

# DOWNLOAD PDF THE CHALLENGE OF FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IN NORTHERN COUNTRIES.

## Chapter 1 : Food sovereignty - Via Campesina

*Food justice is a similar concept, but its discourses focuses more on race and class inequities and their relation to food, whereas food sovereignty refers more so to agency over food production systems.*

Rating Sovereignty November 10, In this article, Professor of Philosophy Michael Marder argues that the impact of the eurozone crisis on Greece, Portugal, Italy and Spain shows the extent to which the classical model of sovereignty has eroded. Al Jazeera Every Nation for Itself: The result is a situation in which every nation focuses solely on its own interests, rather than global concerns. IPS Rule by Troika December The European project of strong regional integration was supposed to secure prosperity, strengthen democracy in states formerly ruled by juntas like the ones in Greece, Spain or Portugal, and eliminate nationalism as a source of war. But with the imposition of harsh austerity measures, puppet governments directed by the troika the EU, the ECB and the IMF and renewed strife between nations, it seems to be having quite the opposite effect. As democratically elected leaders are being forced to resign and former bankers such as Lucas Papademos and Mario Monti are taking over European governments, the commitment to the post-war European ideal seems mere rhetoric. These benchmarks should include release of all political prisoners, repeal of legislation used to suppress nonviolent dissent, halt of abuses in areas of ethnic conflict, and trials for war crimes perpetrators. An estimated 1, political prisoners currently remain imprisoned in Burma. However, The German Constitutional Court in Karlsruhe, made it clear that the German constitution does not allow further transfers of power to Brussels. The struggle to safeguard the Euro discloses itself as a question of fundamentals: How ought the trade off between national sovereignty and regional integration look like? Putin claims he is not attempting to recreate the USSR, but rather to use the legacy of the Soviet Union for regional development. In Russia formed a customs union with Belarus and Kazakhstan which is due to become a "unified economic zone" next year, bringing down barriers to the movement of labor and capital. These projects focus on a range of areas, but predominantly center around agriculture. They take place in over 80 developing countries throughout Asia, Africa and Latin America. Yet Brazil is not alone in its development agenda. The Schengen agreement currently allows free travel within the region, however the EU claims it might be necessary to reinstate national border controls in order to limit the number of migrants entering Europe. Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi has already called for a revision of the Schengen agreement in light of the Arab uprisings. Guardian How the London Political Classes See Scotland March 30, The structure of the British Isles, in both political and social dimensions, is a growing topic of concern amongst the British government. German tendencies towards blaming the Mediterranean states for low productivity have resulted in the role of the European Central Bank in the deterioration of the Euro being vastly overlooked. This article argues that the European Central Bank, having maintained low interest rates to a generate property market boom, is primarily to blame for the current state of the Euro. Furthermore, for the Euro to be successful, the European Central Bank has to be concerned with more than just inflation. This article, however, highlights how the pact does not charter a definite path out of crisis and has no strategy for achieving faster growth through higher public and private investment. Social Europe Journal Europe: Latest estimates from EU agencies claim that around , illegal migrants enter the EU every year, many from North Africa, a trend which is set to increase with the current political instability and revolutions occurring throughout the Middle East. This article address how EU concerns over national interests and immigration have severely influenced European involvement in the Arab uprisings. Prospect What is Multiculturalism? In this interview, Jonathan Freedland from The Guardian and Matthias Matussek from Der Spiegel, use the "failure" of multiculturalism as a springboard to discuss the meaning of multiculturalism and reflect on its realities in Europe. Although approaching the issue from different perspectives, this interview highlights the widespread European concern over multiculturalism and the future of national identities. However, despite the celebrations organised by Prime Minister Berlusconi to honour the creation of a single nation, tensions between regional Italian

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identities are rapidly increasing. From the separatist sentiments of the Northern League to the disaffection of the South Tyrolean Italians, this article highlights that the state of Italy is far from successfully unified. This article highlights the main conclusions of the poll and what they mean for the future of European politics. The living green wall serves to combat Sahel desertification and will comprise of trees and bushes, stretching from Djibouti in the east to Dakar in the west. Eleven countries located along the southern Saharan border have conceived the joint project, hoping that the green wall will not only have dramatic environmental results but also support political stability in the Sahel region. This article highlights how ecological programs can act as a catalyst for improved political cooperation. Guardian Rising Anti-EU Sentiment February 23, Economic hardship, corruption and political stalemates within the Balkan states are fostering a distinct anti-European Union sentiment. This article highlights how citizens are calling for domestic political stability and economic security before further employment and financial compromises are made by governments to attain EU membership. The government hopes that scaling back public sector spending will trigger the private sector to fill the void and resume growth. This article addresses the mechanisms suggested by the French and German governments in order to encourage European economic integration. Set to fall by a further two to three per cent this year, the decline of the Greek GDP is bringing Greece ever closer to the prospects of either default or leaving the Eurozone. Both options come hand in hand with major economic disruption, loss of investment and further austerity measures. This article investigates the possible repercussions of defaulting in both Greece and across Europe. With the establishment of the European Union in , the question of European identity was at the center-stage of regional European politics. In the present context of financial and economic crisis, revisiting this debate is of uttermost importance. Much more than a monetary union, Europe is a political project. Economic solutions such as a two-speed Europe threaten this project. But the UN Millennium Development Report suggests that poverty is deepening in the continent and donor support for social and economic development is waning. Meanwhile, it remains unclear whether joining the EU is a feasible-or desirable-option for Serbia and other Balkan states. Set up on the model of the European Union. Unasur was created in to act as an alternative to the US-dominated Organization of American States. Coordinated policy on regional matters remains a distant goal. EU finance commissioner Olli Rehn has stated he would like Brussels to have more of a say over budget policies of member states. But EU member states are unlikely to allow the EU to get involved in this politically sensitive area. It has also scheduled a shared currency, the East African shilling, for The Rwandan government is even promoting a switch from French to English to gain a common language with its partners. International support for integration in East Africa has so far only been rhetorical, with few Western leaders providing material support to match their lofty words. But as the crisis fades, Icelandic public opinion against EU membership hardens. Many Icelanders are concerned that - with a population of , - their voice would be lost on the European stage. Furthermore, perceptions of the British -unpopular for using anti-terror legislation to freeze UK assets in Iceland - are being conflated with attitudes toward the EU as a whole. EUobserver Building Blocs November 9, Post-communist states in Europe have enjoyed different degrees of success in their efforts to democratize. Political scientist Joshua A. The prospect of EU membership, with the expected benefits this entails, helps states overcome the first hurdles of democratization. These discussions paved the way for the introduction of a single currency zone , the East African Monetary Union, in The East African Community has already put in place a customs union, and the single market is to take effect in January The Lisbon Treaty, a step towards further integration of the EU, raises the question of supra-national decision making and democracy transfer. Today, the information gap between electors and the European Parliament is widening, as governments fail to provide their citizens with information on EU strategies and policies. Recently, the parties agreed on military-to-military contacts. The Cold War legacy has continued strains between the parties. But now a strategic arms reduction treaty may lead to improved relations. The Relative Rules of Sovereignty March 30, In international relations, recognition by powerful actors is a condition of state sovereignty and offers protection and aid, argues Stephen Krasner. Sovereignty does not depend on population size or geography but on political interests of key actors that

