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### Food crises, food regimes and food movements: rumblings of reform or tides of transformation?

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## Food crises, food regimes and food movements: rumblings of reform or tides of transformation?

Eric Holt Giménez and Annie Shattuck

This article addresses the potential for food movements to bring about substantive changes to the current global food system. After describing the current corporate food regime, we apply Karl Polanyi's 'double-movement' thesis on capitalism to explain the regime's trends of neoliberalism and reform. Using the global food crisis as a point of departure, we introduce a comparative analytical framework for different political and social trends within the corporate food regime and global food movements, characterizing them as 'Neoliberal', 'Reformist', 'Progressive', and 'Radical', respectively, and describe each trend based on its discourse, model, and key actors, approach to the food crisis, and key documents. After a discussion of class, political permeability, and tensions within the food movements, we suggest that the current food crisis offers opportunities for strategic alliances between Progressive and Radical trends within the food movement. We conclude that while the food crisis has brought a retrenchment of neoliberalization and weak calls for reform, the worldwide growth of food movements directly and indirectly challenge the legitimacy and hegemony of the corporate food regime. Regime change will require sustained pressure from a strong global food movement, built on durable alliances between Progressive and Radical trends.

**Keywords:** global food crisis; Karl Polanyi; corporate food regime; food movements; food sovereignty

### Introduction

At least year's Clinton Global Initiative Gala dignitaries from the Queen of Jordan to the CEO of Goldman Sachs and World Bank President Robert Zoelick gathered to discuss pressing world issues. Alongside heads of state and business leaders sat iconic urban farmer and African-American food justice advocate Will Allen of Milwaukee, Wisconsin's *Growing Power*. That evening, former President Bill Clinton referred to the former professional athlete as his 'hero'. Allen's presence in that elite group was in many ways a watershed moment. On one hand it signaled official recognition of the urban-based US 'food justice' movement in national and international food politics. On the other hand, it was an opaque reflection of the political divides and underlying class and racial tensions in the struggle over the world's food. Aggravated by the current food crisis, these divides and ensuing conflicts – and the institutional efforts for their mediation – are actively reshaping the

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political landscapes of food and agriculture across rural and urban communities in both the Global South and the industrial North.

In this paper we will examine the current global food system through the framework of a corporate food regime (McMichael 2009), the formation of which is at the root of the recent spike in both food prices and global hunger (Bello 2009, Holt-Giménez *et al.* 2009, Gonzalez 2010). We will also examine the global food movement in the context of capitalism's 'double movement' between liberalism and reform, and pose a typology for different political and social trends between and within the corporate food regime and the global food movement. We describe each trend based on its discourse, model, and key actors, institutions and documents. Finally we suggest possible alliances between these trends, and their potential to influence the corporate food regime in the direction of neoliberal retrenchment, reform or transformation.

### **Rise of the corporate food regime**

Food regime analysis – first introduced by Friedmann (1987) and later elaborated by Friedmann and McMichael (1989) – combines political economy, political ecology and historical analysis to explain how particular relations of food production and consumption are central to the functioning and reproduction of global capitalism. The basic definition of a food regime is a 'rule-governed structure of production and consumption of food on a world scale' (Friedmann 1993a, 30–1, in McMichael 2007). Beyond simply serving to identify the agrifood foundations of particular historical periods of agrarian capitalism, the concept has gained currency as a valuable analytical lens for current global food systems (McMichael 2007, 148).

Before turning our attention to the current food regime, it is useful to recall the characteristics of earlier regimes. In the first global food regime (1870–1930s), cheap food and raw materials from the tropical and temperate settler colonies fueled industrialization in Europe. Concurrently, the emerging settler states, led by the US, provided Europe with wheat and meat, the dietary staples of the working class (Friedmann and McMichael 1989, 100).

The second food regime (1950s–1970s) reversed the flow of food from South to North as a transfer of US agricultural surpluses to the South began in the form of food aid (McMichael 2009). The period was characterized by the global spread of industrial agriculture through the 'Green Revolution', which injected high-yielding varieties of a few cereals (wheat, maize, rice) coupled with the heavy use of subsidized fertilizers, pesticides, irrigation and machinery into the agricultural economies of the Global South (Hewitt de Alcántara 1976, Jennings 1988, Shiva 1991). The development of industrial agriculture oriented to the global market weakened peasant agriculture and increased the power of large landowners (Hewitt de Alcántara 1976, Griffin 1974). The deepening of class, gender and regional inequalities caused by the Green Revolution has been extensively documented and analyzed (Agarwal 1994, Byres 1981, Feder 1976, Griffin 1974, Pearse 1980, Shiva 1991, 1992). The consolidation of peasant lands in fewer and fewer hands – along with the mechanization of formerly labor-intensive activities – pushed peasants onto fragile hillsides and into urban slums in unprecedented numbers, forcing them to subsist through 'ever more heroic feats of self-exploitation and the further competitive subdivision of already densely filled survival niches' (Davis 2004, 27).

Despite the Green Revolution – indeed, very often because of it – peasant movements around the globe continued to struggle in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s for broad-based land redistribution, production credit, fair markets, and the right to dignified rural livelihoods (Akram-Lodhi *et al.* 2007).

A parallel process of land concentration driven by global grain and financial market interests occurred in the US, where the number of farms decreased from seven million in 1935 to 1.9 million in 1997, with the most precipitous decline occurring between 1935 and 1974 (Strange 1988). By 1999, farms *greater* than 500 acres controlled 79 percent of all US farmland (USDA 2002a, 2002b, Weis 2007, 83).

The third, corporate food regime (1980s to the present) emerged from the global economic shocks of the 1970s and 1980s ushering in the current period of neo-liberal capitalist expansion.<sup>1</sup> During the 1980s Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) broke down tariffs, dismantled national marketing boards, eliminated price guarantees and destroyed national agricultural research and extension systems in the Global South. These policies were embedded in international treaties through bilateral and international Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). The establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995, and its Agreement on Agriculture (AoA), institutionalized the process of agricultural liberalization on a global scale by restricting the rights of sovereign states to regulate food and agriculture.

The corporate food regime is currently characterized by the unprecedented market power and profits of monopoly agrifood corporations,<sup>2</sup> globalized animal protein chains, growing links between food and fuel economies, a ‘supermarket revolution’, liberalized global trade in food, increasingly concentrated land ownership, a shrinking natural resource base, and growing opposition from food movements worldwide (Holt-Giménez *et al.* 2009, McMichael 2009).

### **The corporate food regime and the tragic records of the global food crisis**

The global food crisis of 2008 ushered in record levels of hunger for the world’s poor at a time of record global harvests as well as record profits for the world’s major agrifoods corporations (Lean 2008a, 2008b). The combination of increasing hunger in the midst of wealth and abundance unleashed a flurry of worldwide ‘food riots’ not seen for many decades. In June of 2008, the World Bank reported that global food prices had risen 83 percent in three years and the FAO cited a 45 percent increase in their world food price index in just nine months (Wiggins 2008).

<sup>1</sup>The existence of a third, neoliberal food regime is contested among some food regime theorists – see McMichael (2009), Friedmann (2009) and Burch and Lawrence (2009) for an overview of this debate. For the purposes of this analysis, we adopt the premise that the ‘corporate food regime’ is the third regime to emerge, beginning in the 1980s with the current, neoliberal phase of capitalism, and ‘[expresses] a new moment in the political history of capital’ distinct from the previous regime of state-led development anchored in US hegemony (McMichael 2009, 151). However, adopting the alternate premise (i.e. that the corporate food regime is simply a neoliberal phase of the second global food regime) would not change our analysis.

<sup>2</sup>Grain giants ADM, Cargill, and Bunge took control of 80 percent of the world’s grain (Vorley 2003). Chemical corporations Monsanto and DuPont together appropriated 65 percent of the global maize seed market (Action Aid International Ghana 2006): four companies – Tyson, Cargill, Swift, and National Beef Packing Company control 83.5 percent of the US beef supply (Hendrickson and Heffernan 2007).

With record grain harvests in 2008 (2287 million metric tons), there was more than enough food in the world to feed everyone (FAO 2009a). Over the last 20 years, food production has risen steadily at over two percent a year (FAO in Holt-Giménez *et al.* 2009), while global population growth has slowed to 1.09 percent, with an average growth rate of 1.2 percent over the preceding two decades (US Census Bureau 2010). Despite the oft-cited production gains of industrial agriculture, the number of hungry people on the planet has grown steadily from 700 million in 1986 to 800 million in 1998 (Lappé *et al.* 1998, Blas and Walls 2009). With the global economic crisis this number reached an historic 1.02 billion – or over a sixth of humanity (FAO 2009a).<sup>3</sup>

After three decades of liberal trade policies, many developing countries were left with a startling dependence on the global market for basic food and grains. In the early 1970s, developing countries had yearly agricultural trade surpluses of US\$1 billion – by 2000, the food *deficit* in the Global South had expanded to US \$11 billion per year (FAO 2004). At the height of the crisis, Low Income Food Deficit Countries' import bills mounted to over \$38 billion for basic cereal grains (De Shutter 2008b). This systemic vulnerability is a product of overproduction and Northern food aid, international finance institutions, structural adjustment, free trade agreements, green revolution farming models, and a broader divestment of the state from agricultural development (Bello 2009, Holt-Giménez *et al.* 2009, Gonzalez 2010). In essence, the roots of the food crisis lie in the construction of the corporate food regime.

