

Contesting Power: Food Sovereignty as Pedagogical Practice and Resistance

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ABSTRACT: The Anthropocene is a site of domination and resistance for those opposed to the corporatized food regime. The peasant farmers' movement La Via Campesina uses pedagogical techniques based on Freirian horizontal communication methodology to contest the structural and with Via members in Latin America, Alana Mann analyses how members engage in horizontal exchange and processes of farmer to farmer learning, referred to as *campesino-a-campesino* (CAC). She explains how *diálogo de saberes* — dialogue among different knowledges and ways of knowing — works to collectively build a shared vision of agroecology, present alternative framings of food scarcity and challenge the modes of power that operate in the arena of food politics. Her examples illustrate how social process methodology links the food sovereignty framework with indigenous knowledge, gender equity and post-colonial theory. These participatory processes generate critical consciousness of the social and environmental unsustainability of the global food system and mobilise peasant farmers to contest the power structures that shape their food environments.

For over 20 years the transnational peoples' movement La Via Campesina (the peasant way) has contested the industrial food system as a source of widespread misery and dispossession for the majority of the world's rural poor. Evolving from early forms of capitalist agriculture that date back to the Neolithic revolution, the dominant model of export-oriented, cash agriculture that drives profits and supports cheap, largely urban-based labour (Patel & Moore, 2017) has contributed to a devastating paradox. While world hunger is on the rise, growing from 777 million undernourished in 2015 to 815 million in 2016 (FAO, 2017) a surfeit of cheap, calorific food is anticipated to contribute to forecasts of 3.28 billion overweight and obese individuals, globally, by 2030 (Kelly et al., 2008). According to La Via Campesina, which claims to represent 200 million small-scale farmers, fisherfolk, migrant workers and landless peasants world-wide, this dilemma can largely be attributed to a hegemonic food system based on 'regulation, dispossession, exploitation, technological development and market expansion' on a world scale (Holt-Giménez, 2017, p. 33). This system not only impedes the goal of reaching 'zero hunger' (FAO, 2017) but impinges on ecosystem survival in the Anthropocene.

The instrumental and economic rationality embedded in the large-scale, monocultural production model dominated by transnational corporate actors has its roots

in the colonial food regime (McMichael, 2009). This regime, and those that have followed it, is based on Western science or 'monocultures of knowledge' granted 'epistemological privilege' from the seventeenth century (Santos, 2008). Modern science effectively suppressed subaltern knowledges and practices, laying a foundation for the domination of the global North in food production systems. Countering this dominance, La Via Campesina has emerged as the most prominent rural-based movement to recognize and promote the immense diversity of epistemologies among its constituents. Members of the movement center this at the heart of their resistance against the corporate food regime through the concept of food sovereignty, or *soberanía alimentaria*. For peasant farmer organisations in countries such as Brazil, the focus of this article, food sovereignty is a radical proposal for social transformation that aspires to democratise food systems using the concept of 'agroecology' to construct 'an alternative value system' (Meek, 2014, p. 48). Agroecology, defined as 'a way of redesigning food systems, from the farm to the table, with a goal of achieving ecology, economic, and social sustainability' (Gliessman, 2016, p. 187), is widely cited by a growing number of international agricultural experts to be a viable solution to a conventional production model that is resource-intensive and environmentally destructive (Valenzuela, 2016). More than a technical program, it is part of a larger movement toward an 'emancipatory rural politics' (Scoones et al., 2017).

This paper explores how agro ecological knowledge is transmitted through 'transdisciplinary, participatory, and change-oriented research and action' (Gliessman, 2015) in a National School of Agroecology (*Instituto Agroecológico Latinamericanos*, IALA) in Brazil under the remit of the Landless Workers Movement (*Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem terra*, MST). In this School resistive pedagogical and communication models are applied with the aim of developing students as technically proficient, politicised individuals who can help their communities make the shift to ecological farming. Embodying a post-colonial politics, 'new ethics' and praxis based on moral economy and agroecological values, these methods provide a direct contrast to the vertical dissemination or top-down modes of operation witnessed in conventional agronomy education that supports the corporate food system.