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consider a state to belong to their sphere of influence. Besides, there is no conventional pattern to define the concept of sovereignty. Not all states will seek full-fledged independence; some will accept to yield part of their sovereignty to enjoy the benefit of a broader political structure, like the European Union. Further, the regional cooperation in "Mercosur" increases regional integration and makes countries such as Brazil, Argentina and Venezuela less dependent on unfavorable cooperation with the US. This alliance would require the EU to share information on its own citizens with the US, and calls for the creation of a "European Gendarmerie Force" which would be used for paramilitary interventions overseas. The report argues these integrationist steps between the EU and Washington are necessary to successfully combat terrorism. But, privacy laws in some EU member states stand in the way of this future alliance due to principles of confidentiality. But, the union faces some opposition. Eastern European countries worry the UfM will "divert European financial resources and political attention" away from them, and Spain and Germany feel that France is trying to promote its own interests, not the interests of the EU. Some Arab and African members, such as Libya, argue the union exists so that the Europeans can take their resources. The AU has established a regional peacekeeping force, criminal court and common army to eliminate rivalries among its members. The author argues that such initiatives diminish the role of the US as a global superpower. Sovereignty for smaller countries like Ireland is a cherished possession, and agreeing to a stronger European political union allows bigger players like France and Germany to exercise their power over smaller members. France recognized the impossibility of a politically stronger EU and started looking elsewhere to exercise its power, such as the Mediterranean basin. The Union will strengthen the voice of the region and enhance its political power in global negotiations. The plan for a regional defense body caused some controversy. May 21, The Southern African Development Community SADC constitutes one of the six regional organizations in Southern Africa that prioritize development and both economic and political integration. In this interview, Dot Keet, policy expert on trade issues, insists on regional strategies to help each other in times of a financial, food, water and climate crisis. Several prosperous regions in Europe, such as Catalonia in Spain, are frustrated by poorer countries getting a seat at the EU table. They argue that they have more valid claim to independence due to their relative prosperity. The article suggests that the EU should rethink the distribution of power between regional, national and EU levels. European Council on Foreign Relations Africa: Agreeing with this idea, some economists suggest that the African economies "are more competitive than complimentary" and that they would benefit from diversifying production and reduce their dependency on primary product exports. To increase trade between the countries, they argue the countries should engage in greater monetary cooperation and in developing a common African currency. But critics are concerned that NAFTA constitutes a "super-government" with no accountability to citizens who are directly affected by the agreements. In the US for instance, some fear that the decisions made by the Bush administration "may actually undermine the security and sovereignty of the US. Kenya and Uganda demonstrated great support for fast-tracking the East Africa political federation, whose goal is to have a federal president and parliament by Tanzania on the other hand is concerned that a federation may threaten its sovereignty and security and lead to corruption. But Mercosur member countries appear reluctant to break with US-style capitalism.

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## Chapter 2 : Member Organizations | USFSA

*The big challenge: Food sovereignty in Niger by Issoufou Abdoukader (ELP) | Cash and Voucher Programme Assisant, World Food Programme, Niger Niger is a landlocked country sharing borders with Nigeria and Benin in the South, Burkina Faso & Mali in the West, Algeria and Libya in the North, and Chad in the East.*

GROW blog channel Day 9: Peasant movements such as La Via Campesina must step up to the challenge of linking food sovereignty and feminism. From a feminist perspective, we need to ask ourselves who has the power to exercise this right. Peasant movements such as La Via Campesina must step up to the challenge of articulating food sovereignty and feminism. Food sovereignty is a proposed alternative to the neoliberal model of food production and consumption. Food sovereignty involves protecting and regulating local production and trade with a view to sustainable rural development; to fostering organic farming practices; to promoting rural-urban alliances and fair trade; and to rejecting the privatization of land, biofuels, genetically modified crops, single-crop farming and agrochemicals. If seeds exist in diverse forms and circulate freely as a collective asset, they will guarantee an abundance of food. As a result, biotechnology and intellectual property rights form gender barriers to the recognition of women within the food system, preventing women from passing on their knowledge. As well as strengthening local banks of indigenous seeds and continuing to promote seed exchanges, one bold suggestion would be to symbolically and materially reward women who keep and reproduce seeds. We must also attempt to restore gender relations within families and our own movement, as well as re-evaluate the economic and productive nature of reproduction and food, questioning the organizational structure of the economic system based on the idea that reproduction and production are not autonomous. Women are beginning to assess their own personal contribution to the agricultural economy. Naturalization, invisibilization and discrimination are still taking place. Food sovereignty involves wholesale agricultural reform. This process must be a bold one, however, involving equality, ensuring that women are fully entitled to access and control land, fishing areas and grazing migration routes, and that indigenous people have land rights. From a feminist point of view, we should ask ourselves how the power is divided in the exercising of this right. Concrete advances in gender emancipation will take place if decision making is egalitarian, ensuring internal democracy within families, communities and organizations. More specifically, we should aim to create fair decision-making bodies and help women not to feel afraid to make decisions by boosting their self-esteem, thereby promoting access to better education and training them in lobbying. We are currently faced with both opportunities and risks, which the movements need to come to terms with. The re-evaluation of historic social roles, such as the role of food provider, runs the risk of being limited to a mere symbolic recognition, which could even reinforce the traditional patriarchal gender division of work. Articulating food sovereignty and feminism is therefore the unavoidable challenge facing social movements such as LVC. It requires them to review their focuses and strategies with a view to making advances in gender equality and the empowerment of women. The strategies that should be reinforced are to continue claiming social assets and productive resources land, water, equipment, machinery, storage centres, but also to promote genuine participation, autonomy and sovereignty for women in all areas: Concrete suggestions include fostering the balanced participation of men and women in all stages of the production and distribution of food, setting up alert systems when, for cultural reasons, activities that are carried out mainly by women such as seed reproduction are undervalued and, by contrast, the public activities that tend to involve men more such as selling are overvalued. Another suggestion is to promote women taking control of the entire economic and production chain, all the way up to selling their produce at markets, with income for individual women to help to support their autonomy. Food-related chores should be the responsibility of everyone, not just of women as part of the gender mandate. These daily spaces for reflection in rural life can take place at a social gathering, around the stove, at a party or even at a football match. It is also a good idea to hold workshops with children and teenagers, as well as using local media to promote the message of equality. In the process of strengthening

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leadership positions in order to challenge imbalances of power, it is essential to promote alliances with non-rural feminist movements, which can provide training, arguments and strategies for tackling the conflicts that arise out of change, helping to make the process of gender equality a sustainable one. Food Sovereignty and Gender Equality Tags:

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### Chapter 3 : Monthly Review | From Food Crisis to Food Sovereignty: The Challenge of Social Movements

*Food sovereignty is about the right of a people to determine their own policies relative to food and agriculture--rather than having their food supply subject to market forces. The indigenous people of this country certainly understand.*

