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**CO-PRODUCING ORGANISMS, FOODS AND ACTORS IN CONTEMPORARY
AGRI-FOOD ASSEMBLAGES: CONTROVERSIES AND INSIGHTS FROM
THE SOY PRODUCTION CHAIN IN ARGENTINA**

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This paper examines how contemporary global agri-food arrangements are constituted through the sociotechnical articulation of organisms, foods and actors. Drawing on Science and Technology Studies (STS) and critical agri-food scholarship, the analysis proposes an integrated framework to understand how technologies, knowledge and material practices co-produce agri-food assemblages in the twenty-first century.

At the level of food products, the paper engages with classifications based on degrees of processing, distinguishing between processed and ultra-processed foods (Monteiro et al., 2010). Beyond nutritional attributes, ultra-processed foods operate through specific forms of consumption, expertise and everyday practices, giving rise to what Van Tulleken (2020) conceptualizes as “ultra-processed people” (UPP). These subjectivities emerge through sustained

interactions between products, bodies, infrastructures and intersecting regimes of technoscientific, nutritional and practical knowledge.

The analysis simultaneously considers genetically modified organisms (GMOs) as foundational components of contemporary commodity production, rather than treating them as purely technical inputs. The paper conceptualizes GMOs as “ultra-processed organisms” (UPO), emphasizing their entanglement in sociotechnical, regulatory and corporate practices. Through the interrelations between UPOs, ultra-processed foods (UPFs) and UPPs, the study highlights processes of co-production that stabilize particular agri-food assemblages while generating ongoing tensions and limiting alternative trajectories.

Empirically, the argument draws on the soy production chain in Argentina, illustrating how technoscientific expertise, standardization practices and commodity infrastructures shape territorial, technological and social configurations, socio-environmental effects, and the co-production of dietary practices among actors. By foregrounding controversies and unintended consequences, the paper contributes to debates on how contemporary agri-food assemblages are reconfigured through knowledge and technologies, and how these dynamics reproduce inequalities while opening limited spaces for alternative, more inclusive and sustainable arrangements.

Palavras-chave: sociotechnical assemblages; ultra-processed foods; co-production; soy production; argentina.