the neighboring mountains. Alas, that system failed from 1450 to 1455. According to the chronicles, insufficient agricultural production had serious consequences on the health of the population. For the Mexica people settled in the Valley of Mexico, buying corn from unaffected regions was complicated. The royal reserves helped feed a population of 200,000 people. Nevertheless, that supply only managed to satisfy food needs for the first year.

Some Mexican historians speculate that this event triggered the expansion of the territory of the Mexica empire under the orders of Emperor Motecuhzoma Ilhuicamina, who subjugated lands to the south with the purpose of increasing and stabilizing food supply. The *petlacalco*, or royal food reserve, was increased to supply corn for the population of Tlatelolco-Tenochtitlan, the Mexica capital, for at least 20 years. At the beginning of the Spanish invasion, the amount of corn that Tenochtitlan received as tribute extracted from dominated territory was enough to feed 50,000 people. The need to guarantee food security for the center of the empire inflicted a potent effect throughout the territory. The poverty and hunger that it caused in subjugated populations explains why those Mesoamerican peoples allied themselves with the invading Spaniards to destroy the Mexica empire in 1521.

What this illustrates, in present terms, is that food security does not always equal food self-sufficiency. With economic or military strength, food security can be attained, as the Mexica-Culúa managed, without having food self-sufficiency, but impinging upon the sovereignty of others. “Food security” today is a technical (neutral) concept that establishes a goal (the ‘what’). “Food sovereignty,” on the other hand, is a concept related to rights and political mechanisms (the ‘hows’) to guarantee it.

Paradoxically, wide agricultural production doesn’t necessarily imply food security or sovereignty. An example of this is the case of the United States, which has an agricultural trade balance of 10.9 trillion dollars (USDA, 2018), but food insecurity rates of 12 to 14%, and where indigenous communities to this day are subjugated and don’t enjoy, by definition, food sovereignty, experiencing serious consequences such as obesity, diabetes, and low life expectancy.

Food Security

The subjugation that has happened throughout history in different territories on Earth still occurs today, before our eyes, perhaps in subtle or invisible ways. The supply of supermarkets that always have everything, with products that travel thousands of kilometers, so that high-income countries and people in wealthy neighborhoods decide when, how, and what to eat, is an abundance for some that has implications on the food and nutrition of others. Those of us who benefit from well-stocked supermarkets focus our experience on the satisfac-

tion of a moment's craving or convenience and don't perceive that this model of agroindustrial production and supply has a flip side of land dispossession, hunger, disease, and deforestation in other territories. The agroindustrial system has defined who benefits from the gains of the system of production and who doesn't.

The spectrum of agricultural production goes from food self-sufficiency to the production of industrial raw material for non-food purposes. Agroindustrial production occupies vast expanses of land, supplies, and natural resources, taking up almost half of the planet's vegetated surface, according to data from the World Resources Institute (2019). The productive sector of high-income countries is increasingly more consolidated and industrialized, while the productive sector of other parts of the world is under threat, given the tendencies towards consolidation and industrialization of agricultural production. The IPES-Food organization (2017) has clearly documented the concentration that occurs in the global agrifood sector. For example, five companies control 84% of the agrochemical market, and 10 companies control 90% of the processed foods and drinks market.

Food sovereignty refers to the right to choose what, for whom, and in what ways to produce food.

Sovereignty as a political concept brings to light the fact that the necessary resources to sustain industrial production (water, minerals, oil) are finite and compete with the agricultural lands of small production. The sovereignty of small and medium scale producers is in danger, which is to say, their capacity to self-determine what to produce, for whom, and how. From the point of view of industrialization, we call this progress and modernity, while from the point of view of the peasants it is manifested as displacement, impoverishment, hunger, and family and community crisis.

Thus, sovereignty, which is to say, exercising the right to decide, becomes a useful concept to reveal power asymmetries and leads us to three big questions:

What does food sovereignty mean for most of the world population, those of us who don't produce but only consume food? According to data from FAO (2016), there are 570 million farms and 2.5 billion peasants and producers in the world. This means that approximately $\frac{2}{3}$ of the global population doesn't produce food. What does the concept of food sovereignty mean to us, the non-producers?

When and where has food sovereignty existed? What can we look towards to measure or aspire to the state of food sovereignty? And if we're able to establish a reference framework, we're led to another question: How must we transform our public policies to guarantee food sovereignty?

Food policy for the transformation of the 21st century

According to classical economics theory, we harness the human tendency to compete and the desire to benefit individually through a series of markets connected by exchanges so that competition between producers, along with the forces of supply and demand, produce the best results for producers and consumers, creating more benefit for society as a whole. The reality, however, is far from the promises made by capitalist theory. There are profits for the global actors of the food system and chronic ills like obesity, diabetes, and deforestation for the territories and the population.

These market failures are observed all around the world, but fade into the background under the discourse of modernity and economic development. We pretend economic theory works elegantly, because we quantify the generation of wealth and the gross domestic product per capita, but not extraction, hoarding, displacement, or the malnutrition it entails. In other words, we don't put a price on injustice or inequality. That is a negative externality.

Why do we find ourselves with an incoherent balance sheet, in which, it seems, industrialization and capitalism have yielded undeniable benefits, but where, at the same time, there are many equally concrete effects of major flaws, conceptual as well as real? Contemporary industrial and economic models arose in Europe at a historic moment for the then global population of a billion people— less than a seventh of the current population— when the resources of the planet and its capacity to absorb our waste truly seemed boundless. Today:

- Over 820 million people suffer undernourishment; over 2 billion people live with excess weight or obesity; the prevalence of diabetes has doubled in the last 30 years (EAT-Lancet Commission, 2019).
- Global agriculture has razed and transformed 70% of grasslands, 50% of savannas, 45% of temperate forests, and 27% of rainforests in the world; likewise, agriculture and its associated land-use changes are responsible for around 25% of the greenhouse gas emissions (World Resources Institute, 2019) that are causing the climate crisis. It is also estimated that agricultural soil erosion occurs at a speed 10 to 100 times greater than the time required for the formation of new fertile soil (IPCC, 2019).

These facts force us to seek alternatives towards the transformation we must pursue. The task is to update our socioeconomic theories, industrial practices, and the policies that regulate the system. Concretely, the food system must be designed and work according to knowledge and understandings from the 21st and not the 18th century. This redesign would transform the system in the following ways:

- First, agri-food businesses would understand that their right market is health and public welfare. It would become clear to them that food is the determining factor for population health and they would commit to it, leading to the production, marketing, and consumption of healthy and minimally-processed foods.
- Second, agricultural production would be managed with agroecological fundamentals, which regenerate resources, depend less on expensive and harmful inputs— therefore polluting less— and result in a better income for farmers as well as better environmental quality.
- Lastly, earnings throughout the value chain would be equitably distributed, in such a way that producers, day laborers, and other members of the workforce would receive remuneration according to their knowledge and their value within the food system. This would have the double advantage of providing greater income for those who make up a large portion of the poor at the global level. Ironically, it's precisely the people who make up the base of the food system whom the current industrial system fails to recognize and pushes into hunger.

Food Justice

All of this would seem utopic if it depended only on a new morality. For this reason, we must remember that even within capitalist orthodoxy it's recognized that the industrial sector is subordinated to government, that

government is the mediator of public interest and that it's the legitimate role of government to intervene when markets fail (which is to say, when, unjustly, only a few receive its benefits).

In November 2014, a manifesto was published in the United States expressing the way in which government policy should change to correct these distortions in the political and economic system. Mark Bittman, Michael Pollan, Olivier De Schutter, and Ricardo Salvador wrote before the presidential election of 2016:

“How we produce and consume food has a bigger impact on Americans’ well-being than any other human activity. The food industry is the largest sector of our economy; food touches everything from our health to the environment, climate change, economic inequality and the federal budget. Yet we have no food policy — no plan or agreed-upon principles — for managing American agriculture or the food system as a whole. That must change.”

Another way to say this is that the food system is extremely political.

The manifesto was a political demand to devise a food system that works in favor of the population, instead of being an instrument of exploitation; a system that promotes the wellbeing of the population, instead of debilitating it. Several governments in the Americas, with progress and setbacks— Brazil in its moment, Ecuador and Bolivia with strong social and indigenous movements, and Mexico by promoting the construction of a new agri-food system— drive food policies that aim precisely to conceive of food as a system in its totality and which must be redesigned to become independent from neoliberal market forces.

The challenge for those of us who worry about food matters is organizing society (citizens, peasants, day laborers, workers, women, and men) to give visibility to the myths and problems of the economic order that currently organizes the production and consumption of food. Things aren't working out for many territories and populations. This must be said loud and clear.

In Latin America, different peasant groups and socio-environmental movements are leading the struggle for food sovereignty to give visibility to land dispossession, the loss of biodiversity, the obesity epidemic, and the asymmetry of power between regions and economic sectors. In Canada and the United States, minority groups have led the fight under the umbrella term of food justice, to reveal structural racism in the food system and the occupation of territories. Every territory has its own context, but everyone in the movement shares the same dream of justice.

Inequities will not simply disappear. We have to do the work to dismantle them, sometimes facing opposition. In the Americas, it's necessary that we organize to demand our governments to play their role— the search for justice— respecting the sovereignty of all of their citizens. To improve the food system, we will ultimately have to improve our economic and political myths. This is serious and urgent work.

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Trabajadores guatemaltecos en una planta
empacadora de carne en Nebraska, E.U.
(Guatemalan workers in a meat-packing
plant in Nebraska, U.S.) David Bacon, 2013

The Transformation of the Mexican Food System to Guarantee the Right to Food

Jesús Guzmán Flores

Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo Rural Sustentable y la Soberanía Alimentaria, Cámara de Diputados (CEDRSSA), Mexico

At the end of the 1980s, various civil society organizations came together to demand the recognition of the right to food in the Mexican Constitution. It was evident by then that, to meet the demands of international finance organisms and lay the foundations for trade agreements, the government had intensified a process of dismantling organisms and public programs which affected the consumption, distribution, and production of food. It was considered that these actions would exacerbate the food prob-

lems of broad sectors of the population and that, to avoid this, the existence of a legal order that established the State's obligations in food matters was necessary.

In 2011 the constitutional reform that recognized the human right to adequate food was approved in Mexico. This approval was preceded by the food crisis that accompanied the financial crisis of 2008, which evidenced that the food system of the world and many countries, constituted under the tenets of neoliberalism, couldn't sufficiently attend to the food needs of large segments of the population.

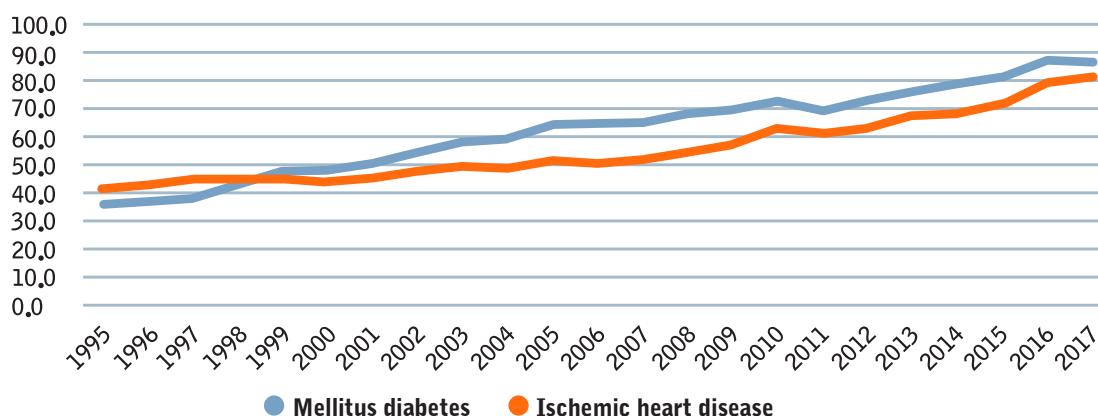
It's worth emphasizing that food problems in Mexico, shown primarily in the fact that broad sectors of the population suffer hunger, have been a constant practically since the territory became a colony of the Spanish Crown. These problems weren't overcome during the period of independence or when Mexico joined the leading strategies for economic development in the 20th century, strategies that have continued into the current century, though with different modalities.

The above can be gleaned in Graph 1 on food poverty in the period between 1950 and 2018. The figures show that the population with an income lower than the amount required to acquire a basic food basket was, on average, 21.1 million people. Some years this number exceeded 37 million people, illustrating that hunger is a chronic ill in our country. Though there are moments in which hunger decreases, it always returns, showing tendencies to aggravate that coincide with national and global economic crises.

The general characteristics of the aforementioned period are as follows: there was a rise in the population located in urban areas: in 1950 it represented 42% and in 2010 it was 77%; paid work was the primary source of income of the population, but the peasant population nonetheless persisted, along with the self-consumption that characterizes it; the processes of accumulation and concentration of capital in a few economic groups were a tendency; and the process of deterioration of natural resources through economic and urbanization activities continued.

In regards to the food system, the fundamental characteristic has been a tendency to foster a homogenization in the products consumed and to strengthen the economic groups that provide foods, which is to say it has created hegemonies in food production and distribution.

GRAPH 1. FOOD POVERTY IN MEXICO



Source: Compiled by author with data from: 1950-1989 by Székely, M. (2005) and 1992-2018 by Coneval

While the above are the tendencies of the Mexican food system, we can distinguish two clear stages in which it developed: the first, which took place from 1938 to 1988, in which there was a high and growing intervention from the State, and the second, from 1989 to 2018, in which State intervention was removed and the market (hegemonies) were allowed to determine the availability and access to food and, therefore, consumption.

