

Migrations, labor and agriculture: which kind of resistances in the global agri-food?

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Outlines

- Neoliberal corporate agri-food regime
 - What about labour?
 - Neo-regulation and certificated schemes
- Resistances and alternatives
 - Decolonizing political economy
 - Understanding farmworker identities
 - food sovereignty as a frame for alliance-building between agrarian/peasant and (migrant) labor movements?

Neoliberal corporate regime

- growing dependency and vertical integration within value chains under the control of monopolistic powers
 - Neoregulation at national and supranational levels
 - processes of dispossession and proletarianization
- (Bonanno, Cavalcanti 2014; Friedmann 2005; Harvey 2009; McMichael 2013)

(Iper-)Mobilities of capital and labour

- continuous reconfiguration of rural areas and city ghettos
- super-flexibility of places, regions and persons
- new forms of labor exploitation and casualization, labor flexibility, use of weaker segments of the labor force (women, children, migrants), subcontracting
- weak worker representation and *diminished role of trade unions* (Cavalcanti; Bonanno, 2014)
- Ability of transnational corporations to diminish the power of agri-food workers and to effectively control them through capital mobility (Friedland, 1994, 2004; Heffernan and Constance, 1994; Heffernan, 2000; Hendrickson et al., 2008)
- “Controls are aimed at avoiding risk and ensuring trust among the parties involved in global flows; ... Labels are created and certification standards are established to express the legitimacy of the sources and institutions involved” (Cavalcanti 2015)
- quality food items to enhance competitiveness and control of increasingly concentrated mainstream markets by corporate retailers (Busch and Bain, 2004; Burch and Lawrence, 2005, 2007; Lawrence and Burch, 2007; Bain, 2010; Bain and Hatanaka, 2010)
- Multiplication of labour : legal residents, unauthorized immigrants and guest workers, asylum seekers; gender, ethnic, national identities

commodity/value chain analysis

- Commodity chain (system) → Global Commodity Chain
→ Global Value chain
 - We learn about the process of capital accumulation at a particular point in the evolution of the world-system, and about the distribution of the total surplus-value created in a particular chain between its various links or boxes (Hopkins and Wallerstein)
- → strict economic determination of inequality, lack of attention to particular, place-based, historical (gender, class, citizenship...) and cultural contexts and inequalities (Thomas 1985, Ortiz 2002), “micropolitics of differentiated groups of workers” (Wells 1996)

dis/articulations

Bair and Werner (2011):

- reorienting attention to “the layered histories and uneven geographies of capitalist expansion, disinvestment, and devaluation” in particular locales, and the “place-making and subject-making which make their production possible”
- attention to the cultural, linguistic, and gendered nature of the agricultural workplace
- multiple forms of difference have sustained systems of labor control, at the same time that they have produced possibilities for collective action and resistance
 - community and family ties, networks of cooperation and solidarity, informal economies

coloniality of power

- coloniality of power (Quijano, 2000) → capitalist world system developed through the violence of colonialism → codification of race and racialized hierarchy + political-economy of a new world market structured on control of labor and resources
- coloniality of knowledge (epistemological colonization) + coloniality of being (colonialist inheritance and its impact on self, self-identification and ontology) → gender, race and class functions as key site for coloniality's hegemonic hold on what it means to be human
- Coloniality 'encompasses the transhistoric expansion of colonial domination and the perpetuation of its effects in contemporary times' (Moraña, Dussel, Jáuregui 2008)
- Coloniality focuses on the historical and renovated role of racialization in constructing laboring classes in a globalizing economy, and in justifying their work conditions → global coloniality (Grosfoguel, 2002)
- **AgriFood+immigration policies as vectors for coloniality → political economies of labor and exploitation continue through racialized hierarchies of class and gender**

Certificated schemes

- Organic, Fair trade, third-party certification programs (TPCPs)
- the enrollment of larger-scale producers and branded transnational corporate buyers has undermined the principles of sustainability and social justice
- Mainstreaming of alternatives (Friedmann)
- negative consequences for small and medium farmers and wage laborers (Campbell; Bonanno and Cavalcanti 2011; Gertel and Sippel; Hatanaka et al., 2005; Bain, 2010; Hatanaka, 2010)
 - Inability to pay for the service and exclusion from affluent markets and economic marginalization.
 - Growers forced to search for strategies to reduce costs and consequent labor exploitation
 - Temporary labour and subcontracting

(about fair trade and org.agr. see Besky 2014; Brown 2013; Getz et al. 2008; Luetchford, 2008; Raynolds 2009)

ALLIANCES → C+C=change

*«I think that we need to create **alliances** between all the food movements. We all want a healthy food supply and everyone in the chain to be treated with dignity—from the production worker to the consumer. But we are facing a monster: the corporate world. They are only interested in money and profits. We have to be clear, relentless, and determined to do what it takes in our communities to create change where we want it. Eventually these corporations, if we hit them where it hurts—if we go for their profits—will be forced to change the way they do business. Maybe we can't make Walmart disappear, but **we can change the way they do business**. The power is in our hands. The first thing we must to do is **develop consciousness and commitment to create change**».*