A brief overview of food regimes

In describing the role of food in capital accumulation over time, the food regime concept is a useful lens for examining

geo-politics and power in the food system. It provides a 'comparative-historical lens on the political and ecological relations of modern capitalism writ large' (McMichael, 2009, p. 142). A food regime is defined as a 'rule-governed structure of the production and consumption of food on a world scale' (Friedmann 1993 in McMichael, 2009). The first food regime (1870–1930) was based on colonial tropical imports including grains and livestock produced in settler colonies through monocultural agriculture, a simplification that has reached crisis point with biodiverse and sustainable agriculture increasingly under threat. In the second food regime (1950–70s) surplus flows of food were sent to postcolonial states as food aid, driving the development model, a power structure that creates needs and then proposes to satisfy those needs — a 'subtle strategy' that enables interventions by nation-states, NGOs and multinational corporations in the guise of benevolence (Giraldo and Rosset, 2017; see also Escobar, 2011). Green Revolution technologies accelerated yields while transnational linkages between national farm sectors grew into global supply chains and created a new international division of labour in agriculture. Commodity markets grew and, through financial speculation, contribute to food price hikes such as those experienced in 2007, 2008 and 2011. Overproduction by the grain-livestock complex is manifested in exported surpluses that propel the expansion of agribusiness transnationals (Weis, 2007; Guthman, 2011). The third food regime (late 1980s) is characterised by McMichael (2008) as a deepening and expansion of the existing regime to emerging economies such as China and Brazil, accompanied by a power shift to the retail sector via a supermarket revolution, the emergence of global food/fuel complex and the end of the liberalised trade regime with the demise of the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

The contemporary corporate food regime captures the contradictions between a "world agriculture" (food from nowhere) and a place-based form of agro-ecology (food from somewhere)' (McMichael, 2009, p. 147). Agroecology, which integrates ecological principles into agricultural systems (Gliessman, 2015; 2016), is both 'an objective and a strategy [...] not only a means of production but also a *praxis* of change: the building of autonomy from the production systems of the hegemonic model' (La Via Campesina, 2017, p. 37). As such, for the social movements campaigning for food sovereignty, it is 'a form of resistances and of deconstruction of dependence on commercial seeds, pesticides and fertilisers which are becoming increasingly expensive, and of the possibility of building and salvaging knowledge which is part of a sustainable relationship between humans and nature, based on ancestral knowledge, culture and territorial diversity' (La Via Campesina). The emergence of social movements such as La Via Campesina is a direct response to this continuation of the colonisation of the food system. Brought into being in the early 1990s through a series of meetings between Latin American, European and Asian farmers in response

to the creation of the WTO and its mandate of a global liberalised trade regime, La Via Campesina adopted food sovereignty as an alternative paradigm to food security, claiming that the right to food can only be realised in a system where food sovereignty is guaranteed (Rosset et al., 2011). While the genealogy of the concept is contested (Edelman, 2014) the social movements popularised the term and introduced it into international food and agriculture policy discourse at the World Food Summit in 1996. 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 Nyèlèni, 2007) food sovereignty appeals to principles of democracy, social justice and inclusivity and serves as an accommodating and mobilising frame for small-scale farmers and eaters opposed to the corporate food regime on multiple scales (Mann, 2014). In this respect food sovereignty might be broadly described as 'a set of reactions to neoliberal globalisation and the industrial food system that is presented as an alternative approach predicated on the dispersal of power' (Andrèe et al, 2014).

In Brazil, specifically, landscapes such as the Cerrado, Amazon and Pampa have been reshaped by agribusiness in a 'brutal transformation' that began with sugar plantations under slavery in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and is now seen in the 'endless fields' of soya beans, maize and intensive livestock farms (Rundgren, 2016, p. 104). As these conditions extend across all farming regions and the entire food chain, their costs are externalised and manifested in climate change, loss of biodiversity and the poisoning of water and soil. Cheap food is not so cheap when these costs are taken into account (Rundgren, 2016; Patel and Moore, 2017). Accordingly, 'the trajectory of the corporate food regime is constituted through resistances: both protective (e.g. environmentalism) and proactive, where 'food sovereignty' posits an alternative global moral economy' (McMichael, 2005, p. 286). The moral economy concept, which was first applied to popular protests against capitalist expansion in the eighteenth century (Thompson, 1971) and was later applied to forms of tenure enforced by the French and Dutch colonial powers (Scott, 1976) is today the basis of MST's argument that productive peasant farms are more valuable than the cash crops harvested from green deserts of sugarcane, for example. Agroecology is employed as the 'moral economic basis' (Meek, 2014) of the political ideology of rural proletarian movements such as MST and sustained by farmer-to-farmer research and grassroots extension approaches.

