Food sovereignty, as a critical alternative to the concept of food security, is broadly defined as the right of local peoples to control their own food systems, including markets, ecological resources, food cultures, and production modes. This article reviews the origins of the concept of food sovereignty and its theoretical and methodological development as an alternative approach to food security, building on a growing interdisciplinary literature on food sovereignty in the social and agroecological sciences. Specific elements of food sovereignty examined include food regimes, rights-based and citizenship approaches to food and food sovereignty, and the substantive concerns of advocates for this alternative paradigm, including a new trade regime, agrarian reform, a shift to agroecological production practices, attention to gender relations and equity, and the protection of intellectual and indigenous property rights. The article concludes with an evaluation of community-based perspectives and suggestions for future research on food sovereignty.
“Food sovereignty”, a term coined by members of Via Campesina in 1996, asserts that the people who produce, distribute, and consume food should control the mechanisms and policies of food production and distribution, rather than the corporations and market institutions they believe have come to dominate the global food system. It also encompasses the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. The phrase "culturally