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The Biopolitics of the Food System and the Counter-
Conduct of Food Sovereignty“

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Abstract

This thesis examines the nature of power relations at work in the global food system and how such relations manifest in the conflict between contemporary globalized food security praxis and the tenets of food sovereignty. Methodologically, the analysis draws on Poststructuralist thought to examine the power dynamics discussed. Particularly relevant to such dynamics are Michel Foucault's discourse on power – especially biopolitical power – and Arturo Escobar's seminal contribution to Post-development theory that examines the discourses of development and the discursive formation of the Third World. To frame an understanding of Foucault and Poststructuralism as applied to Political Science, International Relations and Development Studies, Jenny Edkins' scholarship is equally useful, and thus equally informs this analysis. Employing Food Regime Theory, originally conceptualized by Philip McMichael and Harriet Friedmann (and elaborated upon by many other scholars), the discussion locates the development globalized food system and food security praxis in a historical, systemic and contextual framework. In doing so, it examines iterations of biopolitical power relations in each of the Food Regimes, considers how they shaped the development project and therefore food security praxis, and assesses the emergence of a third regime. Subsequently establishing food sovereignty as an alternative model for a radical recalibration of power relations – the thesis argues for a mode of counter-conduct within the biopolitical construct, a mode capable of subverting the power mechanisms of the dominant global food system. Proceeding to examine the FAO's 1996 Rome Declaration on Food Security as a primary source and example of the institutional ethos of food security, the analysis concludes by identifying the shortcomings of the prevailing model. Ultimately, this thesis posits that conventional global food security praxis is based on a model that devastates local agriculture and economy and thereby reduces the human relationship to food, concluding that authentic food security would be better supported by a food system that favours the principles of food sovereignty; such a goal, however, demands even the underdeveloped definitions of food security be reconceptualized and rewritten.

Abstract

Diese Arbeit untersucht die Natur der Machtverbindungen innerhalb des globalen Ernährungssystems und wie sich diese Verbindungen in dem Konflikt zwischen gegenwärtiger globalisierter Ernährungssicherungspraxis und der Lehre der Nahrungsmittelhoheit manifestiert. Methodologisch verwendet diese Analyse poststrukturalistische Ansätze um die Machtdynamiken zu untersuchen. Besonders relevant für solche Dynamiken sind Michel Foucault's Diskurs über Macht – besonders biopolitische Macht – und Arutor Escobar's bahnbrechender Beitrag zur Post-Entwicklungstheorie, welche den Diskurs über Entwicklung und die diskursive Formation der Dritten Welt untersucht. Um das Verständnis von Foucault und Poststrukturalismus wie er in Politikwissenschaften, Internationale Beziehungen und Studien zur Entwicklung verwendet wird zu umrahmen, ist Jenny Edkins Arbeiten ebenso nützlich und daher auch in dieser Analyse eingearbeitet. Unter der Verwendung der Ernährungsregime Theorie, ursprünglich von Philip McMichael und Harriet Friedmann konzipiert (und erweitert durch viele weitere Forscherinnen), lokalisiert diese Diskussion die Entwicklung von globalisierten Nahrungsmittelsystemen und Ernährungssicherungspraxis in einen historischen, systemischen und kontextuellen Rahmen. Auf diese Weise untersucht sie die Wiederholung von biopolitischer Machtverhältnisse in jedem der Ernährungsregime, überlegt wie sie die Entwicklung des Projekts geformt hat und daher auch die Ernährungssicherungspraxis, und bewertet die Entstehung eines dritten Regimes. Darauf folgt die Etablierung von Nahrungsmittelhoheit als ein Alternatives Modell für eine radikale Re-Kalibrierung von Machtverhältnissen – und argumentiert diese Arbeit für einen Modus von Gegenhandlung innerhalb des biopolitischen Konstrukt, ein Modus der befähigt ist, die Machtmechanismen des dominanten globalen Nahrungsmittelsystems zu untergraben. Anschließend wird die Rom Deklaration über Ernährungssicherheit der FAO aus dem Jahr 1996 untersucht, die eine Hauptquelle und Beispiel für einen institutionellen Ethos zu Ernährungssicherheit darstellt, und schließt mit der Analyse und Identifizierung der Mängel des vorherrschenden Modells. Letztlich postuliert diese Arbeit, dass die konventionelle globale Ernährungssicherungspraxis auf einem Modell basiert, das lokale Landwirtschaft und Wirtschaft vernichtet und somit die menschliche Beziehung zu Nahrungsmittel reduziert, und schließt daraus, dass authentische Ernährungssicherheit besser durch ein System gestützt wäre, das die Prinzipien der Nahrungsmittelhoheit favorisiert; dieses Ziel fordert allerdings die mangelnde Definition von Ernährungssicherheit zu re-konzeptualisieren und neu zu schreiben.

Unearthing Power Relations in Global Food: The Biopolitics of the Food System and the Counter-Conduct of Food Sovereignty

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1. Introduction

From food all creatures are produced... Beings are born from food, when born they live by food, and on being deceased they enter food.

- *Taitreya Upanishad*¹

The cultivation of food was the first great human innovation. Agriculture afforded humans the geographical permanence to foster civilization and, subsequently, every other human innovation. This innovation sets humanity apart as unique from all other beings (save perhaps some particularly industrious species of ant) and has facilitated humanity's prepotence on earth. It also establishes the cultivation of food as an intrinsic element of human heritage – agriculture is an essential part of what is innately human. As exemplified in the passage from the ancient Hindu text, *Taitreya Upanishad*, food and agriculture have immense cultural significance manifest in myriad examples throughout history and across the globe: as established in the sacred Mayan text *Popol Vuh*, Mesoamerican pre-Columbian civilizations believed humans to be made of maize, while in Hindu culture, the cow, milk and products made from the milk are of profound cultural and religious significance. Cultivation techniques, agrarian knowledge and even specific seeds have traditionally been passed down through generations within families, and agricultural communities and are often unique, cherished and closely linked with cultural identity. Humanity developed from the family farm, and today farmers still make up half of the world's working population.² However, modernity and the process of globalization threaten the very nature of this fundamental human endeavor. Local food systems are disappearing as transnational corporations establish monopolies on agricultural production. Exemplifying this phenomenon, since 1997 nearly 80,000 UK farmers abandoned their farming heritage after the country had already lost some 200,000 farms between

¹ Cited in Vandana Shiva. "Introduction, Terra Madre: A Celebration of Living Economies" in *Manifestos on the Future of Food and Seed*. Vandana Shiva, ed. (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2007) 7.

² Michael Pimbert, *Towards Food Sovereignty: Reclaiming Autonomous Food Systems*. (London: International Institute for Environmental Development, 2009): 8.

1966 and 1995, and today one-third of remaining farmers live below the poverty line.³ Similar statistics can be found for the US and the EU.⁴

With the disappearing local food systems, the concomitant aberration of the global food system is inevitable. There is a perverse manifestation of the rich-poor gap evident in emerging statistics: we live in a world of seven billion people, with roughly one billion suffering from malnutrition while another billion are obese.⁵ In one corner of the world, someone gets on a machine to burn off the surplus calories, while another elsewhere dies of starvation. Paradoxically, hunger and obesity are both representative of poorer populations. This glaring disparity is an indicator that there is something intrinsically wrong with the global food system. It is presumable that the current model for food security is fundamentally flawed to be failing so dramatically. Starvation is, however, anomalous in the modern industrialized world; as Jenny Edkins observes, “[f]amines seem anachronistic. They appear to belong to an era more primitive and less technologically advanced than our own.”⁶ Yet famine and hunger are proving aeonian antagonists and, with the food price crisis in 2008 as well as the catastrophic 2011 famine in the Horn of Africa, the faltering model is becoming even more obvious. Adding to such absurdity is the counterintuitive fact that agrarian communities in the Global South are those most susceptible to hunger; as Paarlberg confirms, “[p]aradoxically and perversely, a majority of all these poor and hungry people in the developing world are farmers or pastoralists—people engaged in producing food.”⁷

Food politics is arguably the most pressing social issue of our time, and with the erratic climatic phenomena brought on by global warming and a world population expected to balloon to 9

³Pimbert, 21.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵Per Pinstrup-Andersen & Derrill D Watson II. *Food Policy for Developing Countries: The Role of Government in Global, National, and Local Food Systems*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011, Kindle Edition).

⁶ Jenny Edkins. *Whose Hunger: Concept of Famine, Practices of Aid*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000) xv.

⁷Robert Paarlberg. *Food Politics: What Everyone Needs to Know*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010) 37.

billion by 2050,⁸ the status of global food is only becoming more precarious. World leaders have begun to recognize this problem and are responding with frantic, reactionary land-grabbing tactics around the globe, as import countries with the economic means scramble to secure alimentation for their populations. It is readily apparent that the current structure needs to be radically overhauled, and that a potential vehicle for this reform is food sovereignty. Broadly defined, food sovereignty is “the right of nations and peoples to control their own food systems, including their own markets, production modes, food cultures, and environments.”⁹ The concept of food sovereignty seems simple enough, yet the present-day globalized capitalist model of a neoliberal economy works against the principles of food sovereignty. Such antagonism between globalization and food sovereignty are not novel: during the Great Potato Famine more than a century ago, Ireland was exporting wheat¹⁰ while devastating hunger claimed roughly a million lives,¹¹ and during British colonial rule in India, famine claimed the lives of millions of Indians while countless tonnes of grain were exported to feed Britain.¹² Today an estimated 2.5 billion people depend on agriculture for their livelihood,¹³ which means more than one-third of the world population is directly affected by any system undermining their autonomy. The largest food sovereignty movement, La Vía Campesina, calls for food and agriculture to be excluded from trade agreements like the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in the

⁸ Joel E. Cohen. “Seven Billion,” *The New York Times*. (24 October 2011). Accessed 14 November 2011 <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/24/opinion/seven-billion.html>

⁹ Hannah Wittman, Annette Aurelie Demarais, and Nettie Wiebe, “The Origins & Potential of Food Sovereignty” in *Food Sovereignty: Reconnecting Food, Nature and Community* Wittman, Hannah, Annette Aurelie Demarais, and Nettie Wiebe, ed. (Halifax & Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2010) 3.

¹⁰ Daniel Bender, Rachael Ankeny, Warren Belasco, et al. “Eating in Class: Gastronomy, Taste, Nutrition and Teaching Food History,” *Radical History Review: Radical Foodways* 110 (2011) 207.

¹¹ Cormac Ó Gráda, “Ireland’s Great Famine” *EH.net Encyclopedia*. Accessed 20 December 2011. <http://eh.net/encyclopedia/article/ograda.famine>

¹² Raj Patel. *Stuffed and Starved: From Farm to Fork, the Hidden Battle for the Global Food System*. (London: Portobello Books Ltd, 2007.) 82.

¹³ Pimbert, 8.

interests of restituting national sovereignty over food production and the required agency for self-determination,¹⁴ but it is questionable whether this is truly a realistic and viable alternative.

It is not only trade policy that begs substantive reworking. If hunger relief policy fully adopted the principles of food sovereignty, it could ultimately render agencies like the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) obsolete. Current food security practice only fosters dependence, ultimately exacerbating rather than relieving hunger. The second paragraph of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's Rome Declaration, a product of the 1996 World Food Summit, states the convening nations' aspirations: "[w]e pledge our political will and our common and national commitment to achieving food security for all and to an ongoing effort to eradicate hunger in all countries, with an immediate view to reducing the number of undernourished people to half their present level no later than 2015."¹⁵ The failure of this pledge is obvious from the information presented here in the introduction: not only has the pledge made in The Rome Declaration failed to effect desirable change, the number of hungry, undernourished people has actually increased by roughly 200 million, or 25%.¹⁶ With 2015 only a few years away, there seems little chance the intended goal will be reached. The failure of such initiatives points to inherent problems in the global food system and a fundamentally flawed approach to food security.

¹⁴Peter Rossett. "Soberanía alimentaria: Reclamo mundial por movimiento campesino," Translated by Adrianna Latrónico and María Elena Martínez. *Institute for Food and Development Policy Backgrounder* 9 (2003) 4-5.

¹⁵ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *The Rome Declaration*. (Rome: FAO, 1996) Accessed 3 November 2011 <http://www.fao.org/docrep/003/w3613e/w3613e00.htm>

¹⁶Pinstrup-Andersen et al. Kindle ed.

