

**ECOFEMINISMS AND AGROECOLOGY:
A RESIGNIFICATION OF SOCIAL AND
ENVIRONMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS**

*ECOFEMINISMOS Y AGROECOLOGÍA: RESIGNIFICACIÓN
DE LAS RELACIONES SOCIALES Y AMBIENTALES*

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ABSTRACT

Agroecology and ecofeminisms are recognized as counter-hegemonic epistemologies, practices, and movements that have as their essence the respect for nature, and constitute themselves as elements of ethical, equitable, fair, and healthy development. Both cause ruptures with the capitalist model and the dominant food industry that exploit nature and women, damaging people's health and the environment. Given the lack of publications and debates relating agroecology to ecofeminisms, this theoretical and analytical essay aims to discuss these movements and establish a dialogue between their proposals, principles, and contributions. Both have common ideals that value the achievement of environmental, social, and gender justice, as well as health promotion. These two movements combined may propose a life model in which agroecology is a fertile field to materialize ecofeminist principles, to which respect for society and nature is fundamental. Recognizing food sovereignty as peoples' right over strategies of food production and consumption and making visible the role of women as guardians of biological and cultural diversity means placing life at the center of social organization, in addition to resignify ecosystemic relationships and reducing risk factors for various health problems, which are also decisive points for the achievement of peoples' food security.

Keywords: Health, Gender, Ecology.

RESUMEN

La agroecología y los ecofeminismos son reconocidos como epistemologías, prácticas y movimientos contrahegemónicos, que tienen como esencia el respeto por la naturaleza, y presentan como elemento un desarrollo ético, equitativo, justo y saludable. Ambos provocan rupturas con el modelo capitalista y el sistema industrial alimentario dominante que explota la naturaleza y las mujeres, dañando la salud de las personas y el medio ambiente. Ante la falta de publicaciones y debates que relacionen la agroecología con los ecofeminismos, este ensayo, de carácter teórico y ana-

lítico, tiene como objetivo discutir estos movimientos, estableciendo un diálogo entre sus propuestas, principios y aportes. Ambos tienen ideales comunes que valoran el logro de la justicia ambiental, social y de género, así como la promoción de la salud. Los dos proponen un modelo de vida en el que la agroecología constituye un campo fértil para materializar principios ecofeministas, cuyo respeto por la sociedad y la naturaleza es fundamental. Reconocer la soberanía alimentaria como derecho de los pueblos bajo las estrategias de producción y consumo de alimentos, y visibilizar el papel de la mujer como guardiana de la diversidad biológica y cultural, lleva a colocar la vida en el centro de la organización social para replantear las relaciones de los ecosistemas y, así, reducir los factores de riesgo de diversos problemas de salud, los cuales también son puntos decisivos para lograr la seguridad alimentaria y nutricional de las personas. *Palabras clave:* Ecofeminismos, género, ecología

INTRODUCTION

We bring in this essay the understanding of feminism as a discursive field of action, which corresponds to a movement that comprises plural feminist discourses and practices as an analytical framework to problematize human relations with nature (Alvarez, 2014; Stadtler, 2007). The search for a fair society for all must consider the specificities without which it is not possible to identify the demands of each group. Thus, recognizing feminisms as strategies for social transformation is crucial. It can be said that this recognition is what will feed the practice, fueling the forces that fight for structural changes aimed at equity and justice.

The organic movement started in the 1940s as a reaction to the use of chemical fertilizers and their environmental impact. However, according to Sambuichi *et al.* (2017), the Agroecological movement started from ecological principles for sustainable agriculture. Agroecology's theoretical and methodological framework was consolidated from the 1980s, when, due to European influen-

ce, the studies in the field incorporated a sociological vision of agroecosystems. The incorporation of cultural, social, and political aspects differentiated the agroecological movement from organic production. While organic production focused on ecological agromonic techniques, agroecology addressed cultural and biological diversity, the exchange of knowledge between communities, and their right to produce and manage their food, while maintaining independence from technological packages. Thus, agroecological practices have as principles food sovereignty, which recognizes peoples' right over strategies of food production and consumption, and gender equity, from the recognition of the fundamental role played by women in the movement (Sambuichi *et al.*, 2017).

