Department of Political Science - International Relations

GLOBAL FOOD ACTIVISM: FOOD SECURITY AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY. THE CASE OF LA VIA CAMPESINA

SUPERVISOR

Prof. Marcello di Paola

CANDIDATE

Geovani Ciconte

Student Reg.No 621562

CO-SUPERVISOR

Prof. Antonio Golini

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To Sabrina, my strength,

my woman

INDEX

INTRODUCTION

Strongly discussed and analyzed, the concept of food sovereignty has become in the last two decades an integral part of the discourse on food security and policies on food. Since its beginnings has inspired the birth of social movements, the discussion of political projects and the creation of an analytical framework radically different from the neoliberal one, which is instead entrenched to the concept of food security. The term has been subjected to various analyzes and, starting from its basic definition (the right that people have to democratically control or determine the organization of its alimentary system) has been interpreted in different ways by groups and individuals. Aim of this paper is to collect the greatest issues and concepts related to the creation of a global food network, in order to analyze them in the light of the onset of global and transnational related movements on food, to the extent that they are able or not to express a potential (in terms of social mobilization) to challenge current trends of globalization, with particular reference to the movement that perhaps has been the most successful, La Vía Campesina.

In the first chapter I will introduce the concept of food security, which emerging from the efforts of reconstruction and decolonization of the Third World, has led to the formation of a global food regime based on local, national and international relationships.

This was reinforced by the subsequent creation of international institutions in order to define and implement specific economic policies. Through trade liberalization, privatization, deregulation of

the domestic industry and economic markets, the IMF, the WTO and the WB have helped to strengthen the food safety regime within a wider global network.

The idea behind these institutions will assume that economic growth, achieved through market mechanisms, constitutes the most effective solution for the reduction of poverty and the achievement of food security. However, criticism of this type of strategy put emphasis on this approach to be constantly looking for the most purely economic solution, because still closely linked to a neo-colonial conception of power, thus failing to create a just global food system.

It is possible to find a duality of visions also within international organizations. In fact, whereas the rhetoric and strategies of the WTO, WB and IMF reveal a sense of inevitability of social and economic globalization, IFAD and FAO are proving more reluctant to subscribe to the idea that neoliberal and developmental economic theory is the panacea for curbing global poverty and achieving food security.

I continue then by proposing the most important criticism of that model: a concrete alternative for global hunger and poverty is the raise of the food sovereignty concept. Then it has argued that because the core of such organizations is expressed through a neoliberal idea of growth, based on market mechanisms, the general failure lays upon the injustice found in the food system, entrenched in its neocolonial power structures. What is now challenged are not only the idea in itself of food security and all the concepts surrounding it, but

especially the systems and methods of implementation of certain aid policies supporting agricultural areas in difficulty and in particular those of food aid that are responsible of a de facto dependency of local people on agricultural imports. The concept of food sovereignty paved the way for the insurgence of major awareness of food security related problems. In the second chapter I will deal with transnational and social movement in the form of reaction to the existent global food network, their work expressed by raising ethical issues in an effort to bring attention to how food sovereignty contributes to broader themes of hunger and global poverty. In continuously posing challenges, calling for legal, economic and political rights, food sovereignty has become a unique social movement in which community, political, and cultural rights are intertwined with the issue of food.

The most important food sovereignty organization is perhaps La Vía Campesina, whose struggles have succeeded in mobilizing a human rights discourse against capitalism and neoliberalism in agriculture. In the last chapter I will give a concrete example of how a global movement can contribute in broadening discourses on food security, and how La Vía Campesina has used human rights to frame its demands, not only claiming the enforcement of existent and codified rights, but also creating new human rights, such as the right of peoples to food sovereignty and the rights of peasants. The main question then became wether a global mobilization on food security issues could be effective enough to radically modify certain dynamics of the

international food regime, being able to concrete accomplish step further towards greater social justice in terms of food equity, or simply working as instrument, or better, a platform, giving voice to active minorities and / or raising awareness.

CHAPTER I. THE GLOBALIZATION OF FOOD SYSTEM

1.1 Defining Food Security.

Population growth, an equal distribution of wealth and primary food and services availability, sufficient to guarantee an acceptable lifestyle, represent issues that

today are increasingly gaining importance and relevance. These three issues are related to certain models of natural resources management (either renewable or not), and in different areas of our planet have been limiting human development, to the point of constraining populations to a ferocious competition for the control of those resources or to migrate.

Everything fits in the so called *food and environmental studies*, sector analysis and interdisciplinary field of high complexity.

The approximately two hundred different definitions - which today are found in the literature - of the expression food security, witness to the large and complex nature of the problem of food production, access, and consumption. The concept of Food Security has been defined for the first time during the World Conference of 1974, and during the last twenty-five years has been subjected to three big revisions: 1) from the initial global and national to a more individual and based on family perspective; 2) from the vision for whom food is primary and absolute to that referring to a structured set of livelihood and 3) from a subjective to an objective perspective.

The 1974 World Food Conference born mainly as a direct consequence of the economic shock provoked either by the rough rise in prices in the two previous years, or by the deep fear that the global food system would have risked going out of control. In fact, the final report of the Conference focuses on food stocks (inventories), on prices and on the need to ensure a comprehensive system with less risk on a national scale.

The first definition that addresses these issues clearly identifies the food security with the “availability at all times of adequate world reserves of staple foods[…]to

support a rapid expansion of food consumption[…]and to stem the fluctuations in production and in food prices" (UN 1975).

Through the next logical step, wanted by the IMF, the analytical framework was further simplified and was considered all of the basic food grains valid throughout the world and, through the help of the *Compensatory Financing Facility*, i.e the undisputed measuring instrument or indicator of food security to use in case of aid interventions for countries that were found in feeding difficulties.

The Nobel Prize Amartya Sen, inspired by and reworking some previous studies of Joy, Levinson, Berg and Keilman, shifted the core of the analysis from the problem related to the presence or national stockpiles to the that connected to the mere access to food: he emphasized the fact that the sufficient presence of State's food stocks did certainly not eliminate the problem of hunger, which could persist in large sections of the population to whom was denied, for socio-economic reasons, access. Sen pointed out the problem of access with its studies on the so-called, food entitlements, that is "guaranteed right to food," and demonstrated its relevance even, or especially, in times of famine. From the '80s is become more common to define the food security not only as food production (food supply) or the presence of food in the form of stocks, but a problem of access to food, to be considered both in the internal analysis of individual States, and in intervention programs and international aid. The concept then, with these new clothes, lies at the center of international debates proposed by the FAO in 1983, in the Bellagio and the Cairo Declaration of 1989, in the International Conference on Nutrition in 1992 (FAO / WHO, 1992). In all these meetings,

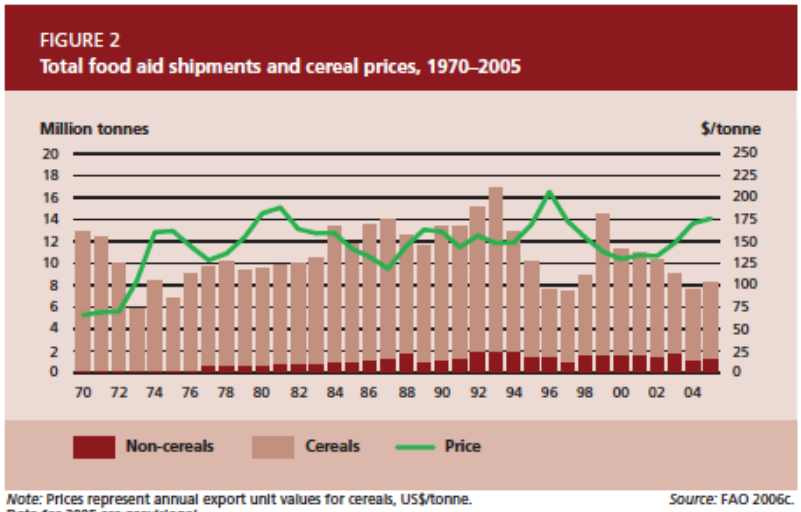
access was not indicated as a character among others, but the main one that defines food security.

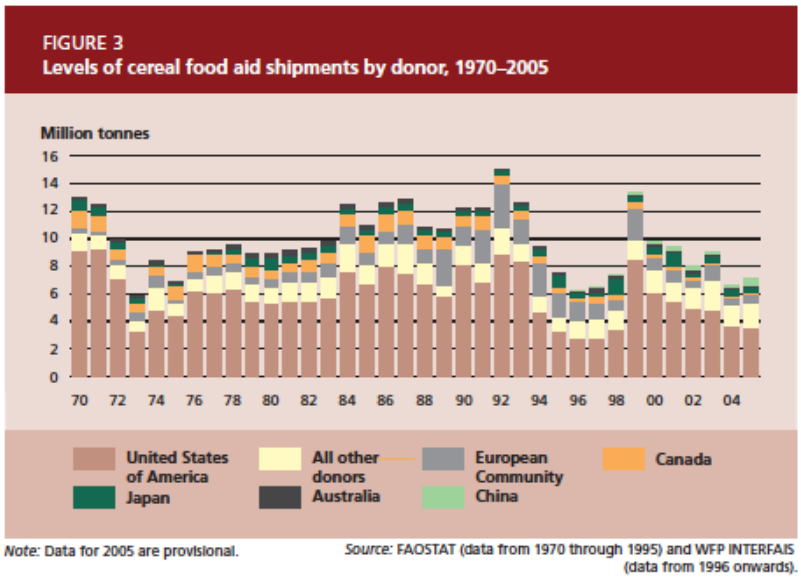
The more recent definitions of food security, although recognizing the complex links between individuals, families, communities, nations and international economy, are based on individual rights. Then, one of the most quoted definitions of food security, comes from a research carried on by the World Bank: “The food security is the access of all people at all time of their existence, to a sufficient quantity of food enough for an active and healthy life”. Not only food for survival but for an active participation to society. This definition reformulates in a very different way that proposed ten years before at the first World Food Conference.

On this aspects born different schools of thought. On the one hand it is considered correct to analyze the problem from the individual point of view, on the other is advanced the Household Food Security (HFS) which underlines the necessity of taking into exam also the family as the only basic and useful unit for carry out a Food Security analysis. The concept of HFS is enriched by successive studies focused on the internal aspects of a family life, nutrition and basic subsistence, the sustainability, resilience and stability, the cultural perception and acceptability, the efficiency and the efficacy of interventions, and human rights.

Within the context of studies on resilience it has been held that “a company that can be said to be in a good state of food safety is not only a company that has achieved a good structure of the food system, but also a company that has developed internal mechanisms that help keep this arrangement in case of unexpected crises” (Oshaug 1994).

The country with high food resilience will manage to escape from the perverse mechanisms of food aid that, not solving the root problem concerned with the imbalance in the distribution wealth, may also cause domestic market disruption of the helped country.

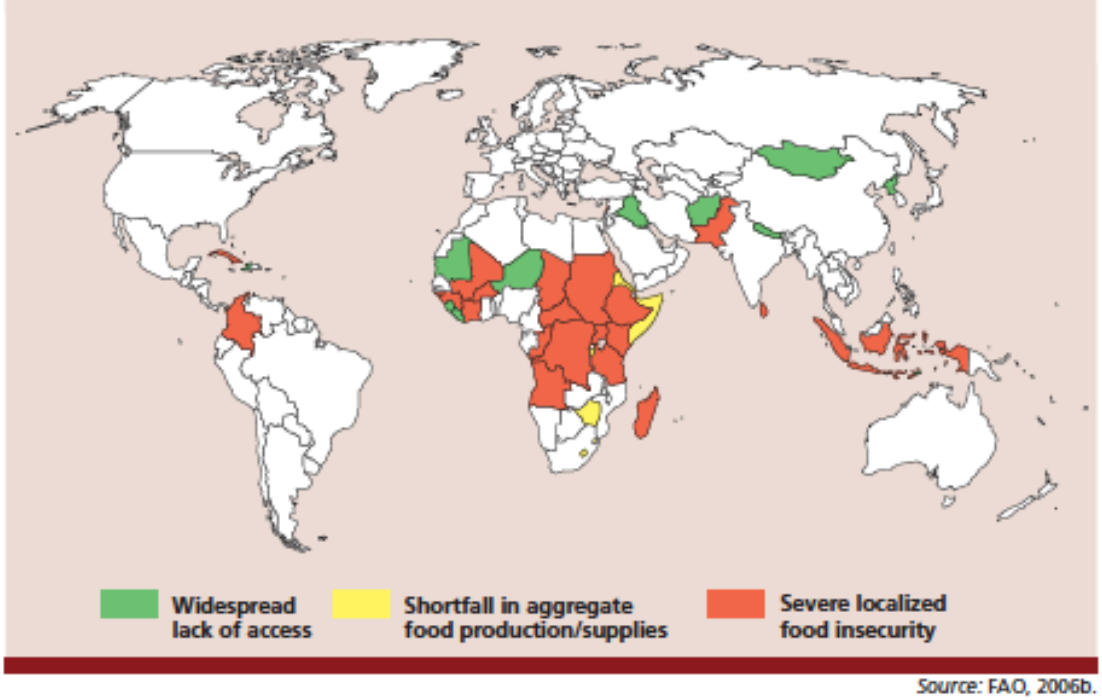




In 2006, the FAO, with the publication of the data shown in Figures 2 and 3, related to the last 35 years of international aid programs, makes a serious complaint: the amount of food aids is not related to the local needs of the populations, but to the international prices of cereals and to the interests of

donors. When prices international grain increases, the aid decreases; when the markets tend to flex, aid increases.

FIGURE 1
Countries in crisis requiring external assistance, October 2006



Source: FAO, 2006b.

Map in Figure Number 1 has been published by FAO in 2006: it makes a distinguish between "*No access to Food Countries*" (green color) with a serious situation of food insecurity (red) and "*Not adequate production areas*" (yellow).

By studying the best concept of resilience applied to the family group have been distinguished three conditions: 1) the "enduring households", those who maintain the Food Security of their household to a basic level; 2) "Resilient households" or resilient families suffering from the shocks, but quickly recovering, and 3)

“fragile households” which increase more and more their state of insecurity after a shock has occurred. The household responds to food crises according to a scale of decisions and a growing commitment of domestic resources, adopting a strategy of reductions and renunciations to the use of resources, up to reaching forms of temporary migration or permanent migration, as shown schematically in the figure below.

The second modification of the concept of food security - the transition from a narrow perspective focused exclusively on the food as primary necessity, to an enlarged vision that includes the means of subsistence - clearly developed after 1985, after the famine in Africa during the years 1984 and 1985. Food was felt to be a primary need , exclusively, as formulated by Hopkins: "The food security is like a fundamental need, basic to all human needs and the organization of social life. Access to the necessary nutrients is fundamental, not only for life itself, but also for establishing a lasting social order. "

Only then is it clear that the food at the international level, especially in the short term, represents only one of the objectives that people tend to pursue and may not be located at the summit of personal priorities. For example, it was observed that during the famine in Darfur of 1984/85, the people chose to tackle hunger and periods of suffering, in order to preserving the main means of subsistence for the future: “they are willing to tolerate different levels of hunger, in order to save the seeds (the seed security in these cases assumed a greater importance than the food security) to cultivate their fields and avoid selling animals”.

