Global development and the corporate food regime

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Introduction

This paper concerns the relationship of the corporate food regime to the current project of global development, as represented in the Doha Round. The corporate food regime provides a critical lens on the substantive, institutional and geo-political contradictions of global development. These contradictions center on the elemental distinction between food security and food sovereignty, and the tensions within the state system, as expressed within the WTO. The reorganization of agricultural and food relations is fundamental to an understanding of the politics of empire and development in the twenty-first century.

The Doha Ministerial as a development initiative

The designation of the WTO Ministerial in Doha (2001) as the 'development round,' was a response to concerns in the global South that 'globalization' was not meeting its promise. In order to realize the claim that globalization is the precondition for development, the Doha Development Agenda Round aimed to strengthen globalization as an inclusive force. Naming it a development round recalls the legitimizing function of development discourse, in moments of intensified global inequality (cf Escobar 1995). It also reminds us that calling the new round 'development' simultaneously promises *and* proscribes.

The Doha Round proposed to facilitate new trade-offs for the global South, whereby Northern concessions would bring further de-regulation of their economies. These concessions were:

1. Freer trade, eg, improved access to Northern agricultural markets, and reduction of Northern subsidies of farmer and agro-exports
2. Qualification of WTO protocols, eg, public health emergencies overriding specifications of TRIPs for trade in pharmaceuticals
3. Management of liberalization of services to enable participation by Southern countries in service trade
4. Reinforcement of Special and Differential Treatment provisions to address food security and rural development needs of Southern countries
5. Technical assistance and capacity building schemes for the global South, especially for the 'least developed countries.'

As it happened, the development round was stillborn, for reasons of institutional inertia, concessions by Northern states to corporate lobbies (such as the pharmaceutical industry), and lack of capacity in Southern states to address and/or implement reforms. In the run-up to the Cancun Ministerial in September, 2003, the Northern states adopted a more aggressive stance, reformulating the Doha round as an opportunity to impose a corporate agenda of equal domestic treatment of foreign corporations, notably in private investment in public services, in return for Northern action in ending farm subsidies.

However, to the extent that the latter meant decoupling subsidies from farm prices, and removing farm support payments to the ‘non-trade-distorting’ Green Box under the WTO’s Agreement on Agriculture rules, the Northern states, and especially the EU, disingenuously retained the capacity to dump cheap farm produce on to the world market. The combination of the Europeans’ attempt to reintroduce the Singapore agenda regarding a global investment treaty (including rules on competition policy, trade facilitation and government procurement), and the North’s avoidance of the dumping question, crystallized a counter-mobilization in Cancun (September 2003) of the global South, represented by the so-called G-20. Since Cancun, while trade negotiations have stalled, the parties have regrouped – the U.S. around bilateral negotiations, the G-20 around regional agreements, and the Europeans around CAP reforms offset by progress in ‘trade’ in services, via the GATS.

Revival of the Doha Round pivots on agriculture, whose centrality to Doha is reflected in its contentiousness. New negotiations in March, 2004, involved a revision of the pre-Cancun agreement struck between the EU and the US, including counter-proposals by the G20 (Oxford Analytica 2004). The focus of the new, Derbez, text included the three key, original issues of market access, export subsidies, and domestic support policies. Meanwhile, additional demands from the global South include provision of a ‘Development Box,’ to sanction subsidies geared to supporting agriculture which is farmer-driven rather than trade-driven (surplus dumping). While agricultural reform is central, it continues to unfold in piecemeal fashion, with the EU making what it considers concessions in decoupling farm payments from commodity prices (though without ending overproduction), and successful WTO litigation by Brazil on US cotton subsidies, which have wrought havoc on African producers.

In short, Doha concentrates international tensions and the contradictory relations which constitute ‘development.’ Currently, Doha claims further global deregulation as the premise of development. Historically, Doha replicates the GATT Uruguay Round of the 1980s, which aimed to liberalize agriculture and services (then banking, insurance and telecommunications) in which the North held a competitive advantage. At the time the global South was skeptical, as its cheaper exports of steel products, footwear, electronic products, and agricultural products were limited by Northern protections. India and Brazil led the resistance to broadening GATT, but Northern pressure and the promise of open markets, including agricultural markets, tipped the balance (Adams 1993:196-7). When GATT became the WTO, the liberalizing Agreement on Agriculture was the global South’s trade-off for accepting TRIPs and TRIMs, which “soon proved to be a double threat to food security and sovereignty in the developing world” (Wallach and Woodall 2004:193).

The Doha Round continues this dance, terming GATS 2000 a trade agreement, which demands openness to ‘cross-border’ provision of services (by TNCs) as a condition for opening EU and US markets in garments, textiles, and agricultural products (Wallach 2003). Oxfam’s Kevin Watkins argues this replays the Uruguay Round, when the global North offered market access in return for protection of TNC patents (costing the South $40 billion in technology rents), suggesting that while the game has changed, the rules are the same: “The West buys your bananas and shirts if you give its banks and insurance companies unrestricted access to your markets” (2002:21). Offering perspective on the terms in which, and means by which, Doha addresses agricultural reform, the international coalition of small farmers, Via Campesina, noted: "The negotiations on agriculture still seem to be a fight between the 'corporate elephants of the agro-industry' represented by the European Union, the United States and the Cairns group instead of negotiation on how to come to fair, equitable trade relations that give protection to domestic food production and consumption and the world's environment" (quoted in Wallach and Woodall 2004: 215).

The corporate food regime: principal trends and contradictions

The corporate food regime, source of much of the contention in the Doha Round, has historical antecendents over the last century. The 'food regime' concept defines an historically specific geo-political-economic organization of international agricultural and food relations. Food regimes corresponding to British and U.S. hegemonic eras were embedded in dominant state-building models organizing a particular structure of food production and consumption relations on a world scale (Friedmann and McMichael 1989).

The British-centered food regime (1870-1914) pivoted on the tension between the colonial, and the national, division of labor. The latter, anchored in a domestic farm sector, complemented, and progressively displaced, the colonial division of labor, involving a global exchange of tropical crops for manufactured goods. The national model found full expression in the settler states, where farm sectors replicated and rivaled European temperate crops, and partnered domestic industrial sectors. The exemplar was the United States' commercial farm belt. After the inter-war period, when national food security was at a premium, the U.S. model of 'inner-directed' national development displaced the 'outer-directed' British model, redefining the organization of agro-food systems in the mid-twentieth century era of universal state-building as colonialism collapsed.