(Lucas Benítez of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers)

Coalition of Immokalee Workers

- organized tomato pickers in Florida , allied with consumers, pressuring corporate buyers to sign “fair food agreements”
- The Fair Food Program functions as a covenant between the CIW and the Florida Tomato Growers. It aims at better wages, better working conditions, and higher standards through strengthened partnerships between workers, growers, and buyers (i.e. Taco Bell, McDonald’s, and Walmart...)
- The Fair Food Program is a farm worker and consumer-driven initiative consisting of a wage increase supported by a price premium (“penny per pound”) paid by corporate purchasers of Florida tomatoes, and a human-rights-based Code of Conduct, applicable throughout the Florida tomato industry.
- The price premium and the Code of Conduct, which were developed by tomato workers, growers, and corporate buyers in a groundbreaking collaboration, form the foundation for a *new model of social accountability* (cit. CIW).

I STAND FOR FAIR FOOD. DO YOU?

The CIW's Fair Food Label means that when you buy Fair Food tomatoes you are supporting real human rights for farmworkers.

Take a Stand. Share the Label.



To learn more visit ciw-online.org & foodchainsfilm.com

Organized boycott

- United Farm Workers' Union (UFW) to pursue the goals of improving wages and working conditions during the 1960s and 1970s.
- community and workplace organizing, political advocacy, and development of support among middle-class urban (students) consumers
- boycott of table grapes, collapse of grape sales, union recognition (grapes as fungible ≠lettuce) → profarmworker hegemony (Friedland 2008)
- “both an expression of working-class solidarity and upper and middle-class charity”
- lack of internal democracy and a failure to develop rank-and-file leadership, union's failure to acknowledge and incorporate workers' own forms of self-organization through migrant networks power (Mooney and Majka 1995; Frank 2003; Wells, Villarejo 2004)



Social Movement Unionism

- Social Movement Unionism: horizontal organization, building of broad social coalitions, recruitment of vulnerable subjects, non-professional grassroots activism, direct action and an anti-bureaucratic approach (Caruso 2016)
- SOC vs Bio Sol Portocarrero (certified by Leading Organic Alliance/GlobalGAP/GRASP)
 - collaboration with antiracist movements, NGOs, foreign trade unions and journalists
- Demonstrations in Swiss
 - Bio Sol Portocarrero Intervention by Bio Suisse, Swiss Coop and Campinia Verde Ecosol → Reinstatement of the workers, wage payment, stabilization of seasonal workers, opening of a SOC branch within the company
- European Coalition of Via Campesina



Popular Production

- UTT, Union de Trabajadores de la Tierra (Buenos Aires, La Plata)
 - around 2-3000 families of small farmers and farmworkers in periurban horticulture
 - Especially Bolivians (Benencia 1997, 2012; Benencia, Quaranta 2006; Pizarro 2010, 2016): *peon* → *mediero* → *arrendatario* → *propietario* (*escalera boliviana*)
 - movimiento trabajadores desocupados urbanos ('90-2003)
 - Member of the Confederación de Trabajadores de la Economía Popular (CTEP)
 - Delivery of bags in popular neighbourhoods too, ferias, fair collective price (*precio colectivo justo*), tomato bonus (buying in advance freezing the price)
 - Agroecological conversion (in coll. with Secretaria de Agricultura familiar, INTA)
 - Unionization
 - Collective mobilization (*Verdurazo*) for policies supporting production and commercialization, access to the land (reforma agraria), implementation of the Family Agriculture Law, food sovereignty

14 DE SEPTIEMBRE

VERDURAZO

POR UNA LEY DE ACCESO A LA TIERRA

Pequeños Productores donaremos
20 mil kilos de verdura



14 DE SEPTIEMBRE
PLAZA DE MAYO | 11HS

CONFEDERACION DE TRABAJADORES
CTEP
DE LA ECONOMIA POPULAR

UNIÓN de
Trabajadores
de la Tierra
UTT

Food Sovereignty as Decolonizing

- platform for struggle against both neo-liberal policies and global governance and as the basis for political action and negotiations with national and transnational Institutions in the context of neoliberal corporate food regime (McMichael, 2013).
- In 2007 the Declaration of Nyéléni stated it in terms of the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate, ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems, transparent trade to guarantee incomes as well as the rights of consumers to control their food and nutrition (Desmarais, 2007; Vía Campesina, 2007; Patel, 2009; Wittman et al., 2010).
- call for the global industrial food system to be replaced by respect and guarantee of regional diversity and democratic participation in the control of food, resources and local agricultural systems (Colombo and Onorati)
- **FS is the ‘continuation of anti-colonial struggles in ostensible post-colonial contexts’ (Grey and Patel 2015)**
- **Decolonizing means ‘deconstructing what we’ve been domesticated to think’... food, health, economy, public policy, livelihood, consciousness, community (Bradley, Herrera 2015; Graddy-Lovelace 2017)**

US Food Sovereignty Alliance

- The USFSA has formed an immigration and trade team to begin articulating this piece of food sovereignty
- “Immigration Policy Principles for Food Sovereignty”

