

Food Regimes, Capital, State, and Class: Friedmann and McMichael Revisited

Tilzey, M.

Author post-print (accepted) deposited by Coventry University's Repository

Original citation & hyperlink:

Tilzey, M 2019, 'Food Regimes, Capital, State, and Class: Friedmann and McMichael Revisited', *Sociologia Ruralis*, vol. 59, no. 2, pp. 230-254.

<https://dx.doi.org/10.1111/soru.12237>

DOI 10.1111/soru.12237

ISSN 0038-0199

ESSN 1467-9523

Publisher: Wiley

This is the peer reviewed version of the following article: Tilzey, M 2019, 'Food Regimes, Capital, State, and Class: Friedmann and McMichael Revisited', *Sociologia Ruralis*, vol. 59, no. 2, pp. 230-254 which has been published in final form at <https://dx.doi.org/10.1111/soru.12237>. This article may be used for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Wiley Terms and Conditions for Self-Archiving.

Copyright © and Moral Rights are retained by the author(s) and/ or other copyright owners. A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge. This item cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the copyright holder(s). The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

This document is the author's post-print version, incorporating any revisions agreed during the peer-review process. Some differences between the published version and this version may remain and you are advised to consult the published version if you wish to cite from it.

1 **Sociologia Ruralis Revised Manuscript (2)**

2
3 **Title: *Food Regimes, Capital, State, and Class: Friedmann and McMichael Revisited***

4
5 **Abstract**

6 Friedmann and McMichael's work, through their concept of the 'food regime', has been
7 foundational to our thinking about the relation between capitalism, the state, and agriculture.
8 Given the thirtieth anniversary of the publication of their seminal 1989 paper in this journal
9 (*Agriculture and the State System: The Rise and Decline of National Agricultures, 1870 to the*
10 *Present*) it seems very appropriate to commemorate this event by undertaking a
11 reassessment of that paper. This paper undertakes such a reassessment by examining and
12 critiquing: the theoretical assumptions underlying the paper, particularly in relation to
13 capitalism, class, and the state. This directs attention particularly to: the authors' (implicit)
14 definition of capitalism; the relation between capitalism and the modern state; their
15 treatment of 'class' and 'class struggle'; and their periodization of food regimes and the
16 dynamics underlying them, these being premised on their theoretical assumptions. The
17 second, third, and, fourth sections occupy the bulk of the paper. The second section develops
18 a significantly revised theoretical foundation for thinking about the dynamics underlying food
19 regimes, while the third section deploys this as the basis for a new periodization of food
20 regimes. This periodization includes a proposed Fifth, or 'Post-Neoliberal' Food Regime, and
21 the final section examines this in detail.

22
23
24 **Introduction**

25
26 Friedmann and McMichael's work, through their concept of the 'food regime', has been
27 pivotal to our thinking about the relation between capitalism, the state, and agriculture.
28 Given the thirtieth anniversary of the publication of their seminal 1989 paper in this journal
29 (*Agriculture and the State System: The Rise and Decline of National Agricultures, 1870 to the*
30 *Present*) it seems very appropriate to commemorate this event by undertaking a
31 reassessment of that paper. We propose to undertake such a reassessment by, first,
32 examining and critiquing the theoretical bases of food regimes as presented by Friedmann
33 and McMichael, together with their periodization of these regimes. Arising from this critique,
34 we go on to develop a significantly revised theoretical foundation for thinking about the
35 dynamics underlying food regimes, and to deploy this as the basis for proposing a new
36 periodization of food regimes.

37 It is perhaps useful to remind ourselves at the outset what we mean by food regimes. Food
38 Regime Theory (FRT)ⁱ represents an attempt to ground understanding of the organization of
39 food production, distribution, and consumption on a world scale in political economy – in
40 other words, to understand how capitalism and the modern state generate and structure
41 this organization. As defined by Friedmann and McMichael (1989), the co-originators of the
42 theory, FRT describes three global food regimes: the First (1870s-1930s); the Second (1950s-
43 1970s); and the Third (from 1980s-present), the latter described as the 'corporate' food

44 regime by McMichael (2013) and as the ‘corporate-environmental’ regime by Friedmann
45 (2005). Friedmann and McMichael articulated the food regime as an historically significant
46 cluster of global-scale food relationships which contributed to stabilizing and underwriting a
47 period of growth in global capitalism. A food regime comprised a series of key relationships,
48 often enshrined in rule-making and enforcing institutions. Following, in part, a Regulation
49 Theoretical (RT) interpretation of capitalist historyⁱⁱ, these relationships coalesced to form a
50 relatively stable pattern of accumulation (historical conjuncture) over a period of time,
51 before then destabilizing and moving into disjuncture and crisis (Campbell and Dixon 2009,
52 263).