During this era, 'development' became identified with the *ideal* of consolidating a growing national economy fueled by an internal exchange between agricultural and industrial sectors. Just as the British-centered food regime was defined as the progressive replacement of one model by another, so the U.S.-centered food regime (1945-1970) pivoted on the contradiction between global integration and the coherence of national farm sectors. During this time, the U.S. deployed food aid to secure its geo-political perimeter in the Third World, underwriting industrialization in states such as India and South Korea as 'development showcases' (Grosfoguel 1996) in which Third World states depended on western foods to provision reconstructed urban diets (Friedmann 1982). By extension, the green revolution consolidated the global movement under the guise of addressing the question of national food security. Green revolution technologies further internationalized agro-food relations, supporting newly-introduced genetically modified crops with chemical and mechanical inputs, and elaborating agribusiness dependencies. With the global expansion of livestocking, green revolution technologies extended into feed cropping, promoting livestock commodity chains linking specialized agricultural sub-sectors across national boundaries. The tight nexus between agribusiness and dominant states fostered a global movement to integrate agricultures, and underlay the movement via the Uruguay Round to institutionalize this process in the 1990's WTO regime.

The Uruguay Round was animated by a need to relieve the problem of food surpluses, arising from the internationalization of the US model of agribusiness, which in turn led to a competitive cycle of dumping of surplus European and American food. As dumping of food surpluses intensified in the 1970s, and the US began selling grain to the Soviet Union (Friedmann 1993), the U.S.-centered food regime was breached, and a new regime began to form, centered on the political elimination of barriers to capital in social and natural relations.

As organized by geo-political/economic relationships, the corporate food regime pivots on the contradiction between the relations of 'food security' and those of 'food sovereignty.' The relations of food security are embedded in the state system, where food security has long been a precondition of political legitimacy (Spitz 1985). Central to the development era, food security considerations shaped national initiatives such as the green revolution, and the content of multilateral institutional relations, where agriculture was exempt from the GATT. As the development era has metamorphosed into the era of corporate globalization, food security has been redefined, and institutionalized, in the WTO as an inter-nationally managed market relation. As such, it challenges agricultural self-sufficiency in the global South, where 30-70 percent of the labor force is agricultural, as opposed to 4 percent in the global North (Kwa 2002).

The special role of agriculture in the South is the context and pretext for a counter-movement under the banner of food sovereignty. Whereas food security is a concept associated with the state/system, food sovereignty is at bottom a non-state concept, concerned with political and economic rights for farmers as a precondition of food security. Food security and food sovereignty represent distinct organizing principles shaping development trajectories at the turn of the twenty-first century. Each concept represents a model of agriculture: whereas food security has come to depend on the agro-industrial model, food sovereignty is rooted in agro-ecological relations.

Food security has functioned as an enabling concept in the development arsenal, emerging in the post WWII world as a public project deploying foreign aid to support the post-colonial 'development state.' Food shortages, endemic to the colonies, resulted from their conversion to export agriculture and the use of market infrastructures to channel grains out of rural communities to metropolitan centers (cf Davis 2001). At the same time European grain harvest failures and the American dust bowl experience of the 1930s put a premium on state-supported commodity programs in the First World. This was the age of 'hunger amidst scarcity' (cf Araghi 1999), and development discourse formed around the problematic of poverty, as a political threat --initially in Europe, but ultimately in the Third World (Escobar 1996). President Truman's 1948 Four Point Declaration noted: "The economic life of the poor is primitive and stagnant…. Their poverty is a handicap and a threat both to them and to more prosperous areas" (quoted in Escobar 1995:).

In this US-centered world order, bilateralism came to overshadow multilateralism, even in the area of direct poverty relief. The overrule of the US of the FAO's proposal for a World Food Board, and the UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration was a key development. President Truman chose the bilateral path. The US food aid program, formalized in 1954 as PL-480, came to dominate the food trade landscape over the next two decades. US-managed food surpluses were distributed strategically as concessional food aid to states on the geo-political frontline, and/or those regarded as future customers of American agri-exports once they transitioned from aid to trade. As Harriet Friedmann

(1982) has shown, this food export regime reshaped, indeed westernized, social diets of newly urbanized customers in industrializing regions of the Third World, at the same time as it undermined local farmers with low-priced staple foods. The managed construction of the Third World consumer paralleled the decimation of peasant agriculture. Each confirmed the central tenets of the development vision: that the western consumption pattern was a universal desire and peasants were historical residuals destined to disappear.[1] Walt Rostow (1960) canonized the development telos as 'the age of high mass consumption.'

The development project incorporated post-colonial states into a universal system of national accounting methods, standardizing the measurement of material well-being (GNP), and the 'externalization' of a variety of environmental degradations and social catastrophes. Only monetized transactions were counted as productive, devaluing subsistence, cooperative labor, indigenous culture, seed saving and managing the commons as unproductive, marginalized and undeveloped activity. As a consequence, the world's rural population decreased by some 25 percent in the second half of the twentieth century with the steady dispossession of peasant cultures (Hobsbawm 1992:56, Araghi 1999).

This process is not simply the preordained movement of rural populations into the increasingly urbanized wage-labor force ('industrialization with unlimited supplies of labor'),[2] but the displacement of customary forms of knowledge and moral economy. This historic rupture accounts for the emergence of food sovereignty as an alternative principle to the productivist, and quantitative measures of food security identified with the monetized transactions of the market system. Food sovereignty is premised on a farmer-driven agriculture that is the key to food-secure relations of environmental and social sustainability.

Food security, capital and the state system

As suggested, the food security principle is rooted in the state system, and remains rooted in this system despite the onset of corporate globalization. The shift in the 'site' of food security from the nation-state to the world market was engineered during the Uruguay Round (1986-1994), anticipating the WTO's Agreement on Agriculture (1995). Under this agreement, states no longer have the right to food self-sufficiency as a national strategy. The WTO's minimum import rule requires all member states to allow imports of food up to at least 5 percent of the volume of domestic consumption. This, despite Article 25 (1) of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which viewed "the right of peoples to exercise sovereignty over their natural wealth and resources" as essential to the realization of human rights (Desmarais 2003:148).

On the face of it, this would appear to mean that states have been trumped by a WTO policy, exposing their domestic food markets to competitive food imports. Among others, French Farmers' Confederation leader, Jose Bove declares this is a "totalitarian exercise" that allows the TNCs to force domestic producers "to submit to their logic" (Bove and Dufour 2001: 137). Nevertheless, the logic of subordinating agriculture to the corporate model is not synonymous with a stateless world food market.

In the first place, the redefinition of food security as "best provided through a smooth-functioning world market" (quoted in Ritchie 1993:fn 25) was introduced into the

Uruguay Round by the US, intent upon securing a competitive advantage for its agribusiness interests through the GATT, and subsequently the WTO's Agreement on Agriculture. Second, and related, the WTO retains this mercantilist imprint in its asymmetrical management of world agricultural relations. That is, the institutionalization of corporate rights via the WTO is a state-initiated project, where some states are more equal than others. And the trajectory of corporate globalization of agriculture is spatially governed by the concentration and centralization of capital, as well as by historic divisions of labor. Unlike industry or services, the capitalization of agriculture retains important spatial dimensions, expressed politically in agribusiness lobbies and farm sector policies geared in the North once to food self-sufficiency, but now to producing food surpluses and export revenues.

