

Food Sovereignty as Local Resistance to Unequal Access to Food and Natural Resources in Latin America: A Gender Perspective

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Abstract : Food sovereignty has been brought by the international peasants' movement, La Via Campesina, as a precondition to food security, speaking about the right of each nation to keep its own supply of foods respecting cultural, sustainable practices and productive diversity. The political conceptualization nowadays goes beyond saying that this term is about achieving the rights of farmers to control the food systems according to local specificities, and about equality in the access to natural resources and quality food. The current feminization of agroecosystems and of food insecurity identified by researchers and recognized by international agencies like the UN and FAO has enhanced the feminist discourse into the food sovereignty movement, considering the historical inequalities that place women farmers in subaltern positions inside the families and rural communities. The current tendency in many rural areas of more women taking responsibility for food production and still facing the lack of access to natural resources meets particular aspects in Latin America due to the global economic logic which places the Global South in the position of raw material supplier for the industrialized North, combined with regional characteristics. In this context, Latin American countries play the role of commodities exporters in the international labor division, including among exported items grains, soybean paste, and ores, to the expense of local food chains which provide domestic quality food supply under more sustainable practices. The connections between gender inequalities and global territorial inequalities related to the access and control of food and natural resources are pointed out by feminist political ecology - FPE - authors, and are linked in this article to the potentialities and limitations of women farmers to reproduce diversified agroecosystems in the tropical environments. The work brings the importance of local practices held by women farmers which are crucial to maintaining sustainable agricultural systems and their results on seeds, soil, biodiversity and water conservation. This work presents an analysis of documents, releases, videos and other publicized experiences launched by some peasants' organizations in Latin America which evidence the different technical and political answers that meet food sovereignty from peasants' groups that are attributed to women farmers. They are associated with articles presenting the empirical analysis of women farmers' practices in Latin America. The combination drove to discuss the benefits of peasants' conceptions about food systems and their connections with local realities and the gender issues linked to the food sovereignty conceptualization. Conclusion meets that reality on the field cannot reach food sovereignty's ideal homogeneously and that agricultural sustainable practices are dependent on rights' achievement and social inequalities' eradication.

Keywords : food sovereignty, gender, diversified agricultural systems, access to natural resources

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