Even European history offers examples of food renunciation and hunger tolerance with the scope of defining, even extremely, personal higher values.

During the last war, the Leningrad siege survived beyond all limits. The siege of the city enacted by the German Army, which lasted for 900 days until January 27, 1944, caused more than 500,000 deaths in two and a half million inhabitants. Sowing and cultivating addresses in the city where possible faced the widespread hunger. In Leningrad was placed the famous All-Union Institute of Plant Industry, founded by Vavilov, who collected an exceptionally rich bank of seeds, third in the world with more than 200,000 types of agricultural species cataloged and stored. Many scientists of the Institute, Vavilov's assistants, died of starvation, but none of them thought of eating the collection of seeds of wheat and potatoes that had been entrusted to the Institute: genetic diversity, heritage and the common good of the whole \humanity, must be respected.

The third evolutionary step of the food security definition, which covers remedy and methods for monitoring the food security, happened with the abandonment of objective indicators in favor of a more subjective and individual one. In the literature, there was, for a long time, the distinction between "state of deprivation", referring to a state objective, and “the feeling of deprivation”, concerning the subject. The conventional approach to food safety was based on objective measurements such as, for example, some pre-established levels of consumption as the consumption of less than 80% of the average daily intake of calories requested. These definitions, however, formulated with an objective and seemingly accurate approach, got some problems. The concept of nutritional adequacy is problematic in itself: the nutritional demand is a function of individual age, health status, body weight, type of employment, the environment frequented behavior. The estimate calculus of the calories required for the average

adult and children is subject to constant revision and is not helped by those individual and collective adaptation strategies mostly used for the measurements.

Pacey and Payne in 1985 state that all estimates of nutritional requirements must be treated as a value judgment: “It is excluded the concept of an optimum nutritional state and well-being. Any vision of desirable or optimal nutritional intake for individuals or groups can only be a value judgment.”

A second problem, pointed out by analysts in the 80s, was due to the complete lack of qualitative aspects, which precisely were excluded from the group of quantitative measurements. In many studies, the nutritional adequacy was only the necessary but not sufficient condition for food security.

It was mainly considered the coherence of food availability with local food habits, framing it in all that concerned the cultural acceptance and dignity human autonomy and self-determination.

Examining the subjective dimension of food security, Maxwell defined it in a broader sense: “A country and its people are safe from the standpoint of food when the their food system operates in a manner such as to remove the fear that there will not be enough to eat. In particular, food security will be achieved when the poor and vulnerable ones, especially women and children and those living in marginal areas, will have a safe access to the food that they want.”

In more recent times, during the XXX Congress, FAO has proposed the following definition: “The state of food security is achieved when all people, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their nutritional needs and preferences, so as to enable him to lead a active and healthy life”(FAO 1996).

To ensure stability is necessary an adequate and sustainable management of natural resources like soil, water, air and vegetation, as well as goods intangible assets such as knowledge of agronomic need for a consistent use of themselves. In this context it seems necessary to supplement the analysis into a more enlarged vision, which takes into account the concepts of environmental security of agro-ecosystems and preservation of agro-biodiversity. The food security is closely related to soil degradation and water pollution. The loss of production due to land degradation is estimated to be about 5%. M.A.Stocking (2003) argues that the change in the quality of natural resources is a critical point related to the increasing vulnerability of populations to "food insecurity" and defines what is "the soil quality" as the ability of a soil to sustain biological productivity to maintain environmental quality and promote the well-being of plants, animals and humans within an ecosystem. This concept differs from the traditional approach that focuses only on the technical production functions. The decline in food production can be attributed to several causes including, first and foremost, the excessive removal of nutritious elements on crops without their adequate recovery. Soil erosion is considered one of the most serious environmental problems in the world and indirectly cause of food insecurity.

The food security today is closely related to the general conditions of coexistence; everywhere a peaceful and stable environment is a fundamental prerequisite for obtaining and maintaining food security (World Food Summit Action Plan, 1996). In many countries, predominantly based on agricultural economy, have recently broken out those that have come to be defined as Eco-wars, namely "wars for

control of environmental resources" such as those that erupted in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Congo, Afghanistan, Haiti, Mexico, Kashmir, Sudan.

There are raising then new ideas that require a global analysis of every single States system and an ability to make comparative judgments, from global to individual and viceversa. In summary, it could possible to reduce the analysis to the four key concepts, implicit in the notion of "secure access to sufficient quantities of food at all times", related to specific disciplinary areas of investigation:

a) Food supply, took particularly into account by agronomic sciences), substantially presented as the quantity of calories needed to an active and healthy life (food science and technology, nutrition, health and wellness, education, nutrition education);

b) Access to food, defined as the right to produce, sell, buy, consume, trade, or receive as a gift (socio-economic, anthropological, political, communication related aspects);

c) Safety understood as a balance between vulnerability, risk and certainty (power-environmental-social structures, patterns of development and consumption);

d) Periods of time in which food insecurity may be chronic, transitory or cyclical.

In 2001 FAO proposed a more complete definition of Food Security, focused on the idea of social access into Food, establishing the ultimate definition used today: "Food Security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and

economic access to sufficient, sage and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preperences for an active and healthy life"(FAO 2009:8)

Ensuring food security has been a central feature of global governance efforts to promote peace, prosperity and stability. Efforts to address global challenges of hunger and malnutrition by improving food production, supply, and trade, and disseminating the findings of early scientific work in nutrition began in the early 20th century under the auspices of the International Institute for Agriculture and the League of Nations, and still continue to be an important issue, as are continuously set important target of halving number of undernourished people.

Among the analyzed concepts and fields of study addressing the complex problem of food security, that of food security in the sense of individual access to food including aspects of availability and cost of the food itself, is the most in use today. Other modern concepts, such as the right to food and food sovereignty, focus more directly not only and directly on food, tend to touch directly the problem to access to productive resources. Food sovereignty addresses the problem of access and forms (type and extent) of control of resources to produce certain amount of food and then come out to an area of strictly technical studies in order toembrace a more socio-political level analysis.

1.2 The Role of International Organizations

In order to be as complete as possible, the analysis should be expanded by referring to certain social, economic, political and cultural realities, unless it

would be impossible to treat separately the role of food security and issues such as trade, agricultural reform and rural economic development and global poverty.

In this context a crucial role is played by various international organizations, because, either directly or indirectly, significantly influence the way in which food is considered (economic or cultural good?) and how its production and distribution should operate on an international scale. In particular, a crucial role was played by the UN and the World Bank to redefine a new development policy whose goal was to break down national barriers to promote greater economic integration: they sought to bring out of poverty the Third World countries, teaching them the classical economic theory. The World Bank should have in its early years collected information for its Member States, to provide assistance, loans and guidelines for international aid. They "believed that they had uncovered a basic truth—the fundamental unity of the global, capitalist economy—and that they had an obligation to spread this truth to others, who would presumably recognize its value and embrace it."(Stiglitz 2003)

Significant to mention is also the work of the IMF that, although not directly, affect Food Security, working closely with the World Bank: in fact, the approval of adjustment loans or other procedures are subjected to the final decision of the IMF itself. As Stiglitz noted: "The IMF became a permanent part of life in most of the developing world".

Similar to the World Bank, the FAO was established to pursue the same fight against global hunger spirit, through the precise mission of creating a more efficient global system of food distribution. Already starting from its first Director

General, Sir John Boyd Orr, the desire to create food security clearly existed, in order to strengthen the global economy.

Define food security in these terms is no easy task, because organizations such as FAO, IFAD conceive the policy for the achievement of food security in a different way from the World Bank, and because “financial governance and international trade arrangements often create additional obstacles to achieving food security” (Schanbacher 2010).

It is clear, therefore, that these organizations constantly redefine the concept of Food Security, especially if you want to take into account the actions that have been undertaken by the latter specifically to redefine development policies and global hunger. To achieve this purpose, various initiatives have been promoted by the United Nations. The UNDP has dedicated his 2003 report to the issue of poverty establishing the Millennium Development Goals. However, this leads to a duality in the interpretations in conceiving certain ad hoc policies as helpful and strong in this regard.

The debate is not about whether growth is good or bad but whether certain policies — including policies that may lead to closer global integration — lead to growth; and whether those policies lead to the kind of growth that improves the welfare of poor people.” (Sachs 2005)

Considering the international organizations aforementioned, if the World Bank, which defined the poverty line below $ 1.25 a day, considers the growth as something to be achieved through the implementation of neoliberal policies, including trade liberalization, privatization and deregulation, that is not the right solution for everyone. Infact, for the FAO and IFAD growth can be achieved only

when poors have access to the free world market in a more just and equitable way. Their role would be to regulate and manage the transition to larger economic relations that would exist since that. However, an unregulated market may have adverse and disastrous effects, because it would not provide the necessary means for the poor to be able to move within the market economy.

The distinction also previously mentioned it is essential to define food security. On one hand, discourses on higher efficiency and management of economic growth is reduced to a matter of producing enough food to feed the world's poor. And once production would be sufficient, it will be needed an adequate distribution paradigm. On the other hand the FAO criticizes this approach, stressing the need to implement policies that would enable poor people living in rural areas to develop an economic base, so as to be able to consume and produce that food deemed culturally important.

Philip McMichael (2000) believes that the global economic order has gone structuring, since post World War II, around a model import-export U.S. directed. Food economies risen in that period become part of an international relations of food issue, and at the same time an issue of world food economy.

While the US organized its economy around protectionism, including in their agricultural policies measures such as controls and subsides to export, on the other hand constant interactions with all European economies and the Third World - that had shaped their economies on that model, due the strong political power Americans had acquired after the Second World War - has led to a profound integration of the food systems among the regions. As such, the food regime that emerged between 1947 and 1972 was a tenuous combination of the “replication”

of the U.S. model and the “integration” of European and U.S. agricultural sectors (Schanbacher 2010, Friedmann 2002).

Integration covers therefore also a tendency on the part of European states to counterbalance the protectionist measures of the United States, while the Third World limited to meet the needs of the global market in constant evolution.

Result of these policies, which even the New Deal is part of, has been the rise of agri-food businesses that pursue this path: farmers were induced to produce a surplus of food, less developed countries forced to reorganize their economies, and multinationals and corporations acting as an intermediary between “specialized livestock operations, which were their customers, and maize and soy farms, which sold to them. Corporate demand for durable foods, which are made from generic ingredients such as sweeteners, fats, and starches, increased the possibilities for substitution, and as agro-food corporations became less dependent on traditional Third World products such as sugar cane and tropical oils (due to the possibility for substitution), these products became marginalized” (Schanbacher 2010, Friedmann 1999). As result, “by the early 1970s, the food regime had caught the Third World in a scissors” (Friedman n 2002). These countries were then forced to organized their economies around an import dependency model, while witnessing an incredible drop in profits with regard to tropical crops.

Problems occurred in subsequent years, when US and USSR made a massive removal of wheat corn and soybeans from the world market, causing an exponential increase in food prices, which also coincided with the notorious oil crisis. The choice left to the less developed countries was to ask for massive

lending money. “Governing elites of these borrowing nations took the money as a way to avoid dealing with the deeper problems of solving their import dependence”. (Friedmann 1999). All these events culminated in the subsequent debt crisis of 1980.

If we look at the crisis from a Bretton Woods point of view, it is clear that large part of the responsibility is to be attributed to Less developed countries, because deemed to have failed in subscribing to those models of economic integration properly. But the real issue lies in the fact that the World Bank, as well as the IMF, sought economic solutions to the problem of poverty, the growing dependence on foreign goods, ensuring economic growth and regular debt service (Friedmann 1999). The role of Food Security, as originally conceived, is to curb global poverty. However, it is often conceived in different ways because filtered by political perspectives related to economic and cultural globalization. In fact, Food Security as such should be understood as distinct from either food security issues for the development of rural economy and agriculture or the security as a support for the cultural subsistence of the poor in the countryside. Precisely for this reason it is important to examine how different institutions of global governance imagine food security, because on a cultural and political level are issues that can be addressed through undertaking various roads. For example, the rhetoric and strategies of the WTO, WB and IMF reveal a sense of inevitability of social and economic globalization, whereas IFAD and FAO are proving more reluctant to subscribe to the idea that neoliberal and developmental economic theory is the panacea for curbing global poverty and achieving food security” (Schanbacher 2010). Although food security is largely supported by certain neo-

liberal paradigms of development expressed for instance in the Doha Rounds, this sense of inevitability is constantly questioned by activists, organizations and international NGO's.

1.3 The geopolitical scenario today: problems and challenges

Poverty and malnutrition eradication are the basic and most important objectives of the world Food Security Policy. However, security intervention in the past were located in between the last points available in the international politics agenda, and the problem was always exclusively tackled in situation of clear emergency, while today politics for food security have become a fundamental point for development strategies in less developed areas of the world. In fact, it is now clear that the world is "in transition from an era of food abundance to one of scarcity […]. We are entering a new era of rising food prices and spreading hunger" (Brown 2012).

In 1996, the World Food Summit has set the ambitious target of halving the number of undernourished by 2015, reducing it - so to say - about 400 million undernourished people (being estimated at over 840 million the number of those who are be in 2013).

According to the projections of the FAO, progresses towards reducing hunger are too slow to reach the threshold set by the 1996 World Food Summit. If current trends will not change, countries in the developing world will have 170 million undernourished people in more with respect to the target set by the Summit, and

gaps are particularly severe in absolute terms for the Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. For the future, we definitely have certainties: despite the progress made towards the elimination of hunger, none of the targets set by the international community will surely be achieved.

Today, for the first time since the end of the bipolar world, peripheral areas are included in positions of weakness in a global food market that goes towards industrialization which is not that of the factory system. Today everything changes: there is globalization, population growth, the penetration of world markets in African and Asian agrifood system, the increase in the prices of non-food products.

The new balances are easy to understand. The expansion of internal markets at high prices, on the one hand, and the close connection of the cost of the food produced in the Less Developed Countries (LDCs) with the hydrocarbons, which serve both as a fertilizer for crops and manage transport, on the other. Then, the greater energy bill of the LDCs, the lower the availability of food to be purchased on the overall open market; the greater the local population and the asymmetry with which it is distributed between city and countryside, the lower the productivity of the soil and the increasing of uses and consumption of Western-style habit by the new poor in the outskirts of the world, with the associated costs.

In purely quantitative terms, there is enough food to feed the entire world population, which is currently over 7 billion people. It is correct, therefore, to ask why in the world - in 2013 - 842 million people - about 15% of the entire population of the planet - go hungry; why 1 in 8 is hungry; why 1 in 6 children in developing countries are underweight (FAO, 2013). Today it is estimated that in

the world die every year 40 million people from causes related to hunger or malnutrition and undernourishment. But the right to food is one of the principles enshrined in the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" of 1948. It is therefore legitimate to ask why hunger persist.

