Translating Food Sovereignty: Cultivating Justice in an Age of Transnational Governance Matthew C. Canfield (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2022)

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In *Translating Food Sovereignty* (2022), Matthew C. Canfield traces how activists mobilize claims for food sovereignty across different issues, locales, and scales of governance. The term food sovereignty was first coined in 1996 by members of Via Campesina, an international farmers' organization, and it invokes the right of peoples to define their own food and agriculture systems. A central concern for Canfield's study is elucidating how contemporary claims for food sovereignty are being communicated in relation to corporate-driven forms of governance that have proliferated with neoliberal globalization. Legal anthropologists have explored the process by which international human rights are made practically meaningful in different local contexts. Canfield extends this approach, but with a focus on the practices through which social movement actors translate justice claims and build networks to challenge neoliberal forms of governance transnationally.

Translating Food Sovereignty argues that the transformative possibility of food sovereignty activism lies in its dialectical engagement with these neoliberal forms of governance and its ability to approach them through a self-reflective modality of decentralized, democratic governance from below. In other words, the emphasis is on the modality of translation practices that activists deploy across different contexts. As Canfield writes, "These practices are centered on democratizing representation, challenging hegemonic knowledge, and protecting the autonomy of peoples. Through these practices [activists for food sovereignty] are building local, regional, and transnational networks…to transform food system governance on multiple political and spatial scales" (63).

Canfield's conceptualization of how food sovereignty activists are cultivating new forms of transnational governance from the ground up is in conversation with various strands of contemporary scholarship on regulation and governance. He references Manuel Castells's account of networked power as well as Boaventura de Sousa Santos's argument that features of horizontality and self- regulation are also present in mobilizations against neoliberal globalization. Furthermore, drawing on political theorist Nancy Fraser's Gramscian terminology, he posits that such activism constitutes counter-hegemonic networks through forms of knowledge that "prefigure" economic and political alternatives to the network-based governance logic of neoliberalism (49). In the hands of the food sovereignty movement, Canfield argues, these value-informed communicative codes and

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protocols cultivate networks that combine responsive flexibility across scales and with a necessary sense of common purpose across differences.

Canfield's point of entry for researching food sovereignty's meanings for activists today is his work with two organizations operating in and around Seattle, Washington. Accordingly, the book's first three chapters examine food sovereignty activism within this locale. Chapter One sets the historical scene, describing an earlier generation of alternative food activism in the Pacific Northwest, whose achievements included the state certification of organic foods in the late 1970s. The analysis then turns to examine activist mobilization of food sovereignty frames in the Pacific Northwest since the late 2000s, with Chapter Two focusing on activist participation on a regional food policy council and Chapter Three exploring an activist campaign in support of local farmworkers organizing within the supply chain of a multinational food brand.

In Chapters Four and Five, Canfield follows these activists further afield as they devise campaigns and build alliances that extend beyond the Pacific Northwest and indeed beyond the United States. Chapter Four explores transnational activism to challenge the promotion of commercialized food biotechnology in Africa. Chapter Five examines the mobilization of food sovereignty movement frames within the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's Committee on World Food Security. These various settings are treated as largely distinct, which can make for some challenging transitions for the reader. In each chapter, however, the relevant scholarly literature is densely footnoted to provide context, and this is one of the impressive strengths of the book.

One analytical theme that runs across *Translating Food Sovereignty* is activists' dialectical engagement with dominant frames when constructing alternatives. Perhaps due to the breadth of the multi-sited, multi-scale project (and thus the space in each chapter devoted to exposition of relevant context), the balance between thick description and narrative overview tends to tilt towards the latter. The payoff to this multi-sited project, however, is that it allows the reader to appreciate the variety of distinct discursive frameworks and creative solidarity- sustaining strategies – operating at multiple scales – that are encompassed by food sovereignty activism today.

A related analytical theme that runs across the chapters is the degree to which food sovereignty activists are invested in building and sustaining a multivocal and meaningfully inclusive movement. In Canfield's account, this feature of the movement is set in contrast against the experience of the 1970s generation of alternative food activists, whose network eventually fractured as different constituencies formed rival networks to pursue their priorities. Whether they are participating in a local food policy advisory council or in an intergovernmental forum under United Nations auspices, food sovereignty activists intentionally engage in an "ongoing process of construction and reconstruction of peoples to whom governance processes must be accountable" (174). As Canfield acknowledges, he is not the first to write about the responses of transnational activist networks to neoliberal globalization or about mobilizations around food sovereignty. Yet by placing his multi-sited study of food sovereignty activism into conversation with the scholarship on regulation and governance, Canfield pushes sociolegal scholars to pay closer attention to the "transcalar" practices through which power works to commodify and through which counterhegemonic networks mobilize

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to preserve social, cultural, and ecological difference (196). In this engaging empirical account, we not only learn about recent and ongoing food sovereignty struggles in their local specificity but also glimpse how these struggles extend beyond lawmaking institutions and across legal jurisdictions. *Translating Food Sovereignty* thus offers a welcome contribution to legal anthropology, studies of social movements, and scholarship on governance from below.

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