Siliprandi (2017) states that the political decisions that cover agrosystems' production issues are still marked by a sexist vision that makes women's actions invisible, which emphasizes the need for their organization and participation in political spaces. Although the spaces for the development of rural policies are marked by traces of patriarchy, women's organization around the agroecological movement has reflected on policies and programs that meet their demands even among their fellow movement members. In Brazil, for example, the Women's Working Group (GT-Mulheres) created in 2002 within the National Articulation of Agroecology (ANA), the inclusion of the agroecological agenda in the *Marcha das Margaridas* in 2011, as well as the women's movement linked to *La Via Campesina*, among other forms of organization, were crucial to bringing visibility to women and their role in food sovereignty as guardians of knowledge, native seeds, and traditional agricultural practices, and to their knowledge of local, cultural food and its preparation. In this context, Siliprandi (2017) points to the characterization of the National Policy on Agroecology and Organic Production (PNAPO) as a reflection of woman's political organization and of the increasing visibility of their role in sustainable agriculture and in the expansion of the agroecological movement.

Women are not the exclusive holders of contact with nature and family care, although historically they have held this knowled-

ge and played a basal role in these practices. However, it is necessary to expand this knowledge to new social and environmental relationships, with a focus on the maintenance and reproduction of life, gender equity, and food sovereignty. Among the types of classical, spiritual, and constructivist feminisms that based this analysis, this study approaches constructivist ecofeminism, which addresses the role of gender related to the family economy.

The study of Busconi (2017) portrays agroecology in Latin America from the perspective of Constructivist Ecofeminism. The researcher points out that processes of destruction of nature primarily affect poor women from peripheral countries, which makes the discussion of gender inherent to ecological processes. The visibility of women's actions in the production and reproduction of life, processes that are related to their environment, and the maintenance of their relationship with nature, overcomes dichotomies consolidated by socialization in a technical-patriarchal society. Also, according to Busconi (2017), classical, spiritualist and constructivist ecofeminisms are among the feminist currents that incorporate the ecological issue in its agenda as a condition for equality and for the guarantee of rights in order to achieve quality of life related to gender.

Feminisms (among which this essay will adopt the ecofeminist strand) and agroecology share the fact that they are currents of critical thought for the analysis of reality and, at the same time, are powerful social movements with the capacity to transform it (Morales *et al.*, 2018).

From different approaches and actions, the epistemologies and policies of ecofeminisms present relevant connections with agroecology. Both are linked to the critique of the capitalist model and the hegemonic agri-food system, which interfere in the guarantee of food security. In addition, analyses within these fields have contributed to questioning the relationship between society and nature, identifying ethnocentric, anthropocentric, and androcentric trends, which have built representations and legitimized unequal practices and the violation of rights (Trevilla-Espinal, 2018).

In this context, ecofeminism and agroecology can be identified as counter-hegemonic epistemologies, practices, and movements that present the defense of sustainable, just, and healthy development as a common ideal.

This essay, thus, analytically addresses the foundations of ecofeminism and agroecology, seeking to establish the relationships between them and their contributions to sustainable development, with a focus on health promotion. To this end, this article is guided by the following question: is it possible to associate agroecology and ecofeminisms with the fostering of relationships based on the centrality of life and guided by the promotion of social, environmental, gender, and health justice?

REFLECTIONS ON ECOFEMINISMS

The theoretical origin of the concept of ecofeminism is often attributed to Françoise D'Eaubonne (1974) and her work entitled “Le féminisme ou la mort” (“Feminism or Death”). The author, in the midst of criticizing the consumer society and worrying about the rapid and excessive population growth, states that women and nature are both dominated by patriarchy and suggests that to escape the spiral of production and consumption of superfluous and ephemeral objects, of environmental destruction and alienation from time itself, it is necessary to question the relations between the sexes. Over the years, ecofeminism has been shaped as a current of thought and a social movement that explores the connections between environmentalism and feminism (Puleo, 2011).

Mellor (2000), in her book “Feminismo y ecología” (“Feminism and Ecology”), points out that these connections gave rise to ecofeminism in the 1970s, in the midst of second-wave feminism and the green movement. This author identifies ecofeminism as a heterogeneous movement capable of highlighting the cultural relationships established in contemporary society. These relationships

organize biological and ecological processes, characterized by the exploitation and degradation of nature, and subordinate women to men.

Accordingly, Puleo (2011) stresses that from the dialogue between environmentalism and feminism, ecofeminism shares and improves the political concept of both movements. This gives depth, complexity, and clarity to the analysis of environmental and social problems that each movement faces separately, thus increasing the conceptual and political richness of both.