Food self-sufficiency was the principal goal in postwar Europe, shaping Common Market policies in 1957, and into the 1960s. But in return for the right to protect its large-scale staple food production (cereals, milk, beef, sugar), the EEC agreed to import US soya beans for European livestock, subsequently confirmed as a policy of duty-free importation of 'substitute cereal products' in the Kennedy Round of 1962-67 (Herman and Kuper 2003:5). Bove notes: 'The arrival of the first soya beans in French ports, not subject to any Customs duties, signaled the start of agricultural industrialization" (Bove and Dafour 2001:61). Cheap imported soya beans, complementing local maize grains and silage, underwrote a livestock complex (cf Friedmann 1994). This in turn drove a Common Agricultural Policy (1962) geared to guaranteed high prices and overproducing cereals, generating food surpluses for export. Management of overproduction crises led to a policy to reduce the farm population by 90 percent (eliminating especially polyculture and subsistence producers), and establish production quotas, hastening monocultures and farm concentration as a survival tactic (Herman and Kuper 2003:10-11).

By the 1970s, the CAP had achieved self-sufficiency, at the same time as it was elaborating an agro-export policy to finance dumping of surpluses of butter, milk, cereals and beef on the world market. In France the slogan was 'Produce to export: agriculture is France's green petrol' (Bove and Dufour 2001:148). On the other side of the Atlantic, the US had also committed to agro-exporting as a 'green power' strategy geared to capturing new markets offshore (Revel and Riboud 1986, McMichael 1994). Both sets of policies, in generating food surpluses, led to an intensifying competition for world market outlets via export dumping.

Agro-export dumping undermined the postwar food regime's system of stable prices and managed disposal of food surpluses (Friedmann 1993). World agricultural prices fell from a mean of 100 in 1975 to 61 by 1989 - a 39 percent decline. Bearing no relation to the cost of production, these world prices expressed an emerging corporate food regime that would institutionalize 'green power' through the WTO. The trajectory was one in which agro-exporting states (EU and US) were forced through competitive relation to synchronize farm policy as a precondition of the WTO's corporate regime.

The first casualty was the national form of food security. In 1986, U.S. Agriculture Secretary, John Block, observed: "the idea that developing countries should feed themselves is an anachronism from a bygone era. They could better ensure their food security by relying on U.S. agricultural products, which are available in most cases at lower cost" (Schaeffer 1995:268). *This form of global 'food security' is accomplished through the political construction of commodity prices*. In that year, U.S. corn dumping forced Zimbabwe's grain marketing board to cut domestic producers prices almost in half and to reduce its purchase quota from these producers (Watkins 1991:43). A decade later, in 1996, such price politicization was the centerpiece of NAFTA, whereby in eight months the domestic price of Mexican maize fell almost 50 percent, "converging with the world price 12 years earlier than envisaged" (Herman and Kuper 2003:72).

The political determination of world agricultural commodity prices emerged through the Uruguay Round negotiations, which sought to stem the escalation of farm subsidies and manage the crisis of overproduction arising from the U.S. and European Community agricultural policies (Dawkins 1999). Anticipating the outcome of the Round (arguably a U.S. corporate weapon against the CAP's export apparatus), in 1992 (by the 'McSharry reform') the EU switched from its original CAP farm price support policies to U.S.-style government subsidies (Dawkins 1999). Replacing a guaranteed price with direct payments introduced the 'world price' to European producers, which stimulated rather than eliminated surpluses (Herman and Kuper 2003:27-28), and synchronized EU policy with that of the U.S. in favoring traders over producers.

The preference given to the price form disempowered farmers across the world, at the same time as it empowered agribusiness. In the North, traders and processors could purchase commodities through farm contracts at low prices unrelated to production costs. For processors, artificially cheapened corn subsidizes 'supersizing' in the fast food industry -- 45 percent of US grain corn is transformed into high fructose corn sweetener, which has grown five-fold in the last thirty years (Manning 2004:43). For traders, low commodity prices enable commodity dumping in the world market (assisted by export subsidies, especially European), forcing local prices down at the expense of small farmers. The resulting, or potential for, low-cost agricultural production in the global South in turn allows global sourcing by agribusiness to exert further downward pressure on Northern farmers. The result has been a mass exodus from farming in North and South accomplished by depressed prices and the competitive advantage of intensive agriculture integrated into agribusiness and favored by a system of asymmetrical farm supports.

Privileging the price form facilitated the restructuring of northern agriculture, expressed in the concentration of corporate agriculture: by the mid-1990s, 80 percent of farm subsidies in the OECD countries concentrated on the largest 20 percent of (corporate) farms, rendering small farmers increasingly vulnerable to the vicissitudes of a deregulated (and increasingly privately managed) global market for agricultural products. U.S. farm income declined by almost 50 percent between 1996-1999 (Gorelick 2000:28-30), and Europe lost half of its full-time equivalent agricultural employment between 1980-2001, with the equivalent of 1 million farm jobs disappearing just in the latter half of the 1990s (Herman and Kuper 2003:29, 40).

Synchronization of Northern farm policy anticipated the WTO's Agreement on Agriculture. Despite the rhetoric of free trade, the underlying Northern agenda was an informal mercantilism of constructing a comparative advantage through de-regulating a highly unequal world market. The AoA was designed to open agricultural markets through the adoption of minimum import requirements and tariff and producer subsidy reductions. Southern states signed on in the hopes of improving their foreign currency income from expanded agro-exports (under the imperative of servicing foreign debt). But the effect was to open markets for northern products, strengthening the position of the

OECD countries in the international division of labor in agriculture (Pistorius and van Wijk 1999: 110-111).

Within the rules set by the WTO, delinked from the UN Charter's provisions for economic and cultural (food) sovereignty, growing food dependencies fulfilled the global vision of 'food security' promulgated by the Northern states and their agribusiness. National health, social, and environmental regulations are assumed to restrict trade, and, therefore, were required by the WTO to be translated into visible and quantifiable tariffs, then subject to reduction over time. In addition, a subsidy hierarchy was constructed, where subsidies were consigned to 'boxes,' arranged according to degree of protectionist effect (Herman and Kuper 2003:35-6). The box system works to the advantage of the Northern states, which routinely consign decoupled farm support payments to the 'non-trade-distorting' Green Box. The CAP, in particular, justifies such an arrangement through a 'rural development' initiative prepared for the 1999 WTO Ministerial, whereby direct farm payments support agriculture's 'multifunctionality.' Besides allowing for a bait and switch operation to hide Northern subsidies, the box system also disadvantages Southern states, which lack the resources for (decoupled) farm support programs.

The combination of reduction of customs duties via 'tarrification' and protection of expanding farm subsidies via 'boxes,' has constructed a regulatory system that transfers resources from public to private hands in the North, and exports food dependency (and insecurity) to the South via dumping.[3] By the mid-1990s, half of the foreign exchange of the FAO's eighty-eight low-income food deficit countries went to food imports (LeQuesne 1997).

