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SEED SAVING AND SEED SHARING: OCCUPYING A LIMINAL LEGAL SPACE

This article explores seed-saving and sharing as acts of resistance within a legally liminal space, challenging an exclusionary legal framework shaped by anthropocentric and capitalocentric perspectives. The Corporate Seed Regime has displaced long-standing local seed systems, prioritizing individual ownership over commons, peasant rights, and indigenous ontologies. Drawing on Victor Turner's concept of liminality, we examine this space as one of critique, and with potential of reform and new sociopolitical system. Through desk research and fieldwork in the UK and Colombia, we compare resistance tactics of local seed organizations. Our findings highlight a growing global movement, led by the Global South, that promotes alternative seed discourses and everyday sharing practices, now influencing the Global North. This movement underscores the polarization between informal, community-driven seed exchange and formalized legal systems, illustrating ongoing struggles for seed sovereignty and posthuman legal recognition.

Key words: Corporate Seed Regime; seed sovereignty; legal liminality; resistance tactics

‘Turning the living wealth of the planet into the property of corporations through patents is a recipe for deepening poverty and ecological crisis... The destructive Anthropocene is not the only future.’ (Shiva, 2014, p. XX)

Introduction

In this article we argue that the seed saving and seed sharing practices of seed sovereignty occupy a space of legal liminality and amount to acts of resistance

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to an otherwise exclusionary legal framework. The analysis of the observed practices as situated in a liminal legal space provides an ideal methodological context for examining the boundaries of capitalism. Our conclusions emanate from desk-based research and preliminary fieldwork in the UK and Colombia. In the modern world, liberalism has prospered as a means of pursuing and protecting individual human liberties and freedoms, be they economic, social, or cultural, from state and institutional interference. However, principles of liberalism have supported the emergence of a neoliberal paradigm that has contributed to producing a global environmental crisis (Artaraz and Calestani, 2015). Too often, development policies and practices involving the extractive industries and agri-business have presided over the use of, and value attributed to, land and ecosystems (Filip, 2020; Glaab and Stuvøy, 2021). In tandem, the Green Revolution and food security (as opposed to food sovereignty) rhetoric has supported the advancement of transnational corporations whereby 40% of the world's seed market share is held by two companies, German company Bayer (23%), and US based Corteva Agriscience (17%), amounting to over \$18,000 million between them (Clapp, 2025).

Such advancements have materialised in a departure from farming as an integral part of culture, territorial autonomy and localised sovereignty, and a loss of knowledge and practices that are experiencing a (re)discovery by those following principles of agroecology. Agroecology has been defined as an alternative paradigm of agri-food systems that involves applying ecological principles to agri-food systems in specific socioecological contexts. This paradigm prioritizes the knowledge and agency of indigenous peoples and peasants, who practice place-based politics (Pimbert et al., 2021). The concept of agroecology encompasses a broad spectrum of approaches to farming, including organic, regenerative, nature based, biodynamic, permaculture and endogenous farming practices, etc. While such approaches are being rediscovered around the world, they remain on the margins, as state-funded research and development, along with overseas aid, continue to focus on industrial agriculture (Pimbert, 2022).

The modernisation and industrialisation of farming into large-scale agri-business has included a move away from the farming of traditional landraces to new ostensibly high yielding varieties supported by significant investment in and reliance upon high input farming and homogenisation aligned with transgenic and genetically modified organisms and F1 plant varieties.¹ It is primarily driven by corporate consolidation, international trade agreements, and intellectual

¹ F1 plant varieties refer to the first-generation offspring of two distinct, stable parent plants. These hybrids are bred for desirable traits such as higher yields, disease resistance, and uniform growth. However, seeds saved from F1 plants typically do not retain these characteristics in subsequent generations.

property regimes that prioritize profit and ownership over collective, indigenous, and peasant rights. The result is that local seed systems developed and practised since farming began have been displaced by a largely exclusionary legal regime that prioritises individual proprietorship rights over global commons, peasant rights, and indigenous ontologies. This approach to seed governance neglects ‘knowledge embedded in seed-related practices of communities (such as practical breeding skills)’ in favour of ‘codified, decontextualized knowledge (such as knowledge connected to *ex situ* collections)’ (Sievers-Glotzbach et al., p. 510). This neglect has been fuelled, among other things, by undervaluing of the nature and importance of farmer seed networks (Coomes et al., 2015). Seed networks are dynamic, decentralized systems where farmers exchange seeds, knowledge, and practices. These networks are critical for maintaining genetic diversity, fostering innovation and perpetuating local knowledge.

Sievers-Glotzbach et al. (2021) warn that such neglect will continue given ‘current technological developments involving digital sequence information that allows immaterial aspects (genetic codes) to be isolated from their material sources (seeds) and cultural backgrounds’ (Sievers-Glotzbach et al., 2021). The result is an ever-yawning gap between human activity and nature, characteristic of the Anthropocene – or Capitalocene, to stress the role of capital in shaping reality (Moore, 2017) – that has seen the mapping and valuation of land based on monocrop yield driven by high input agro-chemicals upsetting biodiversity, biogeochemical cycles and ecosystem resilience (Loreau, 2000). Previously biodiverse landscapes have been rendered monocultural (waste)lands, and degraded lands (de la Bellacasa, 2015). Consequently, many farmers see their productive capacity and territorial autonomy diminished: their territory – both cultural and physical – shrinks (Denzin et al., 2019).

These conditions of global crisis have attracted the attention of a range of researchers who critique modern ontologies as the main source of scientific and legal certainty (Blaser, 2009; Haraway, 2016; Wynter, 2003). They emphasize the importance of moving beyond traditional binaries and challenge the idea of humans as isolated entities, proposing instead a more integrated understanding of the world. This perspective serves as a relevant starting point for works that – like this one – recognize the social nature of models and practices in plant breeding, and distribution. In contrast to the dominant legal frameworks shaped by anthropocentric and capitalocenic perspectives, these systems have been forced to occupy a legally liminal space.

The presence of a liminal legal space centred on seed is an apt methodological situation in which to observe the limits of capitalism, which take the form of social, ecological, cultural and legal problematics. The social problematic arises due to the problem of equity; the ecological – due to the recent trajectory towards genetic uniformity and reliance upon high input, high mechanisation,

and long, complex (and polluting) supply chains; the cultural – because of homogenisation and dispossession of ways of living and cultural heritage; and the legal – as a result of the restrictive global governance of seed and the ensuing liminal legal space occupied by seed savers and seed sharers. We focus on the cultural and legal problematic.

The concept of liminality, originating from studies of the ritual in anthropology (Turner, 1969a, 1969b) inspires legal studies (Laurie, 2017) as it aims to represent a certain culture by exploring its limits or negation. Liminality conceptualizes people and practices in transitional spaces where they defy categorization, bypassing fixed approaches and eluding the typical systems of classification that define roles and positions in cultural contexts. Liminal entities exist in a state of being neither here nor there; they occupy a space between the positions defined by law, tradition, social norms, and rituals. Because liminality represents a temporary condition, it is considered a unique space for critique, reform, and the development of new political and sociocultural systems. In this space, conflict can emerge, along with resistance and social creativity (Turner, 1969a, 1969b).