In terms of primary food production, the first stage (1938- 1988) was characterized by the wide distribution of land to peasant collectives (ejidos and communities) that resulted in more than half of the territory being allocated under an inalienable, non-seizable, and imprescriptible form of ownership and management being done collectively. Also

in this stage the State undertook investments in hydro-agricultural infrastructure and grain storage. Public institutions for agricultural credit and insurance were created, and agricultural professionals were formed. Furthermore, agricultural extension and research services were established, public institutions for the production of seeds and fertilizers were created, and guaranteed prices were set. It's

worth emphasizing that the technologies promoted during this time were those of the 'green revolution'. Food industrialization was fostered at this stage through the establishment of State factories as well as the granting of incentives to the private sector, leading to the production of corn and wheat flour, sugar, milk industrialization, and the extraction of vegetable fat and oil. In terms of food distribution, the State invested in the establishment of warehouses and food stores. Price ceilings were established for staple foods and the foreign trade of grains was regulated and carried out by State entities. Food politics was undertaken with a marked emphasis on the paradigms of food self-sufficiency, security, and sovereignty.

The most important outcomes of this first stage were the expansion of the agricultural border, which allowed for an increase in food production surpassing population growth, as well the generation of products for exportation (cotton, sisal, coffee, among others). State participation in distribution allowed for the provision of foods for the growing urban population, which had access to them due to price stability. Nevertheless, as mentioned at the beginning, the issues of hunger in broad sectors of the population were not overcome. Moreover, in this stage, the State promoted the consumption of processed foods, which nutrition experts then considered appropriate for improving the nutritional status of the population.

The second stage (1989-2018) was characterized by the end of land distribution and the removal of the inalienable and non-seizable character of ejido lands, along with the liberalization of foreign trade, agricultural products included. Generalized subsidies for grains (corn, beans, wheat, and rice) and their processed products were eliminated. The State got rid of the warehouses and food stores and food price control policies were eliminated. The same thing happened with the State's food industries, which were privatized for the most part. The services for research and technical assistance for agricultural producers were reduced substantially and the supply of grains was bound to grain imports from partner countries in the North Ameri-

In regards to the food system, the fundamental characteristic has been a tendency to foster a homogenization in the products consumed and to strengthen the economic groups that provide foods.

can Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). In matters of agri-food policy, it was established as principle that the country produce only where it had a competitive and comparative advantage and that it export products where it didn't. The paradigm shifted towards food security determined by the free market, limiting State intervention to actions that didn't distort markets, and highlighting competitiveness and profitability as the ultimate goals of public action, forgetting the priority that the State should have of attending to the population's food needs.

The results of the second stage were, first, that the cultivation area of basic grains was reduced and a million jobs in the agricultural sector were lost, causing bean, wheat, and rice to fall in production. In the case of corn, while production rose, it was insufficient to attend to the rise in the use of the grain for fodder, which is why the country is highly dependent on corn imports, as is the case with rice and wheat. Livestock production rose for species of greater consumption, in particular poultry and eggs, but these increases don't correspond with the rise in consumption, which is why imports are necessary to satisfy the national demand.

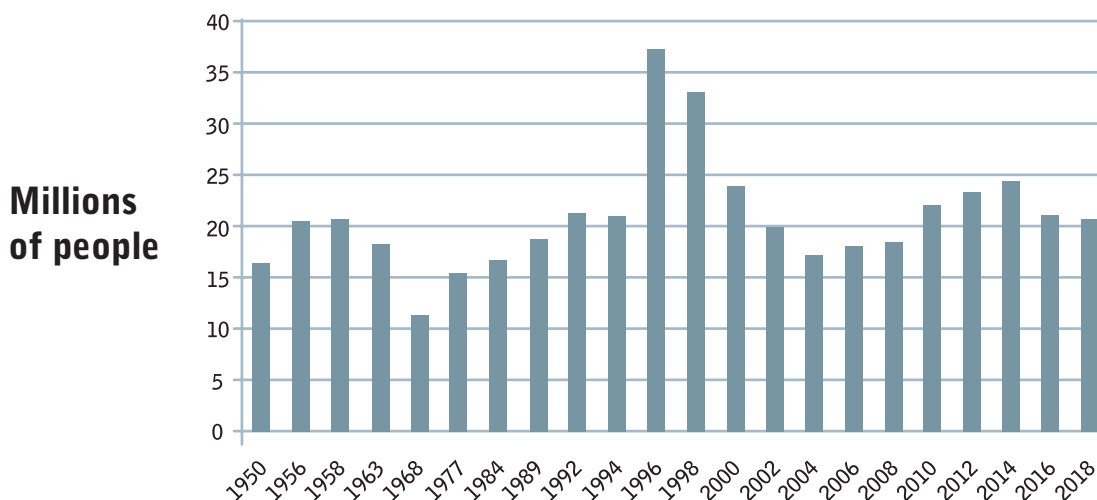
Regarding food distribution, there was a concentration in large retail chains (several of foreign origin), which promoted the consumption of industrialized products, displacing small business as well as public markets. Given their marketing schemes, these chains favor big producers over small producers. Given their size and the substitution of alternatives, to a great extent they determine consumption patterns based on the products they offer, which is why there has been a clear decline in the consumption of cereals, legumes, and fresh produce, and a rise in the consumption of animal products and processed foods. These changes in consumption are primarily the effect of the abundant supply and low prices of said products, with the absence of mediating policies to moderate their consumption. Changes in diet have had an impact, on one hand, in the reduction of undernourishment in general and in particular in children, though it persists in rural areas and among indigenous populations. On the other hand, it's worth highlighting that the country is living through an epidemic of excess weight and obesity that affects over 26% of school-aged children, 32% of young people, and 70% of adults. This has been key in shaping a situation in Mexico where the main causes of death (diabetes, malignant tumors, and heart diseases) are due to illnesses associated with inadequate diets (see Graph 2). The adoption of diets based on the food provided by agro-industrial corporations, in great part multinational companies, indicate how the population and the country have lost food sovereignty.

Food politics was undertaken with a marked emphasis on the paradigms of food self-sufficiency, security, and sovereignty.

Food dependency, the persistence of hunger, and the worsening of health show the importance for sectors of society to claim the guarantee to the right to food. This implies creating conditions so that every person, individually or collectively, can feed themselves or, if they aren't able to, for there to be institutions that provide food.

The guarantee also implies ensuring that the food and diet of every person allows them to perform their vital roles and enables their full de-

GRAPH 2. MORTALITY RATES BY DIABETES MELLITUS
AND ISCHEMIC HEART DISEASE (1995-2017)



Source: Compiled by author with data from the Informe de Labores of the Ministry of Health

velopment and a dignified standard of life according to their cultural context and specific needs stemming from gender, age, race or ethnicity, religion, health conditions, and school or work activities, without risking the fulfillment of other basic needs.

The transformation of the food system is necessary not only to address food issues, but also to achieve environmental, economic, and social sustainability, as the technologies presently used contribute to the degradation of natural resources and the generation of greenhouse gases. In economic and social terms, it must be pointed out that current production exchange methods don't allow the vast majority of small food producers to make enough income to support their activities and families.

The transformation of the food system requires actions to facilitate and protect access to natural resources (water, soil, and agrobiodiversity) and the knowledge to produce foods; to guarantee that the population's income and food prices allow for sufficient and quality procurement; to provide information and education for healthy diets; to promote local and sustainable food production, as well as the establishment of short chains of production-consumption; to foster social participation in food matters; to support institutional nutrition, primarily in schools and for senior citizens; and to attend to child nutrition, especially for infants.

In this transformation, the paradigms of self-sufficiency and food sovereignty must be reestablished, and food justice must be added to these, understood as the fact that every person should receive the food they require to enjoy dignified living conditions.



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The gate, Adolfo Vladimir
Valtierra, 2012

Food Sovereignty in the Context of Structural Violence: Power, Scale, and Resolve in the United States of America¹

Kristin Reynolds

The New School & Yale School of the Environment
Estados Unidos

Introduction

In 2008, the international peasant movement La Vía Campesina (LVC) launched its “Global Campaign to End Violence against Women.” LVC, which has been at the helm of the food sovereignty movement since its coalescence in the 1990s declared, in fact that “food sovereignty *means* the end of violence against women” (Patel 2009, p 670; emphasis added). This is straightforward in terms of physical

¹ Following Dunbar-Ortiz (2014), I use “United States” or “US” to refer to the United States of America, and “Americas” to refer to the contiguous land extending from North, Central, and South America.

violence: on average, women make up to 43% of farmers, globally, according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, and nearly 32% of farmworkers in the United States (US)² are female (Farmworker Justice 2019). It also holds meaning in a broader sense, considering structural understandings of violence and the uneven power dynamics inherent therein.

Food sovereignty is defined as “the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems” (“Declaration of Nyéléni” 2007). The ‘right to define’ can, of course, be denied to people and communities by those holding more physical, social, political or economic power. The right of self-determination can also be threatened by violence, itself a construct of unequal power. As such, considering uneven power in the food system through the lens of structural-, as well as physical violence may help us to better see and envision possibilities for sovereignty. I briefly consider this proposition here, in the context of the US, the geopolitical region in which I live and work.

A US Food System Grounded in Violence

Reflecting on violence in the food system in the US immediately takes us to the nation’s history: Clearly, the food system in this settler-colonial nation is steeped in physical violence. As Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz reminds, “settler colonialism, as an institution or a system, requires violence, or the threat of violence to attain its goals” (2014, p 8). She notes that, from an original 15 million Indigenous peoples in the current US territory (many of whom were originally farmers),³ there are currently just 3 million Indigenous peoples in more than 500 federally-recognized tribes (*ibid*). The *de facto* genocide of Indigenous peoples at the hands of white settlers, sanctioned by colonial authorities and the subsequent US government, is one glaring example of the roots of the nation’s food system in violence. The processes of genocide allowed for the development of the nation via Westward Expansion, and policies such as the 19th century Homestead Act, federal legislation that granted up to 160 acres of “public” land ostensibly to individual settlers for their use in agriculture (*ibid*, p 141).⁴ This land had, of course, once been territory of Indigenous peoples of the Americas.

We can likewise consider that both US agriculture and the US overall were built upon enslavement of Africans via kidnapping and forced exportation from the African continent, fueling a system of racial capitalism that persists today (Woods, 1998). One United Nations estimate notes that the Middle Passage alone caused the deaths of at least one in six Africans forced into those ships, and this does not account for deaths that were part-and-parcel of legalized slavery and oppression in subsequent eras. Those who were enslaved were denied rights and legitimacy as humans, while they toiled in agriculture and other manual labor. Entire economies in the US South were built with a reliance on that labor.

These historical examples are well-known—if often disregarded, in dominant (white) US society—as points on a timeline, rather than core to the founding of the nation, its economy and agriculture. Yet, leav-

2 Agriculture is just one way that Indigenous peoples in the Americas procured, and procure, food, in addition to gathering, tending, hunting, fishing, and additional means.

3 It is important to recognize that “public” land owned, by government entities in the US was appropriated via killing of indigenous peoples and land dispossession, and that, the Homestead Act actually gave much access to land speculators, as described in detail in Dunbar-Ortiz (2014).

ing a discussion of violence in the US food system to historical and corporeal examples would both *incorrectly* relegate it to the past, and be *incomplete* in ignoring ways in which violence spans different generations and geographies. A more complex understanding of violence in the food system, its extension through time and space, can contribute to deeper understandings of struggles for food sovereignty in the contemporary context.

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Theories of Structural Violence

Anthropologist and physician Paul Farmer has, since the 1990s, elaborated the concept of *structural violence*. Drawing from his experiences as a researcher and medical practitioner in Haiti, he describes structural violence as that which is “exerted systemically... indirectly...by everyone who belongs to a certain social order” (Farmer et al. 2004, p 307). It’s the way a society is organized— for example, social hierarchy via structural racism or patriarchy —that sets the stage for, and enables both direct physical violence and negative outcomes for people in the form of “death, injury, illness, subjugation, stigmatization, and even psychological terror” (ibid p 308). Political scientist Iris Marion Young (2011) discusses violence as one of “five [non-hierarchical] faces” of oppression, observing that: “members of some groups live with the knowledge that

Structural forms of violence are an injustice.

they must fear random, unprovoked attacks on their persons or property, which have no motive but to damage, humiliate, or destroy the person.” She notes, “[j]ust living under ... a threat of attack on oneself or family or friends deprives the oppressed [sic] of freedom and dignity” (2011 p. 61-62). Pointing out that racialized minorities in the US continually live within this construct, Young proposes that structural forms

of violence are an *injustice*, and should be taken seriously by those interested in its opposite.

Indeed, scholars have used concepts of structural violence to examine food and social justice issues in the US including: the realities of Triqui ethnic members from Mexico working as migrant agricultural laborers (Holmes 2013); ‘historical trauma’ with respect to environmental justice (Peña 2011); and ways that Black communities confront violence and racial trauma through specific foodways (McCutcheon 2013; Ramírez 2015; Jones 2019; Reese 2019). Although Farmer and others have debated about whether the theoretical concept of ‘structural violence,’ does anything to inform tangible actions (Farmer et al. 2004), LVC itself

makes use of the concept in its ‘stop violence against women’ campaign. This suggests a broader applicability of theories that conceptualize violence beyond the corporeal.