### **The food crisis as an arena of struggle**

With the world food and financial crises of 2008–2009, rumblings of reform have appeared within the food regime. In its 2008 World Development Report, the World Bank quietly admitted that the market liberalization of the 1980s–1990s has not resulted in economic development for the poor, and revived its moribund loan portfolio for agricultural development (World Bank 2007). The G-8 countries, UN offices and IFIs (International Finance Institutions) have all made statements invoking the importance of renewed investment in agriculture, support for smallholders, rural safety nets and the regulation of agrofuels, GMOs and land

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<sup>3</sup>Capitalist agriculture intensified labor productivity, increased overall food production and undoubtedly contributed to the global increase in population. As Bernstein points out (2010, 307) population 'more than [doubled] across the half-century of the greatest development of productivity in capitalist agriculture'. This has led capitalists (and many Marxists) to assume that only large-scale industrial agriculture is capable of feeding the world. But these productivity increases were largely obtained on prime agricultural land. The inability of capitalist agriculture to provide livelihoods for the 1.5 billion peasants that manage to produce half the world's food on marginal lands means that poverty and hunger will continue to increase, as will agrarian struggles for land and resources. It also means that organic and sustainable agriculture will likely grow as alternatives to industrial farming. Contrary to the conventional wisdom, there is ample literature within the science of agroecology demonstrating that organic agriculture and small farms can easily meet present and future demands for global food production, and that these forms of production are better suited to sustaining rural livelihoods (Rosset 1999, Pretty and Hine 2000, Badgely *et al.* 2007). Regardless of one's position on productivity, organic, low-external input production is becoming increasingly important to the survival, social reproduction, and political demands of smallholders and modern peasant farmers worldwide.

grabs.<sup>4</sup> The EU now allows some local procurement for food aid. Nonetheless, the neoliberal focus on global markets remains firmly intact, and as yet, there are no serious governmental proposals for corporate, financial or supply regulation within the food regime.

As Karl Polanyi pointed out in his seminal work, *The great transformation* (1944), unregulated markets are neither socially nor environmentally sustainable. Commenting on the rise of the liberal state and the radical promotion of economic liberalism in nineteenth century Britain, Polanyi observed that if capitalist markets were allowed to run rampant, they would eventually destroy both society and their own natural resource base. For this reason, he argued, alternating periods of unregulated markets followed by state intervention protective of social concerns were a cyclical part of capitalism and ensured the existence of the liberal state itself. For Polanyi, the 'self-regulating' market produced social opposition, pushing governments towards reform. This, in turn, eventually provoked a turn towards deregulation, resulting in a 'double movement'. When applied to capitalist food regimes, the Polanyian thesis suggests that under social pressure even strongly liberal food regimes can undergo substantive, regulatory policy change. Of course, this also suggests that highly Keynesian or 'embedded liberal' (Harvey 2005) food regimes can also be reversed. This is borne out historically in Northern economies in which periods of liberalization in agriculture have alternated with periods of reform, though the political nature of this reform has produced such wide-ranging results as German fascism and Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal (Polanyi 1944, Winders 2009).

The wide range of political possibilities for social opposition and government reforms to liberalized markets suggests that the social demands driving Polanyi's double movement are a reflection of social and political contestation that is played out within civil society. This would be consistent with Antonio Gramsci's (1971) concept of civil society as an arena of struggle in which ruling classes exercise power beyond the 'state-as-force', by seeking hegemonic consensus through cultural and ideological coercion. When applied to the current food regime, it would seem obvious that both liberal and reformist responses to the food crisis are hegemonic class projects. What is not clear is just how they are contested (or assimilated) by other classes, sectors, movements, organizations, groups and communities from within civil society, in what direction this takes today's food movements, and how this then affects the food regime.

The depth, scope and political character of food regime change, we will argue, depends upon both capitalism's 'double-movement' and the political nature and dynamism of social movements. Today's food movements, responding to the social, economic and environmental crises unleashed by the corporate food regime, are important forces for social change. But it is the balance of forces within the food movements that will likely determine the nature and the extent of reform or transformation possible within the double movement of the corporate food regime.

Understanding this balance of forces is an imposing and imprecise task, and we do not propose an exhaustive analysis here. However, we believe that the current

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<sup>4</sup>For a document reflecting the scope these reforms, see the *Comprehensive Framework for Action* outlining the official response by the G8 and IFIs to the 2008 global food crisis, released at the FAO's High Level Conference on World Food Security in Rome, June 2008. Available from: <http://www.un.org/issues/food/taskforce/Documentation/CFA%Web.pdf>

food crisis presents an opportunity for inquiry. When a sixth of humanity is hungry – and half is at risk of hunger – it is surely a planetary disaster. Disasters, be they sudden or gradual, can provide insights into politics and society because they reveal systemic inequities and power relationships, not only in the ways vulnerability to hazard and risk are produced (Blaikie *et al.* 1994, Oliver-Smith 1986, 1994, 1996, Wisner 1993) and the ways capital both provokes and profits from disaster, but in the ways communities, classes and groups organize to replace state and market functions with alternative logic and social organization (Dynes and Tierney 1994, Quarantelli 1994, Rodriguez *et al.* 2006).

In the following sections we introduce a comparative analytical framework of the politics, production models and approaches to the food crisis from the vantage of the main trends, institutions, and actors within the *corporate food regime*, and from within the *global food movements*.

### **The corporate food regime and global food movements**

Over time, the corporate food regime's persistent social and environmental failures have spurred the formation of tens of thousands of local, national and international social movements concerned with food and agriculture (Hawken 2007). These 'food movements' have developed a wealth of political, technical, organizational and entrepreneurial skills, and advance a wide range of demands that include land reform and food sovereignty (Desmarais 2007); sustainable and agroecological agriculture (Altieri 1995, Holt-Giménez 2006, Gliessman 2007); 'good, clean and fair' food (Petrini 2005); fair trade (Bacon *et al.* 2008); local food (Halweil 2004); and community food security (Winne 2008). Taken together, these reflect the alternative agriculture–agrifoods wing of the New Social Movements (Sevilla Guzman and Martínez-Alier 2006, Escobar *et al.* 1998), the Transnational Social Movements (Edelman 1998, Smith *et al.* 1998, Smith *et al.* 1997), the World Social Forum's 'movement of movements' (Wallerstein 2006, Klein 2001), as well as parts of labor and class-based 'Old Social Movements' (see Foweraker 1995, Klandermans 1991, Cohen 1985 for a discussion of 'New' and 'Old' social movements).

Government, industry, big philanthropy and the global institutions of the food regime have also produced a protean array of institutions, programs and campaigns for food aid and agricultural development. Some efforts treat hunger and poverty as a business opportunity and call for solutions based on public–private partnerships and notions of corporate efficiency and competitiveness (Hindo 2008). Others address hunger normatively, and insist government and industry should be held accountable if they advance policies or enterprises that undermine the human right to food (Brock and Paasch 2009, De Schutter 2008a, 2008b, 2008c). Renewed calls for reinvestment in agriculture and a revival of the Green Revolution (Collier 2008) are often accompanied by strident arguments in favor of genetically modified crops (Paarlberg 2008), and occasionally by calls for reforms (Sachs 2005).

This diversity of approaches also reflects important class, race, and systemic divides. While strategic and tactical overlap exist, food and hunger efforts tend to split ideologically between those that seek to stabilize the corporate food regime, and those that want to change it. This split is further characterized by different tendencies, each with its own set of discourses, institutions, models, and approaches. Making sense of the similarities and differences within these different approaches is

essential for charting equitable and sustainable ways forward through the multiple crises plaguing our food systems.

### **Food enterprise, food security, food justice, food sovereignty**

Combining Polanyi's double-movement with Freidman and McMichael's food regime theses, our framework characterizes the two main trends within the corporate food regime as *Neoliberal* and *Reformist*. The former, hegemonic, trend is grounded in the intellectual tradition of economic liberalism, market-based, driven by corporate agrifood monopolies and managed by institutions such as the USDA (under the direction of Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsak), the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the private sector financing arm of the World Bank (IFC), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The latter, subordinate trend is reformist and managed by weaker offices in the same institutions (e.g. Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Kathleen Merrigan, and the public sector financing arm of the World Bank, the IDA/IBRD). While the 'mission' of Reform is to mitigate the social and environmental externalities of the corporate food regime, its 'job' is identical to that of the Neoliberal trend: the reproduction of the corporate food regime. Reformists call for mild reforms to the regime, for example through an increase of social safety nets, consumer-driven niche markets, and voluntary, corporate responsibility mechanisms.

Both trends share a power base rooted in G-8 governments, monopoly corporations and big philanthropy – essentially the ruling, corporate classes. The hegemony of the neoliberal trend is reflected in its ideological ubiquity across the food regime (as well as within many organizations of the food movement). For example, corporate expansion and individual 'consumption-as-politics', divorced from political organizing, undergirds the 'mainstreaming' wing of the international Fair Trade movement as well as much of the high-end 'Buy Local' and Slow Food campaigns in the US and Europe (Bacon *et al.* 2008, 2010, Allen and Wilson 2008). Micro-finance (the for-profit, neoliberal wing of the micro-credit movement) is rapidly gaining adherents in agriculture, as are other for-profit forms of 'social enterprise' from within middle and upper middle classes and Northern civil society organizations (Edwards 2010).