Academic writing supposes a precarious fiction.¹⁷

- Naeem Inayatullah

I am of the opinion that an author is ever-present in her writing, regardless of the purported objectivity academic writing is meant to exemplify, and rather than feign objectivity – that which Naeem Inayatullah so aptly describes as “a precarious fiction” – for me it is key to position myself in my argument and examine what led me to this topic as well as consider the influences that have coloured my thinking. I believe that recognizing authorial subjectivity is important to both author and audience. I have arrived at this topic quite organically. I am from Canada, and am thus a first-hand witness to the large-scale agricultural practices characteristic of North America. In contrast, however, I have also witnessed counter-efforts – I come from a city with one of the oldest fair trade organic coffee roasters in North America, one of the first organic local produce delivery cooperatives in Canada, and my family has an organic hobby farm where we grow nearly all the vegetables we need for the year. Even before the farm, I cannot remember a time when we didn’t have a productive vegetable garden – even when we lived in apartment complexes, my mother found a patch of land by the parking spaces. Thanks to my mother’s other-worldly green thumb, I developed a connection with growing food, and today I grow heritage varieties of tomatoes and peppers in salvaged containers on the patio of my apartment – I like to think I inherited some of my mother’s deft aptitude for horticulture. It is my opinion that food choices are the most important one makes as a consumer, and I am also highly aware that just *having* food choices is a luxury of the affluent consumer that is not afforded to a great deal of the global population; thus, according to my personal ethos, I must respect this privilege of choice and choose responsibly.

I have been a vegetarian for twenty years, a change that began as something as simple as “I like animals, so I don’t want to eat them.” As I matured intellectually, however, my reasons became more complex, and are now political and ethical. My motives now, in brief, are predicated on the

¹⁷ Naeem Inayatullah, “Falling and Flying: an introduction,” in *Autobiographical International Relations*, Naeem Inayatulla, ed. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2011) 5.

level of resource consumption required to raising livestock, the environmental impact of industrial animal agriculture, and the abhorrent maltreatment of animals raised in factory farms. Almost one-third of the earth's land surface is dedicated to raising animals for food, and it counts for 18 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, 40 percent more than all transport emissions combined.¹⁸ For me the choice is obvious – vegetarianism can be seen as the largest single contribution to reducing one's environmental footprint. This said, I understand that there are concerted efforts being made by small-scale farmers to offer ethically produced meat, and I have profound respect for their resolve despite corporate pressure. Beyond vegetarianism, I try to make my food choices ethically by supporting local, whole, fair trade and organic food. At the same time, I am cognizant of the perceived problems with labeling schemes like “Fair Trade” and “Organic,” as they can be seen as the co-opting of ethics and ideas of justice under another iteration of the power dynamic enforced by the neoliberal hegemonic economic system.

My undergraduate academic training is in Latin American studies, a discipline in which a broad spectrum of food issues are particularly relevant. In fact, the first paper I wrote for my first class on Latin America my first year of university was about NAFTA and the Zapatista movement, and corn is at the very center of this conflict. In addition to my training in Latin American studies, I have spent a considerable amount of time living in México and Central America. One of my most enduring memories of Central America is spending ten hours on a bus and seeing virtually nothing but orchards producing palm oil for use in processed foods. I just remember thinking repeatedly: you can't feed a country on palm. In contrast, when I lived in a rancho in a tiny village in Costa Rica, almost everything we ate came off the land, and I witnessed an astounding and enviable degree of “micro” food sovereignty.

In 2011, the first year of my Master's degree in Global Studies, I was recruited by the United Nations Office at Vienna to intern in a disaster relief and management platform. I was thus a researcher at the UN when the Horn of Africa crisis struck, and I spent the bulk of my internship

¹⁸ FAO. “Livestock's Long Shadow: Environmental issues and Options.” (Rome: FAO, 2006) xxi.

researching famine and food security both in the current and acutely stricken East Africa, and in relation to a long-term case study examining chronic hunger and food shortages in Guatemala and Burkina Faso. My extensive and daily research inspired my original research question and sparked my specific interest in the United Nations food security agenda.

When I embarked on this project, my principle intention was to examine ways in which the tenets of food sovereignty could be institutionalized through the UN food security agenda – my original question aimed to consider whether food sovereignty can be institutionalized. However, as the project progressed and I became more conversant in the discourse and theories I was applying to my ideas, I found that it was not the most compelling question. One of the chief criticisms this project could face is that my position is overly idealistic about United Nations efficacy, putting unwarranted trust in its functionality, while giving short shrift to the bottom-up, grassroots nature of the food sovereignty movement and ideology. I did not envision the FAO or any other UN entity as the apex agent in recalibrating the global food system. I had first-hand experience inside the organization, however, and wondered about potential support for the struggle for food sovereignty. I thus determined that if change were to happen on a global scale, it would require pressure from many angles. Though well acquainted with the criticisms of the UN and well versed in its limitations and liabilities, I do not mean to say that it is powerless or obsolete. But the greatest power the UN commands is in my opinion that over public perception – a normative power – and I find it counter-productive that many development professionals dismiss the UN System by ignoring its latent agency. I understand that it will take bottom-up efforts in tandem with the top-down to progress, and that revising the UN food security agenda is only a particular element of what needs to be a larger effort to change the system. Examining the agenda and identifying in how it contradicts the principals of food sovereignty is the first step in this process.

I have always been very resistant to application of theory. In my undergraduate education in Canada, we were trained to use more of our native intelligence than to employ the theory of another scholar to draw our conclusions, and my mentor and supervisor in my bachelor's degree was a

particularly staunch opponent of leaning on theory. It was a rude awakening when I arrived from an interdisciplinary background with little foundation in theory to study international relations at European graduate school, and I was expected to apply the ontology and epistemology of other scholars to everything I thought and wrote. I was skeptical of the heuristic value of this practice and especially unconvinced of the predictive capacity of theories applied to international relations. In short, I do not believe that one theory could explain everything that happens in the world, and in fact, I find any attempt to do this restrictive and reductive. What I saw was something more complex. Then I started reading Poststructuralism, and it addressed all my above-outlined concerns. As Jenny Edkins suggests, Poststructuralist thought is less a theory than a worldview, or “even an antiworldview,” and

[s]cholars working within this worldview are skeptical of the possibility of overarching theoretical explanation for things that happen in the world. They prefer not to look for grand theories but rather to examine in detail how the world comes to be thought of in particular ways at specific historical junctures and to study how particular social practices – things people do – work in terms of the relations of power and the ways of thinking that such practices produce or support.¹⁹

And everything about this explanation rang true for me. I found the ideas I was encountering about power, subjectivity and discourse considerably more profound than the zero-sum reasoning about state interaction characteristic of many positivist international relations theories, or attempting to predict the outcome of a revolution by applying Game Theory. I had little patience for attempts to analyze international politics as if it were a hard science, and I found an alternative in Poststructuralist thought.

At the same time as I began to lose interest in my original question, I found myself engaged in Foucault’s discourse – in particular his thinking about power, and the more familiar I became with his late work on biopolitical power, the more it became the most compelling part of the project for me. I thus decided to shift the focus from policy analysis to examining the nature of the

¹⁹ Jenny Edkins. “Poststructuralism” in *International Relations Theory for the Twenty-First Century: An Introduction*, Martin Griffiths, ed. (New York: Routledge, 2007) 88.

mechanisms of power at play in the food system and the food sovereignty movement's potential to counter that power, though I will still employ the Rome Declaration as a primary source to examine the prevailing discourse around international food security. As I began to explore how Poststructuralism is applied in Political Science, Development Studies and International Relations, I found Jenny Edkins and Arturo Escobar to be the most resonant, and their contribution to the scholarship will also be referenced throughout my analysis.

1.2 *Research Question*

A conventional definition of food security is “access to nutritious, adequate, and safe food s that meet the preferences and social standards of the consumer.”²⁰ As stated above, the food security model currently relies heavily on the pillars of globalization that include neoliberal economics and trade agreements favouring more economically powerful countries. The above-cited definition of food security reinforces such power dynamics, and the system thus works against food sovereignty as Schanbacher confirms. “[F]ood security and food sovereignty models reveal fundamental antagonisms between the way hunger and malnutrition are conceived within these constructs” and therefore, he goes on, “the food security model is founded on and reinforces a model of globalization that reduces human relationships to their economic value.”²¹ I posit that authentic food security can be achieved more sustainably and ethically through food sovereignty; modes of analysis applying the concepts of biopolitical power and the discourses of development, I further propose, will elucidate how the current food system functions and the potential of food sovereignty. It is my hypothesis that a more just and authentic food security can be better supported through a food system that favours the principles of food sovereignty – but this aim demands that even the

²⁰Katherine Krusemark. “Food and Agriculture Security Along the Farm-to-Table Continuum,” in *Food and Agriculture Security: An Historical, Multidisciplinary Approach*. Ed. Justin Krastner, Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010. Kindle ed.

²¹ William D Schanbacher. *The Politics of Food: The Global Conflict between Food Security and Food Sovereignty*. (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010) ix.

underdeveloped definitions of food security need to be rewritten. To this end, I venture to examine the power dynamics of the contemporary food system compared to that of food sovereignty and examine the Rome Declaration to exemplify of the shortcomings of the discourse on development in general and food security specifically.

2. Methodology

2.1 Theory

This analysis is primarily concerned with the dynamics of power that created the reality of the food system and of food security practices and with forms of resistance to the prevailing power mechanisms. For this, I will draw upon notions that inform Poststructuralist thought. The first and most important is the Foucauldian conceptualization of power as biopolitical. In a series of lectures in at the *Collège de France* in the 1970s, Foucault introduced the concept of biopower as an alternative to sovereign power. In the context of governance, biopolitics refers to a form of governance employing the power to regulate life rather than remove it, as is characteristic of sovereign power; as Foucault puts it “the ancient right to *take* life and *let* live was replaced by a power to *foster* life or *disallow* it to the point of death.”²² The power to control rather than remove is characteristic of the predominant political mechanisms shaping the world today. Political hegemony, in other words, focuses on the biological life of a population, problematizing a given population’s collective life. Second, to better understand how and why the life of populations is controlled and shaped in a certain fashion, I will draw upon the Poststructuralist sense of Foucauldian discourse to explore rhetorical constructions of food security. In addition to Foucault, I will draw upon the iterations of international relations scholar, Jenny Edkins, to understand how Foucauldian and Poststructuralist theories can be applied to international politics. Third, I will employ the analysis of the discursive formation of the “Third World”²³ and critique of international development provided by Arturo Escobar in his seminal Postdevelopment text, *Encountering*

²² Michel Foucault. *The History of Sexuality*. Vol. 1, *An introduction*. Translated by Robert Hurley. (New York: Vintage Books, 1990. Original edition, New York: Random House, Inc., 1978). 138.

²³ “Third World” appears here in quotation marks as neither I nor Arturo Escobar subscribe to this conventional pejorative use of the term as it has contributed to the construction of the destructive rhetoric around development (Escobar, 1995). In reference to Escobar’s scholarship and commentary on its discursive construction, I will use “Third World,” but my own discourse will use the Global South to refer to less privileged states.

Development,²⁴ as food security practices fall under the institutions of development. Escobar argues that the “Third World” and the goal “development” under the prevailing economic system, are notions developed through discursive formation perpetrated by the wealthy and powerful states in the post-war period maintain and consolidate colonial power structures under a different guise. “Representations of Asia, Africa and Latin America as the Third World and underdeveloped are the heirs of an illustrious geneology of Western conceptions about those parts of the world,”²⁵ he writes, reminding us that “[a]ny model...whether local or universal is a construction of the world and not an indisputable, objective truth about it.”²⁶ There is a salient interplay between Foucauldian biopolitical power and Escobar’s analysis of the discursive formation of the development hierarchy which I am eager to explore in its application to this subject.

Lastly, with the objective of setting the stage for my analysis, I will also employ *Food Regime Theory*, for it will provide the historical, systematic, and contextual framework from which to launch my analysis. Food Regime Theory was first conceptualized by Harriet Friedman and Philip McMichael in 1989,²⁷ and dozens more scholars have contributed to the theory’s discourse in the two decades since its inception.²⁸ It provides a historical context from which to interpret the function of food and agriculture in the formation of the world capitalist economy (driven by biopolitical power), and borrows some of its theoretical framework and terminology from varied theoretical discourses such as Regime and World Systems theories, the Regulation School, and Marxism. According to Food Regime Theory, historical food system models are divided into regimes. The *First Regime* is characterized by British hegemony and colonial trade patterns, and the *Second Regime* is characterized by US hegemony and food aid. The first two regimes are relatively undisputed and definitive within the discourse; however, some scholars posit that we are now in a period of a *Third Regime* and have in response formulated various definitions of its

²⁴ Arturo Escobar. *Encountering Development*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).