Agroecology as science, ideology and practice

Agroecological approaches to food production including the conservation and sustainable use of seeds and natural inputs as a means to improve resilience to climate change, natural disasters and economic shocks. Food sovereignty

advocates argue that agroecology cools the planet, nourishes the majority of the world's population, protects the environment and builds resilient food production systems. Further, it strengthens communities by valuing and applying traditional knowledge, practices and innovation of farmers. It is worth noting that 'peasants persist because peasant economies are sustained and adapted over time as a set of alternative sociospatial practices' where local relationships of exchange and collectively organised practices co-exist with capitalist forms of agriculture and trade (Cid Aguayo and Latta, 2015, p. 402). In reports by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO, 2015) and independent scientific studies including the *International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development* (IAASTD, 2009; see also Valenzuela, 2016) agroecology is recognised as a possible alternative to crises of the Green Revolution and as a basis for achieving food sovereignty and protecting farmers' rights, including the rights of crop producers, livestock keepers and pastoralists, fisherfolk and local and indigenous communities to natural resources such as land, water, forest and genetic resources. However, the social movements are wary that institutions including the FAO may dismiss the 'transformative potential' of agroecology and instead focus on it as 'a way of making industrial agriculture less unsustainable' (Giraldo and Rosset, 2017, p. 2). For La Via Campesina agroecology is a 'multidimensional space of social processes, sharing, culture, and art' that should be led by farmers and their families. In these processes there is no place for biotechnological solutions as 'agroecology is incompatible with genetic engineering, there can be no agroecology with agrochemicals or with the transnational agribusiness corporations' (La Via Campesina, 2017). This rejection of biotechnology embodies how agroecology 'must challenge the ideological system that protects the corporate food regime and it must take issue with the concentration of power and the unequal distribution of wealth that lie at the heart of the way the food systems operates' (Gliessman, 2015, p. 310).

Despite this common agenda, it is important to note that agroecology is understood by different groups in different ways. Indigenous movements consider agroecology as aligning with traditional farming systems based on cosmic calendars that dictate planting dates, for example, while peasant family farmers adopt agroecological techniques to manage low cost, subsistence production that relies on the local resources (Toldeo, 2000 in Meek, 2014; van der Ploeg, 2012). Rural proletarian movements apply specific methodological tools including *dialogo de saberes*, a Freirean form of farmer to farmer (*campesino o campesino*, CAC) knowledge exchange, based on 'horizontal dialogue between peers who have different knowledges and cosmovisions' (Martinez-Torres and Rosset, 2014, p. 4). Within La Via Campesina agroecological knowledge is 'shared horizontally across

transnational circuits' in a manner 'directly contrary to the hierarchical concentration of knowledge production by agro-business' (Cid Aguayo and Latta, 2015, p. 404). The role of agroecology as a Marxist political ideology is explicitly stated by La Via Campesina in its manifesto:

The theories of Marx and Engels (including the division between the countryside and the city) and indigenous cosmovisions are similar and complementary in agro ecological thought and in the unity between culture and the dialogue of ways of knowing. Our agro ecological proposal regenerates agroecosystems, including plant, animal and soil biodiversity, as well as indigenous cultures with their diverse ways of producing in harmony with Mother Earth (La Via Campesina, 2017).

The Indigenous perspective has provided an important unifying lens for the global movement. Food sovereignty recognises that Indigenous peoples worldwide have suffered from European colonisation and the removal or alteration of traditional lands that produced a variety of traditional foods. Environmental degradation, neoliberal trade agendas, lack of access to land, the breakdown of tribal social structures and socio-economic marginalisation are among the barriers to healthy and culturally adapted Indigenous foods. Aboriginal people have been subjected to a 'de-culturing from within [where] State technologies of order were designed to smash the Indigenous systems of food production, consumption, celebration and identity, to replace them with the civilising forces of modernity' (Grey & Patel, 2014). The discourse of food sovereignty privileges Indigenous views, knowledge and practices in biodiversity conservation and recognises the 'remarkable overlap between Indigenous territories and the world's remaining areas of highest biodiversity' (Alteriri & Toledo, 2014). Aboriginal conceptions of food sovereignty emphasise food as sacred, reflect deep connections/kinship with the environment and rely on intergenerational transmission of food-related knowledge. *Mística*, a shared ritual performance of the connection between the peasant, seeds, soil and water performed at La Via Campesina meetings, is a way of creating 'a sense of cohesiveness among people from such diverse and different cultures who do not speak common languages' (Martinez Torres and Rosset, 2010, p. 164) and it is a vital means of communication that fosters the development and maintenance of a common identity between members of the wider food sovereignty movement.

