

Food security, food sovereignty, and local challenges for transnational agrarian movements: the Honduras case

Jefferson Boyer

This article examines the complicated histories of two competing development tropes in postwar Honduras: food security and food sovereignty. Food security emerged as a construct intertwined with land security and national food self-sufficiency soon after the militant, peasant-led movement for national agrarian reform in the 1970s. The transnational coalition, La Vía Campesina, launched their global food sovereignty campaign in the 1990s, in part to counter the global corporate industrial agro-food system. Cultural and political analysis reveals challenges for each trope. Food security resonates with deeply held peasant understandings of *seguridad* for their continued social reproduction in insecure social and natural conditions. In contrast, the word sovereignty, generally understood as powers of nation states, faces semantic confusion and distance from rural actors' lives. Moreover, Honduras's national peasant unions, weakened by funding cuts and neoliberal assaults on agrarian reform, diverted by their own efforts to help establish the transnational La Vía Campesina, have been unable and, in some cases, unwilling to campaign effectively for food sovereignty. In addition, a parallel network of NGO-supported sustainable agriculture centres has largely embraced the peasant understandings of food security, while remaining skeptical of 'mismanaged, modernist' agrarian reform and the food sovereignty campaign. Attention turns to structural analysis of the steady decline of agriculture, economy and social life in the Honduran countryside, while also identifying potentially hopeful local-national solidarities between peasant union and sustainable agriculture leaders within the popular resistance movement to the recent military coup. This article finds that transnational agrarian movements and food campaigns tend to ignore local peasant understandings, needs, and organisations at their own peril.

Keywords: food sovereignty; food security; local/transnational agrarian movements; agrarian reform; farmer-to-farmer networks; Honduras

The major peasant unions of Honduras have become a vital part of the resistance movement that has sprung up to oppose the 28 June 2009 military coup. Rafael Alegría, one of the founders of the world's largest coalition for the rural poor, Vía Campesina,¹

This is a revised version of the paper 'Food Security, Food Sovereignty and the Invisible Agrarian Question in Neoliberal Honduras' presented at the 28th International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, Rio de Janeiro. I thank Jun Borrás and the three anonymous reviewers for the *Journal of Peasant Studies*, Annette Desmarais, Marc Edelman, and James Wessman, who all gave helpful comments. Wilfredo Cardona sent vital information from Honduras. I also acknowledge the social movements study group at UNC-Chapel Hill, and especially Professors Arturo Escobar and Dorothy Holland.

¹La Vía Campesina or 'The Peasant Path' is its official title. In this paper, I drop the 'La' simply because 'Vía Campesina' is how Honduran speakers generally refer to this organisation.

is a leader of the national resistance. He is convinced that Vía Campesina's worldwide campaign for food sovereignty (including agrarian reform) will not take root in Honduras unless the political transformation that the resistance movement seeks happens first.²

Tragic events the year before reinforced this assessment about favourable agrarian change. On 3 August 2008, hired gunmen assaulted the Guadalupe Carney cooperative in Honduras's northern Aguán Valley, killing 11 members and wounding two others. The cooperative had launched a land occupation. Alegría received death threats for his support of this action. The Aguán Valley was the site of some of the largest agrarian reform peasant cooperatives established in the 1970s, but many of these suffered forced sales to private and Honduran military interests in recent years. This particular contestation, however, concerned land taken by the US military in the early 1980s as a site for training surrogate armies (the Honduran army, the Nicaraguan Contras, and Salvadoran troops) to contain revolutionary movements across the isthmus. By the 1990s, the US military withdrew from this site, and local elites moved in to occupy it, ignoring the national Agrarian Reform Institute's (INA) legal determination that the land should be turned over to the campesinos³ of Guadalupe Carney. Clearly the land's unique ownership history and Guadalupe Carney's union ties to the Vía Campesina network figured in the rapid international letter writing campaign. It demanded that the recently deposed President Zelaya and the national Congress protect Alegría and the Guadalupe Carney peasants and prosecute the assassins and those who hired them.⁴ Even the cooperative's name, honouring the revolutionary spirit of one of the agrarian movement's martyred priests, carried the symbolism of earlier struggles for the land.⁵

Although this event certainly demonstrates the ability of Vía Campesina to mobilise international support for local peasant struggles, Alegría correctly acknowledged its failure to catalyse transformative actions in the Honduran countryside. While the current resistance has stirred the hopes of rural activists, the agrarian question, at least as it concerns equitable access to land and control over food production, generally remains muted in public discourse as the objective needs of the rural poor go begging.⁶ In fact, the levels of landlessness and near landlessness are approaching those of Honduras' 1970s period of massive peasant mobilisation

²I visited Honduras from 1–9 August 2009 as part of a human rights delegation sponsored by the Quixote Center/Quest for Peace, Brentwood, MD, USA.

³This Spanish term for peasant in Honduras refers to subsistence cultivators, whose production for use values still trumps their production for markets, and who remain the predominant carriers of the society's agrarian regional cultures and technologies. Small farmers usually share some of these characteristics, but produce mostly for commercial ends.

⁴Prensa Radio Progreso (North Coast Jesuit media, 28 August 2008; Vía Campesina internet letter writing campaign, 7 August 2008). The Guadalupe Carney peasant group is a local of the union National Congress of Farmworkers (CNTC), with ties to the Honduran Coordinating Council of Peasant Organizations (COCOCH), which in turn is affiliated with Vía Campesina.

⁵See the Jesuit J. Guadalupe Carney's, *To be a revolutionary: an autobiography* (1987).

⁶Although congressional initiatives have attempted to rescind the neoliberal, anti-agrarian Agricultural Law (1992, see below), to restart agrarian reform, and to force the government to settle the almost 1000 petitioned land disputes that have accumulated since 1992, the political right continues to block such legislation (COCOCH-FOSDEH 2009, 155; correspondence with agricultural economist Wilfredo Cardona, June 2009). FOSDEH is the Honduran Social Fund for Foreign Debt.

for agrarian reform.⁷ Moreover, Honduras' traditional role as the food larder for the isthmus has all but vanished. As imports of basic foods – maize, beans, rice, and sorghum – have risen steadily with liberalising markets, culminating with the 2007–2008 Central American Free Trade Agreement, the per capita land area producing these four basic foods has steadily declined.⁸

This article inquires into some of the major problems and prospects for peasants and small farmer movements in Honduras, from local to transnational levels. It examines the food security and counter-poised food sovereignty tropes, as well as their sponsoring organisations, by looking at the historic interaction of culture, agency, and structure in rural Honduras and beyond. Since the 1980s, the US geopolitical interventions and the dominant neoliberal policy regime have undermined the peasant-led, state-sponsored agrarian reform programme. This study assesses the state of peasant unions and the emergence of a parallel non-state network of training (and research) centres for sustainable agriculture. Despite the agrarian reform setbacks, Honduras' National Coordinating Council of Peasant Unions, COCOCH, has played an important role in the establishment and continuing leadership in the transnational movement *Vía Campesina*, now with ties to 149 organisations in 69 countries.⁹ From 1996 to 2004, *Vía Campesina* maintained its world headquarters with COCOCH in Tegucigalpa (Edelman 2008, 67, 2003, 205, Borras 2008a, 96). Analysts agree that COCOCH leaders, along with those of Brazil's Landless Workers' Movement (MST), continue to maintain crucial leadership positions and exert significant influence within the global movement (Borras and Franco 2009, 11; see also Borras 2008a, 107, Desmarais 2007, 8–9, 27–31). As the focus turns to this national-transnational nexus, I assess how well *Vía Campesina*'s anti-agribusiness campaign for food sovereignty has fared in Honduras as a challenge to the older food security trope.

Several analysts have researched *Vía Campesina*'s potential to integrate diverse local-to-national agrarian movements into more powerful collective, anti-hegemonic voices on the global scene.¹⁰ This Honduras case study reverses the mirror. To the extent that it engages *Vía Campesina*, it does so not to reiterate the vital role that this relatively small country has played in the life of such a remarkable coalition, but rather to assess how the coalition continues to energise and support this, one of its

⁷In 1974, the percentage of rural landless families had expanded from 20 percent in 1952 to a third of rural families. The percentage of families with less than one hectare of land rose from 10 percent to 17 percent during that same period (Rhul 1984, 49). By 2008, the share of rural landless had dropped to 25 percent of rural families (161,000 families), but the percentage of families with less than one hectare increased slightly to 18.2 percent or 116,000 families (estimates based on agricultural census data through 1993 and an INA study in 2004, COSDEH-FOSDEH 2009).

⁸COCOCH-FOSDEH (2009), using the National Statistical Institute (INE) data, reports that the average Honduran farmer in 1952 dedicated 28 percent per hectare for basic grain production; this percentage had declined to 15 percent in 2003. During the 1999 to 2006 period, maize imports increased from 2.5 million qq. to 5.6 million qq., bean imports increased from 42,000 qq. to 186,000 qq., and rice imports rose from 1.8 million qq. to 2.2 million qq. (2009, 137–8). One quintal (qq.) = 100 lbs.

⁹COCOCH played a key role in the creation of *Vía Campesina* in 1992–1993, through the then active Association of Central American Peasant Organizations for Cooperation and Development (ASOCODE).

¹⁰See especially Desmarais' comprehensive study (2007), and articles by Borras (2008a, 2008b), Borras and Franco (2009), Edelman (2003, 2008), and McMichael (2008).

most nurturing peasant bases. I seek to problematise, therefore, what Annette Desmarais describes as collective efforts to maintain 'a fine balance' between 'local realities and global actions'.¹¹

The origins of food security as a development template

Intellectual and historical antecedents

Cooper and Packard (2005, 132–7) analyse the postwar emergence of knowledge tropes within the wider epistemology of international development. They call the more salient, publicised frameworks *template mechanisms* in that they order ideas, ideals and goals for achieving the imagined 'good society and economy'. I take food security to be such a template mechanism. Likewise, oppositional constructs, as either counter-development template mechanisms or as anti-development ones, may also emerge, as food sovereignty apparently has done. These Cooper and Packard templates would seem to enhance the sociology of knowledge that Peter Berger and associates first articulated in the 1970s, especially their 'technological packages' as concretisations of development strategies and priorities.¹²

One important antecedent to the emergence of food security as a template mechanism is a persistent strand of early postwar agricultural development thought that stressed national food self-sufficiency in developing countries as a primary goal. This was particularly true in agrarian Central America. Its agricultural development literature from the 1950s and 1960s included a range of universalising modernist assumptions in contrast to the extended field reports that tended to be much more open to socio-political, cultural, and geographic contexts. Yet as I review these books, reports, and manuals, and reflect on my early 1960s experience in Honduras as a rural development promoter in the Peace Corps, I recall the considerable agreement around the key objective of national self-sufficiency in basic foodstuffs for developing societies.¹³ This was seen as the basis upon which further industrial and urban expansion depended. Perhaps my interpretation of this era overly emphasises the 'development with a human face' side at the expense of the more narrowly economic thinkers at the World Bank and other multilateral institutions. But the fact that development writers of the early postwar period in Central America stressed national agricultural self-sufficiency (and productivity) as one basic goal should give us some appreciation for development theory's complicated origins when discussing the current security versus sovereignty of food debate.¹⁴

¹¹See Desmarais' suggestive title to *La Vía Campesina's* fifth chapter, 'A Fine Balance: Local Realities and Global Action' (2007, 135).

¹²See Berger *et al.* (1974) and Berger (1976).

¹³Just a sampling of this early literature includes Gill (1963), Dumond (1966), Mosher (1966), and Roy *et al.* (1968).

¹⁴Cristóbal Kay's (2009) comprehensive review of this pre- and postwar development literature as it engaged wider considerations of industrialisation and the agrarian question. These works included neoclassical industrialists, who saw little role for agriculture in modern industrial development, versus the neoclassical agrarians and early neoliberals, who embraced the need for modern, large-scale, and *productive* agriculture. The pre- and postwar development strand demanding culturally and ecologically sensitive support for peasant and small farm agriculture were the neopopulists of their day.

The early land security/food security nexus: enclosure and agrarian reform

Honduras entered the great struggles of the 1960s and 1970s over export agriculture and the economic and political crisis in Central America¹⁵ with public acrimony over the goals of development. For peasants and small farmers, the US-led 'economic diversification and expansion' model meant that expanding cattle ranches, banana, and sugar plantations, i.e. *latifundios*, were enclosing mostly public lands.¹⁶ These actions threatened *minifundios* and subsistence livelihoods, while terminating the older moral economy based on landlord-peasant reciprocities.¹⁷

As debates about an agrarian reform surfaced in this polarising economy, the notion of peasant security over the land was introduced by labour organisation leaders and less timid officials of the new National Agrarian Institute (INA). It had resonance in the smallholder countryside where the desire for land security was reinforced by the enclosures, lack of titles, and steady population growth. Land security was intimately tied to smallholders' perennial concerns about the adequacy of this season's *milpa*, 'the grains of first necessity', i.e. the ability to feed themselves. These worries included the effects of droughts, floods and insect damage on subsistence crops. All of these threats combined to give the very word *seguridad* a central place in the campesino's cultural lexicon of key words.¹⁸ My arguments here accord with research elsewhere in the isthmus that explored the fine-tuned distinctions between luxuries and necessities in the subsistence ideology of the peasant (Gudeman 1978). Even as the official international development agencies (i.e. the World Bank, USAID, and the United Nations agencies) took up food security as a public goal, Honduras' peasants and small farmers already possessed a deep 'pre-development template', i.e. varied understandings enveloping this construct that they could articulate, and that were widely taken for granted.

