

9-2018

Digesting Democracy: A Theoretical Analysis of American Food Regimes

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DIGESTING DEMOCRACY: A Theoretical Analysis of American Food Regimes

By

Angela R. Moore

A master's thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Political Science in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, The City University of New York

2018

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the graduate Faculty in Political Science in satisfaction
of the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

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Abstract

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ABSTRACT:

This analysis will explore the theoretical underpinnings of the neoliberal food regime in relation to American democracy, and how an alternative food regime of food sovereignty may help to expand American democracy. The latter regime has an integrative approach to promote democracy through realigning the food system with collective decisions at its base instead of distancing the people from food and providing the opportunity for a self-ruling demos to collectively govern. Food sovereignty with its processes of participation, community responsibility, and self-determinism may challenge the current American democracy by using the framework of food regime theory. In the conclusion of this analysis are examples of policy options that can better integrate food sovereignty into the American democratic system and vice versa. The aim of this investigation is to utilize food regime theory to understand food sovereignty as a regime type that may enhance our current American democracy. A concept for food regimes that may offer democratic tenets many hold dear to their notions of American democracy such as sovereignty, participation, collective will, and individual freedom.

KEYWORDS: Food Politics, Democratic Food Sources, Agrarian Democracy, Food Distancing, Food System Politics, Neoliberal Food Regime, Food Sovereignty Regime

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INTRODUCTION

Democracy is commonly understood as the United States' political system when it is instead mostly practiced as procedure. The great democratic dream has not fully materialized for many. Despite the great hopes for the American Project's promise of citizen actors participating in a self-ruling demos that is more than a political process; but a way of life. (M. Wilson 1939) Furthermore, it is far from the ideal of a communal, civic-minded, and self-governing group of individuals. Democracy in contemporary American practice is often little more than the act of voting—and even then, participation rates are painfully low. The State is not organized according to one person one vote and the Electoral College elects the President, further limiting voting as the simplest democratic engagement. The Cultivation of self-actualized democratic citizens is a goal, it requires widespread engagement with all systems that shape society. And yes, many of these systems have become strikingly less democratic over time—none more than the systems that normalize how the United States produces, distributes, and consumes food. Moreover, by addressing the development of a more democratic food system, the U.S. can become a more democratic society.

If we are to imagine society transforming in ways that open additional locations for democratic participation beyond the minimal behavior of voting food is an entry point. Imagine if there were communities built on compassion and equality. Imagine all had access to healthy food. For example, in 2016, four out of the five states with the lowest voter turnout were likewise the most food insecure states in the nation.¹ (McDonald 2017) Civic participation declines when people do not control the means of production over their food. In other words, obstructions to food hinders the greater democratic project. Decisions about food at various levels of society; from the individual, family, community, to nation may offer

¹ This data does not determine causation, but poverty rates and voter turnout remain empirically linked and suggest a connection between food and civic participation. Is food insecurity more than just an indicator of socioeconomic status but a determinant of democracy itself. The fifth lowest voter turnout state, West Virginia, ranked eleventh in the food insecurity chart.

locations for democratic participation. Participation levels in a democracy are strengthened thus by changing society's relationship to food systems.

The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) defines such a system as, "Recognizing all the stages that keep us fed: growing, harvesting, packing, processing, transforming, marketing, consuming, and disposing of food. (Welvaert 2016) The global food system recognized by scholars -for almost half a century- in another way as a food regime. A food regime is when the temporally specific dynamics of a global political economy of food are structured by institutions, and norms forming a "regime". Currently, the neoliberal food regime makes a concerted effort to dominate the American food system with the means of capital accumulation through food through processes of 'distancing' and soft power. The current agricultural paradigm benefits agribusiness and biotech corporations by relying on petrochemicals, mechanical processes, industrialization, and the protection of intellectual property rights favoring capital accumulation through food. Thus, this framework has political consequences. The international community determined the right to food as a political necessity. For example, since food is the necessity for all and access to food was declared a human right by Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. (Assembly 1948)

Another story emerges when food and economics meet. First, the economic ordering must be discussed. Neoliberalism is an/a "economic policy, modality of governance, and order of reason" which forms a union between states and capital accumulation of the market. (W. Brown 2015, 20) The economic policy found in neoliberalism sets the authority over all human activity in the realm of the capitalist marketplace. The commodification of ideas and culture are exemplary of this process. Commodification is also seen in a food regime that adheres to patents on seeds and marketing of foods such as "wild rice" and quinoa to global consumers. The modality of governance in neoliberalism systematically devalues the state in any form other than the arbitrator of decisions that unfetter restriction on capital accumulation. Currently,

the deregulation and inaction of agencies, such as the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are working towards removing obstacles to capital accumulation. Finally, the order of reason that underlies neoliberalism is psychologically traumatizing to people because it devalues all human action that is not supportive to capital accumulation. It is a system that directs all thoughts and deeds toward capital while designating any other activity as inefficient and useless. The restructuring of human activity in this manner has deterred any other forms of social ordering and especially political systems that value equality. The social and political order that is democracy also suffers from such a focus on capital. Food can be redemptive toward the ills of neoliberalism when regarded as a location for daily participation within the process and practice of democracy.

When food is only valued as a source for capital gains the people forfeit an ability to maintain control over their own bodies and diminishes a location for participation for democracy. The neoliberal food regime harms American democracy by lessening political agency over food sources, consolidating power in the food system and using capital-intensive farming practices that prohibit most from participating in the greater food system.² When the food system is beyond the control of the demos, the possibility to promote democracy as a way of life too declines. Citizens have an opportunity for a daily practice of democracy by making collective decisions based on food sovereignty. Food sovereignty is the recognition of food as the key ingredient to social and cultural realignment towards a more democratic society. The space food sovereignty offers a community create terms that guide the principles of the food system towards a daily platform for the democratic process. (Gerwin 2011)

² Conceptually linking the historical accumulation through food and myths perpetuated by the current food regime, engendered by neoliberalism and the green revolution, offer a parsing out of underlying assumptions that grip the current regime. Approaching the food regime with an interpretive analysis of energetic factors, also known as emergent phenomena, highlight consequences of producing and consuming food through poor choices locate points of transformation potential in the current regime. The theoretical framework of the neoliberal food regime doubly outlines and associates the limits to democratic possibilities it provokes in American society. The acknowledgement that such a transformation offers hope to the potential for inclusive and wholistic democratic fulfillment. The challenges the neoliberal food regime present to food sovereignty and its democratic possibilities further the discussion by focusing on solutions rather than the problems for the food regimes.

A self-ruling demos increases the chances of democratic participation based on the decisions of what may sustain an individual's physical body. The cyclical nature of the food regime as a food system works as a mirror that reflects a democratic life. The movement of food through production, processing, distribution, consumption, and disposal provides an applied comparison between what food sovereignty could mean practically and how it could relate to democracy as a process. The original definition of food sovereignty was designated by La Via Campesina as "the right of each nation to maintain and develop its own capacity to produce its basic foods respecting cultural and productive diversity". (H. A. Wittman 2010, 2) This definition has been expanded in ways that encourage democratic participation through the food system. Plus, democracy as a theory of self-rule, provides the needed ethos for food sovereignty which then, in turn, may expand the possibility for an engaged demos. A concept such as food sovereignty directly calls for the self-rule by the people to control food systems and thus bringing greater democracy into everyday civic life. Food sovereignty, therefore, offers an arena for daily civic engagement for the people.

As people become more engaged on a local or individual level with the food system they become knowledgeable about broader topics. This "graduation effect" provides the framing that will connect to the greater good in their own communities. (Levkoe 2006, 9) People engaging with the micro-rule of self-preservation through personal food choices may thus develop a more democratic personality. Self-preservation through democratic food choice may equip citizens with a capacity for macro-political involvement or the national sustenance required for democratic participation. This idea has become common in movements that challenge the status quo in the food system. "as people become more familiar with local democracy through their involvement and engaged in broader food issues it encourages them to work for the common good". (Levkoe 2006, 93)

Food sovereign actors develop traits that are analogous with the democratic personality. Democratic individuals are experimental yet resistant to tumultuous change, communal yet self-actualized, educated, deliberative, compassionate, trusting, engaged and inclusively inclined. The democratic citizen practices discourse, shared learning, collectivity, and recognizes that the greater good is necessary for the virtuous life of a society. Food sovereignty offers the 'good' life to the individual through the self-rule found within the decision-making platform of the food system. The individual's engagement within the larger collective becomes inherently expanded by the awareness of democratic agency through food choices and thus transformative to democracy from the bottom up.

On the other hand, the neoliberal food regime distances food sources from humans who have recognized food as a right by impeding the political right to food. Capital accumulation through food is the neoliberal effort that creates an antithesis to a democratic food regime. This analysis will explore the theoretical underpinnings of the neoliberal food regime in relation to American democracy, and how an alternative food regime of food sovereignty may help to expand American democracy. The latter regime has an integrative approach to promote democracy through realigning the food system with collective decisions at its base instead of distancing the people from food and providing the opportunity for a self-ruling demos to collectively govern the food system. Food sovereignty with its processes of participation, community responsibility, and self-determinism may challenge the current American democracy by using the framework of food regime theory. In the conclusion of this analysis examples of policy options are presented that will better integrate food sovereignty in the American democratic system. The aim of this investigation is to utilize food regime theory to understand food sovereignty as a regime type that may enhance our current American democracy. A concept that may offer democratic tenets many hold dear to their notions of American democracy such as sovereignty, participation, collective will, and individual freedom.

The following work is indebted to many dedicated scholars on the topic of food and politics. Previous work in the field has illuminated the crisis that capital accumulation through food has expelled upon humanity plus the ways toward a restructuring of the food regime. This work is most interested in the ways in which our relationships- from the personal to political -may prosper through realignments in the food system. The research in the following sections relies heavily on the work of Gerardo Otero, Philip McMichael, and Harriet Friedmann. Friedmann was first to recognize the structural system of food regimes by giving it framing in the early 1980's. (Friedmann 1982) She continues to expand the subject with thoughtfulness and dedication. McMichael brought a historical methodology into the food regime analysis and recognized that the "food regime unlocks the history of capital". (McMicheal 2009) Through the crisis of capital, he solidified the food regime as a location of research. The work of Gerardo Otero places the current food regime in the framework of neoliberalism which is crucial when recognizing the destructive capabilities of connecting food to capital accumulation. Plus, it was Otero who defined the food regime as the 'articulation of regulations and institutions making the accumulation of capital possible and stable in agriculture'. Each has made a lasting contribution to the development of food regime theory as a growing sector of analysis on the political economy of food and the destructive path set out by capital accumulation through food. Yet, I aim to expand food regime theory to include alternative systems such as food sovereignty.

Without the works of Friedmann, Otero, and McMichael the problems of this fated relationship between food and capital may have never been recognized. There have been many other scholars to move food regime analysis forward but none so much as Hannah Wittman and Jules Pretty. The greatest contribution to counteract the issues illuminated by the previous three food regime scholars has been in the work of Wittman and Pretty. The work on food sovereignty from Wittman has offered an alternative to the food regime's agenda which relies on capital for authority. Her scholarly work has moved food sovereignty

out of the grassroots setting and into the academic realm where the ideas provide hope for social and political justice in the food system. The work of Pretty, brings the practical solutions of agroecology, the recognition of the cycle of life in agricultural systems, into the policy conversation. (Pretty 2010) The recognition that building healthy soils, a need for greater crop and animal diversity, plus the decreased use of agricultural inputs is imperative for any agricultural system that provides the foundation on which to build a food sovereignty movement. (Magdoff and Tokar 2010) The two scholars have merged the political economy of food regime analysis with action to create new framing for food and politics.

What follows is an attempt to contribute to the work of food regime analysis in two ways. An effort to understand a theoretical thinking on the implications on American democracy specifically from neoliberalism in the food regime. The undemocratic system of the neoliberal food regime is based on theoretical foundations that place a dominant mentality into human relationships based on food and capital accumulation that permeates throughout the food system and infiltrates the citizenry's political agency. Plus, food regime analysis has room for expanding the possibility that alternative regimes not based on capital, but the realignment of human relationships around food could also increase political agency. Including food sovereignty as a regime offers the citizenry a framework for increasing the discourse, decisions, and knowledge sharing regarding the food system. All which have the ability to impress democratic ideals onto the everyday. The recognition of the 'distance' placed between people and their food source as an impediment to democratic participation in America is also a contribution this analysis will address.

This analysis will explore concepts of private property, productivity, and dominion outlined by John Locke and carry the philosophical tension found between the neoliberal food regime and food sovereignty. The crisis of the neoliberal food regime has aspects of a dominance mentality that has become intrinsic to the regime's effect upon the natural world. Alternatively, food sovereignty is a democratic possibility based on the realignment of relationships between people in the production and distribution of food within a non-

dominant mentality. I hope to open discourse on the process of democratic engagement and participation by reevaluating Locke's work within the framework of these two political economies of food.

Skeptics may assume that food and democracy are not particularly the place where Americans will find increased civic participation. They may even think that the knowledge and practicalities of organizing a food system are incompatible with democratic tenets of collective action. Some may think this is a manifesto for agrarian idealism. While most will consider the methods of industrial agriculture as the only way to feed the millions of Americans who need food daily. However, food sovereignty is a radical restructuring which may not happen quickly but changes to dominant paradigms often take time. There are currently few ways that Americans collectivize and food could offer a common ground on which to build greater pathways to build upon food communities. Every American needs food. The tenets of food sovereignty increase location points for relationship building, based on more than capital accumulation. Truly democratic communities are built on personal relationships that encourage empowerment through participation which food sovereignty also heralds. Although, a greater interest in food systems would need to manifest there are collectivist ways to participate without all citizens having to return to the land. As more people engage with the food system there are increased potentials for shared ideas and solutions that could set in motion ways to remove food from the realm of capital back into the hands of the people.

SECTION I: FOOD CRISIS

The provision of food is widely understood as a salve for political upheaval, as reflected in the statement mistakenly ascribed to Marie Antoinette, “Let them eat cake”. (Silbey 2017) This statement is either factual or a manufactured detail, but it makes a point that has become a historical anecdote for political turbulence when food shortages arise. It also exemplifies how those in positions of power are often blind-sided by issues of basic survival which much of humanity continues to experience. In contemporary America the population regarded as ‘food insecure’ lingers around twelve percent, however, this fact is rarely made as a political point. (Coleman-Jensen Alisha 2017) The French sovereign’s statement was made in reference to a women’s march on Versailles in October 1789. Consequently, there was a riot instigated by price hikes on bread and widespread shortages that may offer a lesson to the politically powerful. These women took to the streets for what can be imagined as nothing short of their physical survival, something that food insecure Americans must also feel. (Roessler 1996) Moreover, this is not the only historical instance when food became motivation for political action.