Their neoliberal strategies are in stark contrast to the proposals for ecological approaches to agriculture agroecology and food sovereignty advanced by farmer federations and civil society organizations worldwide that instead seek to transform food systems. Clashes and declarations of protest at recent summits in Rome, Hokkaido, and Madrid, the growing public resistance to the industrial agrifood complex, and the rise, spread, and political convergence of movements for agroecology, land reform, food justice, and food sovereignty, all indicate that the food crisis has become the focal point in a class struggle over the future of our food systems. In June , the World Bank reported that global food prices had risen 83 percent over the last three years and the FAO cited a 45 percent increase in their world food price index in just nine months. In some cases, starving people were just trying to access food from trucks or stores. But with record grain harvests in , according to the FAO, there was more than enough food in the world to feed everyone in "at least 1. In fact, over the last twenty years, food production has risen steadily at over 2. Globally, population is not outstripping food supply. Around half of the people in the developing world earn less than two dollars a day. Despite the oft-cited productivity gains of the Green Revolution, and despite decades of development campaigns"most recently, the elusive Millennium Development Goals"per capita hunger is rising and the number of desperately hungry people on the planet has grown steadily from million in to million in Two companies, Archer Daniels Midland and Cargill, capture three-quarters of the world grain trade. These processes are characterized by changes in the forms of production, livelihood strategies, and political demands. The difficulty of confronting the extensive attacks on smallholders and politically mobilizing around the complexity of their livelihood demands has been a challenge for agrarian movements in the South. This has also been a problem for northern organizations seeking to protect family farms and counter the expansion of large-scale industrial agriculture with more sustainable forms of production. Food sovereignty is a much deeper concept than food security because it proposes not just guaranteed access to food, but democratic control over the food system"from production and processing, to distribution, marketing, and consumption. Whether applied to countries in the global South working to re-establish national food production, to farmers protecting their seed systems from GMOs, or to rural-urban communities setting up their own direct marketing systems, food sovereignty aims to democratize and transform our food systems. For decades, family farmers, rural women, and communities around the world have resisted the destruction of their native seeds and worked hard to diversify their crops, protect their soil, conserve their water and forests, and establish local gardens, markets, businesses, and community-based food systems. These practices have given them important measures of autonomy in relation to the industrial agrifood system and have increased their environmental and economic resiliency, buffering them from climate-induced hazards and market volatility. At the same time, peasant organizations struggling to advance agrarian reform have been busy confronting the neoliberal offensive. As a result, the new transnational agrarian movements regularly integrate social, environmental, economic, and cultural concerns with demands for land reform. Two distinguishable currents can be identified from these trends. The other trend is made up of smallholders working with non-governmental organizations NGOs that focus primarily on developing sustainable agriculture"like Campesino a Campesino. The food crisis may be bringing these movements together. Walking on the Peasant Road In farm leaders from around the world gathered in Mons, Belgium for a conference on policy research put on by a Dutch NGO allied with the International Federation of Agricultural Producers IFAP , an international farm federation dominated by large-scale, northern farmers. What emerged instead was an international peasant movement: The emergence of an international peasant-led farmer federation signified both a break with conventional federations run by large producers and with the humanitarian NGOs typically concerned with peasant agricultural production.

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The Mons declaration asserted the right of small farmers to make a living in the countryside, the right of all people to healthy food, and the right of nations to define their own agricultural policies. It was formed with organizations mostly from the Americas and Europe, but has since expanded to include more than rural social movements from over 79 countries, including 12 countries in Africa, and scores of organizations in South and East Asia. This seminal assessment, sponsored by five UN agencies and the World Bank, and authored by over four hundred scientists and development experts from more than eighty countries, concluded that there is an urgent need to increase and strengthen further research and adoption of locally appropriate and democratically controlled agroecological methods of production, relying on local expertise, local germplasm, and farmer-managed, local seed systems. Agroecological Transformation – Farmer to Farmer Farmers helping their brothers, so that they can help themselves – to find solutions and not be dependent on a technician or on the bank: El Movimiento Campesino a Campesino, the Farmer to Farmer Movement, is made up of hundreds of thousands of peasant-technicians farming and working in over a dozen countries. Campesino a Campesino began with a series of rural projects among the indigenous smallholders of the ecologically fragile hillsides of the Guatemalan Highlands in the early s. Sponsored by progressive NGOs, Mayan peasants developed a method for agricultural improvement using relatively simple methods of small-scale experimentation combined with farmer-led workshops to share their discoveries. Because they were producing at relatively low levels, they concentrated on overcoming the most commonly limiting factors of production in peasant agriculture, i. By adding organic matter to soils, and by implementing soil and water conservation techniques, they frequently obtained yield increases of percent. Rapid, recognizable results helped build enthusiasm among farmers and led to the realization that they could improve their own agriculture – without running the risks, causing the environmental damage, or developing the financial dependency associated with the Green Revolution. The effective, low-cost methods for farmer-generated technologies and farmer-to-farmer knowledge transfer were quickly picked up by NGOs working in agricultural development. As credit, seeds, extension services, and markets continually failed the peasantry, smallholders turned to NGOs rather than governments to meet their agricultural needs. In response, the Campesino a Campesino movement grew, spreading through NGOs to hundreds of thousands of smallholders across the Americas. This conversion was instrumental in helping Cuba overcome its food crisis during the Special Period following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Reforms were enacted to scale down collectives and cooperatives, placing greater control over farming and marketing directly into the hands of smallholders. Rural and urban farmers were provided easy access to land, credit, and markets. It had taken the movement nearly twenty years in Mexico and Central America to grow to that size. The System of Rice Intensification SRI developed in Madagascar has raised yields to as high as eight metric tons per hectare and spread to a million farmers in over two dozen countries. In 95 percent of these projects, cereal yields improved by percent. For twenty years, the Center for Low External Input Sustainable Agriculture LEISA has documented hundreds of agroecological alternatives that successfully overcome many of the limiting factors in African agriculture and elsewhere in the global South. The Divide between Practitioners and Advocates I think we should not fall in the trap of seeing the development of agroecology by just looking at the physical aspects of the farm or just at the economics. We as NGOs have a problem with our social position in which we are serving as a dike and often an obstacle to processes of agency within the people and greater local organization – Agroecology is not just a collection of practices. We promote projects, and projects have a short life. Given the unfavorable structural conditions, agroecological practices have not scaled up nationally to become the rule rather the exception. The farmers of PELUM in West Africa excel in agroecological farming but until recently were largely uninvolved in policy work to halt the spread of the new internationally funded Green Revolution. Ironically, the strength of these farmer-to-farmer networks – i. On one hand, there are no coordinating bodies within these networks capable of mobilizing farmers for social pressure, advocacy, or political action. On the other, their effectiveness at developing sustainable agriculture at the local level has kept its promoters focused on improving agroecological practices rather than addressing the political and