Agro-exporting is protected and encouraged by WTO rules, but it "is imperfectly articulated and includes various exceptions that have proved of more use to developed than developing countries" (Murphy 1999:2). The imperfect articulation corresponds to the subdivision of states in relation to world food trade patterns: the 'natural exporters' (the settler states of USA, Canada, Argentina Uruguay, Brazil, Australia and New Zealand - favorably climates and soils, sparse population and late colonization); Europe as an 'artificial exporter''(created by agricultural policy, chemical-intensive farming, and huge feedstuff imports); net-importing developing countries (Japan, Korea, Switzerland, Norway and Eastern Europe); a large minority of net-importer southern states; and a middle group of southern states more or less self-sufficient in food (Einarsson 2001:4). These distinctions emphasize the historic asymmetry in the state system, which liberalization has consolidated. It is precisely this asymmetry that stalemates WTO attempts to impose a 'level playing field' of trade rules on an unequal world.

The destabilizing effects of intensified export dumping, and Northern agricultural subsidies, frame Doha and the geo-political tensions expressed at Cancun. *But at the same time, the framework of the state system generates negotiating positions that favor a corporate solution.* For instance, the recent CAP reform, introducing 'multifunctionality' as a method of renaming the decoupling of farm subsidies to reward agriculture's non-remunerative services (environment, space, rural habitation, food safety and animal welfare) and making the CAP WTO-compliant, "paves the way for the end of any policy of market management" and allows "beneficiaries of decoupled subsidies to produce without restraints (other than those of a phoney ecology), to produce what they want and eventually to change their production every year" (Herman and Kuper 2003:84). The logical extension of this reform is to hold out the prospect of 'de-localization' of agricultural production to preserve the European environment, while importing food from offshore regions with low wages and weak environmental regulations – as the Doux group, the foremost French and European poultry producer, has done, purchasing Frangosul, the fourth largest poultry producer in Brazil, where production costs undercut those in France by two-thirds (Ibid:21-2). De-localization is part of the global sourcing strategy of US corporations (Blank 1998, Public Citizen 2001), a movement confirmed by the recent migration of failing U.S. soy farmers to Brazil's expanding and low-cost Matto Grosso region.

The WTO's policy of elimination of 'market management' of agriculture shifts priorities from public interest in producing use-values for domestic provisioning, to private/public encouragement of producing exchange-values to expand profits and export revenues. Liberalization is the means to this end, via de-coupling, that is, supporting Northern corporate farming with public monies in service of agribusiness, or via de-regulation of Southern protections – opening economies to food importing and/or agribusiness offshore investment. While often justified by the discourse of food security, institutionalizing Northern green power (McMichael 2003), the privatization of food security conditions an emerging *world* agriculture subordinated to capital.[4]

World agriculture and empire

Historically, the movement of capital involves the progressive subordination of agriculture, as an attempt to resolve agro-ecological crises stemming from the 'metabolic rift,' in a deepening of the rupture in nutrient cycling between countryside and city (Moore 2000:123). Across the former food regimes, subordination occurred within the framework of the nation-state, whether via the national/colonial state nexus, or the national/neo-colonial state nexus. The WTO, as the material expression of the state/capital nexus, continues this process of subordination by capital on behalf of its member states.

The WTO is not a state, rather a disembodied executive, but on a world scale. Its crises revolve around the issue of representation, and, therefore, power. Comprised of member states, the WTO not only instrumentalizes the competitive and hierarchical relations among those states (cf Buttel 2003), but it also denies civil society full representation. In these terms, the Cancun impasse expresses opposition to Northern hypocrisy by Southern states, disenfranchised by WTO procedures and overwhelmed by the material consequences in the erosion of their domestic farm sectors. But, ironically, the G-20's call for greater market access expresses at one and the same time a formal demand for equivalence in trade opportunities, and yet a substantive complicity in the movement toward a world agriculture based in agro-exporting (Peine and McMichael forthcoming).

G-20 complicity expresses the logic of the AoA, namely to complete the liberalization of trade relations as the condition for a world agriculture. But a world agriculture involves more than an intensifying system of food swapping across national boundaries. It is premised on the green revolution principle of 'appropriation,' the progressive removal of components of agricultural production from the control of the farmer via intervention in natural processes (Goodman, Sorj and Wilkinson 1987), starting with bio-engineered seeds, complemented with a range of chemical and mechanical inputs, symbolized by an explosion of factory farming centered on a world livestock industry sourced by specialized feed grains.

Green, and subsequently, gene revolution technologies deepen the elimination of biodiversity, seed saving and local knowledges via agro-industrial monocultures. Bio-engineering has transformed the crop development industry[5] through the concentration and centralization of agri-chemical corporations (Pistorius and van Wijk 1999), and the corporate 'gene giants' already account for more than one-third of the global seed market and 100 percent of the transgenic seed market (Shiva 2000:9). Deploying the discourse of intellectual property rights, the biotechnology industry seeks to institutionalize gene patenting, through the WTO's TRIPs protocol, [6] as a key to elaborating a world agriculture, premised on the elimination of *extant* agricultures and alternative agro-ecological models.

The abstraction from ecology and local entitlements associated with a world agriculture privileges the production of inputs for food processors, agri-chemical companies or global retailers. Agro-industrialization, delivering agriculture to an array of input industries (from energy through fertilizer to animal feed), consolidates a specialization process whereby "[I]n intensive farming the object is to adapt the soil to the crop, never the other way round" (Bove and Dufour 2001:67), also a movement of abstraction anticipating a world agriculture. While this movement of abstraction stems from the history of the agricultural frontiers of European capitalism (Friedmann 2000, Moore, 2000), its completion in the form of a world agriculture is prefigured in the biological and socio-economic blueprints of the gene revolution and the WTO's Agreement on Agriculture.

The concept of a 'world agriculture' refers, not to the entirety of agriculture across the earth, but to a transnational space integrated by corporate circuits. Justin Rosenberg terms this space 'the empire of civil society:' a politically managed "material integration of social reproduction across borders" involving "the extraction and relaying of surpluses" (Rosenberg 2001: 134-5, 131). But the material integration of social reproduction across borders is not simply a space of globalized commodity flows creating new interdependencies – an immanent tendency in the history of capital. Rather, beyond Rosenberg's formulation, a world agriculture resembles Hardt and Negri's emergent concept of 'Empire,' characterized by the elimination of boundaries – either spatial or temporal (implicit in the process of abstraction), and, most significantly, a "paradigmatic form of biopower" (2000:xv), where capital violently reconstitutes humans through reconstituting the natural order, in the name of food security and peace. Deborah Barndt's representation of the increasingly common conditions of social reproduction of the agricultural labor force in corporate agriculture captures this process:

> [T]he only Mexican inputs are the land, the sun, and the workers… The South has been the source of the seeds, while the North has the biotechnology to alter them… [T]he workers who produce the tomatoes do not benefit. Their role in agro-export production also denies them participation in subsistence agriculture, especially since the peso crisis in 1995, which has forced migrant workers to move to even more scattered work sites. They now travel most of the year – with little time to grow food on their own plots in their home communities… [W]ith this loss of control comes a spiritual loss, and a loss of a knowledge of seeds, of organic fertilizers and pesticides, of sustainable practices such as crop rotation or

leaving the land fallow for a year—practices that had maintained the land for millennia (Barndt 1997: 59-62).