As a socially activating form of agriculture (Warner, 2008) women's knowledge, values, vision and leadership are central. La Via Campesina emphasises that food sovereignty is 'only possible with a fundamental transformation of unequal gender relations within and beyond movements themselves' (Desmarais & Nicholson, n.d., p. 6). The movement's 'World Campaign to End Violence Against Women' identifies neoliberalism with

patriarchy, linking local struggles against everyday forms of dominance with the capitalist market.

Along with the struggle for land and against the criminalisation of social movements and transnational agribusiness, it is necessary to stop the violence against women that invades their bodies, subjectivities and social, cultural and symbolic goods. It is necessary to confront this reality as the movements, peasant women's collectives and rural organisations that make up *Vía Campesina International* (La *Vía Campesina*, 2012).

In many Latin American countries men hold tenure and the decision-making power in most rural households, and therefore female farmers face specific obstacles. Accordingly, the struggle for food sovereignty for poor, and especially indigenous, women represents more than opposition to the corporate food regime. Agroecology for these women is a resistive epistemology that 'resumes the indigenous, black, feminist, anticolonial and anti-imperialism struggle of more than 500 years [...] [agroecology] defends the great popular diversity of humanity, biodiversity as the organising principle of Mother Earth and the plurality of knowledge' (ANAMURI member cited in Garrido, 2016). At the Second International Conference of La *Vía Campesina* in 1996 a Women's Commission was created with the aim of increasing the participation and representation of women in meetings. It has ensured parity in decision-making and monitored the use of gender-neutral language while promoting policies to end physical and sexual violence against women and provide them with improved access to land, credit, markets, information and administrative rights.

Agroecology as critical food systems education

As an ideology opposed to the expansion of capital, oppressing patriarchies and hierarchically-organised food systems, agroecological knowledge must be disseminated in a horizontal and experiential manner, where spaces for the learning process are opened up, for 'if the practice is imposed and didactic, instead of endogenous and participative, it contradicts the democratising potential that this social-economic and ecological approach has...converting [it] into another form [of] epistemological imperialism' (Chohan, 2017). The education of teachers in the National Schools of Agroecology is not limited to curriculum development but 'speaks from critical perspective to the way knowledge is produced in society and how this process can contribute to either merely reproducing relations of power or to the creation of new knowledge and to the transformation of society' (O'Cadiz et. al, 1999, p. 89).

This methodology is based on the teachings of Brazilian scholar Paulo Freire, leader of the Movement for Popular Culture from the 1960s and author of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970). Freire established the 'literacy circles'

program with sugar cane workers in Pernambuco, North Eastern Brazil, teaching workers to read and write, an initiative that spread across the country. Following exile in the 1964 military coup he directed programs in Chile 1965–69, returning to Brazil under the Workers' Party (PT) government which represented a rural and urban working-class constituency. In his brief tenure as Education Minister of Brazil Freire worked with local communities to establish the Popular Public Schools 'built on participative planning and delivery' with support from civil society groups including NGOs and social movements (O'Cadiz et.al, 1994, p. 209).

Aiming to revolutionise educational practices, Freire sought to eliminate hierarchy in the classroom by bringing students in as equal participants in the learning process and insisting that the curriculum must reflect and respond to the lived experience of learners to enable them to develop 'an awareness of the dialectical relationship of local and global contexts with an orientation towards action' (Bolin, 2017, p. 757). Linking learning to cultural politics and class struggle Freire encouraged students to challenge the dominant ideology through critical engagement or 'conscientization' (Freire, 1998) — a three stage project involving investigation, thematisation, and problematisation of the practical needs and daily concerns of peasant farmers. This serves, ideally, to develop 'understanding of the interrelation of local and global issues' (Bolin, 2017 p. 758). Using this cyclical process to create a common vocabulary and shared understanding, students are encouraged to rethink meaning-making systems and engage in an informed way with issues identified in and by the community. This directly contradicted what Freire termed the top-down, teacher-as-expert, 'banking approach' to education that feeds knowledge down from experts to the rural poor and serves to integrate them into the structure of oppression, rather than 'transform that structure so they can become "beings for themselves"' (Freire, 1970, p. 47). This critical pedagogy focuses on how education is connected to broader social change, and how schooling itself can serve as an 'ideological state apparatus' (Althusser, 1970). Accordingly, students need tools to reflect on the realities of knowledge production, culture, racialisation and gender identities (Tarlau, 2014), and recognise that the food system is an 'ecological, social and economic system and needs to be viewed as such in all its complexity' (Rundgren, 2016, p. 106).

