Urban Agriculture

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

Discussion Topic

What is food sovereignty?

- Why is it important to be food sovereign?
- Who is part of the food sovereignty movement?
- What is a food sovereignty framework?

What is Food Sovereignty?

Food sovereignty is difficult to define because it has come to mean many different overlapping ideas.

Patel (2009)

- Food sovereignty is, if anything, over defined. There are so many versions of the concept, it is hard to know exactly what it means. The proliferation of overlapping definitions is, however, a symptom of food sovereignty itself, woven into the fabric of food sovereignty by necessity. (p. 664).

Alonso-Fradejas, Borras Jr, Holmes, Holt-Gimanez, and Robbins (2015)

- The term has become a challenging subject for social science research, and has been interpreted and reinterpreted in various ways by different groups and individuals. Indeed, as it is a concept that is so broadly defined, it spans issues such as ***food politics, agroecology, land reform, pastoralism, fisheries, biofuels, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), urban gardening, the patenting of life forms, labour migration, the feeding of volatile cities, community initiatives and state policies, public health, climate change, ecological sustainability, and subsistence rights***. (p. 443)

Qualman (2011)

- Food sovereignty…is many things depending on place, time, culture, needs and so on. As with many forward-looking ideas, it is difficult to predict exactly what food sovereignty will look like in practice – to provide an exact blueprint of food sovereignty is not only difficult but also counter-productive. So it might be easier to define what it isn't. (p.20)

Introduction to Food Sovereignty

Darrin Qualman Advancing Agriculture by Destroying Farms? The State of Agriculture in Canada

Food Sovereignty is NOT:

- A set of policies simplistically aimed at maximizing production and exports
- A disregard for the destruction of family farms and rural communities
- A push towards high-input, high-cost, high-energy-use model for food production that generates chronic negative returns for the farm families who work the soil
- A concentration of land ownership into the hands of fewer and fewer owners, many of them non-farmers
- A corporate takeover of a growing number of agricultural sectors (e.g. hog production and cattle finishing)
- A push towards massive production units that concentrate potential pollutants
- A transfer of key food processing facilities to foreign companies, even to foreign lands
- Economic policies that make foreign-based transnationals the primary beneficiaries of the wealth created by farm families working our land
- A system that makes citizens ever more dependent on food supplied further and further from their homes

What is Food Sovereignty?

Food sovereignty is a multidimensional concept that refers to a process and an outcome.

- **Process** – it describes a movement, a struggle, a democratic process perpetually in negotiation and always in motion.
- **Framework –** to compare food regimes.
- **Outcomes** – agreed upon declarations of rights, codes of ethics and guiding principles. These declarations are debated at conferences, meetings, and public forums and carried out by the parties (who agree with the declarations) in local communities.
  - Nyéléni Declaration 2007

Food sovereignty refers to:

- the rights of nations and people to control their own food economy – to decide how food is produced, consumed, processed, and distributed.
- a paradigm, trend, framework, discourse, regime and model. It is the most radical food movement discourse and rivals the corporate neoliberal food system.
- a right to food that is of quality, healthy, and culturally appropriate
- recognition and respect of women's role in food production
- social justice
- environmental sustainability
- recognition and respect for traditional knowledge and Indigenous Peoples
- agrarian reform including collective land rights and protection of Indigenous Peoples' Lands
- 're-commoning' land and right to defend land from transnational corporations
- against trade liberation

Food Security

We need to think beyond sustainability and food security to address root causes of food problems – we need to build food sovereign localities.

Food Security – Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO):

- Food security, at the individual level, household, national, regional and global level [is achieved] when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious foods to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (1996)

Via Campesina (1996)

- Long-term food security depends on those who produce food and care for the natural environment. As stewards of food producing resources we hold the following principles as the necessary condition for achieving food security…Food is a basic human right. This can only be realized in a system where food sovereignty is guaranteed. ***Food sovereignty*** is the right of each nation to maintain and develop its own capacity to produce its basic foods respecting cultural and productive diversity. We have the right to produce our own food in our own territory. Food sovereignty is a precondition to genuine food security

La Via Campesina Position at the World Food Summit (Desmarais, 2017)