Global food movements are also characterized by two major trends that we refer to as *Progressive* and *Radical*. Many actors within the Progressive trend advance practical alternatives to industrial agri-foods, such as sustainable, agroecological and organic agriculture and farmer–consumer community food networks – largely within the economic and political frameworks of existing capitalist food systems. This is often coupled with calls for the right to food and food justice for marginalized groups self-defined by ethnicity, gender and socio-economic status, or the desire for pleasure, quality, and authenticity in the food system. The Radical trend also calls for food systems change on the basis of rights, but focuses much more on entitlements, structural reforms to markets and property regimes, and class-based, redistributive demands for land, water and resources, as captured in the notion of *food sovereignty*, a concept advanced by Vía Campesina, the global peasant, fisher, pastoralist federation (Patel *et al.* 2009). Demands for food sovereignty are frequently anti-imperialist, anti-corporatist and/or anticapitalist. A few (e.g. Venezuela) are openly socialist. Smallholders, landless laborers and semi-proletarianized peasants in the South, as well as family farmers in the North, have a strong presence in this trend.



Organizations addressing the abuses of labor in the food system, i.e. farm, processing, distribution, retail and restaurant workers, are also part of this trend. Because of the dramatic increase in North–South migration over the last decades, these food movements often overlap with movements for immigrant rights (Holt-Giménez *et al.* 2010). While the Progressive trend is rich in local/alternative food system practices, the Radical trend excels in more militant, national and international political advocacy (Holt-Giménez 2009). Both trends overlap significantly in their constituencies, largely drawn from family farmers, farm laborers and working and middle class consumers in the North, and peasants, fishers, pastoralists and sharecroppers in the South. Together, they make up the ‘movement of movements’ that seeks change in favor of smallholders, the poor and the underserved, and strives for more sustainable, equitable and healthy food systems. Seen as two sides of the same global food movement, the Progressive and Radical trends not only introduce practical innovations for equity and sustainability to the food system, but also seek to change the structural conditions in which these innovations operate.

Is the food movement (including both Progressive and Radical trends) a social force capable of driving a Polanyian counter-movement for reform of the corporate food regime? The question has been directed at different projects and sectors within the food movement (e.g. fair trade), producing uneven and sometimes contradictory answers (Bacon 2010). What possibilities does the global food movement present for bringing about structural transformation of the food regime? We submit that addressing these questions requires an assessment of the potential for convergence (or divergence) between the movement’s Progressive and Radical trends. We propose a *food regime/food movements framework* as an analytical tool to compare trends within the corporate food regime with those of the food movements. As variables, we compare the discourse, model, key actors and institutions, approach to the food crisis, and the key documents referred to by each trend. Our framework locates the progressive and radical trends *outside* of the corporate food regime, not because they are separate, autonomous or somehow autarchic, but in order to assess their potential to influence the regime as a social force acting upon the corporate food regime. Our aim is to better understand the political dynamics of food systems change in the face of the current food crisis (see Table 1).

### ***The Neoliberal trend***

The hegemonic political trend of the food regime over the last three decades has been indisputably neoliberal. Grounded in the neoliberal state, its corporate-driven *food enterprise* discourse is anchored in ideologies of economic liberalism and free-market fundamentalism. The food enterprise discourse advocates expanding global markets and increasing output through corporate-led technological innovation, and pushing peasant producers out of agriculture to make way for more efficient ‘entrepreneurial’ farmers, a practice euphemistically termed ‘land mobility’ (Gates Foundation 2008). The neoliberal approach to hunger is designed to reproduce the neoliberal institutions that presently control the regime itself.

### ***Model***

The neoliberal model is based upon overproduction by the grain-oilseed-livestock complex (Weis 2010), an unshakable faith in the power of technology, the continual,

Table 1. A food regime/food movements framework.

		Corporate food regime			Food movements	
POLITICS		NEOLIBERAL	REFORMIST	PROGRESSIVE	RADICAL	
<i>Discourse</i>	<i>Food Enterprise</i>	<i>Food Security</i>		<i>Food Justice</i>	<i>Food Sovereignty</i>	
<b>Main Institutions</b>	International Finance Corporation (World Bank); IMF; WTO; USDA; USAID; GAFSP; Green Revolution/CGIAR; Millennium Challenge; Global Harvest; Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; Cargill; Monsanto; ADM; Tyson; Carrefour; Tesco; Wal-Mart	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank); FAO; HLTF; CFA; CGIAR; IFAP; mainstream Fair Trade; Slow Food; some Food Policy Councils; Worldwatch; OXFAM-AMERICA; CARE; Feeding America and most food banks and food aid programs	CFS; Alternative Fair Trade & many Slow Foods chapters; many organizations in the Community Food Security Movement; CSAs; many Food Policy Councils & youth food and justice movements; Coalition of Immokalee Workers and other farmworker & labor organizations	Via Campesina and other agrarian-based farmers' movements (ROPPA, EAFF, ESAFF); International Planning Committee on Food Sovereignty; ATTAC; World March of Women; and many Food Justice and rights-based movements		
<b>Orientation</b>	<i>Corporate/Global market</i>	<i>Development/Aid</i>		<i>Empowerment</i>	<i>Entitlement/Redistribution</i>	
<b>Model</b>	Overproduction; corporate concentration; unregulated markets and monopolies; monocultures (including organic); GMOs; agrofuels; mass global consumption of industrial food; phasing out of peasant & family agriculture and local retail	Mainstreaming/certification of niche markets (e.g. organic, fair, local, sustainable); maintaining northern agricultural subsidies; 'sustainable' roundtables for agrofuels, soy, forest products, etc; market-led land reform; microcredit	Agroecologically-produced local food; investment in underserved communities; new business models and community benefit packages for production, processing & retail; better wages for ag. workers; solidarity economies; land access; regulated markets & supply	Dismantle corporate agri-foods monopoly power; parity; redistributive land reform; community rights to water & seed; regionally-based food systems; democratization of food system; sustainable livelihoods; protection from dumping/overproduction; revival of agroecologically-managed peasant agriculture to distribute wealth and cool the planet		

(continued)

Table 1. (Continued).

POLITICS	Corporate food regime		Food movements	
	NEOLIBERAL	REFORMIST	PROGRESSIVE	RADICAL
<b>Approach to the food crisis</b>	Increased industrial production; unregulated corporate monopolies; land grabs; expansion of GMOs; public-private partnerships; liberal markets; microenterprise; international sourced food aid; GAFSPF – The Global Agriculture and Food Security Program	Same as neoliberal but with increased middle peasant production & some locally-sourced food aid; microcredit; more agricultural aid, but tied to GMOs & ‘bio-fortified/ climate-resistant’ crops; <i>Comprehensive Framework for Action</i> (CFA)	Right to food; better safety nets; sustainably produced, locally sourced food; agroecologically-based agricultural development; Committee on World Food Security (CFS)	Human right to food; locally sourced, sustainably produced, culturally appropriate, democratically controlled; focus on UN/FAO negotiations
<b>Key documents</b>	World Bank 2008 Development Report	World Bank 2008 Development Report	IAASTD	Declaration of Nyeleni; Peoples’ comprehensive framework for action to eradicate hunger; ICAARD; UN Declaration of Peasant Rights; IAASTD

unregulated expansion of global markets, and particularly strong engagement from large, philanthropy capitalism. Philanthropy capitalism is characterized by three distinguishing features: very large sums of money committed to philanthropy, mainly the result of the remarkable profits earned by a few individuals in the IT and finance sectors during the 1990s and 2000s; a belief that methods drawn from business can solve social problems and are superior to the other methods in use in the public sector and in civil society; and a claim that these methods can achieve the transformation of society, rather than increased access to socially-beneficial goods and services (Edwards 2008, 32).

### *Key actors and institutions*

The regime is held firmly in place by Northern-dominated international finance and development institutions (e.g. IMF, WTO, World Bank), as well as the major agri-food monopolies (e.g. Cargill, Monsanto, ADM, Tyson, Carrefour, Tesco, Wal-Mart), agricultural policies of the G-8 (US Farm Bill, EU's Common Agricultural Policy), and big philanthropy capital (e.g. the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation).

The neoliberal approach to the food crisis is either to deny the existence of a crisis in the first place (Paarlberg 2010), or use the crisis as an opportunity to highlight continued calls for trade liberalization and increased investment in agricultural productivity, coupled with more emergency aid (Holt-Giménez *et al.* 2009, Ribeiro and Shand 2008, Glover 2010).<sup>5</sup> In this regard many government institutions, industry groups, and even some civil society groups share political positions, many of which are largely indistinguishable from those of the reformist trend. The solutions to global hunger presently being advanced by the G-8 governments, the World Bank, World Trade Organization, International Monetary Fund, US Department of Agriculture, and the US Agency for International Development all call for more of the same neoliberal measures they advocated for prior to the crisis. These measures include the conclusion of the World Trade Organization's elusive Doha Round, the development of proprietary technologies, and further deregulation of land and labor markets to make way for capital expansion and natural resource extraction, e.g. agrofuels and land grabs for industrial food production (Gordon 2008, Jonasse 2009, Holt-Giménez and Shattuck 2009, GRAIN 2008).

Perhaps the best financed neoliberal initiative is the World Bank's Global Agriculture and Food Security Program. The program is a multilateral trust fund set up by the US, Canada, Spain and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to span the gap between the \$40 billion a year needed to end hunger, the \$20 billion promised by the G-8 countries, and the \$14 billion that is actually forthcoming on these promises. The program draws for strategic direction on the World Bank's *World development report 2008: agriculture for development*, which recommends more global trade and more public money for the dissemination of new proprietary agricultural technologies. The move reflects a strategic effort by the Bank to shift the locus of the war on hunger from Rome and New York, where civil society has opened political space, to Washington – firmly under the control of the World Bank. In the image of

<sup>5</sup>The neoliberal fetish, that 'there is a technological fix for each and every problem' (Harvey 2005, 68) is apparent in the scientifically unproven assertion that genetically modified organisms are higher-yielding and 'climate resistant' and are thus the answer to world hunger (Gurian-Sherman 2009).

