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Agroecological Knowledge and Practices in Quindío, Colombia: Sustainable Alternatives to the Dominant Agri-Food Model

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This research analyzes three agroecological initiatives in the department of Quindío, Colombia, as sustainable alternatives to the dominant agroindustrial model. Grounded in the paradigm of Buen Vivir and the Epistemologies of the South, the study seeks to understand how local knowledge and traditional food practices shape alternative models of food production, distribution, and consumption. Using a qualitative, ethnographic methodology—including interviews, participant observation, and document analysis—the research examines the dynamics of the Network of Seed-Keeping Families, the Quindío Agroecological Market, and the culinary initiative Pan Rebelde. These experiences demonstrate that agroecology functions not only as an agricultural technique but as a sociopolitical practice that integrates environmental sustainability, food sovereignty, and cognitive justice. The findings show that these initiatives contribute to the revitalization of native seeds, promote the consumption of local foods, and strengthen community networks, generating more resilient territories in the face of global food crises. The study also identifies tensions with the agroindustrial model, such as limited infrastructure for local commercialization and structural dependence on food imports. It concludes that agroecological practices in Quindío offer viable pathways toward sustainable food systems, in dialogue with traditional worldviews and as strategies of resistance against agricultural extractivism. This work proposes the articulation of ancestral knowledge with technical expertise as a foundation for more equitable and contextspecific public policies.

Biography

Angie Natalia Bustos Lemus is a Colombian Social Worker from the University of Quindío, with a focus on community-based and territorial processes. She is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Cultural and Humanistic Studies at the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez Campus. Her thesis research focuses on alternative food models in Colombia, emphasizing agroecology, local knowledge, and food sovereignty. She has also conducted research on gastronomy as entertainment in Puerto Rico and on rural women's lives and agency in Colombia. She is an active member of the research group "Decolonial Science, Knowledge, and Learning" in the Department of Humanities, where she engages with critical, decolonial, and transdisciplinary perspectives.

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