The major peasant unions demonstrated great tenacity and a remarkable ability to set aside ideological differences in joining together to obtain reform land during the first half of the 1970s.¹⁹ The noted Brazilian agrarian reform lawyer, Santos de Moraes, wrote that Honduras was the only Central American country where

¹⁵I purposely borrow from economist Robert Williams' suggestive title (1986), capturing a major issue of the postwar agrarian struggles across the isthmus and beyond.

¹⁶In 1950, less than half of the national territory was titled and in private hands; the majority was either national lands or municipally held *ejido* lands that mestizo and indigenous peasant families utilised for subsistence needs and production for local markets (Rhul 1984, Posas 1981a, 4). Honduras' agrarian system of land tenure had the highest proportion of publicly and communally held lands in Central America.

¹⁷See Boyer (1984, 1986), DeWalt and Stonich (1985), Stonich (1993), and White (1977).

¹⁸See Boyer (1986) and Stonich (1993) for descriptions of the increasingly forbidding circumstances surrounding peasant agriculture in southern Honduras from the 1960s into the 1980s. See also Robert White's (1971, 1972) study of the Catholic Social Movement's radio school movement in rural Honduras. This movement utilised Paulo Friere's (1973) ideas to make popular education relevant through the identification of key words and core cultural frameworks of peasants and indigenous peoples in Latin America.

¹⁹The two rival national peasant unions were the AFL-CIO influenced National Association of Honduran Peasants (ANACH) and the National Peasant Union (UNC) with ideological ties to the Latin American Catholic Labor Organization (CLASC). A third union, the Honduran Federation of Agrarian Reform Cooperatives (FECORAH), closely supervised by the government officials at INA, was organised in part to advance industrial agriculture, and also as an attempt to control the other two unions. However, the remarkable cross-union solidarity and steady pressure on the populist military regime of López Arellano promulgated

campesinos played the decisive role in the process of agrarian reform (1975, 16). By the end of the decade, more than eight percent of the nation's arable land was benefitting approximately 22 percent of the landless and near landless peasants in new settlements and cooperatives (Rhul 1984, 53). Although haciendas were expropriated, much of the land in question was untitled public land, which either had been used by both cattlemen and peasants or was idle. While the reform process was contentious, this condition of relatively open land access limited some landlord resistance. After the militant land occupations and subsequent settlement of land claims through INA judicial proceedings, however, the peasant unions found themselves with much less leverage vis-à-vis the state reform bureaucracy to demand more support for production, credit, technical assistance, and marketing. Therefore, the unions lost power to say much about policies and strategies that affected food quality and its culturally appropriate production and consumption, i.e. key issues surrounding both food security and food sovereignty.²⁰

Food security emerges as a development template: the 1980s and early 1990s

The return of successive repressive military governments in the late 1970s began to slow the pace of agrarian reform. By the early 1980s, the buildup of US military presence, the contra war, and other cold war policies of geopolitical containment sponsored the Honduran security state apparatus headed by Gen. Alvarez Martínez, who targeted the peasant unions and many reform cooperatives. Ideological infighting among national peasant unions intensified in this repressive atmosphere. By 1984, the four major organisations had splintered into 14 competing groups (Ruhl 1985, 75, Brockett 1998, 193). Stringer (1989, 363) estimated that 21 percent of the 61,000 families in the reform sector had abandoned their settlements by 1985.²¹

As the peasant unions and the reform sector struggled for survival throughout the 1980s, US economic policies had become overtly neoliberal, viewing all state-supported reforms, but especially land reform, with a jaundiced eye. USAID's key strategy for privatisation in the countryside since the early 1980s was its infamous land-titling programme. While the programme was publicised as increasing tenure security and credit worthiness for farms within and outside the reform sector, land titling became the first step in a gambit to sell off agrarian reform lands to the highest bidder. The Honduran Institute for Cooperation and Auto-Development (ICADE) estimated that by 1994, 30,000 of the original 56,587 hectares held by associated cooperatives in the reform sector had been sold to foreign agribusinesses as well as to Honduran financial oligopolies, military officers and cattlemen (Autodesarrollo 1997, 11).²² For most Hondurans, US official pronouncements on food security during the 'lost decade of the 1980s' must have possessed a particularly hollow ring. By this time, USDA had issued its definition to the world: food security for a household meant access by all members at all times to enough food for an active,

the comprehensive agrarian reform law in 1975. See also Posas (1981a, 1981b), White (1977), Brockett (1987, 1998), Kincaid (1985), and Stringer (1989).

²⁰White (1977); author fieldnotes 1979–1981.

²¹Brockett (1998, 194) cites a USAID estimate that 40 percent of original settlers had abandoned reform sector settlements by 1982. I should note that this high figure supports USAID's rationale to move forward with their land titling scheme. See also Boyer (1993) on the consequences of US militarisation during the 1980s in the Honduran countryside.

²²See also Brockett (1987), Ruben and Funez (1993), and Jansen and Roquas (1998).

healthy life.²³ The definition purposely ignored how or where food is produced. In Honduras and other agrarian societies, the US policies of agribusiness-led free trade and the land titling programme just described, were patently serving to increase *food and life insecurity*. The 1980s has been called the lost decade for Latin American development because of debt crises, stagnant economic growth, reduced social spending, and significant wealth transfers from Latin America to major industrialised nations.²⁴ For Central America during the 1980s, the US-led economic restructuring meant currency devaluations, declining real salaries and public sector operating funds, and the curtailment of agricultural research and technology-transfer programmes. Funding for public institutions worsened in the late 1980s, because of US assistance reductions, termination of Inter-American Development Bank loans, and the cuts in public spending. The number of agricultural researchers in Honduras dropped from 127 to 78 between 1990 and 1992, and extension agents fell from a total of 561 to 241. Across the isthmus, public technical assistance through agrarian reform institutes, credit agencies, and rural development projects declined significantly (Kaimowitz 1993, 180–1). The neoliberal project of shrinking the public sector had real teeth.

Throughout the tumultuous decade, Hondurans continued to resist the US military occupation of their country as well as the destructive neoliberal policies of the emerging 'Washington Consensus'.²⁵ ICADE, with Spanish funding and ideological ties to European social democracy and Catholic social doctrine, sought not only to support reform sector cooperatives and enterprises, but to breathe some life into legislation passed in 1985, the Law for the Social Sector of the Economy (Autodesarrollo 1998, 23–38).²⁶ In 1988, peasant union leader Ines Fuentes led a unified front of the major unions in the last of the massive peasant strikes for land reform, occupying 200 cattle ranches, roads, and bridges. A year later, J. Rafael Del-Cid, one of Honduras' foremost analysts and proponents of agrarian reform, published an impassioned article entitled 'Security and Food Self Sufficiency' (1989, translation mine). USAID was then arguing publicly that the results of its land titling and sale of 'inefficient' reform sector cooperative lands to private hands were proof that Honduras' agrarian reform was a failure. Del-Cid's response was to admonish the remaining reform sector campesinos and labour organisations to stop selling the very reform lands that their own pioneer leaders had secured at the cost of blood and suffering. He pleaded with them to ignore the US's narrow version of national food security and pay attention to the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO's) insistence that food security must include food self-sufficiency in agrarian countries like Honduras. Del-Cid argued that all Honduran cultivators should redouble their efforts to grow foodstuffs for themselves and for domestic markets. Pointing to the considerable price instability of the country's traditional agricultural exports, he blasted the North American argument that Honduras enjoys a comparative advantage in tropical exports, and especially in the new array of specialty products (broccoli, cashew nuts, etc.) that US agribusinesses were contracting.

²³See USDA, 'Food security: measuring household food security'. Available from: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/FoodSecurity/measurement.htm> [Accessed 14 May 2009].

²⁴See Chalmers *et al.* (1997, 21–30); Sandbrook *et al.* (2007, 50–4).

²⁵See Williamson (1989).

²⁶It identifies this sector as including all cooperatives, worker-owned enterprises, peasant and labor union associations and federations, communal banks, consumer stores, and public employees.

COCOCH formed in 1990–1991 in an attempt to unite the factionalised peasant unions and fight to restore the agrarian reform process. Unfortunately, President Rafael Callejas (1990–1993), a US-trained economist, banker, and cattleman, proved adept at playing unions off against each other and creating a parallel set of favoured peasant organisations to further divide the beleaguered agrarian movement. He worked closely with USAID and led the Honduran Congress to pass the quintessential neoliberal Agricultural Modernization Law. Its central aims remain the reduction of the governmental role in agriculture and the expansion of the role of private agribusiness, especially in export production. Further, the law supports the continued titling and sale of reform sector and other lands. Its provisions, with a couple of small exceptions, voided the 1970s agrarian reform legislation.²⁷ Ines Fuentes, head of the 1988 peasant strike, and one of COCOCH's founders, put it this way,

Their thesis is that agrarian reform in Honduras and Latin America has been a failure, a failure with credit, failure with technical assistance, failure with the campesinos that can't produce are lazy, poor and everything. It closes the door on the agrarian reform law and constitutes the land as a big market ... It opens everything up to the globalizing policies, for those foreign or national investors who can enter the competition with the non-traditional products and produce with quality. This is called 'modernizing the agro'. So, on the other hand, there is no interest, no policy to carry out agrarian reform, no credit or support for it, and now with the general privatization, it's every man for himself!²⁸

My interview with Fuentes took place just months before Hurricane Mitch devastated much of Honduras. He was looking back at the social disintegration caused by the neoliberal development model beginning in the late 1980s. In late October, 1998, this category five storm destroyed more life and property in Honduras than all other circum-Caribbean nations in its path. The official figures indicated 5657 dead, more than 8000 missing, and 285,000 in shelters, with more than 600,000 people evacuated. The US\$5.2 billion in damages to housing, infrastructure, soil, forests, and livestock represented 80 percent of the national GDP. Both this destruction and inadequate governmental reconstruction efforts, public corruption, and a decade of cuts to crucial social services, further laid bare the pernicious nature of this market rule development model at the end of the 1990s (Boyer and Pell 1999).

Honduras' postwar agrarian movements focused not only on securing land for peasants but also on improving agriculture in a modernising world. Although some of the earliest experiments in sustainable agriculture were linked to the reform sector, we shall see how most of these networks quickly separated from agrarian reform's organisations and activities.

'Campesino a campesino' in Honduras: the parallel network for sustainable agriculture and food security in a neoliberal world

Among the earliest experiments to develop a peasant-centred, ecologically sensitive agriculture in Honduras were two Catholic Church-sponsored agronomy schools in the 1970s with direct ties to the agrarian reform peasant unions. These schools, one

²⁷República de Honduras (1995); Autodesarrollo (1997, 10–12); Comunica (1998).

²⁸Interview with Ines Fuentes, May 1998.

in the North Coast and the other in the southern region, trained peasant farmers in an array of technologies from hand tools to mechanisation, appropriate for the larger reform sector farms. They also provided basic training in cooperative management, marketing, and on social skills and ethics for this collective endeavor. They and Land Tenure Center (University of Wisconsin) consultants William Thiesenhusen and Peter Dorner questioned the prevailing orthodoxy of the conventional 'culture of agriculture' in the reform sector, especially the attitude that modern commercial agriculture should replace peasant agriculture.²⁹

Sadly, the institutional funding for the Catholic agriculture schools all but vanished in the 1980s as foundation and public-sector support for agrarian reform declined. However, the UNC-affiliated³⁰ national peasant leaders training centre, EDRRA,³¹ near Tegucigalpa, continued to train peasants within and beyond the declining reform sector throughout the 1980s. There, peasant leaders, agronomists, and extensionists shared information with Honduras' future 'father of sustainable agriculture', agronomist Elías Sánchez, at his nearby training centre, Loma Linda.³²

Eric Holt-Giménez (2006) provides a generally excellent analysis of the emergence of this horizontal peasant and small farmer movement across the isthmus and the Caribbean. Although *Campesino a Campesino* misses most of the Honduras story,³³ its author clearly writes from his years of experience as an American Friends Service (AFS) agronomist in southern Mexico. An important part of this movement's success is a strategic alliance between Mesoamerica's smallholders, Protestant and Catholic non-governmental organisations (NGOs) like AFS and Mennonite-supported World Neighbors, and the emerging interdisciplinary field of agroecology.³⁴ Holt-Giménez is now the director of the Institute for Food and Development Policy (Food First), one of the world's major institutional supporters of Vía Campesina and promoters of food sovereignty. Interestingly, *Campesino a Campesino* omits discussion of either food security or food sovereignty, despite the fact that Vía Campesina's campaign for food sovereignty was well underway before its publication. Why Holt-Giménez may have been hesitant to engage this debate on behalf of this transnational network is discussed below.