53 In contrast to much of the criticism that was directed against it in the 1990s from then
54 ascendant thinking in post-structuralism and actor-network theory particularly (thinking that
55 McMichael (2013, 12) describes as ‘abstract localism’), our critique seeks, in this paper, both
56 to uphold the tradition of radical political economy that informed Friedmann and
57 McMichael’s paper, and the value of the concept of the food regime itself. Our critique,
58 therefore, takes place from within that tradition. That tradition, however, is diverse and may
59 be said to comprise, not one, but rather several main strands of thought which, at risk of over-
60 simplification, may be grouped into three schools:

61 The first school, which may be termed the ‘market-relations model’, is one in which capitalism
62 is seen to arise through an increase in trade and the rise of an international division of labourⁱⁱⁱ.
63 This line of thinking is represented particularly well by Wallerstein (1974, 1976) in his World
64 Systems Theory (WST), and, it is important to note, WST has constituted one of the two main
65 intellectual influences on the development of FRT (McMichael 2013) (the other, as noted,
66 being RT, which, we argue, Friedmann and McMichael employ only *in part*, to the detriment
67 of their formulation of FRT). We will present a critique of this approach, which, rightly in our
68 view, has been accused of ‘structuralism’ and ‘abstract globalism’, not least by McMichael
69 himself (2013) in his recent ‘retrospective’ on FRT. We will argue, however, that, despite his
70 auto-critique, it is difficult to discern McMichael’s rejection of ‘structuralism’ being translated
71 into his substantive and contemporary analysis of the ‘corporate’ food regime, which
72 polarizes precisely into the abstract globalization of capital and the abstract localization of
73 resistance, the latter occurring, for McMichael, essentially ‘outside’ the dynamics of what we
74 will term the ‘state-capital nexus’. Such charges of ‘structuralism’ are perhaps ironic, since it
75 was Friedmann and McMichael’s intent, by means of FRT, to break out of the determinism
76 and linearity of ‘structural Marxism’ (the ‘second school’, see below), an impulse, as implied
77 above, that has only increased, if not always been realized, since 1989 (see Campbell and
78 Dixon 2009). Indeed, these authors suggest that ‘it is only possible...to understand the
79 significance of these new perspectives by understanding food regimes as a key historical and
80 theoretical pivot that moved debates in rural sociology from a rather narrow, structural and
81 orthodox political economy of agriculture to a more contingent, historically contextual
82 understanding of the many configurations...of agri-food capitalisms’ (Campbell and Dixon
83 2009, 261).

84 We argue, however, and as implied above, that, in the case of McMichael, theoretical
85 provision for such ‘contingency’ has not been realized other than ‘outside’ the regime (see
86 Tilzey 2017), while, in the case of Friedmann, her theoretical shift to engage ‘contingency’ has
87 been undertaken through her partial embrace of post-structural and post-modern frames,
88 which fail, however, to afford a rigorous basis for conceptualizing ‘contingency’. We argue

89 that this unresolved tension between 'structure' and 'contingency' in FRT, as presented by
90 Friedmann and McMichael, arises through their failure to embrace RT in its entirety, together
91 with their apparent lack of awareness of other important and related developments in 'post-
92 structuralist' (but not 'post-structural') Marxian theory – notably, 'Political Marxism',
93 Poulantzian state-capital theory, and neo-Gramscian theory. Indeed, it may be argued that
94 this unresolved tension and the failure to find a theoretical basis for theorizing the dialectic
95 between 'structure' and 'agency', underlies, to a considerable degree, the great schism that
96 emerged in the 1990s, within rural geography and sociology, between the 'structuralism' of
97 'abstract globalism' and the 'post-structural' frame of 'abstract localism'. Further, it was this
98 'abstract globalism' which mandated, and continues to mandate, its mirror image 'abstract
99 localism'. Below, and through the development of 'Political Marxian' and related approaches,
100 we will attempt to vitiate this dualism of the two 'abstractions' by means of revised
101 conceptions of capitalism, class^{iv}, agency, and state^v.^{vi}