Sexual Violence and Food Apartheid in the Contemporary US Food System

Several studies in the past decade have documented sexual violence and harassment in agriculture. Investigative journalists for the 2012 PBS series *Frontline* (“Rape in the Fields” 2012), noted that no statistics report the number of incidents of sexual violence in agricultural fields, due to the intersectional vulnerabilities. The survivors who informed its study were mostly immigrant, female workers, many hailing from Mexico and Central America; most were fearful of losing their jobs and/or being deported. A study the same year by the organization Human Rights Watch (Meng 2012) found that the prevalence of sexual violence and harassment in the agricultural workplace is “fostered by a severe imbalance of power between employers and supervisors, and their low- wage, immigrant workers.”⁵ We might add to this, the reticence of victims to report violations to law enforcement or government agencies for fear of being detained and deported, a situation that has worsened in the US since 2012, and specifically since 2017 when Donald J. Trump came to power as President. In a situation in which people face multiple vulnerabilities – precarious economic means for survival; immigration status in an agricultural system that is dependent on human exploitation; and differences in physical and authoritative power, to name a few – the connections between physical and structural violence are palpable.

Turning to consumption, the term ‘food desert’ is often used to describe places with limited access to fresh and healthy food (often communities of color in the US), coupled with an over-prevalence of unhealthy food options. Many activists and scholars see this term as outdated, and use the term ‘food apartheid’ to describe the situation in which many low-income communities of color live with respect to food inaccessibility (cf. Penniman 2018). This concept provocatively casts racialized access to food as intentional, insofar as denying food is one way for dominant white society to exercise racialized power.

Indeed, many studies have noted that healthy food access is more limited in racial minority neighborhoods; and psychologist and Human Ecology/Africana Studies scholar Naa Oyo Kwate and colleagues (2009) found that location of supermarkets and fast food restaurants in New York City (NYC) are more strongly associated with higher percentages of Black residents than with economic status.⁶ The ramifications of this are serious, considering links between consumption of highly-processed foods and obesity; the greater prevalence of obesity among Black and Latinx people in the US (Hales et al. 2020); and “slow violence” as a cause of mortality in some Black communities (Jones 2019). Returning to different conceptualizations of violence, these effects are both *physical*, insofar as they produce elevated mortality and reduced life chances for individuals, and *structural*, in that US society is organized around racialized disparities. As a reality, food apartheid produces ‘negative outcomes,’ as discussed by Farmer, including illness and death.

5 The former in many ways control the livelihoods of the latter, such as control over job retention, wages, housing, and transportation.

6 That is, according to the findings in their study, they concluded that the location choices for FFR and healthy food retailing in the area of study, were based not primarily on whether or not people would be able to *afford* healthy food but on racial composition of the neighborhood (Kwate et al. 2009).

Ending Violence in the Food System as a Part of Realizing Food Sovereignty

Clearly, there is no singular solution to violence woven into the fabric of the US food system, especially if we accept the relevance of the structural framing to the lived-realities of people and communities. Rather, ending violence requires long-term, and multiscalar work, from addressing the most obvious forms (e.g., enslavement or sexual harassment) to less-recognized, intergenerational traumas related to food, agriculture, or the environment.

Like many complex matters of social justice, ending violence in the food system—and realizing food sovereignty—may begin at *individual, community, and workplace scales*, and by addressing acute, immediate needs. To follow the examples above, this includes ensuring access to healthy food in low-income and low-wealth communities, ending sexual harassment and assault in the food chain, and changing labor practices that allow myriad forms of worker exploitation and abuse. However, the work does not stop here. The food sovereignty movement addresses power structures that enable injustices to pervade the food system at *systemic levels and global scales*. These include neoliberalism (as the dominant economic paradigm), patriarchy, and white supremacy, and can extend to food apartheid, if conceived of as the racist sociopolitical system within which inequitable access to food and denial of self-determination constructed. Ending violence in the food system involves dismantling these structures – clearly a longer-term undertaking — such that food sovereignty can be realized. The work further entails fostering intergenerational healing from historical and racial traumas connected to agriculture and food that are experienced by some members of Black, brown, and/or Indigenous communities. This takes place along a *continuum of historical and contemporary timescales*.

There are many groups and initiatives engaged in such undertakings, often working at more than one of the scales noted above. One example is La Finca del Sur, a 2.5 acre (1 hectare) community farm and garden in the South Bronx, NYC led by Latina and Black women and their allies. The organization grows food and offers safe, affirming spaces for Latina and Black women, and it operates in solidarity with women farmers of the Global South (cf. Reynolds and Cohen 2016). La Finca del Sur works toward food sovereignty by providing a physical place to counter structural violences in the food system, including patriarchy in agriculture and food apartheid in the South Bronx – one of the lowest-income communities in the US. Another example is Soul Fire Farm (SFF) in upstate New York, “a BIPOC⁷ –centered community farm committed to ending racism and injustice in the food system” (Penniman 2018). SFF works to strengthen food sovereignty by growing and distributing nourishing food; training “activist-farmers;” and participating in the movement for community self-determination (ibid). SFF places specific emphasis on healing trauma connected to the land and stemming from associations that some Black and African American people in the US make between land, agriculture, and oppression (Penniman 2018; See also White 2018). The organization has often been sought after to advise on state and national-level policy strategies addressing the needs of Black farmers.

Additional initiatives include the Coalition of Immokalee Workers’ successful training program to end sexual violence in agricultural fields (Chang 2020); and descendants of the Mohawk peoples from the community of Awkwesasne countering cultural oppression by restoring seed sovereignty (White 2019). Understanding all of these examples through the lens of ending structural violence helps us see diverse ways that farmers and movement leaders are working to disrupt power imbalances, envisioning and enacting food sovereignty from individual and community- to structural and global- to spatiotemporal scales.

7 Black-Indigenous-People-of-Color.

Conclusion

Returning to LVC's campaign, we can understand the idea that "food sovereignty means the end of violence against women" in its literal sense: Violence against women reduces a community's ability to feed itself and denies self-determination, a key aspect of the food sovereignty frame. We can also think by extension about how ending structural violence against specific identity-based groups (ethnic and racial minorities; immigrants facing xenophobia; gender nonconforming people; we could name many more) is requisite to a system in which food sovereignty is a tangible reality. Self-determination includes having power over one's lived reality, and the persistence of violence related to the food system denies people of this right.

Knowing about the realities of how violence plays out in the food system can be difficult to grapple with on an intellectual level, and, emotionally, it can be heart breaking. It can also be deadly for those who face the violence and those who advocate for them, such as human rights defenders and social movement leaders. And yet, as I've learned in my work with leaders and activists, some of whom are mentioned in this essay, being psychologically defeated by the stark realities of injustices in the world can be a privileged position that many cannot afford; Moments of doubt and difficulty can be exactly the times to reach further. Seeing struggles for food sovereignty through the lens of structural violence may better equip those of us so inclined to engage in action for a more just food system—in different social, and geographic locations—to do so with the strength and resolve required in such critical work.

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Socio-environmental Impacts of Agrifood Systems: Aggravation of Social Inequalities

Elena Lazos Chavero

Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales- UNAM,
Mexico

Introduction

While all agrifood systems leave their mark on socio-ecological systems, some include productive-forestry cycles for their recovery, whereas others undermine every possibility of restoration. The ecological impacts of agrifood systems are highly heterogeneous, depending primarily on the type and intensity of the management of the agricultural system. The expression of these effects depends on the biophysical characteristics of the territories as well as the economic, cultural, and socio-political con-

ditions of the farmers. The development of sustainable agricultural systems, or, on the flip-side, totally devastating ones, depends on innumerable factors and processes that result from different historical trajectories. Being able to generate the social and economic possibilities and socio-environmental conditions to achieve the agrifood production of the territory, with low or high socio-environmental impacts, depends on multiple factors, including a) agrarian dynamics and structure (land market, increase in latifundios—large estates— or minifundios— smallholdings, land leases); b) possibilities for the regeneration of environmental conditions and ecological integrity; c) presence or absence of development programs that affect land use; d) strengthening or fragility of the community organization and food identities and cultures; e) market influence (trade specialization or diversification for self-consumption); and f) negotiations of territorial policies between a great variety of actors involved (Yúnez, 2012; Lazos, 2013; Schipanski, 2016; Salvador, 2019; Guzmán, 2019). These local or regional contexts are in turn framed by socioeconomic and political processes at the global level.

The devastating effects of socio-environmental deterioration caused by certain agricultural systems are reflected in high levels of soil and surface water or groundwater contamination due to excessive use of agrochemicals and organic fertilizers, in deforestation processes that entail profound habitat transformations, and in the loss of biodiversity and agrobiodiversity. These impacts directly affect the loss of social welfare for farmers themselves as well as for the region's population. In some cases, the outcomes become irreversible since the costs of sustainably recovering ecological conditions are higher than those of the agricultural production itself.

In other agricultural systems, environmental consequences can be incorporated into the reproduction of these systems, since the farmers seek to adapt to local conditions. The very conceptualization of these agricultural systems includes forest system restoration, soil recovery, and biodiversity conservation. Farmers pursue the recycling of soil fertility through an adequate management of organic matter and biological activity. They manage water sustainably and attempt pest and disease control through a topological arrangement of their plots. Among this type of producers, there is a wide range of small and medium-scale farmers, indigenous as well as mestizo, that aim and fight to integrate ecological dynamics into the system, forming an organic agricultural unit based on long cycles. This type of agricultural system provides a wide variety of foods. At the same time, organization and productive management allow for forest restoration, soil fertility recovery, and ecological reintegration in its multiple dimensions (Hernández-Xolocotzi, 1985; Altieri, 1987; Tivy, 1990; Morales, 2011). Nevertheless, the development of more sustainable agricultural systems requires an economic, social, and political framework that supports small-scale farmers and guarantees the sale of their products at a price that allows them to recover their costs and cover their families' needs.

Multiple factors affect the type and intensity of the impacts generated by agrifood systems. Although the size of the plot is relevant, one of the most determining factors in these differences is the pressure exerted by the global market and the consolidation of the agrifood industry (Guzmán, 2019; Gálvez, 2019; Sandoval, 2019; Sammartino, 2019). The regions most affected by socio-environmental impacts are generally areas where production is primarily destined for a market that demands the intensification of specific crops. In general, there is a link between the size of the property and the extent of commercial monocultures, which create the greatest socio-environmental effects, namely: loss of biodiversity and agrobiodiversity, deforestation processes without restoration possibilities, and excessive use of agrochemicals that cause water and soil contamination. However, over the last several decades, depending on the region, this devastating process is also manifested in small holdings. Small and medium-scale farmers, due to the lack of programs

supporting the development of diversified agriculture, are forced to change their agricultural practices, given the absence of possibilities of labor and capital investment. On one hand, there is the acceleration of rural youth migration because agriculture, given the impoverishment of crops and low economic profitability, doesn't provide the sought welfare, which leads to the loss of agroecological practices among small and medium-scale producers, severely deteriorating their socio-environmental processes. On the other hand, there is price volatility, uncertainty, and climate variability that includes years of erratic precipitation, placing harvests at risk and generating agricultural instability. This makes it so that farmers aren't able to invest an important part of their capital.

These agricultural transformations have intensified environmental and food inequalities at four levels. First, a) soil and water contamination due to the excessive use of agrochemicals and fertilizers directly affects some populations' access to clean water and fertile soil. This clearly reduces their productive possibilities, which causes a vicious cycle of agricultural-environmental deterioration. Second, b) the health of farmers and other people who live

near these productive poles has been negatively affected by the excessive use of agrochemicals, many of which have been banned by the European Union due to their high toxicity. This has led to a high number of deaths and congenital malformations in Argentina, Paraguay, and Brazil (Lapegna, 2016). Third, c) there's the control of big multinationals over crop types to consolidate the food industry (for example: Hass avocados, potatoes for Sabritas, wheat for Bimbo, yellow corn for fried snacks). Finally, d) the control of energy-dense diets with ultra-processed products has direct consequences on the health of consumers, leading to the controversial coexistence of both under-nourishment and over-consumption (Dixon et al., 2017; Fuglie et al.; Gálvez, 2019; Reynolds, 2019).

The regions most affected by socio-environmental impacts are generally areas where production is primarily destined for a market that demands the intensification of specific crops.

Alternatives for building sustainable agrifood territories

There are several paths and processes to achieve sustainable agrifood territories that create fewer socio-environmental impacts. The conservation of native agrobiodiversity is a fundamental pillar, for it helps maintain continuous agricultural production in a phased way, meaning that, depending on the composition, it can eliminate the use of pesticides and herbicides. It does, however, require a high investment in fertilizers and workforce for short periods of time. This situation, though it can become an advantage by generating an opportunity to retain the youth labor force in rural areas, is also subject to socio-environmental, economic, and political uncertainties and vulnerabilities (Lazos, 2018).

In the case of the Andes, maintaining agrobiodiversity additionally means protecting and stimulating the spread of indigenous peoples' knowledge through the integration of a rural school, where more experienced

farmers are part of the trainer-faculty and their knowledge is therefore valued and shared (Dorrego, 2019). This experience is part of a great legacy of peasant schools that began in the early 1970s in different parts of Latin America. Participatory Action Research (PAR), started by Fals Borda and later followed by numerous Latin American activists, disseminated participatory methodologies in which horizontal peasant-to-peasant teaching was practiced (Gudynas and Evia, 1991; Boege, 2003; Caporal and Costabeber, 2011). Peasant schools are established as centers for exchange and reflection on agroecological knowledge among farmers. In this type of projects, social participation becomes the central axis in the teaching-learning exchange (Freire, 1972).

Participatory methodologies allow for the co-built accumulation of shared knowledge, the understanding of issues from the perspective of different authors involved, the continual adjustment of projects according to diverse contexts and dynamics, the management of different scales and temporalities, but above all, the increase in the abilities of local institutions and actors (Cernea, 1985; Ghimire and Pimber, 2000; Durand, 2006). They differ from participatory designs defined by external agents, be these national governments and funding agencies or international agro-environmental associations.