Hunger exist for different reasons, all equally import, and on each of them should be operated a corrective approach to the appropriate levels of management policy of the various global and country-systems. One of the causes of the persistence of hunger is certainly the increase of natural disasters, such as floods, tropical storms and long periods of drought, with terrible consequences for food security in poor countries and in developing countries. Climate change caused by harmful emissions (greenhouse gases) and changes in land use have caused the warming of the oceans, melting glaciers and reduced snow cover, the rise of the average global sea level and changed some climate extremes, promoting an increase in the average temperature of the globe (+ 1 to 2.3%) which causes drought. According to the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), "Continued emissions of greenhouse gases will lead to further climate changes. Future changes are expected to include a warmer atmosphere, a warmer and more acidic ocean, higher sea levels, and larger changes in precipitation patterns. The heating will cause changes in air temperature, the oceans, the water cycle, the level of the seas, in the cryosphere, in some extreme events and ocean acidification. Many of these changes will persist for centuries" (IPCC 2013). The extension of the ice will continue to wear thin, in so fare we will assist to a full merger of the Arctic glaciers already by 2050. Drought is nowadays the most common cause of food shortages in the world. In 2006, recurrent drought caused crop failures and the

loss of large amounts of livestock in Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya. In many countries, climate change is exacerbating the already unfavorable natural conditions: poor farmers in Ethiopia or Guatemala, in the absence of rainfall, generally tend to sell their livestock to cover losses and buy food. But successive years of drought, more frequent in the Horn of Africa and Central America, are putting a strain on their resources.

Another cause of the persistence of hunger in the world are certainly conflicts. Since 1992, the percentage of food crises caused by man, of short or long duration, increased from 15 to 35% and very often are conflicts to be the triggering event. From Asia to Africa to Latin America, armed conflicts are forcing millions of people to flee their homes, causing global food emergencies. FAO data indicate that human-induced disasters accounted for no more than 10% of the total emergencies in the mid-80s, while they exceeded 50% at the beginning of the new millennium. FAO also estimates that between 1970 and 1997 the average annual losses in agricultural production caused by the war (without considering the losses in the allocation of capital and other indirect costs) were equal to 4.3 billion USD, then recording a growing trend. The same amount of financial resources would be sufficient to ensure adequate nutrition for 330 million poor and malnourished people, and it would have been saved a lot of financial resources for emergency food aid.

Only 3 of the 56 major armed conflicts recorded between 1990 and 2000 were kind of inter-state, while all other were internal crises, even if for 14 cases have been hired foreign military forces from one or more parties involved. Africa and Asia are the most affected continents by both the new conflicts and food

insecurity. Fight for peace and development, and against poverty and hunger are mutually reinforcing: the construction of a world of peace is inextricably linked to a world free from hunger.

The recent past has experienced very frequently food tragedies that have become intertwined as consequence of the absence of peace and security conditions. Since 2004, over 1 million people have fled their homes due to the conflict in Darfur (the Sudan region), causing a severe food crisis, usually in an area where usually rains and harvests were good. In time of war the food becomes a weapon: soldiers induce hunger to enemies by stealing or destroying their food and livestocks and systematically hitting the local markets. The fields are undermined and contaminated in order to force farmers to abandon their land. It is a matter of fact that where there's an ongoing war, the proportion of people suffering from hunger increases; while malnutrition decreases in the most peaceful.

Another cause of hunger is poverty. In countries in the developing world farmers often can’t afford to buy enough seeds to produce a crop that would satisfy the food needs of their families. Artisans lack the means to purchase the necessary materials to develop their activities. The poor do not have enough money to buy or produce the food necessary to sustain their families. They become, therefore, too weak to produce the necessary to obtain more food. The poor are hungry and it is the same hunger to trap them in poverty, which becomes a vicious cycle.

There is also the question of agricultural infrastructure: in the long term, improved agricultural techniques is one of the solutions to poverty and hunger. According to the report "The State of Food Insecurity in the World", published by FAO in 2013, all countries that are on track to achieve the first Millennium Development

Goal share agricultural growth better than average. However, still too many countries in the developing world do not have adequate infrastructure to support agriculture, such as roads, warehouses and irrigation canals. As a result, transport costs are high, they lack the storage facilities, and water resources are unreliable. The development of agriculture and access to food results very limited. In addition, although the majority of countries in the developing world depend on agriculture, the economic policies of governments often focus on urban development.

A further element is given by the excessive exploitation of the environment: the backward farming techniques, deforestation and over-exploitation of fields and pastures are putting a strain on the fertility of the earth. The arable land of our planet are constantly and increasingly in danger of erosion, salinisation and desertification. The Green Revolution that there occurred between 1960 and 1990 in developing countries has led to a boom in agricultural productivity. At that time, the production of wheat, rice and maize was more than doubled, particularly in Latin America and Asia.

Factors that led to this huge increase in agricultural production were the massive use of fertilizers and pesticides; the improvement of irrigation methods; the use of machinery for the automation of all agricultural processes; the selection of seed, which have made possible the development of crops with high productivity.

The increase in productivity, however, has had its costs and did not solve the problem of world hunger. In fact, the selected choice of new seeds have greatly allowed a reduction of agricultural biodiversity in the world, and the indiscriminate use of pesticides produced a degradation of the environment

causing problems of chemical contamination, threatening public health and the ecosystem. The Green Revolution, therefore, teaches us that in order to solve the problem of world hunger is not sufficient an increase in agricultural productivity, especially if this is not carried out through a sustainable food production, which is a production, i.e a production increasing the profitability and competitiveness of the agricultural sector in developing countries and at the same time improving the living conditions of the people living in involved rural areas, promoting good environmental practices and creating services for the conservation of habitat, biodiversity and landscape.

To eliminate hunger in the world we should rebuild and rethink the whole system way agricultural production throughout the Third World, as the production of food of large global agribusiness majors is addressed to the tastes and needs of the rich markets of the First World.

Agricultural liberalization made by the World Trade Organization (WTO) in the mid-90s caused a huge change in the global food market. In fact, the lands of Third countries, less exploited than those of the First and Second World, have been used for export products suited to Western markets; while the land to produce food suitable to local populations were gradually reprogrammed for this new system of global food market. The production of food in those countries, on the basis of such global agribusiness pressures, will probably lead to an environmental disaster.

The hit and run model that has characterized the relocation of non-food manufacturing companies is applied to the peripheral agribusiness: downward wages, elimination of welfare, contraction of the internal market.

It is possible to identify three critical points within the new path globe economy has undertake: the need to provide food to both the peripheries of the world (which are experiencing a strong demographic and economic growth) and the First World (which can non longer keep protected the costs of its protected agriculture. Furthermore the economic boom experienced by some BRIC'S countries, first among others Brazil, has developed through incentive of organic fuel which is causing the decrease of areas intended for the production of food; is becoming the link between the oil Opec and non-Opec markets and that of agrifuel and constitutes the beginning, on this basis, of speculations on agricultural and food futures which discounts the price increase and contribute to ill financing of global economic.

It is then necessary to think new alternatives: what works with grain or soybeans it doesn't for stock market or car spare parts.

The increase in consumption is due to population growth, the increase of wealth and the conversion of food into fuel for cars.

If we are not able to reverse these trends, food prices will continue to rise, bringing our system to collapse in a power struggle for global food security.

CHAPTER II. A DIFFERENT APPROACH. FOOD SOVEREIGNTY, SLOW FOOD AND GLOBAL ACTIVISM.

2.1 The emergence of global and transnational activism: a bottom-up globalization.

Through the mesh of globalization and economic restructuring, new opportunities are emerging to build alliances between marginalized sectors within the agricultural world and between this and other expressions of the labor and civil society (such as the organization of international solidarity). In many countries of the South organizations of peasants and landless movements have strengthened their links and generate structures capable of dialogue and negotiation with the local, national and international, in many cases receiving strong support from the organizations involved in the co-development of peoples.

The reasoning around which are compared popular movements starts from the need for policies based on the primacy of the common good: to name a few, the adoption of measures to stabilize the supply of food (especially in relation to food prices base) accompanied by a process of its democratization, the development of agricultural policies aimed at environmental and social sustainability, the promotion of a dialogue between the different regions of the world based on the principles of solidarity and sharing. It is clear that in order to achieve these goals, the role of organized expressions of civil society must be recognized and endorsed, ensuring adequate opportunities for participation so that they can advance policy proposals and play an active role in the implementation of programs to ensure the right to food, for instance.

A series of basic principles is the platform on which all the people's organizations and non-governmental are compared:

- Right to Food: go beyond the simple identification of food safety with the availability of products and arrive at an understanding of existing social relations

between individuals and foods; To this end, it is necessary to introduce legal instruments also to ensure the recognition and satisfaction of this right food;

- Sustainability food; put equal emphasis on the practices as much on those who take part in the process of production, circulation and consumption of food. This means adopting policies to sustain the earth through proper management of natural resources and production; to a cure of the rural landscape and the territory in general; to support the farmer contemplating the variety of existing solutions and objectives; to fairly distribute food by strengthening local markets and the production of quality that consumers bind more strongly to the territory and to sustainable consumption, ensuring healthy food and nutrition education through quality and consumer protection;

- Popular participation: to become aware that it is difficult to decrease the level of food insecurity without a confrontation and action manifested by the different sectors of civil society;

- Food sovereignty: decentralized control policies on the articulation of production and distribution. The exercise of this sovereignty requires political and economic autonomy to set policies that transpose the agricultural and environmental specificities of the territories and those social and cultural rights of the population.

The recent upsurge in protest around the world gather also around these main themes, due to the fact that people are becoming awareness that major changes need to be done in order to preserve our planet. In fact, “we are witnessing the emergence of new sphere of transnational activism whose practices, identities, and

analyses are transformative, movement-centered, and autonomous from the inter-state order"(Smith, Duncan 2012).

Two decades of neo-liberal globalization have redefined the relationship between politics, economics and society. On a global scale the political sphere today is characterized by an interstate system, in which power is exercised by both states by supranational institutions and national and international. While at the national level, in the presence of a democratic order, the relationship between state and citizens is regulated through constitutions, laws and democratic procedures, globally there is no system of universal law, rules interstates are often not democratic and have not been established rules and mechanisms to ensure democratic processes of participation, deliberation and voting. The sphere of the economy involves the other hand, on a global scale, businesses and markets that operate on the basis of researches projects. The model of neo-liberal globalization, as popular since the 80s, has dictated the supremacy of the market on the spheres of politics and society.

As for civil society, it has been conceptualized at the national level, as an autonomous dimension compared to the logic of the state and the economy and as the ground of affirmation of political projects, economic and cultural. With the neo-liberal globalization have multiplied the activities of civil society who have crossed the boundaries of states, addressing issues and global problems. The claims and mobilizations of what appears to be an emerging global civil society have directly challenged the political and economic powers through and beyond the state borders.

Global civil society can therefore be defined as the area of relationships and activities carried out by collective actors - civil society organizations, networks and social movements - independent from governments and private companies, which operate outside of politics and economics, across state boundaries.

The way in which civil society on a global scale relates to the powers of politics and economics can be summarized in the claims of international democracy, human rights and peace in politics; of global economic justice in respect of the economy; of social justice and global environmental sustainability against both.

The conception of an emerging global civil society, characterized by more or less stable relationships and formalized between heterogeneous subjects, allows to take into account the different forms of mobilization on global issues. The global social movements are the main actors within global civil society, occupy the scene of the protest. They can be defined as follows: the global social movements are collective mobilization on global issues and cross national borders; groups are formed by organizations, networks and / or campaigns occasional or permanent, with a transnational organizational dimension; share values and identity; challenge and oppose the economic and political powers, claiming a change in the world order; share a global vision problems; have a global perspective of action and deal with national or supranational counterparts.

According to Della Porta and Diani (1999) we need to consider social movements (national) as a mainly informal interaction networks based on shared beliefs and solidarity, which mobilize about conflictual issues through frequent occurrence in various forms of protest. The definition proposed here wants to make a distinction between social movements and global issues and their corresponding

corporations. According to Sidney Tarrow (2001.11) the transnational social movements are socially mobilized groups with recruitment bases in at least two states, engaged in conflictual interactions continue against those in power in at least one state other than their own, or against an international institution , or a multinational economic actor.

The definition of global social movements mentioned above includes numerous forms of organization, mobilization, strategies and objectives articulated around the claim of a change of the political, economic, cultural. Within this set, we can identify the subset of those movements who share identities and values opposed to those of neoliberal globalization, tend to establish and strengthen networks and campaigns, to meet on the occasion of initiatives and major events, from the counter-Forum Special World Cup and continental. They arise as a requirement of two interdependent processes: the movement of social activism from the national to the global economy and the ability to move from protests on specific issues by individual organizations, to a more comprehensive vision of the complexity of the challenges of neoliberal globalization .

The origins of social mobilization and transnational networks of organizations working on international issues can be traced in the movements that have developed since the 70s on issues of peace, human rights, solidarity, development, women, environmentalism . Based on specific objectives, these movements have become capable of dealing with global issues, build networks of information and knowledge sharing, to act together, to experience practices and models of self-organization across borders, to engage in often unconventional manner with the

places of supranational power (Keck, Sinnink 1998; O'Brien, Goetz, Scholte, Williams, 2000; Waterman 1998; Lipschutz 1999; Cohen, Rai 2000;).

The global movements have articulated several alternatives to meet the challenges of neoliberal globalization, from attempts to support patterns of governance of globalization, to return to the national level with the consequent restructuring of the role and functions of the states. But the challenge articulated to the hegemony of neoliberal globalization has emerged from the project of a globalization from below, which is based on the values of peace, justice, democracy, respect for human rights and is rooted in the mobilization of civil society organizations and movements social oppose the neo-liberal model, proposing alternative policies on global issues. According to Richard Falk, who introduced the definition, globalization from below retains the potential to conceptualize values widely shared on world: minimizing violence, maximizing economic welfare, conduct a little social justice and political support and the quality of the environment (Falk 1999, 130).

The growth of global social movements is both cause and effect of globalization from below, as well as a testimony to the importance of this perspective in dealing with issues of a transnational nature. (Among the neo-liberal globalization and the globalization from below was advanced in years 80 and 90, a project of globalization of rights and responsibilities, which aimed to redefine the international rules in an increasingly integrated world and was supported by national governments and illuminated by some agencies of the United Nations - Commission on Global Governance, 1995). It directly addresses the power of markets and states because it represents a hegemonic project that has as its

objective the reduction of the role of the first and the sovereignty of the latter in the name of respect and the promotion of universal human rights, human, political, social and economic.

