
Driving Toward a Food Sovereignty in Rural Sri Lanka through Constructing Symbolic Capital

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Abstract

Food sovereignty refers to people's right to healthy and culturally appropriate food and their ability to define their own food systems. However, as an unexpected result of the green revolution and agricultural change in Sri Lanka, the peasants' right to food has been declined. Now some youth groups in Sri Lankan peasantries have started agricultural revitalization movements to reclaim their right to define their own food systems. Therefore, this research has focused on how potential job seekers in their young adulthood in Sri Lankan peasantries claim food sovereignty while strengthening the social capital. Using a constructing grounded theory, four case studies were conducted alongside in-depth interviews with seventeen participants, in addition to the empirical observations. The analysis indicates that despite the positive changes in the cognitive orientation among young adults on authentic food production that can enhance their capacity to claim the right to food sovereignty, sustenance of the revitalization movement is heavily reliant on their ability to ensure both bridging and bonding social capital, that is established through constructed symbolic capital facilitated by effective and appropriate use of social media platforms. The endeavour to build food sovereignty in rural communities in Sri Lanka is challenging because of the difficulty of creating a positive image of '*farmers*', an essential element of valuing food producers. In conclusion, this study has found that symbolic capital (constructed through engaging in social media platforms) has the potential to transform negatively conditioned thoughts on '*farming and food producers*' into positive thoughts, so that farming and food producers are socially honoured and reputed to move forward establishing food sovereignty in Sri Lankan peasantries.

Keywords: *Agricultural revitalization, Food sovereignty, Social capital, Symbolic capital, Youth involvement*

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