At mid-career, Elías Sánchez became influenced by Guatemalan agronomist of Mayan descent Marcos Orozco, who inspired the ecumenical World Neighbors to expand his soil conservation and cultivation techniques, and especially his 'humble farmer-to-farmer teaching methods' to Mexico, Honduras, and beyond (Holt-Giménez 2006, vii–xxiv, 1–11). At Loma Linda, thousands of peasants, small farmers, agronomists and foreign visitors have learned practical principles and techniques of agroecology for their small farmsteads on steep slopes.³⁵

²⁹See unpublished reports to INA by Thiesenhusen (1980) and Dorner (1980).

³⁰UNC is La Unión Nacional Campesina, the Catholic Social Movement's National Peasant Union.

³¹EDRRA is Escuela para Dirigentes Roque Ramón Andrade.

³²Following Sánchez's death in 2001, Honduras' Congress publicly honoured him with the 'father of sustainable agriculture' tribute (Boyer 2003).

³³Holt-Giménez fairly skips over Honduras in his urgency to show the movement's revolutionary trajectory, beginning in Guatemala and southern Mexico, then arriving in Sandinista Nicaragua and finally, on to Cuba (Boyer 2007a). See Adriance (1995) for a brief overview of Honduras' small farmer network for sustainable agriculture.

³⁴See Altieri (1995) for an overview of the science of agroecology.

³⁵See Smith (1994); fieldnotes 2006, 2007.

In 1989, the Program for Environmental Training and Conservation, PROCONDEMA, funded by the German Catholic development foundation, Misericordia, joined Honduras' sustainable agriculture network in the southern Choluteca diocese. Although occasionally working with some remaining reform sector cooperatives, this programme, like the World Neighbors team, focused on the campesinos of the densely populated hinterlands, beyond the shrinking reform sector. Across the country, this network of agroecologists, researchers, and educators saw themselves as spreading the seeds of a new agriculture, a cultural revolution that needed to diffuse and take root across peasant hinterlands, agricultural schools, and reform settlements before a genuine and sustainable agrarian reform could occur. By the early 1990s this loose network of sustainable agriculture training centres was reaching several thousand small farmers each year in one-day to two-week long workshops.³⁶

Kaimowitz (1993, 186) described some of the thinking of these new agricultural NGOs in Central America:

Two common characteristics ... are: a focus on the micro community level and a holistic view of human development in which technological change is only one element. The emphasis on the micro level is partially a function of the NGOs' own limited geographical coverage. In addition, their relative isolation from national policy-making circles and the importance they attribute to grass-roots involvement has led them to concentrate on micro-level activities.

Unable to resist filling the vacuum of its own making with its anti-land reform policies, USAID entered this new sustainable agriculture network by launching the \$50 million Land Use Productivity Enhancement Project (LUPE) in 1988. Originally slated to operate for eight years and reach 50,000 families, bureaucratic battles and some paternalism in the field reduced its coverage to 12,300 peasant families (Smith 1994, 91–2). By the late 1990s, USAID terminated the funding for this programme.

Honduras' formal network of Training Centers for Sustainable Agriculture (CEAS) began in the mid-1990s.³⁷ Today it includes 25 large- and medium-sized peasant and small farmer training centres, and six field stations that research cropping methods and techniques.³⁸ These centres vary in size; six are large enough to host 30 or more farmer trainees in weekend to week-long workshops. There are also smaller centres that can accommodate up to a dozen participants for a weekend. CEAS also counts 266 model farms, usually owned and run by farmers³⁹ who have successfully integrated the multi-cropping regimes, terraces, and other techniques that they learned in training and now share this knowledge with other local farmers. The loose CEAS network of directors, researchers, and educators frequently share information of mutual interest electronically, and usually meet a couple of times annually (Boyer 2003, fieldnotes 2009).

³⁶Interviews with Roberto Rodríguez and Monica Hesse, PROCONDEMA heads, 1992 and 1993; with Elías Sánchez in 1997, 1998 and 1999; with Roland Bunch in 1998. See also Jim Adriance (1995). Interestingly, the PROCONDEMA officials openly spoke about keeping the doors open with peasant unions while working mostly to create their independent network of peasant learners and practitioners across the south.

³⁷CEAS is Centros de Enseñanza para la Agricultura Sostenible.

³⁸Interviews with Milton Flores in 1990 and 1992 about his extensive programme of cover crop research.

³⁹They are usually called *agrónomos empíricos/as*, or 'empirical agronomists'.

It is understandable that members of this sustainable agriculture network, like Del-Cid, have clearly insisted that local food security begin with local food self-sufficiency. While they have generally embraced this older development template, why they have tended to resist *Vía Campesina's* more recent campaign for food sovereignty is addressed below.

Vía Campesina and the campaign for food sovereignty

The veteran leaders of Honduras' beleaguered agrarian reform movement faced enormous challenges by the early 1990s. The half dozen remaining peasant unions that made up the national coordinating body, COCOCH, suffered much reduced, mostly European funding to support local organising. The neoliberal 1992 Agricultural Modernization Law, indeed, represented a major institutional shift for the countryside. It not only increased the sale of reform sector lands and further isolated the remaining settlements and cooperatives, but it also made the peasant unions' pressure tactic of land occupations virtually illegal. Rhul's 1984 estimate that landlessness would double by 1990 to more than 120,000 families (of a total rural population of more than 500,000 families) if the reform sector were not expanded, indeed, had become the daunting reality.⁴⁰ The COCOCH leaders and their rank and file also were confronting other forms of economic internationalisation begun in the 1980s; first, not only the mentioned cuts in agricultural service sector spending primarily imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) structural adjustment policies, but also new steps by isthmian (and US) governments to begin a systematic integration of Central American markets with global ones. Throughout the 1980s, tariff reductions depressed prices for local grains and encouraged the substitution of cheap imported grains. Coffee prices plummeted partly as a result of failure, in 1989, to renegotiate favourable prices for Central American producers (Edelman 1998, 51–2).

Blocked from significant action at home, the frustrated COCOCH leaders looked beyond their borders and found opportunities for a different kind of political and civil society engagement. During the 1980s, European governments were generally alarmed at the disruptive effects of US militarism and policies of rapid economic liberalisation across the isthmus. Through the framework of the Central America peace process, they established an alternative body to US geo-political domination in Panama, the Support Committee for the Economic and Social Development of Central America, CADESCA.⁴¹ By 1990 this organisation offered a training programme on *food security* for both government officials and peasant leaders, including selected members of COCOCH. Their educational outreach focused on food self-sufficiency and grass roots participation in policy-making; they also gave workshops on microenterprises, energy, and the environment. Interestingly, the first formulations of *food sovereignty* had surfaced in CADESCA's workshops at this time (Edelman 1998, 59, 2003, 190).

Through these European networks the Central American peasant leaders learned that significant public and private funding for mostly non-local, transnational organising was available. They wasted little time. By 1991, COCOCH and peasant leaders from six other countries founded the Association of Central American

⁴⁰Rhul (1984, 53–6, 61), 1992 Honduran Agricultural Census.

⁴¹The Comité de Apoyo al Desarrollo Económico y Social de Centroamérica (see Edelman 1998, 57, 2003, 190).

Peasant Organizations for Cooperation and Development (ASOCODE). Edelman carefully traces the rapid rise and decline (by the end of the 1990s) of this region's first major experiment at peasant transnational coalition building (1998, 2003). Among its accomplishments was the creation of political spaces for peasant voices and interests to be heard in Central America's inter-governmental forums; voices that could protest the excesses of agribusiness and market integration while defending rural livelihoods and the environment. ASOCODE was responsible for training a generation of confident peasant leaders, able to hold their own not only in local but in these difficult national and international political settings as well (Edelman 2003, 190–4). This was something rarely seen before in the land of caudillo politics and fruit company executives. Finally, ASOCODE contributed to the formation of Latin America's still active peasant and indigenous network, Latin American Coordination of Rural Organizations (CLOC), and to the creation of *Vía Campesina* (Martinez-Torres and Rosset 2010, 5–10). Before turning to these latter events, it is important for this case study to mention one of the many complicated reasons for ASOCODE's downfall: excessive funding with little initial oversight, which in turn generated issues of excessive careerism and distance between some of the leaders and the peasant farmers at local levels that the ASOCODE leaders were pledged to represent (Edelman 1998, 74–8, 2003, 190–5).

With economic globalisation in full swing during the early 1990s, the idea of a global peasant and small farmer network was discussed at CADESCA workshops in Panama. COCOCH leader Rafael Alegría attended the 1992 ASOCODE meeting in Managua, with invited representatives from the Caribbean, North America, and Europe. In their 'Managua Declaration' they called on 'sister farm organisations' worldwide to join with them in creating an alternative development model (Edelman 2003, 194). A year later, *Vía Campesina* was formally constituted in another transcontinental gathering of peasant and farmer leaders in Mons, Belgium. When this network was headquartered with COCOCH in Tegucigalpa from 1996–2004, Alegría served as its general coordinator (Borras 2008a, 96, Desmarais 2007, 8, Edelman 2008, 229–30).

1996 proved to be an important year for *Vía Campesina*.⁴² It was *Vía Campesina*'s initiation of its global campaign for food sovereignty at the World Food Summit, sponsored by the FAO in Rome. The peasant network unveiled food sovereignty there as 'the right of each nation to maintain and develop its own capacity to produce its basic foods, respecting cultural and productive diversity', and also 'the right to produce our own food in our own territory'. Four years later, *Vía Campesina* understandably added 'the right of peoples to define their agriculture and food policy' (Desmarais 2007, 34). Food sovereignty was a direct attack on official

⁴²1996 proved to be an eventful year for *Vía Campesina* and a telling one for a national gathering of Honduran peasant leaders, including Alegría. Presiding over *Vía Campesina*'s second annual meeting in Tlaxcala, Mexico in April, he discussed the network's global trajectory: 'From the *Vía Campesina*'s point of view, the neo-liberal model is causing the collapse ... of this peasant economy. It is destroying natural resources and the environment. It is also undermining our own peasant movements around the world. ... it is important that we have an international organization like the *Vía Campesina*, so that we can come together on issues we are facing and bring together together our aspirations and ideals that have not yet disappeared from this world. ... Creating a global response is the very reason for the *Vía Campesina*'s existence. Alegría went on to stress that the major achievement of *Vía Campesina* was to be able to negotiate at all levels, and he especially emphasized the international level' (Desmarais 2007, 32–3).

food security, especially its eschewal of local production. Food security was seen as too laden with the political baggage of US and neoliberal designs to feed the world with food surpluses generated in the North to be usefully redefined by the FAO or any development institution (McMichael 2008, 42).

This event and its follow-up created an international stir. Although the FAO has not abandoned its use of the food security template, *Vía Campesina's* growing presence on the world scene has certainly added pressure on this UN agency to make transparent its perspective that food security must include local food self-sufficiency. The major UN development institutions have upheld this fundamental security-sufficiency nexus that Del-Cid in Honduras had called for twenty years ago.⁴³ However, it should also be noted that food sovereignty advocacy has encountered difficulties beyond the local self-sufficiency challenge. The call for a multi-layered, individual-to-collective sovereignty introduces confusion, as we shall see momentarily. Food sovereignty's demands for radical democracy (Patel 2009, 668–71) and agrarian citizenship (Wittman 2009, 818–20) often confound even *Vía Campesina's* more traditional and patriarchal members.

Another event in 1996, the June workshop at EDDRA, outside of Tegucigalpa, for national peasant leaders, was interesting for several reasons, including how the food sovereignty construct played out.⁴⁴ This workshop brought together key veterans of the peasant movement, several active in the 1960s, with leaders of the major peasant unions of the 1970s and 1980s, most of whom were part of COCOCH. One hope for the workshop was that discussing the extraordinary peasant-led history of forging Honduras' agrarian reform might inspire new attempts to overcome some of the factionalism that continued to plague the national movement. When Rafael Alegría spoke about the work of *Vía Campesina*, he introduced food sovereignty to the gathered leaders and repeated COCOCH's idea that a national campaign under this new banner could help unite the agrarian movement. The other leaders discussed this idea in a positive vein, and no one voiced any opposition.

Three years later, *Vía Campesina* initiated a global campaign for agrarian reform. It stressed that food sovereignty includes the right, and usually the necessity, for peasants, small farmers, farm labourers, indigenous peoples, and women as well as men to shape the institutions and services of such reforms (Borras 2008a, 93–5, Desmarais 2007, 35–6). The California based Food First Institute, one of *Vía Campesina's* major institutional allies, argues persuasively that agrarian reform is in so many cases the transformation necessary for food sovereignty to occur (Food First 2005).

⁴³The most important of these agencies is the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which has sponsored the well known annual assessments of human development indicators in 179 countries over the last quarter century. The UNDP has adopted the FAO's definition of food security in their analysis. In contrast, the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) seemed incapable of resisting the neoliberal pressures of the US, the World Trade Organization (WTO), and major transnational corporations (TNCs) from the beginning, and has not officially taken up the food security/sovereignty debate (see Bruno and Karliner 2002, Schroyer and Golodik 2006).