102 The second school of radical political economy may be termed the 'relations of production'
103 approach, one that has often been equated with 'structural Marxism', and one whose
104 inadequacies helped to propel the rise of 'post-modernism' and 'post-structural' approaches
105 during the 1980s and 1990s (indeed, in the minds of many of the latter, 'structural Marxism'
106 *is* Marxism). Indeed, Friedman and McMichael's embrace of WST (and of RT) itself
107 represented a reaction against the reductionism of the 'relations of production' approach.
108 This is not the place to undertake a detailed discussion of this school (see useful summary in
109 Campbell and Dixon (2009) in relation to rural sociology) – suffice to say that, for it, 'modes
110 of production' are defined by the direct relationship between exploiter and exploited at the
111 level of the enterprise. This fails, however, to understand that the direct exploitation of labour
112 is but a 'moment' in the production process as capital is forced beyond the immediate labour
113 process in order to reproduce itself. That is why Marx was, himself, careful to avoid any
114 reduction of his definition of capitalism to this immediate relation itself. Rather, 'the relations
115 of production in their totality constitute what are called the social relations, society, and
116 specifically at a definite stage of historical development' (Marx 1973, 90). In other words, we
117 need to address the totality of dialectical relations between capital, class, and the state (the
118 state-capital nexus) if we are to gain a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of
119 capitalism and the state system, and the place of food regimes within these.

120 This we attempt to do in this paper by building on the third school of radical political economy,
121 which, we argue, represents a resolution to the problems of the first two schools, and which
122 takes as its starting point Marx's desire, non-reductively, to understand capitalism in terms of
123 the totality of social relations. This third school, we suggest, may be said to comprise elements
124 of Political Marxism, Neo-Gramscian theory, Poulantzian state-theory, and RT *in its entirety*.
125

126 The paper has the following structure. First, we assess and critique the theoretical
127 assumptions underlying Friedmann and McMichael's 1989 paper, particularly in relation to
128 capitalism, class, and the state. This directs attention particularly to: the authors' (implicit)
129 definition of capitalism; the relation between capitalism and the modern state; their
130 treatment of 'class' and 'class struggle'. In this section we also assess and critique their
131 periodization of food regimes and the dynamics underlying them, these being premised on
132 the theoretical assumptions discussed beforehand. In the next section, we attempt a
133 synthesis of the elements of the 'third school' of radical political economy to develop a theory
134 of the 'state-capital nexus' in preference to WST and the dismembered RT deployed by

135 Friedmann and McMichael (see below), and as a key explanatory tool for understanding and
136 defining food regimes. In the third section, we use this theory, in conjunction with a re-
137 assessment of historical source material, to propose a revised periodization of, and rather
138 more complex dynamic underlying, food regimes. As part of this new periodization, we
139 propose, *inter alia*, a Fifth, or 'Post-Neoliberal' Food Regime, and the final section explores
140 the rationale underlying this proposed, and current, regime.

141

142

143 **Problems with Friedmann and McMichael's Theorization, and Periodization of Food** 144 **Regimes**

145

146 In their 1989 paper, Friedmann and McMichael sought to explore, as a key objective, 'the role
147 of agriculture in the development of the capitalist world economy, and in the trajectory of
148 the state system' (1989, 93). A re-assessment of their paper would reasonably be expected
149 to ask, therefore, how these authors understand and define capitalism and the state, the
150 relation between capitalism and the state, and the relation between states. We undertake
151 this task below. Also fundamental to food regime dynamics, and to those of capitalism and
152 the state, we argue, are class relations. These relations do not, however, receive prominence
153 in Friedmann and McMichael's paper.

154

155 First, we address Friedmann and McMichael's treatment of capitalism. Interestingly, they
156 provide no explicit definition of this concept, but do refer to Aglietta (1979), a key figure in
157 RT. Here, however, they reference only his discussion of capital accumulation (theorized as a
158 'Regime of Accumulation' from which we assume the term '*food regime*' derives) and fail to
159 address the 'Mode of Regulation', a category of equal significance^{vii}. Shorn of the 'Mode of
160 Regulation', it is difficult to comprehend capitalism as a class-defined and contradiction-
161 ridden mode of exploitation that exists in an 'internal' relation to the modern state, the latter
162 performing vital support and legitimacy functions for capital without which it would be in
163 jeopardy (van Apeldoorn et al. 2012).