Such abstraction of agriculture through its incorporation and reproduction within global capital circuits imparts a 'food from nowhere' character to the corporate food regime (Bove and Dufour, 2001, p. 55). At the core of this process is the appropriation of farming, via the expulsion of rural populations through land dispossession and concentration, as farming is rendered unviable by withdrawal of public supports and exposure to world market prices, or the conversion of farmers to contract farming or hired/plantation/migrant labor, depending on context and crop. Mexico, the home of maize, has been so transformed by liberalization and NAFTA into a food deficit country, and forced to import yellow corn from the U.S. at the expense of almost 2 million *campesinos*, unable to compete with corn price falls on the order of 70 percent (Carlsen 2003, Oxfam 2003). In a 1997 FAO study of sixteen Southern countries, the overall impact of liberalization was identified with: "… a general trend towards the concentration of farms, in a wide cross-section of countries. While this led to increased productivity and competitiveness with positive results, in the virtual absence of safety nets the process also marginalized small producers and added to unemployment and poverty." Although the FAO study lacked data on expulsion, conservative estimates are that between 20 and 30 million people have lost their land from the impact of trade liberalization (Madeley, 2000, p. 75).

Loss of land, livelihood, and knowledge constitute the core of cultural displacement and dispossession. But 'Empire' emerges through related forms of dispossession, notably of local food markets and cuisines – such as the displacement in Mexico of inexpensive white maize tortillas by yellow corn tortillas manufactured at triple the price (Bensinger 2003, Oxfam 2003:19). Following Harvey (2003), the expansion of corporate agriculture represents a process of 'accumulation by dispossession.' This term refers to mechanisms, notably structural adjustment, whereby capital expands profit opportunities (under conditions of overproduction crises) through the release, or privatization of (public) assets. Thus, the construction of a world agriculture (the global integration of social reproduction) is premised on the undermining of local farming and informal provisioning (wet markets, street vendors, and the commons), and displacing independent producers via expanding agro-exporting. These processes interrupt or eliminate *extant* systems of provisioning, by converting them, and other natural resources, into supply chains for the corporate, 'food from nowhere' regime.

Land expropriation may be the original form of 'accumulation by dispossession,' but the realization of 'Empire' involves a deeper, and broader, reconstitution of material culture, centered on biopolitical mechanisms. The global fast food industry, grossing $110 billion a year in the U.S., exemplifies this movement by serving cheap and unhealthy convenience foods, based on the expropriation of home-cooking activities and knowledges (cf Friedmann 1999). The supermarket revolution in the global South (Reardon et al 2003) intensifies the combination of food processing and retailing accumulation, incorporating small or independent producers and local markets and street vending into new corporate circuits and biopolitical relations.

Corporate circuits and biopolitics together frame the transformation of social and ecological relations. In relation to this, the director-general of the Centre for International Forestry Research (Cifor) noted: "In the 1970s and the 1980s most of the meat from the

Amazon was being produced by small ranchers selling to local slaughterhouses. Very large commercial ranchers linked to supermarkets are now targeting the whole of Brazil and the global market" (quoted in Vidal 2004:3). Huge ranching operations organized by European supermarkets now dominate the beef export market (75 percent of Brazil's beef exports flow to Europe and the Middle East). At the same time, corporate-led factory farming is transforming the food sector – currently targeting Argentina, Brazil, China, India, Mexico, Pakistan, the Philippines, South Africa, Taiwan and Thailand. Asia, whose global consumer class outstrips that of North America and Europe combined, leads the livestock revolution (French 2004: 148). Two thirds of the global expansion of meat consumption is in the global South, sourced with Brazilian soybeans. As a Chinese middle class emerges, China has shifted from a net exporter of soybeans to the world's largest importer of whole soybeans and oils – even Brazilian pastures are converted to soyfields, pushing cattle herds deeper into the Amazon (Rohter 2003:3). In this way, biopolitical dynamics are expressed in dietary and ecological transformations.

The material integration of social reproduction is represented as an expansion of market efficiencies through freedom of trade and enterprise. However, it is premised on the deployment of the price weapon, through dumping, to undermine local farming and incorporate knowledges and consumption relations into global circuits, and on agro-exporting, through the application of structural adjustment measures, to displace publicly-entitled foods. Given the extent of displacement and dispossession, what is being socially reproduced? The answer is, in the first place, the corporate empire reproduces itself. The paradox of corporate empire is that at the same time as it represents global integration as the condition for food security, it immiserates populations, including its own labor force. The perverse consequence of global market integration is the export of deprivation, as 'free' markets exclude and/or starve populations dispossessed through their implementation. Dispossessed populations function as reserve labor, lowering wages and offering the possibility of labor casualization throughout the corporate empire.

More than simply a cumulative agro-ecological crisis (Moore 2000), the empire of capital is realized also through social crisis. For example, neo-liberal policies introduced in 1991 threaten India's tens of millions of small farmers, the livelihood source of 75 percent of the population. In 2000, the Indian Ministry of Agriculture observed: "The growth in agriculture has slackened during the 1990s. Agriculture has become a relatively unrewarding profession due to an unfavourable price regime and low value addition, causing abandoning of farming and migration from rural areas" (quoted in Paringaux 2000: 4). Corporate seed prices have inflated ten-fold, cheap imports (notably of rice and vegetable oils) have undercut local farmers and processors, and policies promoting agro-exports of high-value commodities like farmed shrimp, flowers and meat in the name of food security increase human insecurities. Every dollar of foreign exchange earned on meat exports destroys 15 dollars' worth of ecological capital stemming from the use of farm animals in sustainable agriculture (Shiva 2000:14). In other words, the social reproduction of affluence through the corporate empire rests on a foundation of destitution and destruction of social and ecological sustainability.

These paradoxes point to an important relationship that defines the corporate food regime, that the global integration of social reproduction is an immanent, rather than an absolute, process, in tendency and scope. This is not to underestimate the extent of social and ecological crisis, to the contrary, these crises are measures of the power and reach, however contradictory, of the corporate empire. But this relationship emphasizes that the corporate empire is a project rather than a foregone conclusion (McMichael 2000b), especially insofar as it only includes no more than a quarter of the world's population, who have the consumer cash or credit to participate in its circuits (Barnet and Cavanagh 1994:383). The excluded may not participate, but a rising proportion are indeed affected to the extent that resources (material, intellectual and spiritual) are appropriated by the empire, and to the extent that public goods are privatized.