Ecofeminism has been considered plural, linked to the historical, geographical, cultural, and political context from which it manifests, as well as characterized by a process of continuous discussion and theoretical and practical elaboration (Trevilla-Espinal, 2018). This debate has been promoted both by the praxis of political and social movements and by representatives of areas such as epistemology, ethics, political philosophy, economics, and agroecology (Puleo, 2000).

In a schematic overview, Puleo (Duque, 2009) distinguishes two main ecofeminist perspectives: classical ecofeminism, of essentialist and spiritualist characteristics, which sees the proximity of women to nature as linked to biological and ontological factors, and constructivist ecofeminism, which emphasizes this relationship through aspects related to historical conditions.

Mellor (2000), in turn, describes that the ecofeminism dedicated to spiritualist bases of interpretation is based on biological particularities and cosmological forces centered on women's corporeality (motherhood, food, care), which complement each other and constitute links between biology and ontology and between women and nature.

Within the current of classic ecofeminists, theologian and pacifist Ruether, in her book "New Woman, New Earth", published in 1975, was one of the first to combine feminist theology with communitarian socialism, declaring that women should be the voice of a new humanity that would be born from the reconciliation of body and spirit.

Because of their spiritual and/or essentialist conceptual approaches, Ruether (1975) and other authors have been criticized within the ecofeminism paradigm itself (Mellor, 2000) for postulating the existence of an innate link between women and biology due to their reproductive capabilities. In this way, they inserted themselves in a biological determinism, assuming a homogeneous and universal concept of women and inferring that they would all share a set of experiences simply because they are women (Warren, 2000).

In the constructivist ecofeminist approach, the emphasis is on contemporary social inequalities. The deep divisions between men and women are perceived as a historical phenomenon. The analyses of this strand are inclined toward social constructionism since cultural, social, economic, and political meanings and values are assigned to the differences and divisions between men and women, and not as a result of a raw and passive nature. They emphasize that the material relationship between women and nature represents nexuses of power around human corporeality and, consequently, the distribution of burdens and responsibilities that this represents (Mellor, 2000).

Constructivist ecofeminist Ynestra King was the founder of the “Women and Life on Earth” conference in 1980 and of women’s protests in front of the pentagon between 1980-1981, which contributed to launching ecofeminism as a movement. For King (1983) the construction of Western industrial civilization in opposition to nature dialectically interacts and reinforces the subjugation of women. In this context, the author had already highlighted that the domination of men over women represents a prototype for all other forms of domination, with an interconnection between the dominations of sex, race, class, and nature, which mutually reinforce each other.

Although ecofeminists may differ in their approaches, Mellor (2000) points out that the sex/gender relationship can reveal structural dynamics for confronting other oppressions, and that the common core that unites ecofeminist thought around the world is

the critique of the patriarchal forms of organization of Western societies. All ecofeminists also share the opinion about the existence of hierarchical dualisms in Western society (man/woman, public/private, society/nature, mind/body) and patterns of knowledge (reason/emotion, abstract/concrete, academic knowledge/customs).

Carolyn Merchant criticized the idea of nature in the scientific revolution, discussing the need to drastically change economic structures in order to balance work options for men and women. In this sense, Merchant (1983) argued that the environmental problems and the disconnection between humanity and nature resulted from the production system, the sexual division of labor (men in economic production and women in the domestic sphere), the rise of capitalist patriarchy, and the ideology that land and nature should be exploited for human progress through technology.

Corroborating this perspective, Puleo (2002) indicates that constructivist ecofeminism theorizes the interconnection between women and nature as a historical process of socialization of women with the incorporation of gender responsibilities in the household economy. For Di Ciommo (1999), the most important mark of constructivist ecofeminism is found in the consideration of historical, empirical, and conceptual characteristics. These, in turn, help to understand that the correlation between women and nature is constantly fed by a process in which several aspects of the female condition—physical, social, and psychological—contribute to them being considered closer to nature. In other words, women's connection with nature concerns their existence and not their essence.

Mies and Shiva (1993) are authors who put materialism and ecofeminism in dialogue, articulating the spiritual focus with political struggles in order to emphasize women's relationships with nature in their social experience. The authors oppose the hegemony of capitalist patriarchy and the productivist model, arguing that these are the main causes of the disruption of the connection between society and nature. There is, therefore, an advance in the constructivist perspective in which the interaction between

women and nature is not analyzed in an essentialist way, or only through the affective or cognitive characteristics that would be proper of the female, but from its construction as a historical, social, cultural, political, and economic phenomenon.