Examples of food motivating political action can be found the world over and throughout time. In the United States, bread shortages during the southern bread riots of 1863, led to women looting of bakeries in Richmond Virginia. (Chesson 1984) Surely, the civil war played a factor in this episode of civil unrest, but it was the stimulus from lack of food that roused the southern belles to revolt. In 1918, food again led to civil unrest. They led to Terauchi Masatake, once prime minister of Japan, to end his rule after rice riots broke out. (Hayami 1970) And more recently, at the end of the twentieth century, food riots in Argentina forced an elected president to resign from his position. (Human Rights Watch 1989) So in 2008 and 2011, it was also food price hikes that were regarded as a precipitating factor in major civil unrest in both Africa and the Middle East. Once again, food became the motivating factor to enliven political action. (Lagi 2011) These are only a few narratives of the past, both distant and not so distant that illuminate

political motivation when food becomes scarce. However, the issues that the neoliberal food regime currently present are more complex than these earlier scenarios.

Even though food crisis instigated political turmoil throughout history, civil unrest from food shortages is not a common occurrence in modern democracies. Nevertheless, American democracy is not exempt from food crisis. While the past decade of civil unrest spurred by food shortages and price hikes around the world did not result in U.S. food riots, those who thought much on the topic did heed warnings to the American public. In the country's history there were also those who made these connections too. Henry A. Wallace, secretary of agriculture under Franklin D. Roosevelt, spent a lifetime dedicated to ensuring his ideals of democratic principles and supplying Americans with food. Wallace considered the two concepts explicitly connected and made a lasting statement on the conditions which underlie the relationship between food and democracy. He stated, "at a certain point of misery and destitution, nations cease to think about liberty and think only about bread". (Maloney 2011) Wallace's statement recognizes the nutrient needs of 'bread' to maintain political participation levels that ensue individual freedom.

Nowadays, it is rare that "actual" food shortages are the primary problem at all when citizens take to the streets. The production capacity for the world in 2013 was able to produce more than 2800 calories per day per person which is plenty for all to be well fed, yet food crisis continued to unfold. (Ranganathan 2013) The shortage of food is not for lack of production capacity. A forty percent price increase on cereals from March 2007 to March 2008 caused forty countries across the world to experience food riots. (Golay 2010) A result of capital accumulation when the commodity is food. Also, important to note, the U.N. determined that grain production had risen from the highest yield ever recorded just the year before. Plus, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the UN (FAO) recorded an increase of 2.6 percent for crop yields while simultaneously major failings began to unveil in the neoliberal food regime. (Lappe 2008) The incorporation of mechanical and technological advances of the 'Green Revolution', the industrialization and

mechanization of agriculture, had mostly infiltrated the food commodity market, and yet the neoliberal food regime was unable to eliminate the issues of accessibility. The world produced more food than ever before, yet there were still millions threatened by hunger.

In the following years, little changed as food prices increased and in 2011 another price surge was felt. (L. Brown 2011) Plus, agricultural commodity prices saw an increase in 2010 from the previous year by twenty-four percent for soybeans, fifty-five percent for sugar, sixty-three percent for corn and eighty-four percent for wheat were too a major component of the 2011 price surge. (Wiggin 2010) This scenario shows again, it is not the lack of food but the market influence in the food system that threatens stability. In 2016, when the number of hungry increased thirty-five percent from eighty million people to 108 million people. The seriousness of the situation was highlighted by this number of hungry people designated by the FAO in a 2017 report considered crisis level or worse for food security worldwide. (Nations 2017) The signs are clear that the more food is commodified on the neoliberal market then the more instability ensues.

Recent price spikes for food commodities and the corresponding increase in political instability suggests fracture—if not an outright failure—of the current neoliberal food regime. But the regime's major actors, including large food-exporting nations and Agricultural Transnational Corporations (ATNCs), would argue that the current system has nevertheless succeeded in raising productivity to unparalleled levels. The plethora of crop production is what the neoliberal food regime recognizes as benefits from the 'Green Revolution'. This agricultural 'revolution' instigated the transformation of agriculture practices and purportedly led to the largest crop yields humanity has ever produced. The agricultural practices involving modern irrigation, pesticides, and synthetic nitrogen fertilizer- doubled crop yields of cereals, rice and grains in areas that were once considered low tech and the developing world. At the same time, critics of the 'green revolution' argue that these gains have come at a tremendous cost, including environmental destruction and the loss of ecological diversity. After a century of increasing transformation of agriculture th

(Rank 2014)rough technology intended to solve the world's food problems there remains considerable debate over the 'Green Revolution's' successes and failures.

American Agronomist, Norman Borlaug, creator of a first hardy wheat variety of the "Green Revolution" exemplified the viewpoint of its proponents during the height of the 2008 food shortages, Borlaug was quoted as saying,

Some of the environmental lobbyists of the Western nations are the salt of the earth, but many of them are elitists. They've never experienced the physical sensation of hunger. They do their lobbying from comfortable office suites in Washington or Brussels. If they lived just one month amid the misery of the developing world, as I have for fifty years, they'd be crying out for tractors and fertilizer and irrigation canals and be outraged that fashionable elitists back home were trying to deny them these things. (Rank 2014)

Although Borlaug's sentiment demonstrates his intention to provide food for the world's poor, the devil remains in the details. The external cost of producing food in such a manner has taken its toll not only upon the environment but people and their political agency.

Growing concerns among small subsistence farmers, the hungry multitudes, and even now wealthy consumers consider many practices of the 'Green Revolution' to be exploitative on numerous fronts and many are beginning to voice doubt. (Braidotti 1994) These skeptics of the 'Green Revolution' argue that the same practices that are heralded as revolutionary have received credit for which they are unworthy. Commercialized farming has been able to support the growing population; however, the world is still mostly fed by subsistence farms with over seventy percent of the world's food is still produced in this manner. (Group 2017) Plus, the chemicals needed to support industrial agriculture are another aspect of contention. These chemicals, such as ammonia – originally used as chemical weapons during WWI- were co-opted by the earliest proponents of the 'Green Revolution'. (Hakim 2016) They increase the amount of capital for

the agricultural sector while also requiring recourses during their manufacture. Plus, the use of chemicals in agriculture without extensive research as to the effects on human populations is too common a practice.³ The criticisms of methods once seen as innovations are now finding their way into the dialogue of larger audiences.

A challenge surrounding the neoliberal food regime is not only that conflicting opinions abound on the benefits of the 'Green Revolution' but that the causes of food shortages themselves are contentious. The usual suspects to blame during food shortages are either population growth or food distribution issues. Each of these factors may play a supporting role in food shortages, but the structures, norms and institutions of the neoliberal food regime itself contribute significantly to these shortages i.e. food as a means to accumulate capital. This was demonstrated during a major crisis of the neoliberal food regime in 2008 when high production yields of crops continued even though there were shortages and price hikes. The contributions to the crisis are complex and often have conflicting characteristics. Entire sectors of the increased crop yields are now assigned to markets not dedicated to human food consumption. These markets include agro-fuels and animal feed and are contributing to the paradox in the neoliberal food regime. (Reguly 2008) Consolidation of agri-business, financial speculation, control of farmland by multinationals and the agricultural sector's dependence on technology that relies on substantial amounts of capital, are further characteristics of the neoliberal food regime that play into the instability of food prices and thus shortages. (G. a. Pechlaner 2010) The actual crisis exemplified in food shortages and price hikes is a result of the push for markets to enter the agricultural sector at all. Having the market or capital dictate the means of human survival is the crisis of the neoliberal food regime.

³ "The many gaps in information about the mechanisms of toxic action, human exposures, and the nature and extent of human health effects are large. Very few older pesticides, in particular, have been tested for human health effects". (Mushak 1992)

Over the past two decades, a series of international trade agreements have greatly liberalized and globalized the agricultural sector worldwide. For example, this newly opened market sector was created by the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) that became part of the Global Agreements on Trades and Tariffs (GATT) during the development of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Legitimacy based on capital accumulation through agriculture and food became constituted in these agreements. (Group 2017) The emphasis that the transnational trade agreements place on food production with its methods from the 'Green Revolution' have solidified on a global scale. However, the emphasis on agricultural practices of the neoliberal food regime that feeds only thirty percent of the world's population leaves those on the fringes of the capital dominant food regime even more vulnerable. (Gura and Meienberg 2013) Capital accumulation through food prioritizes profits in agriculture over human nutrition and often limits the consideration of externalities the food regime itself is producing. These externalities are evident in the environmental factors and the social impacts on humanity, such as human relationships, economies, and political agency.

SECTION 2: Challenges in the neoliberal food regime for American democracy

It has become clear that the neoliberal food regime expands its influence over the American food system with the 'distancing' between people and their food sources. The economic, social, and cultural effects of 'distancing,' or the "separating of people from personal sources of food and nutrition with as many interventions as possible" creates dynamics that remove personal and eventually political agency. (Kneen, From Land to Mouth 1995) The 'distancing' effect leaves the power structures for a basic human need in the hands of agribusiness, transnational agencies and at the mercy of the market economy -everywhere but in the people's control. This feature of the neoliberal food regime offers limited participation for many individuals other than their role as consumer. The multitude of decisions formed before food is sold leaves little input from the consumer and frames the basis of any food regime.

A clear picture of how quickly Americans have become removed from their food source is evident with the percentage of Americans active in agriculture, which fell from twenty-five percent of the total population in the 1930's to less than two percent today. (Winders 2009) Those farms that do remain, produce over half of all food in the United States and have a gross cash farm income (GCFI) of over a million dollars. (E. o. USDA 2016) These are not small operators but large farms that employ practices favorable to the increased dominance of the neoliberal food regime. Economic shifts of crop values, increased food imports, industrial technology implementation, and monocropping all encouraged changes to the agricultural landscape that aided in the decrease of American farming populations. The economic, social and environmental consequences from the increased disengagement from agrarian work are endemic to the capital accumulation through food that the neoliberal food regime relies upon.

The benefactors from capital accumulation are fewer and fewer as the neoliberal food regime gains more control over the food supply. This control by the few also cycles into the social relationships intrinsic to democratic communities. Fewer Americans experience capital accumulation through food because of the

limitedness of ownership. Farms who have GCFI over five million annually control twenty-three percent of the agricultural market in America. (E. o. USDA 2016) When fewer have a stake in capital accumulation of the food regime then Americans suffer not only from the lack of economic gains but politically too. When fewer voices have influence in food production, distribution, and consumption, social problems for democracy develop. The result from industrialized agricultural systems on the environment accounts for eighty percent of the nitrous oxide emissions, twenty-five percent of carbon dioxide and sixty percent of methane gas in the atmosphere. (Shiva 2005, 10) Environmental degradation from these emissions harm public health. When food is produced by means that harm the environment there are cumulative health problems for society. When food is produced by using methods that increase health issues for people- there are doubled impacts on the society.

The mechanization and industrialization of agricultural processes that were once the engagements of individuals and their relation to the earth have become so far removed, 'distant' from the population, that the origins of food are often given little thought. The deprivation or rejection of manual labor to produce one's sustenance lost prestige hundreds of years ago in America. What does remain in the political culture is the recognition of agriculture's potential to power economies and strengthen states, or now capital. The hyperdrive of the neoliberal food regime witnessed through the vertical integration of entire supply chains and consolidation of corporations into massive global entities removes individual engagement even further. It disconnects food from an imperative for authentic and good living, except through the neoliberal value placed upon capital gains and exchange. The economic norms of the neoliberal food regime are subsequent factors that 'distances' people from food. Food produced by large ATNCs disregards traditional human relationships, personal ones with the soil or interpersonal connections among community members that once existed.

The technologically dependent agribusiness of the neoliberal food regime ignores these sorts of relational externalities, reduces flexibility to resolve the outcomes from poor agricultural practices, and

maintains the supremacy of the normative assumptions of the neoliberal food regime. (McMicheal 2009)

The neoliberal food regime's tendency to frame technology as the best and necessary solution for feeding the planet furthers the distancing of individuals from the food system. Technology, as we know it today, is not accessible to the individual without cost or engagement with the destructive path that unchecked consumption leads us. Especially agricultural tech, an aspect of the ever-greater industrialization of society and typically the manifestation of concentrated capital. Rarely, even in the field of agricultural research are the hands of capital absent. The phenomena of ACTNs funding land-grant universities has a long tradition in America. (Magdoff and Tokar 2010, 24) And yet still, the evidence is lacking that technology now considered an imperative, the resource intensity of such technology, and the overall industrialization dependence on carbon fuels of the food regime has created a just, safe, and more sustainable food source for America. However, these trends are the underlying tone found in American agriculture going back to the early twentieth century. The food regime's reliance on technology, which is equitable with reliance on capital, removes individual engagement from the food system.

The neoliberal food regime clashes with the ideals of food sovereignty while decreasing a possibility for greater democracy. Those conflicts are most prevalent in the following ways: Trade stipulations in the neoliberal food regime are incompatible with the ideals for trade in a food sovereignty regime and demonstrate the location where economic and political intersections of food systems meet. The neoliberal food regime focuses on policy that favors capital, whereas, food sovereignty accentuates people's access to food. Second, the value placed on resources in the food system demonstrate how food sovereignty and democracy are hindered when the neoliberal food regime persists. The neoliberal food regime devalues the natural resources that are necessary to maintain a hospitable planet. Finally, the recognition of people's place in trade highlight how food sovereignty challenges democratic engagement in America while the neoliberal food regime hinders the possibilities for greater democracy.

Global trade decoupled from the national agriculture's agenda favors the transnational agreements towards countries that are economically advantaged over feeding a healthy demos. The imbalances in this system have mandated policies favorable to America and Europe. By allowing subsidies in certain countries but prohibiting them in others, certain countries maintain advantages with historical leanings. The agreements that constitute the neoliberal food regime have created situations where dumping is a common and allowable practice for some but not other countries. Although, the United States has an advantageous position in the neoliberal food regime this does not mean American democracy is enhanced by the global food system. When national policy aligns with international agreements that favor free movement of capital then it is the favoritism toward capital that proliferates, not political agency. Even more, the disadvantage is greater than what is gained from the capital accumulation for American agribusiness since corporatism naturally limits democracy. There is also the greater loss of democratic promise to the rest of the world.

Monopolist control of food production, processing, distribution and even retail markets maintain the neoliberal food regime's growing supremacy domestically. Consolidated power in the food system is demonstrated by the disappearance of slaughterhouses which increase the possibility for ATNCs to control meat production. The fewer slaughterhouses to process meat means animals are transported farther from farms increasing distance in the food system. Plus, increasing transportation increases the resources that impact the health and well-being of the demos. This also means the access to meat processing facilities is further limited to smaller farms that wish to treat animals in a more humane way and not contribute to the violence or dominance mentality of the neoliberal food regime. Companies that have consolidated production, distribution, and sales have greater influence in the USDA. A well-known case is that of Walmart as the largest grocer seller who has actively transitioned beyond retail and now ventures that vertically integrate the entire food system. (Linnekin 2016) As the retailer becomes the farmer and distributor too the economic imbalance widens. The goal becomes capital and food becomes a necessary means to accumulate wealth for few.