In Colombia, defending agrobiodiversity is intertwined with the protection of seed exchange and the recovery of traditional foods with the goal of achieving food security/sovereignty based on high quality nutrition grounded in the diversity of agricultural systems as well as forest systems and/or foraging of native vegetation (Lasso, 2019). These interrelations between agrobiodiversity and nutrition have also been studied in other rural parts of Latin America (for example, Becerril, 2013, in the Maya area of Yucatán, Mexico). Like in most Latin American countries, the loss of control over seeds in Colombia has led to the abandonment of the cultivation of agrobiodiversity. This has meant leaving cultural practices and knowledgesurrounding agrobiodiversity and food behind. Traditional Colombian dishes, like the Boyacá region stew or seven-grain chocolate, have been marginalized and turned into “food for the poor,” thus locals now look down on their consumption (Lasso, 2019).

In these same terms, seed exchange is one of the pillars for the conservation of agrobiodiversity and local food systems. In seed exchange there is also a renovation of knowledge, techniques, and management practices among farmers. These reciprocal relationships promote, on one hand, the conservation of agrobiodiversity and, on the other, the strengthening of social relationships in the fabric of mutual support, the transmission of knowledge, and the trust to achieve a more diverse and safe harvest. There are farmers who donate seeds and knowledge, receptors, node farmers who establish a high centrality in seed networks, consumers, experimenters, and amplifiers under a constant exchange dynamic. In the Tlaxcala study, the corn network woven by farmers is composed of 192 nodes with 230 seed exchanges over the last five years, out of which 169 exchanges were of white corn. Similarly, there is a bean network with 51 nodes and 47 bean exchanges (yellow, black, white, pinto) (Llamas and Lazos, 2019).

In contrast to these studies in the Andes, Colombia, and Mexico, the expansion of agricultural systems that destroy socio-environmental systems has led to the devastation of vegetation, overexploitation of soils, incorporation of hybrid seeds to establish high-yield monocultures, and process technification. The objective has been to pursue greater productivities expressed as high yields per cultivated surface, which induce the depletion of the ecological systems that sustain them, sometimes in the long term, sometimes in the short term, exposing their recovery and reaching the definitive breakdown of ecological integrity. The use of hybrid seeds implies a dependence on purchase for access to these seeds and substitutes complex seed exchange relation-

ships between the farmers themselves. Nutrition is homogenized to cover the requisites of industrial transformation and thus agrobiodiversity and the availability of the varied nutritional quality of foods are lost.

These monocultures are growing in the vast majority of Latin American territories. One example is that of flower production in Zinacatán, Chiapas, which has taken the place of the milpa for family consumption (Llanos, 2019). The landscape is dominated by a great number of greenhouses for flower cultivation as well as Maseca tortilla plants. These agrarian transformations entail ecological degradation due to the excessive use of agrochemicals and fertilizers and the burning of plastics. The size of this system has led to land scarcity for corn cultivation and water scarcity for the community. Nutrition based on the milpa has been replaced by a greater consumption of processed foods and meat. These agrifood and agro-ecological consequences tend to be irreversible.

A key driver in the establishment of monocultures has been the presence of external development programs that only seek productive and economic profitability. Such is the case of MasAgro, proposed by the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), financed by Inter-American Development Bank, and carried out by Mexico's Secretariat of Agriculture and Rural Development (SADER) (Laura Rodríguez, 2019, Working Group on Land, Water, Agrodiversity, and Technology). The program seeks to substitute the cultivation of native corn with hybrid corn, using agrochemicals and fertilizers. Under a conceptual framework of socio-ecological systems (Turner et al., 2003), MasAgro is assessed to generate environmental degradation and greater vulnerabilities by creating, for the farmers, a dependence on external technology.

These major differences between types of agrifood systems aggravate social inequalities between regions and countries. Some populations are more affected than others, both in their socio-ecological systems as well as their own nutrition and health. The exacerbated use of agrochemicals and fertilizers has caused situations of extreme vulnerability for the health of workers and day laborers, as well as the health of the populations that live near vast monoculture fields.

Collective Reflections

The factors that have fostered and led to these major transformations of agrifood systems in all of Latin America involve heterogeneous economic, social, cultural, political, and environmental dynamics at specific local levels as well as global scales and which feed into each other at different timescales and under key social actors. Several questions arise, therefore, on the effect of some of the causes and consequences of these transformations. Among the causes, three fundamental processes stand out for analysis: a) the role of the intervention and direction of agrifood public policies; b) the relation of transition and transfer of technologies; and c) the market's influence. Among the consequences, the following concerns for consideration are expressed: i) impacts on nutritional quality and health; ii) differences in effects depending on gender and age; iii) the extent of the degradation of the territories; and iv) structural changes in power relations and decision-making related to agrifood systems.

Regarding cause analysis, agrifood public policies in Latin America, and especially in Mexico, have promoted and even bolstered the growth of both national and multinational agrifood industries, opening multiple channels for their distribution and dominance. This has resulted in the marginalization of production

from peasant and indigenous family farmers into specialized markets. To build alternatives towards sustainability and foster family agriculture, these policies must therefore be completely transformed, since agri-food industries increasingly control agriculture and food in Latin American countries. More socially and environmentally inclusive policies must be generated to restore the land, food, and health of inhabitants.

Likewise, for several decades now, Latin American governments have facilitated the opening of technology transfer related to the vast production of monocultures. The effects have led to the loss of seeds and agrobiodiversity, the excessive use of agrochemicals, soil decay, and, in general, territory degradation. By contrast, the transfer of knowledge and technology from peasant to peasant at small scales has been marginalized and left in the circuit of civil associations. There have been very few government programs that boost organic or agro-ecological production through family agriculture at a larger scale. An exception might be the National Agroecology Plan in Mexico. Its objectives and goals, however, are still being established.

To analyze consequences, through the cases presented, we can look into the impacts on access to the nutritional quality of food in Zinacatán, where farmers currently cultivate flowers for trade, replacing the diversity of their milpas. This case exemplifies what happens in vast territories in North America. Flowers, vegetables, and genetically modified soy bring forth the same socioecological and sociocultural consequences (Lapegna, 2016; Llanos, 2019). In every case, the families increasingly depend on the purchase of industrialized foods. In protected natural areas, restrictions in land use changes result in a transformation of the food system, as has been shown in Mexico and Ecuador, where they even banned the foraging of edible wild plants (Arellano, 2019). These agricultural transformations have an effect on the type of nutrition and health of the families (Cotlers, et al., 2019; Gálvez, 2019; Reynolds, 2019; Sandoval, 2019). This also causes important cultural changes that break down lifestyles that were previously interwoven with nutrition that was once based, in the case of rural Mexico, in the cultivation of the milpa, centered on a combination of native types of corn and associated crops. The purchasing of industrialized tortillas from Maseca or Minsa entails also a major change in the preparation of the tortilla at the nutritional level (the absence of nixtamalization and interference in calcium intake) as well as at the sociocultural level. These transformations of food culture are promoted by industries but also result from economic reasons. Large parts of the migrant or poor population only have access to certain types of calories. “The neoliberal market has robbed local nutrition, local agriculture, yet also the imagination.” (Gálvez, 2019).

The effects of these impacts are experienced differently in rural, rur-urban, and urban populations, since the generated socio-environmental degradation is distributed unequally, creating contrasting socio-environmental injustices throughout the territory. For example, in a basin, if the farmers located upstream pour out all of their agrochemicals, the impact will be greater for the farmers downstream. In this sense, the impacts generated have highly dissimilar consequences. Because of this, basin regulation has been considered fundamental for controlling environmental effects on food systems (Cotler et al., 2019).

With the transformation towards highly mechanized monocultures, job elimination leads to the migration of youth and, many times, means their loss of land rights in their communities of origin. Similarly, the low prices and low yields of family production systems due to ecological suffocation also elicit these migrations, causing the same effects.

Regarding the food-migration connection, the processes are equally complex. In some suburbs, inhabited mainly by migrants, people are forced to consume ultra processed foods in the absence of natural foods

markets. In this sense, food deserts restrict access to healthy foods (Gálvez, 2019). ‘Food apartheid’ marginalizes the Black population in the U.S. from nutritious foods, as they have access only to the foods sold in suburb shops or “fast food” chains (Reynolds, 2019). Nevertheless, if people stay in their communities, they also aren’t guaranteed quality nutrition due to the loss of agrobiodiversity and the excessive use of agrochemicals, as happens in many Latin American communities. In this sense, the interrelations between food-migration-family agriculture-environmental degradation become more complex (Gálvez, 2019).

Because of this, various fronts must be strengthened: 1) Agrifood policies, including a whole series of technical-productive-trade-credit alternatives to incentivize family agriculture based on the restoration of agrobiodiversity, seed control, and sustainable agriculture practices, eliminating the excessive use of agrochemicals. 2) Territorial planning policies considering ecological differences, but also including socioeconomic and political differences. Young people and women living without guaranteed access to land perpetuates the intensification of social and food inequalities. The movements against the sale or leasing of lands by the installation of wind power facilities in Tehuantepec, Mexico, are held up as fights for food sovereignty (Sandoval, 2019). 3) Differentiated trade policies and short chains to be able to promote agroecological systems that demand a great labor investment, with the goal of being able to guarantee fair compensation for agricultural families (Guzmán, 2019). The tensions between trade strategies and small producers were discussed in several working groups, particularly under the lens of food justice. 4) Democratic innovations and changes for a greater intervention of actors (in particular women and young people) who have been marginalized in regards to decision-making at the territorial level as well as at the level of public policies for integral development. Recognizing and legitimizing the existence of other organization systems in local decision-making would open new spaces of governmentality. 5) Strengthening of rural organizations to consolidate community institutional capacities and be able to scale up agro-ecological experiences. 6) Deconstructing globalized food coloniality through the fight against the processes of inequality and dispossession and rebuilding food culture based on an appropriation of the local food identity (Sandoval, 2019) and being able to revalorize the cultural lived experience of food heritage recovery (Sammartino, 2019). 7) Fracturing the hegemonic vision of food heritage as a decolonizing proposal. An uncritical view of heritage reproduces food inequalities (Sammartino, 2019). For example, in the case of Mexican food heritage, mole recipes with the use of the Chilhuacle chili segregate the cooks who can’t access this chili due to its high cost (Jaramillo, 2019).

In some suburbs, inhabited mainly by migrants, people are forced to consume ultra processed foods in the absence of natural foods markets.

Finally, the proposed alternatives to build a more just and sustainable Latin American field need to be spun at different scales, from the individual and family level to the global level. The processes that have led to the current critical agrifood situation are a product of the intertwining of national and global policies that have favored agrifood industries based on the vast production of monocultures and have abandoned diversified family production that is free from agrochemicals. To revert these processes, again from the individual

level to the global scale, production policies as well as market policies need to be planned jointly with social policies and food culture policies towards a new consumption with socio-environmental co-responsibility.

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Ethics and Methods of Funding in Food Research. Dilemmas of the Public/Private Divide

Chelsie Yount-André

Anthropology

University of Montpellier MUSE, CIRAD

Liliana Martinez Lomeli

The FUNDALID Foundation

Internationally, public research funds have substantially diminished in recent decades, increasingly pushing scholars to seek out private support. Concomitantly, the influence of the food industry on research has come under new scrutiny, as scholars and public officials are accused of colluding with companies to obfuscate products' nefarious effects (Kearns et al., 2016; Nestle, 2002). While certain disciplines

have set forth guidelines regarding the terms under which scholars might accept private funds (Cosgrove et al. 2009), the responsibility generally falls to individual researchers to navigate ethical concerns entailed in collaborations with the private sector. Commercial entities, meanwhile, have far greater resources at their disposal (legal and otherwise) to negotiate the terms of their partnerships with academic researchers, such that any such collaboration is characterized by vast power asymmetries.

On what terms should researchers collaborate with or accept funds from private institutions? What steps can they take to maintain a critical distance from industry interests? How might they grapple with the uneven power relations that characterize public/private collaborations? Exploring the stakes of public/private collaborations and their ethical and methodological entailments became a main issue for the researchers on food studies from diverse national and disciplinary backgrounds.

Dealing with the private/public fundings: food studies facing reflexivity

Developing the ethics, methods, and politics of partnerships between the public and private sector leads to explore not only how the act of accepting private funding influences research findings, but also to consider the cumulative impact that choosing to de facto eschew collaboration with industry could have on scholarship, as public funding sources dwindle. To do so required that we reflexively examine dichotomous portrayals of public and private funding, in order to consider how this binary might work to reinforce the privilege of an ever-smaller group of scholars able to gain access to funds deemed void of ethical concessions. As academics, we thus are invited to critically consider notions of private funding as being so-called, “dirty money” (Jones 2014) in order to explore the implications of various forms of funding for research, in terms of which types of projects receive funding and how various forms of funding impact researchers’ claims to legitimacy.

In the context of a conference or whatever scientific event focused on themes of food justice and sovereignty, this would be no small task. Many of scholars who take part in and attend this kind of events propose a research that has regularly brought them face to face with the nefarious impacts that multinational food and agricultural corporations have had on the world’s most disadvantaged populations. Most have a heightened awareness of recent revelations of the implication of industry-funded nutritionists in obscuring the negative health impact of sugar and processed foods. In this context, the perils of collaborating with the private sector are glaring, notably the risk that academic researchers lend credibility to food companies, contributing to the undue influence of “Big Food” over political processes, which could undermine the very forms of food justice they gather to analyze and promote.

One key point is the fact that even public funding may raise issues regarding the funders’ political position and the ways that this may influence, and potentially compromise, researchers’ approach and the methods they can employ. This reminder that all forms of funding are interested in some fashion should encourage us to include the sorts of methodological and ethical considerations of accepting certain forms of public funding alongside the discussion of private donors, which we expand upon below.

