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Social networks of agroecological innovation: the Brazilian case

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Abstract

Agroecology is a driving force behind numerous social experiences in Brazilian rural areas, making change an unquestionable option. However, the progress of agroecology is marked by difficulties that compromise its upscaling. Our paper presents a characterization and analysis of the institutionalization of agroecology in social networks. This process is characterized with political and social features. Therefore, we seek to understand the operating dynamics of Brazilian main networks, whose experiences can be strengthened by the "National Plan for Agroecology and Organic Production "(Planapo). Our approach combines participant observation, analysis of secondary data, interviews with leaders and attending meetings. Social experiences and interactions show that local innovation based on networks that articulate farming families in different transition stages are collective devices suitable for the creation of social environments. They are focused on mutual learning and dissemination of more harmonic forms of coexistence with nature. We conclude that the operating dynamics of agroecology networks is based on openness to civil society participation, on creating interfaces with a set of social institutions through collective action and on rural development projects.

Keywords: Agroecology, social networks, institutionalization.

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