164 Second, and conjoined to the above, their conceptualization of the relation between
165 capitalism and the modern state is seriously under-theorized. This concerns their neglect of
166 the twin aspects of this relation that enable us to make sense of both entities in their
167 dialectical co-constitution: the 'separation in unity' of the institutional spheres of the
168 'economy' and 'polity', and the complementary accumulation and legitimation functions of
169 the state in relation to capital as defined by RT (Boyer and Saillard 2002). Friedmann and
170 McMichael, however, deploy a dichotomous, rather than dialectical, understanding of the
171 state-capital relation, with both entities reified and de-historicized^{viii}. Their modern state
172 seems to be nothing more than the contingent outcome of a sectoral articulation between
173 agriculture and industry. We suggest that an understanding of the state-capital relation needs
174 to go far deeper than this, however. Following Poulantzas (1978), it is more helpful to see the
175 state, given the lack of 'extra-economic' influence that individual capitals can exert, as
176 providing the *essential* institutional space for various fractions of the capitalist class, in
177 addition possibly to other classes, to come together to form longer-term strategies and
178 alliances whilst, simultaneously, the state disorganizes non-capitalist classes through various
179 means of co-optation and division. The state, also for reasons of legitimation, must,
180 additionally, be 'relatively autonomous' from the interests and demands of particular

181 fractions of capital, and even from capital 'in general'. So, as Poulantzas (1978) suggests, the
182 state represents the condensation of the balance of class forces in society. For Friedmann and
183 McMichael, by contrast, capital is a unitary entity, bereft of specific class and class fractional
184 content, and is counter-posed to a 'state', a content-less abstraction which apparently
185 represents, without mediation, the position of a generalized counter-movement. This aligns
186 with a Polanyian, indeed neoclassical, conception of the state and capital as essentialized and
187 opposed entities. McMichael's later conceptualization of the 'corporate' food regime seems
188 to be a direct outgrowth of this view, neglecting the enduring importance of divergent
189 fractions of capital in current dynamics and the pervasive significance of the territorial form,
190 and potentially imperialist character, of the state. We suggest, by contrast, that the modern
191 state is better conceptualized itself as a social relation. That is, an arena or container (the
192 state-capital nexus) (Taylor 1994; van Apeldoorn et al. 2012), within which class contestation
193 and compromise is played out, principally to secure the material and ideological reproduction
194 of the hegemonic fractions of capital, even where these may be transnational in orientation.

195 Third, Friedmann and McMichael either neglect, or deploy a deficient, class analysis,
196 especially concerning inter-class 'struggle'. From this derives serious shortcomings in their
197 presentation of state/capital dynamics involving class contestation and compromise^{ix}. In this,
198 their stance has affinities with Polanyi's avoidance of class and class contestation as causal
199 factors in political economic dynamics (Tilzey 2017). By contrast, we suggest here, in line with
200 the schools of Political Marxism (Brenner 1985; Mooers 1991; Wood 2002) and Neo-
201 Gramscian IPE (Bieler and Morton 2004), that the prime mover in the formation and
202 reproduction of food regimes is the social-property relations in the hegemonic state (in the
203 world system) and the international articulation of these relations with receptive and
204 complementary class interests in other states. This points to the pivotal importance of class,
205 class struggle, and 'hegemony' in the birth and subsequent nurturing within the state-capital
206 nexus as 'national policy', and then projection beyond the hegemon, of a specific regime of
207 accumulation and, within it, a food regime. 'National policy', stated otherwise, is the outcome
208 of coalitions within the state-capital nexus, arising in turn from class contestation and
209 compromise between hegemonic, sub-hegemonic, and oppositional interest groups.