Whilst legal scholarship has applied the idea of liminality to uncertainty in the context of an individual's documented or undocumented migrant status (Chacon, 2015; King-Irani, 2006; Menjívar, 2006), and to the regulation and law of human health research (Laurie, 2017), we apply the concept to elements of the relational practice of seed sovereignty, namely, seed saving and seed sharing. We talk about relational practices from the consideration that seeds do not exist in isolation, but rather they originate, develop and are preserved in specific socio-ecological contexts. Corporate Seed Regimes promote the commodification of seeds through genetic engineering and the enforcement of intellectual property rights, and marginalise indigenous and local agricultural practices (Escobar, 2016). In this sense, we propose liminality as an epistemic condition, to consider the complexity surrounding the phenomenon of seed saving and seed sharing. In the liminal spaces, tactics of resistance unfold. We understand them as the everyday, often subtle ways in which individuals subvert and navigate the structures imposed by dominant systems of power – such as governments, institutions, or capitalist markets (de Certeau, 1996). In Part I, we briefly consider the global governance of seed with reference to key international conventions, that of the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) (and the Convention on Biodiversity), and the International Treaty for the Protection of Plant and Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA). In Part II, we explain our methodological approach and we present two case studies from Colombia and UK in order to show similarity of resistance tactics in such diverse contexts. We conclude by reflecting upon what the juxtaposition of the two cases tell us about resistance to dominant legal frameworks.

Part I – The global governance of seed

The global governance framework of seeds is well documented and includes various institutions, including those that are *sui generis* and those within the scope of the WTO (Batur et al., 2021; Santilli, 2012; Thomas et al., 2011). In this part we briefly consider two international treaties at the heart of the global governance of seed so that in part II we can present the problems that arise with these paradigms in respect of our case studies.² Firstly, the International Treaty on Plant and Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) focuses upon the safeguarding of crops and seed by farmers and the protection of diversity, and brings into effect Article 1 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (1992) (CBD). Article 1 includes the requirement for ‘the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resource’. A driving factor for the CBD was concern for a significant reduction in biological diversity by human activity.³ The ITPGRFA is presented as supporting sustainable and ecological practices, genetic diversity of crops, and the expanded use of local and locally adapted crops and varieties (Article 6), promoting in situ conservation of wild crop relatives and wild plants for food production. The protection of rights holders (local and indigenous communities and farmers) includes their traditional knowledge and farmers’ rights to save, use, exchange and sell farm-saved seed/propagating material (Article 9).⁴ The ITPGRFA has 154 Contracting Parties.

Seemingly in opposition to the emphasis on benefit sharing, genetic diversity and biodiversity, sits the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) (Batur et al., 2021). This treaty adopts a restrictive and tightly controlled approach to the global governance of seed driven since the 1960s by the so-called Green Revolution. It has been revised on a number of occasions since its inception, the most recent and restrictive version being UPOV 1991. UPOV and associated domestic laws are premised upon paradigms of ‘productivism, standardization of agricultural products, and fragmentation of the many stages involved in agricultural production’ (Santilli, 2011, p. 83). These paradigms are based upon concepts of proprietorship in the form of plant breeders’ rights to intellectual property and the protection of plant varieties via registration and certification subject to criteria of distinctness, uniformity and stability (DUS – Articles 6-9 inclusive). Currently, 80 states are members of UPOV, with nearly half joining since the year 2000.⁵ This rise is in part due to

² There are other instruments both internationally and domestically, but we have confined our scope.

³ Preamble CBD.

⁴ See the Preamble and Article 1 of the Treaty.

⁵ Members of the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants, status 27 February 2025, https://www.upov.int/edocs/pubdocs/en/upov_pub_423.pdf.

membership of UPOV being set as a requirement of trade agreements by the European Union, Canada and the United States (Santilli, 2011, p. 83).

Both the ITPGRFA and UPOV have attracted criticism (Golay and Bessa, 2019). UPOV is constructed to support a linear approach which, according to Niels Louwaars is ‘counterproductive in terms of balanced sustainable growth and development and should be abandoned’ (2007, p. 5). However, nor has the ITPGRFA succeeded in securing meaningful benefits for stakeholders in developing countries that fall within its remit of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources (Dutfield and Suthersanen, 2018). On the face of it, the ITPGRFA may appear to be expansive with reference to principles of sustainable agriculture, but its scope is reductive presenting benefits as ‘information’, ‘technology’, ‘capacity-building’ and ‘monetary’ (Article 13) with an emphasis on intellectual property rights. Its approach thus sits within, rather than against, a framework that ascribes value according to productive capacity and defines benefit as a derivative of human endeavour according to principles of rationalism. There is no reference to food sovereignty, only to food security.

Similarly, the claimed benefits of UPOV in respect of new and improved plant varieties, improved yield, respect for the environment and food security are contested. UPOV is said to have been negotiated ‘by developed countries, for developed countries’ without consideration of the seed systems common to ‘developing countries’ and/or to meet the needs of those countries, and that it is incompatible with the ITPGRFA (The Reasons Why Indonesia Should Not (Be Forced to) Join UPOV, 2022). UPOV’s approach favours and promotes large scale agri-business with roots also in the Green Revolution, modelled by genetic uniformity and monocultural farming at scale (Bonneuil et al., 2006), accelerating the erosion of seed diversity (Pimbert, 2022). There have been calls for the EU to desist from requiring developing countries to adopt UPOV 1991 as part of free trade agreements and other activities with the EU to prevent further embedding UPOV into the global approach to seed governance (Batur et al., 2021). Advocates for change to seed marketing laws in the UK have described the current legal environment as ‘stagnant and poorly placed’ to respond to ‘promising opportunities’ that have emerged involving low input approaches to growing seed, and shorter more collaborative food chains ‘[with] important markets for smaller-scale producers, in parallel to conservation and breeding efforts to revive landraces and develop diverse and locally adapted plant populations’.⁶

Two United Nations human rights declarations sit in contrast to UPOV and the ITPGRFA by promoting a human rights based approach to seed sovereignty for indigenous and farming communities: the Declaration on the Rights

⁶ Advocacy Paper: Legislative Support for Heterogeneous Grain and Cereal Seed Production, Gaia Foundation Seed Sovereignty UK, and others, 2–3 (on file with the authors).

of Indigenous Peoples 2007 (UNDRIP) and the Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and others working in rural areas 2018 (UNDROP).⁷ A human rights based approach requires states to respect, protect and fulfil the rights enshrined. Both seek to protect cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and freedoms associated with seeds. Article 2 of UNDROP requires states to apply obligations under international agreements they are party to in a manner that is consistent with human rights obligations towards peasants and others working in rural areas. Article 31 of UNDRIP provides that indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions including seeds. In UNDROP, Article 19 is of paramount importance. It refers to the right to seed including the protection of traditional knowledge relevant to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, equitable benefit sharing, participation in decision making and, importantly, the right ‘to save, use, exchange and sell their farm-saved seed or propagating material’ alongside ‘the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their own seeds and traditional knowledge’.