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economic conditions for sustainable agriculture. While the potential synergies between a global peasant federation advocating food sovereignty and far-flung smallholder movements practicing agroecology may seem obvious, efforts to bring agrarian advocacy to farmer-to-farmer networks have run up against the historical distrust between development NGOs implementing sustainable agriculture projects and the peasant organizations that make up the new agrarian movements. Aside from having assumed many of the tasks previously expected of the state, NGOs have become an institutional means to advance social and political agendas within the disputed political terrain of civil society. Within the institutional landscape of agricultural development some NGOs are enrolled either directly or indirectly in the neoliberal project. Others are simply doing what they do best and tend to look out for their own programs. But others are deeply concerned that advancing the practices of sustainable agriculture without addressing the conditions for sustainability will ultimately end in failure. These NGOs are potential links to vast informal networks of smallholders who are committed to transforming agriculture. Over the last thirty years the farmers in these networks have demonstrated their capacity to share information and knowledge. Their commitment to agroecological practices has resulted in a body of agrarian demands specific to sustainable peasant agriculture. It is now common among these farmers to hear the term food sovereignty. Integrating Advocacy and Practice: The MST has settled more than a million landless peasants and forced the redistribution of thirty-five million acres of land an area the size of Uruguay. The MST has its roots in peasant land occupations dating back to the late s. In December a group of landless rural workers set up a camp at a crossroads now known as Encruzilhada Natalino. Following a clause in the Brazilian constitution mandating that land serve a social function, the peasants demanded that the government redistribute idle land in the area. Three and a half years and many mass mobilizations later, the group was granted around 4, acres. Building on the success of Encruzilhada Natalino and several others like it, land occupations have been the primary tactic of the MST. In the movement reached out to other peasant movements practicing agroecology, and at its fourth national congress in , the MST adopted agroecology as national policy to orient production on its settlements. Like its predecessor, the new Green Revolution is essentially a campaign designed to mobilize resources for the expansion of capitalist agriculture. Similar to the role once played by the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations albeit on a much smaller scale , the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is the new philanthropic flagship for the Green Revolution tasked with resurrecting the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research and obtaining broad social and government agreement for the expansion of agro-industrial capital into peasant communities. The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa serves up shallow definitions of terms like agroecology, sustainability, and even food sovereignty in an effort to strip them of their deeper, agrarian content and enroll NGOs and their stakeholders into the Green Revolution. The food crisis is bad, but another Green Revolution will make things much worse. The alternative, smallholder-driven agroecological agriculture, was recognized by the IAASTD as the best strategy for rebuilding agriculture, ending rural poverty and hunger, and establishing food security in the South. To be given a chance, however, this strategy requires a combination of strong political will and extensive on-the-ground agroecological practice to overcome opposition from the well-financed Green Revolution. In the face of a renewed, neoliberal assault in the form of a Green Revolution, peasant movements and farmer-to-farmer networks do appear to be moving closer together. African farm organizations and their allies have met in Mali, Bonn, and Senegal to advance African Agroecological Alternatives to the Green Revolution , These developments and others suggest that the international call for food sovereignty is beginning to take root in specific smallholder initiatives to confront the food and farm crisis. New mixes of advocacy and practice across borders and sectors and between institutions are being forged on a daily basis. These hopeful developments have the potential for bringing together the extensive local networks for agroecological practice with the transnational advocacy organizations. If the two currents merge into a broad-based movement capable of generating massive social pressure, they could tip the scales of political will in favor of food sovereignty. Ultimately, to end world hunger, the monopolistic industrial agrifood complex will have to be replaced with agroecological and

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redistributive food systems. It is too early to tell whether or not the fledgling trend of convergence signals a new stage of integration between the main currents of peasant advocacy and smallholder agroecological practice. Nonetheless, the seeds of convergence have been sown.

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## Chapter 4 : Via Campesina - Wikipedia

*In a food sovereignty world assembly was held in Mali, where more than advocates coming from 80 different countries gathered for several days to commit themselves, and their respective movements, to the ideals of food sovereignty.*

IPC facilitates dialogue and debate among actors from civil society, governments and others actors in the field of Food Security and Nutrition, creating a space of discussion autonomous from political parties, institutions, governments and private sector. The legitimacy of IPC is based on the ability to voice the concerns and struggles that a wide variety of civil society organizations and social movements face in their daily practice of advocacy at local, sub-national, regional and global levels. All the positions or joint policy initiatives must be signed by the individual organizations, and each participant can only speak on behalf of its own organization, and not as a representative of a sector, geographic area or representing the network as a whole. The organizations participating at the international level to the IPC are: NGOs participate as active support for the above mentioned social movements. HISTORY The International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty IPC was officially set up in to react to the simplification of the question of agriculture focusing only on the export for the international markets, creating alliance and synergy between different movements in facing and dialoguing with the different governments and institutions From , IPC has also had a more formal relationship with FAO, as established in a co-signed Exchange of Letters that stated the principles governing FAO-IPC relations and laid out a programme of work in four priority areas: Since its formalization in , IPC has facilitated the participation of thousands representatives of small-scale food producers and Indigenous Peoples organizations in the FAO regional conferences and technical committees, where their voice were previously absent from these political forums. IPC has participated in all negotiations for the renewal of CFS, as key player leading the recognition of small food producers organisations and other social movements as relevant actors in the CFS work and decisions and also worked on the proposal for the creation of the CSM, Civil Society Mechanism the representative body of CSOs for the CFS, as an original instrument to guarantee an effective and organised participation of CSO and social movement at the CFS work. The CFS reform process has absorbed a lot of energy in order to involve all stakeholders and facilitate their participation. The IPC had a leading role in this process, providing a clear space for the interests of social movements and food sovereignty in the centre of the agenda, and working with regional and constituencies focal points to ensure comprehensive advice in the districts and regions Since the CFS began working independently, the IPC decided to redefine its own workspace outside the CFS, primarily in the FAO, but also other UN agencies, and in the territories: For these reasons, the IPC has began to reorganize at regional level, making a clear distinction in the roles and responsibilities of organizations of small food producers organisations who make decisions about initiatives and positions and support NGOs which play a supporting role. The IPC is putting new social movements in the first line: In this way food producers organizations and social movements will be able to organize the IPC space and maintain their agenda at the centre of IPC initiatives. The IPC in is active through working groups established on agreed priorities. Current Working Groups are: Recommendations for ongoing cooperation with FAO. Forum for Food Sovereignty, Rome. More than organizations, mainly from the global South, were directly involved. It has been approved the program and defined the priorities of the four questions posed in Small-scale agroecological food production: The implementation of the Action Program in the world continues. Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Food adopted by FAO member countries in September , thanks to the action of CSOs and effective lobbying Organizations involved in FAO technical committees fishing, commodities, agriculture, genetic resources, global food security. The IPC has facilitated the participation of about delegates at the Forum and representatives of organizations in 60 countries worldwide. The IPC has facilitated the participation of over representatives. Over delegates attended the Forum from 80 countries. They wrote a declaration on food sovereignty, which is still today the main definition. To see all the declaration, access to the link: The IPC has facilitated the participation of 30

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organizations of farmers, indigenous and peasant organizations in both events, and coordinated the Forum in collaboration with the League of Pastoral Peoples and SwissAid. Organization of a seminar preparing and facilitating the participation of farmers and indigenous peoples in the 2nd meeting of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, held in Rome in October. The IPC has facilitated the participation of over delegates and observers at the Forum and some 50 official observers to the Conference. Several press conferences were held. CFS, "Prepare the regional consultation meetings on voluntary guidelines on responsible governance of tenure of land and other natural resources. Organization of the first meeting of the Coordination Committee of the CSM and political seminars, Cordoba Spain Participation of civil society in the process of developing voluntary guidelines to ensure the sustainability of small-scale fisheries IG-SSF. In this action, they are looking for support, FAO and other sources, to enable them to contribute to the effective development of voluntary guidelines on securing sustainable small-scale fisheries VG-4SSF whose approval is expected by July COFI CSOs Statement only in Spanish: Global meeting to discuss how to reorganize the functioning of the IPC. India national workshop on SSF Guidelines and the state of its implementation process. It reunited all coordinators and facilitators of different WGs. To access the manual, see: Brazil national workshop on SSF Guidelines and the state of its implementation process. Ecuador national workshop on SSF Guidelines and the state of its implementation process. Pakistan national workshop on SSF Guidelines and the state of its implementation process. Tanzania national workshop on SSF Guidelines and the state of its implementation process. IPC fisheries WG, thanks to the IFAD grant, developed a web page on the implementation process, with the updates on the workshops and ongoing international processes. Nos importa la privacidad y no te mandaremos spam ni vendremos tus informaciones de contacto.

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## Chapter 5 : About Us - Food Sovereignty

*From Food Crisis to Food Sovereignty: The Challenge of Social Movements* The current global food crisis-decades in the making-is a crushing indictment against capitalist agriculture and the corporate monopolies that dominate the world's food systems.

