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CONCLUSION

The vitality of everyday food

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In this book on social change and development in agriculture and food in Latin America, we have sought to address how agriculture and food unfold within the vitality of everyday experience. Born from an ambition to further our conceptual understanding of how food matters to the organization of people, the book can be read as an ethnographic critique of a romantic vision of norms and the aggregate capacity of institutions. In contrast to such abstractions, the chapters draw on highly empirical research to illustrate how people play a crucial role in creating real-life events. By fulfilling democratic values, they provide relevant instances capable of moving food debates beyond the present-day controversies over food security and sovereignty.

From a methodological standpoint, the chapters share a commitment to real-time study of food practice and a “flat” ontological perspective – that is, free from assumptions of *a priori* relationships between people and food based, for example, on gender, race, or class. While such social categories may be useful for describing differentiation, their application can become self-reifying, leading to little questioned suppositions on continuity and change.

In their study of a range of ongoing struggles, negotiations and accommodations involving different actors, the authors explored how people draw upon different repertoires of knowledge, assets, values, and forms of civic movement to create new forms of corporeality. The resulting book is regionally situated, politically engaged, and conceptually emboldened. Interested in strengthening the empirical grounding of food studies, we view this as part of an ongoing reappraisal of the relationships embodied in food production, circulation, and consumption.

In continuation, we explore what this collection contributes to our collective insight into agriculture and food developments in Latin America. At the end, we propose a brief research agenda for a more critical approach in food studies.

Agrofood realities: challenging common wisdom

As summarized in the introduction to this book, the agrofood studies literature is rife with accounts of the revolutionary fervor of peasant farmers and urban-based consumers organizing to fight against the avarice of an out-of-control “global food system.” In contrast, the empirical work presented here – from the bio-intensive Tenate food basket in Oaxaca, Mexico (Chapter 10), water-for-food production (Chapter 5) or the use of milking technology (Chapter 6) in Ecuador to the New Dawn Milk Cooperative in Mar del Plata, Argentina (Chapter 12) – identifies another dynamic: one characterized not just by *a fight against* a system or regime, but rather *a fight for* highly pragmatic materializations of values. The case material shows that food is not merely constructive (i.e., it is not solely the product of intention or design); food is also born and borne through a nexus of relational encounters. As such, food is not just the intentional expression of identity, but it also is a product of the relations generated in and through interactive processes of production, circulation, and consumption. In other words, food is both constructed and constituted through situated practice.

Social studies in agriculture and food, particularly as applied in socio-environmental studies, are often based on essentialism and positivism, especially when representing worlds that are epistemologically defined as a natural state. This normative pathway has led to a preoccupation with a search for social principles and basic rights. Over time this perspective has become the central agenda for a proposal of state-based governance that seeks a predictable, stable society that is capable of managing contemporary risks. Nevertheless, as the chapters throughout this volume reveal, the social world is fundamentally open, unpredictable, and creative. The case material finds no underlying principles or universal explanations in the social world, but only processes, relationships, objects, and corporealities, as generated through daily interactions with food.

The chapters call attention to new relational forms enabled through food that emerge and catalyze actors, things, affects, and bodies into a new corporeality of existence. In so doing, the different experiences permit a grounded reflection on relational being and public good as forged through contemporary food practice – namely, saving seed and planting a field, bringing water to plants, milking a cow, delivering, procuring and preparing food, and weaving a hat as well as the endlessly visceral sensations tied to eating. Most basically, the resulting processes stimulate multiple, contested events and materialities that question – theoretically, methodologically and normatively – the long-standing social science tradition of separation between object and subject.

In the authors’ examination of contemporary agrofood embodiments, we find that research and engagement with bodies – both public and civic – involves multiple and overlapping socio-political relations tied to the senses as well as to particular life histories. We find that the research provides the basis for better understanding how people and things bring forth coexisting food-worlds, as it announces a need for further analytical attention to common, and at times

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discrepant, agrofood materializations. The chapters present how experience is constituted through a multiplicity of materialities. In effect this work travels beyond a subject-object divide towards infinitely creative, if contingent, flows in which food is embodied and given corporeal expression.