⁴⁴In June 1996, J. Ramón Velásquez Nazar hosted this workshop at EDDRA. The peasant leaders were Rafael Alegría (CNTC, COCOCH, Marcotulio Cartagena UNC), Inés Fuentes (ACAN, COCOCH), Santos Valeriano Ordoñez (ANACH), Pedro Mendoza (UNC), Faustino Rodríguez (ACAN), and Teófilo Trejo (CNTC). Campesino movement educators were Antonio Casasola and Elsa Vargas, also an EDDRA administrator. I taped this two-day session with the help of Robert Trudeau, and assistance from photographer Be Gardiner (see Boyer 1998).

Cultural assessment: information deficit and cognitive dissidence across rural Honduras

Turning first to Honduras' peasant unions, there unfortunately is little evidence to indicate that beyond the national leadership ranks of the COCOCH council, the campaign for food sovereignty has gained much traction in the 13 intervening years. Neither the COCOCH-affiliated peasant unions nor the independent ones have been able to mount an effective counter-strategy to challenge the legal authority of the Agricultural Modernization Law, especially with regard to further reform sector land sales. The one exception, included in the 1992 legislation, allowed the resolution of some longstanding land claims by indigenous groups.⁴⁵

In 1998, I visited reform sector groups, affiliated with ACAN in Yoro, CNTC in Comayagua, and an ANACH national leader in Cortes. In 2002, 2005 and 2007, I also visited both UNC and ANACH groups in Choluteca. While this is hardly a representative sample of the national reform sector, it was evident that with the exception of a few local union leaders of the CNTC, the food sovereignty campaign had not reached the settlements in a deliberate, systematic way. In fact, the rank and file reform sector farmers were more familiar with the older template of food security than food sovereignty.

Following up with the national peasant leaders from the workshop two years later revealed why this was the case. In 1998 I recorded life histories of these and additional leaders, both men and women. Rafael Alegría, of course, promoted food sovereignty, as did the interviewed educators closely affiliated with Alegría's national peasant union, the CNTC. However, one of the CNTC founders, Teófilo Trejo, initially paid lip service to food sovereignty, but as the day and a half interview wore on, he lapsed back into 'land and food security' *speak*. The leaders from the other peasant unions did not object to Vía Campesina's food sovereignty construct, but in retrospect, it is clear that they were not convinced that it somehow better represented their abiding concerns for peasant control over land and subsistence rights than did their understandings of land and food security. Why culturally this may be so, I address momentarily; suffice it to say, the queried rank and file union members had not heard of food sovereignty because their leaders were not sufficiently convinced that the older food security trope needed to be replaced.

Turning to the parallel CEAS network, my assessment suggests several things.⁴⁶ First, all of these centre directors and researchers were aware of Vía Campesina's global food sovereignty campaign. To a person they voiced some reservations about fully embracing the peasant union campaign, even though they accepted many of the elements encompassed by the food sovereignty construct. When asked if the directors discussed food sovereignty with their staff and farmer students, the

⁴⁵The indigenous groups, the highland Mesoamerican cultures, and the lowland and coastal Caribbean groups, including the Afro-Caribbean populations together, constitute no more than 10 percent of Honduras' population. Hale (2004) argues that the recent recognition of indigenous land and other rights in Latin America often masked neoliberalism's paternalism that has further divided and conquered these very indigenous groups. Most of the national peasant leaders gathered at the mentioned 1996 workshop saw this as the government's political media ploy to 'divide and conquer', helping the minority while walking away from the plight of the rural majority.

⁴⁶Interviews include the directors of World Neighbors, CIDICCO (cover crop research), PROCONDEMA, and the director of the 'Semillas del Progreso' Center near Siguatepeque, and EDDRA in 2001. In 2008 and March 2009, with a new centre director near Gracias, with economist Wilfredo Cardona, and again with the 'Semillas ...' director.

PROCONDEMA director said that he did, that it simply added to the strength of food security. Interestingly, a new CEAS funder, Heifer International-Honduras, presented food security as an important aspect of food sovereignty to my students at Appalachian State University last October. All directors continue to teach the older food security construct as including local food self-sufficiency.

It is helpful to examine the distinctive semantics of the food security and food sovereignty development templates. I believe that those 'wordsmiths' within *Vía Campesina* may have underestimated the deep salience and valuing evoked by the aforementioned term *seguridad* in the countryside when they looked for a powerful alternative. It is worth a simple reiteration: for people whose very labours render their 'grains of first necessity', the insecurities of land access and soil quality, water, seed, the weather, their own health, and potential liens on their production all conspire to make the very idea of security very attractive indeed. This cautious aspect of everyday life for peasants and small farmers can be too quickly overlooked in the rush to fashion strategies of transformative action. The many meanings embodied in security, one with considerable time depth, possess a fundamental conservative sense that many peasants and small farmers may have difficulty discarding.

In contrast, sovereignty is not a term that expresses the concerns of everyday rural life in the same manner that security does. In *Vía Campesina*'s efforts to establish a universalising alternative to food security, they clearly were seeking to balance several ideological tendencies within their own ranks.⁴⁷ The idea of autonomy invoked by the term sovereignty may well appeal to populists and certainly groups influenced by some anarchist traditions in politics, but it also can become somewhat confusing to the many who equate sovereignty with states and not with the rights of particular peoples or aspects of their daily lives. Indeed, it may well be that the state-centred understandings of sovereignty limit actor-driven potentials, whereas the personal, communal, and local resonances with *seguridad*, whether food or land security, suffer no such limitation in rural Honduras.⁴⁸ Sovereignty's semantic distance from rural peoples' daily lives can pose problems of initial acceptance, especially when it competes with such a cultural keyword as security.

My claim about the deeper cultural semantics of 'security' in a generally insecure peasant world is not a casual one. The writings of other social scientists about rural Honduras, and much of this society's literature and folklore, point explicitly or implicitly to the centrality of land and food security in the lexicon, voiced concerns and descriptions of forbidding conditions for peasants and small farmers.⁴⁹

⁴⁷Borras (2008a, 109) identifies radical agrarian populism, various Marxist strands, groups with strong anarchist political tradition and leaning, radical environmentalists and feminism as all co-existing uneasily within the broad coalition that is *Vía Campesina*. Balancing these tendencies within national coalitions like COCOCH and across the transnational arena is understandably difficult.

⁴⁸Jon Carter (2008) argues that Honduras' youth gangs call themselves 'sovereign' in part as a rejection of the Honduran state's supreme law making authority over their lives. They also use the word as personally embodied, a kind of defiance against the physical violence that they encounter in everyday street life (email correspondence 18 November 2009).

⁴⁹The centrality of land and food security is explicit in all the cited research of the southern region, including Stares (1972), Del-Cid (1977), DeWalt and Stonich (1985), and Stonich (1993). It is also explicit in Jansen (1998) and especially Jansen and Roquas (1998) for the central-western region, and in Kramer (1986) for the western region. Land and food security and insecurity are found repeatedly in Bonta's (2001) comprehensive cultural geographic study of central eastern Olancho. On the North Coast, land and food security resonates in the recent

Moreover, similar hermeneutic and structural resonances abound in the peasant and small farmer literature across Mesoamerica, Latin America, and other world regions.⁵⁰ This national case study may not be the place to claim the high well ubiquitous condition of natural and human-constructed insecurities in a steadily globalising postwar world. Nevertheless, Netting (1993) came close to such assertions about human-nature relations, and Scott (1976, 1985) makes similar arguments about political economic relations.⁵¹

The food sovereignty construct may well face additional problems of semantic confusion caused by successive 'stacking' of multiple meanings.⁵² However inspiring food sovereignty may be for scholars and activists as an overarching vision and challenge for overcoming the problems of the countryside,⁵³ its clarity can be compromised as principles, causes, and conditioning or intervening variables are too simply listed in sequential order. I understand Desmarais when she says that the principles of food sovereignty are not a checklist of separate 'things to do', that they are integrative goals of a praxis that play out differently from one organisation, locale, region, country, and transnational setting to the next.⁵⁴ I do not question the necessity for comprehensive agrarian reform to ensure local control over food and its nutritional and cultural qualities in many peasant, small farmer, and indigenous regions. Nevertheless, food sovereignty's very complexity (and therefore instability) as it vies for status as the development template to displace food security may well be one of the factors impeding its ready acceptance at the grassroots level.

From the CEAS network's perspective, the rise of food sovereignty as a counter-development (or even anti-development) template reveals cultural and political challenges. The experienced agroecologists, researchers, and educators in this

study reported by Nygren and Myatt-Hirvonen (2009). And it is found in various regions in the writings of Brockett (1987), Del-Cid (1989), Posas (1981a, 1981b), Stringer (1989), and Thorpe (1991), as well as my 2007 interview with pioneering INA director, Rigoberto Sandoval. It is also worth noting an unusual commonality among many Honduran intellectuals, whether literary writers, historians, or folklorists, who repeatedly express agrarian themes such as food sufficiency and life's insecurities in the countryside. These are also central themes of traditional music and folklore. A handful of examples are writers Ramón Amaya Amador, and Froylán Turcios; historians Mario Argueta, Héctor Leyva, and for 'the agrarian in the colonial urban', Leticia de Oyuela; folklorists Alfonso Carranza R. and the published humorous tales of CNTC leader Teófilo Trejo; and the many 'sique dances' and folksongs like 'The Indians of Picacho' ('Los Inditos de Picacho') and 'The Rain Poncho' ('a la Capotín'), translation mine.

⁵⁰In Mesoamerica and the Caribbean see especially Brockett (1998), Edelman (1999), Gudeman (1978), Williams (1986), A. Bartra (1982, 2004), Nash (1994), Roseberry (1976, 1993), and Wessman (1978). For world regions within and beyond Latin America, see Wessman (1981), Wolf (1966, 1969), Isaacman (1993), Netting (1993), Scott (1976, 1985), and Edelman's (2005) evaluation of James Scott.

⁵¹Writing about both pre- and postwar eras, Eric Wolf (1966, 1969, 1981) actually came closer to attending the security/insecurity nexus for peasants and indigenous peoples on both sides of Marx's humanity-nature/human-human double dialectic.

⁵²Food First (2005) lists the following basic principles encompassed by food sovereignty: (1) food: a basic right, (2) agrarian reform, (3) protecting natural resources, (4) reorganising food trade, (5) ending the globalisation of hunger, (6) social peace, and (7) democratic control.

⁵³For instance, Philip McMichael (2008, 47–50) writes enthusiastically that food sovereignty has become the new agrarian question, shifting epistemological gears from production to social reproduction.

⁵⁴Annette Desmarais' lecture to the social movements forum, UNC-Chapel Hill, 3–4 April

network have learned through daily peasant practices, as well as verbal reflections, about the centrality of the 'security/food and land security' nexus. Their collective efforts represent a challenge to the deceitful US food security definition that has privileged export market rule over local food self-sufficiency.⁵⁵ While I am not arguing that such themes of self-sufficiency, especially the embodied peasant production of use and local exchange values, could not be transferred to the new food sovereignty template, it clearly will take a much greater didactic and organisational commitment than we have seen thus far in Honduras. My suspicion is that Eric Holt-Giménez was well aware of this historic allegiance to the food security template within networks like CEAS as *Vía Campesina's* food sovereignty challenge was surfacing across the alternative development world. Rather than risk a debate that might further divide peasant unions and the sustainable agriculture network, he chose to avoid such a confrontation by not raising it in his study of the farmer-to-farmer movement.

Last but certainly not least, my queries of the CEAS centre leaders about agrarian reform made it clear that this issue has become a major impediment for their general acceptance of the food sovereignty campaign. Discussion of this crucial impasse awaits the structural analysis below.

Organisational and structural analysis

This section first offers an interpretation of cultural perceptions and attitudes, discussed by peasant leaders and professional allies, about organisational problems and relationships for peasant unions and the CEAS network. It then offers an analysis of the recent changes within the more deeply structured economic and power relations of Honduras; those changing relations shape the contexts for contemporary organising and ongoing praxis.

Expressed organisational challenges

Turning to the expressed organisational problems that the Honduran food sovereignty campaign has encountered, it is evident that the peasant unions' weakened links mediating the local, reform sector groups in feeder hinterland communities and with regional and national offices have long been a serious problem. Unfortunately, as the gaze of the Honduran peasant movement shifted globally to play a vital part of creating *Vía Campesina*, many of the unions' ties with their bases languished. The charges of excessive careerism play into this; many see in the national leadership a pursuit of personal advancement, material gain, and personal power over and above serving the broader social goals of their unions. The retired veteran leader of the UNC's early struggles for agrarian reform in Choluteca, Modesto Domínguez, put it this way: 'Those at the top must come down. Those on the bottom should replace them, but only for a while'.⁵⁶ This founder of the first reform cooperative in the south (in 1970) was expressing a widely-held view within

⁵⁵Most older professionals of the sustainable agriculture network well recall the food self-sufficiency heritage in that strain of the early postwar development paradigm mentioned above. Several volunteered that defending this heritage is what initially inspired them to engage in development work.

