

"LA COMIDA: THE CORE OF FOOD SOVEREIGNTY" PHOTO ESSAY

DIGGING IN: FACILITATING DIALOGUE AND ACTION

KEY THEMES AND TERMS

Comida, food sovereignty, neoliberalization, NAFTA, UniTierra, knowledge as commodity, *aprender*, fast food or *chatarra*, *maíz*, GMO or transgenic corn, Permanent People's Tribunal, centrality of women, patriarchy, assemblies, National Indigenous Congress, state security, community safety, ancestral histories, Marichuy

CATALYZING CONNECTIONS

DECODING QUESTIONS

- *Description*: What stories are told? How did you feel reading them?
- *Personal Connection*: Do any of these stories connect to your personal experience or stories in your family?
- *Common Themes*: What social issues/themes are raised in these stories? Is there a common issue shared across contexts?
- *Social Analysis*: What are the historical and social processes that created this situation?
- *Planning for Action*: What can be done? What can I/we do?

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

- What impact did neoliberal free trade agreements of the 1990s have on campesinos and Indigenous communities in Mexico? What was the response of the Zapatistas to NAFTA in Mexico?
- How does Gustavo contrast institutionalized education with the kinds of knowledges and ways of knowing honoured by UniTierra?
- What did writer Eduardo Galeano mean when he wrote: "Those not afraid of hunger, fear food"? What aspects of the corporate food system cause fear?

INTERGENERATIONAL AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

Gustavo describes the work of UniTierra through verbs that refer to processes and forms of action. What is the value of thinking in terms of verbs, instead of nouns? See the photo essay “Language and Food: A World View in Verbs” by Ryan DeCaire and compare his emphasis on verb-based languages with Gustavo’s perspective.

How does the concept of *comida* challenge dominant notions of food in western cultures?

Gustavo suggests that we are witnessing “the death of 5,000 years of patriarchy”. What evidence does he use to justify that statement? What do you think about that statement?

Valiana Aguilar, the young woman who, along with Ángel Kú worked with Gustavo at UniTierra, brings a perspective of Mayan people and youth to the challenge of food sovereignty. See the photo essay “Mutual Nurturing: Re-Weaving Community with Our Elders” for their perspective on the importance of intergenerational learning.

INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

What was the meaning of the phrase, “Sin Maíz, No Hay País” (“Without Corn, There is No Country”) in the campaign to defend corn? What strategies did Gustavo and others use in this campaign?

How did this campaign connect with a global movement for food sovereignty?

What was the strategy of the National Indigenous Congress in nominating Marichuy, an Indigenous woman, for president of Mexico? How does she represent the global struggle for Indigenous rights and food sovereignty?

Research the groups in your community and country that are defending healthy and traditional food systems against industrial corporate food systems.

DIGGING DEEPER: RESOURCES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND ACTION

VIDEOS

Cadiot, Jonathan, and Arthur Rifflet, dirs. “Sin Maíz No Hay País: Las Semillas de la Dignidad.” Culture Unplugged. 2008. Video, 39:16.

<https://www.cultureunplugged.com/documentary/watch-online/festival/play/5911/Sin-Ma-z-No-Hay-Pa-s-Las-Semillas-de-la-Dignidad>, Accessed April 11, 2020.

BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Baker, Lauren. *Corn Meets Maize: Food Movements and Markets in Mexico*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc, 2013.

Esteva, Gustavo, and Madhu Suri Prakash. *Grassroots Postmodernism: Remaking the Soil of Cultures*. London, UK: Zed Books Ltd., 2014.

Esteva, Gustavo, Salvatore Babones, and Philip Babcicky. *The Future of Development: A Radical Manifesto*. Bristol, UK: Policy Press, 2013.

La Via Campesina. "Supporting resistance to Genetically modified maize in Mexico." June 15, 2013.
<https://viacampesina.org/en/supporting-resistance-to-genetically-modified-maize-in-mexico/>.

Schachet, Carol. "The Contamination of Native Mexican Corn Varieties by GM Strains." Grassroots International. May 21, 2014.
<https://grassrootsonline.org/in-the-news/newsarticlescontamination-native-mexican-corn-varieties-gm-strains/>.

ORGANIZATIONS

Campaña Nacional Sin Maíz No Hay País. "Campaña Nacional Sin Maíz No Hay País." Accessed July 5, 2020. <http://sinmaiznohaypais.org/>.

Común Tierra. "CEDICAM: Center for Integral Small Farmer Development in the Mixteca." Accessed July 5, 2020.
http://comuntierra.org/site/comunidades.php?id=81&id_idioma=2.

Grassroots International. "Grassroots International: Funding Global Movements for Social Change." Accessed July 5, 2020. <https://grassrootsonline.org/>.

La Via Campesina: International Peasant's Movement. "Via Campesina - Globalizing hope, globalizing the struggle!" Accessed July 1, 2020.
<https://viacampesina.org/en/>.

Universidad de la Tierra. "Welcome to Unitierra." Accessed July 5, 2020.
<http://unitierraoax.org/english/>.