Additionally, the longevity of land use has been an aspect ignored when short-term profits are made to accumulate capital in a food regime. Externalities are endless in the neoliberal food regime. In America, there is yet a significant increases in food cost which factor in the larger cost of cheap food. In fact, since the 1960's the percentage spent on food has decreased ten percent. (Elitzak 2016) The use of chemicals as fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides continues to threaten the stability of the soil even though there is much evidence which shows the detrimental aspects of using such products. (Rabin 2017) Desertification and algae blooms have become all too common side effects from the overuse of fertilizers, fifty-two percent has been attributed to agricultural activities in the U.S. The externalities of trade practices that create long-distance shipping increase the carbon footprint of every food item consumed by an individual. This has become known as "food miles". Unfortunately, the factors inducing global warming are wrapped up in externalities found in the global food system, especially the impact of energy usage needed for the vast shipping distances our food now travels. The harm to air, water, soil, and humans themselves is a paradox when considering the ultimate use value of the food regime is to sustain life.

If the externalities of the neoliberal food regime continue then there is little chance for food sovereignty to transform the current regime or for that matter American Democracy. Without healthy land, water, and soils the capital required to grow food will certainly increase. A scenario where all food is produced in artificial environments would devastate the most vulnerable populations both, globally and domestically.⁴ Additionally, the majority of the water consumed in the United States, with some estimates as high as eighty percent, is consumed by the agricultural sector. (Schaible 2017) The irrigation needed for large-scale farming requires the piping of water over vast distances and requires even more water if industrialized agricultural inputs are added into the supply chain. Americans have yet to have this factor into their food cost; with the average of only seven percent of income spent on food. This is a vastly lower percentage

⁴The poor always spend more of their income on food(Elitzak 2016)

compared to the rest of the world. (Plumer 2015) Of course, the lower cost to consumers is often a selling point for the markets increased capital accumulation through food. A closer examination of who is paying what for food in America shows that the economically strained pay a far greater percentage of income for food. (Rose 1999) The reality that healthy food cost more is a consequence of the policies enacted which favor American ATNCs and the neoliberal food regime.

Economic Imbalance

Food regime theory designates three phases in a global food system: First, the constitution of stable periods for capital accumulation through food. Second, a crisis period where global shifts of power impact the food system structure. Third, the transformation of food systems when new powers dominate capital accumulation through food production. The historical force behind food regimes are currently based on oppression, inequality, and a refusal for democratic expansion of the food system even while states participating promote ideals of political equity. The stability of the system is a slippery concept since in recent years instability of food sources have become the norm and are exemplified in the consecutive scarcities and price hikes of food.

There is a brief history to understand on how the neoliberal food regime came to be. This history includes multiple transnational agreements that constituted the neoliberal food regime as the force for capital accumulation through food. The beginning of what Otero calls, the 'sanction of the state', solidified by the 1947 Global Agreement of Trade and Tariffs (GATT) brought global trade under a dominant international authority that became legitimized by nation state participation. American agricultural markets then further congealed with the neoliberal food regime during the 1994 signing of the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA). This ended the protection which agriculture once held in the global market from the forces of capital accumulation. The moment had come when even human sustenance was at the whims of the international market and the favoritism of the market toward countries long industrially developed, i.e.

European and the U.S, allowed direct and indirect subsidies to their own farmers. while prohibiting such subsidies to those considered developing countries. This structural disadvantage was acknowledged on the world stage when Korean farmer, Lee Kyung-Hae, committed public suicide by stabbing himself in the heart during the WTO Cancun meeting in 2003. (Watts 2003) The tragedy was directly linked to the farming subsidy programs of the neoliberal food regime that were hurting subsistence farmers and maintaining the neoliberal.

There are three common economic maneuvers of the neoliberal food regime that thwart the expansion of democracy in the food system. One of these maneuvers is the consolidation of production chains which create power structures impenetrable to democratic communities. When a company owns the cow, the slaughterhouse and the trucks that transport cattle there is limited access for the demos to engage with their food other than the point of sale. Discourse on how cattle are raised, what the cattle eat or how it eventually comes to market is also limited by ownership that lies out of the public's reach. Another maneuver is when financial speculation instigates price hikes which the neoliberal food regime has become accustomed too in recent years. In 2007, cereal speculations lead to the upshot of grain prices of over forty percent the following year. (Doering 2009) Finally, vertical integration a tactic demonstrated by the market power of transnational 'food' giants. McDonalds led corporate dominance by yielding the ultimate power in determining the variety of potato crop which is grown and sold, because McDonald's is the largest buyer of potatoes. At 3.4 billion tons yearly, it maintains the position to sway the production choices of the potato industry in the decision of crop variety. (Press 2009) These economic 'distancing' maneuvers diminish the ability for people to maintain relationships with food sources and diminish the participation of the demos in the food system.

The recent Department of Justice's approval of a merger between multinational companies Bayer and Monsanto is exemplary -of another feature of the neoliberal food regime- how economic distancing

harms American democracy. Not only does the merger create a monopoly in certain sectors of the market, it is one of the top five largest cash buyouts of an American company ever by a foreign company.

'Distancing' of the American people becomes a reality as ownership of agricultural companies transfers to nations where American political will is rendered obsolete. The possibility for democratic engagement encounters another political gap when corporate headquarters are offshore. The notion of out of sight, out of mind holds greater meaning in the food regime because mergers between transnationals increase the ability for corporations to influence public opinion and undermine scientific research by removing accountability to the population they feed.

This sort of corporate maneuvering becomes a practice that secures the accumulation of capital through both instrumental and discursive power measures. (Fuchs 2010) Counterproductive to the interest of an informed demos, companies advance their information or gatekeeping power. For example, Bayer produces neonicotinoids, a popular insecticide, and a determining factor in the decrease of pollinators necessary for a healthy food system. Monsanto too is notorious for the production of products that are harmful to the food system. Specifically, the carcinogen, glyphosate, a banned herbicide in the E.U, subsequently is the most widely used chemical on American farms. Over 1.8 million tons of glyphosate has been applied to American lands since 1974 when it became commercially available. (Main 2016) The possibility for democratic discourse encounters hurdles when the dissemination of biased information downplays the harm of such products. Discursive power tactics marketed through corporate funding of research eventually create ways to silence any opposition. The collective will of a democratic society to regulate harmful products in the food system decreases capital accumulation through food but renders democracy better served, neither which are happening in the neoliberal food regime when companies wield such means of power.

In an attempt to frame the public's knowledge about their products the Monsanto company states, "In evaluations spanning four decades, the overwhelming conclusion of experts worldwide has been that glyphosate when used according to label directions, does not present an unreasonable risk of adverse effects to humans, wildlife or the environment". (Main 2016) The statement sets the tone for safety standards for agricultural inputs and consequently is articulated by the very entity that will profit from the sale of these same inputs. Yet, the United States EPA has determined that the high-end exposure for infants exposed to such chemicals is now beyond what was determined a safe level in 1983. The regulatory agency designed to protect the health of the American people recognizes that a product sold is harmful to both humans and the environment, but the collective will under the neoliberal food regime diminish powers to take democratic political action to discontinue the company's profits.⁵ The fact that the company continues to sell knowingly harmful products and use them on the food Americans consume demonstrate the food regime's priority of capital accumulation over public health. Capital accumulation of the neoliberal food regime passes the external cost of such harm onto citizens.

Actors in the neoliberal food regime acknowledge the distance people feel with their food source. The U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance, a known lobby organization of agribusiness, published a survey on the 'perceptions' of American food in 2017. The language of perception signals the image concerns of agribusiness and the inclination to offer superficial changes that continue the capital accumulation for the companies.⁶ The survey focuses on the perceptions of antibiotics and genetically modified crops; the two largest areas of concerns heard from consumers. Food regime actors recognize their need to understand and control the perceptions consumers have on these controversial practices in order to maintain profitability. The fact of the matter is that these organizations recognize concerns about the very practices

5 The watchdog group, Open Secrets, claims that Monsanto spent 4.3million dollars on lobbying in 2015. Democratic society encounters limits when the power of influence counteracts and disregards the democratic ability to access unbiased information.

6 A recent conference was sponsored by BASF, a major player in the chemical inputs of the neoliberal food regime. This company like Bayer is German based.

that continue their profitability. The solutions to such concerns are seen as 'perception' changes in the consumer not change in the food regime itself.

Food policy created by transnational agreements have also left individuals without a means for recourse, as in the case of Lee Kyung-Hae. This is the paradox of a human guided system based on capital accumulation. Practices of the food regime to feed the world simultaneously harm human life; physically as in the case of Monsanto and economically as in the case of trade imbalances. Policies that create the neoliberal food regime are contradictory even to themselves. As is the case when American farmers, are paid not to grow food. The policy not only blocks capital accumulation to American farmers but also fixes prices on the global market creating a higher price for food. A contradiction unto itself, the neoliberal food regime must confront the tension between the accumulation of capital as a goal and the accumulation of human suffering brought about by its policies.

The economic 'distance' created by the neoliberal food regime stems from the transnational agreements, mergers, and consequences of both. Transnational agreements distance the American people from the seat of decision making that is intrinsic to democracy. When decisions are continually made away from the demos the points of access to power shrink away from the people. As the neoliberal food regime intrinsically prioritizes transnational agricultural corporations (TNAC's) the American people will remain an afterthought. Recognizing the neoliberal regime's focus on capital accumulation while confronting the challenges exposed thus far in the neoliberal food regime offer the expansion of democratic participation.

[Distancing/ Dis-ease of PEOPLE](#)

The 'distancing' of people from their food supply creates a form of cultural poverty or a lack of fundamental knowledge regarding the processes intrinsic to one's physical life. Food knowledge is traditionally passed on generationally in relationships between family, friend, and community, or political culture. (Deutsch 2009) When people lose their cultural heritage of food they are less engaged with food

sources and thus the democratic participation it would take to keep food sources open to democracy. Vandana Shiva, a long-time food activist, eloquently discusses the understanding of poverty in regard to the crisis of the current food regime, “There are two ways to designate the poverty of the world, one is the material poverty i.e. living without the convenience of neoliberal life or cultural poverty i.e. the inability to sustain oneself or peoples”. (Shiva 2005, 30) Shiva so powerfully puts into perspective how many Americans lack a relationship to their sustenance. The neoliberal food regime has impoverished the world in the second sense. There are fewer places left where culturally there is a drive, a motivation to maintain control over the very necessities of life.

This form of cultural poverty is evident in an U.K. survey of 27,000 of five to sixteen-year-old children. Although there has never been a stateside study, the U.K. study demonstrates just how little food knowledge we are passing on to the next generation in countries where the neoliberal food regime strives for market dominance. One in ten children think tomatoes grow underground and potatoes grown on trees. (Burns 2013) The career ideals of twenty-first century American children are also far from the farm. In a small study of 500 children ages 1-2 none of the top three “when I grow up categories’ were a farmer. (Adams 2015) These studies show democracy’s potentiality in countries who participate in the neoliberal food regime whom are not creating informed citizens when it comes to the commodity which maintains healthy democrats. Future democrats who lack knowledge about a basic need for survival is less likely to understand the complexity of self-rule.

The ‘distancing’ of people from food has a tradition that predates contemporary liberal democracies. Marx identified people’s removal from the land as ‘primitive accumulation’. David Harvey now recognizes a similar phenomenon where the market enacts predatory practices as ‘Accumulation by Dispossession’, also a removal of people from the land. (D. Harvey 2018, 48) which the neoliberal food regime enacts as a further ‘distancing’ tactic. Once removed from the land the self-sustaining capabilities of

producing food become dependent on the dominant food regime. A top-down approach to a tradition rooted in the literal roots of grasses. Dispossession is happening at an increased rate more than any other point in human history. Human endeavors of urbanization leave humanity less and less focused on food production and more suited for capital accumulation through food. Although, the separation from land has both positive and negative consequences for the whole of humanity the market led neoliberal food regime leaves little space to critique such a realignment. The question becomes less about how or why our lives are arranged in certain ways but more on what the market may offer our lives. Thus, food production is relegated to policies, treaties, and agreements that perpetuate a food regime that fosters capital accumulation through food. This leaves people with lacking the knowledge- cultural poverty- of the means and ways of food production where it collectivity once existed.

The dispossession of people is rarely acknowledged in American history for the part it played in building the nation. Usually scholars consider dispossession a phenomenon that took place in the global south during industrialization phases of nation-building. Yet, the industrialization in America led to dispossession mostly on southern plantations where slave labor created a great part of early America's capital accumulation. The dispossession was binary in the sense that the landowners who depended on the violence of slavery to produce food lost connection to the means of survival and antebellum populations of slaves were separated from the land. Both aspects continue the dispossession which remains today. (Edge 2017) American agriculture today is notorious for the use of labor without rights to citizenship and works to keep certain sectors of the population outside the realm of political agency.

The food regime's distancing of humans to their food source has even lengthened the psychological distance we have with one another. The distance of the food source is left to global agencies that are faceless and often nameless to bring nutrients to the American demos. The increased consumption practices of Americans leave forty percent of the food domestically produced designated as waste.

(Gunders 2012) Not only do we waste exorbitant amounts of food we have lessened the amount of time spent on our food. The pace of contemporary American culture is relevant when considering the values perpetuated by the neoliberal food regime. The decreased percentage of labor in the American agricultural system proves this in the professional realm, but the personal realm holds much more to understand about the 'distancing' by the food regime. Americans spend a mere thirty-seven minutes a day on food prep.

(Hamrick 2011) The temporal expenditures on food outside the home surpassed food consumed at home in the year 2015. A diminished temporal priority placed on food in contemporary American culture shows a demos who also diminish the value of food.

The notion of 'food from nowhere', a practices that the global food system employs to create an easily interchangeable process and products is another form of 'distancing'. Food has become a raw material to produce and manufacture durable goods. This can be exemplified in the intensive meat industry that has produced the 'world steer'.⁷ A standard breed of cow that favors the mechanization of the meat industry. The animal is no longer a living-being but a material that is manufactured. As the concentration of the agro-food sector gained influence upon the mechanization and inputs of the American agriculture landscape, so too began the quick decline of American family farms. Simultaneously left many American farmers in exuberant debt and others unable to keep up with the technological shifts in agro-business. Farmers now plant as much soy and modified corn products, not for food, but as inputs for industry. These raw materials once considered food have become mere cogs in the machine of global production. Global diets are consuming more meat and grains at expedited rates and all for the ends of capital gains.