Several chapters, but most notably Silva *et al.* (Chapter 11), adopt an ethnographic view of food as a public good, fundamental to people's social life and wellbeing. This particular study exposes a struggle between state-supported crop production solely for flour against a well-established cottage industry for artisanal bread and straw hats, leading to competing territorial configurations and assemblages. Other examples included a multinational celebration, consumer responsibility, and citizen-organized food consumption and political mobilization. Taken together, these cases reveal how food contributes to ways in which different bodies of knowledge are constructed and constituted.

The chapters highlight an increasing dissolution of spatial boundaries dividing jobs and processes (production, consumption, and eating), administrative units (farms, markets, government agencies, cooperatives and organizations) and countries, generating ebbs and flows of information, images and emergent properties among individuals, social groups, and entities that coexist in a variety of modes of being, all of which demand food – as a public good in a multiplicity of forms, shapes, and quantities. The authors describe diverse inter-weavings of practice, values, and ideas that take material form, including a collective food basket, a common crop or meal, a milking machine, a paradise tourism destination, a formalized farmer's network, and an international cooking event. These embodiments and corporealities are sites of the re-assembling of relationships of (ill)health, (un)sustainability, and (in) equality in wealth and power.

The literature on food sovereignty commonly places the dominant actors of food pleasures and travails in a tidy narrative of oppositions involving marginalized, victimized peasant farmers and helpless consumers facing powerful abstract entities: transnational corporations, the state, science, and an out-of-control global food configuration. Likewise, in its effort to identify natural relations and to generalize agriculture and food as tied to a global transcendence of alternativeness, food studies literature often overlooks people's empirical reality – that is, the actualities of life at home and on the streets. The notion of a critical transcendence in food studies postulates that processes of food globalization can only be contained through state regulation, ignoring, for example, the gap between government discourses about sovereignty and an excluded people eking out a living in some remote territory. One can question whether national regulations can truly allow citizens to set their own agenda for inclusion and for ending political marginalization. In addition, one can ask which part of the nation-state can be trusted to support people's actions and their values of environmental sustainability, social justice, dignity, and fair income.

Nevertheless, our main preoccupation with this politically correct and transcendental analysis is more specific. We ask: what do nation-state policies mean when key institutional actors in the state, but also in social movements and global forums,

distance themselves from people's reterritorialization of trade, labor, environment, health, and food? Food studies commonly loses sight of the contingency in food as well as the creativity of emergent embodiments and their corporealities and multiplicities (i.e., a manifold network of processes that interact with one another), which often lie outside of cognitive categories or the expectations of how life uniquely unfolds. In this vein, we argue that the *immanence* (i.e., the realm of "God's presence within" or, in other words, the mundane) in food studies involves a democratic and inclusive politic of life, in which actors involved in the nation-state, social movements, and multinational corporations, among other spaces, seek to extend influence and control. The notion of an international public movement for equality and social and environmental justice may be difficult to achieve outside of the description and empirical analysis that reveals the material existence of efforts to assemble globalization processes, be it through resistance from below or via existence from within. A number of chapters in this book, but in particular Oscar Reyna's work on the Wirikuta nomadism and rebellious Peyote (Chapter 7), analyze such efforts and reveal a potential public ontology that, while being more than merely social, challenges the popular institutional epistemology of regulations through which the vast majority of present-day food studies seeks to explain transformations in agriculture and food.

Meanwhile, the daily experience of family farmers in the Galapagos Islands (Chapter 8) demonstrates how organic, home-grown and locally marketed food can effectively block the leading source of invasive species to the islands (i.e., the introduction of fresh food from the continent) and decrease dependence on fossil fuels (due to dependence on food brought in by ship from the 1,000 kilometers of distance between the islands and the Ecuadorean mainland), reminding us that repetition in the shared understandings and values of environmentalism, but also in food studies, has come at the cost of seeing the creativity in the actualities of people's daily encounters with food. A social construction of paradise leads to notions of ecotourism in the Galapagos, indigeneity in the Amazon (Chapter 3), and producer-consumer relationships in places such as Oaxaca and Valdivia (Chapter 13). In the process of attempting to generalize human experience, social scientists commonly overlook nuanced opportunities, for example in nature conservation, the protection of a culture, or the capability of bio-intensive farming to unleash affordable, healthy food. The studies presented here diversely explain food as a public experience, transformation, and active embodiment with the potential of providing what Gilles Deleuze or Manuel de Landa (as explained in Chapters 12 and 13) might describe as rhizomatic access to food, environmental concerns, rights and the politic of justice.