²⁵ Escobar, 7.

²⁶ Escobar, 62.

²⁷ Harriet Friedmann, & Philip McMichael. “Agriculture and the state system: The rise and decline of national agricultures, 1870 to the present,” *Sociologia Ruralis*, 1989, XIX(2): 93-117.

²⁸ Scholars such as Bill Pritchard, Raj Patel, Annette Desmarais and Farshad Araghi, for instance.

incipient formation. The validity of the Third Regime is disputed, however, as scholars debate whether it is a fully-developed regime, a transition period or “simply a hangover from the previous regime.”²⁹ I will assess the existence of a third regime and elaborate further on Food Regime Theory in Chapter 4, in which I present a historical overview of the globalization of food regime.

The Poststructuralist thought I am drawing upon of Foucault, Edkins and Escobar meshes well with Food Regime Theory. Their fluctuations are temporally congruent, and they similarly find foundations in neoliberal and colonial power constructs which emerge with modernity – the First Regime appears as biopolitical power dynamics establish themselves.

2.2 *Methods*

As stated above, this analysis will focus primarily on power relations in the food system. Additionally, I will use the FAO’s Rome Declaration and Plan of Action (1996) as a primary source for my analysis, as international organizations are central in the forming the discourse of development and the Third World. After examining the dynamics of power and resistance at work in the food system – the conduct of the food regime and the counter-conduct of food sovereignty – I will analyze the agenda in an effort to expose established discourses and their antagonisms with food sovereignty. Ultimately, what I aim to illustrate is that the current food regime is only capable of short-term, myopic hunger relief responding specifically to emergency-level manifestations of the deep-seated problem of chronic hunger, and that it devastates local agriculture and economy, creates a dependency, and ultimately exacerbating global inequality. Furthermore, current prescriptive approaches to food security reiterate colonial power structures and form a discourse that subjugates the Global South and therefore robs many of an intrinsic part of human heritage. With this established, I will then examine an approach based on food sovereignty that empowers

²⁹ Philip McMichael. “A Food Regime Genealogy,” *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 36: 1, 142.

communities to secure their own food supplies sustainably, thus affording them autonomy and the power of self-determination.

Because of its scope and nature, this project will be largely based on analysis of the primary source, and critical assessment of relevant discourse. It will also be a largely theoretical research project rather than an empirical study.

3. The Biopolitics of the Food System

Power gave itself the function of administering life.³⁰

- Michel Foucault

The predominant nature of power in contemporary society is biopolitical. In his late scholarship³¹ Foucault identifies the emergence of biopolitical power as “an episode in the mutation of the technologies of power”³² synchronic with the emergence of economic liberalism. Jenny Edkins defines biopolitics as “a concern for the regulation and control of populations, which replaces a politically qualified life.”³³ As opposed to the previously dominant nature of power, sovereign power or the power to make die, biopolitical power presents a more complex, borderless, nuanced and amorphous power, which governs human conduct; Foucault elaborates,

What we are dealing with in this new technology of power is not exactly society (or at least not the social body, as defined by the jurists), nor is it the individual-as-body. It is a new body, a multiple body, a body with so many heads that, while they might not be infinite in number, cannot necessarily be counted. Biopolitics deals with the population, with the population as a political problem, as a problem that is at once scientific and political, as a biological problem and as power’s problem.³⁴

Through his scholarship, he Foucault characterizes biopolitical power as inevitably “conducting” human life, and theorizes about power relations rather than the abstractions of power and resistance. Yet Foucault acknowledges that power does not exist without resistance, as Edkins confirms, “[i]n the Foucauldian view, power is not separated from resistance but rather implies it: where there is no resistance, there would be nothing that could be called a power relation.”³⁵ So, according to biopolitical power, what could be characterized under other theoretical frameworks as resistance is under the biopolitical framework “counter-conduct.” Thus the nature of contemporary power exists entirely within the conduct/counter-conduct binary. Equally important to Foucault’s

³⁰ Foucault, *Sexuality*, 138.

³¹ This conceptualization spanned many volumes of Foucault’s work, including but not limited to *The History of Sexuality*; *Society Must be Defended*; *Security, Territory, Population*; and *The Birth of Biopolitics*.

³² Michel Foucault. *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-78*. Arnold I Davidson, ed. Graham Burchell, trans. New York: Picador, 2007.) 34.

³³ Edkins, *Whose Hunger*, 2.

³⁴ Michel Foucault. *Society Must be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76*. Arnold I. Davidson, ed. David Macey, trans. (New York: Picador, 2003) 245.

³⁵ Edkins, “Poststructuralism,” 92.

conceptualization are the apparatuses of security that are characteristic of modern societies and conduct of populations. He identifies security in contrast to the juridical authority of sovereign power. In *Security, Territory, Population*, Foucault uses the food system to explain how security works within the reality of fluctuations in price and abundance rather than trying to artificially constrain it,³⁶ stating “freedom is nothing else but the correlative deployment of apparatuses of security.”³⁷ The new biopolitical security is more pervading than its predecessor, judiciary power. Foucault describes previous forms of power as centripetal, existing within and held together by the borders of sovereignty, while biopower he describes as centrifugal and pulling away from sovereignty, having the capacity to permeate beyond borders.³⁸ This notion of centrifugal power correlates with the process of globalization identified as emerging along with biopower – globalization is a biopolitical process, and the food system is thus shaped by a power centrifugal in nature. Foucault evokes this characteristic centrifugality and points to its correlation with liberalism: “[t]he game of liberalism” he explains, entails “not interfering, allowing free movement, letting things follow their course; *laissez faire, passer et aller* – basically and fundamentally means acting so that reality develops, goes its way, and follows its own course according to the laws, principles and mechanisms of reality itself.”³⁹

Biopolitical power is also closely linked to Foucault’s disciplinary power.⁴⁰ It is one side of power over life or normative power: biopolitical power is the normative power over populations, while, in contrast, disciplinary power is the normative power over individuals. When Foucault theorizes about it in the *History of Sexuality, Volume 1*, he states that “power gave itself the function of administering life.”⁴¹ Essentially, biopower is concerned with conducting populations,

³⁶ Foucault, *Security*, 37

³⁷ Ibid, 48

³⁸ Ibid, 45.

³⁹ Ibid, 48

⁴⁰ As Foucault conceptualized in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, (1975) and further developed in his later scholarship including *Security, Territory, Population*.

⁴¹ Foucault, *Sexuality*, 138

so that a population's life can be optimized. Foucault elaborates on the interplay between optimizing life and the apparatuses of security:

In a word, security mechanisms have to be installed around the random element inherent in a population of living beings so as to optimize a state of life. Like disciplinary mechanisms, these mechanisms are designed to maximize and extract forces, but they work in very different ways. Unlike disciplines, they no longer train individuals by working at the level of the body itself. There is absolutely no question relating to an individual body, in the way that discipline does. It is therefore not a matter of taking the individual at the level of individuality but, on the contrary, of using overall mechanisms and acting in such a way as to achieve overall states of equilibration or regularity; it is, in a word, a matter of taking control of life and the biological processes of man-as-species and of ensuring that they are not disciplined, but regularized.⁴²

The technocratic “regularizing” mechanisms for administering life are present in everyday reality from standardized tests to inoculation campaigns to rubrics of caloric intake requirements. It is an apparatus of large-scale surveillance concerned with lessening the possibility of what Foucault called “aleatory events,”⁴³ or events outside the norm. Biopolitical power's administration of population is often undertaken at the expense of another population, a hegemonic phenomenon that applies also to the optimization of the privileged northern populations at the expense of the Global South – it is a complex system with myriad manifestations, many of which will be elaborated upon later in this analysis. Were Foucault alive today, he would witness a global biopolitics that he may not have been able to imagine when he devised this theory. The process of globalization has fomented biopolitical power relations no longer constrained to the same degree by the confines of the nation state. More frequently now, the power of transnational corporate interests is diffused through the apparatuses of government and conducts life in this manner. With the continuing consolidation of global populations, the expansion of the neoliberal economic system, and the gap between rich and poor ceaselessly widening, the nature of the populations administered under biopolitical power has become more amorphous. Foucault was certainly conscious of the dynamic nature of such power relations, as he writes, “a constant interplay between techniques of power and

⁴² Foucault, *Society*, 246-247.

⁴³ Foucault uses this term in, for instance, *Society Must be Defended* (2003).

their object gradually carves out in reality, as a field of reality, population and its specific phenomena.”⁴⁴ In this global arena of disparate power, the system reinforces and concentrates the power of wealthy, privileged populations, while oppression for the ever-growing populations of poor and disenfranchised is compounded. Philip McMichael expresses similar concerns and identifies the emergence of what he calls a “global consumer class,”

The [Global South’s] losing battle within the global North nevertheless conditions the construction of a ‘world agriculture.’ The combined dumping of subsidized food surpluses and growing agribusiness access to land, labor, and markets in the global South clears the way for corporate-driven food supply chains binding together a (selective) global consumer class.⁴⁵

Arturo Escobar’s echoes this assessment of disparate power in *Encountering Development*, and his treatment of power is Foucauldian as well. The interplay between biopolitical power and the power dynamics in Escobar’s development discourse is evident in the following quotation from *Encountering Development*:

The discussions held in academic circles or in the ambit of the nascent international organizations also had a new tone; they focused on topics such as the relationship between economic growth and population growth; between population, resources and output; between cultural factors and birth control. They also took on topics such as the demographic experience of the rich countries and its possible extrapolation to the poor ones; the factors affecting human fertility and mortality; population trends and the projections for the future; the conditions necessary for successful population control programs; and so on.⁴⁶

In describing the emergence of the development project, Escobar clearly addresses the same technocratic statistical management of population Foucault codifies. The discursive formation of the Third World, of development and of the war on poverty, and the demographic and statistical interstices Escobar identifies are all products of biopolitical power and are informed and shaped by global inequality. Given that discursive formation itself is a type of rhetorical normalization, the power of the privileged north over the Global South is rooted in discourses defined by a “nexus of

⁴⁴ Foucault, *Security*, 79.

⁴⁵ Philip McMichael. “Global Development and the Corporate Food Regime.” (*New Directions in Sociology and Development*. 11 (2005) 296-303.) 274.

⁴⁶ Escobar, 35.

power, knowledge, and domination”⁴⁷ The discursive interplay Escobar describes is of key importance to the analysis of the food system that is among its constructs. Essentially, what this section aims to examine is the how food regimes developed as apparatuses with which to conduct and control populations.

3.1 *Discourses and Dynamics: Food Regime Theory*

To elucidate power relations in the food system, it is necessary to understand the history of how modern humanity arrived at this model. This section will therefore provide historical context for the modern food system and explain the evolving mechanisms responsible for forming contemporary reality. It will draw on the conceptual framework offered by food regime theory in a chronology divided into food regimes, what Harriet Friedmann defines as the “rule-governed production and consumption of food on a world scale.”⁴⁸ It will additionally identify the prevailing discourses that shape and give voice to the dynamics of these regimes, though such an approach admittedly comes with the constraints McMichael confirms in noting that “this concept has a comparative macro-status, and in no way assumes that all food production and consumption conforms to this pattern.”⁴⁹ Food Regime Theory nevertheless offers a framework that identifies the historical formation of the predominant global system now in place – it is an overarching, macro-explanation of international mechanisms responsible for the development of current reality. Complementary to the Poststructuralist theory I am working with, the emergence of the First Regime is rooted in the same developments in the mechanisms of power as the emergence of biopower, while Escobar’s discourses of development and the discursive formation of the Third World come into play in a Second Regime driven by the same power mechanisms that

⁴⁷ Escobar, 31.

⁴⁸ Harriet Friedmann. “The Political Economy of Food: A Global Crisis,” *New Left Review*, 197, 30.

⁴⁹ Philip McMichael. “A Global Interpretation of the Rise of East Asian Food Import Complex.” *World Development*. 28 no. 3, 421.

problematized poverty and “brought into existence new discourses and practices that shaped the reality to which it referred.”⁵⁰

3.1.1 *The First Food Regime: British Hegemony and Industrialization*

Though today the United States is the predominant driving engine behind the globalization of the food system, many scholars maintain⁵¹ it is rooted in British Colonialism. Commencing in approximately 1870,⁵² the First Regime was shaped by colonialism and industrialization during the epoch of British hegemony. With Britain at the core and the Colonies as the subjugated periphery, “the workshop of the world” began to outsource agricultural production. As England embraced industrialization, workers migrated to the urban centers and abandoned their agrarian heritage. Britain’s prerogative was manufacturing, and the colonies conveniently made up for the gaps in an agricultural output required to sustain the ever-growing population of industrial workers. With the industrialization of the manufacturing sector, there came the first stages of the industrialization of agriculture that characterize the First Regime.