(McMichael 2009, 282)

⁷The world cow and the world automobile simultaneously arose, and the manufacturing of meat and transportation mirrored one another. An effort of industrial animal husbandry sucking up the enormous amounts of soy and modified corn products that had too lost their use value and were commodities to produce meat to the growing 'middle classes'.

SECTION 3: Theoretical Underpinnings of the Neoliberal Food Regime and Food Sovereignty -How we think = How we eat

The neoliberal food regime perpetuates certain ways of thinking based on an ideological support system that date back to the writings of John Locke. Locke's work not only grounded the foundations of social liberalism, but also the economic free-market liberalism in the American economy. The "neo"-liberalism that characterizes the American economic system positions capital to lead society and State-direction only as a means to remove obstacles impeding further capital accumulation. The American food system highlights the worst of the market's priorities. The organizing principals found in the American food system that emphasize a market mentality has adopted similar characteristics of the wider economy. These factors that prioritize capital accumulation in the world economy now have focused interest on the source of human sustenance, food.

The theoretical support for the neoliberal food regime that is found in Locke exemplifies itself mostly in paradoxes. The contradictions have become embedded within our way of thinking because they have built the foundations of modern society. Festering inconsistencies become most plain in a food regime that aims to accumulate capital, while simultaneously functioning with an outward pretense of feeding the world. Our world is blended between actions of capricious production and consumption, especially when food is concerned. However, the realities of such a way of life that cause irreversible harm to both human and planet and require divergent activities but are quite often ignored. The inconsistencies of the modern world compete against the ingrained patterns of thinking and contemporary knowledge. The neoliberal food regime proliferates such paradoxical thinking. Locke's chapter on property opens with the natural right of preservation that any food regime would accept as a basis. The common purpose to grow food is to feed people, yet this purpose has become second to the accumulation of capital through food. Locke states, "Men, being once born, have a right to their preservation, and consequently to Meat and Drink," (Locke 1988, 285) There is no doubt that Locke acknowledges the need and even right to food. However, his

theories influence the neoliberal food regime in ways that are contradictory to this message and leave human preservation at the market's discretion. The right to food is built into the mentality of contemporary neoliberalism but the neoliberal food regime has forfeited these rights to the supremacy of capital.

The political economy of food echoes theoretical beliefs collectively held about productivity, private property, and the dominion of humans over the natural world. These philosophical undertones are intrinsic to the mechanics of the neoliberal food regime (NFR). These are also concepts that Locke quite diligently also considered. Beliefs about private property, human's dominion over nature, and an impetus to remain ever more productive are fundamental in contemporary society because Locke's writings continue to validate our economic systems. Locke's epistemology validates the NFR as a provision to procure the necessary commodity of food in a neoliberal frame. The framing around food that is traceable to Lockean thought also provides the narratives which supply the food regime with authority. However, many of our narratives are in need of reconsideration and are the antiquated theories of political economy with philosophical undertones that continue to validate the political economy of the food system. The NFR's values are based on the ever-productive accumulation of capital perpetuated by the domination mentality of private ownership that lies external to human survival.

The economic institutions of the neoliberal food regime too are based on the appropriation of land through labor and private property, both which structurally find theoretical traces to Locke. Community decisions about food offer a location where social survival of both human and nonhuman life forms build foundations for social actualization. If the highest actualization of the individual is to live the democratic 'good life', then a prerequisite would require a strong community that prioritizes food.⁸ If food is available to everyone then the actualized community of the demos may act as a collective for political agency. The

⁸ Good is based on the definition of goodness in the agency of democracy as popular power, as the horizon of political action and the discursive source of its legitimacy as an ongoing combination of ethics and power. (Wallach 2018, 6)

beauty of a democratic community is that it allows for both self-rule and collectivity that unite a society. Food is a necessity for any society. Democratic actions increase in a society that assigns a value to humanity in the form of respect for both human and non-human life in the food system. The actualization of the individual is fostered by the value placed upon the 'good' in a democratic community. In the sense of food sovereignty, this 'good' is seen by the value placed on access to food that is 'good', i.e. healthy, sustainable and offers engagement with the larger community through a democratic food system.

The political economy of food on a global scale, described as a food regime, has connected the sociological, political, and economics of food since the late nineteenth century. Food regimes too hold theoretical concepts based on dominance, productivity and private property that guide the processes of production and consumption of food. Regimes experience crisis of legitimacy when rifts in the basic philosophy of the regime push it toward transformation. The first food regime of the late 19th century reached the crisis point as the first wave of colonialism lost its legitimacy. This loss of legitimacy for the first food regime was due to global philosophical shifts which produced independence movements against colonial power's agriculture capital accumulation. No longer widely accepted are the theories that sympathized with colonial practices, i.e. slavery. The neoliberal food regime, the current globally scaled political economy of food, is facing a similar philosophical crisis of legitimacy. This regime is named by the increased dominance of agricultural transnational corporations (ATNCs) that gain power from international agreements and prioritize industrialized methods of accumulation, production, and distribution of food. An outward display of crisis was seen in the major price hikes and food shortages that swept the globe a decade ago.

The global food system which is built upon the favoring of ATNCs ability to accumulate capital through food leaves people as secondary. Transnational agreements reaffirm capital's authority over nation states in the system. Although the nation is compliant in the acceptance of such terms, it is capital accumulation that assembles authority in this regime by creating authority based on the logic of the market.

However, the neoliberal food regime is now facing a crisis of legitimacy similarly to the contradictions of the market's authority to create a more liberal and democratic world begin to show. The neoliberal tenet that logical and mathematical conclusions will form a more perfect world have yet to fulfill such a promise. The priority of logical and mathematical conclusions superseded the production of food as an ends and championed the accumulation of capital as the ends. The current crisis is that on one hand, the regime's logic is to produce enough food to maintain the labor necessary to accumulate capital. And on the other hand, the regime accumulates capital through food. These two ends have yet to find a balance and are the basis for tension in the NFR.

The tensions of the neoliberal food regime correlates to the contradictions of the neoliberal mindset. The hereditary knowledge of farming and food practices passed from generation to generation are lost in the NFR's emphasis placed on productivity with capital-intensive methods. This presumption of neoliberalism deems it necessary that society too fit this logical model. Humans become numerical figures and statistics of productivity becomes the logic. The knowledge framework of logic and mathematics thus leaves the market, with a positioning toward ever more productivity. It becomes the only place for deciding the worthiness of systems and outcomes. The early proponents of neoliberalism envisioned an end to human bias in human affairs, but instead, it has given the mathematical nature of capital the final determinate over human needs. All human efforts must conform to the mathematics and logic of the market otherwise they are seen to be inefficient. Traditional agricultural processes are consequently declared ineffective and useless to the NFR because they are outside the framework of capital. The proponents of a food regime that places value on capital accumulation through food convinced nations that implementing a neoliberal framework into the agricultural sector was the most effective way to feed the world. This notion also fit nicely with another underlying belief of neoliberal thinking that can be traced to John Locke. He instigated the notion that the "industrious and rational" were to gain prominent positions through the

productivity of the land. (Locke 1988, 291) Locke's work situates an imperative that it is logical that a food regime require inputs and resources that are capital intense to increase productivity.

A market that is capable of correcting social ills prioritizes the health of both, people and the planet and sublimates the capital accumulation of the NFR. However, in the United States, seventeen percent of children lack nutritious food sources. (Feeding America 2017) Children under five years of age experience the risk of cognitive and developmental damage due to poor nutrition. The NFR leaves 3.5 million children without the chance to fully develop their cognitive abilities. The American children are limited by the lack of food in the richest country the world has ever known. Considered from this perspective the NFR is not correcting social ills, it is instead increasing their persistence. The physical realm of peoples suffering is not the end of this contradictory belief of neoliberalism that has infected the political economy of food. Also, the possibility for one of humanities greatest actualizations of the self through democratic collaboration loses too when the market wins through food. The NFR hinders the ability of collective control over a life necessity-food.

The myths endorsed by the NFR are traceable to Lockean ideals on private property, productivity and the acceptability of inequality due to a mentality of domination. The ideological undertones of productivity and inequality muddle the distinction between the right to land, food production, and wealth accumulation in America. These are the social, and thus political, ideological consequences of the NFR that hinder American democracy. The economics of the NFR finds its inception in Lockean thought. Encouraged the 'green revolution' -the epoch of agricultural 'innovation' that spread mechanization and industrialization throughout the food system-the shift to a neoliberal global order and the onset of the NFR is no mere coincidence. Capital's authority expanded through deregulation at the national level during the late twentieth century as a way to infiltrate new markets under the guise of Neoliberalism; thus, capital

accumulation through food became an acceptable practice. Food in the neoliberal regime becomes indistinct to location but follows the whims of the now 'liberated' market.

Theory illuminates the value we place on a necessary commodity: food. Lockean theories on productivity and private property are imperative for the neoliberal food regime's capital accumulation. Empirical evidence for the underlying theory of productivity is found in the regime's inclination to produce food using increased amounts of chemical and petrol inputs for capital-intensive farming practices. The increased amount of agricultural inputs required for the means of food production in the NFR parallels the increased capital accumulated for ATNCs. The NFR now produces more food with methods that claim increased productivity while simultaneously contradicting the chief purpose of food production, to sustain human life; instead produces food for the accumulation of capital that is ultimately disadvantageous to humans.

Theorist often invoke food to make certain their thought exercises are relatable to readers. Perhaps, too there is an underlying aspiration that joins food and theory on a subliminal level. It was food that exemplified the productivity of labor, in John Locke's, *Two Treatises of Government*. "he hath mixed his labor with, and joined to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his property". (Locke 1988, 288) Locke too used the gathering of acorns and apples to prove the point of private property. Adam Smith also placed food centrally as he described labor and pricing. "somebody can always be found who is willing to do something in order to obtain it". (A. Smith 1981) The 'it' for Smith was food. What begins to manifest is more than poetic license. These references are as universal then as they are today. The historically theoretical footholds for the political economy of food influence the way we value the food system today. Thinking on food remains in these notions developed so long ago.

In the NFR, the distancing of people from their food sources by increasing the physical distance and psychological detachment of an individual's food source also increases the ability for the regime to

accumulate capital. The practice of consolidation and vertical integration by producers, distributors, and retailers increase the points to accumulate capital for corporations while simultaneously creating distance between individuals from the sources of food. The largest retail seller of food in the United States, Walmart, has merged the chain of production through these practices to the point that an individual has significantly limited access points into the food system. (Gura and Meienberg 2013) There are very few decisions an individual can make in a system when acting only as the consumer. Unfortunately, this has become the point of participation for the individual to act in the food system. As food production moves out of our physical reality the mental distance too increases and the political will over food is thus further removed. The choice to purchase one type of apple over the other is a microscopic decision when compared to the chain of decisions that placed the apple on the shelf in the first place. Decisions that are a prior to the purchase are in the realm of international agreements and corporations, far removed from individuals. The terms made at the NFR level uphold the systematic use of inputs which damage the environment while prioritizing capital-intensive research that places the mathematical efficiency of agricultural production superior to the organoleptic qualities of food. However, these decisions return to both the individual and community when the regime is based on food sovereignty instead.

A food sovereignty regime can offer a new perspective on the political economy of food by limiting the distancing effect enacted by the neoliberal food regime. The sovereignty of a community over food counteracts this distance of people from their sources of food and thus encourages personal agency in food choices. The neoliberal food regime acts against the notions of the 'good life' by prioritizing the accumulation of capital through food. Food sovereignty encourages the 'good life' not just with the fruits of deliciousness from the organoleptic qualities of food but fulfills authentic notions of self. The participation needed in a food sovereignty regime encourages community learning, collective discourse and expands the points of access for democratic participation to the daily decisions of food choices. By reducing the gap between people and their food the individual has agency in personal choices that sustain not only the

individual but the larger community i.e. food sovereignty. A collective will forms through the acknowledgment that the community gains from inclusive access to healthy and sustainable food.

Food sovereignty intrinsically links food and democracy in a relationship, one that provides individuals with food to live while offering a daily access point of food choice to practice democracy. Designated the highest 'good' of political order, democracy is considered the most liberated way to live and govern. The democratic values of individual freedom and collectivity find common ground in democracy by means of the communal decisions about food. This life, if lived 'good' requires a physical, mental and social sustenance that comes from food and the sharing in the communal self-ruling that comes with democratic engagement. Self-ruling individuals that create shared discourse, learning, and decisions about the way food is produced, distributed and consumed become the basis for food sovereignty. Decisions about food that reflect what is collectively valued and determined as 'good' offer both the individual and community fulfillment through the highest order of self-rule.

The relationships and meanings we assign to food are figured out collectively through those shared ideas, decisions, and language that facilitate agreements of participation in the food system. These agreements frame how we collectively live. Language and theoretical ideas about food structure institutions, rules, and norms build the framework of the agreements. These are the foundations that create a food system that either sets up mental restraints or empowers agency in the collective. The access point to the 'good' life becomes accessible to the greatest number of individuals. The imperative that the neoliberal food regime collectively insists upon is the value of capital and this imperative leads to the paradox of this regime.

The social and environmental externalities a food regime imposes on the community can either increase or decrease the use value of food. A food regime can produce food by methods that cause harm to both while externalities of the system are generationally off-set. The enjoyment of sharing in a collective life that validates the worthiness of relationships built on a political economy of food recognizes how

externalities are placed upon future generations. This awareness that food offers a place of communal participation to consider larger social and political issues of our time i.e. climate change, biodiversity loss, mass human migration, inequalities and the decline of civic participation- situates value away from capital while opening possibilities for realignment of food's social value. (Shiva 2005, 146) Food sovereignty's inclination to actualize democratic individuals by their participation in the food system allocates value to food beyond capital accumulation outcomes.

A community that is actively involved in making the decisions on how food is produced and distributed may experience collective learning and discourse practices that are transferable to other political participatory settings, a 'graduation effect'. (Kneafsey 2008) These individuals will grow as democrats; better able to form and maintain a democratic community from the skills learned from active engagement in a food sovereignty regime. The American demos has relinquished democratic decision making about food mostly to the neoliberal food regime. The reality that there are toxic levels of chemicals i.e. glyphosate and increased amounts of health impacting ingredients i.e. sugar accepted as the norm in the American diet shows a lack of collective care regarding the food system. By forfeiting decisions to the NFR the 'graduation effect' also diminishes.