Leaky embodiments: finding the flow of existence

Bringing to the fore the matter of the body, the significance of food (dis)embodiments reinforces how issues of food quality raise new policy concerns for national governments, civic movements, growers, retailers and consumers as

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rapid economic, urban, and rural changes become manifest in people's physical-material being. Over time this has become reflected in, for example, national health statistics on morbidity and mortality rates. Beyond concerns over the immediate human body, health, and nutrition in relation to food, the cases in this book demonstrate how collective embodiments become a vehicle for political action and environmental (dis)content. Here we have seen how particular foodways incorporate (un)sustainable production and consumption practices, thereby influencing notions of place, power, and risk. Feeding into this are everyday experiences of (ir)responsible production, circulation, and consumption that enable or disable certain food associations.

Taken together, the chapters position the body at the center of emergent social relations between nature and culture, subject and object, and inequality and justice. With the breakdown of a series of oppositional categories (urban-rural, consumption-production, rich-poor, and North-South), the actors begin to generate new food corporealities, engendered through their practice. In analyzing this, the authors (re)problematize human and nonhuman actors in assemblages, thereby revealing the political significance of bodies in action. This activity manifests the multiple ways in which food is linked to experience and the consumption of modernized polluted environments, to affects (memory, fear and nostalgia), to the yearning for exotic food-stuffs, and to social policies that address basic public services. It also is tied to a proliferation of "public bads" – the unwanted, yet increasingly undeniable collective products of modern food, such as mass pesticide poisonings, pandemic overweight/obesity, and global warming.

Our distinctive public ontology focuses on the notion of multiple subjectivities, in which actor's bodies rhizomatically associate material things (such as a landscape or a food product) with nonhuman entities (culinary knowledge, bacteria, and microorganisms). Such human – nonhuman associations intensify the experiential qualities of situation and place (e.g., the taste of a particular wine or recipe), thereby generating space for action, creativity, affect, and common sense. The resulting embodiments become a potentiality in the hands of actors involved in public events, the production and distribution of goods, or the activities of competitive or cooperative coordination. In the process, new subjectivities may emerge that are capable of objectivizing (i.e., distributing the object of food in rhizomatical fashion through different subjects) emergent materialities, as observed in the nomadic use of Peyote in the Wirikuta Desert as well as during the Ajijic Chili Cook-offs in Mexico (Chapter 1). The authors explain the manifestations as the outcome of temporary, unstable, "fluid" materiality. These food corporealities – be they in the form of seamless human-Peyote relationships or a valued pot of chili – are what Michel Foucault calls "somatic singularities," which constitute a contemporary unknown within a horizon of imperceptibility and specific difference.

The empirical research in this book poses a much needed challenge to the orthodoxy of social science on agriculture and food in Latin America, in particular with regard to the largely unquestioned reliance on reference points that focus on state, science, and the market. By implication, environmental and social goods tend

to dwell on rationality and formalized institutions. While a critical project does not abandon the expectations for a better future, it preoccupies itself with the practicalities of survival. As explained by Paola Silva and colleagues in Chapter 11, food can be considered as a public good, which for them implies a being that cannot be treated merely as natural object, but rather food also can be part of assemblages of distributed subjectivities, involving both the human and nonhuman.

Coming to the fore is how agriculture and food are the outcome of largely expressive, non-dialectic processes of being and becoming. The case material presented here – from bringing water to bear on food in Ambuqui and the appropriation of government-supported technology in Santo Domingo to the constitution of modern rural diets in Carchi and the flavor and taste of childhood food in the Putumayo – sheds light on the contingency, agency, and self-organization in agriculture and food as a configuration of assemblages from within and without, rather than against or from below. This perspective contrasts with approaches that emphasize how agrofood actors (and entities) perform according to universal principles or conditions or some other preordained schemata. In the terminology expressed in a number of experiences in the book, including the Tenate food baskets in Oaxaca and the 250,000 Families Campaign in Ecuador (Chapter 14), our empirical work from within food movements does not find a mere struggle of resistance, but rather situated and pragmatic endeavors of “momentum” and “sensation” found in *existence*. Accordingly, food is not simply a matter of understanding, representation, and authorship, but more so it is a part of unpredictable and even inexplicable processes of formation, invention, and fabrication as well as accident.