Furthermore, Article 19 requires states to ‘take measures to respect, protect and fulfil the right to seeds of peasants and other people working in rural areas’; ‘recognize the rights of peasants to rely either on their own seeds or on other locally available seeds of their choice, and to decide on the crops and species that they wish to grow’. In particular, States ‘shall take appropriate measures to support peasant seed systems, and promote the use of peasant seeds and agrobiodiversity’. It goes on to provide that ‘seed policies, plant variety protection and other intellectual property laws, certification schemes and seed marketing laws respect and take into account the rights, needs and realities of peasants and other people working in rural areas’. However, Article 20 arguably qualifies this. It is for States take ‘appropriate measures’ in accordance with ‘their relevant international obligations’ when it comes to preventing the depletion and ensure the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in order to promote and protect the full enjoyment of the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas. This could limit the action a State takes.

If a state is a member of UPOV or has committed to membership as part of a trade agreement or other arrangement, those obligations may well preside and undermine protections under UNDROP. Further, as declarations, UNDRIP and UNDROP are not legally binding, save for where principles of customary law are involved. That said, States that voted in favour of one or both declarations can be seen to have made voluntary commitments and may be held to account on that basis by states members of the United Nations and civil society as part of human

⁷ For an assessment of the extent to which other human rights instruments include reference to seeds, there is no explicit reference in the relevant texts, but see General Comments of on ICESCR and CEDAW (Haugen, 2020).

rights monitoring mechanisms, such as Universal Periodic Review and human rights treaty bodies reporting and recommendation processes (Ashley, 2024).

Some countries have signed UNDRIP and UNDROP yet paradoxically allow the commercial cultivation of GMOs, that threatens indigenous and peasant life (e.g. Argentina, Brazil, China, Colombia, Mexico, South Africa, Spain, United States); other countries have signed UNDRIP and have expressed reservations or abstained from signing UNDROP, but don't allow the use of GMOs (e.g. Israel, Russia, Switzerland). This can be understood as a sign of protection of indigenous and peasant life, as shown in Table 1 which gives a worldwide overview of soft international commitments regarding seeds. Also, it may lead to contradictory legal situations, where the production of GMO is permitted while at the same time GMO-free zones, communities or territories are legally recognized (e.g. Argentina, Colombia, Spain) (Table 1). Indeed, it is striking that some European Union countries have banned the cultivation of GMOs, although they allow the import of genetically modified foods (e.g. Germany, Austria, Bulgaria, and Poland). In resistance to this type of policy, some communities and regions have declared themselves “GMO-free” (e.g. Austria, Germany, Poland) (Table 1).

Table 1. GMO-free zones in major food-producing countries

Country	Signed ITPGRFA	Signed CBD	Signed UPOV	Signed UNDRIP	Signed UNDROP	Allows the production of GMOs	Recognize GMO-free zones
Argentina							
Australia					Expressed reservations or abstained (ERA)		
Austria							
Belgium							
Bolivia							
Brazil							
Canada					ERA		
Chile						Yes, with strict restrictions	
China							
Colombia							
Cuba							
Czech Republic							

Republic of Korea							
Denmark							
Ecuador							
France							
Germany							
Israel					ERA		
Italy							
Japan					ERA		
Mexico							
Netherlands					ERA		
New Zealand					ERA	Yes, with strict restrictions	
Peru							
Poland							
Russia					ERA		
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines							
South Africa							
Spain							
Switzerland					ERA		
United Kingdom						After Brexit, it has established its own regulations that allow some GMOs	
United States							
Uruguay							

	Yes
	Expressed reservations or abstained
	No

Source: Prepared by the authors, based on cited legislation and <https://www.gmo-free-regions.org/>

Based upon their research on seed systems in the global south, Kuhlmann and Day have modelled legal and regulatory seed systems along a spectrum whereby ‘strict or comprehensive regulation’ sits at one extreme, ‘partially flexible registration (exemptions)’ at the other, and ‘differentiated registration’ in the middle (Kuhlmann and Dey, 2021). They place Colombia in the comprehensive regulation category. Similarly, Pérez Cantero et al. indicate that seeds are produced through two systems, formal and informal, whereby the latter is one in which farmers look after the quality of seeds without the surveillance of control bodies (Pérez Cantero et al., 2020). In the informal (or local) seed system, there is a process of ‘continuous crop evolution’ whereby farm-based management and selection of seed combines with natural processes of genetic mutation and cross breeding (de Boef et al., 2007). The polarisation of informal vs formal overlooks the lived experience of small-scale farmers (and those at an industrial scale on occasion⁸) of transitioning to certified seed, including GM, whilst continuing traditional seed saving and sharing practise. Further, the authors observe a weakening of trust in the formal institutions – actors do not always comply with the rules, they devise tactics explored below—such as collusion, negotiation and mimicry of the dominant legal system—to subvert and creatively circumvent the regulatory environment. State institutions are aware of such tactics but not capable or minded to take formal action in response.

Part II – Legal liminality and tactics of resistance: case studies

Seed saving and seed sharing has been practiced freely by peoples and communities since farming began some 10,000 years ago. Paradoxically, in the era of economic liberalism, these practices are potentially illegal. It is therefore no surprise that today, age-old practices have been imbued with powerful political significance as acts of resistance and liberty. This resistance, spearheaded by civil society organisations such as La Vía Campesina with roots in Latin America, has emerged as a global counter movement to the commodification and enclosure of seeds. Although seed saving and seed sharing has been practiced at a local level worldwide for thousands of years, the language of resistance has been adopted more recently to represent their significance and character as part of a global seed sovereignty movement, and includes: seed defence, seed recovery, seed conservation (García López et al., 2019) and seed activism – which encompasses concepts relating to seed commons, peasant seeds and seed sovereignty (Peschard and Randeria, 2020). These terms are used by campesino and

⁸ *Monsanto Canada Inc v Schmeiser* [2004] 1 S.C.R. 902, 2004 SCC 34, before the Supreme Court of Canada.

indigenous communities and have been adopted by agrarian activists beyond the global south to include ‘food rights activists, urban gardeners and consumers, plant breeders, public interest lawyers, students and a younger generation of consumers, trade unionists, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and academic researchers’ (Peschard and Randeria, 2020, p. 614).