Locke's theories' illuminate philosophical points of the neoliberal food regime (NFR) and the tension between the alternative food sovereignty (FS) movement. The market in the (NFR) or the agency of individuals in (FS) can either hinder or encourage democratic communities through food. The neoliberal food regime guides the trade and production of agriculture based on global regulations, supply chains, and capital-intensive modes of production. The market holds a position of dominance and authority in the NFR creating fewer access points for democratic participation through food and more distancing of people from the source of their food. The alternative, food sovereignty movement, aims to counteract the capital accumulation through food by empowering individuals in the food system through democratic engagement.

Individuals engage with their communities to control the ways and means of food production and distribution while realigning the value of food with its 'use' form. Food Sovereignty gives the authority to the community in decision making about food while increasing the access to democratic. Tracing three basic concepts of political economy regarding productivity, property, and dominion from Locke's theories found in the neoliberal food regime provide recognition of the importance of food in the greater political economy.

The NFR continues to accumulate capital with notions of productivity, as in Locke, through the union of labor and land. For instance, capital accumulation comes in a variety of forms for the NFR. Capital accumulation through food is maximized in the NFR by increased meat consumption of burgeoning affluent populations, transport cost related to fossil fuels, the agro-fuels effect on the price of corn, plus an increased interest of capital speculation in the commodity futures of food and farmland. As capital accumulation becomes the imperative of a food regime this furthers the distances between individuals and communities from their food due to the profit maximization of actors in the NFR.

One way that capital accumulation through food manifest in the neoliberal food regime relies on a philosophical underlying assumption based on a mentality of dominance. The domination of the natural world is recognized in the neoliberal food regime and is seen as a rational and logical necessity to produce food for the masses.⁹ Domination over land and people has allowed the accumulation of capital through food with the contradictory ends to feed the same humans it dominates. The NFR dominates humans by the extraction of labor at wage levels that perpetuate inequality and through the unhealthy consequences from industrial farming, i.e. both unhealthy diets plus the corruption of environments.

Of Course, ideas of human dominion do not intrinsically derive from Locke. However, the entitlement to the land that validated his notions of property and productivity which threads into common assumptions on human dominion that the NFR holds. "God who hath given the World to Men in common,

⁹ Domination as an economic characteristic (Eiseler 2007)

hath also given them a reason to make use of it to the best advantage of Life, and convenience". (Locke 1988, 286) Perhaps a product of his times, Locke understood the land and earth as gifts from God to be used by man for survival. Similar assumptions continue to run rampant in the NFR. The dominance mentality is a psychological justification to ignore the causal properties that the NFR practices have on the world. (Morton 2013) Industrial and Mechanical methods require a mentality that hierarchically sets humans outside the natural world. David Harvey recognizes this mentality as imperative to capitalism itself as, "the social necessities dictated by capital-labor relations of domination". (D. Harvey 2018, 56) A similar imperative to what Locke addressed as human's right and mandate to dominate the natural world. "So that God, by commanding to subdue, gave Authority so far to appropriate. And the condition of Humane Life, which requires labour and Materials to work on, necessarily introduces private possessions." (Locke 1988, 292) The authority from God permits the command and subordination of nature when capital accumulation is perpetuated by the NFR.

John Locke endorsed land accumulation measures as the necessary duty of humans. The reference to the biblical narrative of the earth as God's gift to humanity is evidence of this thinking. His writings determine that labor is the force that appropriated the land into private property. The NFR also dictates the natural world, including human labor as God-given. It is productivity that is advocated in the NFR as the duty of 'man'. "The earth and all that is therein, is given to Men for the support and comfort of their being". (Locke 1988, 288) However, the Earth has felt every dis/comfort of 'man' in the sense that the dominion over the natural world has left the natural world in a deteriorated state from both its practices and assumptions. Unfortunately, the unintended consequences of such human efforts to control nature have poisoned water, air and soil and are the costs of unchecked productivity of the land.

Corporate actors historically have engaged with the natural world as a domineering force with the sanctity of entitlement to the fruits of the land. The first food regime was based on the ideas of dominance

not only of the land but of peoples. This regime developed during the height of the British Empire of the late nineteenth century. (Friedmann 1982) The historical connection to slavery and colonialism from earlier food regimes that profited from domination did not disappear but were merely adjusted by the perception building powers of the new regime's soft power of marketing and public relations. The agricultural past, specifically in America, is wrought with agricultural crimes against humanity and the food regime of this earlier time was accumulated capital with the help of a dominance mentality that still belies justifications for the NFR today. The dominance mentality displayed by the NFR does not openly condone slavery as in the past, but the power structures based on domination remain in the regime as capital accumulates through food. Domination is enacted through market powers where few have agency without capital and here too is how the regime furthers its reach into the greater food system.

The dominance mentality is suggestive too of the productivity concept in Locke. The more humans dominate, or in Lockean terms, 'appropriate' land the more productive one becomes, "he who appropriates land to himself by his labor does not lessen but increase the common stock of man". (Locke 1988, 294) The mixing of one's labor with the land made it productive and beneficial for all of humanity in Locke's view. This is also true in the philosophy of the NFR through the initiatives to perpetuate agriculture as an industry. The predecessor to the NFR was able to feed a growing number of people during a time of unprecedented population growth during the twentieth century. Nevertheless, a contradiction of the NFR now uses productivity as an underlying philosophical justification for capital accumulation through food. The justification of productivity allows the use of known poisons as agricultural inputs, i.e. for the increased productivity of agriculture has led to a contradictory feedback loop. The more productive lands become, the increased amounts of fertilizer, pesticides, and herbicides which are required to maintain productivity in the NFR. These practices create a cycle that accumulates capital from both the production of food and the means of production. The ways and means of food production in the NFR utilizes techniques that are

contradictory to the purpose of food production, the maintenance of human life. When actors in the food regime make decisions to apply harmful chemicals to food the use value of the commodity is sublimated.

NFR practices of industrialized agriculture have on one level increased the common stock of food, although debated, it has simultaneously diminished the common stock i.e. the environment. What has been gained are the unintended consequences of industrial inputs from agriculture enacted upon the land and the environment. This contradiction of productivity is a critical point of rupture in a food regime that delegitimizes the perception building the regime does for itself. The NFR would like the dominant belief to be that it is feeding the world through its methods of industrialized production. However, this has yet to become a reality since only thirty percent of all food globally is produced by the neoliberal food regime, while most is still produced by subsistence farmers. (Gura and Meienberg 2013) The productivity of the NFR through capital accumulation has unforeseen and detrimental consequences and can no longer benefit all.

The expansion of agricultural production has real consequences i.e. environmental degradation of soil and water plus the health impacts upon people that are directly related to the agricultural practices that emerged from the 'green revolution' and continue. Far beyond the capabilities which humans could impact the natural world during Locke's time, now land appropriation and productivity is the cause of destruction to the land. A tension found in the neoliberal food regime claim the convenience of industrial agriculture as a win for humanity. Locke's statement, "conveniencys of life from ten acres, then he could have from an hundred left to nature", authorizes extraction from the land in every way humanly possible from the surface, soil, and rock which lay beneath. (Locke 1988, 294) It becomes no surprise the persistence of the NFR to extract from the land as much as possible. The food regime has little alternative than to reuse extracted minerals, petroleum, and heavy metals as fertilizer if productivity is the ultimate ends.

The abstraction of value was seen by Locke, as the merging of labor and land to appropriate private property that was once held in common. The philosophical notions of appropriating property as private too underlies the NFR's agenda. Farmland speculation is a practice of the NFR, employed by ATNCs, when renting or leasing lands to hold the value of what was once held in common, as land for food. More than half of American cropland is now rented, yet the labor performed on these lands is limited to only the productivity of capital accumulation. (Services 2017) ATNCs lease large land tracts which frame the economic value of both land and labor. The accumulation of capital rest in Locke's theories on private property and because capital's interest is favored in the NFR, both ownership and individual labor is transferred to actors who still gain the 'private right' to accumulate, when ownership of land is economically distant then fewer people my claim this private right "And so they became his private right", removed from the land in every sense. (Locke 1988, 288)

Agribusiness now determines value from what is exchangeable on the market- what can be sold- not only in the capacity of price determination but the very use of what is sold. The valuation of corn as an energy product, ethanol, is an example of the NFR's exchange value of 'food'. Corn has lost its use value as food when its exchange value can accumulate more capital for a food regime when sold as ethanol. Currently, fuel production consumes a third of corn grown globally. (Gura and Meienberg 2013, 7) The corn sector has restructured to the benefit of capital accumulation. The previous use of producing corn for food has lessened its ability to increase capital compared to the exchange possibilities from ethanol. (H. Wittman 2011) Locke was early to recognize it is not only what we accumulate from the land itself that has value, but for the imagined labor or product which would come from the combination of the land and labor. "As much as anyone can make use of to any advantage of life." (Locke 1988, 290) The advantage to turn corn into agrofuel is justifiable in the Lockean sense through the advantages of productivity that the NFR now equates with capital accumulation.

Locke's discussion applied to the combination of land and labor to increase productivity assumes an acceptance of hierarchy and inequality through the invention of money. "And as different degrees of Industry were apt to give Men Possessions in different proportions, so this Invention of Money gave them the opportunity to continue and enlarge them." (Locke 1988, 301) The NFR too takes on this philosophy of hierarchy of capital as an ends and justifies the inequality of the system. An illuminating scenario is the inequality of wages between the labor of agricultural fieldworkers and agro-business C.E.O.'s. The unequal pay is astounding, where field workers earn seventeen cents to the dollar made by agribusiness C.E.O's. (Cooperative 2016) These discrepancies depict how those actively engaged in food production are distant from the location of power and excluded from decision making locations about how food is grown. The NFR thrives on the inequality of production because it disjoints the points of entry for communities to make decisions about their food.

By using worker populations exempt from democratic participation a food regime increases the accumulation of capital. Here the NFR contradicts the Lockean viewpoint, that it is human labor that manifests value from the land. This paradox brought about by the impetus to push productivity ever forward has coincidentally left human labor as a hindrance to productivity especially those workers with political agency. 'tis value which puts the greatest part of value on land'. (Locke 1988, 290) Yet, the labor which goes into the land has historically and consistently been undervalued. Laborers of the land are not appropriating the land by their labor for their own sustenance but appropriating for the accumulation of capital itself. This idea is fundamental to Locke's ideas on labor.

The labor valuation of necessary commodities represents an aspect of a community's ethos regarding those who perform such essential labor. The NFR devalues labor by engaging in practices that constitute poor working conditions. The farmer who is indebted to the agri-business for expensive infrastructure purchases necessary for industrial-scale farming is distant from ownership of their livelihood.

Plus, the farmer who has become only a “lease holder” instead of an owner/operator of the farm perpetuates this distance. These are two examples of the way the NFR devalues the labor that produces food. The labor is a mere mathematical calculation in the outcome to produce the valued commodity of the regime, capital. Food sovereignty is a way to restructure the end value of the food regime that replaces capital with a healthy and well-fed democratic community.

A radical understanding of democracy based on the interpersonal level is offered by food sovereignty and allows for the healing of relationships that span from human to human, and human to earth. The ecological, interpersonal and political blocks brought about by capital accumulation through food are identifiable when theoretical underpinnings illuminate the values related to food. Food sovereignty defined by the engagement of citizens actively taking part and collectively creating the terms surrounding food, from its production to disposal offers a platform on which this daily democratic process may manifest. (Gerwin 2011) The awareness that food was a necessary right of people was not lost on the early political economist. John Locke with his insistence on productivity, even still recognized the right to food, “man, once born, has right to life and consequently meat and drink.” (Locke 1988, 280) The awareness that it was a natural right to feed oneself aligns with the food sovereignty movement. The autonomy that is built through owning the production and distribution of food provides the philosophical undertones from which a community constructs “environmental, social and economic sustainability”. (H. A. Wittman 2010, 34)

Locke’s sentiment used by the NFR to create obstacles to the collective will are simultaneously seen in another light. The value of labor onto the land is too found in food sovereignty as the principal of ownership that creates a collective stake in a territory. Responsibility to the land nurtures the collective stake and the collective will to value both labor and land for its continued productivity. Ownership of land continues to be a highly contested issue and a reason for this is that land is required for the maintenance of

human life. As land is increasingly invested in and speculated on by capital the NFR limits the ownership of both land and labor to those with capital and removes those without.

SECTION 4: A Neoliberal Food Regime Hinders Democracy in the U.S.

Democracy is a two-sided coin like many other human aspirations. The tension between individual and collective lies at its heart yet it is this tension that strengthens the potentialities for the greatest actualization of human's self-rule. By working collectively, the actualization of the individual is expanded to greater potentials. However, it is the most dazzling of promises of human collectivity when imagining the inclusive possibility of individual and communal will merging. Characteristics of the democrat remain pertinent to the challenges democracy continues to grapple with within the food regime and the American ethos. For the food regime to hold a place for democracy the demos would need a capacity for sharing knowledge, multiple platforms for participation, and an understanding of collective needs. Food provides an opportunity for learning collectively and can be considered an entry point for all to participate as a community since food is a shared necessity for survival. (Levkoe 2006) The capacity to form community trust, compassion and communicative skills are important for democracy and increased through participation in the food system. The current food regime is filled with mistrust, greed, and misinformation that are reflective of circumstances in American politics today. However, democratic communities have come farther than the limited notions democracy offered in ancient times.

The democratic initiative originated with the Greeks with few participants; in contrast to what we think of today, the many, participating in the collective self-rule in Athens. The historical exclusionary traditions, interlaced with the more noble ideas of self-determination and self-rule, permitted very few to participate from the beginnings of the democratic state. The Greek's gift to the world was democracy; however, few communities have actualized this idea, and more frequently undemocratic aspects have stagnated short of inclusivity of a whole population. The democrat in Athens had to be a landowner and male, which also often meant being a slave owner. Thankfully democracy is more inclusive today and being pushed to its fullest inclusivity, opening opportunities to build interpersonal relationships, communities,

including nations that are based on and value democratic tenets. Although the Greeks did not see that all individuals should be included in the demos the ownership of land shaped the ancient demos as self-reliant, self-ruling, and self-determined. The initial stages of the American experience held similar requirements as the polis of Athens. If one could provide sustenance for oneself, one could participate in the demos, becoming an engaged democrat participates in democratic practices. It was land which made this designation for many throughout American history.

Greeks too recognized the sanctity of land to provide for the citizenry. Athenians were an agrarian society who were able to provide for themselves by maintaining a connection to the land. Agriculture made up eighty percent of ancient Greece's economy and provided the sustaining power for their empire. The American empire is not much different. America too built an empire with agriculture at its base, like the Greeks, they also lacked virtue by using land theft and slavery to accomplish such goals. These open wounds continue to fester in the contemporary American consciousness. Acknowledged by only certain portions of the population, one can't deny the energetic repercussions historical terror creates. (Nestler 2012) We can also note, those who were terrorized to create what is modern America were connected to the natural world; either from spiritual acknowledgement that creation should be respected, or by sacrificing their lives to the land, with the agrarian work needed for America to eventually hold a hegemonic position in the world, especially in agriculture.