World Bank operations, the program divides support between the public and private sector, with the International Finance Corporation (IFC) in charge of long and short term loans, credit guarantees and equity to support private sector activities.

Industry has its own set of proposals as well. Industry-NGO partnerships also take a production-oriented approach to the food crisis. The Global Harvest Initiative, for example, brings together biotechnology companies Monsanto and DuPont, grain giant Archer Daniels Midland, and farm machinery supplier John Deere with NGOs Conservation International and the World Wildlife Fund to promote agricultural intensification and increased public investment in (and regulatory approval of) proprietary genetically modified crops (Global Harvest 2010a).<sup>6</sup> The initiative's policy position is indicative of the near complete consensus between neoliberal and reformist approaches to the food crisis:

The Global Harvest Initiative believes innovation in agriculture from production through distribution will make it possible to feed the world of 2050. Achieving this monumental task requires embracing all production practices, including conventional and organic agriculture, for producers of all sizes, ranging from subsistence farmers to large modern producers ... We support policies that support agricultural research, continued liberalization of food and agricultural trade, and improved US foreign assistance. (Global Harvest 2010b)

This approach (increased aid, accompanied by modest reforms and a mention of conventional, organic and genetically modified agriculture) appears again and again in reformist platforms from the *Comprehensive Framework for Action* to the draft text of the US Senate's Global Food Security Act (see Reformist trend below).

### *Key documents*

These prescriptions are perfectly compatible with the World Bank's 2008 *Agriculture for development report*. The report's 'pathways' out of rural poverty (commercially-oriented entrepreneurial smallholder farming, rural non-farm enterprise development and outmigration) unite under the 60-year-old modernization paradigm of development (Veltmeyer 2008).

### *The Reformist trend<sup>7</sup>*

The Reformist trend within the corporate food regime employs a *food security discourse* rooted in modernization theories of state-led development left over from

<sup>6</sup>Key board members of both Conservation International and the World Wildlife Fund draw from the ranks of the corporate agri-food monopolies. The former CEO of DuPont sits on the board of WWF along with former executives from Coca-Cola and Goldman Sachs. The executive committee chair at Conservation International is the current chairman of the board of Wal-Mart.

<sup>7</sup>Reformism in the food regime is rooted in modernization theories of economic development which saw the path for economic development in the Third World as following the same industrial path as that of the industrial North (Rostow 1960). Modernization theory was a defensive capitalist response to the spread of Marxist economic thought (Baran 1957) and to the related body of dependency theory (Furtado 1964). Central to modernization theory was the notion that continued economic development of the North was essential to finance the development of the South (Isbister 1991). This appears to be a persistent subtext of both Neoliberal and Reformist thought in the corporate food regime.

the import substitution industrialization (ISI)/' development states' of the Third World, and the neo-Keynesian 'development decades' of the 1960s–1980s promoted by Northern governments (Preston 1996, Rapley 1996). Reformists employ a cautious *food security discourse* and seek to mainstream less socially and environmentally damaging alternatives into existing market structures (FAO 2009b). Some advocate incentive-based certification and corporate self-regulation as a pathway for the transformation of unbridled capitalism. These approaches aim to modify industrial behavior through the power of persuasion and consumer choice (Conroy 2007). The supporting notion is that by dint of a good example or 'voting with our forks', less damaging trade and production alternatives will someday transcend their market niches (frequently high-end specialty products) and set new industrial standards. What has emerged, however, is an uneasy dualism between 'quality food' for higher income consumers and 'other food' consumed by the masses (Goodman and Goodman 2007, 6). The trend is broadly oriented toward state-led assistance and seeks to regulate, but not directly challenge market forces.

### *Model*

The Reformist model for food systems is compatible with capitalist overproduction and proprietary technologies, but is tempered by calls for renewed public financing for agricultural development, and self-regulatory and third-party certification systems that attempt to address problems of weak sustainability and poor equity (e.g. fair trade, large scale organics, and voluntary industry roundtables). The Reformist trend relies on the same guiding documents as its neoliberal counterpart, but emphasizes a renewed role for the state in establishing safety nets and re-investing in agricultural development, in part to ensure governability (if not 'good governance') along the lines of the post-Washington consensus (see Fine 1999, Gore 2000, Bello 2008).

### *Key actors and institutions*

Reformist projects reside in different wings of some of the same international finance institutions that manage the Neoliberal trend, e.g. the World Bank Group's public finance arms (IDA/IBRD), and in global institutions governed by one country one vote (e.g. United Nations, FAO). The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) was instrumental in spreading industrial agriculture to the Global South by using big philanthropy and public funds from the industrial North, as well as the infrastructure of the Southern development state. Following years of mission creep into rural development, a painful financial crisis, and a much-heralded 'greening' in the early 1990s the CGIAR lost its southern counterparts – National Agricultural Research Systems – to structural adjustment programs. Adrift and weakly funded, the CGIAR's research centers have recently been given new life by big philanthropy and agroindustry interested in launching a new Green Revolution based on GMOs (Patel *et al.* 2009, Holt-Giménez *et al.* 2009).

Common projects and institutions in the reformist trend include the corporate mainstreaming faction of Fair Trade (Holt-Giménez 2007); principles for 'responsible' foreign direct investment in agricultural land (i.e. land grabs) (Borras

and Franco 2010); the various industry-dominated ‘roundtables’ for sustainable soy, palm oil and biofuels (Shattuck 2009); corporate sectors of the organic foods industry; and civil society driven corporate social responsibility and industry self-regulation initiatives (O’Laughlin 2008). Many humanitarian, environmental and social service organizations like Bread for the World, Oxfam-America, CARE, WorldWatch and World Vision are wholly or partially rooted in the Reformist trend, in part because their main sources of funding come from government, major corporations, or large philanthro-capitalist institutions such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The Gates Foundation finances both neoliberal and reformist projects, though their support to the latter is much weaker (see Patel *et al.* 2009, Holt-Giménez 2008). The corporate-funded International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP) is a prominent organization within this trend. Unlike the more radical peasant federation Via Campesina, IFAP is dominated by large farmers and engages actively in consultations with international financial institutions. IFAP seeks a final agreement of the Doha Round, and, rather than a ban on GMOs, asserts ‘farmers, through their professional organizations and cooperatives, have a key role to play in the development of biotechnology in the agrofood and agroindustrial sectors’ (IFAP 1998).

### *Approach to the food crisis*

The reformist approach to the food crisis calls for increased trade liberalization, emergency aid, and long-term investment in agricultural development, none of which differs significantly from the calls of neoliberal groups. In the US, this is exemplified by the Lugar–Casey Global Food Security Act. The bill reforms foreign aid to allow for some (unspecified percentage) of locally sourced food aid in emergencies, and provides \$7.75 billion over five years for agricultural research.<sup>8</sup> The bill also mandates that research include ‘ecological agriculture, conventional breeding and genetically modified technology’ specifically, though the first two were only inserted after sustained civil society intervention. In fact in a recent op-ed, the bill’s author made exporting American expertise in biotechnology a key rationalization behind the bill (Lugar 2009).

Because of their economic dependence on government agricultural surplus, many food banks in the US (e.g. Feeding America) are financially rooted in this approach as well. Rather than call for structural change, most work to increase social safety nets (food stamps, food banks, food aid, food-for-work, etc.), and to increase their share of distribution. For these organizations, ending hunger depends primarily not on eliminating the causes of hunger, but in employing the industry’s surplus and the powers of the state to feed those who cannot afford to eat well (Wahlberg 2008, Winne 2008, Feeding America 2009).

Internationally the trend is represented by the UN High-Level Task Force on Hunger, headed up in large part by international finance institutions, and its *Comprehensive Framework for Action* (CFA) grounded in the World Bank’s 2008 Development Report. The CFA recognizes the human right to food. In doing so, it implies – but does not specify how – governments have a legal obligation to ensure

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<sup>8</sup>For the full text of the Global Food Security Act, see <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c111:S.384>: [Accessed 6 July 2010].

the food security of their citizens. However, the CFA studiously avoids addressing the root causes of the crises, calls for a swift conclusion to the WTO's Doha round, and assumes that integrating farmers into global commodity market chains will benefit smallholders.

Both neoliberals and reformers have signed on to the *Comprehensive Framework for Action*. However, while neoliberals have moved quickly to control the purse strings for the CFA's implementation, reformists have attempted to build a social consensus for the CFA by drawing civil society organizations into 'consultation' (Arnold and Nabarro 2010). The High Level Task Force and its Framework for Action actually have very little discretionary power. The funds the Task Force originally solicited from donor governments ended up in the World Bank's Global Agriculture and Food Security Program, a program sheltered from much of the social pressure currently on the UN bureaucracies represented on the Task Force, leaving the Task Force with stature, but not resources to affect its vision of change.