It became clear just how difficult it is to make generalizations regarding the tricky questions about public/private funding and collaboration. Scholars are often careful to specify that their perspectives are disci-

pline-specific, dependent on the national contexts in which they worked, as well as their specific research themes. The conditions that would make a given collaboration acceptable for researchers in their field may well diverge from expectations in other contexts. What it means to “work with” or even “accept funding from” industry varies greatly from one case to the next and the specific arrangements of a given collaboration has a significant impact on whether researchers feel comfortable accepting funding.

We propose to develop three specific hypothetical examples to encourage researchers to engage with the complexities of these contingencies.

A geographically specific issue?

The first, based loosely on French “CIFRE” funding for PhD students asked them to consider whether they would be willing to act as dissertation advisor to a student whose funding came, in part from a private company. In these arrangements, the government collaborates with private institutions to fund three years of doctoral research, during which time the student has the legal status of an employee at the company while also being affiliated with a university and research laboratory. In France, where doctoral funding is limited and extremely competitive, this form of funding has rapidly normalized. But in Mexico students who are accepted to a PhD program are guaranteed state funding. Unsurprisingly, scholars from Latin America approached this question with more caution than their European colleagues. This highlighted the ways that our apprehensions and ethics regarding public/private collaborates are both geographically specific and conditioned by existing funding opportunities.

As scholars, the adjustment and adaptation also may concern public and government fundings

The second example emerged out the fact that the issues of methods and research ethics that concern us relative to private funding may well be at play when one receives public research grants as well. This hypothetical case describes a researcher interested in urban farming who had recently become eligible for new forms of public funding as municipal governments began to take interest in questions of climate change and sustainability. After applying for and being awarded one of these grants, the researcher received a request from the local government to adjust the proposed timeline for the study in order to complete the research and analysis in roughly half the time you proposed, so that the study results could be disseminated just before the next municipal elections. We specified that this adjustment would require the researcher to significantly adapt the methods and the scope of the project: he thus has to consider, at what point would the funders’ expectations constitute an undue influence on the project, compromising the integrity of the research.

This second example worked to destabilize dichotomous portrayals of public and private finding by drawing attention to the ways that even public funders might attempt to exert influence on the research process itself. Moving away from the indirect relation with a private funder proposed in the first example, this case asked researchers to consider how funders might influence the actual methods and approach used in a research project. This served two purposes: first, it sparked discussion of the issues that might arise even when working with government funders, despite the legitimacy that public funding might lend a research

project. Second, this case encouraged researchers to consider the ways that various funders may engage with the research process, exerting influence at various stages.

A consensus emerged funders will inevitably exert influence over research through the selection process, which gives them power to decide which projects may be carried out and (thus) indirectly shapes sorts of proposals researchers make, as they tailor their approaches to fit the funding organization's expectations. But there is a clear distinction between this selection bias and situations in which funders attempt to influence the research process itself, at which point maintaining the integrity of one's research becomes a much more complex process. Indeed, any arrangement in which a funding organization hopes to engage in decisions about researcher's scope, methods, or analysis process – whether it be in demands for adjustments to the research proposal or promises of “collaboration” between researchers and members of the funding organization – opens a researcher to ongoing pressures from the funding institution, requiring constant diligence to assure the integrity of the research. At this point, receiving funding from a private foundation, which after accepting the proposal does not attempt to influence the research process, may be preferable to accepting public funding in an arrangement in which local politicians.

Sponsors inevitably exert some influence on research

Leading a qualitative research commissioned by a private foundation:

The final example aims to consider whether researchers would be willing to take the role of lead researcher on a qualitative research project commissioned by a private foundation. This organization pools funds from banks, private companies, and personal trusts, private actors that clearly hoped to boost their reputations by funding this project aimed at improving nutrition in vulnerable communities. We specified that the project would provide funds to hire graduate student research assistants and the theme was well aligned with the potential researcher's interests, but it also focused on a particularly vulnerable population: local school children in an impoverished area. In this case, the individual groups that contribute to the funding organization appeared to spark less debate than questions of ethics related to working with school children. In ethical terms, children are notoriously highlighted as a vulnerable population and researchers who work with children are often subject to specific laws (in much of Latin America, for example, it is illegal for private companies to carry out research in schools) and codes of ethics (to receive project approval by an Internal Review Board in the US, researchers working with minors are subject to higher ethical standards).

The discussion reinforced a point made in earlier cases: whatever one decides relative to funding, it is the researcher's obligation to be transparent with one's research participants and all decisions regarding the funding one accepts and the conditions and the forms influence they entail should be informed by one's discussions with community members. And yet, the consent of potential research participants does not suffice, but

rather, it is the researcher's responsibility to be better informed than their interlocutors regarding the politics the project entails and to carefully weigh the potential risks associated with funding, in ways that may not be apparent to the local community.

To sum up: there is no simple answer

In sum, there is no simple answer to questions of whether and upon what conditions one might accept funding, be it from private or public organizations. But rather, exploring these issues in a food justice and sovereignty pointed to many factors that shape one's perspective on the ethics of accepting funding (discipline, national context, organization of the collaboration relative to gradients of influence a funding organization might have). This discussion made clear that as research funds seem ever scarcer, researchers must be vigilant of the many ways that funders can exert influence on research and the many risks that this implies, for the quality of research and the communities involved. As we engaged, as researchers, with the complexities of the three cases upon, taking a nuanced approach questions of public and private funding, it also became clear that with these new funding situations come a plethora of new concerns of which researchers must be aware. This again draws attention to the burden associated with becoming aware of and managing the risks of various forms of funding, a task which falls to individual researchers whose time and energy are already under significant pressures from their research, teaching, and administrative responsibilities. In the future, as new forms of funding normalize, the task of ensuring the ethics and legitimacy of research could be better assured if research organizations (laboratories, universities, disciplines, etc.) came together to establish sets of standards or questions to consider which could guide researchers in making these decisions.

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Salt of the Earth.
Carole Condé and Karl
Veveridge, 2008

Food justice: a conceptual framework and a category of action. Perspectives from the Latin American context

Camille Hochedez,
Université de Poitiers,
France

Theoretical advances from Latin America: accessibility and right to food to figure out food inequalities

Food justice is not the traditional framework to analyse food issues in Latin America. Academic works, as well as public authorities and civil society reports, rather use the notions of food insecurity and food sovereignty or sustainable development. Thus, one may wonder whether food justice is just another paradigm coming after another, or whether it brings a real change in the way to figure out food

inequalities. However, the Latin American approach actually highlights two different ways to consider food justice: accessibility and right to food.

Accessibility is a first classical way to figure food justice as a good access to safe and quality food. This is traditionally analysed through the consumers' point of view, but the Latin American context brings complexity in the understanding of food accessibility. Indeed land issues are pivotal in the debate over food security. It leads to consider access to resources to produce food as a part of food accessibility as well. This approach highlights as well the processes of connection and disconnection between consumers and producers, between rural and urban areas. As an example, studying the marketing of agricultural products is particular-

Space plays an important role in the creation of food inequalities.

ly relevant to analyse those connections and disconnections in the food system. The analysis points out how alternative food networks (AFN) are able to create new markets controlled by the producers themselves, or food initiatives built by consumers. This specific theme of AFN also reflects the circulation of alternative models of supply chains such as farmer markets, producers' stores, baskets, co-operatives, etc., between parts of the

continent, all of which share the revival of power and value by farmers as well as the empowerment of consumers. According to this approach of justice, accessibility deals with space or territories. The latter is often seen only as a context to think about food issues. But space plays a major role in creating food inequities, as pointed out with concepts of "food desert", even "food apartheid" (Washington, 2018). Food apartheid is a notion created in the North American context to highlight areas where a lack of access to fresh and safe food combines with a high rate of poverty, ethnicity and health issues. But this notion is very negative and stigmatizing, that's why one might prefer to use the notion of "healthy food priority areas" to underline the potentiality of acting on space to solve the problem.

The second approach analyses food justice in terms of right, according to the work of M.I Young (1990). Such an approach brings the food issue into the context of democracies, underlying the food responsibility of the State, as the right to food is now written in the constitution of several Latin American countries. Moreover, food is a part of citizenship and a way to exercise our citizenship. At an individual scale, the "right to" approach of food justice faces several challenges of Latin America, such as the right to land and land access, the right to have access to food, the right to the city (through initiatives of urban agriculture for example), labour rights in agriculture, in agro-food systems, in distribution sector. Latin American specific issues addressed in terms of "right to" highlight the food justice concept by putting food sovereignty at the heart of the conceptual framework.

Contributions from the dialogue between food and agriculture: studying relations of power in the rural and productive parts of the agrifood systems and facing climate change

Studies in the field of food justice as well as the food justice movement often focus on the issue of food access from the consumer side (Hochedez et Le Gall, 2016). They tend to forget that food comes from the field, and that it is connected to the land. However, there is a lack in investigating on injustices in agrifood systems and employment, and on the structural inequities shaped by agricultural capitalism (Tsing, 2009). Some topics might be analysed in a food justice framework in order to reveal at least relations of domination inside the agricultural systems. This applies especially to labour migrations in agriculture and the reproduction of a modern system of slavery, or to the very limited human rights for the migrant workers on the field.

While focusing on the use of land resources to produce food, there is also a lack of analysis considering the role of production methods in reducing food inequities and in impacting climate change and biodiversity loss: does agroecology bring more food justice, or only more sustainability? Does increasing food justice mean protecting biodiversity? What are the consequences of climatic disasters on crop losses? How climate change can impact rural communities? In Latin America, we must underline the role of indigenous peasant seeds, that lead to figure the place for local knowledges in agrifood systems, thus in food sovereignty.

Finally, the dialogue between food and agriculture addresses the question of the “empowerment” dimension in the food justice, and highlights the relations of domination between rural farming communities and the agro-food industries within agrifood systems.

A difficult but necessary dialogue between North and South America on food justice and sovereignty: feeding the debate on racial and migration inequities in the agrifood systems

Focusing on America makes sense while talking about food justice, because America played a key role in the emergence of this concept, “with the defense of food sovereignty emerging from the south and demands for food justice coming from the United States” (call for papers of the Jysala Congress, 2019). To “put forward a collective reflection from the specificities of the social, political, economic, environmental organizations that characterize the continent from north to south” appears as a major challenge. However, crossing the two parts of the continent yet requires a theoretical and practical effort. It allows to raise two main points.

Firstly, the racialization of the food issue seems to be a cross-cutting approach between the two parts of the continent. Indeed, food sovereignty is closely intertwined with the issue of minorities and indigenous people. In most metropolitan areas of the United States, food accessibility is highly racialized, what of the use the notion of “food apartheid” (Washington, 2018) to qualify food desert situation that affects black neighbourhood underlines. In Latin America, the ethnic dimension of food justice mostly relies in the fact that food sovereignty has also to deal with the issue of rights of indigenous people.

Then, circulations and migrations between the two parts of the continent inside the food chain reflect relations that can reveal several forms of exploitation in the frame of the agricultural capitalism (Tsing, 2009).

Those circulations are the result of wage inequities, inequities in living conditions between countries. It is as well the result of global mechanisms of devaluation of agricultural employment, and of the global food system organization.

Approaching the territorial and social relativity of the food justice notion

Food justice is a relative notion according to two scales: territorial contexts, and social groups.

On a territorial scale, the regional socio-political context of changes in the American countries plays a major role in the changes of food justice situations. Recent socio-economical and political upheavals have major consequences on food security: malnutrition and hunger dramatically increase, to reach in some place an alarming situation. One other consequence of this situation lies in the withdrawal of the State and public policies, that leads to shift from a tradition of strong public intervention, to a neoliberal logic, combined to a commercial opening.

On an individual scale, the relativity of food justice situation is also a matter of norms. Indeed food justice is usually defined as a situation where everyone has access to safe and quality food. Whereas the answer of what good food or bad food should vary according to social groups, areas or bodies, the division between good food and bad food is institutionally constructed by nutritional policies and medical field. Those policies sum up bodies in expression of pathology or diseased parts: this socially constructed division between bad food and good food appears as an “institutional and academic colonialism”. To the contrary, food justice situation should also consider the complexity of a multiplicity of food systems that relies in each body.

Food justice in action: what is the « right » scale, who is the « best » expert to implement food justice?

Despite the vitality of the concept of food justice in the North American literature, much remains to be clarified about “what it means to do food justice” (Cadieux and Slocum, 2015). This question shares a preoccupation with the food justice movement about what would provide the best combination of theory and action to increase the potentiality of initiatives that pretend to achieve food justice. What would be norms for

food justice practices? How to implement a dialogue between several areas (science, art, civil society, activism...) and scales of action to achieve it? Who are the key players of food justice?

Who has the legitimacy to do or talk about food justice?

Two advances are particularly relevant in recent researches. First, the American context opens the debate on the “right” scale of action to solve food injustice situations: should

public policies be renationalized or delocalized? The diversity of stakeholders puts into the debate the role of the public sector, whereas new forms of social organisations based on social relations are growing to develop food initiatives. The origins of the food justice movement also foster the dialogue between academic and politic communities. Who is legitimate to do food justice or to talk about food justice? Are academic people more legitimate than others to talk about it? Who are the best food justice “experts”? Then the food justice theoretical framework advances the researchers’ capacity to provide a holistic analysis of the food system inequities. But researchers do also play a role in the civil society and some present themselves as “activists” in and from the food justice movement. As researchers, they introduce the principle of justice into their way to do research, by creating actions and mechanisms to achieve food justice situations. Recent works dealing with the impossibility to ignore the individual social, racial, gender, political characteristics to explain the position of the researchers question their alleged duty of neutrality or objectivity. In this regard, the dialogue between research and the arts seems to be an efficient way to make visible inequities in food systems, as well as to shape new actions to fight them.