The practices we situate within a liminal legal space are not new; they have been carefully (re)constructed and (re)positioned as a defensive response to straightjacketing and enclosure by a complex restrictive legal framework (Brac De La Perrière and Kastler, 2011; Kloppenburg, 2014). This enclosure has forced age-old farming, community, indigenous and cultural practices into the margins. Operating in spaces between law and regulation, we observe that approaches to protect, grow and distribute native and/or heritage seed involve deploying tactics such as collusion, negotiation and mimicry of the dominant legal system. Mimicry includes the emergence of alternative regulatory paradigms. Whilst those emergent paradigms are precariously situated in a liminal space there is evidence of a move towards a legally plural environment, particularly in respect of seed sovereignty practices in Colombia. In this section, we firstly outline our research methods, and then discuss in more detail the two contrasting and yet overlapping case studies, situating certain seed sovereignty practices and tactics in a space of legal liminality.

To approximate these (daily) practices, a qualitative methodological strategy was followed, based on a unique (rare) case study (Coller, 2000), in Colombia and the United Kingdom, which consisted of two phases of fieldwork. The first phase, developed following concerns raised with one of the present authors by the co-ordinator of a seed house in Colombia regarding problematics of the national legal framework, was carried out between 2020 and 2021. This included a review of the legal framework on seeds in Colombia and the UK, and informal conversations with key individuals (such as activists, academics and lawyers),⁹ as well as attendance at conferences in the UK.¹⁰ As a result, two politically important case studies were identified: the collective recovery and custodianship of seeds in the Indigenous Reservation of Cañamomo and Lomapieta located in Riosucio municipally (Caldas Department of Colombia), and the recovery of heritage grain by John Letts, an Oxfordshire-based farmer in the UK. The second phase, carried out from March to August 2022, consisted of semi-structured interviews and participant observation sessions, recorded in a field diary,

⁹ First phase report Ashley, L., Rodríguez-Herrera, D.M., Jiménez, D.A., García, A.M. (2021). Final Report. “Custodians of Seeds: Native Seeds v Certified Seeds – unpicking the legal battle”. Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) – Building International Collaborations. Leeds Beckett University & Technological University of Pereira (on file with the authors).

¹⁰ Led by Oxford Real Farming (January 2022 and July 2022) and the Gaia Foundation (UK) Seed Sovereignty (October 2021).

in both the UK and Colombia. Between 2022 and 2024, participant observation and interviews were carried out in the Escopetera and Pirza Indigenous Reservation, located also in the municipality of Riosucio. Orchards, seed collections, as well as training, dissemination, seed exchange practices and territorial context, were observed. For the interpretation of results, the procedures of transcription, coding and triangulation of qualitative data were followed.

Indigenous Reservations in Riosucio, Colombia

Our first case study takes us to the municipality of Riosucio, Colombia. There, the Chamí Indigenous Community has formed a local network of custodians and guardians of seeds since the 2000s, which has fluctuated between 15 and 40 members. This process of territorial seed custody is emblematic within the National Free Seed Network¹¹ because in 2009 one of the four reservations of this community –called “Cañamomo y Lomapieta”– was declared as a GMO-Free Territory (Pimbert and Borrini-Feyerabend, 2019). Supported by indigenous laws and the National Constitution, they claim collective rights and their own ontologies, as can be seen from the first article of this declaration:

According to our Law of Origin, Major Law and our Uses and Customs, seeds are the collective heritage of the peoples, they are integral beings of our mother earth that deserve all respect and recognition as a fundamental part of life in our universe. Therefore, they are not individual property, they are part of the development of the communities and may be used collectively for the well-being of the inhabitants in a sustainable way without affecting their existence, nor the very existence of any other being in nature or of mother earth.¹²

According to our data, three combined factors facilitated the emergence of activism around the seeds in Riosucio, which had this declaration as a milestone. In the first place, a decrease in the traditional use of seeds for medicinal, food and ritual purposes within the indigenous reservations. This situation arose due to a process of dispossession. Farmers began to normalise the use of commercial seeds based upon a monocultural approach, a dependency that intensified with free market policies in Colombia in the 1990s and led to a change in daily practice moving away from seed saving of one's harvest. Linked to this, a second factor consisted of the risk of transgenic contamination of native maize, due to the authorisations for the planting and consumption of GMO from Decree 4525/2005, which regulated the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (Law 470/2002). Since 2006, GM maize has been grown in Colombia – reported

¹¹ This network defends seeds as a common <https://redsemillaslibres.com/>

¹² Article 1, Resolution 018 of 2009, Cabildo of the Indigenous Reservation of Cañamomo and Lomapieta <https://resguardolomapieta.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Colombia-Canamomo-y-Lomapieta.pdf>.

evidence of success based on yield increase due to ‘better pest control’, production cost decrease, and reduced need for additional land for farming is to be balanced against detrimental impacts at a local level due to varieties performing poorly in certain local conditions compared to conventional seed, and poor knowledge transfer regarding methods for growth of GM crops (Brookes, 2020; Méndez et al., 2011). Concerns harboured by farming and indigenous communities in Colombia are amplified given the contamination of native corn experienced in Mexico, the centre of origin of maize (Fitting, 2013).

A third factor, one that emerged from this conjuncture of crisis, is related to the call made by the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia to work for food sovereignty. A seed custodian of the El Claret community in the indigenous reservation Escoletera Pirza (Riosucio) recalls that at the beginning of the 2000s the reflection of the indigenous movement on dependency deepened:

[we asked ourselves] how were we going to have that connection with the territory if we were cutting the roots of what our ancestors had left? So, those kinds of needs were showing us that the seeds had to be worked on, recovered.¹³

For the custodian and leader of the Riosucio custodian network, seed conservation became the “centre” and “flag of struggle” for activists and social organizations, who, like her, found support in the indigenous movement, in the agroecological movement and, especially, international cooperation agents such as the Swiss Foundation for Development Cooperation (Swissaid).

In its beginnings, the Riosucio seed custodians and guardians network undertook processes to recover collective memory on the use of seeds, community seed inventories, permanent spaces for training and internal deliberation. These experiences encouraged in the participants the desire to ‘take responsibility’ for the ‘care’, ‘conservation’ and ‘recovery’ of seeds that were ‘entrusted’ to them because they were at risk of disappearing. Parallel to this work carried out on individual plots, education, outreach and community organisation processes were activated whose initial goal was ‘to produce the seeds required by the reservation and the municipality, to supply seeds, mainly corn and beans, to the different projects that they were executed from the Municipal Mayor’s Office and the reservations, or that could come from other projects’. This was all part of implementing and securing the territory as a GMO free zone.