### *Key documents*

The key international references for the Reformist trend are the *Comprehensive Framework for Action*, the Millennium Development Goals, the World Bank's *World development report 2008: agriculture for development* and Gordon Conway's *Doubly Green Revolution: food for all in the twenty-first century* (Conway 1999).<sup>9</sup> Reformist-minded economists from the post-Washington consensus, such as Jeffrey Sachs, David Held and Joseph Stiglitz, believe that the benefits of neoliberal globalization generally outstrip its costs (Sachs 2005, Held 2004, Stiglitz and Charlton 2005, Bello 2007) and advocate an 'enlightened global capitalism' (Bello 2007), or in the words of philanthro-capitalist Bill Gates, 'creative capitalism' (Gates 2008). Though far from neo-Keynesian positions, they are not above finessing the resources of the state for agricultural development if it helps extend the reach of global markets (Bello 2007). In other words, the *REFORMIST path* out of the current food crisis is through a social re-stabilization of the corporate food regime on one hand, and the further application of technology and global markets on the other.

### **Two sides of the same coin**

Neoliberal and Reformist trends reflect the two directions of capitalism's double movement. They exist simultaneously and, despite some ideological variation, are both structurally integral to the corporate food regime. Many regime institutions

<sup>9</sup>Published when Gordon Conway was president of the Rockefeller Foundation, the *Doubly Green Revolution* argued for a new 'reformed' Green Revolution that ensured equity and sustainability. After Conway left Rockefeller, his book was used by the Foundation to revive their Green Revolution efforts in Africa. *Africa's turn: the new Green Revolution for the twenty-first century* advocates hybrid and genetically modified seeds and chemical fertilizers, training of African scientists, local-global market development, agro-dealer networks, infrastructure investments and agricultural policy reforms (Rockefeller Foundation 2007). Based on the premise that the Green Revolution had 'missed' Africa, *Africa's turn* became the guiding document for the Rockefeller and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundations' Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA).



and initiatives have both neoliberal and reformist projects, and the regime's key documents accommodate both perspectives for the capitalist development of global food systems. The double movement *within* the corporate food regime – in which reform is largely subjugated and instrumentalized by liberalization – results in more of a fine-tuning of the neoliberal project rather than a substantive change of direction. The propping and shoring by big philanthropy, the knitting together of corporate dominated public–private partnerships and the regulation of alternatives and dissent (rather than of markets and monopolies) characterize a food regime that has not yet found it necessary to substantively reform in the face of social pressure or environmental implosion.

### ***The Progressive trend***<sup>10</sup>

This tendency – primarily based in northern countries – is possibly the largest and fastest growing grassroots expression of the food movement. It employs a *food justice discourse* grounded in an empowerment orientation in which the poor, oppressed and underserved assert their rights through the power of self-respect and community organization (Alkon and Norgaard 2009, Levkoe 2006, Morland and Wing 2007).

The progressive trend is based primarily in the middle and working classes of the global North, and has particular appeal to youth. The food justice movement itself emerged from the environmental justice movement (Bullard *et al.* 1994), working class communities of color dealing with diet-related diseases (Herrera *et al.* 2009) and critiques of structural racism (Allen 2008, Self 2000). Food justice draws on the history of the racial justice movements of the 1960s and 1970s and more recent environmental justice organizing in the US (Ahmadi 2009). Labor movements in the US are beginning to influence progressive food movements as well, from the SEIU's<sup>11</sup> statements of intent to organize fast food restaurants<sup>12</sup> to the Coalition of Immokalee Workers' high profile campaigns and

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<sup>10</sup>Progressivism emerged in the US during the 1920s, as a reaction to increased industrialization and capitalism. Progressives advocated for economic and social justice through government regulation of large corporations. The contemporary progressive movement has become increasingly pluralist, encompassing issues such as religious freedom, environmental protection, women's rights and labor rights. A key theme anchoring progressivism is political reform in the public interest to prevent the political system from being dominated by elite and corporate interests. The progressive movement attempts to regulate corporate control over society, such as limiting the privatization of social security and providing stronger public protection of civic and environmental common goods. This is achieved through deepening democracy and making the government more accountable and responsive to the needs of its citizens. Progressives strive to create public policy that enhances social and economic justice and decreases inequity through prioritizing public interests (Dierwechter 2008). The progressive discourse is flexible, change oriented and pragmatic, providing a lens for social problem solving and reform (CAP 2010). As a result, progressivism is not associated with a political party, and adapts to the changing socio-economic landscape.

<sup>11</sup>Service Employees International Union.

<sup>12</sup>Though the SEIU has not made any official announcements, a leaked memo indicated the union's plan to organize fast food workers should the pro-labor Employee Free Choice Act pass. The memo is available at <http://www.scribd.com/doc/31364789/SeiuRestaurantOrgznPlanDec2009>.

the up and coming Restaurant Opportunities Center and Food Chain Worker's Alliance.<sup>13</sup>

### *Model*

The eclectic 'model' for the progressive development of the food system focuses on local foodsheds (Kloppenborg 1996, Meter 2010), family farming and 'good, clean and fair' food (Petrini 2005) with a strong representation from urban agriculture and direct rural-urban linkages, e.g. farmers markets and forms of Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs). The model also works on access to fresh, healthy food in low-income neighborhoods, explores worker-owned and alternative business models, and can even advocate for minority ownership of food businesses explicitly.<sup>14</sup>

### *Key actors and institutions*

The 'food justice' groups in the Progressive trend are a blend of community food security and environmental justice NGOs that denounce the ways people of color and underserved communities in rural and urban areas are abused by racism and classism within capitalist food systems (Ahmadi 2009), and insist on social rather than individual (consumer) responses to food regime failings (Lang 1996). Primarily practice-oriented, groups in this trend work on local production and processing of food, and focus on creating new business models for underserved communities.

Particularly strong in underserved communities in the global North, the Progressive trend is also characterized by broad and vigorous participation from urban and university youth. In the US, Real Food Challenge, Rooted in Community, and Growing Food & Justice are examples of this. While groups in the progressive trend are often aware of the global framework girding the corporate food regime, they are primarily active in local-national arenas. The focus on mobilizing local communities to solve local problems constitutes both a strength and a weakness of Progressive food justice movements. Energizing grassroots constituencies and creating innovative models also results in a 'patchwork' of successes and failures (Bellows and Hamm 2002) that does little to challenge the structure of the corporate food regime. As one farmer-activist put it, 'We are islands of good food and good community in a sea of bad news'.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>The Food Chain Workers Alliance (to which the Restaurant Opportunities Center belongs) is a radical coalition of worker-based organizations whose members seek to improve conditions for laborers at all levels of the food value chain. They have infused the progressive food movement with a call for healthy and affordable food access with radical demands for workers rights within the food system. See <http://foodchainworkers.org/>. The Coalition of Immokalee Workers is a farmworker organization of primarily indigenous and latino immigrant tomato pickers in Immokalee, Florida. Their innovative campaigns against modern-day slavery in the fields and 'a penny more a pound' for tomato pickers have mobilized the faith community and university students, successfully targeting fast food chains like Burger King, McDonalds and Taco Bell with successful boycotts. See <http://www.ciw-online.org/>.

<sup>14</sup>See the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network's 'Creating a Food Secure Detroit: A City of Detroit Policy on Food Security'. Available from: <http://detroitblackfoodsecurity.org/policy.html>.

<sup>15</sup>Farmer Jim Cochran, co-founder of Swanton Berry Farms in Northern California, as quoted in Shuman (2009).

The emergence of dozens of Food Policy Councils throughout the US and Canada reflect increasing local resistance to the corporate food regime (Harper *et al.* 2009, The Toronto Food Policy Council 1993). Food Policy Councils convene actors from local and/or state governments, local business and civil society in an effort to better manage local food systems. They are characterized by direct citizen participation and a commitment to equity and sustainability.

In Europe, citizen reaction to the European Union's neoliberal Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has resulted in the formation of 750 AMAP (Associations for the Maintenance of Smallholder Agriculture) in France alone. The AMAP establish solidarity contracts between consumers and local agroecological farmers. In Spain an AMAP-style gardening movement called 'Under the Asphalt lies the Garden' (Bajo el Asfalto está la Huerta – BAH) operates in hundreds of neighborhoods, as do the 600 vegetable box schemes in Britain, and the 200 or more GASAP (Groupes d'Achat Solidaire de l'Agriculture Paysanne) in Belgium (Vivas 2007).

In Africa, the Participatory Land Use Management (PELUM) association, in Latin America the *Movimiento Campesino a Campesino* (farmer to farmer movement), and in Asia the Farmer Field Schools are representative of the farmer-led, sustainable agriculture movements advancing agroecology, low external input, organic agriculture, integrated pest management and permaculture from within this trend (Holt-Giménez *et al.* 2009, Pretty *et al.* 2008). These groups, largely supported by progressive NGOs, historically have poor linkages with agrarian movements (Bunch 2010, Gomez 2010, Vasquez 2010). However, this is changing as both NGOs and the farmers realize that simply producing more food more ecologically will not save their livelihoods from the enclosures of the corporate food regime. They have begun to reach out politically and are forming new, agrarian-based farmers' federations (Wilson 2010).

### *Approach to the food crisis*

In many ways, progressive responses to the food crisis have been decentralized and locally based – from programs to supply food banks from local/urban farms, to global projects for community grain banks. While these remain important and vibrant parts of a solution to the root causes of the food crisis itself, their disconnected nature risks leaving little structural impact on hunger. In the US, farm organizations in this trend represent small farmers seeking policies that support organic agriculture and family farming over industrial agriculture, GMOs and agrifood corporations (e.g. Family Farm Defenders, National Family Farm Coalition). A host of locally-based initiatives linking access to healthy food to sustainable production comprise the urban side of this trend, including farm-to-school programs, urban gardens, corner store conversions, community markets, community-supported agriculture and the spread of farmers markets into under-served communities.