Hence the need for land reforms, for fighting against GMOs Genetically Modified Organisms , for free access to seeds, and for safeguarding water as a public good to be sustainably distributed. Where does the concept of food sovereignty come from? The concept of food sovereignty was developed by Via Campesina and brought to the public debate during the World Food Summit in and represents an alternative to neoliberal policies. Since then, that concept has become a major issue of the international agricultural debate, even within the United Nations bodies. Neoliberal policies are wrecking food sovereignty Neo-liberal policies prioritize international trade, and not food for the people. They have forced hundreds of millions of farmers to give up their traditional agricultural practices, to rural exodus or to emigration. International WTO , regional Free Trade Agreement of the Americas-FTAA or bilateral " free" trade agreements of agricultural products actually allow those companies to control the globalized food market. WTO is a completely inadequate institution to deal with food and agriculture-related issues. The plague of low prices imports: Those products are exported at low prices thanks to dumping practices. The United States and the European Union had a new dumping practice ratified by WTO, which replaces export subsidies by a strong reduction of their agricultural prices combined with direct payments made by the State. To achieve food sovereignty, dumping must be stopped! Food sovereignty includes fair trade Food sovereignty is not contrary to trade but to the priority given to exports: Under the responsibility of United Nations UN this trade must be granted a new framework, which: Access to international markets is not a solution for farmers. The first problem for farmers is a lack of access to their own local market because the prices are too low for their products and the import dumping they are confronted with. The example of the tropical products coffee, bananas, etc. Agricultural policies have to support sustainable family farm based agriculture in the North and the South. In order to be able to make their food sovereignty work, countries in the North and in the South have to be able to support their agriculture to guarantee the right to food of their populations, to preserve their environment, to develop sustainable agriculture and to protect themselves against dumping. They should also be able to support their agriculture to fulfill other public interests that can differ according to countries and their cultural traditions. But at present the United States and the European Union in particular abuse public support to reduce their internal market prices and to dump their surpluses on the international markets, destroying family farm based agriculture in the North and the South. Alliances are fundamental For several years Via Campesina has played a major role in the development of international networks gathering social, environmental movements, development NGOs, consumers etc. From Seattle to Genoa and Porto Alegre, those networks develop proposals and strategies which are essential to put an end to neoliberal policies and to develop solidarity policies. What can be done concretely? Get in touch with Via Campesina member organizations in order to support local and national initiatives and actions such as land occupation, sustainable farm production initiatives, defence of local seeds, actions against GMOs and dumping, etc. It is also important to bring this debate into your organizations and into your governments and parliaments. On the international level, you can take part in the world peasant fight day on April

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### Chapter 6 : Food Rebellions!, Crisis and the Hunger for Justice (summary)

*Whether applied to countries in the global South working to re-establish national food production, to farmers protecting their seed systems from GMOs, or to rural-urban communities setting up their own direct marketing systems, food sovereignty aims to democratize and transform our food systems.*

From Food Crisis to Food Sovereignty: Their neoliberal strategies are in stark contrast to the proposals for ecological approaches to agriculture agroecology and food sovereignty advanced by farmer federations and civil society organizations worldwide that instead seek to transform food systems. Clashes and declarations of protest at recent summits in Rome, Hokkaido, and Madrid, the growing public resistance to the industrial agrifood complex, and the rise, spread, and political convergence of movements for agroecology, land reform, food justice, and food sovereignty, all indicate that the food crisis has become the focal point in a class struggle over the future of our food systems. The contradiction of increasing hunger in the midst of wealth and abundance sparked food riots, not seen for many decades. In June, the World Bank reported that global food prices had risen 83 percent over the last three years and the FAO cited a 45 percent increase in their world food price index in just nine months. While commodity prices have since fallen due to the world economic downturn and speculators lessening their bets on commodities, food prices remain high and are not expected to return to pre-crisis levels. The widespread food protests were not simply crazed "riots" by hungry masses. In some cases, starving people were just trying to access food from trucks or stores. These shrill warnings immediately revived Malthusian mantras within the agrifood industry and unleashed a flurry of heroic industrial promises for new genetically engineered high-yielding, "climate-ready," and "bio-fortified" seeds. But with record grain harvests in, according to the FAO, there was more than enough food in the world to feed everyone in at least 1. In fact, over the last 20 years, food production has risen steadily at over 2 percent a year, while the rate of population growth has dropped to 1. Globally, population is not outstripping food supply. Around half of the people in the developing world earn less than two dollars a day. Nearly 20 percent are "extremely poor," earning less than one dollar a day. Many of those officially classified as poor are subsistence farmers who have limited access to land and water and cannot compete in global markets. In addition, the diversion of large quantities of grains and oil crops for the growing industrial feedlots in the emerging economies, as well as the diversion of land and water for "green" agofuels, has put significant pressure on markets for many basic foods. The steady concentration of profits and market power in the industrial North mirrors the loss of food producing capacity and the growth of hunger in the Global South. Despite the oft-cited productivity gains of the Green Revolution, and despite decades of development campaigns-most recently, the elusive Millennium Development Goals-per capita hunger is rising and the number of desperately hungry people on the planet has grown steadily from million in to million in Today, the number stands at over 1 billion. This shift from food self-sufficiency to food dependency has been accomplished by colonizing national food systems and destroying peasant agriculture. We as NGOs have a problem with our social position in which we are serving as a dike and often an obstacle to processes of agency within the people and greater local organization. Agroecology is not just a collection of practices. Agroecology is a way of life. We promote projects, and projects have a short life. Given the unfavorable structural conditions, agroecological practices have not scaled up nationally to become the rule rather than the exception. Despite far-flung farmer-to-farmer networks linked by hundreds of NGOs, farmers in these movements have generally not lobbied, pressured, taken direct action, or otherwise organized in favor of sustainable agriculture in a significant way. The farmers of PELUM in west Africa excel in agroecological farming but until recently were largely uninvolved in policy work to halt the spread of the new internationally funded Green Revolution. Ironically, the strength of these farmer-to-farmer networks-i. On one hand, there are no coordinating bodies within these networks capable of mobilizing farmers for social pressure, advocacy, or political action. On the other, their effectiveness at developing sustainable agriculture at