The globalization from below seeks emancipation and the conquest of spaces of self-organization of civil society, but at the same time look at the quality of global policy, so that they can effectively ensure, sustain and generalize that emancipation. In other words, it calls for a reconfiguration of the relationship between the spheres of politics, economy and society. What it is therefore claimed in respect of governments and international institutions, concerns not only the assertion of abstract rights, but also their direct application within the economic and social relations; not only the principle of democracy, but its introduction into decision-making processes of international organizations and its development in the sense of participation. Through forms of mobilization, strategies, proposals and practices for a globalization from below the mission to accomplish is to intervene on the global roots of social injustice and inequality in the democratic system and that of the market. “They do so by expanding the practices and discourses of global politics as well as individual and collective identities beyond those defined by the inter-state political arena” (Smith, Duncan 2012). Such transgressions of the dominant institutional sphere have been key to the expressions of “real utopias” (Wright 2010; Salleh 2012; Karides 2012). In these sense, this movements try to “normalize” the utopias, proposing alternatives and actively working for a restructuring of the dominant economic and political order (Smith, Duncan 2012). This movements share also a common set of core values, which are the result of “pretransition ethos” such as consumerism, individualism

and anthropocentrism, that given way to another triad: quality of life, human solidarity ecocentrism (Raskin 2012). Evident in many struggles for economic and social justice, this movements “recommend a break: that of social, ecological and democratic transition. They put forward new concepts, new ways or producing and consuming. Some of these include: the Commons and new types of property, control of finance, *buen-vivir* that is well-being and prosperity without growth, the reinvention of democracy, common and differentiated responsibilities, rights-based public services, etc. The goal is that the organization of societies as well as of the world, be based on the access to rights for all”. (Massiah 2012) These core values are enacted in “real utopias”, that is, concrete practices and projects that are employed by groups that are either aiming to advance larger transformative goals or to simply meet their community’s basic needs (Wright 2011; Salleh 2012; Karides 2012).

Converging across national borders, these global and transnational movements have brought together constructive ideas around a veritable organizational infrastructure of interpersonal connection. Their evolutionary process is ongoing, and increasingly tends to promote the ability of people to implement, by continuos comparison, these aspirations and shared core values (Smith 2005).

Since 1990, the World Conference on the United Nations have helped and encouraged the proliferation of new organizations. There have been, through the dissemination of new actors on the international scene, a sharp increase of specific weight and importance of civil society in the political world. In fact, By engaging in these international arenas, movements have helped advance norms of human rights and ecological sustainability over territorial sovereignty as the basis for

legitimate authority (Smith, Duncan 2012). In other words, movements and their allies can increasingly challenge states' authority in the world- system by pointing to contradictions between state practices and the normative elements of what world-systems analysts refer to as the "geoculture" of the modern world-system (Wallerstein 2004).

To better understand the rising of this new space for collective action, we can consider it as a "sub-system of world politics". Jaeger (2007) consider this sub-system as a sort of world political counter-movement. This movement reflects the experiences and pressures that on a inter-state level have arisen in response to demands for social change. This arena has also peculiar characteristics which can be identified in: a movement-centrism soul, as opposed to a state-centrism one in which governments enjoy the power to delimit spaces of negotiation and adjust the debate to the circumstances; a privileged role of civil society; and greater coherence in setting global identity, discourses and practices.

In the next paragraphs the analysis will be concentrated around food activism as the most clear example of transnational and global activism.

2.2 Transnational and global food activism.

The global agri-food system can be viewed in terms of two competing networks informed by different ideologies (Jarosz; 2000; Morgan et al. 2006). The first and dominant network is characterized as an industrial system of production and distribution whose main features are large-scale production, processing, and distribution of food at the national and global scales (Morgan et al. 2006). At the level of production, it seeks to maximize production yields through a model that

consists of monocultures and the use of agrochemicals, hybrid seed, biotechnology, and mechanized labor. Dominated by large-scale companies, especially multi-national corporations, it consists of long supply and commodity chains that increase the geographical distance between producers and consumers as products flow through a myriad of hands before they arrive at their retail destination.

The industrial perspective is very compatible with the current hegemonic economic ideology that Steger (2002) calls “globalism”, or “the new market ideology”, which is grounded in the principles of classical liberal economics repackaged for the current era of increasing global integration facilitated by the process of globalization. At the core of this ideology is the belief in the primacy of the free market to create conditions that benefit everyone and facilitate the spread of democracy Steger 2002). Its core principles of efficiency, competition, and profit maximization require market expansion, which is facilitated by the liberalization of trade and production as per trade agreements and other developmental “tools” (such as structural adjustment programs). The neoliberal development model, emerging from the principles of classical liberal economics, is predicated on export-leg growth and the concept of comparative advantage. This has had profound consequences on the global agri-food system as it has facilitated the expansion of the industrial food system, which is evidenced by the growth in overseas food production and processing, the rise of large retail outlets (e.g supermarkets), and the spread of corporate food eateries (e.g fast food outlets).

The second agri-food network represents a critique of the industrial model. Referred as the alternative or sustainable agri-food network, its ideology express a deep commitment to more environmentally sound agricultural production practices and the shortening of supply and commodity chains emphasizing small enterprise and local economies (Morgan et al 2006:2) the alternative food approach takes issue with the multidimensional consequences of the industrial agri-food approach, including cultural, political, social, environmental and economic ramifications. It rather advocates new approaches to organizing and structuring the food system to promote more equitable market access for small and medium-sized producers and retailers, to preserve the cultural traditions of local and regional communities that are often threatened by cultural homogenization, to allow for increased political participation of citizens in national and local food policies, and to prevent environmental degradation through the implementation of ecological approaches to production and distribution. The seek to "reemebed" the marked into local environmental and social relations (Raynolds 2000).The alternative agri-food approach insists that the ideology of globalism, transmitted through the process of globalization, has hindered equality and the spread of democracy as neoliberal globalization privileges those entities that can successfully complete in the market namely multinational corporations that have the resources to invest transnationally and seek out either more competitive venues for production or new markets to exploit. The approach further argues that the emphasis on minimizing regulations and barriers to trade alongside the promotion of fiscal austerity has led to the decreased protection of citizens and local and national markets, thus making them

more vulnerable to the fluctuations of the global market. Furthermore, the privileging of the market has resulted in the subordination of human rights, environmental qualty, and democratic rights. In this sense the alternative or sustainable approach advances a counter hegemonic claim, to use Evans' (200) terminology, as it challenges the very underpinnings of globalism.

Activists, as one go the groups of actors that comprise the alternative agri-food network, play an important role in transmitting the ideology of the alternative agri-food approach, and the organization of these activists has become increasingly transnational. This is evidence by the emergence of organizations and social movements, such as Food First, Slow Food, food sovereignty, the international organic agriculture movement (footnote: The international organic agriculture movement is also a transnational movement though its emergence was not recent but rather in the 1970s, or arguably earlier) and fair trade that operate with and across borders. Transnational food activists (footnote: Tarrow (2006) defines transnational activists as "people or groups who are rooted in specific national contexts, but who engage in contentious political activities that involve them in transnational networks contacts and conflicts" p29), though under-studied in the literature on alternative food approaches, represent an increasingly important spectrum of activism that advances the claims of the alternative agri-food paradigm.

The focus of this chapter is then on two such movements, the food sovereignty movement and the Slow Food movement, to demonstrate how this alternative agri-food ideology is articulated by transnational food activists and, in turn, is spread on account of their campaigns. The objective is to widen the discourse on

these movement and open up avenues for expanding research on these transnational movements, as called for by such scholars as Evans (2000, 2005) who purport that the scholarly literature on counter-hegemonic movements "lags the growth of the movements" (Evans 2005:2). Drawing on the work of Raynolds (2000) in her study of the international organic litarutre and fair trade movements, the work of counter-hegemonic food movements is significant in terms of providing alternative approaches to addressing the failures of the industrial agri-food approach to correct inequitable market relations, environmental degradation, and cultural imperialism. It is equally important for the purposes of analyzing the capacity of these movements to successfully contest neoliberal globalization by "turning neoliberal globalization's own ideological and organizational structures against itself" (Evans 2005:2). While acknowledging that in this work there is a lack of empirical evidence presented in Raynolds' study, it aims to explore the different approaches of two transnational alternative agri-food movements and their congruency as well as discuss some of the broader, connected issues.

2.3 Food Sovereignty and Slow Food Movements.

The food sovereignty and slow food movements represent two distinct movements and are very intriguing to study together because, while they both reject the hegemonic discourse of globalism and the reflection of this discourse in the global agri-food system, they have very different approaches to articulating their contention. Both food sovereignty and Slow Food address a host of concerns that they view as consequences of the dominant agri-food system. However, their conceptualizations of how to address the weaknesses they perceive are

considerably different. Both movements have distinct roots. The concept of food sovereignty was introduced by La via Campesina. Slow Food, on the other hand, was founded in Italy in the late 1980s by a group of Italian leftists who were concerned about the fate of tradition local cuisine. While food sovereignty implicitly forwarded contentious political objectives from the get-go that challenge the dominant global neoliberal economic framework, Slow Food started out as more of gastronomic organization interested in educating consumers about local products and cuisines (Miele and Murdoch 2003:33). Both movements have expanded significantly in scope since their inception, though food sovereignty remains a highly fragmented movement while Slow Food is extremely formalized. These differences have very much shaped their unique discourse. After discussing each of these movements in greater detail, I will conclude by comparing and contrasting these movements, thus demonstrating similarity and distinction between these different approaches as well as discussing several implications of this research.

2.4 Food Sovereignty

The concept of food sovereignty, like that of food security, has been an evolutionary process. As stated above, La Vía Campesina, established in 1993, first forwarded the concept of food sovereignty at the UN FAO's World Food Summit in 1996. The food sovereignty movement has since grown and encompasses a broad range of social movement organizations, transnational advocacy networks, (international) nongovernmental organizations, academics, indigenous people institutions and think tanks, and individual activists. Being that

there is no central organization to the movement, the exact number of constituents and adherents is unknown. The main focus of the movement is to restructure the dominant agri-food model to be more socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable.

Food sovereignty is seen as a precondition to genuine food security. For the People's Food Sovereignty Network (2002) Food sovereignty is the right of the people a) to choose the food and set up their agriculture, to protect and regulate agricultural production and domestic trade, in order to achieve sustainable development goals; b) to determine the degree of autonomy and self-sufficiency; c) to reduce the cost of production under its own markets (dumping) and to provide community-based fisheries and aquaculture priority in the management and use of those rights related to water resources. It was then proposed a second definition of food sovereignty, now identified with the right of communities and countries to produce for their own needs, determine their own methods of farming and food policies and decide what to import and export. According to R. Lec, the food sovereignty also has a cultural and spiritual features. Producing food implies a way of interpreting and see life, social relationships, the democratic equilibria and cultural rights of indigenous peoples and their economies.

Conceptually, food sovereignty is a policy framework that aims ti democratize food systems and restructure the global agri-food system not only to ensure that all people have access to healthy, culturally-appropriate food but also to contest negative consequences of the global food regime under neoliberalism. The transnational food movement that has emerged around the concept of food sovereignty, while fragmented, represents a concerted effort to highlight the

profound implications of the dominant agri-food ideology and forward an alternative approach grounded in a discourse of rights. While the food sovereignty movement has constituents and adherents worldwide, there is an implicit focus on the plight of the Global South where economies are still very much dependent on agriculture and raw materials as the mainstay of the national economy. The food sovereignty movement concentrates not the plight of the rural sector. With the bulk of small and medium-sized producers in the South, the majority of stakeholders reside in this global region and have disproportionately felt the effects of unequal trade polices funneled through international organizations, the controlling interest of which lies in the hands of governments of the Global North and the dominant, Western ideologies of market liberalism that they forward.

At the center of their argument is that the neoliberal trade order has resulted in disembodying local discourse in food and agricultural policy making. Because the majority of large scale, multinational agri-food corporations are based in the North and are able to shape policy in their favor due to their abilities to lobby both nationally and internationally for policies that favor their interests, small and medium sized farmers in both the global North and South disadvantaged in terms of asserting their interests due to their subordinate position and fall victim to policies that they do not benefit from. This has resulted in a myriad of concerns for local communities worldwide. Among these concerns are not only the unequal access to the productive resources (such as land, seeds, and water) and markets, but also a host of ecological concerns resulting from the industrial model of agri-food production as well as social and cultural concerns that result from shifts in production. The influx of imported goods deepen inequality and are frequently a

result of “food dumping”, which further weakens the ability of local food producers to compete, or the result of imported goods that are frightfully expensive as a result of market control by free transnational corporations (Rosset 2006, 2008).

The export-led model of economic development has profoundly affected culture and society throughout the world. The concept of comparative advantage, which argues that countries should specialize in producing the products that they have an advantage in producing (due to, for instance, their climate or the means of production) has led to specialization and a lack of diversity of national markets. this has further resulted in rendering national economies dependent on a few export mainstays, making them vulnerable to global market fluctuations. Furthermore, in an effort to complete for their market share, farmers and other food producers opt to grow products they know will sell on the world market, thus relegating cultural and traditional agri-food products to a secondary position. With the influx of imported goods typically from external cultures and the decrease in production of local, traditional foods, there have been changing patterns of consumption.

While developing countries are hit the hardest globally with these conditions, rural communities in developing countries face even more dire conditions as land (especially fertile) land is increasingly concentrated into the hands of big landowners, agribusinesses, and other large scale enterprises, thereby excluding small and medium-sized producers from production (Windfuhr and Jonsén 2005:8). the concentration of land into the hands of a few combined with myriad of other factors encourage migration away from rural areas, as Pimbert (2008)

describes in the following:" Declining commodity prices, the cost-price squeeze experienced by producers, destruction of habitat and culture due to social and environmental injustice, and the privatization of social services, health, education and culture, al encourage rural people to migrate to cities in search of better economic opportunities"(p.23)

Food sovereignty is thus a response to the conditions described above. A recent definition from the Declaration of the Forum for Food Sovereignty, Nyéléni (2007) states that, "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", and elaborates the following,

It puts the aspirations and needs of 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 interest 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 and users. Food sovereignty priorities local and national economies and markets and empowers peasant and family farmer-driven agriculture, artisanal - dishing pastoralist-led grazing, and food production, distribution and consumption based on environmental, social and economic sustainability. Food sovereignty promotes transparent trade that guarantees just incomes to all people as well as the rights of consumers to control their food and nutrition. It ensures that the rights to use and manage lands, territories, waters, seeds, livestock and biodiversity are in the hands of those of us who produce food.

Food sovereignty implies new social relations free of oppression and inequality between men and women, peoples, racial groups, social and economic classes and generations (p1)

It is then emphasized the importance of the needs of those who produce, distribute and consume food, for the present and future generations, giving priority to local and national market economies rather than to international ones.

The presented excerpt from the Declaration of The Forum for Food Sovereignty touches on each of the four "priority areas for action" identified during the 2002 Forum on Food Sovereignty and later summarized by International Planning Committee (IPC) for Foof Sovereignty (Windfuhr and Jonsén 2005:14), which is incidentally one of the largest networks of food sovereignty activists containing "more than 500 rural social movements and NGOs, radical and conservative, as members" (Borras et al. 2008:171) These priority areas include: the right to food, access to productive resources, mainstream agroecological production, and trade and local markets (Windfuhr and Jonsén 2005:15). The excerpt above also includes what Pimbert (2008) sees as the objectives that proponents of food sovereignty pursue, which he describes in the following:

1) Equity: securing the rights of people and communities, including their fundamental human right to food; affirming and celebrating cultural diversity; enhancing social and economic benefits; and combating inequalities, such as the ones responsible for poverty, gender discrimination and exclusion.
2) Sustainability: seeking human activities and resources use patterns compatible with econoligal sustainability.