Here the cognitive map of globalization's spatial differentiation offered by Cameron and Palan is useful in capturing the dialectic of empire/exclusion. They posit new "imagined economies of globalization" as distinct from "the imagined community of the nation-state," where authority and sovereignty no longer inhabit the same space, as in the territorial state (Cameron and Palan 2004:15). While similar to Rosenberg's notion of the ambiguities of sovereignty attending the (global) 'empire of civil society,' these imagined economies inhabit "different normative and cognitive spaces whereby the boundaries of the state … are rendered multiple, complex and dynamic" (Ibid: 15-17). Cameron and Palan label these emergent spatialities as the *offshore*, *private* and *anti-*economies, where the *offshore economy* represents a de-territorialized, nevertheless state-sanctioned, space of flows (from Castells 1996), the *private economy* as the "increasingly dominant discourse of statehood in the context of globalization," and the *anti-economy* as the space of exclusion, beyond the norms and practices of the emergent global order (Cameron and Palan 2004:17). While the authors note the material development of these spaces, their emphasis is on their discursive function in the narrative of globalization: "their importance lies less in what they *describe* than in what they *narrate*. In representing a dynamic respatialization of social and economic relations, the discourses of globalization and exclusion posit the immanent development of new spatial forms to which policy-makers, industrialists, jurists and ordinary people must adapt" (Ibid:20). Thus President Bush proclaimed, on the eve of the WTO Doha Ministerial, "I want America to feed the world… It starts with having an administration committed to knocking down barriers to trade, and we are" (quoted in IUF 2002:4).

In the imagined economies of globalization, the anti-economy is inhabited by the impoverished and excluded, who, from the perspective of the 'competition' or privatizing state, "can ultimately extricate themselves only by themselves…[I]n the new policy language of empowerment" (Ibid:149). But the anti-economy also includes *alternative* forms of empowerment, based not on the "need to adapt, flexibilize, retrain and reskill" (Idem), but on much of the material culture targeted for elimination by corporate globalization. The conditions for overcoming the social and ecological crisis of the corporate food regime are precisely given by those crises, and include rejecting or re-embedding market-based epistemology. That is, the trajectory of the corporate food regime is conditioned by its resistances: from environmentalism through fair trade to a variety of food sovereignty movements (community-supported agricultures, producer cooperatives, land reclamation, organic farming, seed saving, etc).

<u>Food Sovereignty and the anti-capitalist movements</u>

Food sovereignty represents an alternative principle to food security, as currently defined by the corporate food regime. But it is not the antithesis of food security, rather, food sovereignty is a premise for genuine food security, since “food is first and foremost a source of nutrition and only secondarily an item of trade” (Via Campesina 2002:8).

In the terms of the corporate food regime, ‘food security’ is to be achieved through trade, rather than through a strategy of self-sufficiency. The chairman of Cargill put it recently like this: “There is a mistaken belief that the greatest agricultural need in the developing world is to develop the capacity to grow food for local consumption. This is misguided. Countries should produce what they produce best – and trade” (quoted in Lynas 2001). This definition frames the WTO’s Agreement on Agriculture.

In this context, the concept of ‘food sovereignty’ was developed by the international farmers’ movement, Via Campesina, and introduced into public debate during the 1996 World Food Summit. Via Campesina defines food sovereignty in the following way:

> In order to guarantee the independence and food sovereignty of all of the world’s peoples, it is essential that food be produced through diversified, farmer-based production systems. Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to define their own agriculture and food policies, to protect and regulate domestic agricultural production and trade in order to achieve sustainable development objectives, to determine the extent to which they want to be self reliant, and to restrict the dumping of products in their markets. Food sovereignty does not negate trade, but rather, it promotes the formulation of trade policies and practices that serve the rights of peoples to safe, healthy and ecologically sustainable production (Via Campesina 2001).

It is important to emphasize that trade is not ruled out, under the Via Campesina vision, rather it is a question of the regime under which trade occurs. The anti-capitalist resistance represented by the Via Campesina does not reject the global for the local, rather it redefines the global in terms appropriate to democratic conditions of food production and distribution. As Judit Bodnar emphasizes in her interpretation of the conflict between the French Farmers’ Confederation and MacDonalds in 1999, Jose Bove and his followers destroy transgenic corn produced by global firms “not because the seeds are produced by ‘others’ but because of the way they are produced” (Bodnar 2003:141). Under the slogan of ‘the world is not for sale,’ Bove and the Via Campesina emphasize two central premises: first, that the international tensions surrounding the politics of food ultimately derive not from conflict between governments, but that between models of production and rural development -- “a conflict that exists in both the North and the South” (Via Campesina 2003:5); and second, that the struggle is global but decentralized in content and leadership. Bove articulates the latter point as follows:

> The strength of this global movement is precisely that it differs from place to place…The world is a complex place, and it would be a mistake to look for a single answer to complex and different phenomena. We have to provide answers at different levels – not just the international level, but local and national levels too. History shows that each phase of political development has a corresponding institutional form: France’s response to the Industrial Revolution was the nation-state; the WTO is the expression of this phase of the liberalization of world trade (Bove and Dufour 2001:168).

Embedded in this quote is the ‘global’ vision represented by the Via Campesina, namely that an alternative modernity depends on rejecting the WTO/corporate move to privatize modernity and erase (shared) local knowledges (cf Desmarias 2003), and on reinstating “the right of peoples, communities and countries to define their own agricultural, labour, fishing, food and land policies which are ecologically, socially, economically and culturally appropriate to their unique circumstances” (quoted in Ainger 2003:11). Bodnar’s study emphasizes that, despite Bove’s relative privilege in producing the internationally traded Roquefort cheese, as an artisan he represents a production model that appeals to farmers and consumers worldwide, striving for transparent production and distribution in opposition to the mass production model of industrial agriculture. In addition, the model elevates democratic economy and fair trade principles, as essential to a global civil society, over the reactionary “link between land and nation” (Bodnar 2003:141-3).

On the other side of the world, this sentiment echoes through another constituent of the Via Campesina, the landless-workers’ movement in Brazil, where exports of coffee, sugar, poultry, cacao, orange juice concentrate and soy and corn destined for livestock in the global North leave behind forty-four million chronically hungry Brazilians -- as Candido Grzybowsky, director of IBASE in Rio de Janeiro, observed:

> Probably in Brazil there exists no greater taboo than that centuries-old question, the agrarian question. But there is no question that is more current because it is not limited to the countryside itself, to its population…The modernity of the MST consists in questioning us about this, about the past of our agrarian origins and about the future in the use of our natural resources, with the question of land at the center….We are, of the large countries of the world, the least demographically dense, the most privileged in terms of natural resources – land, water, biodiversity – and at the same time, the most unequal and tragically, the most predatory. For how long, in the name of an even more narrow vision, will we be able to maintain the right to act on this part of Planet Earth in a way that is so socially and ecologically irresponsible?