Two of the first most prolific products in this early system were tea, and its common counterpart, sugar. Sweetened tea with milk became a popular sustenance for workers and kept them more alert than its predecessor, beer. The trade paths thus became established from India and China for tea and from the Caribbean colonies for sugar. This outsourced farming in the Colonies gave rise to the large-scale monoculture that included the plantations that are among large-scale agriculture’s most objectionable results and were key to the food system’s early globalization. As the Industrial Revolution progressed, the economies of the Colonies were directed toward agriculture and the range of climates made it possible to import a variety of food products to fuel the growing working class population engaged in industry in Britain. Tropical foods came from the

⁵⁰ Escobar, 24.

⁵¹ Raj Patel, Harriet Friedman and Philip McMichael, for instance.

⁵² McMichael, “Genealogy,” 141.

southern Colonies (like tea, sugar and coffee) and temperate foods (like meat and grain) were supplied by the settler Colonies.⁵³ With this construct, the gap between countries in which food is produced and countries in which food is consumed appeared, and an “articulated dynamic” between industry and agriculture emerged.⁵⁴

Alongside the newly articulated dynamic, it is not difficult to identify the power mechanisms at work. The relevance of biopolitical power over a population in the colonial construct of the First Regime is evident. The life being fostered, regulated and optimized is the emerging class of industrial workers who are capable of bolstering the state’s economic force and, of course, the political and colonial power that go along with it. Biopolitical power maintains and shapes life of the working class, aiming to increase their numbers via the engineered food regime system of supply. Hence the risk of Foucault’s “aleatory events” – events outside the norm, like famine or civil unrest – are mitigated through technologies of power. But this pyrrhic benefit came at the cost of the subjugated colonies. Such a system utilizes cost effective food products to biologically sustain workers’ life based on a minimal caloric intake, fostering only life but undermining the possibility of self-determination. The detriment to working class autonomy may be most evident in the proliferation of tea with sugar, which is neither nutritious nor substantial, but energized workers with caffeine and sugar. Hence tea and sugar were increasingly imported by the ton during the Industrial Revolution.⁵⁵ It was a delicate balance for the ruling class to maintain a lower class nourished enough not to breed dissent while also keeping population growth in check. Raj Patel summarizes this Malthusian mindset about conducting the lives of the lower class while avoiding revolt tellingly, albeit crudely, as based in a logic by which “the poor were reduced to three basic organs: growling stomachs, clenched fists, and insatiable genitalia.”⁵⁶ These are cold demographics by which to measure a population.

⁵³ McMichael, “Geneology,” 144.

⁵⁴ Ibid. 141.

⁵⁵ Patel, *Stuffed*, 80.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 85.

The First Regime ended with the onset of the First World War, and the resulting transition period that ensued persisted unsurprisingly through the Great Depression until the end of the Second World War, when the Second Regime became established.

3.1.2 *The Second Food Regime: US Hegemony and Food Aid*

The subsequent landmark shift in the global food system came with the end of the Second World War. US hegemony, the process of decolonization and the Cold War defined the Second Food Regime. The end of World War II left Europe in ruins and marked the beginning of the development project and, along with it, one of the most dubious development initiatives, food aid. First, US surplus food stocks were sent to Europe to aid recovery as part of the Marshall Plan. As Europe recovered and the process of decolonization brought about a wave of newly formed nation states, Cold War tensions were escalating and food became a geo-political, ideological weapon for the US. US food surpluses were strategically distributed to emerging states in an informal imperialism with the goal to propagate the capitalist economic system, establish geo-political influence and ensure no communist ideology take root in precarious newly-independent states. As Escobar confirms in reference to development generally (and therefore hunger indirectly), “[t]he fear of communism became one of the most compelling arguments for development. It was commonly accepted in the early 1950s that if poor countries were not rescued from their poverty, they would succumb to communism.”⁵⁷ The fear of communism was central to the discursive construction of development discourse and the “Third World.” In fact, the term “Third World” itself is a relic of the Cold War reality, originally taking shape within a rhetorical triptych of the First, Second and Third World. The “First World” included the US and its allies, the “Second World” the Eastern Bloc and other Communist countries, and the “Third World” the predominantly newly-independent countries that remained non-aligned. It was in the interests of the feuding superpowers

⁵⁷ Escobar, 34.

to ensure that these burgeoning states remain unstable and dependant, and as Escobar elaborates, “[t]he system that generates conflict and instability and the system that generates underdevelopment are inextricably bound.”⁵⁸

Not unlike the First, the Second Regime reveals a similarly crude conceptualization of the needs of the working class needed to ensure their continuing subjugation: the pseudo-philanthropic distribution of food aid to bolster the geo-political power characteristic of the Cold War was based on a logic by which a hungry proletariat is a dangerous proletariat – when one feeds the worker, one diffuses dissent. Again, an iteration of biopolitical power presents itself in this deployment – life is shaped by a fostered dependence on food aid that in part constitutes the newly waged assault Escobar describes:

The war on poverty was justified...particularly in the urgency believed to be characterize the ‘population problem.’ Statements and positions regarding population began to proliferate. In many instances, a crude form of empiricism was followed, making Malthusian views and prescriptions inevitable, although economists and demographers made serious attempts to conceptualize the effect of demographic factors on development.⁵⁹

The World Wars also left behind a surplus of chemicals and chemical plants. In an effort to reallocate these resources, the plants and chemicals were used to manufacture chemical fertilizers for industrial agriculture, and so began the Green Revolution that substantially increased agricultural output (though in an unsustainable fashion). Along with the Green Revolution, the second technological advance characteristic of the Second Regime was advent of processed, “durable foods,”⁶⁰ and, in giving food stocks a longer shelf-life, these purported advances increased the accumulated surpluses to be distributed as food aid, thus reinforcing what some scholars have termed the global “development project.”⁶¹ This term is used to describe the politically driven, post-World War II efforts to foster expansion and codification of world capitalist markets in the

⁵⁸ Escobar, 34.

⁵⁹ Ibid 35

⁶⁰ McMichael, “Geneology,” 144.

⁶¹ “Development project” has been used in, for example, Philip McMichael. *Development and Social Change. A Global Perspective*. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 1996).

name of supposed growth and modernity by integrating “postcolonial states into an imperial field of power.”⁶² The development project played an integral role in the globalization of food.

There is similarly discernible biopolitics in the industrial developments of the Second Regime. Mass-production of food and standardization (regularization) of diets during the Second Regime reached a historically unprecedented level, and food aid was institutionalized and distributed to foster life in poor countries. These developments undermined both the affluent consumer in the privileged states and the poor of the newly independent states who received ideologically and politically loaded food aid by limiting their agency over their own diets. Echoing the logic of the First Regime, the apparatuses of security developed in this period are founded on mitigating the risk of “aleatory events,”

Scholars maintain that the Post-War Second Regime began to disintegrate in the mid-1970 with the food and fuel crises. At that time, the dubious nature of the putative “food aid” rubric came into question; essentially, the ethics behind flooding the Global South with surplus subsidized grain at lower than domestic market price was shown to ultimately exacerbate hunger and poverty, and what was once praised as “food aid” was revealed to be subsidized exports, and eventually labeled more aptly as “dumping.” As the Second Regime unraveled, with dumping established as dumping, “aid” came to mean resources allocated in an emergency and presumed to be a gift or, as Friedmann puts it, “[f]ood aid came to be understood more explicitly as either “humanitarian” or an extension of foreign policy.”⁶³ This shift in nomenclature as well as normative changes from implicit to explicit are characteristic of a waning regime and the flux of a transition period. In addition to the change in definition and perception of food aid, a new set of issues surfaced in connection with food and agriculture, including safety, technology, cultural tradition, biological

⁶² McMichael., “Geneology,” 145.

⁶³ Harriet Friedmann. “From Colonialism to Green Capitalism: Social Movements and the Emergence of Food Regimes.” *Research in Rural Sociology and Development*. 11 (2005) 245.

diversity, animal welfare, exploitation, pollution and resource consumption. At the forefront of this discussion, the overarching theme of the bulk of these emergent issues is the environment.⁶⁴

3.1.3 A Third Food Regime?

There is a vibrant debate among the prevalent scholars of food regime theory over the existence of a third regime, and, in the case of its existence, its characteristics. Scholars attempting to identify an incipient third regime have authored numerous theories, frameworks, conceptualizations, portents and forecasts. McMichael labels it a “corporate food regime,”⁶⁵ while Friedmann identifies an emergent “green capitalism,”⁶⁶ along similar lines, Burch and Lawrence posit there is “financialized food regime,”⁶⁷ while Pechlaner and Otero have formulated a regime characterized by biotechnology and neoliberal globalism.⁶⁸ Scholarly attempts at deciphering a new regime are vast, and though it may be easy to find some truth in each scholar’s formulation, in reviewing the discourse, I assert that the contemporary reality is a world that remains in a desultory transition period between regimes, but that what is emerging is most accurately outlined in McMichael’s corporate food regime, explained in his words:

The corporate food regime exemplifies, and underpins, these trends, through the determination of a world price for agricultural commodities strikingly divorced from cost. It is one thing to subject agriculture to the price form, but quite another, through political means, to artificially depress agricultural prices through a food regime of overproduction and dumping. While the postwar U.S.-centered food regime managed overproduction to serve targeted Third World markets, the world price of the corporate food regime is universalized through liberalization (currency devaluation, reduced farm supports, and corporatization of markets), rendering farmers everywhere vulnerable to dispossession as a precondition of the construction of a world agriculture.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Friedmann, “Green Capitalism,” 249.

⁶⁵ Philip McMichael. “Global Development and the Corporate Food Regime.” *New Directions in Sociology and Development*. 11, 269-303.

⁶⁶ Friedmann, “Green Capitalism.”

⁶⁷ D. Burch, & G Lawrence (eds.). *Supermarkets and Agri-food Supply Chains: Transformations in the Production and Consumption of Food*. (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Edgar, 2007).

⁶⁸ Gabriela Pechlaner & Gerardo Otero. “The Third Food Regime: Neoliberal Globalism and Agricultural Biotechnology in North America.” *Sociologia Ruralis*. 48, no. 4 (2008) 351-371.

⁶⁹ McMichael, “Corporate,” 270.

The corporate regime is driven by what McMichael, among other scholars, calls the global development project, another iteration of development's discursive construction. Similarly, he identifies a "world agriculture" emerging. It is characterized by the large-scale corporatization of food production, liberalization of agricultural trade and institutionalization of mechanisms which support this practice like the WTO. As a system based in capital accumulation, it breeds systemic overexploitation of resources while paradoxically displacing populations engaged in agriculture. McMichael explains that "new food circuits relentlessly displace small farmers into an expanding circuit of casual labor, flexibly employed when employed at all." Hence, he goes on, "a global labor reserve, and (displaced/released) cultures of provision, represent new opportunities for accumulation in a global project of 'development.'"⁷⁰ And he similarly echoes Escobar's concerns about the development project in relation to the corporate regime,

While the rhetoric of development frames the WTO Ministerial meetings since the Doha Ministerial in 2001, the practice of global development is filtered through the competitive relations among (unequal) states. And these competitive relations are increasingly governed by the corporate pursuit of 'comparative advantage' across the state system. The latter is decisive in constructing a world of agriculture, generating the new circuits of labor fueling 'global development.'⁷¹

In his reference to the competing relations among unequal states, McMichael also addresses an expression of biopolitical power explored earlier in this analysis. He points to the reality of privileged benefiting at the expense of subjugated populations and the exacerbation of the gap between rich and poor, which is carved out by biopolitical power relations.

The existence of myriad endeavors to identify a third regime present in the academic community is in itself indicative of the instability characteristic of a transition period. Though she proposes an emergent food regime, Friedmann maintains the world has yet to see a hegemonic system with implicit rules has yet to manifest.

⁷⁰ McMichael, "Corporate," 269.

⁷¹ Ibid.