210 Should this 'national policy' successfully augment, through expanded capital accumulation,
211 the power of the state, this state may then, through international projection of its regime of
212 accumulation, aspire to the status of hegemon in the inter-state system. This process is
213 exemplified by the emergence of the British 'free trade' food regime (1840s-1870s) as the
214 *first* international *capitalist* regime of this kind, denoted by Tilzey (2018), consequently, as
215 the 'first' or 'Liberal' Food Regime. It is cross-national class coalitions and international
216 alliances which act as conduits for the dissemination of a food regime. Such a class agential
217 process obtains even in relations between a hegemon and a subordinate state, as between
218 'core' imperial states and those of the 'periphery', for example, in which case peripheral
219 extroverted class fractions and imperial transnational class interests may fabricate
220 symbioses^x. Thus, food regimes comprise specific forms of capital accumulation, and these
221 forms comprise the favoured interests of a class fraction or coalition of class fractions within
222 the hegemonic state, interests which may then be projected politically, via *conscious* class
223 agency, into the international arena. Given that the intention is to augment the power of the
224 state-capital nexus, this may generate relations of 'combined and uneven development' with
225 other states (see next section).

226 Fourthly, Friedmann and McMichael fail to articulate a theory of agency that might conjoin
227 the categories of capital, state, and class by means of political action. Thus, while failing to
228 identify the internal relations between capital and state, and the crucial understanding of
229 both as class relations, they also fail, consequently, to grasp the role of class as a ‘bridging’
230 concept, one that encapsulates both structure and agency, or class position and positionality
231 (Potter and Tilzey 2005). This concept, as ‘structured agency’, makes it possible to identify the
232 class fractional interests that comprise capitalist social relations and directs attention to
233 strategies and understandings deployed by political agents in the defence or promotion of
234 their interests. Elsewhere, this has been termed the ‘strategic relational approach’ (Jessop
235 2005), relating structure that defines positions to social practices/discourses (positionalities)
236 of agents^{xi}.

237 We now turn to an assessment of the framing of the relations between capitalism, the state,
238 and class that appear to guide Friedmann and McMichael’s substantive depiction of specific
239 food regimes and, deriving from this, their periodization of these regimes.

240 The first major problem with Friedmann and McMichael’s substantive characterization of
241 food regimes relates to the causal dynamics they identify as underlying their so-called ‘first’
242 food regime. They assert that the USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand (one might add
243 Argentina and Uruguay), as independent settler states: 1) supplied cheap wage foods to the
244 new European working class. While they certainly provisioned Britain, by contrast Germany
245 and France, in their desire to foment articulated economies, erected protectionist barriers
246 *against* such imports (Koning 1994; Tilzey 2018); 2) ushered in a novel form of trade, ordered
247 internationally for the first time, and concurrent with a colonial relation. This is questionable,
248 since the preceding free trade era (denoted the ‘first’ or ‘Liberal’ food regime by Tilzey (2018))
249 was likewise *international* but did not, with the exception of Britain, entail colonialism. The
250 succeeding ‘Imperial’ regime (Tilzey 2018) was characterized by protectionism in Europe,
251 permitting Germany and France to industrialize. They assert, very dubiously, that this new
252 order operated on the basis of comparative advantage ‘as an apparent automatic mechanism
253 of specialization’ (Friedmann and McMichael 1989, 93). In actuality, protectionism was the
254 antithesis of comparative advantage, with the *previous* ‘Liberal’ food regime embodying this
255 latter principle (Tilzey 2018).

256 The second problem concerns their assumption of direct continuity from the late 19th century
257 system to that of the 20th century US hegemony, in which this state, through grain
258 exports/food aid, guaranteed completion of the state system in the global South. Despite the
259 truth of the latter, there is a tenuous connection between the 19th century export regime and
260 the 20th century Keynesian surplus disposal regime (Tilzey 2018). Imperialism characterized
261 US relations with the global South during the ‘Imperial’ food regime and these were inimical
262 to completion of the state system (Koning 1994). The latter project was disjunctural with the
263 ‘Imperial’ regime and arose from a singular confluence of Keynesian policies and cold war
264 politics following the Second World War.