AGROECOLOGY AND ECOFEMINISMS

Agroecology is a field of (theoretical and methodological) knowledge production that aims to build a model of sustainable rural and urban development, based on popular knowledge from women, indigenous peoples, and traditional communities. As such, it aims at practices based on a system of food production and consumption that is harmonious and integrated with nature, human beings, and animals, as well as at the maintenance of the stability of natural ecosystems. Furthermore, agroecology manifests itself as a paradigm in opposition to the hegemonic and corporate agri-food system and is, therefore, an action in favor of gender, class, race, and ethnic equality (Santos *et al.*, 2010).

As a practice, agroecology is secular. As an ecological movement, it dates from our time. As a science, it questions science itself, that is imbricated by the mechanistic paradigm. It proposes science as a social practice that highlights the value of the knowledge of ancestral peoples and the need for methodologies that correspond to their social responsibility. In this sense, science has a transformative role that calls for the acknowledged inexistence of methodological impartiality and the rethinking of the predominant methods (Santos, 2006). Thus, the scope of the term agroecology as practice, movement, and science is in line with Busconi, who associates agroecology with a new paradigm of life and production by questioning the pillars of capitalism and the hierarchical dichotomies of this model:

La Agroecología se presenta así como un nuevo paradigma de vida y de producción, al cuestionar los pilares del capitalismo patriarcal, que las mujeres, y el feminismo en particular, han enarbolado en sus luchas: androcentrismo, etnocentrismo y antropocentrismo, o sea el mundo concebido desde la centralidad de un ser humano varón, blanco, burgués, masculino y heterosexual (Busconi, 2017 p. 8).

On this path, agroecology is not only a sustainable model of production but also a socio-political expression of the ecological process. Agroecology incorporates ecological principles, based on the conservation and expansion of ecosystems and their original forms of reproduction, on the conservation of soil balance and its specificities with green fertilization and plant covering, on crop rotation and other biological practices, as well as on the diversification of species primarily native and/or adapted to the environment. In addition to ecological principles, cultural principles are incorporated from a dialogue of knowledge, environmental rationality, a new paradigm of association between technique and science, and collective management of natural resources in opposition to the destructive and exclusionary capitalist model (Santos *et al.*, 2004).

It is possible to achieve an ecological style of agriculture, which, as Primavesi (2008) points out, means managing natural resources while respecting the web of life and accounting for the diversity of each agroecosystem. This is done by the promotion of practices based on local characteristics, soil, climate, living beings, and the interrelations between these components aiming at a minimal disturbance of the environment. For this reason, the author stresses that agroecology relies heavily on the knowledge that each farmer has developed from her or his experiences, in a permanent construction based on the dialogue of indigenous and peasant peoples' knowledge, enabling a hybridization between sciences and techniques through interdisciplinarity and knowledge exchange (Santos *et al.*, 2004).

Agroecology aims to preserve local traditional knowledge for peasant autonomy and sovereignty. In terms of autonomy, it is up to agroecology to establish a dialogue with ecofeminism to question the systems of domination (Rosendo, 2016; Trevilla-Espinal *et al.*, 2021).

In this sense, Siliprandi (2009) highlights that ecofeminism, and particularly its constructivist strand, has allowed us to move beyond mere observations about divisions of labor and biased valuations of individual contributions within the conventional production model. The author indicates that this movement has enabled the examination of how the access to productive resources (including the natural environment) and symbolic goods associated with family farming is marked by unequal power relations between men and women in the countryside, such as the political role of men in land ownership, financial control, and production decisions.

Roces *et al.* (2014) emphasize that *La Via Campesina*, the international peasants' movement, recognizes the work and the historical responsibility of women, especially in attending to food needs, both in the domestic sphere and in their territories. In this sense, the authors identify the struggle for gender equity as a fundamental axis of agroecology and as a strategy to concretize food sovereignty. In June 2021, *La Via Campesina* (2021) released a publication entitled "The Path of Peasant and Popular Feminism in *Via Campesina*" to strengthen the movement's formation processes and build Peasant and Popular Feminism as a political instrument against oppression and violence. The publication takes up the achievements of women within the movement from a historical perspective and lays the foundations for Peasant and Popular Feminism to be collectively built, in a plural movement that respects diversity (Via Campesina, 2021).

Moreover, agroecology offers concrete foundations for the promotion of gender equality and equity, since it enables various ways of using space and time to accomplish a combination of productive and reproductive activities. Thus, through the establishment of links with constructivist ecofeminist epistemology, it is possible to empower transformative processes capable of breaking

with the sexual division of labor that segregates these activities and creates hierarchies between them. However, it is necessary to stress that in the construction of the agroecological movement, as well as in its practice, this equality is not given yet, constituting a horizon to be sought.