While a functioning hegemonic food regime operates consistently and autonomously on a set of implicit rules, periods of hegemonic transition are unstable. As such, a crucial element of my argument is not only that food sovereignty would work toward redressing injustices in the food system, but also that now is the opportune time to enact change – it is considerably more difficult to undermine an operational regime than it is to establish a new one in a period of disorder. Moreover, food sovereignty has the capacity to bring to light the underlying power structures of an emerging corporate regime; as Madeline Fairbairn puts it “[b]y naming the assumptions and politicizing the power structure behind the corporate food regime, food sovereignty advocates poke holes in the naturalizing narrative and threaten the regime’s chances of successful consolidation.”⁷² Here Foucauldian normative power can be identified in what Fairbairn calls “naturalizing narrative” and counter-conduct functions in the subversive act of exposing and politicizing the regime’s mechanics. The world is poised at a critical juncture from which a regime is fated to emerge; few would argue that times of chaos offer opportunity lost in times of stability, and the nascent regime need not be atavistic; as Friedman suggests, “[t]he unfolding of another hierarchical regime based on accumulation of capital may not be the only, necessary, or even stable future.”⁷³ It is certain that the emerging regime is a vehicle of gross inequality and dispossession. Some unsettling statistics about obesity and malnourishment were cited in the introduction. The next section will delve deeper into grim manifestations of injustices within the food system.

⁷² Madeline Fairbairn. “Framing Resistance: International Food Regimes & the Roots of Food Sovereignty” in *Food Sovereignty: Reconnecting Food, Nature and Community* Wittman, Hannah, Annette Aurelie Demarais, and Nettie Wiebe, ed. Halifax & Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2010) 28.

⁷³ Friedmann, “Green Capitalism,” 259.

3.2 *Dehumanizing Populations*

How agonized we are about how people die.
How untroubled we are about how they live.⁷⁴

The nature of how biopolitical power manifests in the dominant food system is dehumanizing. Driven by corporate interests and the free market, populations are regulated and optimized via technocratic statistics, and there is a cold, calculated demography at play. Such dehumanizing capacity manifests on many of levels and in many ways in the contemporary reality and throughout the historical development of food regimes. In examples from the First and Second Regimes, pragmatic reduction of the working class to the sum of their biological functions (mouths, fists and genitalia) is profoundly dehumanizing. There is no doubt the global food system undermines the cultural significance of food and “distances eaters from the people who produce food and from the places where food is produced – literally and conceptually.”⁷⁵ The discourses formulated around the “Third World” described by Escobar echo this same dehumanizing capacity, as is evident in the following passage in which he describes the depiction of hunger:

To be blunt, one could say that the body of the malnourished – the starving “African” portrayed on so many covers of Western magazines, or the lethargic South American child to be “adopted” for \$16 a month portrayed in the advertisement of the same magazine – is the most striking symbol of the power the First World has over the Third...After all, what we are talking about when we refer to hunger of population is people, human life itself; but all it becomes, for Western science and media, helpless and formless (dark) masses, items to be counted and measured by demographers and nutritionists, or systems with feedback mechanisms in the model of the body espoused by physiologists and biochemists.⁷⁶

Escobar laments glaringly evident biopolitical power manifestations at work in this passage in his use of “items to be counted and measured” and “feedback mechanisms in the model of the body,” and in his reference to “demographers and nutritionists” and “physiologist and biochemists.” This is a particularly apt description of the mechanisms and reasoning of biopolitical power.

⁷⁴ P. Sainath. “The Unbearable Lightness of Seeing,” *The Hindu*, (5 February 2005). Accessed 15 November 2011. <http://www.hindu.com/2005/02/05/stories/2005020500611000.htm>

⁷⁵ Wittman, et al, *Origins*, 5.

⁷⁶ Escobar, 103-104.

The transnational corporate appropriation of local food systems undermines the basic human rights of the people engaged in agriculture. Therefore, similarly, food security practices are inherently dehumanizing; as Schanbacher goes on to confirm,

Food sovereignty contends that food security denigrates the cultural importance of food by considering food simply on the level of the caloric intake needed for human survival. Instead, according to food sovereignty, food represents a cultural commodity that much of the world regards in terms of its nutritive value, taste, and tradition; namely, a fundamental element of farmer and community livelihoods.⁷⁷

From the disappearance of the family farm and breakdown of community ties to undocumented workers in abhorrent conditions in the massive slaughter houses typical of factory farming, to rural Indian farmers selling their kidneys to feed their families,⁷⁸ examples of dehumanization symptomatic of the global food system are plentiful and inescapable.

Perhaps Foucault's most disquieting discourse is on suicide. The historical shift to biopolitical power imbued suicide with a new role as a social act; he writes:

It is not surprising that suicide – once a crime, since it was a way to usurp the power of death which the sovereign alone, whether the one here below or the Lord above, had the right to exercise – became, in the course of the nineteenth century, one of the first conducts to enter into the sphere of sociological analysis; it testified to the individual and private right to die, at the borders and in the interstices of power that was exercised over life. This determination to die, strange and yet so persistent and constant in its manifestations, and consequently so difficult to explain as being due to particular circumstances or individual accidents, was one of the first astonishments of a society in which political power had assigned itself the task of administering life.⁷⁹

For Foucault, suicide is the ultimate act of counter-conduct.⁸⁰ The current reality of the food system produces many morbid (and profoundly biopolitical) statistics. The most unsettling expression biopolitical power I have encountered in this research is the statistical data on farmer suicide from various countries worldwide. It is, in fact, what first sparked the intellectual connection I made between the food system and biopolitical power. I encountered statistics on

⁷⁷ Schanbacher, xiv.

⁷⁸ Patel, *Stuffed*, 25.

⁷⁹ Foucault, *Sexuality*, 138-139.

⁸⁰ Arnold I Davidson. "Introduction" in *Security, Territory, Population*. Michel Foucault (New York: Picador, 2007) xxxi.

suicide rates among agricultural workers shortly after I had read the final chapter of *The History of Sexuality*. Farmers from India to China have ingested the pesticides that failed their crops in poignant protest. In rural Sri Lanka, where the population is predominantly engaged in agriculture, pesticide ingestion is the number one cause of death. More than half of Chinese suicides are the result of the same, and in rural China, the suicide rate is three times that of urban areas. In a publication from 2007, 150,000 farmer suicides in India were cited.⁸¹ These statistics are not endemic to the Global South – in the UK, farming is the profession with the highest suicide rate.⁸²

The case most closely linked to the Foucauldian counter-conduct of suicide is that of Lee Kyung Hae, South Korean farmer and peasant organizer who was honoured by his country and by the United Nations for his efforts in agriculture and in organizing the agricultural community. He lost his cattle farm after South Korea lifted restrictions on the import of beef by adopting the General Agreement on Trades and Tariffs (GATT) in 1992. The GATT was the precursor for the WTO. On September 10th, 2003, Lee was in Cancun, Mexico where the negotiators of the WTO met. Amongst and before WTO protestors from around the world, the 56-year-old farmer leader climbed a barricade with a sign that said “WTO Kills Farmers” and drove a knife into his chest.⁸³ In Lee’s sacrifice he exercised “individual and private right to die”⁸⁴ in public protest against “power that was exercised over life.”⁸⁵ In a statement he distributed before taking his life in Cancun, Lee straightforwardly cautions,

My warning goes out to all citizens that human beings are in an endangered situation. That uncontrolled multinational corporations and a small number of big WTO members are leading an undesirable globalization that is inhumane, environmentally degrading, farmer-killing, and undemocratic. Otherwise the false logic of neoliberalism will wipe out the diversity of global agriculture and be disastrous to all human beings.⁸⁶

⁸¹ Vandana Shiva. “Introduction, Terra Madre: A Celebration of Living Economies” in *Manifestos on the Future of Food and Seed*. Vandana Shiva, ed. (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2007.) 5.

⁸² Patel, *Stuffed*, 25-26.

⁸³ Peter Rossett. *Food is Different*. (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2006.) 5-6.

⁸⁴ Foucault, *Sexuality*, 139.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Lee Kyung Hae, “Speak the Truth: Exclude Agriculture from the WTO,” in Peter Rossett. *Food is Different*. (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2006.) xiv.

The grim body count outlined in this section is an expression of biopolitical power at play in the food system, as well as an indicator of the gravity of the situation facing agrarian communities. I am hopeful, however, that a less extreme form of counter-conduct, that of food sovereignty, has the capacity to foster justice and equality in the food system. The transnational corporate appropriation of local food systems undermines the basic human rights of the people engaged in agriculture. Democratizing the food system and a return to recognizing cultural importance, indigenous knowledge and agrarian heritage proposed by the food sovereignty has the potential to foster a more humane system, to “re-humanize” food, if you will.

4. The Counter-Conduct of Food Sovereignty

Whether we can unmake development and bid farewell to the Third World will... depend on the social invention of new narratives, new ways of thinking.⁸⁷

- Arturo Escobar

The preceding chapters describe a global food system – its stages of development and current state of turmoil – which in most instances disenfranchises and dehumanizes. Both consumers and producers are thus subject to a glaring inequity and injustice that begs an alternative Escobar describes as “the social invention of new narratives, new ways of thinking.”⁸⁸ The potential for such inventive rethinking, I posit, can be found in the food sovereignty movement. It is telling that La Vía Campesina may be the largest social movement in the world,⁸⁹ representing approximately 200 million people from 150 organizations in 70 countries, all of which are concerned with fostering food sovereignty and the long-term sustainability of the food system:⁹⁰ This peasants’ movement is thus the central body and the engine of grassroots food sovereignty. Because biopolitical counter-conduct flourishes in spaces where it can contest hegemonic power, I posit food sovereignty provides such a space as a social movement and as a vehicle for change. Prominent food sovereignty scholars Hannah Wittman, Annette Aurelie Demarais, and Nettie Wiebe echo such assertions, proposing that “[t]he theory and practice of food sovereignty has the potential to foster dramatic and widespread change in agricultural, political, and social systems related to food by posing a radical challenge to the agro-industry model of food production.”⁹¹ In contrast to the dehumanizing biopolitical power relations of the emerging corporate regime (as well as all preceding regimes), food sovereignty is based in community, culture, equality and person-to-person connections. It requires a reinvigoration of the values that have fallen victim to the neoliberal reality responsible for modernity’s large-scale poverty: indeed, community, citizenship and

⁸⁷ Escobar, 20.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Patel, 16.

⁹⁰ La Vía Campesina, “International Peasants Voice.” <http://viacampesina.org/en/index.php/organisation-mainmenu-44> (Accessed 2 November 2013).

⁹¹ Wittman, et al., *Origins*, 4.

solidarity have proven pivotal in solving other problems faced by poor and underserved populations. Escobar elaborates on the capacity of traditional community support systems which have broken down in the face of neoliberalization, writing that

Within Asian, African and Native American societies – as well as throughout most or European history – vernacular societies had developed ways of defining and treating poverty that accommodated visions of community, frugality, and sufficiency. Whatever these traditional ways may have been, and without idealizing them, it is true that massive poverty in the modern sense appeared only when the market economy broke down community ties and deprived millions of people from access to land, water, and other resources. With the consolidation of capitalism, systemic pauperization became inevitable.⁹²

What the food sovereignty movement proposes are changes with the potential to reform much more than the food system. Its rhetoric is one of empowerment, not victimization; of cooperation, not individualism; of justice, not avarice.

Emerging around 1996, the food sovereignty movement responded to trade's accelerating liberalization through agreements such as the GATT/WTO and NAFTA, which threatened national food systems, agrarian livelihoods, and the environment. During the 1996 World Summit on Food in Rome, at the same time as the Rome Declaration was being drafted by member states in the FAO, La Vía Campesina released one of the organization's first calls for food sovereignty, stating that "[f]ood sovereignty is the right of each nation to maintain and develop its capacity to produce its basic foods respecting cultural and productive diversity...each nation should declare that access to food is a constitutional right and guarantee the development of the primary sector to ensure the concrete realization of this fundamental right."⁹³ The document released presents food as a human right, calls for agrarian reform, protection of natural resources, reorganization of food trade, an end to control by corporations and multilateral organizations like the WTO, IMF and World Bank, and identifies social peace and democratic control as necessary to achieving food sovereignty. There is particular focus on democratization of the UN System, including the FAO as La Vía Campesina had

⁹² Escobar, 22.

