

# ***Pesticide use and the ideological legitimization of genetically modified agro-food production in Brazil***

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The genetically engineered agro-food regime in Brazil is closely tied to specific concepts of human beings and society as well as to an agricultural model that relies on a massive and increasing use of pesticides. The underlying societal logic is based on competition, the dominance and subordination of nature, and the increasing industrialization of the agricultural production structure. The consequences of this dominant logic are the growth of social inequality, the marginalization of many groups and individuals, and the destruction of nature and ecosystems.

The logic that underlies genetically modified production is based on the reduction of external influences on the nature of the production process, on the privatization of knowledge (regulated by patent rights that enable revenues) and on the increasing political control over labor. The consequence of this logic are a combination of intensified capitalist relations of production (by putting a monetary price on everything possible) and retrogressive working conditions, which contribute to neo-feudalist structures. It is this dominant ideology of the agribusiness, based on the combination of servitude and industrialization, that unifies the global alliance between large landowners and agribusiness corporations. In this context, science has been used as a tool of legitimization and for sustaining the euphoric propaganda in the interest of the agribusiness and large agrochemical corporations.

The increasing problems that emerge in the context of GMO production due to a lack of capacity to adapt to the environment is perceived as an opportunity to develop new technical solutions. In contrast, possible solutions that do not follow the logic of maximizing profits and privatizing knowledge have been stigmatized as being unscientific and unviable. As a consequence, genetic engineering has become a totalitarian technique, a technique that in its use and development aims to gain political control. Genetic engineering attempts to subordinate nature and humans to practical constraints in a form that inhibits autonomy in the production process and in the development of knowledge.

Genetic engineering destroys diversity, such as biodiversity and diversity of opinion. It means the dominance of technocracy over democracy, exploitation over freedom, and competition over solidarity. In consequence, it is a form of dehumanization that is propagated as progress. Our research project describes, analyzes, and problematizes the above mentioned mechanisms of dominance of GMO agro-food production in Brazil in the past twenty years. We will focus on contradictions in academic debates, the influence of agrarian cooperatives, the Brazilian media, and the work of consultants. This project draws methodologically on the philosophical and sociological approach of the Frankfurt school in analyzing dominant ideologies.