The consolidation of a feminist agenda in agroecology has been consolidating processes of political construction to change the lives of women farmers, both within their families and their territories. This becomes evident in the organizational processes in which these women participate. Women's contribution to the construction of agroecology—as a science, movement, and practice—is, in fact, visible in several dimensions: seeds (acting in the maintenance and/or recovery of varieties); production and processing (complying with sanitary principles and standards); commercialization (influencing the creation, implementation, and/or modification of public policies); and, finally, the production and construction of knowledge and research (Cardoso *et al.*, 2015).

In Brazil, in the course of women's struggle *in and for* agroecology, the III National Meeting of Agroecology may be considered a historical landmark in the country. In 2014, it (re)affirmed the slogan “Without feminism there is no agroecology!”, which was coined in other spaces of the agroecological movement such as the Women's Working Group of the National Agroecology Articulation (ANA) and the Brazilian Agroecology Congress. The Political Letter issued by ANA by the end of the conference states that:

The construction of agroecology is driven by an ethical vision of social and environmental justice that entails the sharing of domestic and care work and of production management, a life without violence, guided by respect and equality. This means ensuring women's right to full participation in the social and political life of their communities, as well as guaranteeing their access to land, water, seeds, and conditions of production and commercialization with autonomy and freedom. (...) The struggle of women, from

the feminist and agroecological perspective, strengthens their organization and the experiences that seek to promote integral health, based on healthy and diversified food, understanding the human being as part of the environment in which they live (Articulação Nacional de Agroecologia [ANA], 2014: 3, 15).

As highlighted by the Letter issued at the 17th Agroecology Conference (Jornada de Agroecologia, 2018), the intense participation of women in agroecology not only rebalances the historical and unequal sexual division of labor, but also introduces the need to rethink society from a place of caring and in opposition to the capital. In this sense, it means recognizing that there are other paths to an economy that is no longer dominated by profit and competition, but rather reigned by relationships that value life, solidarity, diversity, and popular organization.

Thus, there are similarities between the proposals of agroecology and ecofeminisms that offer ways of establishing dialogues for the defense of life. Herrero (2015) emphasizes that despite the distinct approaches, all ecofeminisms share the view that the subordination of women to men and the exploitation of nature respond to a common logic: that of domination and subjugation of life to the logic of accumulation.

Herrero (2015) underlines that in contrast to the conventional economic view, ecofeminism proposes an economy centered on the satisfaction of collective needs. It seeks new forms of socialization and social and economic organization that allow overcoming the current development model that prioritizes monetary benefits over life.

It is worth emphasizing that agroecology and ecofeminisms have the potential to reclaim the set of practices historically developed by women, as they provide alternatives for a dignified and inclusive life. In addition, both position themselves ethically and politically in favor of the dialogue between local-traditional knowledge and scientific knowledge based on interdisciplinarity,

in order to sustain life and promote social, environmental, and gender justice (Trevilla-Espinal, 2018).

In this context, Burg (2005) emphasizes that the construction of a sustainable development model based on agroecology requires, aside from changes in the technological base, a set of social and political changes in rural Latin America in order to promote equality between women and men in the access to productive resources, education, professional training, and leisure, as well as to ensure their citizenship.

WOMEN IN AGROECOLOGY: PROMOTING HEALTH AND WEAVING ECOSYSTEM RELATIONSHIPS

According to Farias (1996), rural women have always been part of the economic and political history of the agrarian sector. They have always worked in the fields, whether in large or small-scale production, accumulating long working days in which they did not recognize themselves as workers, only as helpers. The author affirms that although women have been recurrent figures in the plots of rural social movements and the struggle for land, they have not been registered as characters in these events, but only as anonymous participants or companions. Carriers of a speech whose sound was not heard as a voice of knowledge or power, but of duties prescribed by roles.

Women have historically been tasked and relegated strictly to the dimension of care (production and preparation of food, organization and cleaning, and health care). In agriculture, women produce a large part of what is consumed at households or at production units, and they are mostly responsible for guaranteeing and materializing food security on a daily basis. The historical resilience of these women has provided them with a wealth of knowledge about agroecosystems, as they play an important role as managers of biomass flow, biodiversity conservation, and plant domestica-

tion. They also demonstrate, in many regions of the world, significant knowledge about genetic resources, ensuring the basis for biodiversity (Pacheco, 2002).