At the international level, the progressive response has been to carve out significant political space within the United Nations system (McKeon 2010). The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) became prime contested territory. In 2009 after decades of pressure, the Committee for World Food Security (CFS), an intergovernmental policy body, went through a period of structural reform to allow for greater civil society participation. That reform made the CFS, and begrudgingly,

parts of the FAO, central players in the progressive response to the food crisis (McKeon 2010). As the food crisis heated up, so did pressure from donor governments to restrict the role of the FAO as a policy forum and development actor. On the other side, social organizations urged the FAO to play a more autonomous role in the fight against hunger, and hold governments accountable for their failures (McKeon 2010).

The CFS Coordinating Committee of the Civil Society Advisory Group is run by representatives from the International Policy Committee on Food Sovereignty (IPC), Oxfam International and Action Aid, who have developed a draft proposal that includes progressive and even radical positions on issues surrounding sustainable production methods, land reform, fighting food monopolies, support for small scale farmers, limiting the production and distribution of GM crops, and supply management.<sup>16</sup>

### Key documents

There are few overarching policy documents specifically informing or reflecting the largely heterogeneous Progressive trend. There is, however, a plethora of research and writing in academic and popular circles (from journals to blogs) that address food justice and community food security (Winne 2008), food democracy (Lang 2005), new agrarianism (Jackson *et al.* 1984), food safety (Nestle 2002), and good and healthy eating (Petrini 2005, Pollan 2009, Schlosser 2001). There is a boom in documentaries that both attack the industrial agrifoods complex and champion local, organic, sustainable food systems and e.g. *The World According to Monsanto* (Robin 2008), *Food Inc.* (Kenner 2009) and *King Corn* (Woolf 2007). The International Agricultural Assessment of Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) is frequently referred to by progressive think tanks and development organizations to support strategies based on agroecological and farmer-driven approaches to rural development (IAASTD 2008).<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup>See for example the Civil Society for the Committee on World Food Security (available from: <http://cso4cfs.org/>) and the Declaration of Civil Society Organizations participating at the CSOs/NGOs – FAO Consultation for Europe and Central Asia, Yerevan, 10–11 May 2010 (available from: <http://www.foodsovereignty.org/new/> [Accessed 6 July 2010]).

<sup>17</sup>With the advent of the post-Washington Consensus, the World Bank Group has led several global assessments, engaging experts and stakeholders in high-level reviews of controversial industries, for example, the Report from the World Commission on Dams (2000) and the Extractive Industries Review (World Bank 2004). Findings and recommendations from these studies have been coolly received by the Bank (World Bank 2004), and generally ignored by industry and other IFIs. The IAASTD (International Assessment on Agricultural Knowledge Science and Technology for Development), a four-year, \$15m exercise initiated by Monsanto corporation and the World Bank in 2003 and carried out with some 400 scientist-stakeholders, was no exception (Scoones 2010). Though signed by 57 governments (excepting the US, Australia, and Canada), the IAASTD was rejected by scientists from the powerful pro-industry group *CropLife*, largely because findings did not profile genetically engineered crops as a solution to world hunger (CropLife 2008). The IAASTD was ignored by the High Level Task Force and the Comprehensive Framework on Agriculture, and receives no mention by the World Bank in its New Deal for Agriculture. Repeated efforts by anti-hunger groups to obtain official recognition of the IAASTD from the US Department of Agriculture have been met with silence.

***The Radical trend***

The Radical trend in food movements seeks deep, structural changes to food and agriculture. While sympathetic to much of the grassroots movements in the Progressive trend, it advocates for a radical transformation of society:

Although most on the left would find resonance [with the work of local food movements] they may think that the key tactics chosen by activists at the grassroots are insufficient to mount a systemic critique of corporate agriculture and liberal capitalist economics as a whole ... A complete *transformation* of the agriculture and food system ... requires a complete *transformation* of the society. (Magdoff *et al.* 2000, 188)

The notion of *entitlement* and the *redistribution* of wealth and power within the food system run throughout the discourse and practice of movements in this trend. Entitlement, as advanced by Sen (1981, 1), ‘connects one set of ownerships to another through certain *rules of legitimacy*’ (our emphasis). In this view, hunger is not caused by low productivity, unemployment, poor wages or inadequate distribution, but by inequities in the determinants of production, reproduction and distribution, i.e. the entitlements extending to relations of exchange, modes of production, social security and employment (Sen 1981). Redistribution is not simply about the redistribution of wealth or goods but concerns the restructuring of entitlements. In this regard, the Radical trend challenges the corporate food regime’s rules of legitimacy.

The Radical discourse is framed primarily by the concept of *food sovereignty*, defined as ‘the right of peoples to define their own food and agriculture’ (Windfuhr and Jonsén 2005). The ‘right to have rights over food’ invokes a democratization of the food system in favor of the poor and underserved (Patel 2009, Vía Campesina 2008, Windfuhr and Jonsén 2005). Launched by Via Campesina at the 1996 World Food Summit, the political banner of food sovereignty has since been raised by countless farmers’ organizations, fisherfolk, pastoralists, and civil society organizations, as well as NGOs, worldwide. It has been mentioned in the constitutions of Venezuela (2008), Ecuador (2008), Bolivia (2009), Mali (2006), and Nepal (2007). It reached its most broadly articulated expression in the Declaration of Nyelení held in 2006 in Selingué, Mali, where thousands of rural activists gathered to agree on its terms (Via Campesina 2007). Food sovereignty affirms the human right to food as extended by Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations, but not simply through access to food (following the FAO’s definition of food security), but through the right of democratic control over food and food-producing resources.<sup>18</sup>

***Model***

The food system ‘model’ of the Radical trend is similar to the Progressive model in that it also embraces agroecology and local, community-based food systems, as well as traditional knowledge. However, to achieve a system transformation in which these grassroots alternatives can scale up, the organizations in the Radical trend advocate dismantling corporate agri-foods monopolies, parity, redistributive land

<sup>18</sup>For definitions and discussion of food sovereignty see Patel *et al.*, *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 36(3), July 2009, ‘Grassroots voices: food sovereignty’.

reform, protection from dumping and overproduction, and community rights to water and seed. While many of these demands are articulated in global fora, there is a strong call for regional and local democratic control over agriculture and food systems.

As a political demand, food sovereignty invokes the sovereign power of the state for the implementation of re-distributive land reform, social protections and safety nets. It also challenges and transcends the state as 'the state has been captured by capital, and the rights of small farmers, and the ability of small farmers to influence state policy (despite their numerical superiority vis-à-vis large farmers) has been abrogated' (Patel and McMichael 2004). Via Campesina calls for food sovereignty to reach beyond the State into global arenas in order to pressure national governments and raise global awareness (Martínez-Torres and Rosset 2010).

### *Key actors and organizations*

Organizations leading this trend come primarily from historical agrarian and labor struggles in the Global South. Via Campesina's 148 farmers' organizations spanning 69 countries<sup>19</sup> are leaders in this regard, but many other organizations and movements, including the World March of Women, the International NGO/CSO Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty and the global climate justice movement call for food sovereignty. Activists in this trend frequently occupy international spaces for advocacy, such as the UN, FAO, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In Europe one of the principal reference networks for food systems change is the Via Campesina European Coordination, which brings together organizations and farmers' unions from Denmark, Switzerland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Greece, Malta and Turkey (Vivas 2007).

### *Approach to the food crisis*

The food crisis brought new urgency and attention to the radical agenda but did not cause a major shift in the movement's approach to food and agriculture. When the crisis broke, Via Campesina International Coordinator Henry Saragih sent an open letter to the head of the FAO stating

This current food crisis is the result of many years of deregulation of agricultural markets, the privatization of state regulatory bodies and the dumping of agricultural products on the markets of developing countries. According to the FAO, liberalized markets have attracted huge cash flows that seek to speculate on agricultural products on the 'futures' markets and other financial instruments. (Saragih 2008)

The letter called on governments to regulate international markets and support countries to strengthen their food production, asserted that peasants are responsible for the majority of the world's food production, and re-affirmed the call for food sovereignty.

More interesting, however, was the convergence within the radical trend around the food crisis. In the US, the US Working Group on the Food Crisis, an ad hoc coalition of 40 labor, religious, anti-hunger, environmental and family farm groups issued a call to action echoing the Via Campesina in demanding policy to 'Stabilize

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<sup>19</sup>See [www.viacampesina.org](http://www.viacampesina.org)

prices for farmers and consumers globally, re-balance power in the food system, make agriculture sustainable, and guarantee the right to healthy food by building local and regional food systems and fostering social, ecological and economic justice'.<sup>20</sup> Internationally the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty occupied key strategic space from within the UN system, and mobilized to assert pressure on those institutions from the outside with their more radical grassroots base (McKeon 2010). One strategic international lever has included the push for a UN Declaration on Peasant's Rights, a potential tool which La Via Campesina, the IPC and their allies got one step closer to creating in March of this year when the Human Rights Council released a preliminary study of the issue (UN Human Rights Council 2010).