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the local level has kept its promoters focused on improving agroecological practices rather than addressing the political and economic conditions for sustainable agriculture. While the potential synergies between a global peasant federation advocating food sovereignty and far-flung smallholder movements practicing agroecology may seem obvious, efforts to bring agrarian advocacy to farmer-to-farmer networks have run up against the historical distrust between development NGOs implementing sustainable agriculture projects and the peasant organizations that make up the new agrarian movements. Aside from having assumed many of the tasks previously expected of the state, NGOs have become an institutional means to advance social and political agendas within the disputed political terrain of civil society. Within the institutional landscape of agricultural development some NGOs are enrolled either directly or indirectly in the neoliberal project. Others are simply doing what they do best and tend to look out for their own programs. But others are deeply concerned that advancing the practices of sustainable agriculture without addressing the conditions for sustainability will ultimately end in failure. These NGOs are potential links to vast informal networks of smallholders who are committed to transforming agriculture. Over the last 30 years the farmers in these networks have demonstrated their capacity to share information and knowledge. Their commitment to agroecological practices has resulted in a body of agrarian demands specific to sustainable peasant agriculture. It is now common among these farmers to hear the term "food sovereignty. The MST has settled more than a million landless peasants and forced the redistribution of 35 million acres of land an area the size of Uruguay. The MST has its roots in peasant land occupations dating back to the late s. In December a group of landless rural workers set up a camp at a crossroads now known as Encruzilhada Natalino. Following a clause in the Brazilian constitution mandating that land serve a social function, the peasants demanded that the government redistribute idle land in the area. Three and a half years and many mass mobilizations later, the group was granted around 4, acres. Building on the success of Encruzilhada Natalino and several others like it, land occupations have been the primary tactic of the MST. Though the MST initially promoted industrial agriculture among its members, this strategy proved unsustainable and economically disastrous on many of its settlements. In the movement reached out to other peasant movements practicing agroecology, and at its fourth national congress in , the MST adopted agroecology as national policy to orient production on its settlements. Like its predecessor, the new Green Revolution is essentially a campaign designed to mobilize resources for the expansion of capitalist agriculture. Similar to the role once played by the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations albeit on a much smaller scale , the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is the new philanthropic flagship for the Green Revolution tasked with resurrecting the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research and obtaining broad social and government agreement for the expansion of agro-industrial capital into peasant communities. The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa serves up shallow definitions of terms like agroecology, sustainability, and even food sovereignty in an effort to strip them of their deeper, agrarian content and enroll NGOs and their stakeholders into the Green Revolution. The food crisis is bad, but another Green Revolution will make things much worse. The alternative, smallholder-driven agroecological agriculture, was recognized by the IAASTD as the best strategy for rebuilding agriculture, ending rural poverty and hunger, and establishing food security in the Global South. To be given a chance, however, this strategy requires a combination of strong political will and extensive on-the-ground agroecological practice to overcome opposition from the well-financed Green Revolution. In the face of a renewed, neoliberal assault in the form of a Green Revolution, peasant movements and farmer-to-farmer networks do appear to be moving closer together. African farm organizations and their allies have met in Mali, Bonn, and Senegal to advance African Agroecological Alternatives to the Green Revolution , These developments and others suggest that the international call for food sovereignty is beginning to take root in specific smallholder initiatives to confront the food and farm crisis. New mixes of advocacy and practice across borders and sectors and between institutions are being forged on a daily basis. These hopeful developments have the potential for bringing together the extensive local networks for agroecological practice with the transnational advocacy organizations. If the two currents merge into a broad-based movement capable of generating massive social

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pressure, they could tip the scales of political will in favor of food sovereignty. Ultimately, to end world hunger, the monopolistic industrial agrifood complex will have to be replaced with agroecological and redistributive food systems. It is too early to tell whether or not the fledgling trend of convergence signals a new stage of integration between the main currents of peasant advocacy and smallholder agroecological practice. Nonetheless, the seeds of convergence have been sown.

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### Chapter 7 : The big challenge: Food sovereignty in Niger | International & Executive Programs | UC Berkeley

*Food sovereignty is the peoples', Countries' or State Unions' RIGHT to define their agricultural and food policy, without any dumping vis-À-vis third countries. Food sovereignty includes: prioritizing local agricultural production in order to feed the people, access of peasants and landless people to land, water, seeds, and credit.*

The ecological and socio-economic dimensions of sustainable agriculture, Keene, NH: Antioch University Center for Tropical Ecology and Conservation in press The previous panelists have offered thoughtful perspectives on how US agricultural policies profoundly alter the lives of people around the world and how people in tropical Central America are beginning to reclaim sovereignty over their food supply. This discussion is in many ways an outgrowth of my research on the science and politics of genetic engineering in agriculture. For a variety of international perspectives on the relationship between genetic engineering and global trade policies, please see my book, *Gene Traders*, published by Toward Freedom in Burlington, Vermont. Today, Vermont, and northern New England as a whole, is overwhelmingly a net importer of food. A Rodale Institute study of food self-sufficiency across the US, published in , showed that Vermont even imports percent of its carrots and apples. New Hampshire, unfortunately, comes in at a disappointing 6 percent. How did it come to this? And, even more importantly, in an era of rising fuel prices and wars for oil, how do we begin to change the situation? From the westward migrations of the midth century, to the coming of the railroads and the creation of a national grain market, the huge surpluses generated by Western farms drove prices down and rendered New England growers economically marginal. Expanding commodity-based agriculture increasingly trumped the ethic of self-reliance that our region was said to be built upon. In the s, when Americans spent more than 30 percent of their household income on food, policymakers decided that food had become too expensive for the emerging consumer lifestyle, and that too many people were trying to make their living in agriculture. Subsidies were structured so as to create new export markets for agricultural commodities, and to encourage people to sell their farms and migrate to the cities to find work. A vanishing share of our food dollars actually goes to farmers, and we are often reminded that food items travel an average of at least miles from farm to table, a figure dating back to the late s. Vermont lost nearly 90 percent of its farms in the past half century, and many agricultural areas of the central United States faced significant depopulation. Transnational chemical companies, food processors and grain traders, rather than farmers, came to decide how our food would be grown, shipped and processed. Today, the United States has more people in prison than are earning their livelihood growing food. This process of corporate consolidation began with the rapidly increasing use of agricultural pesticides in the decades immediately following World War II. US pesticide sales increased ten-fold between the s and s, and another ten-fold since then. A generation ago, seed production was as dispersed as milk production, if not more so; the idea of companies having global market share in seeds was virtually unfathomable. Genetic engineering is a technology that has significantly helped drive corporate consolidation in agriculture. Syngenta is essentially a synthetic company, formed from successive waves of mergers, divestments and re-mergers of chemical companies from Switzerland, Britain and Sweden; they are number two in pesticides overall and the largest producer of herbicides. Monsanto is number two in herbicides; thus it is no coincidence that herbicide tolerance is by far the leading genetically engineered trait in commercial agricultural production today. The unprecedented market power of Wal-Mart and other huge corporations has also driven consolidation among food processors, with increasing numbers of medium-sized companies-including many of the best known natural food processors-being purchased by the likes of Heinz, General Mills and Mars Candy. In much of Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America, GMOs are at the center of highly visible and persistent public controversies, and more than 30 countries have adopted labeling rules and import restrictions, resisting pressure from the US and the World Trade Organization WTO to step back and simply accept this disruptive and dangerous technology. Vermonters are very concerned about the quality of our food, and share a concern and identification with those who grow our food that has