⁹³ La Vía Campesina. "The Right to Produce and Access to Land, Food Sovereignty: a Future without Hunger," in *Food Sovereignty: Reconnecting Food, Nature and Community* Wittman, Hannah, Annette Aurelie Demarais, and Nettie Wiebe, ed. (Halifax & Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2010) 197.

been excluded from the World Food Summit of 1996.⁹⁴ As is evident from the discourse emerging in the 1996 document, central to the call for food sovereignty is the human right to self-determination and a concomitant respect for the environment; as Schanbacher confirms,

At its core, the food sovereignty movement fights for the human right to food and the right of peoples, countries, and states to define their agricultural and food policies. Alongside control over how food is produced, distributed, and consumed, the idea of sovereignty ultimately centers on local, state, and regional control over natural resources such as land and water.⁹⁵

However, the demands of this inceptive document are lofty and unfocused, and even its definition of food sovereignty reiterates the antagonism inherent in food security by identifying problems in the malfunctioning food system without setting many concrete and achievable goals apart from the movement's primordial demand: excluding agriculture from free trade agreements.

In contrast, in Doha in 2001, La Vía Campesina released a demand for food sovereignty indicative of a matured and crystallizing movement and offering a telling depiction of the organization's discursive development. In the long shadow of WTO negotiations, The Fourth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, La Vía Campesina presented a call for food sovereignty in a document entitled *Our World is not for Sale: Priority to Peoples' Food Sovereignty* and positing a revised and expanded explanation of food sovereignty:

In order to guarantee the independence and food sovereignty of all of the world's peoples, it is essential that food be produced through diversified, farmer-based production systems. Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to define their own agriculture and food policies, to protect and regulate domestic agricultural production and trade in order to achieve sustainable development objectives, to determine the extent to which they want to be self-reliant, and to restrict the dumping of products in their markets. Food sovereignty does not negate trade, but rather, it promotes the formulation of trade policies and practices that serve the rights of peoples to safe, healthy and ecologically sustainable production.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ La Vía Campesina. "The Right" 197-199.

⁹⁵ Schanbacher, xiv.

⁹⁶ La Vía Campesina. "Our World is not for Sale: Priority to Peoples Food Sovereignty," in *Food Sovereignty: Reconnecting Food, Nature and Community* Wittman, Hannah, Annette Aurelie Demarais, and Nettie Wiebe, ed. (Halifax & Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2010) 200.

It is immediately evident that above call for food sovereignty is more comprehensively and realistically developed the first call from 1996. Succeeding the preamble above, La Vía Campesina goes on to cite itemized and well-defined goals under six categories:

I. Market Policies

- Ensure adequate remunerative prices for all farmers and fishers;
- Exercise the rights to protect domestic markets from imports at low prices;
- Regulate production on the internal market in order to avoid the creation of surpluses;
- Abolish all direct and indirect export supports; and,
- Phase out domestic production subsidies that promote unsustainable agriculture, inequitable land tenure patterns and destructive fishing practices; and support integrated agrarian reform programmes, including sustainable farming and fishing practices.

II. Food Safety, Quality and the Environment

- Adequately control the spread of diseases and pests while at the same time ensuring food safety;
- Protect fish resources from both land-based and sea-based threats, such as pollution from dumping, coastal and off-shore mining, degradation of river mouths and estuaries and harmful industrial aquaculture practices that use antibiotics and hormones;
- Ban the use of dangerous technologies, such as food irradiation, which lower the nutritional value of food and create toxins in food;
- Establish food quality criteria appropriate to the preferences and needs of the people;
- Establish national mechanisms for quality control of all food products so that they comply with high environmental, social and health quality standards; and,
- Ensure that all food inspection functions are performed by appropriate and independent government bodies, and not by private corporations or contractors;

III. Access to Productive Resources

- Recognise and enforce communities' legal and customary rights to make decisions concerning their local, traditional resources, even where no legal rights have previously been allocated;
- Ensure equitable access to land, seeds, water, credit and other productive resources;
- Grant the communities that depend on aquatic resources common property rights, and reject systems that attempt to privatise these public resources;
- Prohibit all forms of patenting of life or any of its components, and the appropriation of knowledge associated with food and agriculture through intellectual property rights regimes and

- Protect farmers', indigenous peoples' and local community rights over plant genetic resources and associated knowledge – including farmers' rights to exchange and reproduce seeds.

IV. Production-Consumption

- Develop local food economies based on local production and processing, and the development of local food outlets.

V. Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)

- Ban the production of, and trade in genetically modified (GM) seeds, foods, animal feeds and related products;
- Ban genetically modified foods to be used as food aid;
- Expose and actively oppose the various methods (direct and indirect) by which agribusiness corporations such as Monsanto, Syngenta, Aventis/Bayer and DuPont are bringing GM crop varieties into agricultural systems and environments; and,
- Encourage and promote alternative agriculture and organic farming, based on indigenous knowledge and sustainable agriculture practices.

VI. Transparency of Information and Corporate Accountability

- Provide clear and accurate labelling of food and feed-stuff products based on consumers' and farmers' rights to access to information about content and origins;
- Establish binding regulations on all companies to ensure transparency, accountability and respect for human rights and environmental standards;
- Establish anti-trust laws to prevent the development of industrial monopolies in the food, fisheries and agricultural sectors; and,
- Hold corporate entities and their directors legally liable for corporate breaches of environmental and social laws, and of national and international laws and agreements.⁹⁷

While the first document from Rome in 1996 suggests a vague, ideological wish list, 2001's Doha release resembles a directed, comprehensive strategic plan. Such a marked difference in a mere five years indicates considerable progress in the formation of a discourse for a decentralized social movement. These new and pointed demands articulate succinct modes of counter-conduct by subverting the dominant normative conduct of populations, making its resistance known in clauses such as “[r]ecognise and enforce communities' legal and customary rights to make decisions concerning their local, traditional resources, even where no legal rights have previously been allocated,” “[p]rohibit all forms of patenting of life or any of its components, and the appropriation

⁹⁷ La Vía Campesina , Priority, 200-202.

of knowledge associated with food and agriculture through intellectual property rights regimes,” and “[e]ncourage and promote alternative agriculture and organic farming, based on indigenous knowledge and sustainable agriculture practices.”

However, as several scholars have pointed out and as has already been explored to some extent in the second chapter, there are conflicts of concern within food sovereignty. The first uneasy point of contact lies between the model of food security and that of food sovereignty – several scholars have examined the discursive construct of food security from its inception in the development project and maintain that it has an established meaning antithetical to food sovereignty;⁹⁸ as Schanbacher confirms, “food security and food sovereignty models reveal fundamental antagonisms between the way hunger and malnutrition are conceived within these constructs. Ultimately, the food security model is founded on and reinforces a model of globalization that reduces human relationships to their economic value.”⁹⁹ Food security is rooted in a model that emerged in the Second Regime – the post-war reconstruction of Europe and the subsequent inception of the development project. It is based in the practice of the US dumping its agricultural surpluses in the Global South and thereby creating a dependency on this putative “food aid.” When this model crumbled under the weight of the 1972-73 food crisis, it left behind enduring rifts in a food system that had become dependent on the aid model. Attesting to the discursive resonance of the Second Regime, Fairburn notes that “[t]hrough the post-war food regime came to a sudden halt with the world food crisis in 1972-73, the language and concepts that characterized the regime would continue to influence the framing of food-related issues for several years to come.”¹⁰⁰ In 1981, the faults of this model began to become apparent when Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen published the pivotal text *Poverty and Famines*,¹⁰¹ in which he determines “national-level food

⁹⁸ This has been examined to vary degrees by Schanbacher in *The Politics of Food: The Global Conflict between Food Security and Food Sovereignty* and Madeline Fairbairn in “Framing Resistance: International Food Regimes & the Roots of Food Sovereignty.”

⁹⁹ Schanbacher, ix.

¹⁰⁰ Fairbairn, 21.

¹⁰¹ Amartya Sen. *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981).

availability does not necessarily translate to house-hold level food *access*.”¹⁰² From Sen’s work emerged the revised discussions of “food entitlement” and the concept of “household food security.” Even under these more particular examinations, however, became clear that there was disparate distribution of food within the household, with men being the most food secure and women and children more vulnerable to hunger.¹⁰³ Given that men conventionally men work to accumulate capital for a family, such a discrepancy is a manifestation of how biopolitics works to optimize population productivity through normative power, by optimizing and prioritizing male productivity. Regardless of how much the discourse may have changed, ultimately all of these iterations of food security maintain a top-down mode of implementation that imposes something on a population. Food sovereignty, however, is intrinsically bottom-up by being generated from a population. Fairbairn points to this problem as she goes on to criticize the role of the FAO in the discursive formation of food security, stating “food security was conceptualized in the corridors of global power; thus while it attempts to remedy a faulty system, it does so without questioning the dominant political-economic system.”¹⁰⁴ The term food sovereignty was “specifically intended as foil to prevailing notions of food security, which almost studiously avoided discussing the social control of the food system,”¹⁰⁵ and the following chapter will analyze the Rome Declaration in which is a salient hangover from this outlined construct of food security is made manifest.

The second antagonism exists within food sovereignty itself, making itself known throughout the above-cited demand of the movement. First, it is internally conflict in deploying the language of “food security” in a discourse that, as established above, necessarily stands in opposition to food sovereignty. As the 1996 call for food sovereignty indicates, “food security

¹⁰² Fairbairn, 24.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 24.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 22.

¹⁰⁵ Patel, Raj. “What does Food Sovereignty Look Like?” in *Food Sovereignty: Reconnecting Food, Nature and Community* Wittman, Hannah, Annette Aurelie Demarais, and Nettie Wiebe, ed. (Halifax & Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2010) 189.

cannot be achieved without taking into account those who produce food,”¹⁰⁶ and “[l]ong-term food security depends on those who produce food and care for the natural environment.” It is paradoxical, however, that the document also insists that, “[a]s stewards of the food producing resources we hold the following principles as necessary for achieving food security.”¹⁰⁷ Considering the polemical nature of food security’s discursive construction, the passage presents fundamental contradictions on many levels, and the only mediating qualifier offered is the adjectival “long-term.”

Yet even more intricate antagonisms exist within the movement’s discourse. Raj Patel provides a comprehensive outline of these in his attempt to decipher what food sovereignty would look like – how the ideology could become a reality.¹⁰⁸ Even so, there are persistent antagonisms in the ideological interstices that food sovereignty presents. The discourse of food sovereignty relies on the language of democracy, while simultaneously aims to condemn a neoliberal world order likewise rooted in the rhetoric of democracy.¹⁰⁹ Similarly difficult to reconcile is the expressed support of women’s rights by a movement that concomitantly promotes the family-based farm when the family is, as Patel puts it, “one of the oldest factories for patriarchy.”¹¹⁰ And even beyond ideological dissonance, there is a rhetorical fatuity in their publications. In an example Patel draws from the Nyeleni Declaration of 2007, it is stated that the movement “puts those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations.”¹¹¹ This description does not exclude anyone, including the corporations it is presumably meant to be condemning. For food sovereignty to establish legitimacy, these contradictions must be reckoned with.

¹⁰⁶ La Vía Campesina, “The Right” 197.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 197.

¹⁰⁸ Raj Patel. “What does Food Sovereignty Look Like?” in *Food Sovereignty: Reconnecting Food, Nature and Community* Wittman, Hannah, Annette Aurelie Demarais, and Nettie Wiebe, ed. (Halifax & Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2010) 186-196.

¹⁰⁹ Patel, “Look Like,” 189.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 190

¹¹¹ La Vía Campesina. “Nyeleni Declaration.”(Selingue, Mali: Forum for Food Sovereignty, 2007).