265 The third problem concerns Friedmann and McMichael’s temporal delimitation of their
266 international regimes: ‘We organize our argument around the concept of the food regime,
267 which links international relations of food production and consumption to forms of capital
268 accumulation, broadly distinguishing periods of capitalist transformation since 1870’
269 (Friedmann and McMichael 1989, 95). This starting point appears to stem from Aglietta

270 (1979), but why 1870? It might have made more sense to start in the 1840s when the ‘Liberal’
271 food regime began (Tilzey 2018). Or, indeed, given their intellectual debt to WST, one might
272 reasonably ask why the ‘first’ food regime did not emerge some five hundred years ago (see
273 below for critique of this assertion of the *generalized* appearance of capitalism at this early
274 date). The reason appears to be that ‘it allows us to characterize late 19th century capitalism
275 as an extensive form, constructing capitalist production through the quantitative growth of
276 wage labour; and mid-20th century capitalism as an intensive form, reconstructing
277 consumption relations as part of the process of capital accumulation’ (Friedmann and
278 McMichael 1989, 95). It is contentious, however, to assert that the core economies of the
279 ‘age of empire’ (Hobsbawm 1987) were constructed around the quantitative growth of
280 labour, or absolute surplus value. As Amin (1977) demonstrates, the hallmark of the ‘Imperial’
281 regime was the emergence of *qualitative* growth, or relative surplus value^{xii}, as the foundation
282 of aut centrism and of the nation-state, Germany being exemplary (Mooers 1991; Koning
283 1994; Byres 1996).

284 Lastly, Friedmann and McMichael (1989, 95) assert, dubiously, that ‘settler agriculture was
285 the centrepiece of the formation of metropolitan nation-states’. While causally embroiled in
286 the genesis of the European state-capital nexus, it did not itself engender nation-state
287 formation. The emergence of sectorally and socially articulated development was premised,
288 rather, on the erection of tariffs *against* cheap imports and in favour of national agricultures
289 (Koning 1994; Mazoyer and Roudart 2006). Had comparative advantage held sway, as in the
290 preceding ‘Liberal’ era, aut centrism would have proven impossible. In contrast to Germany
291 and France, Britain did continue to rely on cheap imports to underwrite industrial
292 competitiveness but at the expense of its national agriculture, which continued its decline
293 (Koning 1994).

294

295 **Proposing a Revised Causal Basis for Food Regimes**

296 In defining a basis for FRT that has greater explanatory power than that offered by Friedmann
297 and McMichael in their reliance on WST and partial rendering of RT, we propose here the use
298 of ‘Political Marxism’, in alliance with neo-Gramscian International Political Economy (Cox
299 1987; Bieler 2004; Morton 2007) and a *full* rendering of RT (as specified above). The first
300 necessity is to develop an understanding of modern capitalism as opposed to ‘merchant’ or
301 ‘commercial capitalism’, terms conflated by WST. Following Marx (1981) there is a need to
302 specify modern capitalism in terms of class relations, composed of owners of the means of
303 production counter-posed to an expropriated class ‘free’ to sell its labour power, in which,
304 for the first time, power over production is exerted ‘economically’, not ‘politically’. As long as
305 means of production are owned by capitalists and denied to labourers, the ‘dull compulsion
306 of the economic’ obliges the latter to sell their labour power to the former. Modern capitalism
307 is thus a ‘*qualitatively* new phenomenon, a new mode of mobilizing social labour in the
308 transformation of nature’ (Wolf 1982, 85). This contrasts markedly with the WST tradition
309 where, following Weber and Braudel, capitalism is seen simply as an expansion of processes
310 already at work within feudalism.

311

312 If WST has no specific theory of capitalism, then, equally, it has no specific theory of the
313 modern state. This is so because the newly constituted and institutionally separated spheres

314 of the 'political' and the 'economic' are *dialectically* cognate and implied, with their very
315 'separation in unity' a consequence of the commodification of labour power and the
316 establishment of absolute property rights in the means of production. At the same time, the
317 modern state acquires a strategic 'political' role which the individual capitalist cannot fulfil.
318 The state was instrumental in effecting the process of 'primitive accumulation' which created
319 a proletariat 'free' to sell its labour power to the capitalist (Perelman 2000). Once capitalism
320 was installed, the state deployed its power further to maintain and guarantee absolute
321 property rights by the capitalist class, and to institute and support regimes of work discipline
322 required by this new mode (Wolf 1982, 100). The modern state also assumed the essential
323 role of arbitrating and managing contestation between fractions of capital (and between
324 capitalists and its labour force) and of representing their interests in the inter-national arena.