3) Direct democracy: empowering civil society in decision-making, and democratizing government institutions, structures and markets

The great successes of the food sovereignty movement lie in the ability of the movement to not only direct attention to the inequalities produced by the hegemonic, neoliberal economic model, but to also articulate an alternative approach and discourse that effectively politicizes the issue of food. At the 2007 Nyéléni Forum for Food Sovereignty, participants from over 80 gathered and produced an action agenda asserting that food sovereignty is a political proposal. In an effort to strengthen the political power of food sovereignty activists, participants articulated an action plan that included the following objectives, summarized by Pilbert (2008):

1) expanding the debate outside producer groups and workers' trade unions;
2) building momentum and support among governments who are in favor of food sovereignty; and
3) developing a collective and global strategy to ensure that the right of peoples to food sovereignty is recognized as a specific and full right, and that its defense is legally binding for states and guaranteed by the United Nations.

In sum, the food sovereignty movement is a directed response to the globally dominant neoliberal trade paradigm as well as to the dominant global system of commercial/industrial agricultural production. Food sovereignty provides an alternative vision as to how agricultural production could be organized by putting the interests of peasants and small-scale farmers at the core of production stems

(Desmarais 2007:37), thus creating systems with greater local accountability and more democratic decision-making. This would allow rural peoples far more latitude in constructing local markets that answer to the concerns and interest of their constituents, including social, political, and economic well-being as well as environmental protection and respecting local cultural customs and traditions. The goals outlined above suggest that the strategy of food sovereignty is still directed mainly at creating alliances and broadening the discourse in an effort to frame food sovereignty to resonate with actors outside of the movement in order to attract support and create opportunities for the deeper political and social embedding of the movement's principle. Furthermore, on the one side Food Sovereignty has built a comprehensive opposition to a "corporate industrialised agriculture", which is always more global in its effects, registering a "changing relationship to food imposed by the industrialization of (agricultural) production and the globalization of agricultural trade" (Wittman et al 2010, 5), and resulting in "food insecurity, fossil-fuel dependence and global warming" (McMichael 2010, 172). On the other, it helped to highlight new aspects of globalization from a point of view, so to say, qualitative, to the extent that technology now controls key aspects of the food production through the growing privatization and corporate control of certain seeds due to their genetic engineering (Kloppenburg 2010a, 2010b).

2.5 Slow Food

The origins of Slow Food can be traced back to a group of italian leftists who ere concerned about the fate of traditional cuisine. Since its inception, Slow Food has become an international movement focused on preserving local food cultures, the environment, and the livelihoods of producers. The core concept of which is that of"eco-gastronomy", defined as "the combination for a concern for the environment with the pleasures associated with the production, preparation, cooking, and consumption of food" (Andrews 2008:18). As a movement, Slow Food addresses the cultural dimension of global food politics and rejects the industrial agri-food approach and its tendencies toward economies of scale, which dissembled local food cultures through economically rationalist orientations toward food production, distribution and consumption. Thus Slow Food directly responds to what Ritzer (1993, 1998) theorized as the McDonaldization of society. In recent years, the movement has shifted from its consumer-oriented foundations to addressing the predicaments of producers.

At the present time, Slow Food boasts a membership of 100,000 people organized into over 1,000 convivial (local chapters) from over 120 countries. As as international nonprofit association, the movement is bound by its international statute that was approved by the Fifth International Congress held in Puebla, Mexico, in November of 2007. In its 45 articles, this document defines the organization and outlines its objectives, methods of achieving its goals, organizational and institutional structure, organizational processes, and the rights and responsibilities of its institutional and organizational components, which include the International Congress, International Executive Committee, National Board of Director (for national organizations), and convivial (the international

statute can be found online at http://www.slowfood.com/slowftp/eng/STATUTE_ENG.pdf).

The term Slow Food was first coined following an organized demonstration in Rome where the second McDonald's restaurant in Italy was to be constructed. In November of 1987, the publishing of the Slow Food Manifesto launched the movement. The manifesto explicitly rejects "fast life", which is argued to have "brought a particular mode of life under global capitalism" (Andrews 2008:40). It rather advances slowness as an antidote for the burdens of "fast living", beginning with how humans eat. Slow Food view "fast life" as threatening traditional, regional cuisine in the form of fast food and also endangering the environment. Firthermore, "fast life" is seen as representing "a repressed idea of pleasure" (Andrews 2008:44). Slow food views the privileging of productivity and efficiency as being antithetical to "real culture" which is about "developing taste rather than demeaning it" (Slow Food 1987).

Slow Food became an international movement in December of 1989 earn delegates from 15 countries became signatories to a protocol and pledged their commitment to the principles outlined in the manifesto. Throughout the 1990s and into the early 2000s, the Slow Food movement spread to other European countries with national offices established in Germany, Switzerland, the USA, and France but it (arguably) did not really become "globalized" until the Terra Madre conferences of 2004 and 2006, both of which were turning points in consolidating the political agenda the movement would adopt. However, before the Terra Madres conferences, there were several other developments in the movement that began to spur a shift to incorporate producers into the agenda of Slow Food. This

began with the Ark of Taste, an initiative to protect local agricultural products and foods from industrial standardization and ensure their survival, in 1996 (Petrini 2001), which led to the first Slow Food initiatives to protect biodiversity (Miele and Murdoch 2003; Andrews 2008). The Ark of Taste and the Presidia initiative that followed in 1999 (local groups initiated to preserve traditional foods by cooperating with producers and encouraging local consumption) led to a greater focus on producers and the establishment of the Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity in 2003 to support projects to protect resources and preserve biodiversity. This shift in the movement was further deepened through engagement with producers and activists from other parts of the world, particularly those in developing countries. In 2004, at the first Terra Madre, one of the core concepts to emerge was that of the "food community," which was "composed of producers and consumers brought together in mutual dialogue" (Andrews 2008: 49). This placed the producer in a central position. Furthermore, the participation of developing countries was a critical factor in the shift that occurred in the orientation of Slow Food as a political movement as the vast diversity of participants, and especially small farmers from developing countries, attested to the effects of the global economy on small producers (Andrews 2008). As Andrews (2008) argues, the second Terra Madre conference in 2006 led to two important developments in the movement's organization and ideology. First, the facilitating of a network that would bring together the complimentary knowledge and expertise of producers, cooks, and academics in an egalitarian way, which was innovative in three ways: It transcended the traditional distinctions between mental and manual thought, it would provide an alternative to the current food

system, and, finally, a loose organization structure would allow convivia and food communities to remain autonomous while allowing Slow Food to respect the cultural diversity of its membership and maintain the democratic relationship between the centers and local organizations (Andrews 2008: 53-55). Second, the organizing principles of "good, clean and fair," were articulated and, as Andrews (2008) notes, "These three principles gave a new clarity to Slow Food's objectives while connecting its philosophy to the wider movement" (p. 56). Carlo Petrini, one of (if not the) most prominent figures in the Slow Food movement, provides extensive treatment of these terms in his book Buono, pulito e giusto (2005), which was published in English as Slow Food Nation: Why Our Food Should Be Good, Clean, and Fair (2007). In brief, Petrini (2007) states that, "In defining what is good, two kinds of subjective factors are crucial: taste—which is personal and linked to sensorial sphere of each one of use—and knowledge—which is cultural and linked to the environment and to the history of communities, techniques, and places" (p.97). He adds that a "good" product is one that is "good to the palate and good to the mind," ultimately pointing to a relationship between what is "good" and happiness (p. 109). While the principle of "good" was the driving force behind the conception of the movement, the other two principles are being increasingly emphasized by the movement (Glazer 2007) and their meanings are slightly more direct and interconnected. Petrini (2007) states that a product "is clean if it respects the earth and the environment and does not pollute, if it does not waste or overuse natural resources during its journey from the field to the table…[and]…it is sustainable" (p. 114). Like "clean," "fair" too is an expression of sustainability – but social and economic sustainability – what is fair

"creates wealth, and establishes a more equitable order among the people of the world" (Petrini 2008: 143). "Fair" implies "social justice, respect for workers and their know-how, rurality and the country life, pay adequate to work, gratification in producing well, and the definitive revaluation of the small farmer, whose historical position in society has always been last" (Petrini 2008: 145). What became increasingly obvious at the 2006 Terra Madre was the extent to which the people of the Global South were disproportionate affected by the global economy, which also posed a host of challenges for the environment and local economies (Andrews 2008). While the movement emerged and initially spread in the Global North, Terra Madre was a decisive factor in growing the global Slow Food movement through the exchange of knowledge and experience. It was also influential in developing the Slow Food response to globalization. The Slow Food critique of globalization is predicated on the standardization of culture and food, threats to biodiversity, the industrialization of agriculture, and the degradation of the small producer (Andrews 2008: 152). It shares with anti-globalization movements a "similar critique of the neo- liberal global economy, and, in particular…[opposition to]… the pernicious argument that 'liberalization' and 'free trade' were the only way forward for developing countries" as well as a view that the World Trade Organization, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund should be blamed for global inequality as a result of encouraging developing nations to engage in market liberalization instead of encouraging small farmers (Andrews 2008: 151). However, the approach of Slow Food departs from many anti-globalization movements in that it does not subscribe to strategies of direct action but rather to a concept Petrini calls "virtuous

globalization," described as "an alternative idea of globalization" based on the "sharing of experiences between producers, chefs, activists, and convivium leaders… [that lead to]… mutual understanding, and the joint commitment to action to support farmers in practical ways" (Andrews 2008: 152). The idea of virtuous globalization, however, was deepened on account of experiences at Terra Madre and virtuous globalization expanded to argue that "the global system must work to aid farmers, through a network of local economies which are on the one hand self- sufficient, but on the other sustained through interdependent support" (Andrews 2008: 153). Terra Madre is one of several vehicles through which Slow Food has conveyed "virtuous globalization" and other include the international work of the Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity and the Presidia, both discussed above, which have led to cross-border collaboration with other organizations and groups, as well as the work of Slow Food activists in educating and sponsoring initiatives at the local level that serve to embed the interests of the movement into local societies. In short, the Slow Food ideology represents a new approach to living (Andrews 2008). Although the issues that it addresses are controversial, Slow Food opts to focus on transforming behavior and attitudes through education and experience. The philosophy of the Slow Food movement clearly rejects the hegemonic project of neoliberal globalization, as discussed above, but it also seeks to achieve this through non-confrontational means. It is an innately political movement though it does not directly take up issue at the global level (at least not yet), rather it aims to make changes at the local level.

2.6 Conclusions

Transnational food activists, mobilized in response to dissatisfaction with the dominant global agri-food model, play a significant role in conveying the ideology of the countermovement they represent and they do this in different ways. Clearly, the food sovereignty movement and the Slow Food movement take very different approaches to forwarding their common claim that the dominant agri-food system is a source of economic, social, environmental, and cultural injustice, and in this sense are linked to what is often called the "global justice movement." One of the formative distinctions between them is their approaches to contestation. While food sovereignty is overtly political and challenges the global hegemonic approach to economic integration head on, Slow Food is concerned at heart with the cultural politics of the dominant agri-food system which they acknowledge is rooted in global economic policies. While both movements seek to bridge understandings of the implications of the global economic regimes, Slow Food embodies pre-figurative approaches to conveying their message where as food sovereignty, appears limited in this respect by the lofty goal of transforming the food system. More research would need to be done on the food sovereignty movement, and in particular on constituent networks and organizations to see how the movement is attempting to embed its ideology through action. Most certainly there are projects and campaigns; however, the success of the movement is determined by its ability to influence dominant ideologies and change dominant policies, whereas the Slow Food movement's pre- figurative goals are not constrained by policy and are more compatible with existing economic structures. Both the food sovereignty movement and the Slow

Food movement openly express their contention with the dominant agri-food system as well as the hegemonic neoliberal paradigm on similar grounds. They point to the imperialistic quality of dominant systems of agri-food and the global economy in general as they forward their claims about unequal access to markets that small producers are forced to endure in a highly integrated global economy. For food sovereignty, the effects of economic imperialism have been felt directly and formed the foundation of the movement, while for the Slow Food movement these effects were felt to a lesser degree as it was the interaction with producers in the Global South that made this reality more apparent, and thus shifted the approach of the movement to take such considerations more seriously. However, for both movements the issue of small agri-food producers who are subjected to a high degree of instability due to their subordinate position within their national economies as well as in the global political economy is vital. Both movements acknowledge that the privileging of economies of scale create conditions of competition that are unfair as small producers are unable to compete in markets with actors who have a bigger piece of the pie, so to speak, and are therefore able to manipulate conditions in their favor. Thus, for both movements, the essential strategy is to support small agri-food enterprises, may they be farms, markets, eateries, or other relevant enterprises. Local food systems become the main source of resistance against the dominance of economies of scale. In addition to the economic and trade dimension, both movements also speak of a discourse of rights; for food sovereignty, it is the right to food and the right to fairly access the means of production while for Slow Food it is the right to take pleasure from food and access quality food. This is an interesting difference as it could be taken to

reflect the geographical beginnings of both movements. The roots of Slow Food are in Italy, in the Global North, while the roots of food sovereignty are embedded in the Global South. For many in the Global South, access to food is a challenge while for Northerners access to food is typically not the issue. From this perspective, an important question to ask is if and how both movements shift in order to accommodate the counterparts. This is especially true for the Slow Food movement which has been criticized for being an elite movement due to the higher cost of local, organic products (Glazer 2007). Finally, the issues of the environment and social justice are both mainstays of the approaches both movements. With regard to the environment, although it was not mentioned in the discussions above, both movements passionately argue against genetically-modified organisms, which are viewed to be dangerous to biodiversity and pose a genuine threat to food cultures. Furthermore, the implications of agro-chemicals on both the quality of the environment and food as well as human health pose dangerous risks. Organic and agroecological models of agri-food production are advanced by both movements as alternative approaches to green revolution technologies. Not to be understated, concern for the environment is not only a key component of both approaches but the broader alternative food paradigm in general. The centrality of social justice is also implicit in the movements, especially with regard to equality and equity. Fair wages and mutual respect for rural peoples and their know-how is also a critical aspect of these food movements. This brief overview of the food sovereignty and Slow Food movements, if anything, suggests the need for further research on such movements, echoing Evans' call for more study. The growth and expansion of

both sets of counter-hegemonic ideologies could be argued to point to a shift in the way people are collectively and transnationally thinking about their relationship to food. While this is hardly arguing that the transnational industrial agri-food models are diminishing, it is recommending that academic scholarship look more deeply at the many dimensions of transnational food activism. Unlike studies of fair trade or organic food, studies of food sovereignty and Slow Food are difficult to quantify and thus measure. Part of the challenge for researchers of these movements will be to design studies that can adequately and successfully reflect movement characteristics in order to determine the extent to which they are truly posing a challenge to the dominant order.

The next chapter will be concentrated on the role of La Vía Campesina. There will be an analysis of the movement within the international arena. In a sort of focus box there will be underlined those features and peculiarities that characterize the Movement as transnational within the field of agriculture policies, and those that distinguish it from others that work in the same field, as for instance the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP). The significance and importance of La Via Campesina could be detected through a discussion of its initiative and its strategy that have been at the basis of what it has been already identified as new trends in globalization process that are reversing the process, in so far they pressing for a globalization from below, bottom-up.