Right to produce and access to land

Food is a basic human right

Agrarian reform

Protecting natural resources

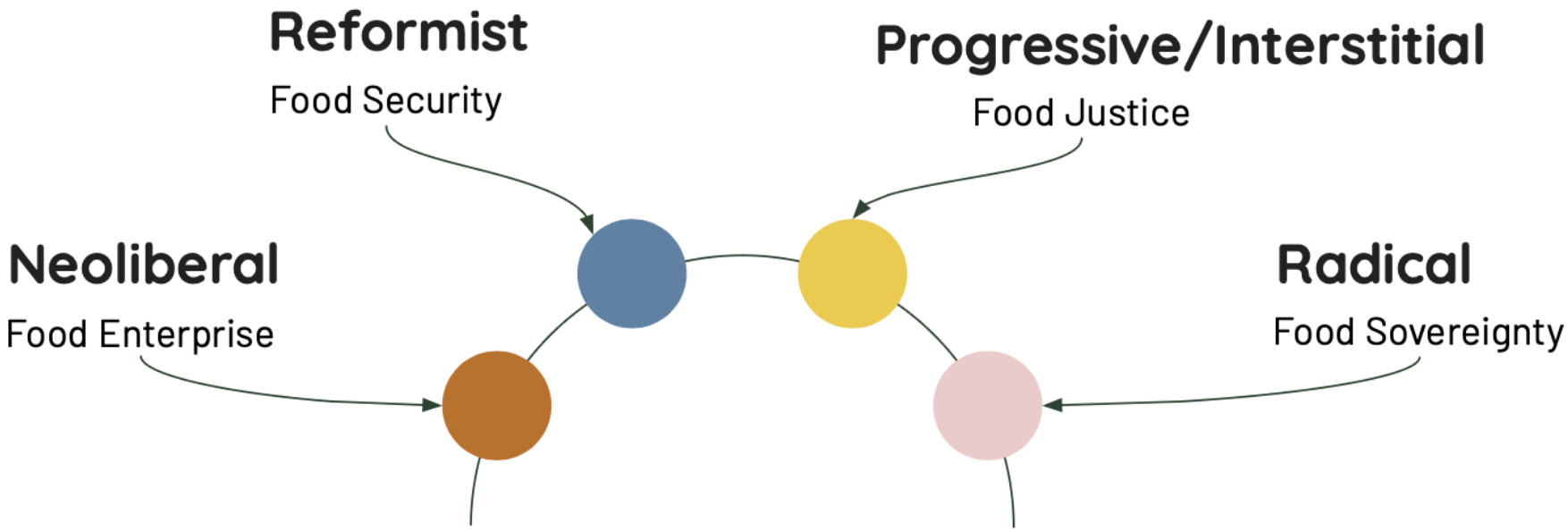
Reorganizing food trade

Social peace

Democratic control

Food System Change

CORPORATE FOOD REGIME **FOOD MOVEMENTS**



Holt-Gimenez, E. (2017) A Foodie's Guide to Capitalism: Understanding the Political Economy of What We Eat, Monthly Review Press, New York.

Food Regimes (Wittman, 2011)

Table 1: Food Sovereignty: An Emerging Alternative Food Regime?

	Corporate/Neoliberal Food Regime	Food Sovereignty Regime
Feeding the World	Food access/security through intensive production based on principle of comparative advantage and distributed through market mechanisms.	Food access/security through prioritizing local agricultural production and protecting local markets from dumping/subsidized food imports.
Role of Agriculture in Advancing National Development	Increase positive trade balances through increased exports of agricultural commodities. Economically successful communities will invest in infrastructure to improve community well-being (e.g., hospitals, schools).	Sustainable agriculture as part of a diversified economy will improve national well-being through improving food security and ensuring a healthy environment. Fair trade will spur economic growth.
Role of Technology in Advancing Agricultural Development	Increases in productivity come through scientific innovation, adoption of technology, and modern management. Problem solving based on a compartmentalized approach to problems of soil fertility, disease, pest infestation, etc.	Farmers must become efficient and competitive through diversifying production, using alternative technologies, and minimizing use of external inputs. Problem solving is based on a holistic approach to adoption of appropriate technology, including agroecology.
Environmental Stewardship	Protected areas, national parks, and environmental regulations are sufficient, as long as they do not harm the potential for the expansion of agricultural export crops.	Agriculture and environmental policy cannot be separated; sustainable agriculture protects biodiversity and leaves space for conservation areas.