Finally, those questions invite to explore the scope of food justice through ‘praxis’, i.e. a mixing of theory and action in the fight to change the world (Slocum and Saldanha, 2016).

Exploring new dimensions of food justice in the Americas

Many dimensions of food justice remain unexplored. Thinking about “agrifood justice” (Hochedez and Le Gall, 2016) in the 2010s, when the concept of food justice merged, is probably not the same than to figure future food justice. Four new issues raised and ask to be fostered by further researches.

The first one is violence which is illustrated by sexual abuses on the field, by conflicts between producers and politics, or by social food movements. Beyond the diversity of vulnerabilities, violence in the American context can be figured as the reproduction of colonialism in the food system, which shapes a new kind of modern slavery. Structural and systemic violence is thus a kind of oppression that the framework of food justice can criticize.

The second one deals with gender inequalities while considering food injustices. Men and women are not equal in the access and management of resources, for example in forestry. Women bodies are more vulnerable to obesity in some countries, such as Mexico, or to sexual abuses on the field. As reminds us the slogan of Via Campesina: “food sovereignty is about ending violence against women” (2012).

The third merging topic highlights the role of social networks, from several aspects. On the one hand, social networks are useful to develop some food justice initiatives such as short and alternative food supply chains. It both creates virtual markets and makes them visible. On the other hand, the use of social networks can create food injustices as well, if we consider apps to order and deliver food. The “uberisation” of the food system introduces new relations of power and domination. In this context, social networks are also a tool to create new social spaces for marginalised, invisible or vulnerable social groups, as well as for their mobilization. As an example, the chat used by women delivering for Uber Eats allows them to report abuses or security problems on the itinerary. Social networks can thus be a pathway to reach empowerment of vulnerable social groups.

The fifth and last issue considers the power of knowledge as a way to improve food injustice situations, by several ways. Knowledge transfer about food and quality food is relevant to foster sustainable food systems, including for example traditional agroecological knowledge in rural communities. Education programs might also help to achieve food sovereignty and food justice. In this area, further researches or food justice initiatives should focus on the role of children and youth as the future of food justice. It means that education will play a major role in the changes that will occur. This is the most important and relevant pathway to reach food justice.

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III. EXPE- RIEN- CES:

Food justice and
sovereignty in
practice



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Photographs in this chapter are
by Stefano Morrone, 2019

Photography and Collective Struggles for Social Justice

**Paolo Marinero,
Marina Almeida,
Caterina Morbiato,
Stefano Morrone**

- *Chamba Collective* -
Mexico

■ *Provecho! Geografías de Explotación y Lucha en la Cadena Agroalimentaria* (Enjoy! Geographies of Exploitation and Struggle in the Agrifood Chain) is a photography exhibition inaugurated at the National Museum of World Cultures (MNC) in Mexico City on October 28, 2019, parallel to the opening of the JySALA Congress.

The exhibit focuses on the experiences of workers in the agrifood industry and pays special attention to the relationship established between Mexico, the United States, and Canada after the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Through conceptual art projects, collaborative works, and documentary photography, the exhibition joins academic research, art, and activism. The artists invite us to reflect upon economic inequalities, gender discrimination, and the exploitation of migrant workers in the global agrifood sector, narrating some of the stories of resistance and transnational solidarity that characterize the geographies of food production and consumption in North America.

¡Provecho! [...] is a space for exchange and dialogue among labor organizations, artists, academic institutions and students, NGOs, local communities, and public authorities. Through the activation of a public program and various activities that summoned the art world as well as civil society, academics, and workers' organizations, the Chamba Collective seeks to develop bonds of solidarity, debate dynamics, and collective action initiatives. ¡Provecho! [...] exposed multiple issues regarding relations of domination and the inequalities that characterize global agrifood chains. The faces, movements, and landscapes of inequality, from the field to the trash, and passing through the kitchen, the table, and the precarious delivery worker's backpack were made visible.

Chamba is an interdisciplinary collective that explores the intersection of art, research, and activism to promote collective reflection on power relations and injustices in the labor market. Its members are Caterina Morbiato (independent journalist and cultural anthropologist), Stefano Morrone (political scientist and photographer), Paolo Marinaro (researcher at the UCLA Labor Center and the Penn State Center for Global Workers' Rights), and Marina Almeida (Latin Americanist and human rights specialist).

www.chambacollective.com / <https://www.facebook.com/chambacollective>

Public program in Mexico City

Taller de Trabajadorxs (Workers' Workshop). Along with the #NiUnRepartidorMenos Collective and the Chamba Collective, Sol Aramendi coordinated a workshop to create materials and banners for the protest carried out by delivery workers on November 27, 2019. The action took place in memory of José Manuel Matías Flores, a young delivery worker who lost his life in 2018 after being run over by a truck while delivering an UberEATS order.





Solidarity Stories in the Agrifood Industry. A roundtable discussion with labor organizations from different sectors of the agrifood industry was organized. Among the various subjects addressed were: climate change, urbanization, sustainable agriculture, digital workers' rights, dispossession, and migration. The participants were: Red Nacional de Jornaleros, Sindicato Democrático de Trabajadores y Trabajadoras Agrícolas Jornaleras de San Quintín, and the #NiUnRepartidorMenos Collective.



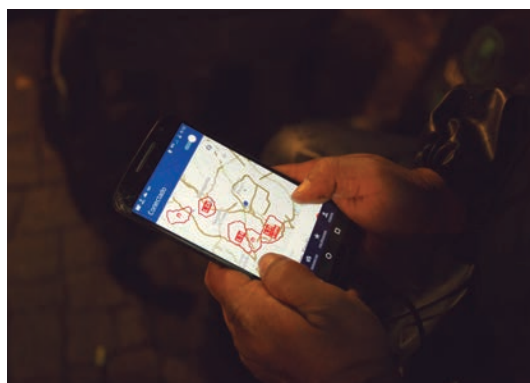
The White Bicycle. Members of the Chamba Collective accompanied the #NiUnRepartidorMenos Collective and Sol Aramendi in giving maintenance to the white bicycle, which commemorates delivery workers who have died on the job.



Exhibition tours with international organisms and institutions. The #NiUnRepartidorMenos Collective presented the installation “Cotidiana Guerra” (“Daily War”) and their labor demands to members of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Labor Organization (ILO), and Mexico City’s Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (STPS). The work “Cotidiana Guerra” records the harassment and accidents that characterize the daily lives of delivery workers who work for apps like UberEats and Rappi in Mexico City.



Research Project: *The future of workers and the future of organizing.* Stemming from the ¡Provecho! exhibit and dialogue with workers’ organizations, the Center for Global Workers’ Rights at PennState developed a comparative research project focused on digital app workers in Mexico City and New York.





Photographs in this chapter
are by Salvador Cisneros Silva,
2019-2020

Food Poverty: Driving Force of Illegal Cultivation in the Guerrero Highlands

Salvador Cisneros Silva

Documentary photographer

México

Tlapa, Guerrero. The region of La Montaña is located in the northeast of the state of Guerrero, adjacent to the states of Oaxaca and Puebla. It consists of 19 municipalities with members from three indigenous groups—Nahua, Mixtec (Na'savi), and Tlapanec (Me'phaa), which are jurisdictions with high rates of poverty and marginalization.

Culturally, corn is the main source of nutrition for these localities. The grains, for the most part, are planted in denominated mountainous terrain (tlacolol) and their growth depends on the rainstorms that





take place from May to September.

Within the local cosmovision, rituality is extremely important to guarantee a good rainy season that ensures good harvests.

There are between 16 and 19 types of native corn in La Montaña. Corn tortilla, accompanied by beans and hot sauce, represents the daily diet of the population. It's a diet that allows for their survival but doesn't guarantee healthy growth and development.

Added to food poverty is the absence of basic health and education services as well as unemployment or the lack of other types of financial income. This has generated, since the 1990s, an increase in migration towards northern Mexican states and other countries, primarily the United States.

The first agricultural workers who migrated to the north of the country, in particular to Sinaloa, arrived to work in illegal opium poppy and marihuana cultivation. Many of the families started bringing back seeds to their communities to start their own crops. In the beginning, opium gum and marihuana yields were offered locally, in the biggest municipalities in Guerrero, and the increase in earnings motivated more families to join this illicit activity. From 2010 to 2016, whole towns of the region found the basis of their income in this cultivation.

Low levels of education prevented the earnings obtained from the cultivation and sale of opium gum from being invested in the families' social development. Ten years after the opium poppy boom, the region presents the same development indicators: poverty and extreme poverty.

Most of the income obtained was used for the purchase of weapons, vehicles, and alcohol. This led to conflicts between towns and families that, on many occasions, ended in shootings and murders.



For their part, organized crime groups from the whole country saw in La Montaña a mine for their interest in the production of opium gum, given the good adaptation of the plant to the region, which generated more violence over the area's control.

The State has violated indigenous people's right to food, as marked in article 4 of the Mexican Constitution, which declares: "Every person has the right to nutritious, sufficient, and quality food. The State shall







▲
Las manchas de aguacate no se quitan. (Avocado stains can't be removed) Javier Dragustinovis, 2016

guarantee it.”

Alternative Food Networks: Challenges for Collective Action and the Building of an Inclusive Agrifood Policy

Dulce María Espinosa de la Mora,

Facultad de Ciencias políticas y Sociales, Centro de Estudios Antropológicos- UNAM, Mexico

Luis Bracamontes Nájera

Postgraduate, Ciencias de la Sostenibilidad- UNAM Mexico

David Sébastien Monachon

Coordinación Universitaria para la Sustentabilidad- UNAM Mexico

In the context of a global crisis, derived from different political and economic processes that have affected the way foods are produced and consumed, collective actions for food sovereignty have developed around the world, including Mexico. Although these actions challenge the predominant agrifood system and its policies in every continent, there are few works that help us understand the sociopolitical processes that have led to their rise (Gravante, 2020:15).

In Mexico, these collective actions have emerged, among other forms, in the creation of Alternative Food Networks that seek to build local, fair, democratic, and sustainable agrifood systems. In this chapter we explain the context in which these initiatives arise and the characteristics, actions, and objectives of the projects being developed in Mexico for a few years now, as well as reflect upon their capacity to build sustainable agrifood systems. We also present the results of a diagnosis elaborated by different organizations in 2018, which led to a proposal for a public program that, beyond traditional state logic, would allow for new forms of social organization to guarantee the right to food in Mexico.

Mexican fields and food in the neoliberal context

The way of producing, distributing, and consuming foods in Mexico has changed throughout history, showing a tendency towards the integration of agrifood systems, once diverse and ecologically and culturally localized, into a homogenizing global system, increasingly more specialized and asymmetric. This logic has deepened in recent decades, with the national and global adoption of neoliberal policies (Harvey, 2005) for agriculture and food.

With these policies, food went from being the State's responsibility to being a business; peasants went from being productive subjects to becoming passive beneficiaries of aid programs; and the environmental impacts generated by an increasingly more intense agricultural production continued being neglected. Some of the economic, environmental, and social consequences of these policies have been:

- Increase in the import of basic foods, like grains, oilseeds, and meats. Inability for small and medium-scale producers to compete with international prices. High concentration of the market in the production of inputs, storage, and final marketing.
- Deforestation, erosion, water contamination, greenhouse gas emissions, and loss of agrobiodiversity. High increase of rural area concessions for economic activities with high environmental impacts.
- Increase in the national obesity rate and the prevalence of diseases linked to unhealthy diet, like diabetes and hypertension. Loss of gastronomical diversity and rise in the consumption of ultra-processed foods.

Facing this difficult panorama, national movements have organized to demand changes in agrifood policy, including El Campo No Aguanta Más (The Field Can't Take It Any Longer), the campaign "Sin Maíz no hay País" ("Without Corn, there's no Country"), and the fight for the constitutional recognition of the Right to Adequate Food. Peasant organizations have been founded, some of them cooperatives. Indigenous peoples have raised their voices for the recognition of their rights. Non governmental organizations have been established to promote rural development with an agroecological focus. And networks for fair trade and the local consumption of peasant products have emerged, among them, Alternative Food Networks.

The concept of “Alternative Food Networks” seeks to encompass different organizations in which producers, transformers, and consumers connect with the goal of building closer, fairer, democratic, and sustainable local agrifood systems (Sánchez, 2009). These initiatives present different organizational forms, according to the type of participants, the relationship between them, and the temporality and modality of the exchange.

Alternative food networks position themselves critically against the dominant agrifood chain, in all of its links, since AFS: promote a more sustainable production based on alternative approaches like agroecology or permaculture; promote methods that are traditional, artisanal, and free of additives in the transformation of foods; develop more fair exchanges and financing strategies between producers and consumers; foster access to adequate foods and the reduction of packaging and food waste in homes; and establish democratic and transparent governance mechanisms, allowing for knowledge exchange and the creation of spaces for social innovation, collective cohesion, and political action.

Alternative food networks position themselves critically against the dominant agrifood chain, in all of its links.

Alternative food networks in Mexico City

Over the last decade, Mexico City saw the emergence of multiple Alternative Food Networks that appeared in the urban and peri-urban area of the city with a diversity of perspectives and organizational structures: farmers’ markets, consumer collectives, consumption and production cooperatives, shops, urban produce gardens, as well as Community Supported Agriculture.

These organizations distribute and market different food products like basic grains and vegetables, meat and seafood processed foods, ready meals, and non-food items. They also consider the exchange of services and specialized knowledge among its members. They’re often informal and can appear in the neighborhood, condominium, university, itinerant points of distribution, stores, and even advanced purchasing schemes with delivery in associative spaces, private or public. Although there’s currently no precise calculation, approximately 40 Alternative Food Networks operate in Mexico City.