This appeal to a global movement against the uniformity of the corporate trade regime, in the interests of the future sustainability of the social and natural world, rests on an analysis of the power base of the neo-liberal model. First, the Via Campesina argues that a world market of agricultural products is non-existent, rather, the corporate food regime, accounting for only 10 percent of world agricultural production, is:

> an international trade of surpluses of milk, cereals and meat dumped primarily by the EU, the US and other members of the CAIRNS group. Behind the faces of national trade negotiators are powerful TNCs such as Monsanto and Cargill who are the real beneficiaries of domestic subsidies and supports, international trade negotiations and the global manipulations of trade regimes (2001:6).

Second, agro-industrialization is being rapidly globalized through the *mobility of financial capital*, with an ability to rapidly concentrate, centralize and coordinate global agribusiness operations. According to Joao Stedile of the MST, world agriculture is dominated by ten TNCs, such as Monsanto, Bayer, Cargill, Nestle, Syngenta, BASF, Novartis, and ADM, operating in and across distinct sectors related to agricultural production, and controlling commercial agriculture, agrobusiness, the agro-toxins and seeds: “now capital is not content to buy labor and hold land as private property, but it also wants to turn knowledge, technology, farm technologies and seeds into private property" to increase productivity per acre, with the goal of developing a food model based in the unification of eating habits across the world (Via Campesina 2004c:2).

The power relation in the corporate food regime implicating the world's peasantries (including family farmers) is expressed in the Via Campesina's claim that "multinational corporations want to manipulate our crops to be able to control all of the food chain around the world, requiring us to stop producing food and start consuming their products" (2004b:3). This is the alternative way of describing the movement toward a 'world agriculture.'

The mechanism promoting this movement is, of course, the neo-liberal model institutionalized in the WTO as well as structural adjustment policies. As the Via Campesina's website observes:

> The specialisation of production in regions that can export at lowest costs, importation of agricultural products at prices below the cost of production in the importing country, the agreement by the WTO of public support that allows the rich countries to export at prices below their cost of production, is destroying food sovereignty in all regions. Prices called global, are artificial and result in dumping. They are disconnected from the reality of production. Many countries are forced to export because of their debt and the structural adjustment programs imposed by the IMF and the World Bank. (http://ns.rds.org.hn/via/)

Within this context, the Via Campesina reformulates the crisis of the corporate food regime, critiquing unequivocally the *representation* of the Cancun standoff as a North-South conflict. Maintaining that the real conflict is "between centralized, corporate-driven, export-oriented, industrial agriculture versus decentralized, peasant-and family farm-based sustainable production primarily oriented towards domestic markets," – a conflict invisibilized in global trade negotiations -- the Via Campesina argues that the WTO, a "totally inappropriate institution for democratic decision-making" regarding food sovereignty and social and ecological sustainability, should get out of agriculture (1999:3). This critique sets the Via Campesina apart from the G-20 grouping of the global South, which it views as representing agro-export interests in the South at the expense of the majority of domestic producers:

> they too are demanding the abolition of 'trade distorting' subsidies and more access to markets, both in the North and in the South, without acknowledging that it is in fact the unbalanced focus on exports and corporate interests which is the main problem... Increased liberalization and generalized market access will serve only to strengthen the grip of multinational agribusiness cartels, deepening the problems of poverty and social exclusion of millions of people in the world (2003:5).

The Via Campesina opposes the WTO's neo-liberal project of constructing a world agriculture based in 'comparative advantage' because it is not about strategies of regional differentiation so much as about corporate global sourcing strategies, premised on the existence of a reserve army of cheap labor. Noting that "the massive movement of food around the world is forcing the increased movement of people," the Via Campesina offers a new paradigm based in community sustainability as the anchor of an alternative globalization. Here, food sovereignty depends on access to credit, land and fair prices to be set via rules negotiated in a reformed UN and alternative multilateral institutions such as a Convention on Food Sovereignty and Trade in Food and Agriculture, an International Court of Justice, a World Commission on Sustainable Agriculture and Food Sovereignty, and so forth (2001:8). As Bove asks, "Why should the global market escape the rule of international law or human rights conventions passed by the United Nations?" (Bove and Defour 2001:165). The premise, of course, is "the active participation of farmers' movements in defining agricultural and food policies within a democratic framework." The specificity of this politics is that, while the consumer movement has discovered that "eating has become a political act," articulating the (bourgeois) health/transparency relations of food, Via Campesina adds the social/ecological and historical dimension: "producing quality products for our own people has also become a political act… this touches our very identities as citizens of this world" (www.ns.rds.org.hn/via/).

In sum, the coherence of the Via Campesina vision, uncompromising in its relationship with the growth paradigm of neo-liberalism, and with NGOs and multilateral institutions (Desmarais 2002), constitutes a distinctive politics of modernity rooted in a global moral economy. Just as Peter Kropotkin argued at the turn of the twentieth century that the preminent social question is the 'question of bread,' so Amory Starr proposes that the global anti-capitalist movement for 'diversity' is best summarized as 'agricultural:'

> Encompassing first world farmers seeking market protection, farmers resisting genetic engineering, indigenous sovereignty movements seeking to control land and practices, sustainable development, localist economic visions, and third world peasant movements reacting to the failures of urbanization and neoliberalism by by insisting on rights to land and subsistence. These movements have a variety of relationships to political economy, formal democracy and existing nations. But none imagines that growth, modernization or technology provide answers to their problems; indeed they see corporate technology as economically and ecologically dangerous (Starr 2001:224).

And just as Starr characterizes the core of the anti-corporate globalization movement as centered on agricultural issues, so the Via Campesina can be viewed as the core of the resistance that constitutes the corporate food regime by articulating its alternative, that which it seeks to eliminate. There are many strands of resistance to the corporate food regime, from environmentalists through seed savers to community supported agriculture, but the Via Campesina's unique method of unifying the diversity of agrarian producers across the world, brings these movements together in a singularly heterogeneous movement of opposition in which social, economic, cultural and environmental relations feature in different configurations across the world.

Global capitalism and the corporate food regime

The phenomenal dynamics of the corporate food regime, namely expropriation of farmers across the world, appropriation of peasant agri-cultures, reorganization of food supply chains, and so forth, express the immanence of capital and its drive to deepen commodity relations. The question is how these dynamics also specify the world-historical conjuncture? The answer lies in the politics of the corporate empire, that is, how a reconfigured state system accommodates the strategy of corporate globalization pursued by the U.S. as a form of imperial power.

The origins of corporate globalization stem from the de-regulation of financial relations in the 1970s, as a U.S. strategy to unburden itself of rising claims on the dollar, relocate debt to weaker states in the currency hierarchy, and reassert U.S. power within an emergent neo-liberal framework (Helleiner 1996:111-119). Decoupling the dollar from gold in the early 1970s allowed currencies to float, and facilitated a rapid expansion of the offshore dollar market and global banking institutions. The era of 'financialization' expressed a hegemonic crisis (Arrighi 1994, Panitch and Gindin 2004) as the U.S. state moved to reconstitute its power through eliminating capital controls, and laying the conditions for gaining access to global savings by liberalizing capital markets, with lowered trade and investment barriers benefiting U.S. transnational corporations. This strategy was the condition of and for a counter-mobilization of capital to disorganize labor, globally. It shaped a general reconstitution of states, via structural adjustment and free trade agreements, to institutionalize 'financialization' in the WTO and GATS protocols, and, more recently, has governed U.S. 'pre-emptive' neo-liberal development policies for 'failing' states (Soederberg 2004, Panitch and Gindin 2004).