Food has been at the basis of agricultural or capital accumulation debates since the inception of the American nation-state. Thomas Jefferson, an early influencer of American democratic ideals saw agriculture as the aspect of virtuousness in a democratic government. He thought a demos' connection to the land was essential to sustain self-rule of a democratic people. In his following statement this sentiment is understood, "Our Government will remain virtuous for many centuries; as long as they are chiefly agricultural; and this will be as long as there shall be vacant land in any part of America." (M. Wilson 1939, 21)

When we think of the disconnect today of the American people from the land a narrative begins to unfold which aligns with Jefferson's view. Although, America has grown in population, inclusivity, and territory beyond what Jefferson possibly could have imagined; the national history is abhorrent when it comes to its agricultural past. There was an obvious lack of virtuousness during Jefferson's time as well. Even in our contemporary political situation, extreme violence continues in agriculture, whether that of environmental degradation or labor and human rights abuses. These transformed forms of violence are consistent with the lack of virtue in current America democracy. The lack of agricultural connections in the majority of citizens daily lives has created at least a public disengaged from the basic commodity of life and at worst a serious inability to participate with the what may be a basic virtue of self-rule.

An American thinker who helped push the democrat further was John Dewey. Dewey's emphasis on the education of citizens instilled with democratic principles may still offer American democracy the necessary skills a community needs to communally form a social will. The foundation of a civic-minded education that is based on food sovereignty would allow the demos to participate in an expanded form of democracy. Participation in the community is sustained through democratic discussion, consultation, persuasion, debate in decision making on the food system. Social engagement with deliberative ends empowers the individual as an actor in the community who is concerned with personal and communal access to food. Thinking and critical citizens, a pretense to what Dewey considered the potential of the American project, are necessary to both democracy and a food sovereign system. Expressive and socialized citizens would become self-ruling participants actualizing the most expansive possibilities of democracy. When members of a group have the liberated potentials accessible in democracy sharing a common interest becomes possible. Individuality is truly expressed when all are equally participating in the demos and gives democracy its goodness. (J. Dewey 2007)

Although, Dewey never called for food sovereignty his consideration of democracy would benefit from the daily participation required in a food sovereignty regime. The following quote from his book, *The Public and its Problems*, illustrates the lack of control citizens experience in the neoliberal food regime with its highly technical practices. “Man has suffered the impact of an enormously enlarged control of physical energies without any corresponding ability to control himself and his own affairs”. (J. Dewey 2016, 197)

Dewey’s sentiment shows the persistence of humanity’s linear progress rarely leads to increased self-rule. The neoliberal food regime is endemic to this issue. The space for individual expression through daily decision making in the food sovereignty regime would satisfy a democratic notion established by Dewey’s writing. Exemplified in the following quote, “singular persons are the foci of action”. (J. Dewey 2016, 118)

Plus, establishing a common interest in the Deweyan sense is easily drawn between access to food and the needed resources to facilitate food sovereignty. The civic participation to keep the land, water, soil, and air protected for the continued access to nutritious food forms could provide a basic commonality for uniting a population. Additionally, the direct democratic activity needed to facilitate food sovereignty provides another social inquiry into democracy, as Dewey suggests. Food sovereignty would align the needs and values of a democratic community on a visceral level. Since food is a daily requirement, daily interaction and engagement with the social community of democrats provide an opportunity for more frequent practices in the project of democracy and communal learning.

Sheldon S. Wolin also framed democracy as a project. Wolin considered democracy an aspiration for the people, the demos, to order and regulate the life shared in common- A project of the collective. Similar to the basic tenets of food sovereignty as the people controlling the food system also create a commonality of the people as a collective power. When considered a project which legitimizes the power of people, democracy and food sovereignty align in their objectives. Wolin also considered democracy a “political

movement to be remembered and recreated”¹⁰ Remembering and recreation, otherwise seen as a process. (P. O. Espejo 2014) The ebb and flow, the changing, the “re”membering, “re” creation, “re”turn toward democracy. A thing which is becoming, not a solid state of constituted thingness.

Another thinker, Paulina Ochoa Espejo too points to the ‘becoming’ of a people as an attempt to understand popular sovereignty and the changing needs of collective wills. The people are the process or the project of becoming that compositionally change over time. Espejo offers democracy a way to move past exclusivity in a nation-state territory. A similar changing found in food sovereignty to open the door to greater democracy through the problem solving of feeding the demos may mirror the process of Wolin and Espejo.

Additionally, Wolin saw the ‘taking back of one’s power’, the actualization of the individual to self-rule, as the decisive action permissible through democracy. The definition he assigns to democracy offers the contemporary demos a flexible and nurturing position of self-rule. The taking back of power from the neoliberal food regime creating a food sovereignty regime would too be a democratic. As Wolin wishes, democracy as a project, one concerned with the political potentialities of ordinary citizens is what food sovereignty offers. If citizens are nutritiously satiated, then needs of the collective shift toward the need for greater political agency and provide space to continue the project of democracy through food sovereignty. Both Espejo and Wolin quote Dewey and can help translate the theory and practice of democracy into one which food sovereignty would become in Wolin’s words a, “restorative moment”. (Wolin 2016)

¹⁰One point I disagree with Wolin is that the modern state created the good kind of modernity. I would argue it actually was the citizenry or collective humanity who created modernity. He is speaking directly to the militarized technology that cannot be viewed as only good. There’s actually no way to know how humanity would have gone if industrial militarization did not dominate. And to declare modernity good we would need to ignore the continuation of atrocities that even the “good of the state” has brought. Slavery is less than abolished it has only moved out of sight, oppression of so many natures continue to persist in American democracy. Our Modernity is forever built on the backs of those who have yet to find their voice and who have been actively oppressed by the means of capitalist who intend to keep building a world for which only capital thrives. It was never the benevolent state, a body without organs, so to speak. There were many humans, individuals who fought to create the good kind of modernity. I would even go as far as to question what is the good. Does Wolin mean Progress because if we speak to the nature of humanity and the greatest question of why? We are still no closer than Socrates himself to answering such a question.

Wolin also saw democracy as a constant process moving through constitutional structures to revolutionary change and back again. The American citizenry reminded and recreated through the participatory nature required of food sovereignty encourages practice for a healthy democracy. Controlling food becomes a specific process or project of participation, demonstrating the same desire for the people's sovereignty and a necessity for democracy. There is a multitude of opinions as to how individuals participate in the demos. The challenges brought about by a revolutionary change through a food movement offer American democracy the fully actualized democrat participate on every level of their "being". The project of democracy infiltrates the citizenry to a level of interpersonal relationships possible through food sovereignty. An equal footing of the young/old, rich/poor, strong/weak. A possible democratic practice which not only is about self-rule on the collective level but also the individual is able to self-rule their own nutrition and health by participating in the food sovereignty regime.

The centuries of dispossession from the land created an ever-progressing tension the neoliberal food regime preserves. The food regime literature typically discusses dispossession as the removal of subsistence farmers from the land. Specifically, this phenomenon occurred throughout the global south with literature written on the process occurring throughout the twentieth century influenced by the 'green revolution'. The reduction of necessary labor for food production created a wave of dispossession from the land. When reconsidered on a global scale there stands a 'relational' distancing of all peoples to the sources of food production. Technology in agriculture replaced humanities chief labor endeavors. The amount of collective labor for human survival now heavily relies on machines and chemicals. The dispossession of people from food labor now spreads into the macro-economies of global trade that remains necessary for all labor, capital and human reproduction.

Globalism is one of humanities greatest resources when recognized as a program for all humans to share ideas and insights on human quality of life. We must remember it is not a purely economic project of the last century but has infiltrated humanity's undertakings since the earliest civilizations. (Moore 2015, 51)

Ideas and culture have circumnavigated the globe for much longer than the last century's neoliberal, neo-regulatory capitalist program. However, the implementation of transnational agreements specific to the food regime has removed decisions making about what constitutes basic quality of life factors-what to eat. Accusing globalism of the issues manifesting from the capital accumulation through food misses the mark on problems of democratic engagement in current American politics. The crisis of liberalism may face growing pains through a process of maturation as humanity moves towards a completely globalized society that a call to isolationism will not resolve. Decades into the neoliberal globalization project, the food regime exemplifies areas where tension between greater democratic possibilities and a liberalized world, market included, may find solutions. How the neoliberal food regime directly affects the possibilities for greater democracy are negotiated in three limitations that the current regime exemplifies and act as feedback loops upon each other.

Historically, cultural, social, and legally forced population outside the demos dominated agricultural labor in the U.S. today, economic demands force workers to produce food for the collective while remaining outside the demos. The undocumented and often disproportionate populations of women are left without political agency when relegated to agricultural labor. (Bauer 2010) The numbers of workers needed for seasonal work is still high even in a nation where the neoliberal food regime is technologically capital dependent. (Cooperative 2016) The collective American mind has chiefly erased the memory of the forced labor which built the country's wealth. Mostly wealth accumulated from the land remains largely unacknowledged by the dominant culture. And, by not acknowledging the shared agricultural past a cycle continues which removes political agency from those who produce food for the demos and Americans forfeit a location to practice democracy.

Accumulation of capital through food for the benefit of private agribusiness continues with the American demos acceptance of labor from populations with little political agency. The labor that participates

is often from groups with weakened political power and often takes on agricultural work due to economic necessity. Those individuals working in the neoliberal food regime face labor conditions that offer little pay, unsafe conditions and similarly oppressive occupational situations as earlier agricultural labor populations faced. (Cooperative 2016) Undocumented persons are estimated as half of the workers for American agricultural production. (Kandel 2018) The labor of these workers is often not their own in the sense that they are beholden to capital for work without the agency of citizenship. This precedent upheld by the neoliberal food regime uses disenfranchised populations to consolidate power beyond a person or even the state. This reality leaves dispossessed individuals distant from land but also from the democracy because they are migratory, often leaving home countries and forfeiting the possibility of political engagement within the system where their labor accumulates capital.

The community project of food production once required of humanity is now relegated to the realm and whims of the market. There is little need for a food productive community when products like Soylent give necessary nutrients for the busy lifestyles that support the accumulation goals of the neoliberal market.¹¹ There is an anti/non-humanist measure enacted in the absence of food production. Traditional human practices and efforts centered on food production are now unnecessary when the neoliberal food regime becomes the dominant food regime. Nutrients have become only an energy source sustaining humans, not as actualized beings in a greater democratic community, but as the necessary source of power for machines to accumulate capital. The relational distance of humans to their food source is furthered by nutrient uptake products. The 'food from nowhere' notion is exemplified in products created from the breaking down of whole foods into drinkable energy i.e. Soylent. (McMicheal 2009) A product that could have grown anywhere, flown everywhere and eaten whenever replaces the expansive cultural, social and political relations between people and their food. However, the dispossession from the land, distancing

¹¹ Soylent is a drinkable meal often purported to be the future for nutrient uptake and marketed toward the busy tech-world lifestyle.

in the geographical and relational sense inspire the de-collectivism evasive in the neoliberal food regime. Feedback loops in the food regime perpetuate systematic disconnection to food and stifle the points of entry for collectivism necessary in a healthy democracy.

When land is appropriated by agribusiness those working it, 'the farmers', become indebted to the accumulation of capital. A new American version of dispossession, often seen as a changing of the times, is a result of economic implications of the neoliberalism food regime. Exemplified by the transnational corporations that encompass the entirety of the food chain that remove small family farms and consolidate in the food regime. Consolidation of the food chain takes many forms. A few ways this happens is by the merging of production chains, the patenting of intellectual property rights on biological organisms used in food production and capital investment of vast land swaths.¹² The ownership of the natural materials, the land, the labor, the distribution systems, the retail outlets, and the entire farm are typical actions for agribusiness consolidation and leaves little space for individual actors to participate on their own terms. Otherwise, leaving little place for democratic engagement through the food system.

The influence of ATNC's over regulatory bodies increases the likelihood that the neoliberal food regime may resist localized democratic opposition to questionable practices. The parable of fighting a specter comes to mind when ATNCs influence not only the international but national politics. As these corporations turn toward technological practices such as genetic engineering or biotechnologies, the distancing from even the knowledge of how food is produced is solidified in the neoliberal food regime. Americans now lack the discourse to debate practices such as when patents are held by foreign entities. Technology on this scale ultimately depletes the tangible knowledge of the everyday community to make decisions on food outside the laboratory.

¹² "The agriculture company is expected to generate \$16 billion in sales after the separation, surpassing Monsanto as the largest player in a rapidly consolidating industry. Three major agriculture industry mergers have been proposed in the last six months. In addition to the Dow-DuPont merger, Bayer AG is trying to takeover Monsanto Co., and ChemChina, an agriculture company owned by the Chinese government, is paying \$43 billion for Swiss pesticide and seed giant Syngenta." (Mordock 2016)

The natural world has been feeding humans without technological inputs over time immemorial. It is a blatant act of hubris that companies encourage the use of laboratory created biotech agricultural inputs that place biodiversity and sustainability at peril. The agribusiness influence on the Iraqi agricultural situation exemplifies the hubris of agribusiness and has been linked to a single mother on heroin. (W. Brown 2015, 145) Wendy Brown described the distribution of GM crops by the U.S. AID deployment of wheat on the war-torn country in this manner and highlighted the loss of hereditary knowledge that dates to the fertile crescent. The companies implemented an agenda based on the neoliberal food regime with little resistance. With the least coming from the American demos from which the Bremer Orders originated. The orders were a form of market control where agribusiness companies were allowed to own the entirety of life cycles from seeds to retail outlets for the agriculture of the war-torn country. Although, one may argue Iraqi and American agricultural markets are vastly different the access to food supply is similar in that they both are influenced by the neoliberal regime.