Furthermore, a Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) has been developed that supports seed recovery and custodianship. This is a formalised system with elements of both subversion and mimicry of the dominant state-based regulatory framework through. PGSs exist across Latin America and globally with a focus

¹³ Interview, Maria Luz Mary Bartolo, indigenous of Escopera Pirza Reservation and seed custodian.

upon knowledge building, trust, democracy and independence (Home et al., 2017). Hernández Vidal and Gutiérrez Escobar (2019) have studied the PGS of the Riosucio seed custodians, arguing it combines local knowledge and modern science, to propose quality criteria that partially differ from the formal biosafety protocols required for a seed to be certified. According to these authors, germination, purity, stability, yield, safety and production costs are official quality criteria, of which the PGS primarily recognizes safety. The application of these criteria will depend on the type of seed and higher principles related to agrobiodiversity, adaptability (Hernández Vidal and Gutiérrez Escobar, 2019), resistance to pests, sovereignty and ‘no alteration of its natural condition’.¹⁴

By adopting audit processes, PGSs ascribe legitimacy to what might otherwise be perceived as an intermediate, transitional, ambiguous, and unstable condition. The PGS compensates for the absence of legal certainty. In doing so, it might also constitute the precursor to change. However, what is being measured and guaranteed reflects the cultural as well as scientific priorities of those engaged in the PGS and so participation in the PGS confirms aspects of quality assurance that are not accounted for in the formal approach to registration and certification required for commercial growth and exchange by Colombia’s state-based institution, the ICA (Colombian Institute of Agriculture). The PSG also provides a means to overcome prohibitively costly third-party organic registration processes, whilst assuring a means to an agroecologically driven market. Hernández and Gutiérrez recall Rosa, a seed guardian, challenging staff at a meeting with the Ministry of Agriculture, stating ‘sorry, but here we have our own proposal, our own seeds, and we don’t want certified seeds’ (Hernández Vidal and Gutiérrez Escobar, 2019, p. 55). According to testimonies collected in 2022, this resistance continues and the seed custodians of Riosucio have succeeded in meeting their goal of selling their seed more broadly across the reservation and online. Nonetheless, one should be wary of romanticising the success PGSs – many face challenges in achieving their maximum reach (Kaufmann and Vogl, 2018), and have not succeeded (Castro, 2014).

One tactic adopted by La Casa de Las Semillas (the House of Seeds) in Riosucio, Colombia is revealed in the wording printed on each seed packet:

This is not a commercial product, the cost is what the custodian is recognised for his effort and dedication to produce it.

As noted, in Colombia (as in the UK) domestic legislation accords with UPOV requirements so that the marketing and sale of seed is regulated, and only certified / registered seed can be sold for commercial purposes. By reproducing

¹⁴ Article 2, Resolution 018/2009 declaring the Cañamomo and Lomaprieta Indigenous Reservation a GMO-Free Territory.

the above wording on each packet of its seeds, La Casa de Las Semillas deploys a tactic that subverts and circumvents the dominant legal order, claiming that ‘the cost’, the money paid for the seed, is not to purchase the seed but rather to compensate the efforts of the custodian in caring for and producing it.¹⁵ This is not to say that the seed is without value, but its value cannot be ascribed based upon reductive and/or productive principles. This tactic is a very public declaration of the liminal legal space such seed sharing practice occupies.

We see here how this type of space of legal liminality is occupied through a series of disparate negotiations in which supposedly imposed categories and local ontologies overlap. The experience of the Riosucio Seed Custodians and Guardians Network teaches us a policy of place that rejects the proprietorship module of UPOV by adopting a model based upon collective interests and care for local knowledge and biodiversity. The practice of small-scale farmers and custodians is active and not passive, driven by experimentation in situ to preserve and build crop resilience and performance in particular localities. This activity sits outside of the realm of UPOV with an important role to play in terms of food sovereignty and also food security. Despite the food security rhetoric of the World Intellectual Property Organization which promotes UPOV as the role-holder overseeing and protecting the domain of innovation and experimentation in farming (Rivoire and Jewell, 2019),¹⁶ it is suggested by civil society organisations that small scale farmers feed 70% of the world.¹⁷

Rather than operating within a neoliberal profit-oriented paradigm, small scale farmers, peasant farmers and seed custodians determine experimentation and innovation with a collective driven moral clarity that is embedded in cultural and scientific knowledge. Implementing rules on their own terms and using the controlled equivocation are scattered (many times anonymous) tactics that manifest form of everyday social creativity, as defined by de Certeau (1996), that are not fixed, finished or complete. Therefore, in our opinion, such tactics allow networks (here human – the custodians, and non-human – the seed) and

¹⁵ The full name is The Network of Seed Custodians of Riosucio Caldas. There are seed houses across Colombia that are part of the Free Seed Network.

¹⁶ The rhetoric deployed is one securitisation, with UPOV citing the new developed of plant varieties as ‘an essential response to achieving food security and agricultural sustainability, especially in a context of climate change and global population growth’ with UPOV as the vehicle to encourage the development of new varieties and the means by which to protect innovation and secure a return on investment.

¹⁷ In an open letter to the FAO from eight CSOs, concern is raised regarding the FAO’s quantification of the contribution of peasants to food security that suggests only a third of the world’s food is produced by peasants, whereas as other studies indicate 70%, ‘FAO confusion over the role of peasants in meeting the food needs of the world’s peoples’, Open Letter to Director-General, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 01 February 2022, https://grain.org/system/attachments/sources/000/006/698/original/70_FAO_letter.pdf.

their practice to occupy a legal liminality that, in the case of the Riosucio seed activists, has at its centre the problem of quality standards and the very concept of ‘invention’:

It is a time when we are opening a market for a seed that does not exist, so we have to be very judicious on the issue of quality. Because the norm in theory says that this seed cannot be marketed, that it is not allowed, although that has been changing [...] that is why we are so demanding in terms of quality [...] In other words, our seeds are of better quality than certified seed. And for that to be [real] we must be very rigorous from the moment it is planted and throughout the storage process.¹⁸

For as long as issues related to quality, rights to sell, exchange and obtain seed formally and the high costs of official seed certification are not resolved, the Riosucio Seed Custodians and Guardians Network will have limitations on their right to fully market their productions. It will continue to adopt such labelling tactics to collect money for the work that custodians do whilst seeking to avoid legal liability for a breach of domestic and global legal requirements.

John Letts – heritage seed in the UK

A second case study of seed activism is found in the figure of John Letts, a farmer living in Oxfordshire in the UK. His story both contrasts and overlaps with the seed custodians of Riosucio. Whilst John’s journey has not been driven by recovery linked to indigenous ontologies and epistemologies, which are at the heart of the community activism and practice in Riosucio, there are similarities in respect of ethics of care, recovery of cultural assets and farming traditions, and a focus upon crop resilience and adaptation. Similarly, the narrow confines of the UK legal environment have led John to adopt tactics to share the seed of the grain populations he has developed. We perceive these tactics as occupying a liminal legal space by finding a way to engage in commercial activity that defies the exclusionary legal regime.