Food security is primarily about access to and consumption of healthy food. This, in turn, is one of the dimensions of human dignity and a requirement to improve overall health. It is also an important part of health promotion, which aims to change the determinants of the health-disease process. To do so, a more harmonious and sustainable relationship with the environment is necessary (Pinheiro, 2005).

In practice, the production of agroecological food triggers different networks of meaning, such as integration with and dependence on space, giving new senses to the elements of nature. This production also values One Health and the expanded concept of health that encompasses well-being and well-living, realized through the awareness of the need of integration between society and nature (Giordani *et al.*, 2017). The coming together of agroecology and ecofeminisms is expressed by the ideals of human beings' primordial connection with nature—which nourishes human life—and their genuine position of dependence and care for the planet.

Therefore, it is imperative that we strengthen and expand the principles of agroecology as a strategic redesign for the transition of the food production model as opposed to the food industry system. The agroindustrial model violates the human right to health and to proper food and nutrition by perpetuating poverty, inequality, and the exclusion of family farmers (Triches *et al.*, 2014). Its unsustainability and contradictions derive from the organization of long supply chains, which in turn produce and distribute highly processed (ultra-processed) food products that contribute to the growing poor health of the population. Its environmental damage entails the loss of biodiversity, food, water, air, and soil contamination by toxic wastes, increased production of garbage and waste, and escalating environmental crises and water scarcity (Triches *et al.*, 2014).

The study of the history of capitalist development makes clear that the processes of inequality are inherent to capital transfer and accumulation. The agroecological movement, based on social justice (as the foundation that differentiates it from organic agriculture), fights for the resistance to liberal practices that weaken peoples' sovereignty. These liberal practices associate rights and possessions with laws of competition and financial fluctuations that are favorable to hegemonic economies, which hold and defend capital as a regulatory agent. In that way, capital goes from object to subject and determines the conditions and relationships in the ecosystems of dependent economies.

The widening of inequalities is inherent to the development of capitalism (Braudel, 1985; Polanyi, 2000; Strange, 2009). Braudel (1985) distinguishes the market economy that grounds materials' exchange values from the capitalist processes, that have a footing in the 16th century and are based on monetarization of exchange relations, the concentration of capital, and inequality of economic, legal, and weapon powers. The discourses of stability and long-term income distribution through the growth of capital are rhetorical, empty, and partial and are used to manipulate dependent economies and to legitimate strategies for the free flow and accumulation of capital by dominant groups (Harvey, 2005). Inequality is inherent to capitalist development, sometimes this is explicit in facts, evidence, and restrictive actions to capital, sometimes implicit and masked by fallacies that justify its liberalization and expansion (Arrighi, 2012).

With the misrepresentation of the concept of free market and self-regulation (the invisible hand proposed by Adam Smith), neoliberals expanded the freedom of capital and the ability of multinationals to act without restrictions (Strange, 2009). In this way, the processes of capital transfer and the imbalance of power in negotiations have become more prominent, perpetuating hegemonic power. The cycle of regularization and liberalization of capital varies according to the intensification of socioeconomic conflicts and the incentive to overcome financial crises. These alternate,

sometimes in moments of subjugation of rights and environmental protection, sometimes in measures of protection of minimum survival conditions and appeasement of conflicts of the working class.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

We support the central ecofeminist thesis concerning the persistent interconnections between the exploitation and domination of nature and the domination and subordination of women, both configured according to the logic of the patriarchal model and of capitalist expropriation and accumulation. This model results in environmental and social damage, negatively impacting human health.

We argue that both the agroecological and the ecofeminist approaches inspire other ways of living, being, and socializing. As such, they offer possible answers to the oppressive hegemonic models. These approaches envisage an integrated coexistence based on respect for society and nature, in which life is placed at the center of social organization and raise concrete foundations that open paths to the achievement of social and environmental justice and gender equality.

Nevertheless, both movements act as health promoters insofar as they present proposals for ecosystemic changes that would affect the health-disease processes, reducing the risk factors for several life stressors. Transforming the food production model from the perspective of food security, especially *for* and *by* women, means transforming social relations and our relationship with nature.

In this sense, it is necessary to move away from the illusion that capitalist development—empowered by the patriarchal system—is the only viable form of development. The ideals of agroecology and constructivist ecofeminism are powerful triggers for the just transformation of the way we engage with food, and they are capable of giving new meaning to ecosystem relationships.

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