Food engagements: public goods and their potentials

The public goods that emerge through assemblage and association in the different cases are organized and made effective by means of practice and voice, and they come to be through diverse *modus operandi* (procedures, techniques, and rituals) that effectively coordinate and restrain the imagination, quality, and possibility. In short, the public good is a singular association that comes into being as a state of politic – a special force that interfaces with the national state and the market. From a methodological perspective, the public can be utilized to observe practice and its results in order to explore the characteristics of such neglected resources as food lifeways and to account for the “facts” of daily experience.

As diversely encountered in this book, the public good exists regardless of one’s willingness to recognize or acknowledge it. Not only are present-day institutions in Latin America increasingly blinded to particular public goods, but through a growth in hybrid public-private partnerships, they also have systematically neglected people’s experiences and actualities. In an effort to defend the citizenry through protection of the commons (of access to land, water, flavor, nutrition, seeds and markets as well as the government of knowledge), these institutions systematically decrease the space of the public. As we see in contemporary Latin America,

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this is taking place in the name of enhancing biosecurity, intellectual property rights and patent protection, food security, and food sovereignty.

The new conflict is not just between public and private, but also between people and the authority they have bequeathed to formal institutions – be it the state, science or, the market – to manage the public good, as embodied in knowledge, territory, and exchange. In the process, people today are not just in danger of losing their representation and recognition in society, but also at risk is their control over their food territories. As found in such diverse locations as Santa Domingo, the Galapagos, and Valdivia, food embodiments and their emergent corporealities diversely overcome this tendency through at least two relational processes: the collapse of dualities and dichotomies and de/reterritorialization.

Multiple chapters, but in particular the struggles of farmers in the Galapagos with the impositions of conservationists, the state, and the tourism industry, reveal how cultural images and objects, such as the notion of paradise, are constituted and objectified through the indeterminacy and flux of cultural life. In this way, lived experience and culture – emergent through the interplay of actors, knowledge and sites – become the focus of bodily being-in-the-world.

Being and becoming: actors, knowledge, and sites

Together, the chapters shed light on the means of being and becoming. In the cases presented here, an actor signifies one or more people in pursuit of individual or collective interests in a social network. Actors' actions are an important agency resource for new identities and new ways of life within the modernities of the contemporary world. It is here that the embodiment of politics centers on the multiple subjectivities of livelihoods, which may converge with issues of health, food quality, and food experience. As found in the purchasing groups in Oaxaca and Valdivia, the New Dawn Milk Cooperative in Mar del Plata, Argentina, and the *Articulação Nacional de Agroecologia* in Brazil (Chapter 9), networks are an agency resource of high potential. Socially situated and disembedded from institutional political realities, networks are embodied in actor alliances and performances and territorially located throughout food sites, where agents create space and may come to wield extraordinary degrees of civic political influence on contemporary institutional decision-making.

Knowledge encompasses not only cognitive knowledge but also the affects, experiences, and skills gained through life, stored in the physical landscape, and built into the environment and social interactions. Knowledge is people's public understanding of their social categories, such as ideas, relationships, and affects of relatives, friends, neighbors, and institutions, but also their practice, such as in eating-out. Practices of eating generate social and natural interactions in the "streets," allowing people to observe one another's food-knowledge. As called for by Gross and colleagues in Chapter 2 and experienced throughout Latin America, further research is needed to visualize the continuities and discontinuities in existing diets, describing how specific social communities (e.g., schools or clubs),

through everyday sayings and doings, generate new forms of knowledge, however harmful, in providing access to relatively inexpensive, high-sugar and high-fat foods. Such research provides insight into how political public influence hinges on the embodiment of human-nonhuman alliances – experience that could be particularly useful provided the pressing need to respond to a growing overweight/obesity pandemic in children, youth and mothers through the mobilization of knowledge resources found in food (i.e., non-industrialized or non-processed food), people (their healthy living and being) and their social institutions (norms and values).