Domestically agribusiness does not hesitate to enact similar control that leaves little room to oppose or even change direction if health issues arise. Such an example of agribusiness neglect of American's health are the acceptable arsenic levels allowed in rice grown in the American south. These levels are direct consequences of agribusiness's use of industrial chemicals on the once heavily cotton reaped lands that have now switched to rice for the capital benefits of the latter crop. (Potera 2007) To even label food products with chemical or genetic alterations has received opposition from agribusiness. The neoliberal food regime prefers to confuse actual debate on the topic by using discursive power means of public relations and marketing. ATNCs spend a fortune on research and marketing to persuade the consumer that biotech in the food regime is unharmed. (U. F. Alliance 2017) This is most notable in a recent perception survey released by the U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance, which is heavily funded by agribusiness. Even the agency set out to reflect the American demos, the USDA, has a revolving door of

sitting Ag. Secretaries and agribusiness executives. Here too the use of perception altering exist with the designation of family farms in the country in the following manner: Very large family farms (101,265) gross over \$500,000, Large family farms (86,551) gross between \$250,000 and \$500,000 while Small family farms (1,925,799) gross under \$250,000. (USDA 2018) When the median household income is only \$56,000 (Census 2017), even small family farms seem a promising occupational choice for Americans although it is commonly acknowledged otherwise. (B. Smith 2014)

Through democratic discussion and knowledge sharing a collective decision to label GMO products was made by the demos in Vermont, while agribusiness attempted to thwart the collective will. The argument still wages today as those who wish to see GMO labels are skeptical of what they deem the “DARK” act, or “Deny Americans the Right to Know”, a nationally proposed measure that would allow agribusiness to determine the labeling criteria for GMO food. Opponents of the national legislation claim that the Vermont label standards would be ignored if this legislation is enacted. Again, in this case, agribusiness has the upper hand with a quiet veto by President Barak Obama to the Vermonter's democratic decision on the federal level and opened the opportunity for business to create GMO labels on their own accord. (Dinan 2016) Obama's actions exemplified the push for the neoliberal food regime's desire for capital accumulation over the demos collective will. A facet of neoliberalism to remove the collectivity of a people by transferring the location of power from the localized level of the state and farther away from the demos to the national regulatory body holds true in a case from Vermont. Primarily ATNCs have the resources, (aka lobbying capacity) and political agency to make sure legislation favors capital accumulation over the collective will.

The state of Vermont's attempt to label products with genetic engineering (GMOs) stirred companies whose interest it counteracts. Because consumers questioned the processes of food production agribusiness moved to block the collective will. There is a case that genetically modified organisms (GMOs)

is another aspect of 'distancing' of people and their food by introducing technological processes beyond common understanding. This alienation from the natural cycles of genetic modification is moved into the laboratory away from accessible and shared knowledge. Additionally, it can be another way that agribusiness accumulates capital through multiple courses by genetic patents. The profit motive driving the selling of food with GM characteristics as well as the capital-intensive research become revenue. Using 'lab-designed' food is similar to a path-dependence framework that requires agricultural inputs necessary to maintain the relevance of such products. The biological ability to grow precarious laboratory products out in the fields requires industrial processes where every step become locations for agribusiness capital accumulation. The lack of knowledge of food processes removes the agency of the democrat to a degree that is only now recognized such as in the Vermont case.

There is an exceptionalism to American democracy grounded mostly in the ideas of individual freedom, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. These all hold vague conceptions for democracy and create tension where the individual will dominates and decreases the possibility for commonality. The murkiness of the neoliberal food regime lies in its resemblance to American democracy thus far in its efforts to spread markets which are advantageous to capital. American democracy consists of separate actors in a pursuit to find happiness through the market, but otherwise without a way to collectively build the project for democracy. It can be argued that liberal democracies have faltered in recent years and a collective reimagining a democracy project would be to realign around a commodity, such as food, that humanity shares. American democracy currently holds tenets traceable back to the appropriation of territory by Locke, otherwise manifest as the empirical constitution of the food regime as a consequence of the American project and the neoliberal market. The political agency that most Americans utilize is in the market with relation to the commons has become an afterthought. Two concepts imperative for a living democracy are self-rule and agency. Both have lost legitimacy in American politics because actualization manifest through capital accumulation currently and not through the project of democracy.

Democracy is a body politic as the citizen is the individual body. Just as a balanced healthy person makes daily choices regarding the nutrients to consume, this framework is translatable to the politics they live. What democratic actions create a healthy democracy? Although the ethos of American democracy has provided the world with much more liberalized society the consequences of equating democracy with political choice in the market has led to the neoliberal food regime. Contemporary democracies, they are to incorporate ideals of food sovereignty may provide individuals another place to expand democratic theory and to consider a collective holistically. A democratic alchemy may take shape because citizens are healthy and engaged by participating in inclusive self-rule in the realm of food sovereignty.

The dominance of the neoliberal food regime currently trickles into every aspect of American society and stifles the self-actualizing potential that an authentic democracy with self-actualized knowledgeable participants, would offer. This dominance is intrinsic to the western paradigm of consumer culture and propagated globally at the rate of mechanical temporality, or machine speed. Food is intrinsic to capitals global value, yet the natural schedules may not adjust. It also is central to the reproduction of wage labor and other forms of labor coming under capitalist sway'. (McMicheal 2009) What produces the wealth of nations but the labor which creates capital and what maintains labor reproduction but food itself. This sentiment is the basis for understanding the intricate connection food and democracy have with each other. Without food, a reproductive labor market would transform. When we chose to renounce democracy in the food regime we forfeit a unique means for the demos to participate daily in a democratic society. It is hard to imagine humanity moving back to an agrarian paradigm but the dispossession from lands is a reality we must consider as a true limit of democratic engagement. However, to know and care about where and how food is produced does lead to understanding certain ideals democracy may offer humanity. Safe and nutritious food enables people to develop cognitive skills required for self-actualization and self- rule. When the systems which produce the food for the demos are corrupted or aim for the accumulation of capital through the production of food then the citizens suffer.

SECTION 5: Food Sovereignty - A Chance for American Democracy

Food sovereignty would reintegrate the individual into the food system. A person, a family, a community, or even a nation would engage with the basic commodity of food as it is, a basis to humanity's survival. Food becomes a location for participation where individuals may act collectively by practicing democracy in the food system. The practice of democracy has been at the basis of food sovereignty since the concept's inception. The original definition expanded to include food sovereignty as a way towards new social relations that include democratic engagement of the individual, family, community, and nation. The Nyèlèni Declaration, written in 2007 at a conference in Mali, reads below:

Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts those who produce, distribute, and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations. It defends the interests and inclusion of the next generation. It offers a strategy to resist and dismantle the current corporate trade and food regime, and directions for food, farming, pastoral and fisheries systems determined by local producers. Food sovereignty prioritizes local and national economies and markets and empowers peasant and family farmer-driven agriculture, artisanal fishing, pastoralist led grazing, and food production, distribution and consumption based on environmental, social and economic sustainability. Food sovereignty promotes transparent trade that guarantees just income to all peoples and the rights of consumers to control their food and nutrition. It ensures that the rights to use and manage our lands, territories, waters, seeds, livestock, and biodiversity are in the hands of those of us who produce food. Food sovereignty implies new social relations free of oppression and inequality between men and women, peoples, racial groups, social classes, and generations. (First 2017)

The expanded mission of food sovereignty recognizes specific obstacles the neoliberal food regime imposes on the relationship between people and their food. The call for an ecologically sound and sustainable methods approach to producing food directly contrast to the practices of the neoliberal food regime. The impetus to increase productivity through any means necessary is challenged by the food sovereignty movement. If agricultural methods are overly productive, what remains are the crisis exemplified through social, environmental, and democratic obstacles that indemnify the neoliberal food

regime. Secondly, food sovereignty puts people as the authority on food and food policy. This is a direct contrast to the neoliberal power situated where ATNCs and international trade organizations which favor policies that prioritize capital accumulation through food. Decision making on the local level allows greater participation because points of entry are more numerous in smaller communities. The greatest support food sovereignty presents for democracy is the implication that new social relations will form. They would not be based on oppression or inequality. The potentiality for a new social system based on the sovereignty of food, is radically different than what the current food regime offers. This would also mean the realignment of the social order away from the market and towards a 'food first' position that implements agroecological to mend the environmental harm from the food system.¹³

The Nyèlèni Declaration confronts two myths held by a food regime based on capital accumulation, that of neoliberalism's liberalization of humanity through the market and the superiority of technological and industrial practices of the green revolution. These aspects of food sovereignty are outlined below:

Imperialism, neo-liberalism, neo-colonialism and patriarchy, and all systems that impoverish life, resources and eco-systems, and the agents that promote the above such as international financial institutions, the World Trade Organization, free trade agreements, transnational corporations, and governments that are antagonistic to their peoples. (*DECLARATION OF NYÉLÉNI 2007*)

The term food sovereignty itself offers democracy a new process focused on the sustaining commodity of food. Sovereignty in the traditional definition as supreme authority has historically lead to problems of exclusion. However, the sovereign in contemporary democracy are the people. The sovereign is generally accepted to mean the people for contemporary democracies. The people, also with its problems in democratic theory, must decide who and what makes the people. Paulina Ochoa Espejo determines that it is through a process approach that who are the people should be considered. She states, "If we conceive of the people as a series of events, rather than a collection of individuals, then we can solve the problem of

¹³ Agro-ecology is the joining of ecology in the agricultural system. an approach whose proponents see as the way out of the industrialized farming practices that the neoliberal food regime encourages.

legitimizing rule democratically as the people's composition changes". (P. O. Espejo 2011) Food sovereignty may also transcend the traditional political sovereignty issues and expand the freedom of individuals by reimagining locations for democracy. Espejo's definition of the people as process provides an opening to see sovereignty itself as process. Always changing, as the people change. Food sovereignty may offer the same in the way that a flexibility of process on food decisions would require flexibility. The promise that a 'good state', a democratic one, may gain legitimization through the possibility of sovereignty demands similar civic agility. When the supreme authority is the democratic collective will the basis for these processes fulfill the promise of the 'good state'. (P. O. Espejo 2011)

Collective will and or political sovereignty as a democratic project is also an emergent processes to analyze food sovereignty. Approaching the food regime with an interpretive analysis of energetic factors, otherwise known as emergent phenomena, highlight the consequences of poor choices when producing and consuming food and locates potential transformation points in the current regime. (H. Wittman 2011) The collection of individuals that democratically engage to create a food sovereignty regime remedy the poor choices of the current regime by putting people before capital. The collective will emerges from the democratic process that gain sovereignty through 'good' food decisions. The acknowledgement that transformation points in the current regime hold potential for inclusive and wholistic democratic fulfillment through food sovereignty is this emergent process.

Food is a political engagement one we may or may not be aware that we are betrothed. Every decision and choice which culminates with food on the table was at some point created by and thus has a return upon the American democratic process. One access location that offers daily participation in the collective democratic society is found in the choices made surrounding food. There are shifts occurring for the American citizenry's engagement with their food and an unbelievable recognition and concern as to where food originates, how it is processed and the carbon footprint on the planet has begun to make

mainstream headlines. In the past twenty years, the market increase of organics has double-digit growth since the mid-1990's. (OTA 2016) The rise of farmer's markets has also increased by 76% since 2008 according to the USDA. (Service 2016) All such factors demonstrate a shifting awareness in the American food system, the system that produces, process, distributes, consumes, and disposes of all food.

A way to connect to the land, a place, for us a nation state, is to speak of physical territory required for food, or as Wendel Berry eloquently states, "ancient human need to have and to belong to a piece of land". (Berry 2015, 7) The land is what gives territory and legitimacy to a state and is important to discuss within the bounds of democracy and food sovereignty. For a basic understanding of the state, a physical territory must exist. The territory would also need to produce resources to support the state. Territory thus legitimizes the sovereign. It is a place, a home. People need a place for their physical bodies but also for their physical nourishment- for their food. The territory of a people gives back what not even a self-determined government is able to give; a physical space needed to grow food and support the continuation of individual life.

Food sovereignty aims at a basic principle that what nurtures an individual is food. Those with hungry bellies cannot care to engage beyond the minimal action to maintain survival. Currently, this means disengaging not only politically but even with one's own body by ignoring the detrimental choices made to eat poorly. Food sovereignty asks of democracy a path for the citizenry to live up to human potential. There are urban areas beginning to rectify the situation through public land efforts to increase control of publicly owned lands. In Detroit, a movement has specifically called for food sovereignty to play a part in the rebuilding of a community devastated by global neoliberalism. (Ignaczak 2016) Additionally, in New York City land activist have created maps for educating the public on where the unused land lay so that a movement of community gardens has sprung up throughout the city in the past few decades. Similar urban

agricultural and urban renewal education programs have occurred in New Orleans, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia. (596 Acres n.d.)

These are small efforts by individuals that bring greater democracy to their local communities. Many of the areas considered food deserts, or those lacking access to grocery stores, are now able to produce food and circumvent the need for the neoliberal food regime altogether. Actions of food sovereignty positions people in control of their food source. It seems impossible to separate food production from the territory or 'land' usurped by capital in the effort to create further capital. Humans become absent except as means of production in these scenarios which are the status quo for the neoliberal food regime. Communities that take action to 're-territorialize' their food sources are participating in food sovereignty and the relationships that develop offer democracy a chance to grow.

Most often when food is discussed the imagination takes us to an agricultural setting. Whether this setting is imagined as a large industrial farm or a small subsistent farm would ultimately be determined by the knowledge held as to where food is produced. If one imagined a large-scale industrialized farm the deduction could be made that knowledge of the actualities of the neoliberal food regime exists. However, it seems the imagination is reluctant to give up myths and so many imagine small family farms in America growing and producing the food we consume. The production of food gives the calories necessary for Americans to survive and also to practice in the political realm if they so wish. The nourishment provided by the production aspect of the food regime is metaphorically similar to the education a society would expand upon their citizens. The education of the demos would provide the knowledge to know where one's food is grown thus nourishing the knowledge which builds a well-informed demos.

The 'becoming' that transfers an idea into a process of self-rule is similar to the becoming that food undergoes during the nutritional processing stage. Becoming a democrat requires a process of both individual actualization and communal actualization. The collective will, -hopefully virtuous because values are aligned with the nourishment of food- uses the knowledge from the production of food for decision

making that offers the greatest good for the most people. This processing scenario in food sovereignty reflects the self-actualization, becoming, of the self-ruling and responsible citizen to the collective. An action of doing, a means of process that merge food into democratic practice.

The distribution within a food sovereignty regime would mean food moves around to all who need and want nourishment from it. The distribution can equate with the co-operative nature or the moving around of a collective will to accommodate all of the demos. The distribution of food moves around in a similar fashion as the ideas, needs, and desires of the collective transform through the knowledge and processing of this knowledge. It is through dialogue that an ever-changing demos can form a collective will. A Demos open to new members and flexible enough to accommodate all viewpoints will sustain as a political community. Food Sovereignty offers the community the commodity of food to build out the collective will.

The consumptive characteristic of the food sovereignty regime is active. It is an action which all members of society take part and is the most relatable for the democratic alignment between the food regime and the participation of the demos. Here is where the most people take part in the food regime and thus where food sovereignty would have the most to offer American Democracy. If the American demos was educated in the food system this knowledge would contribute to their own self-actualization or self-sustaining process. The knowledge of the food system and the act of becoming a democrat forms a collective will and community beyond the individual enacted in the food sovereignty regime. When there is collective will- around the right to food- collective action -food sovereignty- becomes a democratic possibility as all are acting in the common good of feeding the demos. Consumption is a metaphor for the individual action of both food and knowledge about the food system that is needed for the collective action to sustain the collective body of a democracy. Consuming the food not only nurtures the individual democrat but the nourishment transfers to democratic action by the collective through knowledge shared in the food system. In simple terms, healthy democrats build healthy democracies.