Many initiatives outside Via Campesina also attempt to bring different aspects of the food regime under citizen control. The extensive peasant federations of East, West, South and Central Africa have taken strong positions favoring market regulation, grain reserves, guaranteed prices, redistributive land reform, the right to save seeds, and other issues intrinsic to food sovereignty (Patel 2007). In Africa a new 'African Alliance Food Sovereignty' has recently formed to directly confront the new Green Revolution.<sup>21</sup> 'Citizen Juries' in Africa and Asia have put the CGIAR on public 'trial' for advancing research agendas that undermine food sovereignty and farmers' control over seeds (Pimbert and Boukary 2010).

### *Key documents*

Key strategy documents reflective of the Radical trend have largely come from Via Campesina and the International Policy Committee on Food Sovereignty, as well as agrarian declarations from the Regional and World Social Forums. Seminal documents include proceedings from the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD), the Declaration of Food Sovereignty of Nyelení, The Peoples' comprehensive framework for action to eradicate hunger, Terra Preta, and the proposed UN Declaration on Peasant Rights. Supporting, compatible documents include the FAO's Voluntary Guidelines on the implementation of the Right to Food and the IAASTD.

The praxis of the Radical trend has a radicalizing effect on the politics of the food movement. This is reflected in the growing literature surrounding food sovereignty. Rooted in Marxist political economy and the agrarian question, this literature loosely tracks Via Campesina's political evolution (Martínez-Torres and Rosset 2010), i.e. agrarian studies with demands for land (Borras 2007, Rosset 2006); socio-ecological crises with agroecology and food systems studies (Altieri 1989); global resurgence of peasant identities with new social movements and transnational social movements (Borras *et al.* 2008, McMichael 2007); and opposition to monopoly capital with studies of late capitalism (Hendrickson 2007, Harvey 2005). The unequal burden borne by women in the food crises, the spread of AIDS, and migration have brought gender to the Via Campesina platform and gender studies to food sovereignty (Bryceson 1995, Desmarais 2003). Academics, think tanks and researcher-activists in the Radical trend have deepened and popularized studies of agrarian capitalism and globalization (Bello 2004); politics of hunger (Patel 2007,

<sup>20</sup>See <http://usfoodcrisisgroup.org/>

<sup>21</sup>See [http://africanbiodiversity.org/abn\\_old/documents\\_SSL\\_items/AFSA\\_declaration](http://africanbiodiversity.org/abn_old/documents_SSL_items/AFSA_declaration)

Lappé *et al.* 1998); agrarian demands and international peasant movements (Rosset 2006, Borras *et al.* 2008, Edelman 2000, Desmarais 2007); trade and agricultural policy (McAfee and Murphy 2005, Rosset 2006); GMOs (Ribeiro and Shand 2008); agroecology (Vandermeer 2009, Altieri 1995); energy, climate and peasant agriculture (Pimentel and Pimentel 1990, GRAIN 2007, Gordon 2008); and the political economy of food systems (McMichael 2009, Friedmann 1987).

### Class politics and permeability

Liberalism, neoliberalism and reform have been described as class projects (Harvey 2005, McMichael 2000, Polanyi 1941). Arguably, class interests have been the mortar in the construction of the corporate food regime. In the same way, the Progressive and Radical politics anchoring the world's food movements are also reflections of class interests. Practical, community and identity-based food justice alternatives and structurally-combative food sovereignty demands are political projects that express overlapping class interests expressed through the politics of food. If these interests were to converge, they might contribute significantly to the construction of a different food regime. However, in contrast to the homogenous projects on the neoliberal/reformist's agenda, the political projects of the Progressive and Radical trends are heterogeneous and fragmented. Given the political state of the left overall, this should come as no surprise. Apart from the hegemonic influence of neoliberalism, the challenge of turning 'a movement in itself' into 'a movement for itself' is complicated by the blurring of class interests with identity politics and the socio-political influence of relations of consumption *vis-à-vis* the relations of production. This seems particularly apparent in the food movement, an arena of political struggle in which both industrial production and mass consumption are being contested by a wide array of social forces in rural and urban areas in the industrial North and in the Global South.

The food movement in general, and especially the Progressive trend, is often perceived as coming from predominantly educated, middle class and elite communities.<sup>22</sup> But this characterization belies the social, racial and economic complexities that exist between trends and even between groups within those trends. The Detroit Food Policy Council and the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network, for example, though rooted in progressive actions, have an explicit analysis of structural racism in the food system, and a policy platform that includes eliminating 'barriers to African-American participation and ownership in all aspects of the food system', as well as 're-distribution of wealth through cooperative community ownership'.<sup>23</sup> Several important middle-class movements straddle reformist and progressive trends. The 'movement-based' wing of Fair Trade and many actors within the organic foods and urban farming movements take progressive and often radical positions on the issues of food and justice (Holt-Giménez *et al.* 2007, Bacon 2010). The Slow Food movement, focused on 'good, clean and fair' and already critical of industrial food, is being cautiously turned at the top by calls for food justice and food sovereignty (Petrini 2005, Viertel 2010, McCandlesh 2009). By the same token, key urban and rural organizations from the

<sup>22</sup>See for example the portrayal of the food movement in Michael Pollan's (2010) recent New York Times Magazine piece on food movements.

<sup>23</sup>See <http://detroitblackfoodsecurity.org/policy.html> [Accessed 2 July 2010].



largely progressive food justice movement also adopt deeply radical concepts and positions, such as food sovereignty (Schiavoni 2009). Even within the Radical trend, class lines are not always clear. For example, both the Canadian National Farmers Union, members of which may own and operate 1200-acre, fully mechanized farms, and the Brazilian Landless Workers' Movement are members of La Via Campesina, and though they may adopt similar political positions against neoliberalism, do not originate from the same class base.

These tensions exist throughout the food movement, and may present both opportunities and obstacles to convergence. As the food regime shifts between liberalization and reform, we can also expect these divergent class alliances to shift. For this reason, the ideological trends within the food movement are permeable. Food movement organizations are fluid and have different and changing positions on key food system issues like GMOs, food aid, agrofuels, subsidies, supply management, land reform and trade. Depending on their ideology, political awareness, support base and funding, food movement organizations will adopt a range of stances, and will consciously or unconsciously form alliances across regime and movement trends. While some organizations are solidly neoliberal, reformist, progressive or radical, others are much harder to categorize because they adopt politically distinct positions on different issues – or adopt one position while practicing another. A group's positioning vis-à-vis neoliberal or reformist projects and institutions can be tactical or strategic. Rather than ascribing fixity to organizations in the food movement, an appreciation of their heterogeneous and fluid political nature, coupled with an analysis of potential alliances within the movement, can help us identify challenges and opportunities for food systems change.

### **Solving the food crisis: alliances for regime change**

The world food crisis, far from an anomaly, is part of the 'creeping normality' of the corporate food regime. Barring profound changes, the regime will likely repeat its cycles of liberalization and reform, plunging the world's food systems into ever graver crises (Lang 2010a, 95, 2010b). While food system reforms like localizing food assistance and increasing aid to agriculture in the Global South are long overdue, and while initiatives such as 'Fair Trade', 'Organic' or 'Sustainable' certification give an indication of the possibilities for less destructive markets, in and of themselves these reforms do not alter the fundamental balance of power within the food system, and in some cases may even exacerbate inequitable power relations. To put an end to hunger, the practices, rules and institutions determining the world's food systems must change. This implies *regime change*.

The challenge for food movements is to address the immediate problems of hunger, malnutrition, food insecurity and environmental degradation, while working steadily towards the structural changes needed for sustainable, equitable and democratic food systems. The first task has been undertaken widely, and is reflected in the rich diversity of experiences, projects and organizations fighting hunger that, in the words of activist-academic Harriet Friedmann, 'Appear everywhere like plants breaking through the cracks in the asphalt!' Progressive alternative models hold a tremendous amount of energy, creativity and diversity, but can also be locally focused and issue- rather than system-driven. The progressive trend is an ideologically amorphous mix of organizations in which labor and agrarian concerns

are just one more expression of ‘new social movement’ diversity. The absence of an ideological compass means these groups can turn towards reform and neoliberalism, or towards more radical, class-based, engagement. In this regard, the Progressive trend is a pivotal trend in the relationship between the corporate food regime and the food movement.

To take a specific example, the movement to improve access to food in low-income urban communities has received high level support from the White House and the USDA. But the causes of nutritional deficiency among underserved communities go beyond the location of grocery stores. The abysmal wages, unemployment, skewed patterns of ownership and inner-city blight, and the economic devastation that has been historically visited on these communities are the result of structural racism and class struggles lost (Self 2000). No amount of fresh produce will fix urban America’s food and health gap unless it is accompanied by changes in the structures of ownership and immigration laws and a reversal of the diminished political and economic power of the poor and lower working-class.

The way in which regime and movement actors have responded to the food crisis is broadly indicative of their overall political and ideological alliances and shifting balances of power. In many cases, we see reformist approaches to the food crisis – like the US’s Global Food Security Act’s inclusion of ecological agriculture – alongside support for GMOs; or the UN High Level Task Force’s civil society consultations adopting discursive positions from the progressive camp. The growing Reformist–Progressive discourse asserting that ‘we need all solutions’ to confront the tremendous challenge of global hunger (read: sustainable agriculture *and* industrial agriculture; free trade *and* certified fair trade) is on one hand a tactical retreat on the part of industry in the face of widespread social and environmental criticism. However, this also reduces the debate on hunger to the realm of technological innovation and deflects critical analysis of how the corporate food regime undermines agroecology and food sovereignty.

As the world’s food, fuel, financial and climate crises worsen, the contradictions between the food regime and food movements will likely deepen. The Reformist trend will continue to reach out to organizations in the Progressive trend in an attempt to build its social base of support and pre-empt their radicalization.

