Alternautas, an academic peer-reviewed blog, is calling for contributions for a special issue on ‘Agribusiness, (Neo)Extractivism and Food Sovereignty: Latin America at a crossroads’.

In Latin America’s history, the agricultural sector has played a pivotal role. From the colonial global division of labour that assigned many Latin American colonies the role of agricultural producers, entrenching some of the most unequal patterns of land distribution in the world (Florescano 1997, Bulmer-Thomas 2003) to the current expansion of the Soybean republic in the Southern Cone of the region (Turzi 2011) and the constitutional or legal enshrinement of food sovereignty in Venezuela (1999), Ecuador (2008) and Bolivia (2009) (see McKay and Nehring 2014; Altieri and Toledo 2011), the role of the agricultural sector in the definition of the region’s developmental path - in collaboration or rejection of either the neoliberal industry or the postneoliberal state, respectively - cannot be underestimated.

In the past few decades, the tensions between large scale agricultural producers and international agribusiness holdings and those of the local communities, peasant and rural organisations have increased considerably, framed in what Svampa (2013) has termed the “eco-territorial turn” of social and peasant (including indigenous) struggles. More than ever, the agricultural fields of Latin America have become conceptual and direct battlefields, where ideological, economic, political and cultural interests clash (Wallerstein 1990). The expansion of the agroindustrial frontier fuelled by technological advances of genetically modified crops and large scale use of pesticides and fertilizers has accompanied the increasing focus on extractivism that has dominated the region’s recent economic and political path, further increasing the tensions around environmental issues and land use (Gudynas 2013, North and Grinspun 2016, Svampa and Viale 2014, Svampa 2015). It is the intricacy of these issues, across both topographic, semantic and political scales, which calls for pan-regional discussions aiming at unearthing the inherent and related mechanisms of such transformations. This special issue seeks therefore to explore the tensions, changes and conflicts arising from the expansion of agribusiness as the dominant model of accumulation and food production in the region.

Suggested (but not exclusive) axes of reflection that we expect to be discussed in the issue include:

- Modalities of practices and discourses of states on agricultural commodities and the export-oriented development model,
- Effects of the agribusiness technological package in terms of environmental, social and health related impacts and organization of local resistances,
- Conflicts arising from the advancement of the agribusiness frontier and the struggle for access to land,
- Tensions between food security and food sovereignty as either national projects (Clark 2016) or cosmopolitan social movement platforms beyond the state (Arce et al. 2015).

The call is open to contributions from different disciplinary approaches, from sociology, anthropology, political geography, law, history, economics or political science. Contributions are expected to be of a length between 1,500 and 3,500 words and should include two pictures of your choice, eligible for unlimited reproduction.

Please send your contributions before April 21st, 2017 to Ana Estefania Carballo at ana.carballo (at) unimelb.edu.au, Johannes Waldmueller at johannes.waldmuller (at) graduateinstitute.ch or María Eugenia Giraudo at M.E.Giraudo (at) warwick.ac.uk.

REFERENCES:
- Svampa, Maristella. 2015. 'The ‘Commodities Consensus’ and Valuation Languages in Latin America’ Alternautas, 2(1), 45---59.