**At present,
approximately 40
Alternative Food
Networks operate in
Mexico City.**

Likewise, the number of consumers associated with these networks varies. We can nonetheless estimate that consumer collectives and cooperatives have around 100 consumers, and farmers’ markets, depending on their opening days, can receive between 300 and 500 consumers daily.

Through an analysis of the different types of Alternative Food Net-

works in Mexico City, we can note a characteristic that is common to all of them: solidarity. According to Servet (2010), this means that participants are not just producers or consumers, but actually overcome the individualistic and utilitarian economic act to establish relationships of reciprocity and mutual support.

These initiatives, united under the same banner, face different structural challenges. The need to reflect upon these issues led to a meeting in October 2018 in which the Mexico City networks joined others from the rest of the country with the goal of carrying out a collective diagnosis, which allowed for the creation of political proposals meant to promote and strengthen the development of this type of organizations in the entire national territory and to create a legal framework for their full recognition.

Building an inclusive agrifood policy and its challenges

As part of the answers from Alternative Food Networks to these structural problems, in 2018 a Mexico City “promoter group” invited other groups in the country with similar characteristics to generate a “proposal for government support for the creation and reinforcement of short sustainable production channels, transformation, marketing, and food consumption generated by small and medium-scale farmers.” This proposal sought to take advantage of the incoming government’s discourse which, at the end of 2018, proclaimed the importance of food self-sufficiency for the country’s development.

Another objective of this exercise was to bring attention to the presence of different initiatives throughout the country, as evidence of civil society’s quest for the reformulation of productive processes and social and economic relationships regarding food.

Thanks to the call, meetings took place in San Luis Potosí, Aguascalientes, and Tlaxcala, as well as a big meeting in Mexico City attended by close to 200 people, including public officials, students and researchers

from different universities in the country, small agricultural producers, drivers of transformation and members of over 40 networks that represent the supply of healthy foods for over a thousand families of urban consumers and various cities around the country.

**La importancia de las
Redes Alimentarias
Alternativas radica
en las alianzas
entre productores
del campo y
consumidores de la
ciudad.**

These organizations show numerous areas of opportunity for their development, as expressed in the diagnosis undertaken, which include: management and development of direct, solid, and efficient links between producers and consumers; the creation of mechanisms and spaces to have information about produc-

tive processes available to consumers; the quest for new forms of nonmonetary exchange between producers and consumers; the development of efficient and user-friendly administrative and accounting systems; the securing of permits for public-space use; and the creation of tax incentives, among other things.

As fruits of the collective exercise, other things that came up were: the need to guarantee training and consulting for production, transformation, marketing, and responsible consumption of healthy foods as well as for the creation and management of the organizations; hiring of specialized technical support for productive, administrative, or marketing bolstering of the networks; support for infrastructure and equipment for sustainable farming and transformation; promotion and management of spaces for exchange and marketing; incorporating ICTs and legal consulting for brand management, food safety, and financial management.

Unfortunately, the proposal wasn't well received by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (SADER), because, as the heads of the institution explained, SADER doesn't have a program to support partnerships between consumers and producers. It customarily only benefits producers with subsidies through programs like *Producción para el Bienestar*, leaving aside small-scale sale and distribution processes.

Final reflections

The importance of Alternative Food Networks lies in the partnerships between rural producers and urban consumers, which allows for the sustainable and coordinated growth of the supply and demand of healthy food. Likewise, these articulations generate exchange spaces that favor a more participative governance of agrifood systems, where their participants seek to build solidary relationships that aim to go beyond the mere economic act.

This diversity of initiatives endeavors to face the environmental, social, food, and health crisis caused by the intensification of an economic logic based on producing and selling more. What these networks propose is recognizing other rationales, which value local knowledge, where the economic process is centered on people and the values of a solidarity economy.

The proposal presented to SADER, as well as the whole organization process promoted to reach it, is a clear demonstration of the ability of these networks to build collective actions in defense of their food sovereignty. Nevertheless, the government's inability to attend to this proposal means missing the opportunity to build a participative and inclusive agrifood policy, based on innovative mechanisms to exercise the right to food.

Alternative Food Networks in Mexico have a double challenge: on one hand, to keep developing strategies based on their own resources and on the exchanges with other networks to solve their needs, and, on the other, to strengthen, through collective action, their capacity to participate in the transformation of national policy. The building of viable alternatives as well as the reconfiguration of structural policies from civil society are complementary and necessary strategies in the context of the socio-environmental and food crisis we are up against.

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▲
I like everything but Union (detail).
Fred Lonidier, 1983



I've worked in most of the ranches in the area. And the bosses never hold the Union in high esteem.

It's hard for them, for example, for a Union representative to point out something they're doing wrong. And since they weren't used to that, they don't think kindly of the Union.

Before the Union, they did what they wanted with the wages and benefits that workers have the right to receive.

The Union came in and it got hard for them [the bosses].

We're the ones who give them the money to be made.

It's good that they provide their capital, but we produce it for them!"

"Entrevista a Luis Gómez del Sindicato
United Farm Workers, 1982"

Photographers of the exhibition ¡Provecho! Geographies of Exploitation and Struggle in the Agrifood Chain

Sol Aramendi

Sol Aramendi is an Argentinean-born artist who works in New York in collaboration with community organizations and groups. Over the last 16 years, she has collaborated in projects with The Queens Museum, El Museo del Barrio, The Noguchi Museum, Queens Library, New York Public Library, The Guggenheim Museum, Leslie Lohman Gay and Lesbian Museum, and Alice Austen Museum.

David Bacon

David Bacon is a writer and photographer living in California. Since 1998 he has documented the lives and organization of migrant and peasant communities and those social groups most affected by globalization. His work has been exhibited in the United States, Mexico, and Europe.

Carole Condé and Karl Beveridge

Carole Condé and Karl Beveridge are artists from Toronto, Canada. They've been collaborating for 40 years with unions and community organizations to create their staged photographic work. Their work has been exhibited in galleries, museums, and union headquarters in Canada as well as other countries around the world.

Nayeli Cruz Bonilla

Nayeli Cruz Bonilla is a Mexican photojournalist. She has participated in various collective exhibitions in spaces like the Fundación Hector García, Parque Bicentenario, Escuela de Periodismo Carlos Septién García, Centro Cultural Tlatelolco, FARO de Oriente, ArtPrint Photo Gallery, and the exhibition "Desde Nosotras" in the Rejas de Chapultepec Open Gallery. She currently works for El Heraldo de México.

Javier Dragustinovis

Javier Dragustinovis lives and works in Matamoros, Tamaulipas. His artistic process is a permanent dialogue with his family memories and migratory processes. Some of the subjects he investigates are duality, the precariousness of memory, industrial development and its effect on families. He's been a journalist and curator at the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo in Tamaulipas.

Gustavo Graf

Gustavo Graf is a documentary photographer who investigates contemporary subjects of Mexican society, exploring culture and identity through essays, street photography, portraits, and long-term projects. He focuses primarily on migration, life in indigenous communities, and urban phenomena in Mexico City.

Fred Lonidier

Fred Lonidier is an artist, union activist, and academic. He has taught photography at the University of California at San Diego, where he currently lives. His work has been exhibited in art institutions and community spaces like the Oakland Museum, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York, and the Centro Cultural de la Raza in San Diego.

Stefano Morrone

Stefano Morrone does documentary photography with a specific focus on human rights. His work is mainly centered on Mexico, where he currently lives. He has collaborated with different media including Diari ARA, La Repubblica, Altaïr Magazine, Carmilla, among others. Morrone belongs to the collective blog L'America Latina, Immaginari e Storia dai Sud del Mondo.

Adolfo Vladimir Valtierra

Adolfo Vladimir Valtierra is a historian by training and a photojournalist. He has reported on human rights, violence connected to the drug trade, social movements, territory defense, indigenous movements, and daily life. For Cuartoscuro Agency and Magazine he has worked as a correspondent in Zacatecas and as part of the photographer team in Mexico City.

Authors

Marina Almeida

Law. Programa Universitario de Derechos Humanos- UNAM. Mexico.

Marina Almeida is a human rights researcher specialized in the rights of Latin American indigenous/native peoples and communities. As a founding member of the Asociación Nuestramericana de Estudios Interdisciplinarios en Crítica Jurídica, A.C., which publishes the journal *Nuestrapraxis* (ISSN: 2595 2727), Almeida develops interdisciplinary research on contemporary subjects relevant to studies on legal criticism, promoting constructive discussion and dialogue through the event *Encuentros de Pensamiento y Práxis: el derecho en la reconfiguración del capital*. From 2013 to 2019, Almeida participated in CLACSO Working Groups, developing and taking part in dialogue networks with other Latin American researchers and disseminating knowledge in international seminars and conferences. She has published numerous articles in specialized scientific journals as well as book chapters on the issues of the legal phenomenon in Latin America, working with a transdisciplinary approach but also from the participatory-action approach, collaborating as a volunteer in indigenous community projects in Bolivia and Mexico and providing legal counseling in cases of human rights violations in these sectors of the population in Mexico and Brazil.

Sarah Bak Geller Corona

History and Anthropology of Food. Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas-UNAM. Mexico

Sarah Bak Geller Corona studies the political dimension of food practices and the representation of food in the contexts of colonialism and nation-building processes in Mexico and Latin America. Her work on cuisine, culture, and power encompasses different subjects, such as: food, body, and race in Latin America; recipe books and national identities; food languages and formation of citizenship; and the patrimonialization processes of indigenous cuisines in America. She forms part of the Grupo Mexicano de Antropología de la Alimentación and is an associate member of the lab Patrimoines Locaux del Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle in France.

Luis Bracamontes Nájera

Agronomy and Rural Development. PhD in Ciencias de la Sostenibilidad- UNAM. Mexico

Luis Bracamontes Nájera has focused on the study of the agroecological, social, and political dimensions of the Mexican agrifood system with the goal of understanding its problems and developing alternatives based on social innovation. In recent years, he has directed his academic and political work towards alternative food networks and the construction of public policies for bio-culturally pertinent agriculture and nutrition. He is currently part of several research projects related to the defense of peasant seeds, the territorial autonomy of indigenous peoples, and the bolstering of agrifood initiatives of the solidarity economy.

Dulce María Espinosa De la Mora

Anthropology. Facultad de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales, Centro de Estudios Antropológicos- UNAM. Mexico

Throughout her academic career, Dulce María Espinosa De la Mora has approached the subject of food with the premise that it's an important phenomenon for the biological and human sciences, and a field that is increasingly gaining relevance within anthropology and in the context of human rights and public policy. She has turned her attention and actions towards the understanding of a wide range of national and international movements that raise the subject of food injustice, denouncing the lack of physical and economic access to adequate food or the means to obtain it, as well as access to sufficient foods, in quantity and quality, culturally acceptable and without harmful substances. These political movements have allowed her to analyze the demands and actions that could support said access through structural and redistributive reforms of the food system to reduce social inequalities.

Matías García

Rural Sociology. Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas, Universidad Nacional de la Plata, Universidad Nacional Arturo Jauretche. Argentina

Since 2002, Matías García studies changes in the horticultural production model of La Plata (Buenos Aires) and its emerging issues with a systemic view, seeking to identify causes as well as consequences, to be thus able to outline the resulting productive and supply model at the local, regional, and national level, with a critical look. The role of the Bolivian horticulturist, the exploitation of the workforce, the prevailing technological model, and an external context of advances of urban and agricultural borders in non-Platense horticultural regions are key elements to interpret the spatial and functional changes in this period. The ultimate goal is to propose alternatives to the dismal living and working conditions in the sector, as well as influence political strategies to guarantee the supply of fresh, quality produce, without harming the environment, and at a fair price.

Sebastián Grenouille

Sociology, Rural Development. Conservation Technical Director, Administración de Parques Nacionales, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria (INTA). Argentina

In Sebastián Grenouille's research on the productive and commercial ties of small and family producers in the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires in Argentina, the lens of food justice and food security are central for understanding the producers' conditions of production and reproduction as well as the possibilities of access to quality and safe foods by wide sectors of the population. Grenouille is interested in analyzing the capacity of vulnerable sectors to insert themselves in different markets and through complementary marketing channels. There is a series of explanatory dimensions that allow for the comprehension of these phenomena: 1) the informality of the sector that operates in a double sense; on one hand, it weakens entry barriers and allows access for these new players; on the other hand, there's the cost of a limited inclusion que drives them to reproduce at the margins of normativity, controls, and space (remote areas or of difficult access) 2). Governance and access to marketing allow not only an economic but also an organizational and social strengthening. This is reflected in greater negotiating capacity and autonomy in their decisions at different levels of government and chains and towards the interior of the organizations themselves. Finally, 3) there's the emergence of disputes to valorize and make daily practices visible on behalf of the same actors in the territory.

Jesús Guzmán

Agronomy. CEDRSSA- Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo Rural Sustentable y la Soberanía Alimentaria, Cámara de Diputados. Mexico

An agricultural engineer and specialist in Agricultural Economy by the Universidad Autónoma Chapingo (UACH), Jesús Guzmán Flores has worked with public entities dedicated to the production of food grains and in the distribution of basic foods in rural areas. He participated in the assessment of rural development programs in the southeastern states of Mexico and has acted as advisor for agricultural planning and rural development in the states of Yucatán and Oaxaca, for public authorities as well as peasant organizations. He's currently a researcher at the Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo Rural Sustentable y la Soberanía Alimentaria of Mexico's Chamber of Deputies on the subjects: Right to Food, Food Systems, and Sustainable Agriculture.