⁵⁶July 2001, Concepción de María, Choluteca, Honduras. Translation mine.

the unions, peasant movement, and movement watchers from the countryside to Tegucigalpa. Desmarais' assessment of the challenges for balancing 'local realities and global actions' (especially in Canada, Mexico, and Brazil) lists the following: '... lack of resources, weak leadership, regional and personal jealousies, ideological splits, a declining or inactive membership base, and co-optation from governments and NGOs – that have afflicted rural organizations everywhere' (2007, 136). Desmarais (2007, 22–7), following Petras and Veltmeyer (2001; see also Jelin 1998, Rucht 1999, among others) also highlights sharp criticism against the rural NGO community as a 'parasitic neo-comprador class, full of professional careerists'. My analysis, critical of neoliberal strategies to utilise many NGOs to co-opt the popular peasant movement, agrees in part with this criticism (see below). But I must agree with Borras (2008b), who identifies a range of dedicated-to-deceitful NGOs with respect to peasant and small farmer interests and movements. Moreover, I submit that leadership succession within the peasant unions, COCOCH (and to some extent even *Vía Campesina*) is not so transparent or openly democratic either.

It is time to examine the other side of the peasant movement leadership issue that Marc Edelman recently analysed (2009b). Whereas he addresses the remarkable agency of key leaders in recent transnational agrarian movements, it is also important to remember the structural limits faced by such gifted leaders, some similar to those he had identified in his study of Central America's former ASOCODE coalition. My own analysis of extraordinary local and regional agency (Boyer 1990) suggests that although historic circumstances may encourage individuals to step into new leadership roles, it is not always the case that such structural openness 'generates' the skilled leadership sufficient to catalyse intended changes or desired transformations. Although the leadership capabilities of many Honduran peasant leaders are, indeed, admirable, I nonetheless argue that Rafael Alegría's organisational skills and visionary capabilities are rare. The future will likely continue to see some extraordinary leaders at all levels, but these barriers for advancement in a poor rural setting, whether in Honduras or Appalachia,⁵⁷ are quite real. These necessarily limit the availability of skilled leaders at crucial historic moments. This situation must explain some of the careerism and lack of turnover in Honduras' peasant unions and, of course, COCOCH, the former ASOCODE and *Vía Campesina*. Given the continual need for capable leadership in such institutions, my rhetorical questions are simply: Is careerism always bad? Are there not culturally appropriate circumstances in which the honed skills of veterans trump the obvious need for regular and inter-generational succession of peasant union leaders?⁵⁸

Returning to the farmer-to-farmer CEAS network, it is important to place its emergence within the neoliberal policies of shifting agrarian action from the public to the private sector in the early 1980s. Honduras certainly participated in the global trend of NGO proliferation in the 1980s and 1990s; Kaimowitz (1993, 182) noted that by 1992, 64 percent of the 71 NGOs dealing partially or completely with agriculture formed after 1980. Yet as Borras (2008b) persuasively argues, these new agents of development invariably expressed the political and cultural divisions of

⁵⁷See Boyer (2007b).

⁵⁸By gifted leadership, by no means am I limiting that quality to charismatic leaders. Increasingly, those people who are skilled at the give and take of shared leadership and collective decision-making are in high demand, particularly in social and labour movements emphasising equality, democracy, and inclusiveness throughout the world. See the Highlander Center Newsletter at <http://www.highlandercenter.org> [Accessed 19 May 2009].

their wider social milieu. The ideological splits between these new development agencies in Honduras were extraordinary. The centre-left sustainable agriculture CEAS network questioned neoliberalism's pro-market, pro-agribusiness agenda and USAID's policies. Most of their centre directors were understandably suspicious of new programmes, like LUPE, which were expressly tied through funding and hiring policies to USAID. Some of these NGOs were established to support US counter-insurgency efforts during the Contra war. USAID, the US embassy, and puppet NGOs attempted to mask this geopolitical agenda by publicising their efforts to reduce the inefficient and failing public sector 'boogey man'. This was especially true of the agrarian reform sector. Laura Macdonald's (1994, 1997) research showed similar divisions between neopopulist and neoconservative NGOs spreading across much of Central America in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The former NGO group was mostly funded by western European and Canadian foundations, and the latter by the US and World Bank funds.⁵⁹

Why were the CEAS leaders loathe to extend their progressive leanings regarding ecological sustainability to agrarian reform? The PROCONDEMA director seemed to be the most supportive, but he also shared the general concerns that there was too much of a focus on large-scale export agriculture among the reform sector bureaucrats. Former World Neighbors-Honduras director Juan Pérez⁶⁰ expressed his reluctance to work with the reform sector. He said that many government officials' careless and irresponsible attitudes about land stewardship, lack of concern over the quality of what is grown, and their general willingness to sell off reform land under the new law all 'infect' the peasant farmers in the reform sector. Working with official agrarian reform, he thought, would undermine much of World Neighbors' patient work with their peasant hosts. Pérez pointed out that World Neighbors focused on agricultural technology for hillside agriculture, but not lowland, open field, and larger-scale farming, the primary emphasis of reform sector agriculture. Finally, he was critical of many peasant union leaders, whom he saw as more interested in ideological sparring and in perpetuating their careers than in the patient work of developing a sustainable agriculture. When I reminded him that some of his predecessors at World Neighbors, the founding agronomists at PROCONDEMA, and the earliest Church-led training farms all held out for the possibility that the *revolutions* of agrarian reform and sustainable agriculture were not incompatible,⁶¹ Pérez replied that he believed in that dream as a young man, but that he no longer held such hope.

At the same time, CEAS leaders are aware of the fact that their slow and patient work with small groups of cultivators has reached a relatively limited audience. It is doubtful that their network, together with the few programmes of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cattle Ranching and schools of Agronomy, are reaching more than an estimated 10,000 peasants and small farmers annually.⁶² This contrasts sharply

⁵⁹The important exception to this trend is World Neighbors; its founders were an ecumenical branch of midwestern Mennonites in the US.

⁶⁰I have fictionalised this individual's name upon his request; his interviews occurred March 1998 and May 2001.

⁶¹Interviews with Roberto Rodriguez and Monica Hesse, PROCONDEMA heads, 1992 and 1993; with Milton Flores in 1990 and 1992; with Elías Sánchez in 1997, 1998, and 1999; and with Roland Bunch in 1998.

⁶²There is disagreement about this total number. Wilfredo Cardona insists that almost 30,000 small producers receive some kind of training, support, or contact by CEAS annually.

with the total of 46,890 families who received land through the agrarian reform programme by 1980 (Rhul 1984, 52–3). Moreover, the current level of 277,000 landless and near landless families cited at the outset strongly suggests that whatever multiplier affect the CEAS teaching network might possess, it alone can never address the structural problem of rural poverty in Honduras. Some of the North American, British, and Euro-Catholic agency foundations and the officials of the CEAS network, concerned more with the particular qualities (i.e. technical knowledge, patience, and care) in establishing a workable sustainable agriculture, demand loyalties from farmers that can become an overprotective paternalism (i.e. ‘my peasant groups’ or ‘my communities’, etc.). This issue of NGO professionals and other activists willing to speak ‘for the peasants’ invariably carries troublesome elite-versus-lower class assumptions that are too rarely critiqued, confronted, and surmounted.⁶³ These problems, together with foundation fears of past unstable and threatening politics within nationalistic agrarian reform movements, all conspire to erect barriers between CEAS and peasant unions.⁶⁴ COCOCH-Via Campesina officials have rightfully complained that when the Ministry of Agriculture and prestigious agronomy schools like Zamorano trot out yet another limited programme for peasant and small farm sustainable agriculture, and when government officials happily point to the laudable work of the CEAS network in their country, they inevitably mask fundamental class issues, globalising structural problems and the agrarian question that looms ever larger. Such, indeed, is the Janus face of neoliberalism.

Changing agrarian structures and the emergence of global corporate food regimes

This discussion of organisational and political difficulties for local-to-transnational movements in Honduras begs consideration of the changing underlying agrarian structures behind the Janus face. Such structures are constituted by the norms, institutions, and political relationships that govern land as a productive resource (Stavenhagen 1970, 3, Wessman 1978, 1981). In the early 1980s, I and other analysts described Honduras’ regional agrarian structures as constituted by the articulation of two increasingly contradictory modes of production. The dominant agrarian capitalist mode was comprised mainly of cattle haciendas, foreign controlled banana, palm oil, and sugar plantations, and a growing number of farming operations for ‘the new exports’ of cotton, coffee,⁶⁵ melon, broccoli, and cashews, all producing for world markets. The second mode, simple commodity production, was made up of peasants and minimally commercialised small farmers producing primarily for subsistence. During the era of my fieldwork, many peasants and smallholders were

I respectfully question these high figures. *Significant* teaching contacts with rural cultivators cannot be any more than the annual 10,000 cultivators. Clearly, a comprehensive evaluation of CEAS is long overdue.

⁶³This necessary class analysis obviously includes our work as agrarian scholars. See Edelman (2009a) and Hale (2008).

⁶⁴See Borras (2008b) for an excellent discussion of the often contradictory relationships between agrarian movements of and by peasants and small farmers and wealthier NGO funders and staff professionals.

⁶⁵Although coffee is one of the oldest Central American exports, Honduras’ coffee production was mainly for domestic consumption before World War II, and only became a significant export crop after the mid-1960s (Williams 1994, 1986, Del Cid 1977).

also battling for a greater share of the land and access to the benefits of export market production through the agrarian reform program (Boyer 1984, Del Cid 1977, Posas 1981a, 1981b). Interestingly, historian Darío Euraque (2006) suggests that by this time the urban, commercial, and industrial interests of the North Coast, led by the ethnic minorities of Christian Arabs (mostly Palestinian) and a few Jewish families, had begun to wrest control of national politics (and the media) from the traditional agrarian elites, both the large landlords and older mining interests.⁶⁶ Yet despite its own rapid urban growth, Honduras remained the most rural Central American society; in 1980, 64.3 percent of its 3.4 million inhabitants lived in the countryside and small towns. Fully 60 percent of its labour force was engaged in agriculture, again the highest percentage in the isthmus.⁶⁷

Edelman's (2008) analysis shows the continuing decline of Central America's agriculture and the role of small producers in the region's economy, the shrinking of 'the rural' with steadily urbanising demographic shifts, and the debilitating effects on rural community life of rural out-migration together with the rise of illicit youth gang and narco-trafficking activity in rural as well as urban spaces. Summarising Edelman's (2008, 70–80) presentation of CEPAL data covering the last two decades, we see the following trends for Honduras: (i) its rural population dropping to 49.4 percent by 2010, yet still the largest in Central America; (ii) agriculture's share of GDP declining from 15.2 percent in 1995 to 13.6 percent in 2005;⁶⁸ (iii) agricultural employment as a percentage of total employment declined from 42 percent in 1990 to 36.3 percent in 2005;⁶⁹ (iv) agricultural exports as a total of total exports declined from 60 percent in 1995 to 29.5 percent in 2005, the largest decline but still highest level among these five countries; (v) coffee exports as a percent of total foreign exchange earnings declined from 19.2 percent in the 1980–1984 period to 6.3 percent in the 2000–2003 period;⁷⁰ (vi) remittances from abroad increased from \$242.5 million in 1995 to \$2002.4 million in 2005. As a percentage of total export earnings, Honduras' remittances climbed dramatically, from 14 percent in 1995 to 58.5 percent in 2005. Honduras ranks third among the Central American countries, after Guatemala and El Salvador, in both remittance measures, clearly signaling their growing economic importance.

These data confirm the demographic shifts and steady decline in economic activity that have moved wealth and power away from Honduras' regional agrarian structures and landlord *caudillos*⁷¹ and toward urban and industrial structures and

⁶⁶Euraque (1996) has carefully traced the emergence of this capitalist class since the Christian Arabs, fleeing Ottoman repression in Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria, settled in Honduras' North Coast at the beginning of the twentieth century.

⁶⁷See Banco Central de Honduras (1984, 3), Robinson (2003, 255–6).

⁶⁸Here Honduras ranks third, after Guatemala (22.8 percent) and Nicaragua (17.9 percent).

⁶⁹This last figure virtually ties with Guatemala's 36.2 percent as the highest levels in the isthmus.

⁷⁰Honduras is ranked third, after Nicaragua (8 percent) and Guatemala (6.4 percent). Coffee, especially in Honduras, is an important income source for small producers and part-time wage labourers.