Sites form the territory of multiple interconnections or assemblages of human coexistence with the vibrancy of food. This may include, for instance, the physical (e.g., towns) and even imaginary sites (such as the virtual worlds of television and the internet) or those spaces where social practices happen in households, schools, and in the streets. Sites are spaces of food (re)connection with territories and culture. Here, global processes are mediated, managed, or attuned to the potentials of such food territorialization through the life experience of people.

The mobilization of bodies and food contributes to the awareness that internal and external relations should not be seen as creating different orders, but rather together they are involved in (re)constituting fragments and parts, which modify an actor's subjectivity and physiognomy – both human and nonhuman. Their organic bodies are rooted in natural and social interfaces, which in turn become significant metaphors, imaginaries, and imaginings. It is in these sites that food territorializes itself through the strength of associations that are embodied in a variety of selves, symbols, and meanings.

Relational forces: intersubjectivity and political alliances

In connecting corporeality, affect and reflexivity, processes of embodiment demonstrate how food practice, knowledge, and technology break through divisions, such as those that commonly separate object and subject or nature and culture. New relationships and alliances are formed at an interface where entities (real or otherwise) construct, reconstruct, and dismantle themselves in the co-constitution of individualities – be they linguistic or corporeal. Following the work of Deleuze and Guattari, a collection of chapters (6, 7, 11 and 12) refer to this process as uniquely intersubjective. Through intersubjectivity, the experience of creativity is available as an emergent resource not just to the individual, but also to the nonhuman other, thereby generating associations between individuality, the social, the self, and the other. We view such intersubjective processes as central to the birth of a new public good.

From an ethological perspective, territory has to do with the environment of a group – for example, the Andoque in the Colombian Amazon (Chapter 3), ecotourists or colonists in the Galapagos, agroecology networks in Brazil or the New Dawn Milk Cooperative – that cannot be objectively located. Instead, territory is determined through processes of constitution, in this case as rooted in

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agrofood practice. As per Felix Guattari, *relative* deterritorialization retains the possibility of reterritorialization, such as domestication by the state, science or the market. It refers to transcendence, as commonly explained by present-day food studies. In contrast, *absolute* reterritorialization involves the impossibility of going back to an earlier state or territory, referring to the constant production of *immanence*.

While certain cases cite the dangers of people handing themselves over to the transcendence of science, the state, or the market (e.g., by indiscriminately accepting the recommendations of the *ingenieros* or conservationists, giving in to formal processes of certification or going back to the temptation of the supermarket), as explained by Gustavo Blanco *et al.* in Chapter 13, many of the experiences appear to be in processes of absolute deterritorialization in the form of immanent embodiments, corporealities, and multiplicities. Experiences such as the growth in agroecology networks or urban-based consumer movements are shaping new territory that does not necessarily obey the boundaries of the genetics of indigeneity, the economics of class, or scientific standards of “best practice.”

Andrew Ofstehage’s study of transnational soybean farmers from the United States in Brazil’s Cerrado (Chapter 4) and their toils with contingency, improvisation, and unpredictability reveals the complexity of new agricultural and social relations. These are sometimes contradictory to what has traditionally been understood as the rural community. This raises questions over commonly held beliefs in the benefits of the modernization and globalization of food. It also highlights the extent and intensity of socio-environmental degradation. The isolation, alienation, and broadening of food production and consumption are a complex result of the assembly of endogenous and exogenous entities, which ultimately places into question the notion of their dichotomy.

It is from such relationships that we understand the cosmopolitanization of food and agriculture as a reflexive response to rising rates of mobility, fluidity, and interdependence between work and the expressions of agricultural goods, as presented in the Ajjic Chile Cook-off and the 250,000 Families Campaign. In part, this is due to the emergence of highly intensified experiences of people, acting as consumers in search of the original flavor and taste sensations of the familiar as well as the exotic, leading to all sorts of expected and unexpected outcomes, including goodwill, generosity, charity, and peace. These experiences illustrate that agricultural practices are not necessarily a part of a market, nor do they necessarily organize and operate in line with the “natural state” of a territory, legal institution, society, or culture.