CHAPTER III. LA VIA CAMPESINA. FROM FOOD SOVEREIGNTY TO PEASANTS' RIGHTS.

3.1 A brief historical chronology

La Vía Campesina emerged in a particular economic, political and social context that was undermining the ability of the farmers of the world to maintain control over land and seeds.

It came at a time when a particular model of rural development was altering the rural landscape, threatening to turn local knowledge irrelevant and denigrating rural cultures. The key elements in this phenomenon were the intruder globalization of an industrial model of agriculture, on the one hand, and the search

for an alternative approach among those who have been most affected by the epidemic of dislocation created by their appearance, on the other.

In May 1993, at a conference held in Mons, Belgium, 46 representatives (men and women) of organizations of peasants, small farmers, indigenous peoples and rural workers from various regions, created La Vía Campesina. But the roots of La Vía Campesina back long ago. During the 80s, the founders of La Vía Campesina members participated in dialogues and exchanges with their counterparts and international regions. This led to the creation of regional movements such as the European Farmers Coordination (CPE) in Europe, and the Association of Central Agricultural Organizations (ASOCODE) and the Latin American Coordination of Peasant Organizations (CLOC) in American economies.

The dialogue and exchanges led to the signing of the Declaration of Managua, signed by representatives of eight peasant organizations in Central America, the Caribbean, Europe, Canada and the United States, who had gathered to participate in the Second Congress of the National Union Farmers and Cattle breeders (Unión Nacional de Agricultores y Ganaderos) held in Managua, Nicaragua.

La Vía Campesina was established in the North and South sharing some common goals: an undisputed refusal of the neoliberal model of rural development, a fierce refusal for not being excluded from the development of agricultural policies and determination not to disappear and a commitment to work together to give strength to the voice of peasants. Through the strategy of "building unity in diversity" and its concept of food sovereignty, farmers and farmers' organizations in the world are working to ensure the well-being of rural communities.

The aim of La Vía Campesina is bringing change in countryside. A change in order to improve livelihoods, to increase local production for local consumption, and to ensure open democratic spaces so that rural people can have a role, a position, and decide on matters that impact in their lives. The movement believes that this type of change can occur only when local communities are granted greater access to the control of local production resources, as well as greater access to social and political power.

Since the signing of the Uruguay Round of GATT, in 1994, representatives of rural organizations in the North, South, East and coordinated West, walked together through the streets of Geneva, Paris, Seattle, Washington, Quebec, Rome, Bangalore, Porto Alegre, Cancun and Hong Kong, among other cities. Whenever and wherever international institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Bank and the Organization of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) meet to discuss issues related to agriculture and food, La Vía Campesina is there. La Via Campesina can be found also in small communities where farmers and farm families, in countries such as Honduras, Mexico, Brazil, Guatemala, Indonesia, are resisting to the spread of genetically modified seeds or have been expelled from their lands to facilitate an urban disorganized growth, the construction of golf courses, intensive shrimp farming, pig farms or large plantations of eucalyptus.

To many this situation seems very surprising. For over a hundred years, those who thought they knew what was happening in the countryside worldwide, had predicted the demise of the peasantry. Surely, now you should have all disappeared. Analysts have long predicted the demise and disappearance of the

peasantry as an inevitable result of the penetration of agriculture by capitalism (Kaustky 1899, Hobsbawm 1994). Nevertheless, peasant communities have not only refused to disappear (albeit with a lot of out-migration), but in recent years peasants have organized in a sophisticated, transnational way to respond to the neoliberal phase of late capitalism (Kearney 1996). Instead, integrated La Vía Campesina farmers are popping up everywhere, presenting a dissenting voice, resisting to some trends in globalization.

The presence of La Vía Campesina has not gone unnoticed. Wearing dark green caps, bandanas, white shirts and waving green flags emblazoned with the logo brilliantly colorful, while chanting energetic slogans, La Vía Campesina has become an increasingly visible and resonant voice of the radical opposition to the globalization of neoliberal model of neoliberalism and corporate. This resistance reached its peak in September 2003, the first day of the Fifth WTO Ministerial Meeting, held in Cancun, Mexico, with the tragic death of the farmer's leader Lee Kyung Hae, who along with another 120 Koreans had joined the delegation of La Vía Campesina in Cancun with the purpose to ask the WTO to stay out of the business of agriculture. With the slogan "The WTO kills farmers" Lee walked near the fence that had been built to "protect" the negotiators from the protesters, and killed himself with a knife.

That extreme and dramatic act of resistance symbolizes what La Vía Campesina has been defending for years: the liberalization of agriculture is a war against the peasants decimating rural communities and farm families destroyed. Lee's desperate cry for change, helped reinforce La Vía Campesina, and from then on the September 10th has been declared International Day of Protest against the

WTO. That day, organizations in several countries are mobilized in favor of food sovereignty.

The increased visibility of Vía Campesina as a social actor, strongly rooted in local communities and at the same time involved with more experience on the international stage, has attracted the attention of many rural organizations in search of alternatives. Between 2000 and 2004, the movement grew over 41%. The Fourth International Conference of motion Itaici held in Brazil in June 2004, forty-two organizations joined La Vía Campesina, which is now composed of 150 organizations in 70 countries. Much of the success of La Vía Campesina is due to its efforts in balancing the different interests of its members by openly trying to discuss and give priority to topics such as gender, race, class, culture, and North/South relations, which could potentially cause divisions. According to La Vía Campesina the main conflict is not between farmers from the norht and southern peasants. Rather, it is a struggle between two models of social and economic development, which in many ways are diametrically opposed. On the one hand, a neoliberal, globalized corporate model, where agriculture is only a business to make money and where resources are increasingly concentrated in the hands of the agro-industry. La Vía Campesina, on the other hand, with its different, more rural vision, based on Food Sovereignty and peasants rights. Here, agriculture is managed by the farmers, based on peasant production, uses local resources and is adapted to domestic markets. In this model, agriculture plays an important social role, while being economically viable and ecologically sustainable at the same time. The formation and consolidation of La Vía Campesina shows that farmers and farm families have not been complicit in the

process of economic restructuring, nor have they been passive victims to the growing impoverishment and marginalization. Instead they are actively resisting to the globalization of an industrial model of agriculture. Indeed, farmers and farmers are using three traditional weapons: organization, cooperation and community, to redefine "development" and build an alternative model of agricultural based on the principles of social justice, economic sustainability and respect for peasant cultures and peasant economies. This involves the creation of viable alternatives, ranging from small agricultural cooperatives, local seed banks, fair trade associations, to reclaim traditional ways of farming.

In the formation of La Vía Campesina peasant organizations effectively internationalized themselves and succeeded making a place in the international arena. La Vía Campesina is filling this place with the voices of farmers, articulating the demands of the peasants and farmers alternatives in an effort to resist the imposition of a model of industrial agriculture. Is allowing us to imagine that change is possible and that an alternative has been created. This is clearly captured in the slogan “Globalize struggle - globalize hope”.

3.2 Agriculture and globalization: the paradigm of modernization.

In the world of agriculture, the globalization process has worked very intrusive, radically changing the concept of food and agriculture. First, it changed the way of international production. If at the beginning of the century the farmer had full control over the process, to the extent that consumption and production were

closely linked, the food system of today has allowed the entry of new players who have taken control of much of the production stages. The modernization of agriculture has meant that production is increasingly detached from consumption, and agribusiness, which arose from this change, added and encouraged the growth of new stages of production, different from and outside the farm. In the West, the main force behind the modernization of agriculture was the private corporate sector, which made concerted efforts, often through state-sponsored scientific research and development, to control or refashion "nature" through technological innovations that involved projects of appropriation and substitution (Goodman and Redclift 1991.). Using the David Goodman (1991) definition, appropriation is the "transformation of discrete activities into sectors of agro-industrial accumulation and their re-incorporation into agriculture as agricultural inputs". While substitution is concerned with processes whereby "agricultural products are reduced to an industrial input and then replaced by fabricated or synthetic non-agricultural components in food manufacturing" (Whatmore 1995:42).

This will thus align the interests of governments in supporting a cheap food policy and a specific agricultural-industrial model. What changes is, therefore consequently, the role of the farmer, who became subordinate and totally dependent on the new agribusiness enterprises that have appeared on the market. These enterprises through ad hoc researches had gained access to a type of technology that has allowed them to obtain high-yield seeds: farmers' centuries-old practices of pollination and selection produced yields comparable to those produced in laboratories (Marglin 1996). They subsequently reported a success when the seeds, removed from the hands of farmers, have fueled the accumulation

of capital. In fact, “rather than pursuing the farmer controlled methods (of pollination), seed companies inserted themselves directly into production process by developing scientifically produced high-yielding seed varieties tied to a whole technological package, including inputs, mechanization, and irrigation” (Desmarais 2007: 42).

Agribusiness enterprises have been successful because they acted "taking out nature from agriculture" (Allen, Lueack 1999), thus being able to control them in a better way. From this point of view, technological process has done significant damage, because in facilitating access to the food chain for a series of new economic actors “had tied farmers to production contracts, and facilitated the dominance of agribusiness in the various food sectors” (Desmarais 2007:43). According to the Department of Agriculture of the United States at the end of the ‘90s the 89% of factory farming was bound by a contract of production (USDA, 1998: 61). In conditions like this the agriculture is completely excluded from the production chain, incapable of making decisions but at the same time taking responsibility for a considerable portion of the business risk.

The concept of poverty here mentioned is what Truman meant when he operated the distinction between countries with a certain level of wealth, and then “developed”, and others whose standards of living were not adequate (Rist 1997), called “underdeveloped”. It follows then that poverty itself was not explained through an historical point of view, as a result of power dynamics defined by economic interests, but rather as a function of "not having” something. This view, therefore, made coherent solutions aiming at increase in production, consumption and economic growth through the progressive transfer of Western technology to

all other countries. In short, the South would have to reach the North through a gradual process of integration.

This theory is the basis of many strategies that have subsequently been made: the expansion of markets has been used to justify not only the colonial expansion in the past, but in more recent times to aggregate and support the growth of liberalization and globalization (Rist 1997 : 25). The modernization of agriculture has maintained its target especially with regard to rural development policies. The ultimate goal of reducing rural poverty would be achieved through programs of technological improvement and increased productivity and production, as well as the power consumption (Barraclough, Solon,Ghimire, Meliczeck, 1997: 10).

This question however should not be resolved by limiting food in a simple dynamic North-South: the different expressions of the agricultural world, are closely related to social structures, economic, institutional and political aspects of society as a whole. The issue regarding the modernization of the agricultural development is characterized by great subordination of the industry, constantly forced to deal with logic and approaches born and conceived outside the agricultural context: the liberalization of international food trades, sanctioned by the last round of GATT negotiations, that rewards benefiting the global flows favoring intermediation and reducing the medium-term commodity prices (reduced to simple raw materials); standardization of production techniques and product business-oriented; hyper sanitation of the production system that supports the needs of full control typical in industrial plants, food biotechnology which are as common in the North and the South. It’s a problem of hegemony suffered by the agricultural world, more and more forced to pander systems born elsewhere.

But also it’s a political issue insofar it takes the form of imposition of a Western model of agriculture. The modernization of agriculture is a major tool in creating the "suffering and dislocations" deemed necessary for development (Desmarais, 2007: 46).

The political question that is therefore raised concerns a particular way of seeing food, technology, nature culture and society” (Yapa 1996:69) to the extent that agriculture has become one of the new frontiers of accumulation of capital (Moore 2014).

Today, agriculture is the most exposed sector to economic restructuring - according to Robert (1992), the modernization of agriculture is a war on subsistence seeking to break subsistence farmers' autonomy - and more unprepared for the ethical and political changes, particularly in reality less integrated with the production nodes that generate them, like the outlying rural areas of the planet. But if it is true that these new arrangements pose a threat to the rural economy, it is clear that balances and broader collective interests are also threatened, if we consider correct the analysis formulated in the volume *Agriculture, un tournament nécessaire,* signed by the Groupe de Bruges : “globalization and the growing interdependence, the questioning of the traditional division of responsibilities between the public authorities and the market, the irruption of exclusion and the risk of social fragmentation, changes in the relationship between man and environment, the collapse of the postwar paradigm of modernization and the calling into question of the models built upon it, are evidence of a crisis which is not involving agriculture solely”.

Within a scenario in swirling transition, the more productive sectors seek their place as to ensure their survival in a globalized economy and the current crisis agriculture is experiencing should be read in the light of difficulties that beset all sectors of society, but that hits hardest those with lower dynamic capabilities. The sharp decline in transport costs and cargo movements, the presence of a structured information network, technological innovation, internationalization of financial markets and investment, the progressive development of multinational corporations, constitutes signs of the rapid evolution that society and the economy are undertaking: goods, services, capital, knowledge and, in some way, even men are becoming more mobile. Instead - and in this rests the fragility of the agricultural sector - processes of food production maintain are characterized by an extremely static dimension, by virtue of its own structural characteristics. This should be understood in its complexity as long as it impacts on food security: if the commodities are now able to migrate from one continent to another with relative speed (potentially able to cope with sudden food crises), the production system as a whole instead manifest lack of flexibility, being still anchored to technical and seasonal constraints. The amount of food per unit area, the allocation of factors of production, and other factors, have a clearly defined dimension and constitute a limit that prevents the modulation of the production according to qualitative and quantitative variations of the demand. Such a situation expresses both the peculiarities and the narrowness of agriculture compared to other production processes, and also constitutes a concrete limitation, in a world that demands timeliness and speed according to the real-time dogma, a dogma that increasingly characterizes the industry services. For these reasons it is

necessary to create an integrated, stable and solid food security system, where local agriculture plays a central role according to criteria of sustainability, stability and a proper balance between production costs and consumer prices that ensure a fair price to farmers and to ensure broad access to food by consumers.

Temporal flexibility of the production system also arises a basic contradiction: the speed is one of the cornerstones of the concept of modernity, modernity that during the post-war period has created the paradigm through which has been structured the process of industrialization of agriculture; but this, in turn, was and still is based on the simplification of management and production processes, that is ill-combined with the need to generate a high production system with a strong buffering capacity compared to the fluctuations, so that for a long time the problem of hunger has been treated by considering only the related issue of how to produce sufficient amounts of food to be ensured by a steady growing population: a sort of challenge between the reproductive and productive capacities. The Green Revolution born out of this convictions, exporting a certain model of agriculture, which was successful in the North, also in Less Developed Countries. This would have been possible because guaranteed by technological development that would have ensured the control over natural processes on which insert agricultural production. However, completely ignoring farmers' cultural practices based on local knowledge, the process helps" peasants shift from subsistence to commercial agriculture by making them increasingly dependent both on Western technology and knowledge and on imported industrial inputs and goods (Marglin 1996:234). Therefore on this bases, the Green Revolution was also a cultural revolution.