Camille Hochedez

Geography. Université de Poitiers, RURALITES lab. France

Hochedez's research, approached from social geography, addresses the subject of agrifood justice through agricultural dynamics. In the first place, injustices are studied in the framework of new food circulations: accessibility of short channels and the products derived from organic agriculture, the role of new forms of metropolitan governance in the reduction of food inequalities. More recently, she has studied injustices in the conditions of agricultural production, focusing on the role of migrants in agricultural production systems: temporary migrant workers in different specialized agricultural sectors in Southwestern France, foreign minorities that reconfigure the spaces of urban agriculture in Malmö and Göteborg in Sweden, for example. Diverse privileged objects (gardens, agricultural facilities, specialized agricultural sectors) make up her support-spaces for the observation and study of agri-food injustices.

Elena Lazos Chavero

Social Anthropology and Socio-economy of Development. Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales- UNAM. Mexico

Led by political ecology and based on extensive field work in Latin American countries, the academic and political interests of Elena Lazos Chavero revolve around challenges in agrodiversity conservation, seed exchange and control by peasant and indigenous families, and the construction of food sovereignty as food justice and the right to food of peasant and indigenous populations. Concerned with these processes, Lazos Chavero has carried out research on the perceptions and impacts of the possible introduction of genetically modified corn and socio environmental vulnerabilities related to climate change and hydrometeorological events. She's interested in the political context of social inequalities in rural areas, in particular on gender and rural development, as well as culture and power in the conservation of nature, decision-making processes, and environmental governance.

Julie Le Gall

Geography- Social Sciences. Centro de Estudios Mexicanos y Centro-Americanos (CEMCA- CNRS USR3337). Université de Lyon – École Urbaine de Lyon – ENS de Lyon. Mexico/France

Julie Le Gall has a PhD in Geography (Sorbonne University) and Social Sciences (UBA). She's a professor at Université de Lyon in France (ENS de Lyon, Urban School of Lyon, French Institute for Education) and is currently a researcher at the Center for Mexican and Central-American Studies (CEMCA) in Mexico City. She specializes in the analysis of processes that promote agri-food justice, support family agriculture, and facilitate every person's access to a healthy and sustainable diet. Le Gall addresses the Anthropocene by creating pedagogical proposals for middle school students where the sciences and social, educational, and artistic proposals coalesce. She develops new investigative lines to understand how scientists and education professionals can support societies facing the iniquities caused by the changes and complexity of the Anthropocene and, at the same time, create more social inclusion. She works in the metropolitan regions of France, Latin America, and North America.

Andrés León Araya

Anthropology and Political Sciences. Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Políticos (CIEP), Universidad de Costa Rica. Costa Rica

Andrés Leon Araya's academic interests regard the relationship between political power and land, particularly through their realization in the expansion of monocultures in Central America and how this process undermines most communities' possibility to decide upon their own food practices.

Renato Maluf

Development Economics and Social Sciences. Postgraduate Program in Social Sciences of Development, Agriculture, and Society, Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro. Brazil

Renato Maluf has a PhD in Economics from the State University of Campinas (1998), Brazil. He's a professor in the Postgraduate Program in Social Sciences of Development, Agriculture, and Society (CPDA) at the Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRRJ), where he coordinates the Reference Center on Food and Nutrition Sovereignty and Security (CERESAN/ UFRRJ) and is part of the Public Policy for Agriculture Observatory (OPPA / UFRRJ). Maluf has been a research fellow at Oxford University (UK, 1996-1997), École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (Paris, 2001-2001), University of London (2017).

Maluf acted as Coordinator of the Brazilian Network for Research on Food and Nutrition Sovereignty and Security 2017/21 and has been a Member of the National Coordination of Brazilian Forum on Food and Nutrition Sovereignty and Nutrition (FBSSAN) since 1988. He was Member (2013-2016) and President (2007-2011) of the Brazilian National Council on Food and Nutrition Security (CONSEA), and Member of the Steering Committee of the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition, United Nations Committee on World Food Security, 2010-2015.

Maluf focuses particularly on issues related to development theories; food and nutrition security and sovereignty; family agriculture; and agrifood public policies.

Paolo Marinaro

Sociology. UCLA Labor Center and Center for Global Workers' Rights, Penn State. United States

Paolo Marinaro is an associate researcher at the UCLA Labor Center. His research focuses on the impact of global economic restructuring and technological transformation on the experience of workers in Mexico and the United States, with particular attention to the border. He's also a professor of labor relations at the Center for Global Workers' Rights at Penn State University and works with Global Labour University, a university network that offers masters degrees to labor activists in Germany, Brazil, South Africa, India, and the United States. Since 2016, in collaboration with the Chamba Collective and a network of contemporary artists and labor activists, Marinaro has curated exhibitions and art projects that explore the relationship between art, research, and activism.

Liliana Martínez Lomeli

Sociology. Fundación FUNALID. Mexico

Sociology of food researcher and nutritionist. President and founder of the Foundation for Food and Development (FUNALID). Columnist on food and society at El Economista. Gastronomist, observer, and foodie. Collaborator at EMEX Consulting and cofounder of Neurosociology Lab, a research lab dedicated to socio anthropological and neuro sociological processes.

David Sébastien Monachon

Social Anthropology. Coordinación Universitaria para la Sustentabilidad (CoUS)-UNAM. Mexico

Throughout his professional and academic experiences, Monachon has worked on issues related to the agrifood system, small-scale agriculture, and agroecological practices. The study and accompaniment of processes of social struggles connected to access to land, defense of food sovereignty, and construction of other economies have led him to become particularly interested in alternative marketing strategies. These alternatives appear in the diversity of alternative food networks, the construction of participative guarantee processes based on trust and solidarity between urban and rural actors in the search for more sustainable production and consumption models, subjects on which he's currently working.

Caterina Morbiato.

Journalism. El Sur, newspaper from the state of Guerrero, Mexico

Caterina Morbiato lives in Mexico City, where she works as a journalist. She has written for Jacobin USA, Altaïr Magazine, Il Manifesto, and Napoli Monitor. In Mexico she has worked with different media like Pie de Página, Animal Político, and Expansión, among others. Morbiato is currently a reporter for the newspaper El Sur in the Mexican state of Guerrero, where she covers different subjects, from human rights to the environment. As a freelance journalist she has focused on documenting the rise of platform apps in Mexico and the organization of digital workers. Morbiato holds a bachelors and masters in Anthropology from the Università di Bologna, with specialized studies in migration and violence. She's a PhD candidate in Latin American Studies at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) with a thesis on the importance of walking in the city of San Salvador, El Salvador.

Stefano Morrone

Photojournalism. Chamba Collective. Mexico

Stefano Morrone was born in Termoli, in the south of Italy, in 1988 and spent his childhood and adolescence there, until moving to Bologna in 2007 for college. He has always enjoyed traveling and exploring new cultures, which led him to study a semester at the University of Istanbul. In 2015 he graduated in Political Sciences from the Università di Bologna.

Morrone's introduction to the world of photography was during a trip to Burkina Faso in the summer of 2012, where he went to do volunteer work at an orphanage in the city of Yako. Since then, the camera has become his loyal travel companion. Morrone's desire for social and cultural discovery took him to Mexico City, where he was able to cultivate his passion for photography and study at Canon Academy in 2016. In recent years he has collaborated with several newspapers and magazines, including La Repubblica, Diari ARA, Jacobin Italia, Altreconomia, Permetetro, Pié de Página, professionally working on documentary photography and photojournalism.

Morrone is part of L'America Latina, a collective of researchers, artists, journalists, academics and photographers. In recent years his work has focused on telling the lives of workers, young people, and the LGBT population in Mexico City through photography.

Ayari Genevieve Pasquier Merino

Sociology. Centro de Investigaciones Interdisciplinarias en Ciencias y Humanidades-UNAM; previously Coordinación Universitaria para la Sustentabilidad (CoUS)-UNAM. Mexico

Ayari Genevieve Pasquier Merino's general interest is investigating the links between social inequality and the natural environment in contemporary food systems. In this general field, she's interested in working on the follow subjects: the social distribution of the quantitative and qualitative conditions of access to foods in cities, including emerging markets characterized as socially just and ecologically responsible; the conditions that affect the ability to make food decisions tied to the social meanings of healthy and/or sustainable food; the factors that affect decision-making regarding food production methods; and the social distribution of the environmental costs of industrial production systems.

Delphine Prunier

Human Geography. Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales- UNAM; previously Programa Universitario de Estudios sobre la Ciudad (PUEC)- UNAM. Mexico

Delphine Prunier has a PhD in Geography from Paris Diderot University with studies on migration, rurality, and family organization in Nicaragua and Mexico. She is currently a full-time associate researcher "C" by art. 51 in the framework of the *Subprograma de Incorporación de Jóvenes Académicos de Carrera* at the Institute of Social Research (ISS-UNAM), with the project "Agricultural extractivism, territorial inequalities, and rural exclusion dynamics. A look at the situation in the Central American field to understand the origins of transit migration in Mexico". She's also a professor in postgraduate studies in Geography at the UNAM and a member of the International Mixed Laboratory LMI-MESO "Mobility, governance, and resource in the Mesoamerican basin" as well as the CLACSO Group "Borders: mobilities, identities, and businesses". In 2018-2019 she participated as a researcher in the University Program of City Studies (PUEC- UNAM) with an investigation on short food channels and periurban agriculture. She has coordinated the Agriculture, Food, and the City Seminar. In this context, she organized the International Congress *Food Justice and Sovereignty in the Americas: Inequalities, Food, and Agriculture* in October 2019.

Kristin Reynolds

Geography. The New School & Yale School of the Environment. United States

Dr. Kristin Reynolds is a critical food geographer based in New York City. Her studies and activism focus on creating socially just food systems in urban and rural spaces. Her first book *Beyond the Kale: Urban Agriculture and Social Justice Activism in New York City* (2016; University of Georgia Press, coauthored with N. Cohen) examines the work of women and people of color to create more socially just systems and the possibilities of grant funding to support these initiatives. Her current research examines social justice and the political implications of urban commercial agriculture in New York and Paris. She works with many community-based nonprofit organizations and small-scale farms through her research and teaching. She's the co-founder and coordinator of the American Association of Geographers Food and Agriculture Specialty Group's Food Justice Scholar-Activist/Activist Scholar community of practice. Dr. Reynolds teaches courses on food systems, social justice, and food policy at The New School and the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. She holds a PhD in Geography and an MS in International Agricultural Development from the University of California, Davis.

Ricardo Salvador

Sustainable Agriculture and Public Policy. Food & Environment Program, Union of Concerned Scientists, United States

Ricardo J. Salvador is an agronomist specialized in the history and production of corn and in sustainable agricultural systems. He is the senior scientist and director of the Food and Environment Program at the Union of Concerned Scientists in Washington, DC. He has also served at the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Iowa State University, and the Agrilife Extension Service of Texas A&M University. Salvador is a member of the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food) and advises a dozen organizations dedicated to improving agricultural and food environments. His PhD and MS in Crop Production and Physiology are from Iowa State University and his BS in Agricultural Science from New Mexico State University.

Braulio Torres Beltrán

Public Policy and Food Systems. Proyecto la Guajolota. Mexico

Braulio Torres practices permaculture in a family farm-forest in the municipality of Amealco, Querétaro. He's a consultant on public policies related to food systems and just transition and collaborates with different projects related to green jobs and the just transition agenda of the International Labor Organization (ILO). At Proyecto La Guajolota, Torres promotes agroecology and food sovereignty projects. He recently coordinated the publication "How to transform food systems" and, in the context of that book and congress, participated in its academic committee.

Torres was the Director of Monitoring and Evaluation at the Fundación IDEA and consulting partner at C-230 Consultores, where he worked on projects with the World Bank, the Carlos Slim Foundation, and different government entities from Mexico and Colombia. Before that, he was the Mexico Country Director for Innovations for Poverty Action. He has a masters in Public Policy from the University of Chicago and recently did a research fellowship at MIT's Department of Urban Studies and Planning, where he focused his research on the interaction between diabetes prevention, the urban-rural link, and food systems.

Chelsie Yount André

Anthropology. Université de Montpellier MUSE, CIRAD/SupAgro. Francia

Chelsie Yount André's research focuses on the moral discourses used to explain and justify the (often unequal) distribution of foods and other resources, which she calls "economic moralities." Food justice depends on normative ideas on the rights to food. She examines how these moral notions, often discussed, link rights to food with other status positions; as citizens (integrated), poor (deserving), or family (close), for example. Her first project looked at the economic moralities of transnational Senegalese families, analyzing how children who grow up in Paris understand cultural values like "solidarity", which have different meanings in European and African contexts, through daily acts of food exchange and how these moral stories in turn shape the ways in which people understand their rights and responsibilities to share. Her current project examines economic morality in the context of a multinational food corporation, analyzing the ways in which employees express the moral objectives of the company and how these ethical goals are developed in the territory.



This book opens a space to reflect and debate around the inequalities in access to food, the marginalization of farmers and the environmental deterioration associated to food systems across the Americas, from three perspectives: the systemic focus, the interdisciplinary, and the cross-cutting geographical contexts. The efforts of scientists from different disciplines, along with activists and photographers converge in this book, sharing their experiences and points of view, in order to build analytical schemes that transcend binary and normative thoughts around “good” and “bad” forms of production and eating, seeking to analyze the full complexity of food systems.

In theoretical terms, the text suggests a reflection around concepts such as food security, sovereignty and justice, analyzing the contributions and limitations of each as tools to understand the processes that hinder the access of the entire population to sufficient, quality food, in conditions of dignity (social, spatial and environmental).

At the same time, this text is also a space to share and imagine opportunities to build more fair and sustainable food systems, sharing and reflecting around some of the proposals that emerged as alternatives in different contexts.