The final stage of any food system is disposal. Action in the food sovereignty regime would entail the composting of food waste. This action becomes the process that continues the food cycle and also where the process of furthering the locations for democratic participation merge. Located here is the foundation that builds healthy soils necessary for a food sovereign regime. This action process of disposal in the food system is relatable to the democratic process in the way that democracy requires renewal from the demos both in actual people and the renewal of ideas. A community is renewed by the generative nature of ideas and disposal of outdated modes of thinking.

The power to decide carries a different weight than the choice to decide. The choice is so pervasive throughout late-stage capitalism it's often dizzying. The marketing of certain products continually bombards an individual's consciousness to the point of submission. Much of our food can directly be tied to technologies that were developed by the military. We submit to the convenience and ease of the militarization which has infiltrated the food system. (Salcedo 2015) However, an essential power is lost to an individual by the complicated food system brought about by these militarized market forces

The discussion of political power in food has moved into mainstream media sources and attention to the need for more 'power of choice' in the food regime will most likely increase over time. Attempts at food sovereignty by black liberationist in the twentieth century have opened the possibility for further work. (Edge 2017) Fannie Lou Hamer, a land activist, saw the value in food sovereignty long before it was an international movement. The political power of producing food is a way out of oppressive relations and could be attained by the purchasing of farming lands. Hamer bought acres of land in the United States Delta region for black farmers to reclaim. This was how Hamer thought was political or the sovereignty that could be gained through food production. Countless others have and are working toward food sovereignty in the America food system which offers opportunities to increase democracy on the whole by greater participation of the demos.

SECTION 6: How Food Sovereignty May Increase Democracy in America

Democracy is more than a government it is a 'way of being', in contemporary market terms, a 'lifestyle brand'. Food sovereignty offers American democracy a way to incorporate the daily participation of democratic principles into the food system thus expands locations for democracy. The five phases of the food cycle in a food sovereign regime translates to the education, responsibility of self-actualization, and the community building or collective will required for any project of communal action that would transform the demos. The demos would know, experience, act, and transfer democracy into a larger project based on food sovereignty. The expansion of democracy through the tenets of food sovereignty is possible and in certain circumstances beginning to influence individuals as they encounter democratic ideals previously discussed. The current neoliberal food regime does not need a public that is motivated, educated, or that has a will to participate in an authentic way to create a more democratic America. Instead, it benefits from the demos that lacks the participation, knowledge, and motivation (perhaps from unhealthy diets) about the food system. The current food regime accumulates capital when the demos consumes food that is produced, processed, distributed, consumed and disposed of in ways that remove political agency.

American democracy has a tradition of food sovereignty forgotten, glossed over and at times even suppressed to limit information and hinder democracy of food for Americans. (O' Conner 2017) Even in 1939, M.L. Wilson was writing on the topic in a book titled, 'Democracy has Roots'. The book acknowledges what other authors, Wendell Berry, Walter Goldschmidt, and Thomas Jefferson also saw as the intellectual basis for a democracy. Democracy was not to be only relevant in political terms but as a means for the co-operative and individualistic tendency of a democratic society. Democracy is to be lived, and a means of self-actualization for the demos. These writers acknowledge a transformation of the individual into a community actor. Each imagined this process to include the agricultural engagement between nature and humanity.

In a food sovereignty regime American democracy specifically would gain a more engaged and educated citizenry. The very energy spent to know where and how food is procured increases the political knowledge Americans hold when it comes to the food system. The American public is bombarded with information on what to eat from advertisers or the new fad diet but is rarely socially or politically engaged when compared with the social and political dynamics necessary for food placed on a table. Fortunately, some people are realizing the importance of these questions and the greater political and social opportunities afforded by food sovereignty. Examining trade agreements, resource use and the viewpoint of the people, within food sovereignty offers American democracy its fullest potential. The way to move democracy to daily life and beyond its current state of an insincere governmental form.

Multinational trade agreements in a food sovereignty regime may remove food as a globally traded commodity. With a political push to make such a declaration, the American people would gain by the mere recognition that food holds special commodity status in the economy. If this were to occur then the political distance to food policy would lessen and give priorities to the local and regional markets domestically.¹⁴ The citizenry could no longer outsource bad labor and environmental practices to locations beyond the borders. Or could they possibly condone those that are seen as destructive and undemocratic according to their collective principles. The acknowledgment that such detrimental and destructive practices are an aspect of the access to cheap food for Americans requires a reevaluation of American democratic principles too. Removing food from the transnational agreements also holds a possibility to reallocate the wealth held by ATNCs which practice business on American soil but remain controlled by capital interest. This maneuver could create space for more localized and regional food by decreasing the physical distance between food

¹⁴“The distance from which their food comes represents their separation from the knowledge of how and by whom what they consume is produced, processed, and transported. If the production, processing, and transport of what they eat is destructive of the land and of human community - as it very often is - how can they understand the implications of their own participation in the global food system when those processes are located elsewhere and so are obscured from them?” (Kloppenborg 1996)

policy and a community. Food Sovereignty is a way forward toward a more democratically engaged citizenry and an accessible place to all because of the shared 'humanness' of food.

Policy redesign and implementation is another route to democratizing the current food regime. Already discussed are the transnational agreements which distance the food regime from the demos. While more localized policies create a space for community and collective will; a food sovereignty regime would remove food and agriculture from such agreements by redistributing the control to both nation states and local communities. Furthermore, municipalities that show support towards efforts to return public lands to the demos for food production certainly create a more democratic environment. Local policies are an excellent way for democracy to expand into the food regime. National policies to encourage farming as a stable and sustainable life increase the chance that more of the population will see the production of food as a viable option.

The value of natural resources also transforms in a food sovereign regime. No longer a utility to accumulate capital, both land and water are considered vital to the basic democratic tenets of food sovereignty. Instead, they become added locations to engage and educate the citizenry as self-actualized and self-ruling democrats. Plus, the major tenet of food sovereignty, food as a human right, is far from the neoliberal regime's aspirations. When food is a right to the citizenry, the citizenry gains more time to engage in familial, community, and political areas of life beyond those that contribute to the market. Through agrarian reforms that lead to the redistribution of land, agricultural zone protections and the socializing of water sources food sovereignty harks back to original theories of state development. A landholder is a stakeholder in the state system. There is a physical both geographically and substance-wise for the citizen to participate in the social and political maintenance of the state. Plus, a restructuring of natural resource holdings and distribution encourage the demos to share and protect the natural resources needed for food production for future generations of Americans. A food regime based on food sovereignty

by self-ruling people enhances the ability for the demos to self-actualize because the political, social, and affectionate nature of an individual's humanity is engaged.

As of now, the neoliberal regime purports and reminds the citizenry of the competitive nature of capitalism and equates this with human nature. However, this is a contestable idea and even scientifically losing ground with a greater understanding of genetics.¹⁵ (W. Goldschmidt 2006, 14) The status markers in America are now based on wealth and titles which perpetuate this falsehood of a great society built on the competitive nature of humans. As the world shrunk through communication and transportation technology the maintenance of such a myth holds firm. However, is it human nature or capital nature that encourages competition of tooth and claw? The attempt made by food sovereignty for democracy realigns the individual, family, community, and society to participate in a more cooperative, knowledgeable, educated, listening, compassionate, empathetic, trusting, virtuous, and communicative practices than what is conventionally considered American politics. Participating in the food regime allows the actions of individuals to make a contribution to self-actualize themselves and their community based on intrinsic needs instead of capital accumulations. (W. Goldschmidt 2006, 86)

Self-actualization finally creates a human capable of self-rule. One who is not in fear for survival and competitive with neighbors. Creating a food regime where self-actualization creates a collective will based on the ideology that all should eat healthy food offers inclusivity yet experienced in any democratic state. It is a radical notion to think that if you eat you can participate in the demos. The Greeks almost got it with the acknowledgment of land ownership as a basis for participation and the physiocrats knew that all wealth comes from the land, but the food sovereign know that human potential itself is at stake in the food regime. If democracy is the actualization of human's greatest potential; efforts must move society, economy, state,

¹⁵ Goldschmidt sees affection as a greater contributor to the survival of humanity rather than competition. "Goldschmidt considers the sociality of survival of the fittest to "downplay the role of affinity in the daily lives of living things."

and individual in that direction. Active participation in the food regime creates an individual invested in something greater than themselves yet they themselves are totally reliant upon for survival. The democratic feedback loop that is food sovereignty. American citizens need food and American democracy needs food sovereignty.

The trend of decreasing the number of American farms and increasing of large-scale agricultural operations has left an imbalance in the national agricultural sector. Not only is there an issue of scale to be overcome when accessing the farming sector but now most American farmers are over the age of sixty-five. There is little interest from younger generations due to the reality of low wages, extreme debt and decreasing government support as the obstacles to create a livable career. Incentivizing American youth to choose food production as a career through policies that support smaller farms may rectify this situation. Incentives such as debt forgiveness would remove financial obstacles for those who have a passion for working on the land but are unable to finance the land or equipment needed for farming. Policy action by the federal government to incentives farming as a career choice would increase the likelihood more would join the food regime at the production level. This would increase the young population to secure food sovereignty for themselves and fellow citizens.

Barriers to democratic participation often come in two forms, one is financial and the other is temporal. The issue of livable wages in the current food regime is a major motivator for activist work in food sovereignty movements. Low wages span the entirety of the food system and the positions with the lowest pay in America are in the food sector. (Cooperative 2016) Policies that deal with issues of livable wages like the support of young farmers would secure food sovereignty. Those who work in the food system often are paid so little they must work multiple jobs to support themselves and their families. An increase in wages could offer them more time for civic participation. The American demos that is too tired and busy will not have the opportunity to practice democracy.

Democratic practice expands through education and discourse when all aspect of daily life offers these shared experience. Recognizing the maintenance of important life-sustaining provisions when active in a food sovereign community the demos experience a “graduation effect”. (Kneafsey 2008) This effect leads to the minimal attention paid to food consumption in terms of the buying power of the consumer and translates to the political power of the informed democrat. As an everyday practice in the engagement with one’s food leads to an understanding of power structures which may have earlier been unknown, ignored, or often in neoliberal food regimes purposefully hidden from the consumer, food sovereignty beckons the engagement of the citizen through food. The consumer is far removed from the location of power where political engagement first manifests in the market and remains absent from the locations of real choice in the food regime. Those choices made at the level of the transnational agreements dictate much national policy and keep the ATNCs in the locus of power. However, like the small steps of urban gardeners, the consumer choices made by self-educating on the food regime may be the steps prior to the full self-actualization of the democratic citizen. There is data which confirms the “embeddedness” of identity with food choice. An individual making food choices that align with their political choices will guide the food regime toward food sovereignty.

The demos that are active in food sovereignty will decide on methods of agriculture that are ecological and sustainable. This area is important because the exclusion of future generations hangs on the choices Americans make today. By allowing the neoliberal food regime to continue the destruction of environments the future possibilities for democracy slender. Without access to healthy environments to grow food the prospect of food sovereignty as a way forward to create the self-actualized and self-ruling demos diminishes. Agroecology, the integration both of regional environments and agricultural production understood as an ecosystem is imperative to ensure future generations will have the healthy environments needed to grow food. (Gliessman 2006) When agriculture blends into and merges with the surrounding

environment sustainability of the food system becomes a greater possibility. The longevity of agricultural production in America will help create future democrats that push for more democracy in American.

The neoliberal food regime now in a crisis is fertile for the transition toward a food sovereignty regime in America. Many citizens are becoming more engaged with the food they eat and the politics which control the food system from where their food comes. Democracy will benefit if actions taken toward land reforms, agricultural policy changes at national and local levels, and agricultural practices begin to see the entirety of the environment as an important aspect of food production. An aspect of agroecology is that of emergent properties. The theory of emergence recognizes the component parts of any system as affected characteristics of the higher levels of an organization. (Maxwell 2017) If we can see how emergence manifests in nature it may not be too far off to imagine the emergent properties of American Democracy. There is an old saying, “you are what you eat”. What if this is true not only for an individual but for the demos. Consuming foods from the neoliberal food regime condones the destruction of environments, oppression of peoples and the misuse of natural resources as components of their make-up. The demos will consist of the same disregard for the precious aspects we call life on planet earth if the proverb holds any semblance of truth.

Some have already begun to study the correlation between food choice and political choice, but few have outlined how much democracy relies on self-actualized in relation to a food sovereign citizenry. (DuPuis 2015) A future study for the understanding of how food sovereignty challenges American democracy empirically is to understand the correlation between unhealthy diets and the relationship to voter turnout. Voting is the very minimal engagement for a democrat so if one chooses not to take this basic step toward the self-actualization of one’s political agency, what could be the cause? If poor health due to diet does matter in the minimal practice of voting, then the challenges to democracy because of the lack of food sovereignty needs greater attention.

A future where citizens grow a little of their own food and family farms provide the rest to small micro-economies is imaginable. Urban areas are handicapped by the scale intrinsic to mass populations. However, with resources re-distributed there is hope for a food sovereign future. This would undoubtedly mandate significant value changes in society, an educational imperative to effectively teach civic participation through the food system. Currently, we are not headed in such a direction; although small efforts by writers, thinkers, and activist may move us closer to a food sovereign democracy. A democracy which will become at least more than what is currently the norm.¹⁶

Liberation of our individual bodies from undemocratic food systems will breed a democratic body politic that strives for freedom and liberty through self-rule. Many contemporary democracies lack some of the most prized ideals found in the ethos of democratic theory i.e. egalitarianism, and equality. A food-sovereign democracy may be the grandest form of resistance to the tyranny so many have known. Many people who eat from the gardens they grow realize the freedom in nourishing themselves. Change is constant in America, a revival of subsistence gardening has recently flourished. The desire to grow food in community gardens has created the renewal of urban lots and the increase of garden plots throughout the country. Personal gardening was up by seventeen percent from the previous year in 2014 with forty-two million Americans participating in a garden plot.¹⁷ Over the past five years, Americans are increasing their food sovereignty through the proliferation of vegetable gardening. The need to have a hands-on relationship to food will not disappear quickly from a species which has lived agrarian lifestyles for all of civilization. The largest increase is in young Americans, with an increase up sixty-three percent since 2008. (The National Gardening Association 2014) These sorts of trends may be signs that the involvement with one's own food will further a greater civic participation by the larger demos.

¹⁶ Voter turn-out a minimal engagement activity has hovered around 50% since the 1960s. (Yoon 2016)

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