John’s work over the last two decades has been to develop genetically diverse populations of cereal crops to ‘mimic the resilient landraces and variety mixtures that were grown by our ancestors’ (*What Are Heritage Grains?*, 2020). This has been achieved by collecting seed from seed banks and farmers across the world and over time, slowly developing the crop to build up a genetically diverse ‘living gene bank’ population. John is driven by a desire to improve crop resilience without the need for an agro-industrial approach as well as improving the nutritional value of the food we eat. His wheat and rye populations, for example, boast larger and deeper root systems characteristic of landraces that

¹⁸ Interview, Velma Echavarría, indigenous of Cañamomo y Lomapieta Reservation and leader of Riosucio Seed Custodian Network.

allowed for moisture and nutrients to be more deeply drawn from beneath the land's surface. The replanting of seed carefully selected from previous harvests has created populations well adapted to local conditions (Saladino, 2022; *What Are Heritage Grains?*, 2020).

Letts identifies issues with the way wheat is grown in the UK, in relation to 'conventional' highly industrialised methods involving chemical fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides and also organic farming (Letts, 2020). Farming based upon Green Revolution principles of expensive high agro-chemical input, monoculture and yield have created a situation of crop dependency rather than resilience, depleting soil health and biodiversity in the process, with negative consequences for ecology and climate change. Furthermore, '[i]ntensive organic grain production requires huge areas of land to accommodate the leys, and extravagant use of diesel for all its cultivations' (Letts, 2020). As an alternative, John has developed a third approach, that of 'restorative continuous cropping (RCC)', adapting the philosophy and farming practices of Masanobu Fukuoka and Marc Bonfils to UK conditions (Letts, 2020). RCC depends neither upon the high artificial input of conventional farming, nor the land intensive demands of organic farming requiring restorative crop rotation. Instead, Letts's approach builds organic matter and biodiversity on and below the surface of the ground by the use of nitrogen-fixing understorey crops, carefully timed sowing, minimal tillage, leaving crop residues in situ after harvesting, and no use of artificial fertiliser or agro-chemicals (Letts, 2020). As grain is grown every year in the same field, the total output is three times that of a standard 5 year rotational organic system. These agroecological approaches are in harmony with those of the indigenous communities of Riosucio and align with the principles advocated by a growing global movement.

However, despite these farming methods supporting biodiversity, the seed that Letts farms in this way cannot be 'marketed' (transferred to a third party) as they do not comply with the 'distinct, uniform and stable' (DUS) criteria derived from UPOV, and so cannot be registered on the UK National List. The temporary EU experiment (2014) that allowed the sale and marketing of heterogeneous crop material was, in the UK, restricted to the composite cross wheat population 'YQ' developed by the Organic Research Centre and Prof. Martin Wolfe. John has been sharing seed with other growers for over 20 years through growers' clubs and, like the members of free seed networks in Colombia, has deployed tactics to defy the restrictive bureaucracy of the regulated environment.

Growers' clubs in the UK have also found ways to circumvent legal norms by engaging in non-commercial exchanges, operating through member-only systems, focusing on heritage seeds, labelling seeds for educational use, or hosting informal swaps. Letts has increased production by entering 'contract to

grow' agreements with other farmers whereby Letts retains legal ownership of the seed. As a party to such an agreement, the farmer is contractually bound to grow the seed in accordance with growing guidelines. However, DEFRA has indicated to Letts that distributing his cereal seed via a growers' club would be in breach of UK legislation.

Whilst Letts has adopted a particular tactic, his concern regarding the limits placed upon the sharing of genetically diverse seed is held by others in the UK, and Europe. In the UK, this network is populated by organisations and individuals with artisan skills and a focus upon collaborative food chains, part of a community that engages in knowledge sharing and seed health that goes beyond a simple focus on departing from the DUS criteria and seed certification.¹⁹ Within this network we observe tactics similar to those of the seed custodians of Riosucio being deployed. UK based Real Seeds supplies vegetable seeds to home gardeners. In order to market its seeds it too has been forced to occupy a space of liminal legality. Real Seeds operates as a seed 'club' whereby those that purchase seeds automatically become a member of the seed club, so that seeds are not being sold to the public in breach of seed marketing regulations. This tactic effectively transforms what might otherwise be a public commercial transaction into a private, community-based sharing network, reducing legal scrutiny. However, Real Seeds states in its terms and conditions that due to more strict enforcement of regulations, they now label certain seed packets with the words, 'amateur seed not for commercial exploitation', reporting they are working with DEFRA (UK Department for Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs) to register their unlisted varieties but prohibitive costs mean that some varieties will not be available as a result.²⁰

Campaigning and advocacy for regulatory change to accommodate genetic crop diversity met with some success with the introduction of EU regulations permitting the marketing of organic heterogeneous material without having to comply with relevant certification processes.²¹ However, whilst the UK was involved in the pilot scheme that preceded the introduction of the 2018 regulations,²² the 2018 EU Organic Regulations do not form part of EU retained law and so do not apply in the UK.²³ This has exacerbated legal uncertainty meaning

¹⁹ Advocacy Paper: Recognising the Importance of Heterogeneous Grain and Cereal Seed Production in the UK Seed Legislation, Gaia Foundation Seed Sovereignty UK and others, 4 (on file with the author).

²⁰ Real Seeds terms and conditions: <https://www.realseeds.co.uk/terms.html>

²¹ Organic Regulation 2018/848/EU

²² EU Commission decision 2014/150/EU.

²³ However, see 'Explanatory Memorandum for European Union Legislation Within the Scope of the UK/EU Withdrawal Agreement And Northern Ireland Protocol' DEFRA, dated 17 March 2022: 'Organic Regulation 2018/848/EU... now applies in Northern Ireland, while re-

those engaged with the marketing and production of heterogeneous material in the UK have been further ‘pushed to the confines of illegality’.²⁴ That is not to say that the EU Organic Regulations are a panacea. In the UK most heterogeneous material is grown by organic farmers, but this focus could exclude local varieties, landraces or amateur varieties that are not certified organic. There has therefore been a call for derogations to apply to conservation varieties, though the success of this would then depend upon whether novel evolutionary populations created from modern hybrid varieties (e.g. YQ wheat) or traditional heritage lines (e.g. Letts’s living gene bank populations) are accepted as Conservation Varieties.

By way of conclusion

To conclude, the tactics deployed by seed custodians in Colombia and the UK include mimicry, subversion, circumvention and resistance, situating their practice (and themselves) in a liminal legal space. We see some overlap in relation to labelling of seed products, and some differences – in Latin America it being more common to develop PGSSs, whereas in the UK, formal advocacy focuses upon legislative change and resistance on an individual level, such as that deployed by John Letts. In Colombia, legal changes are primarily driven by ancestral knowledge and indigenous rights, while in the UK, they rely more on experiential knowledge and material evidence. Which is not the same as saying that in Colombia the struggle is only speculative and that in the United Kingdom the construction of empirical evidence is easy or sufficient. Home tests to measure GMO contamination are, for example, desirable but expensive technologies for Colombian custodians. Whereas, in the UK, buying or renting land to carry out autonomous seed experimentation is something unfeasible for most young activists.