325
326 This Marxian understanding of capitalism enables us to see that this new 'mode of
327 production' emerged first, in mature form, only in England in the 18th century (Wolf 1982),
328 although its origins may be traced back to the 15th century, again *only* in England (Brenner
329 1989; Wood 2002; Teschke 2003; Lacher 2006; Dimmock 2014). Contra WST (including Arrighi
330 (1994)), capitalism was not, therefore, a Europe-wide phenomenon prior to the 19th century,
331 nor can the imperial dynamics of Portugal, Spain, and France be attributed to its logic – rather
332 these dynamics were of *mercantile* capitalism as an adjunct to the absolutist state variant of
333 feudalism (or the 'tributary mode of production' according to Wolf (1982)).

334
335 Our qualitative view, presented first in modern times by Robert Brenner (1977, 1985) and
336 pivoting around his concept of 'social-property relations', is now referred to as 'Political
337 Marxism'. Drawing inspiration from Marx's mature works, notably *Grundrisse* and *Capital*,
338 Brenner accords priority to the dynamics of class contestation in a strategic relational sense.
339 Key to understanding modern capitalism for Marx and Brenner is 'primitive accumulation'.
340 Like Marx, Brenner rejects Adam Smith's understanding of this concept, in which it is the
341 accumulated wealth from mercantile capital that is seen as pivotal in the transition to modern
342 capitalism, a view replicated in WST and described as 'neo-Smithian Marxism' by Brenner
343 (1977). By contrast, Marx and Brenner see primitive accumulation as predicated on the
344 separation of the peasantry from their means of production.

345
346 Brenner, rather than employing the term 'social relations of production', prefers that of
347 'social-property relations', principally because the former 'is sometimes taken to convey the
348 idea that the social structural framework in which production takes place is somehow
349 determined by production itself, that is, the form of cooperation or organization of the labour
350 process' (Brenner 2007, 58). Brenner sees 'disastrous consequences' for specifying social
351 system dynamics arising from the usual restrictive use of the 'social relations of production'
352 concept (as with the 'second' school of radical political economy). First, the importance of
353 property relations between surplus appropriators and surplus producers is missed; and
354 second, power relations between surplus appropriators and surplus producers that are
355 actually pivotal to specifying class dynamics are relegated to the 'political superstructure'.
356 Thus, while surplus in pre-capitalist societies cannot be appropriated other than by political
357 means, even in capitalism the 'political superstructure' of the state is actually infrastructural
358 with respect to the accumulation and legitimation needs of capital.

359

360 Brenner, therefore, does not restrict attention to inter-class relations between capitalists and
361 proletariat, for example. Intra-class contestation between capital fractions and between
362 nation-states is considered of equal significance in capitalist dynamics. The 'social-property
363 relations' formulation thus enables the traditionally 'reified' regions of the 'economic' and
364 the 'political' to be strongly re-integrated. It also enables the state to be re-configured as a
365 causally and theoretically meaningful entity in social system dynamics.

366
367 This conceptualization suggests the primacy of 'political' dynamics, or 'class struggle' around
368 the key issues of 'who owns what, who does what, who gets what, and what do they do with
369 it?' (Bernstein 2010, 22), mediated by discourse and the cultural politics of positionality,
370 framed within the social formation, or 'state', comprising a distinct constellation of social-
371 property relations and given coherence by a singular jurisdictional authority – within
372 capitalism typically the nation-state. In contrast to the 'externalist' or 'functionalist' approach
373 of WST, Political Marxism considers social formations to be co-conditioning – in other words,
374 'external' relations are mediated, refracted, and distilled out by the social-property relations
375 of each social formation to constitute an 'internal' dynamic which co-develops, with varying
376 degrees of asymmetry, with other social formations.

377
378 This conceptualization helps us to understand the co-evolution of capitalism and the modern
379 state in 17th and 18th century England. The competitive edge afforded to the British state-
380 capital nexus by first agrarian and then industrial capitalism led to the adoption, in modified
381 form, of these social-property relations by other 'core' states in Europe and North America
382 during the course of the 19th century. The constitution of capitalist food regimes was a key
383 element of this process. Sooner or later, however, the constraints on the level of surplus value
384 which could be generated within the confines of the nation-state began to be encountered,
385 and capital, still grounded in the enabling and protective structure of the state, embarked on
386 programmes of 'combined and uneven development'^{xiii}, or imperialism (Trotsky 2008). This
387 meant, and means, that capitalist growth in 'core' states occurs through 'combined and
388 uneven development' with a consequent 'periphery', the latter's development distorted to
389 the benefit of the 'core' and peripheral comprador classes. Again, contra WST, this should not
390 be understood in 'functionalist' terms according to the abstract logic of the 'world system',
391 but rather as predicated on class and class fractional agency within the context of the state-
392 capital nexus, and on power relations between the latter. Thus, 'the pressures of uneven
393 development are clearly mediated through different forms of state as nodal points of
394 nationally specific configurations of class fractions and struggles over hegemony and/or
395 passive revolution within accumulation conditions on a world scale' (Morton 2010, 229).