In its legalization of private property and franchising of public property, increasingly the nation-state in Latin America is consuming the public, thereby melting away both individual and common property – as perhaps best illustrated by the controversy over wheat germplasm ownership and biodiversity in the Bio-Bio territory, Chile. In this case, public agriculture policy for crop breeding conflicts with local practice, organized around other purposes – namely, wheat for the preparation of bread and artisanal hats. Recent official recognition of farmers’

“hidden” wheat varieties has begun to provide a degree of social legitimacy for long-standing territorial handicraft and culinary knowledge. Such socio-political-material experience reveals a multiplicity of cooperation, coordination, and intra-actions with certain imperceptible, random happenings, such as earthquakes and market events, shedding light on the intersubjectivity of everyday life, in this case the existence of a human-nonhuman agency as a potential quasi-reality involved in the territorialization of change. In the Bio-Bio case, food and handicraft have value not just because these are in popular demand, but because people and their territory derive value from the knowledge that other varieties of wheat for food and handicraft exist. The public of the territory maintains these goods because their existence and their consumption are intrinsic to the territorial commons. This experience suggests that such assembled relationships merit further attention as a means of better explaining agrofood relationships and their effects and affects. As such, public good can be seen as not just a concept, but also as a pragmatic and useful approach for working with people to identify and catalyze territorial potentials for social change and development.

Corporeality: relational being

In their study of the constitution of responsible consumption through the *Cooperativa La Manzana* in Valdivia, Blanco and colleagues challenge a series of little questioned dichotomies: North/urban/wealthy/modern/bad and South/rural/poor/traditional/good. In addition to the problematic organizing of states of being as good or bad, in their preoccupation with the presence of the good, formal institutions can lose site of the “bad.” In effect, such binaries blind the observer to the rich goings on in food. In the process, the living presence is overlooked and food is dispossessed of its bodies, and food studies fails in its responsibility to factually describe and make sense of food, but also to critically inform policy. In contrast, the authors find the centrality of affects in the process of creating a new subject (the responsible consumer) and a new object (the food cooperative and fair food), which leads them to call attention to a need to go beyond structural and materialist understandings of an assemblage.

The literature has created lists of representations for agroecology and food movements, and while there may be certain truth to these descriptions, there is always difference. The nature and potentialities of food are always elusive. For example, the chapters on changing patterns of nutrition in Carchi and the Chili Cook-off in Ajijic reveal how contemporary food becomes embodied within lived experiences, thereby mobilizing minds, objects, and relationships in ways that exceed classic representations. Emergent food lifeways are simultaneously specific and dynamic, as migrating rural families or foreign retirees and Mexican nationals publicly build social relationships and live together in a locality. In comparison to the dichotomies that divide classes or nationalities, youth and the elderly, the relations forged through the constitution of food can even lie outside the imagination or even the possible.

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Civic movements represent and promote alternative agendas for change, which under certain circumstances challenge forms of normative authority and orders that are seemingly dominant. Nevertheless, the expectations of people, with their family dreams and the effects of belonging to geographical or imagined communities, give rise to new forms of authority dedicated to mediating change. The resulting inhibitions, when met with those brought by the “external” expert, industrialist, or bureaucrat, generate actions that cannot be explained solely as deeds to materialize disobedience and resistance against the forces of domination and globalization. These forms of organization, in favor of the immediate existence and daily life, are more than just an expression of a rationality of social groups with political consciousness. This type of effect and policy as “course of action” causes the explanations that use the contradictions of the earlier mentioned categorical dichotomies to collapse and fall apart, revealing the importance of the description of everyday experiences that support life forms, existences, and manifestation that are empirically difficult to deny (although they clearly do not fall within the representations of the macro-influences or conceptual micro-frameworks). What is left is simply relational living and being, in all of its gloriously undeniable circumstance, contingency, and coincidence.

