

# DOSSIER “STRATEGIES ON FOOD AND NUTRITIONAL SAFETY”

## FOREWORD

Food security has drawn the attention not only of scholars that unravel it, but also of governmental and global organizations that promote public policies and strategies to mitigate the consequences of famine and malnutrition, which affect hundreds of millions people worldwide. However stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, it was in the World Food Summit of 1996 that food security reached visibility by being characterized as a state in which everyone is granted right of physical and economical access to the nutritious food they need for a healthy and active living. However, such a definition does not encompass the negative effects of a growing supremacy of markets and the spreading of neoliberal structural policies fostered by multilateral organizations and transnational corporations. These are, in fact, determinant factors of food insecurity, to which alarming statistics on overweight caused by the consumption of processed foods contribute.

Differently, the concept of food security has been broadened by the coordinated action of social movements and non-governmental organizations that follow a counter-hegemonic agenda based on food sovereignty. Their focus lies on the need for counteracting the ever growing famine and poverty brought about by the excessive consumption of processed foods, the sad outcome of an agrifood system that expands from neoliberalism while compensatory state policies are depressed. In this sense, the idea of food sovereignty challenges the globalization of markets and the agrifood system by restoring food as a right by which countries protect their own populations and promote local agrifood systems and practices while keeping fair land ownership and protected natural resources. From a social justice perspective, food involves the right of producers and their communities to control their own resources and to ensure regular supplies. The construction of such an alternative agenda, that stands against the current food order is, therefore, a reaction to a state of food insecurity that defies governments and organizations.

In accordance with the considerations above, the articles in this issue tackle different aspects of the complex food (in)security theme. Upon delineating the world food order under hegemonic markets, a straight connection between food insecurity and the increasing social inequality is presented, revealing how the dominant economic model has failed to distribute the outcomes of accumulation and expansion. Still in global terms, regulation of commerce is discussed in an appraisal of the liberal character of international relations, often mistaken for a pathway to development. The expectations that the World Trade Organization would promote food security after the Doha round were frustrated by the implementation of a clause under which developing countries are allowed to safeguard their food supplies by adopting protective agricultural policies. Another approach to the subject is to discuss the leading role of the civil society in the establishment of a legal landmark for the human right of access to proper food, by which social control of the Judiciary could be implemented. The right to food is therefore discussed in light of the dialogue between the organized society and the State, so that public policies be adopted in accordance with democratically

expressed demands of social movements. The discussion goes in line with the concept of food sovereignty, which emphasizes the rights of people and communities over trade.

The use of food commodities for the production of biofuels is one of the most widely discussed themes nowadays. This conflicting use of food materials is approached with the argument that biofuels can also be produced from processed lignocellulosic biomass, without compromising food supplies. Specifically regarding technological alternatives, by criticizing the prevailing food and agricultural model, an article delves a sociological explanation of the ecological subfield, with emphasis on the role of social movements, especially that of landless workers (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem-terra, MST) as political agents of food security and sovereignty via ecological agriculture.

Also in a counter-hegemonic sense, with emphasis on the establishment of a food security strategy by social agents, the adoption of agroecological organic street markets as a food supply policy of Curitiba is discussed. The role of family farmers and marketers in such activities highlights the importance of articulating the State and the civil society toward local food security. Regarding public policies geared to family farming, which is responsible for most of the food production in Brazil, the national fostering program for family farming (Programa Nacional de Fortalecimento da Agricultura Familiar, PRONAF) is discussed as the main agricultural policy for that social segment. However, increased credit supplies for export commodities over basic food have caused the policy to undergo adaptations. Despite allowing for a better degree of food security among farmers, the greater income from such commodities can be detrimental to society as a whole. Accordingly, a food acquisition program (Programa de Aquisição de Alimentos, PAA), which has proven to be a most relevant public policy since its inception in 2003, is discussed. The program has been able to articulate interests and demands of cooperating family farmers with those of consumers in social vulnerability and food insecurity. Finally, it is well known that children are most dramatically affected by the state of food insecurity, with inevitable consequences to their cognitive capacity and overall development. This is dealt with in a discussion on school catering in the State of Paraná, which stresses the local advances and setbacks in food security and their implications on students and family farmers.

Although the articles assembled here address specific topics, their authors are all motivated by concerns brought about by an unsettling state of food insecurity that self-perpetuates as a trait of society. Far from the pretense of exhausting the complex subject of food security, this collection of works contributes to its understanding, shedding light on important initiatives devised to overcome, even if locally, the serious problems caused by famine and malnutrition, which are inconceivable at this point in history. Finally, for the record, the objectives initially set for this issue of the *Revista Paranaense de Desenvolvimento* would not have been accomplished without the help of Ipardes and RPD editor, Roberto Carlos Evencio de Oliveira da Silva, who took over this idea of giving food security the visibility it deserves.

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