What has encouraged the spread of industrial agriculture were the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) that have introduced new legislation regarding commercial terms. Systematically dismantling the structures and mechanisms of state support such as subsidies, SAPs have led to "an integration of debtor countries' economies into a highly competitive global economy" (Desmarais, 2007: 48). Along with the insert of agriculture within SAPs and WTO trade arrangements emerges the willingness to treat the agriculture sector in a different way than others, and is is clearly highlighted by the fact that the “market itself is increasingly viewed as the only means to promote development” in the neoliberal conception (Berthoud, 1992: 73), and by the acknowledgement that we are witnessing “a time of unprecedented deregulation of agriculture (a shift from aid to trade), the hegemony (the so-called “new realism”) of export-oriented neo-liberal development strategies, and a recognition that globalization (a word not even part of the lexicon of the earlier Rome summit) of the world afro-food economy was proceeding apace” (Watts 1997:1).

La Vía Campesina born within this international context, in which the export of this said development model has been spread all over the world and blatantly presented as the definitive model for the resolution of hunger and poverty, looking for a different approach development by welcoming all those that had been damaged "by the epidemic of dislocation" (Desmarais 2007:44).

3.3 The rise of a movement.

La Via Campesina, as already mentioned, comes at an important time in which the nation-state has undergone a transformation, changing its role in relation to rural areas, posing new challenges. The comparison with the peasants, has allowed them to regroup and move on the international scene. In addition to causing a restructuring of state-society relations, the claim of the neoliberal model has led to the emergence of new forms of social movements that are more autonomous, horizontal, and more based on collective identities rather than just social class (Alvarez et al. 1998)

Since the 70s, the ISI model (Import Substitution Industrialization), has implemented a mechanism oriented towards the provision of national markets through domestic production. This trend has been strengthened and made possible by the ad hoc alliance that was created between the capitalist élite producing mainly for the domestic market, and the population which instead requires a certain purchasing power to consume (De Janvry 1981).

The results that were obtained with this model can be considered mixed, in the sense that rural poverty has been substantially maintained. The creation of a state in such a fashion, than can be defined “developmentalist” (Martinez-Torres, Rosset 2010) has been also the way in which african and asian states have intervened in their national food markets.

In this context, the political parties were able to obtain a considerable prestige by collecting sufficient resources, both to win elections and to provide political patronage in the distribution of resources. “For rural areas this meant that each urban-based political party was able to create and maintain a national peasant organization by channelling state resources to that organization” (Martinez-

Torres, Rosset 2010). Under this corporatist arrangement in Latin America, for example (Klaren 1986) all the parties were able to maintain their correspondent peasant organization. “In fact these urban-based parties offered no real proposals of great interest to rural communities, as all of them adhered, more or less, to the philosophy that rural economic surpluses from agriculture must be extracted and transferred to urban areas in order to subsidize industrialization. This often maintains rural poverty. But they were able to buy the loyalty of their rural organizations by channelling state resources to them” (Martinez-Torres, Rosset 2010). Part of their social base, frustrated by the lack of structural changes that truly addressed poverty, joined armed revolutionary movements (Seligson 1996).

The leadership of the non-revolutionary peasant organizations was often clientelistic, because they were used as political machines in the service of urban electoral interests (Fox 1994 Petras and Veltmeyer 2002). However, the situation changed with the arrival of dictatorships, hostile by nature to political domesticated movements. Pushing for a change in economic direction of a neo-liberal structural adjustment during the 70s and 80s, have provoked a distancing of peasant corporatist and clientelistic organizations from their political base, which had no interest in maintaining this type of relationship. The conditions of the peasants worsened considerably, therefore, not only in Latin America but also in Africa and Asia.

Therefore, on the contrary, the new arisen organization have rejected any form of patronage and corporatism refusing instead to be subordinates with respect to urban interests. Compared to previous generations, they proved to be more

radical, they called for greater support to agriculture through the restoration of improved versions of state services, and the reduction of neoliberalism.

The opening of markets, the conclusion of free trade agreements, GATT, WTO and NAFTA, as previously mentioned, during the ’80s and ‘90s, have opened a serious problem that larger farmers' organizations have faced, such as the collapse of the crop and livestock prices. If your real enemy is beyond your national borders and is also the real enemy of your peers in other countries, then you must join forces with those peers to fight your common enemy (Desmarais 2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c, 2005, McMichael 2008). Identifying corporations and financial capital as the invisible forces behind international institutions, farmers' organizations are organized on a transnational basis, developing a counter-hegemonic political discourse, seeking common cause and common enemies from country to country.

3.4 First years of birth: setting up.

In some countries, farmers' organizations were struggling with their governments against liberalization and globalization. While the Uruguay Round progressed (it was started in 1986 in Punta del Este), the peasants, in some way represented by the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), strove to influence the positions of national governments, but they were mostly unheeded .

“La Vía Campesina has provided a space, and allies who are our peers, to form a network and jointly analyze our issues and problems, and develop new concepts

like food sovereignty"[1]. La Vía Campesina has provided them with "a space where they gain international (and national) respect, respect from other social movements, from institutions, and where they have greatly increased their self-esteem"[2].

When La Vía Campesina emerged, were already operating internationally various development NGOs, working closely with rural organizations and often declaring to speak on their behalf, claiming to represent them. However, this kind of dialogue should not be misunderstood, "farming people often did not recognize their own voices when they were communicated back to them"(Desmarais 2007:90). IN this context, the creation of La Vía Campesina addresses the need to give voice to a presence of independent peasant. While some NGOs were well prepared to accept the new role that social movements peasants could have within the international political landscape, others NGOs, while supporting their participation in the debate, claimed to control the internal dynamics of the movement by presiding over the selection process of the peasants members; others conditioned financial support to the direct participation of NGOs in the decisions of peasants, making erroneously match their interests. La Vía Campesina could not accept the existence of such dynamics, and for this reason his birth was very difficult, as Paul Nicholson, one of founding member of the movement, noted. "To date, in all global debates on agrarian policy, the peasant movement has been absent: we have not had a voice. The main reason for the very

[1] (CLOC. (1997) II Congreso de la Coordinadora Latinoamericana de Organizaciones del Campo. Peres Editores , Brasilia). Asian peasant leader speech.

[2] (CLOC. (1994) Ier Congreso de la Coordinadora Latinoamericana de Organizaciones del Campo. ALAI , Quito. La Vía Campesina staff member speech.

existence of the Via Campesina is to be that voice and to speak out for the creation of a more just society" (Paul Nicholson, quoted in Desmarais 2007, 96).

For this reason LVC has developed a peculiarity, namely that of not accepting organization that does not have as their foundation a peasant base. This also resulted in a clear strategy in a political sense: a strategy built around a movement made of poor people, people driven almost to extinction, teased too many times and never taken into account at the negotiating table. Just like other social movements, LVC have a deep sense of mistrust, channeling dissent through "conflict resolution", "stakeholder dialog", "World Bank consultations" and "participation", etc. (Rosset and Martinez 2010).

Peasants, therefore, at this stage have made their way forcefully through La Vía Campesina, participating and taking action through protests, mass mobilizations wherever key debates or international negotiations concerning rural communities would have taken place. With the message "we are here and we can speak for ourselves" they have completely removed the NGOs and taken their places at the table for their own account: this decision has been taken at the first La Vía Campesina Conference, where defined itself as the transnational peasant movement. Referring to a speech undertaken by Piven and Cloward (1978) The Vía Campesina movement can be classified as a transnational social moved which is mainly confrontational, different to those that tend to be conciliatory investing their energies in dialogue. In this way, it tends to be more successful because, according to the scholars, poor peoples' organisations are most effective at achieving their demands when they search for direct confrontation. "This is most clearly demonstrated by their militant opposition to the WTO. To date a

combination of La Via Campesina-led street protests and the stubborn refusal of many governments to give in to the US and European Union has kept the WTO stymied" (Martinez-Torres, Rosset 2010).

As we have seen, social movements try to build a globalization from below, and this also involves their leadership: in fact, unlike NGOs, organizations that are small, finite, composed of only a finite personal and a foundational council, whose membership is also not active in the sense that members are responsible upwards, they have a high capacity for mobilization, due to the fact that the staff is extremely small compared to the membership base. Seemingly La Via Campesina is composed of "peer" groups, avoiding internal tensions (typical in transnational networks where "old colonial patterns may be replicated in the relation between Northern-dominated nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and local grassroots organizations in the South" (Stahler-Sholk et al.2008).

This first phase of the birth of the movement is thus marked by a clear political position, than can be summed up reffering to its Second Conference held in Tlaxcala, Mexico, in April 1996. On that occasion, in fact, La Vía Campesina has laid the foundation not only of a simple coordination, but has established its own regional structure, and developed the ultimate design of food sovereignty.

3.5 Dialogue with International Organization: a place at the table

In a second successive phase, La Vía Campesina, following the Third Conference held in Bangolore, India between September and October of 2000, has developed

a strategy of alliances with other actors in order to put pressure on international organizations such as the World Bank, the WTO, but especially the FAO. The strength of the movement, and this become clearer from here on, lies in the fact that continuously tried to become a reference point for other movements and associations of rural farmers. La Vía Campesina has become the strongest actor of civil society than all others, undertaking a leading position. The example of this is the lead role played by La Via Campesina in the civil society forums, lobbying, and protest that helped lead to the collapse of the WTO Ministerial in Cancun, Mexico, in September 2003 (Rosset 2006). Identified as "clear enemies", IGOs such as the World Bank and the WTO are no worth of any dialogue, according to LVC position. However the movement didn't show resolute opposition only, and actually actors like FAO as alternative spaces to the World Bank and the WTO for determining agricultural and trade policies (Martinez-Torres, Rosset 2010).

Summing up in short, the framework for the anti-farmer has gathered around several agreements for the liberalization of trade, which since 1986 have taken place continuously, with the inauguration of the Uruguay Round GATT negotiations, become WTO in 1995; together as well as the establishment of several regional and bilateral agreements (e.g NAFTA) which resulted in fluctuations in the prices of commodities, the global homogenization to consume, emphasis on large-scale agroexport production to the detriment of peasant agriculture, widespread privatization, and the growing corporate control over all aspects of food production, processing, and marketing (McMichael 2004).

Among these harmful aspects is also important to mention the phenomenon of dumping (i.e the export of products to countries in the developing world at a

lower price than the price of production). This has prevented peasants from entering the competition, deepening them into a state of poverty, insofar it has highly lowered the price of crops that make earning a livelihood off the land increasingly impossible. The downward thrust of agricultural prices has been helped by the adoption of this policy by all the major exporting countries, with compensatory subsidies for larger, wealthier farmers, in which giant trading corporations like Cargill and Archer-Daniels-Midland can buy cheap, export to other countries, undercut local farmers there, and capture ever growing market segments in those countries (Rosset 2006).

In this context the tactics set by La Via Campesina does not seek for a technical comparison, but quickly moves the debate towards a moral dimension of "right-wrong". It is a political strategy that, through transnational coordination with its allies, seeking to occupy and defend a political space. "This has proven to be an effective strategy for shifting the terms of the debate on many of the issues that La Via Campesina addresses" (Rosset and Martinez 2010).

Its fierce struggle is oriented to a greater extent towards a constant opposition to the WTO, which is considered a key instrument within the process of globalization. Its uniqueness as a transnational social movement and strongest actor of the civil society, lies in the "sui generis" approach in addressing the debate on food security.

The position of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP) about international trade is oriented towards similar positions of the Via Campesina insofar it is convinced that there must exist some form of regulation for the creation of more equitable food and agriculture markets. However, unlike

the Via Campesina, its positions have gradually changed until the acceptance of the inevitability of liberalization. “serves to ensure that economic growth and greater integration of the world economy fulfills its potential to enhance the livelihoods of family farmers throughout the world, contributes to the eradication of poverty, and promotes and economically, socially and environmentally sustainable path for agricultural development” (IFAP 1998a:4).

The IFAP actively participates to WTO works and reunions: regular meetings between its Secreteriat and staff of the WTO in Geneva have been made with the final purpose of trying to influence international decisions so that they are somehow bound into account the interests of farmers (Desmarais 2007). The goal is to strengthen farmers' organizations within the international decisions in the field of agriculture, offering a model of gradual liberalization of the market, so that the countries of the South can slowly recover the gap (IFAP 1998b, 2000). The acceptance of liberalization should, in this view, be conditioned to a stronger participation of the farmers in international organizations.

Radically different is the position of La Vía Campesina. “Food is the first and foremost a source od nutrition and only secondarily an item of trade”. The need for agricultural trade is not excluded entirely, but placed in a subordinate position: the new perspective formulated regards the involvement of human rights. The production of food must be directed first to the satisfaction of those needs regarding food security issues, within the framework of food sovereignty: “Food is a basic human right. This right can only be realized in a system where food sovereignty is guaranteed” (Vía Campesina 1996:1-2).

The industrial agriculture model that La Via Campesina denounces is that imposed from above, leading to the destruction of biodiversity, exacerbating environmental degradation and contributing massively to the impoverishment of the rural world all over the world. The WTO rulings are therefore firmly rejected, mainly because "forced liberalization of trade in agricultural products across regions around the world" (Vía Campesina 2000a:1) resulting in " a disastrously low prices for many of the crops produced".

Food sovereignty rejects the right of export and the broad power of the WTO at the global level, and rejects the notion of food security advocated by it, that is "assuring an adequate supply of *imported food* " (Stevens et al. 2000: 3). All countries have the duty, according to the Via Campesina, to develop their agricultural policies ensuring the well-being of their people, cultures and natural environments.

However, ironically, international agreements grant Member States the right to ensure that well-being, but at the same time restrict their action in a framework of international trade. What La Via Campesina demands Is that "trade (should) not be the first proprity over all else" (Desmarais, 2007: 111) The organization of trade regime must ensure more justice and fairness, and thus be framed within a perspective focused on human rights. That would change completely the nature of the WTO, by questioning its foundation. For this reason LVC calls for agriculture to remain out of WTO's legislation.

We can conclude by saying that the position of the movement Via Campesina has fluctuated between a reformist and radical one. The compromise between these two perspective led, rather than a call for the total abolition of the WTO, to its

reduction within an international framework that would aspire to become more democratic and transparent on food and agriculture.

3.6 Mobilization and resistance.

As previously argued, Vía Campesina and the IFAP operate dichotomously at international level for the definition of agricultural policies. Dealing with a greater degree of medium and small producers, the Movement uses the means of mobilization together with mass demonstrations and direct actions also. “Only in certain contexts that offer adequate space for negotiation will the Vía Campesina co-operate and collaborate to work for favorable policy changes” (Desmarais 2007:112) La Via Campesina also underline the fact that negotiations must always be followed or accompanied by mobilization (Vía Campesina 2000b).

Yet from its birth the leaders of the movement begin to put pressure on the WTO in Geneva, vigorously supporting the democratization of trade negotiations, catalyzing the frustration of farmers through public manifestations. What is asked to the governments was “to negotiate a fair international trade order which plays fair prices, does not destroy family farming and leaves each region with the possibility of securing its own food supply” (Via Campesina 1993). The next second WTO Ministerial Conference held in May 1998 saw the return to the scene of demonstrations by Via Campesina, as the promises of change advocated by the first meeting had not been maintained, and the results obtained since the previous Conference had further deteriorated the social tissue of rural communities. The

reaction of the international institutions in these protests can be summed up in the words of Bill Clinton: “Globalization is not a policy choice - it is a fact”.