The Freirean approach helps 'student develop a consciousness of freedom, recognise authoritarian tendencies, empower the imagination, connect knowledge and truth to power and learn to read both the word and the world as part of a broader struggle for agency, justice and democracy' (Giroux, 2010, p. 1). It addresses the need to embrace transdisciplinary strategies that 'incorporate non-academic ways of knowing into knowledge generation activities, acknowledging that certain research problems or objectives requires engagement beyond narrowly defined

expert knowledge' (Valley et al., 2017, p. 6). Critics of narrowly defined, sectorial approaches to food systems education note that the underlying capitalist ideology of the corporate food regime — defined in terms of capital accumulation and the logic of the marketplace — is rarely challenged in universities or schools (McLaren 2003 cited in Bolin 2017; Valley et al., 2017; Holt-Giménez, 2017; Meek and Tarlau, 2016). Any signature pedagogy for sustainable food systems education (Valley et al., 2017) should engage with issues of politics and power, and incorporate collective action, systems thinking and experiential learning (Kolb, 1984; Dewey, 1970).

National Schools of Agroecology

The social movements that comprise La Via Campesina recognise the importance of creating spaces and 'learning networks' (McMichael, 2008) that focus on the pedagogical aspects of organising critical to their emergence and maintenance (Tarlau, 2014). Their tools include the National Schools of Agroecology (Latin American Agroecological Institutes, IALA), 'agro-ecological training spaces that democratise debate, knowledge, science and technology [...] where training is oriented towards critical thinking and, at the same time, seek to equip young people with practical tools to build food sovereignty' (Garrido, 2016). The Schools were originally established by the Latin American Coordination of Rural Organisations (Coordinadora Latinoamericana de Organisations del Campo, CLOC) in reaction to dominant systems of education in contemporary universities that produce graduates with technical skills that serve the needs of the corporate food regime.

The first National School was set up in Brazil — Paraná state, municipality of Lapa in 2005 — followed by Venezuela (2006), Paraguay (2008), the Amazon (2009), Chile (2014) and Colombia (2016). Argentina, Nicaragua, and Ecuador have also established IALA, and a new proposal for a Haiti School has been put forward (Chohan, 2017). In the Schools agro ecological knowledge is grounded in social and environmental justice concerns to create a new ethics (*nueva ética*) where peasant praxis and collective action are valorised. Staff are politically active, and their own organisation, collective bargaining and representation encouraged. Teaching explicitly promotes 'epistemological resistance against agro-business dominance' (Chohan, 2017). The Schools are united in their aims to integrate youth into an alternative food systems paradigm that supports small-scale peasant farming and collective agriculture practices.

Brazil — The Federal Institute of Paraná, Rural Campus of Marabá (IFPA), O Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST)

An emerging economy with unrivalled rates of inequality, Brazil has one of the highest concentrations of property

ownership in the world, stemming from colonial land grants, historical laws of tenure and exacerbated by agro-industrial policies and development projects. The wealthiest 10 percent of the population possesses 46 percent of the nation's income while 50 percent collectively own 13 percent. One percent of landowners control 45 percent of farmland, a legacy of the large *sesmarias* or land grants to privileged Portuguese families and the institutions of slavery in the colonial era (Carter, 2015). Those who live in the countryside are the most affected by the incursion of international capital. The Landless Workers' Movement (*Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra, MST*), emerged in the 1980's via religious networks, rural trade unions and civil society activism. Peasant farmers, the urban poor and Indigenous members continue to resist the occupation of large tracts of lands for monocultures such as the 'republic of soya' (Fernandes, 2015). In these sites the persecution and criminalisation of protestors and human rights defenders is common. Between 1985 and 2006 nearly 1,500 land reform activists and peasant farmers, including children, were killed in rural conflicts in Brazil (Comissão Pastoral da Terra, n.d).

In the mid-1990s MST started targeting large global corporations to protest their growing influence in the countryside, recognising the green deserts of monoculture as a new set of obstacles to constitutionally-endorsed land reform — since the 1980's 350,000 landless families have secured land rights through occupations of unproductive estates (Meek and Tarlau, 2015, p. 246). In the Pontal do Paranapanema region of São Paulo State, for example, hundreds of landless families wait patiently to be settled on a parcel of land. Surrounded by a green desert of sugar cane, they shelter in roadside encampments, described as 'rural favelas' by an unsympathetic media. The framing of members of MST as fundamentalists, terrorists and a dangerous menace is a response to the growing role of the movement as a leading critic of neoliberal policies and its role as a voice for the rural and urban marginalised.