Note: for other comparisons between the food sovereignty model and corporate/ neoliberal/ second food regime paradigms see Desmarais (forthcoming); Rosset (2003); Fairbairn (2010); Reardon and Perez (2010).

Table 14.1
Politics, production models, and approaches

	Corporate food regime		Food movements	
Politics	Neoliberal	Reformist	Progressive	Radical
Discourse	*Food enterprise*	*Food security*	*Food justice*	*Food sovereignty*
Main institutions	International Finance Corporation (World Bank); IMF, WTO: USDA; Global Food Security Bill; Green Revolution; Millennium Challenge; Heritage Foundation; Chicago Global Council; Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; ONE Campaign	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank); FAO; UN Commission on Sustainable Development; International Federation of Agricultural Producers; mainstream fair trade; Slow Food Movement; some Food Policy Councils; most food banks and food aid programs	Alternative fair trade and many Slow Food chapters; many organizations in the Community Food Security Movement; CSAs; many Food Policy Councils and youth food and justice movements; many farmworker and labor organizations	Via Campesina, International Planning Committee on Food Sovereignty; Global March for Women; many food justice and rights-based movements

Table 14.1
(continued)

Orientation	*Corporate*	*Development*	*Empowerment*	*Entitlement*
Model	Overproduction; corporate concentration; unregulated markets and monopolies; monocultures (including organic); GMOs; agrofuels; mass global consumption of industrial food; phasing out of peasant and family agriculture and local retail	Mainstreaming/ certification of niche markets (e.g. organic, fair, local, sustainable); maintaining northern agricultural subsidies; "sustainable" roundtables for agrofuels, soy, forest products, etc.; market-led land reform	Agroecologically produced local food; investment in underserved communities; new business models and community benefit packages for production, processing, and retail; better wages for ag. workers; solidarity economies; land access; regulated markets and supply	Dismantle corporate agrifoods monopoly power; parity; redistributive land reform; community rights to water and seed; regionally based food systems; democratization of food system; sustainable livelihoods; protection from dumping/ overproduction; revival of agroecologically managed peasant agriculture to distribute wealth and cool the planet
Approach to the food crisis	Increased industrial production; unregulated corporate monopolies; land grabs; expansion of GMOs; public-private partnerships; liberal markets; international sourced food aid	Same as neoliberal but with increased medium farmer production and some locally sourced food aid; more agricultural aid but tied to GMOs and "bio-fortified/climate-resistant" crops	Right to food; better safety nets; sustainably produced, locally-sourced food; agroecologically based agricultural development	Human right to food sovereignty; locally sourced, sustainably produced, culturally appropriate, democratically controlled focus on UN/ FAO negotiations
	Guiding document: World Bank 2009 Development Report	Guiding document: World Bank 2009 Development Report	Guiding document: International Assessment on Agriculture Science Technology and Development	Guiding document: Peoples' Comprehensive Framework for Action to Eradicate Hunger

Community Food Sovereignty

Communities can control food production, processing, distribution and waste management.

- Urban Farms, edible community landscapes, collective growing spaces
- Food Hubs and/or Community Food Centres
- Collective kitchens
- Cooperative food distribution organizations
- Local markets and CSA
- Agroecology
- Food banks (surplus from distribution organizations and urban farms)
- Food advocacy organizations
- Social justice!