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been all but obliterated in much of the US. In this respect, by moving toward a more conscious cultural identification with the sources and character of our food, Vermont may have more in common with Europe than almost any other place in the US. Eighty five Vermont towns are on record supporting GMO labeling and in most cases, a moratorium on growing these crops, a distinction we share with more than 25 towns elsewhere in New England, as well as three northern California counties, where comprehensive bans on raising GE crops and livestock have been voted into law. Via Campesina has intervened in numerous international fora over the past decade, and has pioneered the concept of food sovereignty as a centerpiece of their demands toward various international agencies. Since the s, agribusiness companies, mostly from the US, have been unloading, or dumping, surplus commodities on international markets, thereby undercutting the value of local food in the recipient countries. Just as the sum of many small, local efforts have helped restrain the unchecked spread of genetic engineering and other excesses of corporate globalism, a similar convergence of local efforts can help us grow toward a healthier, more sustainable future at home. They are developing community gardens, a barter market, a school gardens project, and an effort to green their new community hospital. Other towns in the region have formed a biodiesel co-op, organized bulk purchase of fruit and olive! A year ago, one group of 20 Upper Connecticut Valley residents pledged to only eat foods grown within a mile radius for the entire month of January. They are working toward online partnering of growers and buyers, innovative ways for food producers to share needs, and an effort to strengthen agricultural zoning. Vermont has a vital network of farmers markets and CSA farms. Many growers plant a little extra every year to supply local food shelves. Thanks to FoodWorks in Montpelier, many Vermont schools have active food gardens and horticulture programs. But much more is needed. Even a couple of decades ago, there were many more local canneries for local produce, and freezer lockers and slaughterhouses to serve those who raise animals for meat. Two policy initiatives debated in Montpelier during the legislative session aimed to help further the goal of increasing food self-reliance. One bill was passed H. This idea languished over his four years in office, but needs to be a central element in any meaningful plan to help sustain our farms and farmers. In Europe, public support for organic transitions has been widely available, and has hugely benefited the land, farmers and consumers. In Austria, 10 percent of the farms are organic 50 percent in the alpine Salzburg province , with a ten-fold increase during the s after state support became available for organic conversions. Can these efforts toward increased food self reliance in our region meet the dual challenge of responding to future crises and sustaining a high quality of life for everyone? Can local alternatives challenge the influence of agribusiness giants like Monsanto over all of our lives, and also meaningfully serve those who are unable to pay more for high quality local food? One of the strengths of the GE-Free Vermont movement over the years has been its insistence that we will not encourage the creation of a niche market for safe, healthy food while those who are less fortunate among us are limited to increasingly hazardous corporate-processed food. A sustainable future-a future of genuine food sovereignty-is only possible if healthy, local food is available to everyone, regardless of their economic status, family history, or access to land. In the best New England tradition, we can work collaboratively with our neighbors to create a greener future for us all. He directs the Biotechnology Project at the Institute for Social Ecology in Plainfield, and extends his gratitude to Steve Chase and Christine Arminger for the opportunity to participate in this symposium. Rodale Press, 4 David S. See also David S. Timmons, *Measuring and Understanding Local Foods: Scientists, Citizens and Public Policy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, ; John H. An earlier version of the article appeared in *The Ecologist*, Vol. ETC Group, September Arrogance Incorporated, Oxford, UK: Cargill and its Transnational Strategies, London:

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## Chapter 8 : Food sovereignty - Wikipedia

*Food Sovereignty: A Revolution in US Farm Policy [i]. John Ikerd [ii]. Surprisingly, I was recently asked by the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations to write a policy paper on Family Farming in North America in recognition of the International Year of the Family Farm. [1].*

History[ edit ] The history of food sovereignty as a movement is relatively young. However, there are a number of key movements and countries that have made significant steps towards making an alternative food system a reality. Food sovereignty is 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. It puts those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations. It defends the interests and inclusion of the next generation. It offers a strategy to resist and dismantle the current corporate trade and food regime, and directions for food, farming, pastoral and fisheries systems determined by local producers. Food sovereignty prioritises local and national economies and markets and empowers peasant and family farmer-driven agriculture, artisanal fishing, pastoralist-led grazing, and food production, distribution and consumption based on environmental, social and economic sustainability. As of late , a law is in the draft stages that is expected to expand upon this constitutional provision by banning genetically modified organisms , protecting many areas of the country from extraction of non-renewable resources, and to discourage monoculture. The law as drafted will also protect biodiversity as collective intellectual property and recognize the Rights of Nature. The meeting included people from the Atlantic to the Urals and Caucasus, as well as from the Arctic to the Mediterranean. These people included international representatives from diverse social movements and civil society organisations. By coming together they aimed to build on the foundations of the Mali forum in The objectives were to strengthen local involvement; build a sense of common purpose and understanding; create a joint agenda for action; celebrate the struggle for food sovereignty in Europe; and inspire and motivate people and organisations to work together. The forum, which was organised on the principles of participation and consensus decision making , used methods to avoid institutionalised prejudices that are inherent in society such as gender , age , language , occupation. It did this by making a concerted effort to allow for all sections of society to be included in the discussion. In the name of efficiency and enhanced productivity, it has therefore served to promote what has been termed the "corporate food regime": Haiti can be seen as a case study. Migration from the countryside to cities has reflected a transition from subsistence agriculture to factory labor. Farmers were forced to make this move because of heavy imports of "Miami rice", with which their natively-grown rice could not compete in the local market. By , Haiti was importing 80 percent of its rice, leaving them extremely vulnerable to price and supply fluctuations. When the price of rice did triple in , many Haitians could not afford to buy it. In another publication, Food First describes "food sovereignty" as "a platform for rural revitalization at a global level based on equitable distribution of farmland and water, farmer control over seeds , and productive small-scale farms supplying consumers with healthy, locally grown food. However, many in the food sovereignty movement are critical of the green revolution and accuse those who advocate it as following too much of a Western culture technocratic program that is out of touch with the needs of majority of small producers and peasants. The main focus was on the research, development and transfer of agricultural technology, such as hybrid seeds and fertilisers , through massive private and public investment that went into transforming agriculture in a number of countries, starting in Mexico and India. While the green revolution may have produced more food, world hunger continues because it did not address the problems of access. Results included significant biodiversity loss due to the mass adoption of hybrid seeds and soil erosion [ citation needed ]. With its Marxist influences, food regime theorists are interested in how moments of crisis within a particular food regime are expressive of the dialectical tension that animates movement between such configurations i. According to leading theorist Philip McMichael, food regimes are

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always characterised by contradictory forces. Consolidation of a regime does not so much resolve as it does contain, or else strategically accommodate, these tensions; meanwhile, their intensification, often via the mobilisations of social movements, often signals a period of transition. According to McMichael, a "world agriculture" under the WTO Agreement on Agriculture "food from nowhere" represents one pole of the "central contradiction" of the present regime. The Food Sovereignty movement may be right about the mistakes of neoliberal economic ideology, but it is silent about the fact that many famines actually occurred under socialist and communist regimes that pursued the goal of food self-sufficiency cf. Wittman [21] are directed. In public statements, the food sovereignty movement urges for strong sovereign powers for both national governments and local communities in the vein of the indigenous rights movement, Community-Based Natural Resource Management CBNRM and the like elsewhere it has also appealed to global civil society to act as a check against abuses by national and supranational governing bodies. Those who take a radically critical view on state sovereignty would argue against the possibility that national sovereignty can be reconciled with that of local communities [22] see also the debate about multiculturalism and indigenous autonomy in Mexico [23] [24] [25]. On the other hand, Raj Patel is more favourable towards this prospect: Crisis of the peasantry? However, as part of ongoing debates over the contemporary relevance of the "agrarian question" in classical Marxism, [26] [27] Henry Bernstein is critical of these largely celebratory accounts. Specifically, levels Bernstein, such analyses tend to present the agrarian population as a unified, singular and world-historical social category. Therefore, they fail to account, in any more than a gestural manner, for:

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### Chapter 9 : The Venezuelan Food Sovereignty Experiment - The Solutions Journal

*Finally, part three examines the lessons to be learned from the Cuban experience with respect to local development, sustainable agriculture, agroecology, food security and food sovereignty. The book also highlights the elements of the Cuban system most suitable for replication in other countries facing similar circumstances or challenges.*