However, crop failures contributed to a greater strengthening of the position of Via Campesina, who alone in Geneva, unlike other organizations, had represented people whose very subsistence and possibility of income would required fundamental changes, led by agriculture in patterns of production and marketing of food. In fact, the third Ministerial Conference, marked by fierce protests in the streets (Battle of Seattle headlines media) and the growing internal opposition from some countries in the developing world contributed to the failure of the launch of the Millennium Round, raising a question of delegitimization of the WTO.

“The Fiasco[…] dealt a huge blow to the World Trade Organization and to prospect for freer trade. The WTO’s credibility is lower than it has never been. The Seattle summit has also raised doubts about whether the WTO’s unwieldy structure and arcane procedures can cope with 135 member-countries all demanding their say” (The Economist 1999:17).

Thus from then on the WTO could have no longer ignored the voices of dissent. Globalization was somehow reversing its route. A new international force, a globalization from below, was taking place. “The debacle in Seattle was a setback for freer trade and a boost for critics of globalization[…]The NGOs that descended on Seattle were a model of everything the trade negotiators were not. They were well organized. They built unusual coalitions (environmentalists and labour groups, for instance, bridged old gulfs to jeer the WTO together). They had a clear agenda - to derail the talks. And they were masterly users of the media […]

In short, citizens' groups are increasingly powerful at the corporate, national and international level" (The Economist 1999:18).

The Fourth Conference was held in the name of a small number of non-governmental organizations as the WTO, mounting the excuse of having a few of hospitality facilities in Doha, limited their participation. Although the media have not given neither space nor importance to each other, in those days there were protests in almost all over the world. "Still, the opposition was not completely co-opted or silenced. The sixty representatives of more action-oriented and critical NGOs and social movements, including one Via Campesina representative, who did make it to Doha engaged in daily protests, and they kept the res of the world informed with regular reports on the process of deliberations." (Desmarais 2007:115).

The protests and moves advanced by Via Campesina, however, were not limited to demonstrations in the form of national and local resistance to the WTO. In Taiwan, for example, in 1998, thousands of farmers have launched in the offices of the United States pig dung, as form of protest against the opening of the american market of poultry and pigs (WTO News, 1998: 1) However, more concrete action the Movement has enacted is perhaps represented by its courageous fight against the imposition of genetically modified seeds, so called transgenic. Via Campesina in fact, considers this as serious expropriation to farmers, because it deprives them of the essential tools to produce. The fight on the seeds that has been set up since then had global repercussions and resulted consequently intensified. From the Conféderation Paysanne's denaturation of Novartis GMO seeds in France (Bové 1998), the KRRS's destruction of Bt-cotton

fields in India, the MST's blocking of Argentinian ships delivering generically modified seed to Brazil (Osava 2000), to the Canadian NFU's work against the introduction of genetically modified what (NFU 2003), peasants and farmers are refusing to let transnational take control over seeds (Desmarais 2007:116). In fact, in addition to the national and local resistance, the concrete action deployed together with MST was that crucial to eradicate three hectares of Monsanto's GMO soy occupying those laboratories and warehouses that were distributing the seeds. This can be considered not only as the first action at the transnational level of farmers gathering together, but above all an example of international pressure that has inspired many other movements and organizations of farmers, including for example, the manifestations of KRRS, regional coordinator of Via Campesina, which has managed to bring together in India about half a million peasants and received support even in politics. These events highlight how often illiterate farmers may be able to grasp the social consequences of economic decisions taken by actors away from them, and how it is possibile to educate the public and government officials (as demonstrated for example by the public criticism of the WTO part by SP Skhula - former ambassador to the GATT and VP Sing - former Prime Minister of India) modifying and influencing public opinion.

The role of Via Campesina on the international arena has attracted the attention of a growing number of NGOs and international institutions, including for example the World Bank, the FAO, the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR). In turn, these organizations seek the continued participation of the international peasant movement to seek greater legitimacy on policies and programs discussed.

But international experience accumulated by the movement highlights important features of the Movement. The GFAR, organized in 2000 an international conference in Dresden, inviting to participate important national and international institutions of agricultural research, NGOs, Monsanto and Novartis, the Via Campesina itself and the FIPA. As a result, hoping to make progress through closer cooperation with the Movement, which raised a lot of success internationally, proposed a sort of ad hoc arrangements. The Via Campesina refused it denouncing the undemocratic processes ("escamotages") that were the basis for the setting of the conference (including the fact that the peasants were not invited to speak in the plenary and that critical issues were relegated to secondary position in the agenda). So initially, even though had shared common spaces with the FIPA and the same GFAR, La Via Campesina, actively resisting any attempt of assimilation, deemed these were methods to try to co-opt and to silence a movement that from the start has declared itself democratic, respectful of diversisty and that sharing responsibilities with its social base. Via Campesina generally insist that it be allowed to speak on its own behalf in all spaces. As a result has carved put a space for itself among key international institutions, which now meet with IFAP and Via Campesina separately or provide spaces for each. Given IFAP's relatively more reformist/conformist stance towards agricultural trade in the WTO, the Via Campesina refuses to collaborate with the International Federation of Agricultural Producers in these crucial negotiations (Desmarais 2007). Participation entails serious economics and political questions, because it can be seen with an attempt at co-opting or to legitimize the institution sponsoring the meeting itself. This effort is most evident during those attempts to match

business interests together in one place with NGOs or civil society actors. Paul Nicholson writes: “Multilateral institution tend to slot us all into one space - a space that we must also share with agribusiness. This multi-stakeholder process is the bureaucratization of participation. It smells rotten and effectively serves to distance the base. It is not only a problem of methodology […] It is a process that dilutes and lightens the content, makes it politically correct, and ultimately renders the result useless” […] “The Via Campesina must have autonomy to determine the space it will occupy with the objective of securing a large enough space to effectively influence the event. It is not acceptable to participate on the invitee’s terms in ways which subsume or erase our identity and use our credibility without giving us space to articulate our own interests and select our own representatives” (Vía Campesina 2000c:2)

While on the one hand international organizations seek to consult with actors of the civil society on crucial issues, such as farmers in this case, trying to give space to pursue and support their political world trade, on the other hand this active participation is often conditioned to the extent that requires considerable human and financial resources. Therefore for organizations such as La Via Campesina, this is impossible to achieve. Within the WTO there is no room for the Via Campesina to access the final decisions influencing and controlling them, because its strategy and position seriously calls into question the neoliberal orthodoxy.

As a direct consequence, therefore, on the one hand, the FIPA sits alongside IGOs and NGOs claiming to represent all the farmers of the planet, while Via Campesina founds space on the street, demonstrating and influencing world public opinion. And, judging from the WTO’s increasingly fragile legitimacy and

declining credibility both in certain government circles and the general public (Desmarais 2007), Via Campesina tactics would seem to be succeeding.

3.7 The Internationalization of Peasants. The significance of La Via Campesina.

“We have accomplished this through a bottom-up, not a top down process. The local struggles Already Existed (Thousands of them), what La Via Campesina has done is give them a body of common analysis, and linked them with each other. What all this adds up to is the Strengthening of universal demands and struggle - European Peasants leader. "(Desmarais 2003)

This statement by a European leader during the Second International Conference of Via Campesina witness the fact that the Movement has been built from the bottom up, is independent from governments, political parties, donors and NGOs, and does not represent special interests of certain categories of farmers. Today La Via Campesina is an international reference point for social movement in raising and discussing rural issues and problems, in the construction of proposals, mediated by the legitimacy and trust forged through its years of struggle. It is a new space of 'citizenship' (Borras and Franco 2009).

Assuming positions of collective challenge to the WTO and the World Bank, while also putting forth consistent and coherent alternative proposals, la Via Campesina has created a true peasant internationalism, rather than a discourse of North-South confrontation. The experience of the Movement in response to globalization has brought together families of farmer in the North and the South,

which have in turn created the foundations on which to develop a common identity.

According to Walden Bello (2003) the success of a transnational movement lies in its ability to effectively analyze the global context of the moment, developing accurate tactics and strategies. Not only that, the mode of operation of Via Campesina has built, to use the words of Eschle (2001), spaces and structures, processes and mechanisms to ensure inclusive democratic decision-making and participation. A transnational political movement seeks to make policy with alternative methods, with the inclusion and participation, directly challenging the exclusionary policies of the dominant processes. As we have seen, if a social movement defines its opposition to an increasingly exclusionary and homogenizing world order, supporting the involvement and embracing diversity as a core value, it will tend to build internal processes that reflect these values. The transformatory potential of movements is greatly influenced both by power relations within movements themselves and by the power dynamics in the social and political context in which the movements function (Desmarais 2007).

It's a matter of fact that the birth of the Via Campesina in 1993 has put in motion a process that led to the increasing formation of independent movements that discuss alternatives, coordinating and organizing strategies by joining forums and conferences all over the world. For example, in the 2001 Social Forum of Porto Alegre participants were about 10,000, the following year more than 50,000, in 2004 one hundred thousand and one hundred and fifty in 2005. Resistance movements are active at the local, national and international levels, ant there is no time and stronger co-ordination between different sectors of civil society (Via

Campesina 2003). Despite the forecast of the Economist in 2004 that foresaw the end of the movement for global justice, those have not disappeared. After September 11, 2001, they have instead continued to widen.

Certainly, anyway the peasant movements have continued without any kind of slowing down. For example, in 2002, peasant and indigenous organizations paraded together against the proposed Free Trade Agreement of the Americas. In 2003, the organizers of the protest itself blocked the streets of Quito continuing the struggle, the government responded by deploying ten thousand soldiers. However, this didn't prevent the President Sánchez de Lozada from tendering his resignation. In Mexico, very strong protests were addressed against the measures contained in the Agreement on Agriculture NAFTA; while in India the same year, farmers along with students were asking to multinational companies to leave the country, forming a human chain of about 300km. After the death of Lee Kyung Hae while the demonstrations against the Fifth Ministerial Conference were taking place in Cancún, the Via Campesina gained more resonance, leading to the so-called "collapse of Cancún."

"The Fifth Ministerial Conference of the WTO ended […] in complete failure […] From September 8-14 we engaged in significant days of struggle, first, within the framework of the International Peasant and Indigenous Forum, and later, in diverse street demonstrations both inside and outside the convention center where the negotiators were concentrated. The peasant and indigenous march […] set the tone for the resistance and struggle of the following days.

On September 13 (2003), with patience and great courage, one hundred women from all over the world piece by piece dismantled the barricade that impeded

entry to the convention center. The Korean Peasants together with a large part of the crowd joined in this action and using thick ropes we tore down the walls. This was a symbol of the WTO that would soon collapse in Cancún. The thousands of police and military stood there ready to quell the protesters but no one was intent on confronting them. Our non-violent confrontation was with the WTO, not with the police and the miltary[…] The collapse of the WTO is a result of a profound crisis within the neoliberal model. It is urgent that we continue to strengthen our movements, our alternative proposals. Creating an open, transparent and constructive dialogue among ourselves is all the more necessary to advance in our strategies of struggle" (Via Campesina press release 2003b).

And so it was. In 2005, Via Campesina was present during the Ministerial Conference of the WTO in Hong Kong, also joined by the locals. In 2006, for the International Day of Peasant Struggle in April 17, 2006, organizations and associate friend of Via Campesina demonstrate in the streets in Palestine, the United States and in Mozambique. Even in Bangladesh and in Brazil there were land occupations and protests in front of Brazil's embassies in Italy, Spain and France, calling for the end of "ten years of impunity for the massacre of Eldorado".

Wherever in the world people had show no confidence in the food system. The movements of resistance within and outside Via Campesina, fighting against the privatization of common goods, the introduction of GMOs in food crops, the use of irradiation in food, have linked these efforts as an attempt to subvert a new global order which threatens and endangers the culture and the community. It would be sufficient to recall the outbreak of mad cow disease, the contamination

of GMO corn in Mexico, the avian influenza, the Escherichia coli in the United States, to bring examples that have raised huge doubts and concerns about food security, which in turn led citizens to take an interest towards alternative dietary patterns, such as the organic market.

"All these conditions represent an important political moment for progressive farm organization" (Desmarais 2003). In fact, in this context, Via Campesina has successfully managed to bring together and catalyze the protests and resistance to these changes in global agriculture. If for years we have heard bureaucrats and rulers repeating the same phrase "there is no alternative to globalization" today thanks to transnational social movement and above all to La Via Campesina we cannot be so sure of it anymore, in the sense that in some way the peasants, farmers and their supporters actively contribute to globalize another idea of how the world should be. "We learned that we were not the only ones struggling. Globalization has meant the impoverishment of the majority of communities. All the communities of the world that have been deeply affected, overwhelmed and crushed by this economic globalization - we are organizing ourselves. In other words, we need to globalize this struggle for justice, for the survival of community, for the development of communities. We need to globalize this struggle in the poorest of communities everywhere just as the large capitalists have globalized the economy." (Servando Olivarria Saavedra, Mexico peasant leader).

The Via Campesina has shown that those words of philosophers and political analysts, so called "Masters of globalization" (Desmarais 2007), predicting the demise of the peasantry at the beginning of the century were wrong; has jealously

preserved its fundamental characteristic, that is, to be led by peasants; has resisted attempts to co-opt and intrusion, as well as pressures from reformist organizations and international institutions that have often tempted the Movement with the promise of funds under the condition to change its agenda. Has resisted in order to consistently articulate and advance proposals on the international arena, defending the needs of those who produce food. Its greatest contribution was precisely to ensure that "international agriculture and food deliberations on issues such as agrarian reform, GMOs and the control and ownership of seed, sustainable agricultural practices, human rights and gender equality in the countryside, and the role of international trade in ensuring food sovereignty" would have been placed at the center of the political agenda (Desmarais 2007).

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this work was to critically analyze the global food activism in recent years, in order to identify what has been recognized as the birth of new

trends in the globalization process and discuss, through a focus box on La Via Campesina, an example of how a transnational movement can articulate its objectives and political strategy on a international stage.

In conclusion, it was tried here to show how transnational social movements, bringing the example of food activism, have altered the interstate system, to the extent that they are able to activate latent conflicts, highlighting contradictions between the geoculture's normative and legitimating elements, undermining the legitimacy of the dominant order (Smith, Duncan 2012). The role of the activists is to reinforce an idea of change that is significantly different from the capitalist market logic. The resonance of the new rules and idea brought into the debate by these movements, through discourses of food sovereignty in this case, is part of a global alternative project, in which social movements are creating and legitimating alternative practices that both define and can help the creation of an alternative system of world politics.

Specifically, the formation and consolidation of Via Campesina shows how peasants have not been amenable to this process of economic restructuring, but instead have actively resisted to the imposition of this top-down model. The cultural politics of this movement, in its proposals for a resetting of a new international agenda, has increased the awareness on how food today is conceived, i.e as a political act, linked to business, and thus damaging not only farmers, but also it introduces new mechanisms that escape democratic control.

These transnational identities have contributed in some way to make more explicit and blatant those contradictions that exist between practices and norms of the world-system today. In particular, with La Via Campesina, it has been improved

the potential that these anti-system movements have, in a time when global capitalism is suffering a deep crisis.

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