2007 Nyéléni Principles of Food Sovereignty

Focuses on food for people

Values food providers

Localizes food systems

Puts control locally

Builds knowledge and skills

Works with nature

Food Sovereign Campus Framework

	Corporate Approach to University Food Services	Weak Sustainability Approach to University Food Services	Food Sovereignty Approach to University Food Services
Who runs food services	External Corporation	External Corporation or self-operated (administration run)	Campus-community stakeholders – partnerships with faculty, students, administrators, staff, and the community at large
Approach to sustainability	None	Weak sustainability or triple bottom line approach	A transformative approach to sustainability that includes social justice, decolonization, and anti-racism
The goal of campus food services	Profit from a captive market of resident students	Provide food to a captive market of resident students	Improve the foodscape on campus and in the surrounding communities
The business model of food services	For-profit (profit and loss)	For-profit or non-profit	Social enterprise or social innovation approach
Involvement of faculty	Faculty are potential customers	Faculty are potential customers and consultants	Faculty are stakeholders and co-create the food system through research and community-service learning projects
Involvement of students	Students are the main customers	Students are consulted about their food preferences	Students are co-creators of the campus food system
Involvement of community at large	The community at large are potential customers or not important	The community at large are not the main focus of food services	Beneficiaries of and partners with a campus food system that creates community value
Consultations about campus food services	Part of a marketing strategy to increase profit	Consultations about food preferences, led by the administration	Led by a federation, coalition and/or network of campus-community organizations
How to address food insecurity on campus	None - Student residents are the primary customer and must purchase a meal plan as a condition living in residence	Food banks and emergency food relief for hungry students	A holistic approach of connecting people to food production, processing and distribution on campus and in the community at large
How food service employees are treated	Driving down the cost of labour is key to maximizing profits	Labourers treated with respect and are paid fair wages – but are excluded from decision making and not paid their true value	Labourers are involved in decision making, are not exploited via wages, and given proper benefits to lead a fulfilling life
Food procurement	Bulk purchasing from large distributers to drive down the cost of produce	Purchasing food from local farmers at the lowest price possible	Purchasing food, at a fair price, from a network of local farmers that hire workers for fair wages and/or where possible, grow food on and around campus through farmers coops of faculty, students and the community at large
Environmental Stewardship	Externalize environmental costs maximize profits	Reduce waste and procure food locally when possible	Holistic approach that reconnects people to the biosphere through food practices, regenerative agriculture and decolonization

	Corporate Approach to University Food Services	Soft Sustainability Approach to University Food Services	Food Sovereignty Approach to University Food Services
Who runs food services	External Corporation	External Corporation or self-operated (administration run)	Campus-community stakeholders – partnerships with faculty, students, administrators, staff, and the community at large
Approach to sustainability	None	Soft sustainability or triple bottom line approach	A transformative approach to sustainability that includes social justice, decolonization, and anti-racism
The goal of campus food services	Profit from a captive market of resident students	Provide food to a captive market of resident students	Improve the foodscape on campus and in the surrounding communities
The business model of food services	For-profit	For-profit or non-profit	Social enterprise or social innovation approach

	Corporate Approach to University Food Services	Soft Sustainability Approach to University Food Services	Food Sovereignty Approach to University Food Services
Involvement of faculty	Faculty are potential customers	Faculty are potential customers and consultants	Faculty are stakeholders and co-create the food system through research and community-service learning projects
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Involvement of community at large	The community at large are potential customers or not important	The community at large are not the main focus of food services	Beneficiaries of and partners with a campus food system that creates community value
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	Corporate Approach to University Food Services	Soft Sustainability Approach to University Food Services	Food Sovereignty Approach to University Food Services
How food service employees are treated	Driving down the cost of labour is key to maximizing profits.	Labourers treated with respect and are paid fair wages – but are excluded from decision making and not paid their true value.	Labourers are involved in decision making, are not exploited via wages, and given proper benefits to lead a fulfilling life.
Food procurement	Bulk purchasing from large distributers to drive down the cost of produce.	Purchasing food from local farmers at the lowest price possible.	Purchasing food, at a fair price, from a network of local farmers that hire workers for fair wages and/or where possible, grow food on and around campus through farmers coops of faculty, students and the community at large.
Environmental Stewardship	Externalize environmental costs to maximize profits.	Reduce waste and procure food locally when possible.	Holistic approach that reconnects people to the biosphere through food practices, regenerative agriculture and decolonization. Animals, nature and people form a relationship of reciprocity and interdependence and not exploitation.

Discussion

How can we achieve campus-community food sovereignty?

How can communities become food sovereign?

Thanks!

Questions or concerns?