To conclude this chapter by returning to the potential space for counter-conduct within food sovereignty, central to biopolitical power, as outlined in the preceding chapter, is its inescapability: to reiterate, nothing functions outside the conduct/counter-conduct dynamic. Part of the obstacle facing the food sovereignty movement is the breakdown of the sovereign welfare state discussed in the preceding chapter, as McMichael laments,

The political decomposition of citizenship and of national sovereignty, via the neo-liberal “globalization project,” reverse the political gains (“welfare” and “development” states) associated with the period of U.S. hegemony, facilitating an unprecedented conversion of agriculture across the world to supply a relatively affluent global consumer class. The vehicle of this corporate-driven process is the WTO’s Agreement on Agriculture, which, as above, institutionalizes a distinctive form of economic liberalism geared to deepening market relations via the privatization of states.¹¹²

The supranational, amorphous, multimodal power of transnational corporations is a challenging antagonist for a peasants’ movement, and the more corporate interests are bolstered by the WTO and policy being co-opted in favour of the “affluent consumer class” (this in itself a manner of administering the life of this class biopolitically), the more compounded this obstacle will become. In other words, food sovereignty cannot be achieved without a reappropriation of state sovereignty and reaffirmation of citizenship. It is for this reason I propose an examination of how the prevailing FAO food security agenda may be hindering the principles of food sovereignty and to uncover how it may be changed, as the Rome Declaration is representative of an overarching international food security discourse. In testament to biopolitic’s transcendent capacity, the neoliberal economics conducting food system are fueled by the centrifugal power also outlined in the previous chapter; because biopower is centrifugal, it thus transcends national sovereignty: the articulated dynamic of the food system and free trade agreements thus undermines national sovereignty. The counter-conduct of food sovereignty – the reclaiming of local food production and consumption, and consequently contesting hegemonic power and reinforcing national sovereignty – can offer an effective mode of resistance or, more appropriately, subversion, to the established model. The

¹¹² McMichael, Corporate, 277.

social movement's transnational network as well as its established position within the food system, therefore, provide appropriate space for subversive counter-conduct. Confirming food sovereignty's potential counter-conduct in its position in established discourse of the food system, Fairbairn explains that "[s]ituating food sovereignty within the context of other food-related frames has demonstrated that it is solidly grounded in the political economy of the current world food system but that it nonetheless has the drive and potential to radically alter that system."¹¹³

Foucault theorized about biopolitical power late in his life, and his scholarship on modes of resistance or counter-conduct under biopolitics is limited and unfinished. Though many of his readers have offered interpretations of Foucault's resistance within the dynamic of power relations, including myself in the preceding paragraphs, I prefer the words of Foucault himself in the following passage:

I don't think that a society can exist without power relations, if by that one means the strategies by which individuals try to direct and control the conduct of others. The problem, then, is not to try to dissolve them in the utopia of completely transparent communication but to acquire the rules of law, the management techniques, and also the morality, the *ethos*, the practice of self that *allow us to play these games of power with as little domination as possible*.¹¹⁴

The radical recalibration of power relations food sovereignty proposes aims to do just that – “allow us to play these games of power with as little domination as possible.”¹¹⁵ But as examined in this chapter, this is not a proposal to abolish global agricultural trade but to reform and redirect trade in a people-centric rather than capital-centric way. An FAO Declaration could buttress such an effort, but the existing agenda instead presents many antagonisms incompatible with the tenets of food sovereignty. The nature of this debate speaks to an enduring duality in development theory: the institutional, top-down versus the community-based, bottom-up approach to development. Espousing the principles an immanently bottom-up movement like food sovereignty with a top-down agenda like those produced by the FAO is undeniably antipodal and ultimately self-

¹¹³ Fairbairn, 31.

¹¹⁴ Michel Foucault. *Ethics*, vol. I, James Faubion, ed., Robert Hurley, et al. trans. (New York: The New Press, 1998) 298. Emphasis added.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

defeating. However, I believe it to be a telling analysis with which to better elucidate the antagonisms between the institutional ethos of food security and the principles of food sovereignty discussed in this chapter, and this problem will be examined in the following and final chapter.

5. The FAO's Rome Declaration: Unearthing Food Security's Discourse

The recovery period and development project that defined the years succeeding the World Wars, brought about the inception of a United Nations tasked with international security and cooperation and launched with the putative aim of making the world a better, safer, more just place. The Charter of the United Nations' four leading preambular clauses cite the aspiration to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war,"¹¹⁶ to "reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights,"¹¹⁷ to "establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained,"¹¹⁸ and lastly to "promote social progress and better standards of life."¹¹⁹ The tenets of this founding document produced the United Nations System, and its emergence was a critical juncture in the discursive formation of the Third World and the establishment of the North/South hierarchy.

The agencies of the UN System charged with food and agriculture, along with development project and thus the discursive construct of the Third World, were presumably born of the fourth perambulatory intention "to promote social progress and better standards of life."¹²⁰ The FAO, the World Food Program (WFP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) are charged with the mitigation of persistent antagonists: global hunger and malnutrition. Now that the dominant globalized food system has been accounted for analyzed and the alternative of food sovereignty has been explored, I will finally examine the established international discourse on food security via the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and World Food Summit Plan of Action, a product of the World Food Summit, 13-17 November 1996.¹²¹ Although the food

¹¹⁶ United Nations. *The Charter of the United Nations*. (San Francisco, 1945). Accessed 20 May 2012 <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/preamble.shtml>

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ For the sake of brevity, I will refer to this document simply as the Rome Declaration from this point forward.

sovereignty movement is bottom-up in nature, it is a highly politicized movement that calls for the democratization of a nation's control over its food. The radical change proposed will require support from many levels. The UN System exists, at least in part, to counterbalance the power of the neoliberal economic system. As mentioned in the introduction, there is, of course, staunch criticism from UN opponents about the system's efficacy, but the agency of the FAO lies in the public opinion and definitive discourse from which the FAO and the UN in general draw normative power. To use another ubiquitous United Nations document as an example, the *United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights*¹²² it is not universally adhered to. But regardless of infractions, the covenant is called upon whenever an issue of human rights is in question – it is a pillar of the dominant discourse. The covenant's importance thus testifies to the latent power of a revised commitment from the FAO – it has the potential to become the definitive reference in matters justice in the food system (though the existing Declaration presents many archaic notions regarding modes of securing the food system which obstruct its potential to be the definitive ethos). And second, to make the changes proposed by food sovereignty, there the food system needs to be democratized – the FAO provides a global forum in which to undertake such daunting negotiation. In Friedmann's conceptualization of "Green Capitalism" as the emerging regime, she speaks to role of intergovernmentality in securing the food system. When faced with the question "whether transnational agrofood corporations can effectively regulate themselves,"¹²³ Friedmann maintains the necessity of "inter-governmental standards to set a floor for their activities."¹²⁴ And she speaks to the interplay between national mechanisms stating, "[i]nternational rules will determine standards in governments in the South – to the extent that national regulatory capacity allows for its enforcement."¹²⁵ Concurrently, in the face of the neoliberal reality, the relevance of all entities in the UN system is being questioned, and upholding tenets of a movement

¹²² United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights*. New York: 1966. Accessed 21 November 2011.
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cescr.htm>

¹²³ Friedmann, "Green Capitalism," 253.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 257.

that requires such radical reform to the current system has the potential reaffirm the FAO's relevance on the global stage.

5.1 *Antagonisms with Food Sovereignty in the Rome Declaration*

This section will examine specific instances in which commitments in the Rome Declaration are in opposition to principles of food sovereignty. The fifth paragraph of the introductory declaration begins with a misconceived commitment to food security, stating that “[i]ncreased production, including staple food must be undertaken.”¹²⁶ This is a surprisingly archaic view to food security to encounter in this document's preamble. It is readily apparent in reviewing food system research that the problem of hunger is not an issue of food *supply* but an issue of food *distribution* and, in fact, there are global surpluses of food – in particular staple foods – that have been instrumental in exacerbating inequities in the food system and devastating vulnerable agricultural economies.¹²⁷ As well as being potentially devastating to food systems, increased food production, especially in the case of the monoculture “staple foods” may imply, it is also detrimental to natural resources and ecosystems. Despite the intrinsic problems with such a commitment to increasing food production, the notion is reiterated throughout the Declaration, in Commitment Three, Clauses 23 and 24, and Objective 3.2, Clause 33, Sub-clause B.

In Commitment Two, Objective 2.3, Clause 21 of the Rome Declaration states the objective “[t]o ensure that food supplies are safe, physically and economically accessible, appropriate and adequate to meet the energy and nutrient needs of the population.”¹²⁸ Food sovereignty maintains food is “a cultural commodity that much of the world regards in terms of its nutritive value, taste, and tradition; namely, a fundamental element of farmer and community livelihoods.”¹²⁹ This goal is flawed when viewed from a food sovereignty perspective in that it does not address the cultural value of food – *taste and tradition* – and the right of people to choose what they eat. In order to

¹²⁶ FAO, *Rome Declaration*.

¹²⁷ Scholars including Patel, Friedmann and McMichael provide accounts of these phenomena.

¹²⁸ FAO, *Rome Declaration*.

¹²⁹ Schanbacher, xiv.

support the tenets of food sovereignty, a plan of action would have to address the cultural significance of food as well as the right to self-determination. This biopolitical conduct of populations apparent in the agenda's approach to food as calories consumed (without attention to quality, preference, or cultural importance) and categorizing of people in terms of biological life and aggregate numbers of living or dead – populations, birth and death rates – without also considering quality of life or right to self-determination effectively reduces personhood to a number.

Another example can be found in Commitment, Two, Objective 2.1, Clause 19, Sub-clause F, which states the objective of “[p]romot[ing] access, by farmers and farming communities, to genetic resources for food and agriculture.”¹³⁰ The problem this statement poses lies in the ambiguity of the use of “genetic resources,” as it is unclear if the clause refers to biodiversity preservation or propagation of genetically modified organisms (GMOs). The patents held by multinational corporations on genetically modified seeds that essentially commodify nature, and even the cultivation of GMOs themselves, stand in direct conflict with the principles of food sovereignty. Concurrently, GMO cultivation is environmentally destructive and undermines nature itself; therefore, an agenda that favours food sovereignty would address this problem explicitly and specifically, prohibiting all seed patents and even the cultivation of GMOs. La Via Campesina's Doha call for food sovereignty demands explicitly under the fifth goal the “[b]an the production of, and trade in genetically modified (GM) seeds, foods, animal feeds and related products.”¹³¹ For these reasons, anything in the Plan of Action having the potential to propagate GMO cultivation contradicts the principles of food sovereignty, and must be rewritten or omitted to provide a more just and sustainable food system. Yet the Declaration returns to the propagation of genetic resources without disqualifying GMOs in Commitment 3, Objective 3.2, Clause 33, Sub-clause E: “[p]romote an integrated approach to conservation and sustainable utilization of plant genetic

¹³⁰ FAO, *Rome Declaration*.

¹³¹ La Vía Campesina, “Priority,” 201.

resources for food and agriculture, through *inter alia* appropriate *in situ* and *ex situ* approaches, systematic surveying and inventorying, approaches to plant breeding which broaden the genetic base of crops, and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of such resources.”¹³² This statement presents even more ambiguity in reference to the treatment of GMOs with the use of language like “*inter alia*.” It repeats the ambiguity in the following Sub-clause F, “[p]romote the conservation and sustainable utilization of animal genetic resources,”¹³³ prompting one to question what constitutes the “sustainable utilization of animal genetic resources.” An agenda truly meant to promote food sovereign agenda would be one explicitly prohibiting GMOs.

There is also a conflict with self-determination evident in Commitment 3, Objective 3.4, Clause 35, Sub-clause C, which promises to “[p]articipate actively in and support international cooperation in research to promote food security, in particular in developing countries, with special emphasis on underutilized food crops in these countries.”¹³⁴ “Underutilized crops” could allow for the imposition of a non-native crop (perhaps genetically modified) on the agricultural system of a subjugated country. This possibility presents a potential obstacle to people’s right to determine their own food system, and would inhibit the commitment to preserving local food systems and traditions, and indigenous knowledge food sovereignty is meant to uphold.

The nomenclature ratified by the FAO in the Rome Declaration also provides a glaring example of the rhetorical construction of development. The document, commencing in Basis for Action Clause 25, and continuing throughout the publication, presents noticeably biopolitical categorization of states as “low-income food deficit counties.” The FAO affirms this categorization under the acronym LIFDCs,¹³⁵ in a regulatory rhetoric characteristic of international organizations which acts to buttress the well-established North/South hierarchy.

The preceding antagonisms are one-off instances in the preamble, and the first three Commitments, which deal with primarily with supporting modes of food security, do so by

¹³² FAO, *Rome Declaration*.

¹³³ *Ibid.*.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

encouraging actions that promote poverty eradication and environmental sustainability. The real wealth of antagonisms presents itself in Commitment Four, which deals with the polemical matter of international trade. Clause 37 under Commitment Four, the Commitment's Basis for Action states,

Trade is a key element in achieving world food security. Trade generates effective utilization of resources and stimulates economic growth which is critical to improving food security. Trade allows food consumption to exceed food production, helps to reduce production and consumption fluctuations and relieves part of the burden of stock holding. It has a major bearing on access to food through its positive effect on economic growth, income and employment. Appropriate domestic economic and social policies will better ensure that all, including the poor, will benefit from economic growth. Appropriate trade policies promote the objectives of sustainable growth and food security. It is essential that all members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) respect and fulfill the totality of the undertakings of the Uruguay Round. For this purpose it will be necessary to refrain from unilateral measures not in accordance with WTO obligations.¹³⁶

The most obvious problem here lies in the clause's acceptance of agriculture as under the purview of the WTO, an appropriation that lies in direct opposition to the demands of food sovereignty. The clause is similarly rife with the flawed rhetoric of food security outlined in the previous chapter, in particular the statement that "[t]rade allows food consumption to exceed food production, helps to reduce production and consumption fluctuations and relieves part of the burden of stock holding" that articulates and upholds the food security practices that have created an unjust system in the first place.