⁷¹*Caudillos* is the Spanish term for traditional political leaders whose basis of power derived from familial control over land and labour, which generally conferred hierarchical status and privilege. This form of authoritarian, charismatic power was and remains far more personal than partisan and ideological, and operates through ties of loyalty between *caudillo* leaders and their followers. Caudillo politics dominated traditional power relations in Honduras, Central America, and much of Latin America since Independence (Carías 2005, Chasteen

business elites. The growth of Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula, and a half dozen secondary cities was spurred by steady rural–urban migration and a population that has more than doubled since 1980 to almost 7.8 million.⁷²

Interestingly, the mentioned north coast capitalist group actually initiated their bid for national power by first supporting the peasant movements' push for agrarian reform in the 1970s. There they found investment opportunities in a national, industrial agriculture (Euraque 2006, 264–5, 270–1). As the globalising corporate food regime replaced Honduras' national phase of economic development,⁷³ this rising commercial and industrial class terminated their alliances with peasant unions to pursue financial opportunities with agribusiness food chains, including industrially processed foods, supermarkets, and franchises with Central American and US fast food corporations. Today these new food retail establishments are found in middle class neighbourhoods, commercial strips, and malls, not only in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula, but increasingly in the expanding secondary cities. In addition, industrially-processed convenience foods have found their way into practically every poor urban neighbourhood and rural community of the country (Boyer 2008).⁷⁴

Researchers at the Honduran Center for Documentation (CEDOH)⁷⁵ in Tegucigalpa have scrutinised the steady consolidation of social and political power by the country's merchant and industrial class. They have traced their increasing influence in the two major political parties, in ownership of media (especially television, radio, and newspapers), and growing ties with both Honduras' military institutions and civil society organisations.⁷⁶ Indeed, Leticia Salomón's recent analysis of the key supporters of the 28 June 2009 coup in the congress, the courts, the media, and the commanding officers of Honduras' Armed Forces shows close linkages to this dominant capitalist class.⁷⁷ She echoes Euraque's (2006, 284–5)

2001). The postwar peasant movements described herein have both battled and sometimes incorporated *caudillo* elements into their own contemporary organisations and leadership patterns (White 1977).

⁷²CIA FactBook. Available from: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ho.html> [Accessed 20 November 2009]. See also Boyer and Carter (2002).

⁷³Formal analysis of successive historical food regimes examines the social and material effects (and transformations) of capitalism's progressive commodification of food, and its production and distribution systems. Following Harriett Friedmann's initial formulation (1978) and Friedmann and Philip McMichael's subsequent refinement of food regime analysis (1989), and especially McMichael (2009), there is general agreement around the timing and characteristics of the first two food regimes. The first (1870–1930s) combined colonial tropical imports (monocultures) to Europe with grains and livestock from settler colonies to feed Europe's industrial workers and British imperial and industrial expansion; the second food regime (1950s–1970s) not only rerouted US surplus foods to Cold War dependent allies but also encouraged widespread national economic development projects through Green Revolution technologies and land reform to dampen peasant unrest. The timing and effects of the third global corporate food regime (late 1980s to present) are still under discussion and debate.

⁷⁴Just one of several Christian Arab investment groups is that of the Miguel Facusse family, who have established a complex of agribusinesses and agro-industries. They also command majority ownership in the ISSIMA brand and mixed control (with Salvadoran capital) of the DINANT brand of convenience foods sold throughout the country. By the late 1990s, they were widely touted as Honduras' wealthiest family (Boyer 2008).

⁷⁵Centro de Documentación de Honduras.

⁷⁶See Meza *et al.* (2009), Salomón (2008), Meza *et al.* (2002), and Salomón (1999).

⁷⁷See Salomón's (2009) 'alert' article, 'Honduras. Políticos, Empresarios y Militares: Protagonistas de un Golpe Anunciado', placed on CEDOH's website just a day after the coup.

earlier predictions of just such an event, precipitated by deteriorating economic conditions and growing political crisis provoked by the profoundly anti-democratic nature of this new class' power grab, backed by the military.

There is little doubt that Honduras' transformed agrarian structures are the result of a declining agricultural economy, growing urbanisation, and the advent of the neoliberal development model that has spawned the corporate food regime, while serving to expand the powers of the new commercial-industrial class over the traditional agrarian oligarchy. In sheer economic terms, the growth-touting neoliberal model of the late 1980s and 1990s fell far short of its promises for most Hondurans. According to the Institute for Socio-Economic Research in Tegucigalpa,⁷⁸ in only four of the nine years between 1990 and 1998 did economic growth outpace the annual rate of population growth (an average of 2.4 percent). The currency devaluations triggered inflation rates that, with one year's exception, fluctuated between 10.7 and 36.4 percent throughout the 1990s.⁷⁹ Chronic unemployment and underemployment rates reached 30 percent and 24 percent respectively by mid-1998. All of this meant that real income fell significantly in the 1990s. The per capita cost of Honduras' basket of basic consumer goods rose 800 percent in the 15 years between 1983 and 1998 (IISE 1999, 6, 23). With the devastations and aftermath of Hurricane Mitch, described above, peasants and small farmers as well as urban poor and even struggling middle classes faced a stark set of material circumstances as the new millennium arrived.

Edelman points to the general social decomposition of the Central American countryside because of these weakened agrarian structures, the recent out-migration of economically active members of rural communities, and leisure effects of migrant remittances that dampen communal solidarities while spawning consumerism (2008, 79–80). Recently, I analysed the history of rural (and urban) hunger in postwar Honduras as a result of changing food regimes (Boyer 2008). What began as undernourishment among the few landless cultivators in the late 1950s in the south became the under-consumption of protein and other essential nutrients by the majority of landless and near-landless peasants in the late 1960s, which reached significant levels of caloric and severe protein undernourishment by almost half of the south's rural population in the late 1970s. By the 1980s and early 1990s, the currency devaluations compounded by the steadily increasing loss of land access with the decline of agrarian reform made either the production or purchase of basic grains and other traditional foods increasingly problematic; chronic food shortages for the poorest peasants extended from the south into the indigenous western region, and other areas. By the late 1990s, as indicated above, Honduras was importing more and more foods from the US and elsewhere.

Yet another, equally ominous trend has emerged. The Food and Agriculture Organization's 2005 study of Honduras' food insecurity revealed in all of these mentioned regions not only malnourishment due to hunger but also the rise of obesity, cardiovascular diseases, and diabetes due to the high levels of salt, sugar, and saturated fats in the industrially processed retail foods and especially in the widely available convenience snack foods. FAO (2005, 49–51) also pointed to the growing concentration of the food economy into a few powerful agroindustries whose capital intensive production and marketing system generates relatively few

⁷⁸My translation of *Instituto de Investigaciones Socio- Económicas* (IISE).

⁷⁹The one exception was the 8.8 percent inflation rate in 1992 (IISE 1999, 5).

jobs. Within a half century, Honduras has lost its enviable status as northern Central America's food larder, exporting basic grains and other locally rendered Mesoamerican foods to neighbouring countries, to now join the global food crisis that Raj Patel (2007) aptly titles *Stuffed and Starved* in his recent volume on this subject. This complicated food crisis is certainly another important aspect of social decomposition throughout Honduras. By 2006, and despite debt relief from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank,⁸⁰ and poverty reduction funds from the UN Millennium Account, even the mainstream *El Heraldo* newspaper sounded the alarm with this editorial:

There is no doubt: the worst consequence of poverty and inequality is hunger. A society, a system that is incapable of satisfying basic nutritional necessities for all its members is very close to absolute breakdown, given that men and women cannot carry out their labor tasks efficiently and malnourished children cannot aspire to compete well as adults given their reduced physical and mental development. According to FAO's (United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization) recent data, Honduras with a 22 percent malnutrition rate, [is] surpassed [in Central America] only by Guatemala's 23 percent rate. ... Instead of reducing malnutrition, Honduras, like Guatemala, has witnessed its increase in recent years. (18 October, author's translation)

The foregoing confirms a steadily weakening food production and distribution for most Hondurans, making the food security/sovereignty debates and future praxis quite urgent. The most recent economic news is that since the military coup, the Honduran economy is losing \$50 million each day. The business survey organisation, Consensus Economics, has recently revised its June forecast of a shrinking GDP this year from a minus 0.7 percent to a minus 2.6 percent. These realities do little to reverse the general pessimism about the future in this the third poorest country in the hemisphere (after Haiti and Nicaragua).⁸¹

Finally, both Edelman and I (2008) note the alarming rise of a final challenge for the maintenance of communal solidarity and popular organising. It concerns the disintegrative effects on rural as well as urban society of the violence generated by the illicit ex-military activities, linked with narco-traffickers and urban youth gangs. Their spread into rural areas is due to the frequent proximity of agro-export packing facilities to rural airstrips and harbors used by drug cartels, the easy availability of weapons in Central America's post-civil wars era, the lack of adequate programmes of social rehabilitation, and poverty itself (Edelman 2008, 78–9). Beyond the scope of this study, this growing nexus is a challenge for the maintenance of trust relationships and solidarities necessary for progressive social movements, healthy civil society, and political culture.⁸²

⁸⁰Honduras was declared one of the 40 Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) by the World Bank and IMF, which made it eligible for debt relief in 2005: \$2.2 billion distributed over 15 years. This annual transfer equals 8 percent of national income and 1.7 percent of the GDP in 2006 (Velázquez 2008, 12–13).

⁸¹See the full BBC Business Report, released 15 October (Plummer 2009). The confidence of Honduran citizens in the willingness and capacity of national institutions, and especially their government, to meet basic needs has been low, even by Latin American standards, for some time (PNUD 2006).

⁸²See J. Carter (2008), L. Gutiérrez (2009), and A. Pine (2008) for recent research on the nexus of youth gangs, narco drug trafficking, and ex-military illicit activity in Honduras.

Clearly these structural and demographic shifts during the last quarter-century have served to narrow and close important social and political spaces for those struggling to maintain peasant and small farmer control over local-regional food production and distribution. This now includes the food destined for consumption in Honduras' growing cities. As corporate agribusiness takes over more and more farming and food for the nation, as both rural and urban dwellers become ever more dependent upon remittances sent from the US to make ends meet, the agrarian crisis of food security as the Hondurans have defined it is increasingly a national one. And in this hungry and impoverished society, the issues of sovereignty as *Vía Campesina* defines such multilayered autonomy is now embedded in the current political struggle over who will govern Honduras and how.

Steps toward a workable praxis in rural Honduras

When Rafael Alegría discussed the current futility of a renewed food sovereignty and agrarian reform campaign, he said that none of this could be resolved until Honduras can decide 'who will govern and how'. This observation reminds us of the recent research in Brazil and South Africa by Baletti *et al.* (2008) regarding the importance of timing for agrarian mobilisations as they encounter favourable or unfavourable structural conditions shaped as much or more by local-national forces as global ones. Yet Honduras' agrarian crisis deepens; the growing landless and hungry population and mounting number of land disputes continue. As Cristóbal Kay wrote about the agrarian reform challenges in the era of neoliberal counter-reforms in Latin America (2002, 44–5),

It is vital for peasants, rural workers and indigenous communities to organize and strengthen their representative institutions so that they can shape and secure their future survival in a world increasingly driven by global forces. While major agrarian reforms especially of a collectivist kind are unlikely to recur, it is certainly premature to argue that current land policies and neoliberal measures are heralding the demise of the agrarian question in Latin America. Any resolution will require changes in the unequal and exclusionary land tenure system.

Four years later, with growing problems in the global financial system and corporate food regime, Kay argues that agrarian reform is the necessary but not sufficient condition to reduce poverty and enhance equity. He then identifies a series of additional support services (credit, import-substitution in staple foods, and autonomous development strategies such as sustainable agriculture) as well as macro-economic policies to protect agrarian reform beneficiaries (2006, 474–6). Together, Baletti, Johnson, and Wolford and Kay are arguing for timely and strategic pressures from grassroots rural organisations (from below) and movements together with national-transnational coalitions and movements (from within and above) on states to establish or protect agrarian reform and other programmes supporting the rural poor from threatening global market forces.⁸³

⁸³This strategic view is also held by Desmarais (2007), Borras (2008a, 2008b), Borras and Franco (2009), and McMichael (2008). Such 'below and above' pressures have been crucial for relatively successful redistributive policies and social democracy for four societies (Kerala, Costa Rica, Mauritius, and Chile) in the global periphery (Sandbrook *et al.* 2007). See also the detailed account by Rosset *et al.* (2006) about successfully instituted agrarian reforms that increased equity, control over food, and improved livelihoods for peasants and small farmers.

While the continuing political crisis, the deepening agrarian crisis, and evident social decomposition constitute formidable obstacles for a renewed, workable praxis in rural Honduras, signs of hope, doubtless much of it born out of suffering and despair, have emerged within the resistance movement against the coup. As municipal resistance committees have formed in the major regions of the country, a growing number of peasant union and CEAS leaders have joined. I witnessed some of their discussions during my August 2009 visit, remarkable in that for the first time in years, they were agreeing to collaborate and admitting that they need each other now more than ever. While is too early to see the long-term effects of this national movement, there is little doubt that the events since June 2009 have generated transformational thinking and actions on the ground.