The vitality of everyday food

The contributors presented here challenge, from a range of standpoints, normative biases concerning how agriculture, food, and development *should* be. Instead, the authors place their analytical lens on how everyday experience unfolds through diverse modes of living and being – namely how agriculture and food *is*. What remains are the contingent effects and affects of the daily life, leading to the identification of multiple everyday food embodiments and assemblages constituted out of a willfulness that, we argue, is capable of surpassing hegemonic scientific wisdom and established neoliberal discourse. This leads us to propose a fresh perspective for conceptualizing subjectivity and agency in relation to food and its material forms.

While we would not discount the many valuable contributions to date of institutionalism and governance in agrofood studies, considering its neglect of the rich socio-biological and socio-material dynamics involved in the different embodiments, corporealities, and assemblages found here, we are left questioning the continued utility of mainstream critical food studies, such as the present-day preoccupation with certification. We argue that further theoretical, methodological and normative unpacking is called for.

A number of chapters call attention to the limitations of common dualistic and dichotomous categories in explaining continuity and change in agriculture and food. In other words, is the world still (if it ever were) organized and dominated by North-South, rich-poor and urban-rural? In light of the proliferation of unwanted developments in agriculture and food, is it fair and promising to continue to rely on governments, science, and the global capitalist system to define and coordinate the course of action for people?

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We propose a revised critical perspective that is both more situated in the actualities of agriculture and food and more critical in its attention to how agriculture and food are uniquely embodied as well as its willingness to acknowledge and embrace emergent multiplicities, however (un)intended or (un)desirable. This work gives prominence to the endless potentials of peri-capitalization (as per A.L. Tsing, the specific manifestations of capital assets at the margins of existing worlds) to overcome the stagnation and even recession of seemingly insurmountable sources of influence and power. The social agency and creativity found in each of the chapters justifies further qualitative attention to the multiple goings on in informal institutional spaces and people's self-organization – be it in the form of a native people and its intimacy with plants and the environment, an emergent purchasing collective, the interfaces of producer associations with cows and milking machines or irrigation technology, or encounters between networks and social movements vis-à-vis science, industry and the state.

A number of insights begin to identify an agenda for a more genuinely critical treatment of change in agriculture and food. These include renewed scrutiny of the mundane immanence of daily living and being – in the family, neighborhood and social networks as well as in administrative bureaucracies of the state, market, industry, and science. In particular, notions of place and space must be reconsidered as being not only bound by the physical and geographic but also by the virtual and social. In addition, there is a need for rethinking the relations of time as not merely a matter of succession. Past and present also are a matter of instinct, memory, and coexistence, as illustrated by the Andoque utilization of gold and the Wirikuta consumption of Peyote as well as the cosmopolitan context of the ongoing social reconstruction through flavor and taste in the Putumayo. Such a treatment of time opens the way for further attention to the constitution of intersubjectivities – the emergent intuitions, resonances, and dissonances that can be felt through the different rhythms and vibrations of being and becoming in agriculture and food.

From a methodological point of view, a strengthened critical perspective requires renewed commitment to empirical study and in particular to *practice* as what Theodore Schatzki describes as the highly situated, yet infinitely ambiguous “site of the social.” In addition, placing emphasis on a flat ontology demands careful thought to normative preconception and appreciation for the particular sites, spaces and time of unfolding life. As highlighted by a number of the contributors, this ontology must include scrutiny to anthropocentrism and openness to human-nonhuman relationships. This can only be achieved through access to the real-time dynamics of inhabitation in daily living and being, which in turn requires full immersion in the field, participant observation, and assiduous ethnography.

Beyond the work of institutional studies that emphasizes state-based or project-based development, this empirical treatment shows how people in the street create space for change, if in ways that commonly lay beyond their control, guidance or intention. In a period of growing cynicism, skepticism, and despair over the prospect of a better future in agriculture and food, the contributions represent a testament to human willfulness, pragmatism, and practicality. While humans may

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not be in full control of their worlds, we find that they nevertheless have a will for power and production, mutual affection, and embodiment. Food practices and values are revealed through the expression of creativity and intention – a vitality that despite, and even because of, seemingly insurmountable forces and odds provides a modicum of hope and inspiration for more healthy, equitable, and sustainable futures.