The Declaration as written shortly after the Uruguay Round of negotiations within the WTO, which called for several toothless measures to mitigate the injustices the WTO would promulgate, including reducing government subsidies on food exported in the world market (but not eliminating them). On the whole, the clauses of Commitment Four support the WTO and interplay with agriculture, citing objectives in the purported interest "Least-Developed" and "Net Food-Importing

¹³⁶ FAO, *Rome Declaration*

Developed Countries”¹³⁷ (again, an example subjugating development discourse). This rhetoric is apparent in Commitment Four, Clause 38:

The Uruguay Round Agreement established a new international trade framework that offers opportunity to developed and developing countries to benefit from appropriate trade policies and self-reliance strategies. The progressive implementation of the Uruguay Round as a whole will generate increasing opportunities for trade expansion and economic growth to the benefits of all participants. Therefore, adaptation to the provisions of the various agreements during the implementation period must be ensured. Some least-developed and net food-importing developing countries may experience short term negative effects in terms of the availability of adequate supplies of basic foodstuffs from external sources on reasonable terms and conditions, including short term difficulties in financing normal levels of commercial imports of basic foodstuffs. The Decision on Measures Concerning the Possible Negative Effects of the Reform Programme on Least-Developed and Net Food-Importing Developing Countries, Marrakesh 1994, shall be fully implemented.¹³⁸

This clause goes as far as to recognize the WTO’s potentially disastrous effects on agriculture, especially in the Global South, and present established measures to mitigate the agro-economic fallout. However, statistics presented in preceding chapters in reference to developments in the food system after 1996 prove these measures to have been innocuous.

Commitment Four goes on to pledge Objective 4.2, Clause 40, “[t]o meet essential food import needs in all countries, considering world price and supply fluctuations and taking especially into account food consumption levels of vulnerable groups in developing countries,” Sub-clause A cites safeguards, “[r]ecognizing the effects of world price fluctuations, examine WTO-compatible options and take any appropriate steps to safeguard the ability of importing developing countries, especially LIFDCs, to purchase adequate supplies of basic foodstuffs from external sources on reasonable terms and conditions,” and Sub-clause C states the aim to “[r]educe subsidies on food exports in conformity with the Uruguay Round Agreement in the context of the ongoing process of reform in agriculture conducted in the WTO.”¹³⁹ The first Sub-clause of this Objective calls for “WTO-compatible options” in reference to securing a nation’s food supply and ultimately preventing starvation of a population – such WTO-centric commitments are indicative of an ethos

¹³⁷ FAO, *Rome Declaration*

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

in which a robust neoliberal economic system is prioritized over the well-being of human beings, a disturbing yet all-too-frequent occurrence. Furthermore, in the following Sub-clause, the commitment to “reduce” subsidies is profoundly subjective, and compliance to such a ‘reduction of subsidies’ would undoubtedly correlate with economic power of the state in question. The FAO, despite being an institution founded in humanitarian concerns, appears to be invested, at least in part, in another agenda. Examining the Rome Declaration suggests an organization preoccupied with upholding the principles of trade agreements, thus perpetuating and buttressing a neoliberal economic model and overall it reiterates and enforces the destructive and subjugating rhetoric constructed by the development project, none of which is conducive to food sovereignty. The food sovereignty movement recognizes such fault in the UN System but at the same time appreciates the institution’s latent potential: included in the 2001 Doha call for food sovereignty was the demand for “a reformed and strengthened United Nations, active and committed to protecting the fundamental rights of all peoples, as being the appropriate forum to develop and negotiate rules for sustainable production and fair trade.”¹⁴⁰ FAO agenda reform which favours food sovereignty’s principles would be a pivotal step in this direction.

¹⁴⁰ La Vía Campesina , “Priority,” 206.

6. Conclusion

Shake the hand that feeds you.¹⁴¹

- Michael Pollan

...allow us to play these games of power with as little domination as possible.¹⁴²

- Michel Foucault

Ultimately, the symptoms of the unjust, malfunctioning food system examined in this analysis are part of a much larger omnipresent power struggle occurring in various manifestations worldwide: a struggle between the globalized neoliberal economic system and the principles of equality and social justice. The struggle for the world food system is one expression of such, as McMichael confirms, it “embodies the tensions between a trajectory of ‘world agriculture’ and cultural survival, expressed in the politics of ‘food sovereignty.’”¹⁴³ Despite the archaisms and contradictions with food sovereignty discernible in The Rome Declaration, and its tendency toward propagating McMichael’s “world agriculture,” the FAO appears to be reorienting, however slowly, in the direction of the democratization of agriculture and the promotion of autonomous food systems. Promising developments are evident in recent publications from the organizations. The FAO is attesting to changes within the organization via new management and an overall focus on decentralization – a shift conducive to collaboration with the food sovereignty movement.¹⁴⁴ An example of such a document is the recently published *FAO Strategy for Partnership with Civil Society Organizations*,¹⁴⁵ a comprehensive outline to a renewed commitment to partnerships with a wide variety of civil society organizations: member-based organizations, non-governmental organizations and social movements. The FAO acknowledges in it the advantages of collaboration with such organizations, “their outreach capacity to the poor and vulnerable; their mobilization and advocacy capacity; the representation of their broader networks; their key role in community-based

¹⁴¹ Michael Pollan. *In Defense of Food: An Eater’s Manifesto*. (London: Penguin Press, 2008) Kindle ed.

¹⁴² Foucault, *Ethics*, 298.

¹⁴³ McMichael, “Corporate,” 274.

¹⁴⁴ FAO. *FAO Strategy for Partnership with Civil Society Organizations*. (Rome: FAO, 2013) 3.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

management of natural resources; and their knowledge of local contexts.”¹⁴⁶ The strategy cites policy dialog and normative activities among mutually beneficial areas of collaboration with civil society organizations. This commitment would presumably encompass La Vía Campesina.

Throughout this thesis, the breakdown of the nation state, national sovereignty and globalization of world power are discussed and analyzed. The prevalent power structure is biopolitical and transcends national boundaries. La Vía Campesina mirrors this power structure as a transnational network of peasants that can be counted among its strengths as a movement. One problem facing the UN System is that it is entrenched in the nation-state paradigm, while power relations operate well outside such constraints in contemporary reality. Returning to Foucault’s description of its nature offered earlier in this argument, power functions by “not interfering, allowing free movement, letting things follow their course; *laissez faire, passer et aller*,” which “basically and fundamentally means acting so that reality develops, goes its way, and follows its own course according to the laws, principles and mechanisms of reality itself.”¹⁴⁷ To remain relevant in the fight for the global food system, the FAO needs to strike up a new conversation, and it needs invite La Vía Campesina to the negotiation table. Perhaps another World Food Summit is in order.

Adding another layer of urgency to the problem and identifying another manifestation of the power struggle against the globalized neoliberal system, the call for food sovereignty is inextricably linked to a larger global difficulty, the environmental nexus of food, water, and energy and a crisis is mounting to the point that even naysayers cannot deny its criticality. I return to my opening statement: the cultivation of food was the first great human innovation. Throughout history, food production has not only altered the course of human civilization – it has also altered the natural environment in monumental ways. With modernity especially, agriculture became intertwined with a biopolitical ethos that entailed high-jacking the planet’s ecosystem and asserting dominion over

¹⁴⁶ FAO. *FAO Strategy*, 22.

¹⁴⁷ Foucault, *Security*, 48.

its creatures. The way in which the living economies of food operate will be instrumental in shaping the world's future. Along with the myriad social benefits that food sovereignty has the potential to foster, a system based on its principles would shape the environmental future of the planet for the better.

Although the objectives set forth by the international organizations like the UN have conventionally relied on a model based on powerful states “aiding” those less powerful, authentic food security – the kind proffered by food sovereignty – *cannot* be exported. Just and secure food systems must begin with a democratic, inclusive collaboration and be cobbled together *in situ* from the ground up by the community in question. It will not originate from power imposed over a subjugated population, but must originate within the population itself, and achieving a bottom-up mode of food production will require a dynamic interplay between local, regional and national interests. Creating sustainable and equal access to food no trivial endeavor, but it is hopeful that a multimodal recalibration of power relations will ultimately support the effort.

The movement is not without distinct obstacles and limitations, many of which have been explicitly examined in this analysis. True and universal democratization is immensely complex, and it is difficult to envision its reality, given that food sovereignty will look different in each of its many possible manifestations. It is based in reappropriation of agency and the right to self-determination and, as Raj Patel puts it, drawing on Hannah Arendt before him, food sovereignty is “precisely about invoking a *right to have rights* over food.” Patel goes on to elaborate on the problematic nature of establishing this right once and for all, noting that “[i]f we talk about food sovereignty, we talk about rights, and if we do that, we must talk about ways to ensure those rights are met across a range of geographies, by everyone and in substantive and meaningful ways.”¹⁴⁸ This is a hopeful yet equally daunting endeavor.

¹⁴⁸ Patel, “Look Like” 195. Emphasis added.

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Education

Master of Arts, Erasmus Mundus Global Studies

2010-2012, University of Vienna, Austria & University of Wroclaw, Poland

For this international, interdisciplinary Joint Master's degree, I was among very few students to hold the European Commission's Erasmus Mundus Scholarship.

Bachelor of Arts, First Class Honours in Spanish & Latin American Studies

2005-2009, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada

I achieved a 3.9 GPA and I was consistently on the Dean's list, and I was awarded various academic awards and scholarships, including In-course Scholarships and the De Carteret Memorial Graduation Prize for Outstanding Achievement.

Academic Exchange Programme

2008-2009, Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (ITESM), Mazatlán, México

I achieved a 96% average and was awarded the Dalhousie Study and Work International Fund 2008/2009.

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Relevant Experience

Global Engagement Coordinator, Western University

December 2013-present, London, Canada

I am charged with the internationalization of students, staff and faculty and fostering global engagement within the university community and supporting international relations and international development initiatives. With a particular focus on designing programs, processes and strategies that fulfill Western's internationalization mandate, I am also responsible for outreach and marketing, advising and counseling, and developing new relationships with partner institutions and other stakeholders.

Fellow, Intercultural Communication Institute

July 2013, Portland, Oregon, USA

As a Fellow at the Summer Institute for Intercultural Communication, I supported the functioning of the Institute while working closely with leading scholars in the intercultural and international higher education fields, including Darla Deardorff, Janet Bennett and Michael Paige.

International Learning Coordinator, Western University

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At a university of 37,000, I was charged with the internationalization of students and student mobility. I was the first point of contact for students interested in international experience. I was responsible outreach, marketing and information, advising and counseling, developing internationalization programming, and maintaining communication with partner institutions and other stakeholders. I navigated university and immigration policies and processes. I supervised a team of student assistants and volunteers, and I managed student files, databases and statistics.

Intern, United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV)***July-October 2011, Vienna, Austria***

In a platform for disaster relief, I assisted in long-term research projects on hunger and malnutrition in Latin America and Africa; drafted, copy-edited and reviewed various team and mission reports for UN publication; extracted and analysed data; managed various division databases and negotiated emerging technology in disaster management. I presented my research to various high-ranking diplomats and I operated in a highly formal, diplomatic setting requiring cultural tact, utilising Spanish and French for research, reporting and general communication.

Monitrice de Langue/Language Monitor, Department of Canadian Heritage***August 2009-June 2010, Rimouski, Québec, Canada***

I facilitated English learning among francophone students in Québec as part of a government initiative to promote bilingualism. I developed my own curriculum, supported the language learning of 800 students, over 24 classes in two schools, and gained experience working in a second-language environment.

Exchange Assistant, Dalhousie University International Centre***September 2007-August 2008, Halifax, Canada***

On top of supporting the daily management of the office, I facilitated a 25% increase in students going on exchange, developed and supervised a volunteer program of 30 students, managed various databases and the resource library, organised more than 20 events and workshops including a Study Abroad Fair, advised, assisted and counseled students from more than 110 countries, negotiated immigration and international education policies, used language skills for translation and interpretation, and operated in an intensely diverse, multicultural environment.

Academic Awards and Honours

Graduate Level

Erasmus Mundus Master's Scholarship 2010-2012, European Commission

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Professional Development Training

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