Whilst PGSSs centre upon postmodern agroecological approaches, the setting and disseminating of standards mimics the regulatory environment, replicating a modern logic of ‘audit cultures’ (Strathern, 2003). Here there is a risk that suspicion or mistrust is embedded in the framework at the risk of ignoring

tained Regulation 834/2007 continues to apply in Great Britain, creating divergence. The Trade and Cooperation Agreement recognises the EU and UK as equivalent for the purpose of trade in organic products so there is no impact for GB/EU trade.’ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1065440/220317__EM_EU_Regulation_848_and_NI_Impacts__1_.pdf

²⁴ Advocacy Paper: Recognising the Importance of Heterogeneous Grain and Cereal Seed Production in the UK Seed Legislation, Gaia Foundation Seed Sovereignty UK and others, 4 (on file with the author).

indigenous and campesino forms of social control and ethical perspectives, centred upon social relations including trust and reciprocity (Santilli, 2012). Further, market driven indicators such as price, demand, yield uniformity may become primary signifiers of value, rather than an emphasis on those inherent values present in everyday spaces and daily practice. This type of micro-invasion of the market in daily life, in addition to influencing social trust and cooperation, implies new organisational work for farmers, which is added to underpaid productive work. We would be witnessing renewed forms of expropriation of farmers' time (through meetings, workshops, training, fairs, etc.), who now have to devise, implement and even simulate new forms of 'quality' to defend their agriculture (Rodríguez Herrera, 2020). This form of scaling emphasises market principles of productivity rather than encompassing other value-based systems such as ways of life and cultural heritage.

In both the UK and Colombia, seed activists invest their efforts in ensuring the 'quality' of seeds through different means to develop, support and legitimise the market niche. Through these cases we see how the agricultural experimentation and innovation processes, that are the very basis of agriculture, risk being reduced and privatised. Even so, a PGS, a bilateral agreement or a local seed system subverts the regulatory environment of formal seed system by circumventing it, with this subversion amounting to a form of seed activism and resistance. Taken together, the tactics deployed realize and advance local practice in dialogue with modern knowledge. They can be described as acts of resistance to the hegemony of the dominant legal system driven by ethics of care rooted in circular ecology.

The occupation of a legally liminal space by farmers in Colombia and the UK manifests a conscious act of resistance and, we suggest, is a counter-map to a restrictive (global) governance regime complex of seed law and regulation (Raustiala and Victor, 2004). Actors within this space are part of a spatial and relational international activist movement to preserve, recover, and protect practice and ways of being that diametrically oppose a productivist, privatised and proprietorship based approach to seed such as the UPOV-based legal framework. The commodity-based, standardised agricultural paradigm reliant upon highly mechanised industrial approaches to farming has caused devastating consequences for small scale farmers and rural communities including economic insecurity and migration to urban areas (Barbier, 2000), reduced access to land (Vélez-Torres and Varela, 2014), and a threat to agrobiodiversity (Thomas et al., 2011), which includes the contamination of native crop varieties, which may well be exacerbated by continued practise of seed saving and sharing following the introduction to small scale farmers of GM crops (Iversen et al., 2014).

The GM and proprietorship approach that characterises agro-industry is embedded in a patriarchal system that elevates the 'rational' and abstract world above and beyond the physical. Nature, as part of the 'physical' world is a threat

to be fought and subjugated with artificial means, rather than be embraced as containing the seeds of the solution / resolution itself. The result is an approach that is linear and destructive rather than cyclical and constructive. The disconnection of people to the land and to nature in the western world is material and immaterial. Those engaged with industrial agriculture are separated from the natural processes by the use of heavy machinery, and chemicals working against rather than in harmony with ecology. Whilst consumers are similarly disenfranchised by a food system that values uniform processed and artificially packaged products with little evidence of their origin.

Like Colombian and British examples activist-style seed exchange can be observed in Poland. Its objectives are to protect and promote local, heirloom plant varieties, contrasting with the focus of large institutional seed banks. These initiatives, spearheaded by organic farming associations like Ekoland, and permaculture educators like Agro-Perma-Lab, operate through informal networks and events.

Like in the examples presented above, activist-style seed exchange in Poland exist in a legal liminality. While emphasizing exchange, tradition, and biodiversity over commercial sales, they operate within a regulatory landscape primarily designed for commercial seed markets. This means the line between non-commercial exchange and activities that could be interpreted as regulated “marketing” can be unclear, creating a space where these conservation and educational efforts navigate the existing legal framework without necessarily fitting neatly within it. The growing interest in seed sovereignty in Poland also reflects a desire to legitimize and support these grassroots practices.

As we have illustrated, seeds are imbued with deep cultural significance and link the material and immaterial world. The case studies we have presented reflect a broader global social movement led by the Global South that has been gaining traction in the global north. There is a paradigm shift, but this is on the fringes. Until the practices of the farmers and communities we have observed are supported by an alternative ontology and a legal framework that runs counter to the presiding extractive, productivist and linear model there is a risk that activities are unlawful and occupy a precarious position in a liminal legal space. However, in the analysed examples synergies with emerging posthuman legality jurisprudence can be observed – where the object of protection and the rights holder is non-human, thus challenging a (neo)liberal anthropocentric discourse.

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Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN poleca



**Anna Kwak
Mariola Bieńko**

Nieustająco pełny dom **Perspektywa rodziców** **mieszkających z dorosłym** **gniazdującym dzieckiem**

Warszawa 2024

■ W przeszłości, gdy dorosłe, niezamężne/nieżonate i nieposiadające potomstwa dzieci mieszkaly razem z rodzicami, nie nazywano ich „gniazdownikami”, były częścią rodziny zgodnie z uznanymi normami życia rodzinnego. W czasach współczesnych zjawisko gniazdowania rozwija się w innych warunkach społecznych, ekonomicznych, demograficznych. Kontekstem zmian są procesy przejść demograficznych przynoszących płynność, zmienność, niepewność, niestabilność. [...]

Na początku XXI wieku wybuchła dyskusja dotycząca gniazdowania dorosłych dzieci. W mediach zarzuca się młodym dorosłym pozostającym w domu rodzicielskim brak odpowiedzialności, wygodnictwo, egoizm, niechęć do podejmowania zobowiązań związanych z małżeństwem i posiadaniem dzieci, wykorzystywanie rodziców, korzystanie z dóbr rodzinnych bez własnego wkładu, niedojrzałość, uzależnienie od matek. [...]