Its newly reformed constitution guaranteed its citizens the right to food through a secure national food supply based on sustainable agriculture as a strategic framework for rural development, to be carried out through a series of laws, institutes, and programs. This move could be seen as a leap of faith for a highly urbanized country that had largely abandoned agriculture as it built its economy around its petroleum industry over the last century. And yet, against these odds, Venezuela has moved forward in its efforts to build food sovereignty, drastically cutting hunger while bolstering domestic food production. This has been carried out through a host of government programs, in partnership with communities, ranging from land reform to feeding programs to urban agriculture. Today, some of the most promising efforts toward food sovereignty in Venezuela are coming from citizen-run social institutions known as *comunas*, which are forging relationships and carrying out innovative projects across the urban-rural divide. Thus far, a handful of countries have adopted food sovereignty into state policy. Among the first to do so was Venezuela in This was a bold move for a highly urbanized country that had abandoned its agriculture sector as it focused instead on oil production over the last century. Today, there is a wide range of support for food production and distribution in both rural and urban areas coming from the Venezuelan government, working in conjunction with citizen-led efforts. These initiatives have dramatically reduced hunger while bolstering domestic food production. Some of the most promising efforts toward food sovereignty in Venezuela today are coming from citizen-run social institutions known as *comunas*, which are forging relationships and carrying out innovative projects across the urban-rural divide. As I wandered through the streets of Caracas on my first trip to Venezuela nine years ago, a huge urban farm in the midst of concrete high-rises caught my attention. I asked a local walking by if he could tell me anything about the farm whose initiative was it, how long had it been there, who farms the land? Part of what process, I wondered. Later, I would learn that the two concepts were inseparable. Now having followed the processes unfolding in Venezuela for nearly a decade, I often reflect back on this early moment for the meaning behind that simple exchange. Yet these still remain pockets of change in an otherwise broken system in the US and globally where profits come before people, good food is a privilege for those who can afford it rather than a right for all, and food production comes at the expense of farmers, workers, the environment, and human health. In a handful of countries, however, such as in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, there are national efforts to create systemic change in food and agriculture and their advances and setbacks hold valuable lessons. Among these is Venezuela, which is home to one of the most fascinating experiments in food and agriculture today. A rare accuracy in current media reports on Venezuela, however, is that food is a highly politicized issue there. What the reports fail to mention, though, is that this is nothing new. In fact, issues directly connected to food were among the sparks that ignited the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela. On February 27, , hundreds of thousands of people poured into the capital from the impoverished hillside communities on the periphery of Caracas, protesting in the streets as they looted shops first for food, then for other basic goods, and finally for anything in sight. This led to an abrupt surge in food and fuel prices in which the cost of bread rose by over percent. The official death toll was civilians, with actual deaths estimated in the thousands. Corresponding events transpired in cities across Venezuela that same day. The Caracazo is credited not only with being one of the earliest public protests against neoliberalism but also a defining moment of popular power. For insights into why an oil-rich country like Venezuela would embark on an ambitious food sovereignty experiment, it is important to understand the basic context that gave rise to the Caracazo. As attention turned to oil, both the land-owning elites and the government lost interest in agriculture and stopped investing in land. For those remaining in the countryside just over 10 percent of the

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population by –the situation was equally tenuous. The abandonment of its agriculture sector led Venezuela to become among the most urbanized countries in Latin America and the first country in the region to be a net importer of food. It was against this backdrop that renewed attention to food and agriculture became a strategic priority of the Bolivarian Revolution. The State shall promote sustainable agriculture as the strategic basis for overall rural development, and consequently shall guarantee the population a secure food supply, defined as the sufficient and stable availability of food within the national sphere and timely and uninterrupted access to the same for consumers. Food production is in the national interest and is fundamental to the economic and social development of the Nation. On the production end, there are numerous programs to bolster domestic agriculture and provide support to small and midscale farmers. Such measures include a land reform process that has redistributed large landholdings to over , farming families,<sup>7</sup> totaling more than a million people –roughly half of the rural population. Agroecology advocates point out, however, that state support remains skewed toward industrial agriculture and are pushing for a more wholesale paradigm shift. Christina Schiavoni Youth involved in an intergenerational urban farming project in Caracas. On the distribution end, perhaps the most far-reaching initiative is Mercal, a national network of government-run supermarkets selling foods at affordable, subsidized prices. With an emphasis on reaching the most underserved areas, Mercal outlets range from large supermarkets to small mobile markets and have distributed 12 million tons of food in the decade since their inception. To date, 6, casas across the country are serving , people. The fact is, given the continued power of private companies in the supply chain, connecting the many dots between the production and distribution remains a major challenge for the Venezuelan government, and shortages of particular food and some nonfood items in retail outlets are still a regular occurrence. Many see it as no coincidence that two items considered indispensable by Venezuelan households, that is, corn flour and toilet paper, were the two items most frequently missing from supermarket shelves in Systematic change is necessary to achieve food sovereignty, but the advancements made at the national level in Venezuela, while substantial, are not enough. Change must also happen at the community level. Indeed, this is what I find to be most encouraging in Venezuela –reaffirmed by my most recent visit in the summer of One of the main vehicles for this has been communal councils: Supported by the Communal Council Law of , there are upwards of 43, communal councils in Venezuela today. The stated goal is for power to gradually be transferred from the state to the comunas as they become increasingly organized, with an ultimate goal of a transition from state power to popular power. As of October , there were comunas officially registered with the government and, according to a recent national census, over 1, more under construction throughout the country. In a country as highly urbanized as Venezuela, where upwards of 90 percent of the population lives in cities, food sovereignty will not be possible without the active participation of urban inhabitants. This is being addressed, not only through the creation of direct marketing channels such as farmers markets, but also through the co-construction of food sovereignty as a common political project shared by rural and urban Venezuelans. That is, people are increasingly seeing themselves as connected via the process of constructing food sovereignty. In this process, they are not only changing their relationships to one another, but also their relationship to food and to the processes of food and how it is produced, distributed, and consumed. Relatedly, a term gaining in popularity among rural and urban movements alike is *prosumidor* a , a combination of the words for producer *productor* a and consumer *consumidor* a , in an attempt to blur the lines between the two. Comuna Ataroa has also been able to acquire land on the outskirts of the city that is designated for agricultural production and has been partnering with rural producers on a large weekly farmers market, to complement distribution of staple goods coming from state channels. Christina Schiavoni An example of urban agriculture in Caracas. Another example is the urban comuna, El Panal of Caracas, and a rural social movement, the Jirajara Peasant Movement, which are working together on multiple fronts. For instance, El Panal has an established sugar-packing local enterprise that the Jirajara movement will begin to supply with sugar. This demonstrates a point raised by a number of food sovereignty activists in Venezuela: El Panal and the Jirajara movement are also working on joint farmers markets and other distribution projects. Perhaps most

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interestingly, the Jirajara movement has helped El Panal to acquire land in the countryside, which they will work on in partnership. Robert Lanza of El Panal explains that the comuna has several other projects underway in the countryside, including training and educational components that enable comuna members to connect or reconnect to agricultural production. These efforts are complemented by a fairly extensive urban agriculture initiative within El Panal supported by state programs. This is part of a broader push for urban agriculture that has resulted in over 24, urban agriculture units throughout the country as of , which the government has pledged to help triple. Lessons to be Learned Unfortunately, the great strides being made towards food security and food sovereignty have gotten lost in the mix of news coverage on Venezuela. Among the many lessons to be learned from the Venezuelan Food Sovereignty Experiment is that change is needed from above, below, and as with the horizontal network of comunas sideways. Similarly, food sovereignty is neither the task of the state nor of citizens alone, but rather it is the task of both, and how the two engage with each other is something that must constantly be renegotiated. Therefore, mechanisms that allow for ongoing debate and dialogue and for fluid interaction between citizens and their government are critical. And finally, food sovereignty is not something that just happens, nor is it a state to be attained. Acknowledgements Many thanks to William Camacaro for his invaluable research support and collaboration; to Jack Fairweather and to several anonymous reviewers for their feedback; to Mary McGee, Salena Tramel, and Siena Chrisman for their editing; and to the many others who made this project possible.