Large non-governmental organizations are especially vulnerable to these moves. Development groups like Oxfam-America and the Heifer Project, which receive grants of several million dollars from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, have remained conspicuously neutral regarding the Foundation’s plans for the massive introduction of GMOs to Africa. Worldwatch, which received \$1.1 million from the Gates Foundation to carry out a study of sustainable agriculture projects in Africa, reached their conclusions before even setting foot in Africa. In a letter to the New York Times (28 October 2009), Worldwatch researchers made clear that they supported a ‘combination of approaches’ in Africa – from conventional GM agriculture to agroecology – indicating that they were highly unlikely to criticize their underwriter’s approach, whatever the evidence turned out to be (Worldwatch 2009).

To the extent Progressive groups are enrolled in Reformist projects, the corporate food regime will likely be strengthened, the differences between the progressive and radical groups will deepen, and the food movement overall will be weakened. It is doubtful this scenario will bring about substantive reform.

Neither reform nor transformation will likely occur without social movements strong and imaginative enough to inspire citizens to action and force governments to act. Historically, reforms have been forced on liberal markets not by dint of reformists in government, but as the result of intense social pressure, unrest and the threat of ungovernability. To build this kind of political power, organizations in the food movement will need strong alliances and must distinguish superficial reform from structural change. This not only requires a vision and practice of the desired change, it means making strategic and tactical sense of the matrix of actors, institutions and projects at work within local, national and global food arenas. The existing trends within the world's food systems are somewhat self-defining. Actors and institutions within the reformist, progressive and radical trends tend to self-associate, reaching out when specific opportunities for resources, legislation, campaigns, or direct action arise. The challenge for movement-building is to reach beyond the easily occurring, tactical relationships to forge strategic alliances across the progressive and radical trends.

Many groups are already busy addressing these divides. Food Policy Councils are an example of citizens working together to span the divide between advocacy and practice. Despite receiving much of its funding from agroindustry – and despite the predominance of upper-middle class constituents – the Slow Food Movement has made strong statements against ‘big agriculture’ and in favor of food sovereignty (Petrini 2005). Some chapters are actively reaching out to food justice movements and underserved communities (Viertel 2010). Family farmers in the US National Family Farm Coalition (NFFC) also belong to *Vía Campesina* and thus address their national issues within the context of the international struggle for food sovereignty. In Brazil, the Landless Worker's Movement (MST) integrates the agroecological practice taught in their peasant university with the agrarian advocacy and direct action of their land occupations. Increasingly, the positions and campaigns of labor organizations like the Immokalee Agricultural Workers Coalition, the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union and others are finding their way into the agendas of food justice coalitions. The food networks in Europe are joining forces to politically roll back the EU's neoliberal policies. In France, *Minga*, a grouping of 800 associations working on fair, local, and international trade now coordinate with the *Confederación Paysanne* of *Vía Campesina*. In Spain, the *Plataforma Rural*, a diverse broad-based coalition that brings together farmers, consumers, environmental groups and NGOs, is working to create stronger linkages between rural and urban areas to improve rural life and to promote local, socially responsible and ecological agriculture (Vivas 2007). In Africa as well as the US, newly-formed Food Sovereignty Alliances between farmer federations, NGOs, women's organizations, and labor and environmental groups are acting on local and national issues and organizing transnationally.<sup>24</sup> These are all embryonic examples of the ‘convergence in diversity’ among opponents of the neoliberal food regime that Amin (2008) claims is needed for regime change. To the

<sup>24</sup>At the US Social Forum in Detroit in June 2010, the US Working Group on the Food Crisis began a process of expanding its leadership to grassroots food justice groups and changed its name to the US Food Sovereignty Alliance. In Africa, the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa ([http://africanbiodiversity.org/abn\\_old/documents\\_SSL\\_items/AFSA\\_declaration](http://africanbiodiversity.org/abn_old/documents_SSL_items/AFSA_declaration)) brings together farmers' federations from around the continent with women's organizations and NGOs to organize against a new Green Revolution for Africa.

extent that these kinds of strategic alliances between Progressive and Radical trends increase, the food movement will likely be strengthened in relation to the food regime.

The systemic divergence within the food movement is visible in the different constituencies and strategies of organizations working for immediate food aid to the hungry and those struggling for structural change to prevent hunger in the first place; between those working with discriminated and underserved communities, and those working with the privileged 'overserved' classes; between those working on national hunger issues and those working on international hunger; and between global civil society militating in the halls of Washington, DC, Brussels or Rome, and those farmer organizations and NGOs struggling to implement fair, sustainable practices on the ground. Under pressure, these fractures could lead to more divergence and fragmentation within the food movement, undermining the possibility of regime change.

Further, a profound area of silence commonly found across all trends in the food movement is the issue of labor in the food system; not just farm labor, but that of the poor, often undocumented workers that process, deliver, and cook the North's food. These workers – many of whom are former peasants – provide the Tysons, WalMarts, Carrefour, and even Slow Food restaurants of the world with their essential labor subsidy. It is difficult to imagine just how the food movement could significantly change the food regime without establishing strong, strategic alliances with food system workers.

Unlike the symbiotic relationship between Neoliberal and Reformist trends in the food regime, there is nothing intrinsically stable about the relationship between the Progressive and Radical trends that will keep them from splitting under pressure, especially because many of these tactical, issue-based alliances originate in different class interests.

## Conclusions

The food crisis has brought a retrenchment of neoliberalization, weak calls for reform, and the worldwide growth of food movements that challenge the legitimacy and hegemony of the corporate food regime. Arguably, the growth of these food movements, combined with the food crisis, has brought about some discursive changes to the corporate food regime (e.g. 'we need all solutions') and has prodded the liberal state to take measured steps towards mitigating the regime's social, economic and environmental externalities (e.g. the *Comprehensive Framework for Action*, the Lugar-Casey Bill). While not unwelcome, these developments seem trivial when compared to the binge of unregulated speculation on the world's food commodities, the explosion of land grabs, the steady spread of GMOs and agrofuels, and the growing monopoly control over all aspects of the food system. (The finessing of limited public funds by the corporate sector for public-private partnerships for what can be described as corporate – rather than state-led – agricultural development cannot be seen as reform, but as a compliment to the expansion of the 'self-regulating market'.)

However, while food movements have been largely ineffective in ushering in substantive reforms, they might well be instrumental in slowing the *rate* of liberalization. This is not so trivial. The importance of the nineteenth century counter-movement in Britain was that it decreased the rate of liberalization, giving

the dispossessed time to ‘adjust to changing conditions without fatally damaging their substance, human and economic, physical and moral’ (Polanyi 1941, 37). Clearly, the corporate food regime has already visited widespread and fatal damage to masses of people, cultures, economies and environments, worldwide. However, we would submit that the minor reforms and discursive shifts that characterize the weak counter-movement within the current regime have also given social movements an opportunity to grow, spread, and to occupy key political spaces in global and local institutions (e.g. the Committee on World Food Security, local food policy councils). They have also managed to loosely coalesce across barriers of class, race and gender into two complementary trends for food systems change.

As the global food crisis spreads and deepens, food movements are likely to grow and increase social pressure on the corporate food regime. When combined with pressure emerging from the climate, financial and fuel crises, these expressions could intensify the counter-movement overall, helping to usher in reforms. However, as we stated in the beginning of this article, the political nature of those reforms may not be at all sustainable, democratic or redistributive. In order to influence the political nature of reform, the food movement will not only need to apply concerted social pressure, it will need to advance clear political proposals. This implies building social convergence within the movement’s diversity. The political effectiveness of this ‘convergence in diversity’ will depend on the nature and strength of the strategic alliances constructed between Progressive and Radical trends of the food movement.

Beyond the general movement demands for sustainability, equity, food justice and food sovereignty, the basis for strong strategic alliances – ones that will go beyond superficial policy reform and push for substantive regime change – are class interests. Tactical, cross-class alliances between upper-middle class consumers (or large family farmers) in the North and the peasant federations of the South are important. But linking the livelihood interests (production and reproduction) of underserved communities in the North with those of the besieged peasantry in the Global South probably offers much stronger foundations for a more durable convergence. The challenge of building strong class alliances *within* each trend cannot be ignored, either. The overlapping demands for food justice, immigration rights and labor rights are one example of an area of important strategic convergence within and between Progressive and Radical trends.

Whether or not these alliances result in substantive changes to the food regime depends largely on whether or not the pivotal groups within the Progressive trend ally themselves with reformists or with radicals. If the Progressive forces tilt towards reform, the corporate food regime will be strengthened and we are (somewhat paradoxically) unlikely to see substantive changes to the status quo. However, if Progressives tilt towards radical agendas, the food movement will likely be strengthened. Because of the clear political platform and strategic global positioning, the Radical trend will likely determine whether or not this social pressure can be converted into concrete political demands. If the balance of strategic relationships within the food movement leans toward radicalization, it could push the regime’s ‘counter-movement’ to challenge governments and institutions to reign in global markets, dismantle monopolies and create more enabling conditions for community food security, small-scale sustainable agriculture, and localized and democratized food systems.

The transformation of the corporate food regime would require a major shift from societies embedded in the market economy to economies and markets that are

embedded in society (see Polanyi 1941, 43–56). Clearly, the transformation of society is a task beyond the scope of food movements. However, if food movements can play a radical role in food regime change, they may go a long way towards driving the social transformations needed to ensure broader systemic changes.

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