Financial liberalization encouraged securitization (tradable debt) and the proliferation of a variety of financial instruments, creating new money out of expected future income. As argued elsewhere, under this regime the value of money is determined increasingly by its ability to command credit, rather than by creating value through the wage relation (McMichael 2000a). This is consistent with Harvey's notion of 'accumulation by dispossession,' where capital expands through releasing and centralizing assets. The decomposition of the wage relation is directly related to the decomposition of the nation-state, as capital undermines its foundation in a wage labor order (embedded in the modern social-democratic state) by seeking to evade or weaken organized labor through access to a world market in labor. Since the wage form no longer governs valorization, various forms of labor are valorized directly through political/non-market mechanisms as corporate globalization reconstitutes its labor force on world scale, through dispossession, casual contracts, and the recursive 'race to the bottom' dynamic. The reproduction of money is now the object, supplanting the reproduction of wage-labor as key to the consolidation of the modern nation-state (cf Hoogvelt 1997, Polanyi 1957).

Conclusion

My point is that an emergent world agriculture is premised on three key dynamics. First is the reconstitution of capital through financialization, such that corporate strategies intensify vertical integration (from seed to supermarket) with flexible horizontal mergers and alliances, on a global scale. Via Campesina has noted that agri-power no longer resides in control over land, rather it resides in the relations that surround agricultural production – those that "control loans, materials supply, the dissemination of new technologies, such as transgenic products, on the one hand, and those that control national and international product warehousing systems, transportation, distribution and retail sales to the consumer, on the other hand, have real power" (Via Campesina 2004a:5). As Burch and Lawrence have shown, one pertinent form of this reconstitution is the rise of highly innovative and flexible (generic) 'own brand' agri-food manufacturers serving supermarket chains (with specialty foods, including home meal replacements, organic foods, functional foods and prepared dietary products) and challenging the independence of brand-based manufacturing capital in the supply chain stemming from the so-called Fordist era (Burch and Lawrence 2004).

Second, the privatization of states via the multiple relations of financialization, including WTO rules on trade and investment, facilitates the reconstitution of capital on a global scale, and the transformation of food security into a private relation (McMichael 2004). Under this dynamic, agricultural protections mutate from a public food security/self-sufficiency goal into a goal of subsidizing corporate agriculture, agro-exporting and global sourcing, facilitated by the power relations within the WTO, as well as currency devaluations induced by structural-adjustment policies in the global South.

Third, the priority given to the reproduction of money has specific political and social consequences. The preservation of money value increasingly governs institutional politics in global and national arenas, generalizing a cycle of liberalization and crisis management through structural adjustment, at the expense of sustained social policies. Globally, the casualization of labor (McMichael 1999) is linked to, and conditioned by, peasant expropriation. The assault on peasant cultures, as the premise for construction of a world agriculture, deepens the instrumental use, misuse, and abandonment of land and other natural resources.

I would clarify the world-historical conjuncture in the following way. Polanyi viewed the institution of the self-regulating market as an attempt to commodify land, labor and money, and the protectionist movement as a counter-movement of regulation of each of these social substances. The counter-movement involved a cumulative politics of nation-state formation, whereby labor legislation, agrarian protectionism, and central banking attempted to re-embed the market in society. But this was a nineteenth and early twentieth-century double movement that configured the modern welfare/development state (McMichael forthcoming). In the twenty-first century, this trinity no longer operates through the same double movement. Rather, the regulation of money is no longer vested in the state per se, but in instrumentalities such as the IMF, whose task has become a generalized imperative to reproduce (corporate) money through expending labor and land across the world with decreasing regard for their sustainability. The food sovereignty movement is the most direct expression of this socio-ecological crisis.

The corporate food regime, constituted by the double movement of empire and food sovereignty thus reveals both the immanent, *and* the historical, conditions governing the politics of capitalist empire in the twenty-first century. In the crisis of the Doha Round, the discourse of development is most clearly framed by the dialectic of 'food security' versus 'food sovereignty.'

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[1] Contrary to Araghi's contention that this period did not involve a food regime, but an "aid-based food order of an exceptionally reformist period of world capitalism" when capital did not have its way with the food order (2003:51), I contend that we need to recognize that the state is a relation of production, and that different historical periods are defined by the political history of capital. The character and configuration of the state system reflects capital's concrete history, such that the "embedded liberalism" (Ruggie 1982), or imperial relations of capital during the Pax Americana, of the 1940s-1970s, are just as politically defining as the attempt to realize imperial state power through the relations of the WTO order. During the period of the postwar food regime, the U.S. reconstructed the capitalist world order "not through formal empire, but rather through the reconstitution of states as integral elements of an informal American empire" (Panitch and Gindin 2004:17). Across both these periods the relations of production and consumption of food expressed the value relations of capital accumulation within distinctive political relations.

[2] This was not a linear movement either, as Araghi (1995) has shown.

[3] Dumping was institutionalized within the WTO, via what is know as the 'Blair House Agreement,' concerning exports, negotiated between the US and the EU. The agreement "tied reductions in both domestic support and export subsidies to baseline levels of 1986, when stocks and subsidies were at their peak, thus giving both the EU and the US ample flexibility in meeting their obligations," and established a 'peace clause' regarding action against farm support programs and export subsidies (Dawkins 1999). The legitimation of export subsidies (for 25 of 132 WTO members) perversely allowed the U.S. and the EU to intensify export dumping such that "just 3 (members) are responsible for 93% of all subsidized wheat exports and just 2 of them are responsible for subsidizing 94% of butter and 80% of beef exports" (Dawkins 1999).

[4] A recent formulation expressed the US corporate vision: In 2001, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Ann Veneman, envisioned a 'global agriculture (where) future agriculture policies must be market-oriented…they must integrate agriculture into the global economy, not insulate us from it' (quoted in IUF 2002:4). The vision of a '*global agriculture*' is premised on the superiority of a corporate-dominated world market for foodstuffs over domestic food systems (Peine and McMichael forthcoming).

[5] "Typically, a crop development conglomerate is organized around one OECD-based transnational enterprise (TNE), rooted in the chemical, pharmaceutical, or food processing industry. This TNE maintains a network of linkages with one or more plant breeding firms, new biology firms, genomics and software firms, and also with public research institutes. The nature of the linkages is diverse and varies from temporary research collaboration to complete take-overs" (Pistorius and van Wijk 1999:118).

[6] The TRIPs protocol requires states to regulate biological resources, whether through patenting or an effective *sui generis* system, deriving from the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity. Although the protocol is yet to be universally implemented, states choosing the latter path remain under pressure to market their genetic resources for foreign exchange (McMichael 2003:183-4).