Analiza tego zjawiska opiera się przede wszystkim na danych otrzymywanych od jednej ze stron układu rodzinnego, czyli od dorosłych dzieci. Stosunkowo rzadko badacze próbują dotrzeć do strony drugiej – czyli samych rodziców. A przecież to oni są istotną częścią budowanej przez lata rodziny, to oni stają przed nową sytuacją w jej rozwoju.

ze wstępu

Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN poleca



Celina Strzelecka

Aranżowanie temporalności

Kulturowe praktyki zarządzania czasem

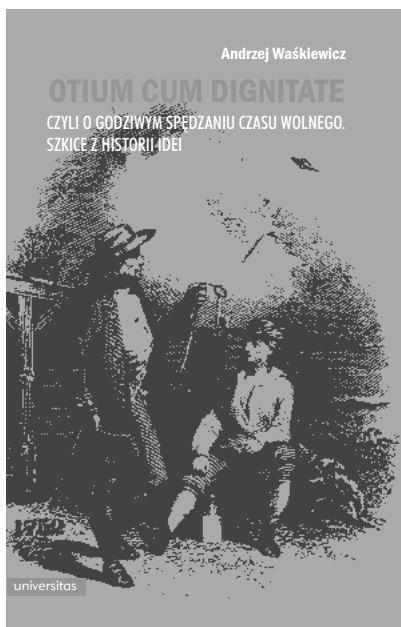
Warszawa 2025

Doświadczenie czasu [...] jest [...] naznaczone nierównościami społecznymi. Im niżej ktoś znajduje się w hierarchiach czasowych, im bardziej jego czas jest zawłaszczany przez inne prowadzące do czasowego niewolnictwa formy reżimów czasu, im bardziej doświadcza ubóstwa czasu, tym mniejszą ma możliwość zarządzania sobą w czasie. Hierarchie czasowe nie pokrywają się jednak w pełni z hierarchią majątkową. Ofiarą nowych, wysoce rozwiniętych technik wyzysku nie są wcale klasy najuboższe, ale klasa średnia i wyższa klasa średnia podatne na presję wywieraną przez neoliberalne technologie zarządzania, które rozbudzają aspiracje pełniejszego życia. Zarządzanie sobą w czasie staje się więc elementem logiki neoliberalizmu, narzędziem wyzysku czasu człowieka prowadzącym do pełnej internalizacji wyzysku przez wyzyskiwanych [...].

Potrzebujemy nowej wizji czasu. [...] Dominująca obecnie wizja czasu przestała się sprawdzać, prowadzi bowiem do coraz większego skomplikowania świata, globalnych kryzysów, zmian klimatycznych i długu entropijnego. Nowa wizja czasu jest niezbędna, aby wymyślić nowe struktury i systemy społeczne, które nadejdą po neoliberalizmie.

fragmenty książki

Wydział Socjologii UW poleca



Andrzej Waśkiewicz

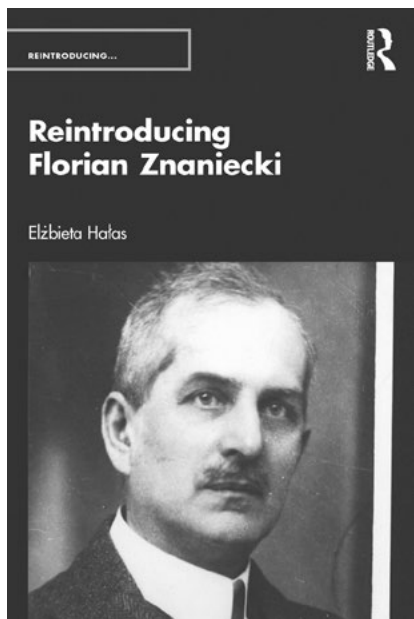
Otium cum dignitae, czyli o godziwym spędzaniu czasu wolnego. Szkice z historii idei

Universitas 2025

Zainspirowany koncepcją Simmla definiuję czas wolny jako taki, z którego wykorzystania jednostka nie ma obowiązku rozliczania się przed społeczeństwem. Zachowuję dla niego łaciński termin *otium*, by odróżnić go od czasu wolnego, który w tej czy innej formie podlega jednak kontroli społecznej. [...] Można je przyrównać do tradycyjnego kieszonkowego, jakie dzieci dostają od rodziców: mogą je wydać na wszystko, byle nie na

alkohol, papierosy, narkotyki i inne zastrzeżone prawem w ich wieku używki. Nie muszą się tłumaczyć, dlaczego regularnie wydają je na „głupoty”. Cycerońska *dignitas* jest jednak czymś więcej niż nawet najbardziej zajmującym hobby, o czym czytelnicy przekonają się przy lekturze kolejnych esejów. Zupełnie zmienia charakter *otium* [...]. Nie jest to już czas wolny od aktywności publicznej i zawodowej, ale czas wykorzystany na inną aktywność, nie mniej ważną dla tożsamości jednostki niż tamte. Dla wielu to właśnie ona i tylko ona – trzeba to ująć patetyczną, choć nadużywaną formułą – nadaje sens życiu. Jeśli cieszy się jeszcze społecznym uznaniem, daje im powody do „słusznej dumy” z etyki Arystotelesa, jeśli nie – wpisuje się przynajmniej w ich „filozofie życiowe”. Inaczej niż *negotium* – o ile nie jest ono „powołaniem”, ale normalnym wykonywaniem swoich powinności – *otium* tego rodzaju wyróżnia się refleksyjnym podejściem do samego czasu, przekonaniem, że jest on rzeczą cenną. Rzec można, że idea *otium cum dignitate* tworzy jedną z elit społeczeństwa, ale elitę szczególną, bo niemal niewidoczną. [...] Z braku obiektywnych wskaźników i deklarowanej neutralności aksjologicznej akademicka socjologia może jedynie stwierdzić, że niektóre sposoby zagospodarowania czasu wolnego są „poważne” – bo niektórzy się w nie „na poważnie” angażują – a inne po prostu nie. Jedynie z perspektywy krytyki społecznej albo zaangażowanej socjologii dopuszczalne będzie stwierdzenie, że czas wolny niewypełniony żadnym sensownym zajęciem jest najzwyczajniej zmarnotrawiony.

Wydział Socjologii UW poleca



Elżbieta Hałas

Reintroducing Florian Znaniecki

Routledge 2025

This book reintroduces the work of Florian Znaniecki (1882–1958) as an innovative constructor of modern sociology who viewed the processes of modernity through the prism of culture, and rediscovers his relational thought on the emergence and transformation of cultural and social systems. Exploring the contribution of Znaniecki's philosophy of culturalism to the cultural approach in sociology, it shows the importance of Znaniecki's work for the foundation of sociology as one of the cultural sciences. Through an examination of his work on the world society from a cultural perspective, the author reveals Znaniecki to have been a pioneer of global sociology, and shows that sociology has much to gain from a fuller appreciation of his legacy in its understanding of processes of social and cultural change. Aimed at students and researchers of sociology, *Reintroducing Florian Znaniecki* will appeal to those with interests in the dynamics of culture, the cultural sciences, theoretical sociology and sociological methods. It presents stimulating analytical concepts and offers inspiration for research in many areas, including knowledge, science, education, creative leadership, the emergence of modern nations and the world society.