Socially engaged researchers can play a small but frequently helpful mediating and listening role as peasant union and CEAS leaders initiate their discussions about collaborating for a renewed agrarian reform that supports small farmer sustainable agriculture. Sensitive researchers can point out synergies between their mutually important roles in a wider movement, help identify commonalities (and differences) within the supposedly opposed tropes of food security and food sovereignty, and generally work to reduce marginalised feelings between the two groups. We also can help leaders revive a common practice from the 1970s and 1980s. Union leaders like Ines Fuentes, Modesto Dominguez, and Rafael Alegría often held meetings with their members that were similar to what Holt-Giménez (2006) describes as 'structural literacy' classes.⁸⁴ They would identify particular agents, institutions, and policies arrayed against peasant and small farmer interests in Honduras, and endeavoured to show their international linkages as best they could. The focus then turned to creative oppositional strategies and spaces for constructive movement building. Researchers often possess vital information about these many topics that can be usefully shared as Hondurans engage in these kinds of critical learning discussions across the countryside. This would not be the first time that such scholar-activist collaboration has occurred in rural Honduras.⁸⁵

Conclusions

... yes there are possibilities for building a global movement. But this doesn't depend on a global process. The consolidation of alternatives rests completely on what is happening at the local level, it depends on the development of organizations in their regions, in their countries. This gives validity to a global process. – Pedro Magaña Guerrero, former Mexican peasant leader.⁸⁶

The solidarity among peoples is an *estrategia de lucha* [strategy of struggle] and of exchange experiences about the most effective ways to oppose monsters that often have no face on the national scene, such as the World Trade Organization or Monsanto International. Mobilizations and experiences enable us to see the world differently....

⁸⁴See especially Holt-Giménez (2006), chapters 3 and 5.

⁸⁵See Charles Hale's edited volume on activist scholarship around the world (2008) and Edelman's recent essay on politically engaged researchers and rural social movements (2009a). Just one example of an earlier collaboration was the continual information sharing that took place between peasant leaders, organisers, and the national-international team of more than a dozen scholars and fieldworkers headed by rural sociologist Robert White, S.J., in 1970–1971. I began my research career with this team, as we carried out extensive studies of the rise of the national peasant movement for rural development, agrarian reform, and 'material/spiritual liberation'.

⁸⁶Cited in Desmarais (2007, 135).

However, it must be stressed that the global actions need to have local repercussions in terms of changing concrete policies. There remains a problem within global organizing: the lack of articulation between the global and the local. Many groups do their part on the global scene, but the feedback to the local rarely happens. . . . The main costs are still born by the locals. This is why we at PCN always emphasize going from the local to the global and not the other way around – whether it is in Europe, India, Colombia or what have you. (Escobar 2008, 254, 265)

These statements by rural activists from Mexico's National Union of Regional Organizations (UNORCA) and from Colombia's Process of Black Communities (PCN) in the western coastal region point to the basic local challenge for virtually all transnational social justice and sustainability movements. Borras and Franco (2009, 28) recently observed that the extent to which *Vía Campesina* will be able to exercise leadership in this broader global rural citizens' land movement will depend on several things: its ability to represent the diverse sectors of the rural world; on its political creativity to continue combining tactics of 'expose and oppose', negotiation and critical collaboration with non-governmental and (inter)governmental global institutions; and on its ability to remain an effective actor and arena of action for (sub)national peasant movements.

I submit that this a very tall order, and in this era of restricted organisational funding, often impossible. Desmarais questions how *Vía Campesina* can ultimately be responsible for the behaviour of its affiliate organisations like COCOCH. This, she says, is the work of the local-national organisations and leadership.⁸⁷ While I agree with this initial division of responsibilities, one of the major themes of this case study is to show the systematic decline of Honduras' local peasant unions as their leadership focused away from the problems of their organisational bases and toward transnational organising, first with ASOCODE and more recently with *Vía Campesina*. Should the national peasant leaders of COCOCH-*Vía Campesina* not bear some of the responsibility for insisting that necessary local-national funding and organising continue? My criticism applies even more to the international funders who, since the early 1990s, have virtually abandoned local/national peasant unions. *Vía Campesina*'s ineffectual performance as a subnational actor in Honduras certainly begs the question of how it can claim to be representing this nation beyond its borders. Hondurans (and many others) can welcome its current 'people's food sovereignty forum', as it challenges state and corporate officials at the World Food Summit in Rome, because these actions *might* bring benefits in the future. But at the same time, rural Hondurans so far have seen few signs that such activity on the world stage has concretely addressed or ameliorated the many problems of hunger and poverty facing Honduras' rural poor.

This inquiry strongly suggests that transnational agrarian movements ultimately ignore the local at their own peril. *Vía Campesina* clearly needs to maintain enough of a presence at the (sub)national level to keep up regular two-way communications with its peasant bases. Without this, why should *Vía Campesina* matter to Honduran peasants? Is this transcontinental coalition beginning to exhibit the distance from local realities and careerism that characterised the now defunct Central American ASOCODE network? I should also note the current importance of *national* organising in Honduras as a timing issue; one might say Rafael Alegría and other peasant, indigenous, and labour leaders are 'on leave' from most transnational duties

⁸⁷Email correspondence, 4 April 2009.

in order to attend to the coup resistance movement. Moreover, this national study has identified several historical, cultural and structural problems impeding the general acceptance of food sovereignty as an alternative development template across rural Honduras, and possibly elsewhere. As the rural voices from the Americas remind us, there is a vast need for the focus to begin with the local, and to restore deep (local) economies (see McKibben 2007) and older communal solidarities, the supposed *raison d'être* for progressive transnational organising in the first place. Hondurans can then more fruitfully assess the relative merits of food security, food sovereignty, and creative forms of agrarian change. In the end, it is *their* thoughtful engagement, decisions, and practices that count.

References

- Adriance, J. 1995. Planting the seeds of a new agriculture: living with the land in Central America. *Grassroots Development*, 19(1), 3–17.
- Altieri, M., ed. 1995. *Agroecology: the science of sustainable agriculture*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Autodesarrollo. 1997. *Journal of the Instituto para la Cooperación y Autodesarrollo (ICADE)*, no.3. Tegucigalpa.
- Autodesarrollo. 1998. *Journal of the Instituto para la Cooperación y Autodesarrollo (ICADE)*, no.4, Tegucigalpa.
- Baletti, B., T.M. Johnson and W. Wolford. 2008. 'Late mobilization': transnational peasant networks and grassroots organizing in Brazil and South Africa. In: S.M. Borras Jr., M. Edelman and C. Kay, eds. *Transnational agrarian movements confronting globalization*. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 123–46.
- Banco Central de Honduras. 1984. *Honduras en Cifras, 1981–1983*. Tegucigalpa, DC, Honduras: Banco Central de Honduras.
- Bartra, A. 1982. *El comportamiento económico de la producción campesina*. Chapingo, Mexico: Universidad Autónoma Chapingo.
- Bartra, A. 2004. *Profound rivers of Mesoamerica: alternatives to Plan Puebla Panama*. Chicago, IL: Mexico Solidarity Network.
- Berger, P. 1976. *Pyramids of sacrifice: political ethics and social change*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Berger, P., B. Berger and H. Kellner. 1974. *The homeless mind: modernity and consciousness*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Bonta, M. 2001. Mapping the *enredos* of complex spaces: a regional geography of Olancho, Honduras. PhD Thesis, Louisiana State University.
- Borras, S.M. Jr., 2008a. La Vía Campesina and its global campaign for agrarian reform. In: S.M. Borras Jr., M. Edelman and C. Kay eds. 2008. *Transnational agrarian movements confronting globalization*. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 91–121.
- Borras, S.M. Jr., 2008b. Re-examining the agrarian movements-NGO solidarity relations discourse. *Dialectical Anthropology*, 32, 203–9.
- Borras, S.M. Jr., and J. Franco. 2009. Transnational agrarian movements struggling for land and citizenship rights. *Working Paper no. 323*, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, UK.
- Boyer, J. 1984. From peasant *economía* to capitalist social relations in southern Honduras. *South Eastern Latin Americanist*, 27(4), 1–22.
- Boyer, J. 1986. Capitalism, campesinos and calories in Southern Honduras. In: J.R. Rollwagen, ed. *Directions in the anthropological study of Latin America: a reassessment*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, pp. 1–24.
- Boyer, J. 1990. Charisma, martyrdom and liberation in southern Honduras. In: C. Calhoun, ed. *Comparative social research, supplement I*. Chapel Hill, NC: Institute for Research in the Social Sciences, pp. 115–59.
- Boyer, J. 1993. Democratización y militarización de Honduras: las consecuencias de la guerra de la contra. In: C. Vilas, ed. *Democracia emergente en centroamérica*. Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, pp. 217–45.

- Boyer, J. 1998. Peasant leaders and allies speak: land, *economía* and democracy in Honduras. Paper volunteered for the 22nd Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, Chicago, IL.
- Boyer, J. 2003. Sustainable agriculture for the select few: neoliberalism's Janus face in Honduras. Paper volunteered for the 25th Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, Dallas, TX.
- Boyer, J. 2007a. Book Review: *Campesino a campesino: voices from Latin America's farmer to farmer movement for sustainable agriculture*, by Eric Holt-Jiménez (2006 Food First), *Human Ecology*, 2(6), 779–81.
- Boyer, J. 2007b. Reinventing the Appalachian commons. In: D.M. Nonini, ed. *The global idea of the commons*. New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books, pp. 89–114.
- Boyer, J. 2008. Food strategies and sustainable agriculture in Honduras: agrarian structures and contemporary neoliberalism. Invited paper for the Mellon Sawyer Seminar 'The fate of food: agricultural production in the fourth world food regime', UNC-Chapel Hill, NC.
- Boyer, J. and J. Carter. 2002. Tegucigalpa. *Encyclopedia of Urban Cultures*. Danbury, CT: Human Area Relations File and Grolier, pp. 289–98.
- Boyer, J. and A. Pell. 1999. Mitch in Honduras: a disaster waiting to happen. *North American Congress on Latin America*, 33(2), 36–43.
- Brockett, C. 1987. The commercialization of agriculture and rural economic insecurity: the case of Honduras. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 22(2), 82–102.
- Brockett, C. 1998. *Land, power and poverty: agrarian transformation and political conflict in Central America*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Bruno, K. and J. Karliner. 2002. *Earthsummit.biz: the corporate takeover of sustainable development*. Oakland, CA: Food First Books.
- Cariás, M. 2005. *De la patria del criollo a la patria compartida: una historia*. Tegucigalpa: Ediciones Subirana.
- Carney, Padre J.G. 1985. *To be a revolutionary*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Carter, J.H. 2008. Spook and sovereign: on gang life and the negative in Honduras. Paper volunteered for the 107th annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Atlanta.
- Chalmers, D., et al. 1997. *The new politics of inequality in Latin America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Chasteen, J. 2001. *Born in blood and fire: a concise history of Latin America*. New York and London: W.W. Norton.
- COCOCH-FOSDEH. 2009. Reforma agraria, agricultura y medio rural en Honduras: la agenda pendiente del sector campesino. Tegucigalpa Unpublished Report, 159 pp.
- Comunica. 1998. Una ley que cambia la vida en el campo: manual sobre la ley para la modernización y desarrollo del sector agrícola. Tegucigalpa: Centro de Comunicación y Capacitación para el Desarrollo, Cuadernos de Educación Ciudadana, #3.
- Cooper, F. and R. Packard. 2005. The history and politics of development knowledge. In: M. Edelman and A. Haugerud, eds. *The anthropology of development and globalization: from classical political economy to contemporary neoliberalism*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 126–39.
- Del-Cid, J.R. 1977. *Reforma agraria y capitalismo dependiente*. Tegucigalpa: Editorial Universitaria.
- Del-Cid, J.R. 1989. Seguridad y autosuficiencia alimentaria: delineando un quehacer. Centro de Documentación de Honduras (CEDOH). *Puntos de Vista*, 2(1), 32–6.
- Desmarais, A. 2007. *La Vía Campesina: gobalization and the power of peasants*. Halifax and London: Fernwood Publishing and Pluto Press.
- DeWalt, B. and S. Stonich. 1985. Farming systems research in southern Honduras. In: J. Winn, ed. *Fighting hunger with research: a five year technical research report of the grain sorghum/pearl millet collaborative research support program*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, pp. 184–92.
- Dorner, P. 1980. The agrarian reform program in Honduras: analysis and recommendations. Land Tenure Center, University of Wisconsin. Report to the Instituto Nacional Agrario, Tegucigalpa, Honduras. Unpublished, 17pp.
- Dumond, R. 1966. *False start in Africa*. New York: Frederick A. Praeger.
- Edelman, M. 1998. Transnational peasant politics in Central America. *Latin American Research Review*, 33(3), 49–86.