(Brent, Schiavoni, Alonso-Fradejas 2015)

Immigration Policy Principles for Food Sovereignty / USFSA

- The US Food Sovereignty Alliance (USFSA) stands for the rights of all people, including undocumented immigrant workers and their families in the U.S. Farmworkers, food processing workers, food distribution workers, restaurant workers and other retail food workers are all directly harmed by the marginalization and exploitation of all undocumented immigrants including the vulnerability of women to economic, physical, and sexual abuse.
- Food sovereignty requires dignity and for all workers in the food system; we affirm that this includes a process of legalization with dignity that guarantees all rights for all people...
- the principles of food sovereignty would be served by policies that honor the humanity of all workers, including the unconditional right to migrate as enshrined in the International Declaration of Human Rights, the right to organize, and the right to defend and implement economic policies that allow for people to prosper and stay in their home communities, including a democratic and sovereign control of local agricultural and food markets and local agricultural policies.

USFSA Principles for Imm. Reform

1. END BORDER MILITARIZATION
2. SEPARATE ENFORCEMENT OF FEDERAL IMMIGRATION LAW FROM LOCAL LAW
3. END TEMPORARY or GUEST WORKER PROGRAMS.
4. END MANDATORY E-VERIFY PROGRAMS.
5. REPEAL UNJUST TRADE AGREEMENTS.
6. PROVIDE A FAIR PATHWAY TO LEGALIZATION AND/OR CITIZENSHIP:
7. KEEP FAMILIES TOGETHER
8. END ARBITRARY DETENTION
9. INSTATE A MORATORIUM ON DEPORTATIONS and allow right-to-return for all deported over the last 4 years.
10. PROVIDE SANCTUARY for refugees and victims of crime, domestic abuse, and sexual assault.
11. REMAIN ACCOUNTABLE AND TRANSPARENT. 12 GUARANTEE THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS FOR ALL. In the workplace and beyond.

Nyeléni Europe Forum for Food Sovereignty

- Krems, Austria (in 2011): call for radical change in the EU's Common Agricultural Policy through the adoption of food sovereignty principles (NEM and ECVC, 2012).
- Cluj-Napoca, Romania, in 2016: demand strategies that ensure the equitable rights of farmworkers (migrant workers, in particular), public policies that put natural resources in the hands of local people, food distribution systems that focus primarily on local, sustainable food, and agroecology as the fundamental approach to agriculture (FIAN, 2016)

Protests and mobilizations in Italy

- 2010, riots in Rosarno, after attacks to Africans
- 2011, strike in Castel Voltuno for fairer wages
- 2013, strike in Nardò for fairer wages and vs. caporalato
- 2014, protests in front of Coop stores(Campagne in Lotta)
- 2015, protests in Foggia for documents and contracts
- 2016, strike in Latina for fairer work conditions and wages (with FLAI-CGIL)
- 2016, protests in Potenza, and Venosa for housing, transports, documents and contracts (with USB)
- 2016, protest in Rosarno after a migrant shot dead by police
- 2016, strike and blocks of trucks transporting tomatoes to cannaries in Foggia, for documents, contracts and fairer wages (with Campagne in lotta, Sì Cobas)

➔ **sectoral protests and mobilizations**

answers

- Growers → increase in wages / dismissals / substitution of national teams with mixed teams (Italians and others) or with other national groups, or irregular with regular workers, or no-contracted with contracted workers, no-EU with EU workers
- Institutions
 - “Rosarno Law” 109/2012 (reception Directive 2009/52/CE Asesoría y tutela jurídica a migrantes)
 - minimum norms on sanctions and applicable measures to the employers of third countries nationals in irregular situation + Penal crime
 - 2016 Law against black labour and labour exploitation in agriculture
 - Penal crime for firms using illegal intermediation + Compensation for victims + Plan for migrant workers' reception + «Network of quality farmwork» + Transports to work
- Traditional Unions/tomato industry organizations/Apulia Regional Government/ Retailers → Fair label program EquaPulia+ seasonal farmworkers' reception plan + regular contracts → low participation by growers and farmworkers

Alternative agri-food networks

- Participative certification schemes/short food chains
 - Solidarity Purchase Groups
- social justice projects to combat work exploitation in intensive fruit and vegetable production, to support migrant workers mobilizations and involve them in new ethical and ecological forms of production/consumption
 - Sos Rosarno, SfruttaZero, Funky Tomato, Contadinazioni
- Italian Coordination of Peasant Agriculture and FarmWorkers for Food Sovereignty
 - Alliance with Unione Sindacale di Base (USB) to support the joint struggle of peasants, farm labourers and other workers in the agri-food system → unionization on the one hand, workers' access to quality food on the other hand

Conclusions

- Differentiated resistances, considering places, identities and social/cultural conditions
- Agri-food Alternatives → socially embedded spaces of production, consumption, reproduction
- FS Coalitions
 - Peasant/Workers/Migrants/Agroecological mov/consumers
 - for radical political agr. reforms/ human rights
 - Raising collective consciousness