In the 1980's MST observed that the occupation of land would need to be supported by a parallel occupation of the school system to counter these negative framings and the government's increasingly narrow focus on urban priorities. Education of the Countryside (*Educação do Campo*), based on Catholic liberation theology and Frierean-based study groups, was developed to advance MST's political struggle to obtain agricultural land and promote peasant agriculture as an oppositional territorial paradigm to agribusiness (Meek and Tarlau, 2016; Fernandes, 2015). It was the basis of the Program for Education in Areas of Agrarian Reform (PRONERA) in 1998 and a series of national guidelines in 2001 and 2008 before the creation of an Education of the Countryside office in the Ministry of Education in 2005 and a presidential decree of support in 2010. The IFPA-CRMB was established on an MST settlement in 2007, with the objective of educating a 'critical citizenry that is capable of

understanding the social, economic, and political contexts of their home community and its relations to the state' (cited in Meek and Tarlau, 2016, p. 249). Encouraging cooperative initiatives, worker organising and solidarity economy approaches alongside agroecological land management practices, the curriculum is based on an 'alternating pedagogy' where students share their time between the campus and their own community, conducting place-based research to identify the sources of oppression, violence and dispossession that pre-date settlements. Interviewing farmers about their land management decisions, they engage in experiential learning that legitimises ordinary knowledge and lived experience while also connecting local struggles to the wider food sovereignty movement.

One example is a seed-saving bank project in response to concerns regarding transgenic seeds supplied by corporates in packages of inputs, including pesticide, herbicide and fertilizers. Identifying a lack of traditional seeds in their communities, students interrogate farmer reliance on agribusiness companies for a resource that has traditionally been the common property of communities. Gathering, planting, preserving, and sharing local varieties among the communities, the students engage in transformative pedagogy and practice, articulating that 'seed sovereignty is about resisting the market control of common resources, breaking farmers' reliance upon the agroindustrial system, and helping them regain their agency over the production, management, and preservation of traditional seed stocks' (Meek and Tarlau, 2016, p. 252).

Conclusion

Food sovereignty has evolved from a catch-cry opposing trade liberalization to be adopted by broader constituencies including advocates in the Global North who share the view that the corporate food regime is fundamentally undemocratic and is actively contributing to the global hunger, poverty and malnutrition of nearly a billion people, 70 percent of whom are women and children (Zeigler et al., 2014). As concept in action central to the achievement of food sovereignty, agroecology is deservedly gaining attention as a viable response to a corporate food regime in crisis.

This legitimisation brings with it dangers of depoliticisation and co-optation. Engaging youth in alternative, collective agricultural practices through a critical food systems education is one way in which social movements such as La Via Campesina aim to retain agroecology as a politically mobilising concept rather than 'a few more tools for the toolbox of industrial agriculture' (Giraldo and Rosset, 2017, p. 1). The cases of the National School of Agroecology in Brazil presented in this article provide examples of the application of Freirean-based techniques and models of education as pathways to mobilisation against the dominant, market-driven paradigm of industrial agriculture. By connecting theory

to practice, and embedding problem solving in the rural communities in which students live, the Schools link student investigations of local challenges to broader social change movements such as the struggle for food sovereignty. This makes learning a political act that interrogates issues of power, scale, and history, recognises different cosmologies and celebrates rather than elides difference.

Just as 'no shared cosmology or shared political program' (Grey & Patel, 2014) can accommodate all interpretations of food sovereignty, a single curriculum cannot satisfy the unique needs of those seeking to challenge modernist notions of power and autonomy in the food system. Women in many countries, for example, face particular challenges as primary carers responsible for the dietary demands of their families. They are charged with creating and participating in 'collectively managed, socially, economically and environmentally sustainable local and regional food systems based on agro-ecologically principles capable of producing and offering diversified, safe and healthy dietary patterns' (Valente, 2015, p. 779) in a corporate food regime where these needs are secondary to profit. Further, Indigenous peoples have unique understandings of food and land as sacred, and carry sophisticated systems of knowledge and protocols that govern the relationships between people, groups and their environments. It is only through inclusion of these multiple identities, conflicting needs and complex ontologies that the common goal of education as resistance, and persistence, against the corporate food regime can be achieved on any scale.

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