- Edelman, M. 1999. *Peasants against globalization: rural social movements in Costa Rica*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Edelman, M. 2003. Transnational peasant and farmer movements and networks. In: M. Kaldor, H. Anheier and M. Glasius, eds. *Global Civil Society*. London: Oxford University Press, pp. 185–220.
- Edelman, M. 2005. Bringing the moral economy back in... to the study of 21st century transnational peasant movements. In *Focus: Moral economies, state spaces and categorical violence: anthropological engagements with the work of James Scott*. *American Anthropologist*, 107(3), 331–45.
- Edelman, M. 2008. Transnational organizing in agrarian Central America: histories, challenges, prospects. In: S.M. Borras Jr., M. Edelman and C. Kay eds. *Transnational agrarian movements confronting globalization*. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 61–89.
- Edelman, M. 2009a. Synergies and tensions between rural social movements and professional researchers. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 36(1), 245–65.
- Edelman, M. 2009b. Rooted cosmopolitans in transnational peasant and farmer movements. Paper volunteered for the 28th Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, June 2009.
- Escobar, A. 2008. *Territories of difference: place, movements, life, redes*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Euraque, D. 1996. *Reinterpreting the banana republic: region and state in Honduras, 1870–1972*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- Euraque, D. 2006. Estructura social, historia política y la nueva democracia en Honduras. In: D. Achad and L.E. González, eds. *Política y desarrollo en Honduras, 2006–2009: los escenarios posibles*. Tegucigalpa: PNUD, pp. 259–85.
- FAO. 2005. *El estado de la inseguridad alimentaria en Honduras*. Tegucigalpa: Lithopress.
- Food First. 2005. Food Sovereignty. *News and Views* 28 (77 Spring/Summer), 2. Available from: <http://www.foodfirst.org/en/publications/newsandviews/> [Accessed 2 April 2008].
- Friedmann, H. 1978. World, market, state and family farm: social bases of household production in an era of wage-labour. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 20(4), 545–86.
- Friedmann, H. and P. McMichael. 1989. Agriculture and the state system: the rise and fall of national agricultures, 1870 to the present. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 29(2), 93–117.
- Friere, P. 1973. *Education for critical consciousness*. New York: Seabury Press.
- Gill, R. 1963. *Economic development: past and present*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Gudeman, S. 1978. *The demise of a rural economy: from subsistence to capitalism in a Latin American Village*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Gutiérrez Rivera, L. 2009. Understanding territoriality: the state and youth gangs in Honduras. Presented at the 28th International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, June.
- Hale, C.R. 2004. Rethinking indigenous politics in the era of the indio permitido. *North American Congress on Latin America*, 38(2), 16–20.
- Hale, C.R., ed. 2008. *Engaging contradictions: theory, politics, and methods of activist scholarship*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Holt-Giménez, E. 2006 *Campesino a campesino: voices from Latin America's farmer to farmer movement for sustainable agriculture in Latin America*. Oakland, CA: Food First.
- IISE (Instituto de Investigaciones Socio-Económicas). 1999. Diagnostico socio-económico de Honduras: Período 1990–1999. Tegucigalpa. Unpublished, 24pp.
- Isaacman, A. 1993. Peasants and rural protest in Africa. In: F. Cooper, et al., eds. *Confronting historical paradigms: peasants, labor and the capitalist world system in Africa and Latin America*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, pp. 205–317.
- Jansen, K. 1998. *Political ecology, mountain agriculture, and knowledge in Honduras*. Amsterdam: Thela Pubs.
- Jansen, K. and E. Roquas. 1998. Modernizing insecurity: the land titling project in Honduras. *Development and Change*, 29, 81–106.
- Jelin, E. 1998. Toward a culture of participation and citizenship: challenges for a more equitable world. In: S. Alvarez, E. Dagnino and A. Escobar, eds. *Cultures of politics and politics of cultures: revisioning Latin American social movements*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, pp. 405–14.

- Kaimowitz, D. 1993. NGOs, the state, and agriculture in Central America. In: A. Bebbington and G. Thiele, eds. *Non-governmental organizations and the state in Latin America: rethinking roles in sustainable agricultural development*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 178–98.
- Kay, C. 2002. Agrarian reform and the neoliberal counter-reform in Latin America. In: J. Chase, ed. *The space of neoliberalism: land, place and family in Latin America*. Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press, pp. 25–52.
- Kay, C. 2006. Rural poverty and development strategies in Latin America. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 6(4), 455–508.
- Kay, C. 2009. Development strategies and rural development: exploring synergies, eradicating poverty. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 36(1), 103–37.
- Kincaid, A.D. 1985. 'We are the agrarian reform!': rural politics and agrarian reform in Honduras. In: N. Peckenham and A. Street, eds. *Honduras: portrait of a captive nation*. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, pp. 135–47.
- Kramer, F. 1986. Market incorporation and out-migration of the peasants of western Honduras. PhD Thesis, University of California, University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, MI.
- Macdonald, L. 1994. Globalising civil society: interpreting international NGOs in Central America. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 23/2, 267–85.
- Macdonald, L. 1997. *Supporting civil society: the political impact of NGO assistance to Central America*. Basingstoke, UK and New York City: Macmillan Press and St. Martin's Press.
- Martinez-Torres, M. and P. Rosset. 2010. La Vía Campesina: the birth and evolution of a transnational social movement. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 37(1), 149–75.
- McKibben, B. 2007. *Deep economy: the wealth of communities and the durable future*. New York: Times Books, Henry Holt & Co.
- McMichael, P. 2008. Peasants make history, but not just as they please.... In: S.M. Borras Jr., M. Edelman and C. Kay eds. *Transnational agrarian movements confronting globalization*. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 37–60.
- McMichael, P. 2009. A food regime genealogy. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 36(1), 139–69.
- Meza, V., et al. 2002. Honduras: prensa, poder y democracia. Tegucigalpa: Centro de Documentación de Honduras, CEDOH.
- Meza, V., et al. 2009. Honduras: poderes fácticos y sistema político. Tegucigalpa: Centro de Documentación de Honduras, CEDOH.
- Mosher, A.T. 1966. *Getting agriculture moving: essentials for development and modernization*. New York: Frederick A. Praeger.
- Nash, J. 1994. Global integration and subsistence insecurity. *American Anthropologist*, 96(1), 7–30.
- Netting, R. McC. 1993. *Smallholders, householders: farm families and the ecology of intensive, sustainable agriculture*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Nygren, A. and O. Myatt-Hirvonen. 2009. 'Life here is just scrapping by': livelihood strategies and social networks among peasant households in Honduras. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 36(4), 827–54.
- Patel, R. 2007. *Stuffed and starved: the hidden battle for the world food system*. Brooklyn, NY: Melville House.
- Patel, R. 2009. What does food sovereignty look like? *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 36(3), 663–73.
- Petras, J., and H. Veltmeyer. 2001. *Globalization unmasked: imperialism in the 21st century*. Halifax and New York: Fernwood Publishing and Zed Books.
- Pine, A. 2008. *Working hard, drinking hard: on violence and survival in Honduras*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Plummer, R. 2009. Honduras turmoil bears bitter fruit. *BBC*, 15 Oct.
- PNUD 2006. *Informe sobre el desarrollo humano: hacia la expansión de la ciudadanía*. Tegucigalpa: Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, Honduras.
- Posas, M. 1981a. *El movimineto campesino hondureño: una perspectiva general*. Tegucigalpa: Guaymuras.
- Posas, M. 1981b. *Conflictos agrarios y organización campesina: sobre los orígenes de las primeras organizaciones campesinas en Honduras*. Tegucigalpa: Editorial Universitaria.

- República de Honduras. 1995. Ley para la modernización y el desarrollo del sector agrícola, Decreto #31-92. Tegucigalpa: Guaymuras.
- Robinson, W. 2003. *Transnational conflicts: Central America, social change, and globalization*. London and New York: Verso.
- Roseberry, W. 1976. Rent, differentiation and the development of capitalism among peasants. *American Anthropologist*, 78, 45-58.
- Roseberry, W. 1993. Beyond the agrarian question in Latin America. In: F. Cooper, et al., eds. *Confronting historical paradigms: peasants, labor and the capitalist world system in Africa and Latin America*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, pp. 318-68.
- Rosset, P., R. Patel and M. Courville. 2006. *Promised land: competing visions of agrarian reform*. Oakland, CA: Food First Books.
- Roy, P., et al. 1968. *Agricultural innovation among farmers*. Hyderabad, India: The National Institute of Community Development.
- Ruben, R. and F. Funez. 1993. *La compra-venta de tierras de la reforma agraria*. Tegucigalpa: Guaymuras.
- Rucht, D. 1999. The transnationalization of social movements: trends, causes and problems. In: D. de la Porta, H. Kreisi and D. Rucht, eds. *Social movements in a globalizing world*. Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Macmillan Press and St. Martin's Press, pp. 206-22.
- Ruhl, J.M. 1984. Agrarian structure and political stability in Honduras. *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, 26(1), 33-68.
- Ruhl, J.M. 1985. The Honduran agrarian reform under Suazo Cordova, 1982-85: an assessment. *Journal of Inter-American Economic Affairs*: 63-80.
- Salomón, L. 1999. Las relaciones civiles/militares en Honduras: balance y perspectivas. Tegucigalpa: Centro de Documentación de Honduras (CEDOH).
- Salomón, L. 2008. Democracia y partidos políticos en Honduras. Tegucigalpa: Centro de Documentación de Honduras (CEDOH).
- Salomón, L. 2009. Honduras. Políticos, empresarios y militares: protagonistas de un golpe anunciado. Available from: <http://www.cedoh.org/publicaciones/articulo/files/golpe%/20de%/estado%/honduras.pdf> [Accessed 7 July 2009].
- Sandbrook, R., et al. 2007. *Social democracy in the global periphery: origins, challenges, prospects*. New York & Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Santos de Morais, C. 1975. The role of the campesino sector in the Honduran agrarian reform. *Land Tenure Newsletter*, 47, 16-22.
- Schroyer, T. and T. Golodik, eds. 2006. *Creating a sustainable world: past experiences, future prospects*. New York: Apex Press.
- Scott, J. 1976. *The moral economy of the peasant: subsistence and rebellion in southeast Asia*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Scott, J. 1985. *Weapons of the weak: everyday forms of peasant resistance*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Smith, K. 1994. *The human farm: a tale of changing lives and changing lands*. West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press.
- Stares, R. 1972. La economía campesina en la zona sur: 1950-1970. Prelatura de Choluteca, Honduras. Unpublished report, 114pp.
- Stavenhagen, R., ed. 1970. *Agrarian problems and peasant movements in Latin America*. Garden City, NJ: Anchor/Doubleday.
- Stonich, S. 1993. *I am destroying the land!: the political ecology of poverty and environmental destruction in Honduras*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Stringer, R. 1989. Honduras: toward conflict and agrarian reform. In: W. Thiesenhusen, ed. *Searching for agrarian reform in Latin America*. Winchester, MA: Unwin Hyman.
- Thiesenhusen, W. 1980. Thoughts on agrarian reform in Honduras. Land Tenure Center, University of Wisconsin. Report to the Instituto Nacional Agrario, Tegucigalpa, Honduras. Unpublished, 13pp.
- Thorpe, A. 1991. America Central no puede tener democracia con hambre: las políticas de la reforma agraria en Honduras antes de 1982. Tegucigalpa: POCCAE-UNAH, Documento de Trabajo, No. 3, 57pp.
- Velásquez, Nazar, J.R. 2008. Impacto de los programas y proyectos dirigidos a la reducción de la pobreza rural en Honduras. Tegucigalpa: Colegio de Defensa Nacional.

- Wessman, J. 1978. The sugar cane hacienda in the agrarian structure of southwest Puerto Rico in 1902. *Revista/Review Interamerican*, 8(1), 99–115.
- Wessman, J. 1981. *Anthropology and Marxism*. Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Pubs.
- White, R.S.J. 1971. Acción cultural popular hondureña. Preliminary report. Choluteca, Honduras. Unpublished, 146pp.
- White, R.S.J. 1972. The adult education program of Acción Cultural Popular Hondureña. Full Report, Parts I and II. Department of Anthropology and Sociology, St. Louis University. Unpublished, 925pp.
- White, R.S.J. 1977. Structural factors in rural development: the church and the peasant in Honduras. PhD Thesis, Cornell University.
- Williams, R.G. 1986. *Export agriculture and the crisis in Central America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Williams, R.G. 1994. *States and evolution: coffee and the rise of national governments in Central America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Williamson, J. 1989. What Washington means by policy reform. In: J. Williamson, ed. *Latin American readjustment: how much has happened*. Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics, pp. 1–13.
- Wittman, H. 2009. Rethinking the metabolic rift: La Vía Campesina, agrarian citizenship, and food sovereignty. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 36(4), 805–26.
- Wolf, E. 1966. *Peasants*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Wolf, E. 1969. *Peasant wars of the twentieth century*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Wolf, E. 1981. *Europe and the people without history*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Jefferson Boyer is Professor of Anthropology and founder of the Sustainable Development Program at Appalachian State University. Research interests include agrarian transformations and rural development in Honduras, Central America, and Appalachia. He is working on the manuscript *Once Upon an Agrarian Nation: Honduras Battles Globalization*. His articles include 'Reinventing the Appalachian Commons' (2007) and 'Democratización y militarización de Honduras: las consecuencias de la guerra de la contra'. In: Carlos Vilas, ed, *Democracia emergente en Centroamérica*. Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, pp. 217–45. Email: boyerjc@appstate.edu