396
397 This discussion enables us, following van Apeldoorn et al. (2012, 474), to distil out the key
398 internal relations between capital and state which the state-capital nexus deploys to secure
399 economic growth and political stability, and which frame the form and function of food
400 regimes. These are:

- 401 1. Market creation: to engender, if necessary, re-establish, and ensure the effective
402 functioning of markets, including the preconditions for capital accumulation like
403 'primitive accumulation';
- 404 2. Market correction: to mitigate the destructive social impacts of capital accumulation
405 and, more generally, to manage the capital-labour relation, and to reproduce the
406 subordination of the labour force to capital (legitimation function);

- 407 3. Market direction: to direct and supervise capital accumulation when private capital
408 fails, or is unable, to do so, commonly referred to as 'state intervention in the
409 economy' (accumulation function);
410 4. External representation: to represent the external interests of 'domestic' capital,
411 extending from economic diplomacy to the forceful, or military, protection of business
412 interests (accumulation and legitimation function, the latter elevating the 'national
413 interest' above class and class fractional interest in the service of nationalism and
414 generating 'combined and uneven development' as a consequence).
415

416 These key relations form, then, the basis for the constitution of food regimes, as subsidiary
417 aspects of the functioning of the political economy of the state-capital nexus within the world
418 capitalist system. With the first a basic premise of capitalist social-property relations, the
419 relative importance of these relations will vary across space and time according to:

- 420 1. The class complexion of the state-capital nexus;
421 2. The 'spatial' location of the state-capital nexus (social formation) within the world
422 system, whether 'core', 'semi-periphery', or 'periphery';
423 3. The 'temporal' location of the state-capital nexus within the overall trajectory of
424 capitalism in terms of its developmental path dependency, e.g., the shift from
425 competitive to monopoly capitalism.
426

427 Capitalism, in intimate conjunction with the state, thus generates food regimes as integral
428 parts of its growth and power dynamic. This has a threefold logic which is tied up with both
429 the accumulation *and* legitimation aspects of the state-capital nexus: first, to supply food, on
430 a reasonably secure basis, to its expropriated labour force, now largely divorced from its
431 means of production, thereby hopefully securing its quiescence (relations 1 and 2 above);
432 second, to supply this as cheaply and abundantly as possible, vital in exerting downward
433 pressure on the socially average wage and thus in maximising surplus value in the production
434 of competitive commodities, and in ensuring a transfer of surplus from agriculture to nascent
435 industries (relations 3 and 4); and, third, to afford opportunities for profit-making by the
436 various class fractions of agrarian capital (relations 3 and 4). As indicated, the state-capital
437 nexus deploys all the four relations specified above to secure this logic. These relations may
438 be complementary, as in 'articulated' economies, or they may be antagonistic, as in
439 'disarticulated' economies.
440
441

442 **Proposing a Revised Periodization of Food Regimes**

443

444 With these basic, framing dynamics in mind we can propose the following, revised, typology
445 of capitalist food regimes. (It may be helpful to recall again, for purposes of comparison,
446 Friedmann and McMichael's own schema of three global food regimes: the First (1870s-
447 1930s); the Second (1950s-1970s); and the Third (from 1980s-present), the latter described
448 as the 'corporate food regime' by McMichael (2013) and as the 'corporate-environmental
449 regime' by Friedmann (2005)):

- 450 1. **The First *National* Capitalist Food Regime, 1750-1846** – the 'First' Agricultural
451 Revolution in England and Scotland from 1750. Whereas, before 1750, increases in
452 production and productivity had come up against the lack of a suitable consumer

453 market, because a 'surplus' population the new proletariat had been unable to secure
454 consistent employment in industry, the progressive boost lent to industrial production
455 by the slavery 'subsidy' from the American colonies as the century matured (an
456 example of 'combined and uneven development'), translated into increased
457 employment and an expanded market. The opportunities for profit-making that
458 followed stimulated changes in agricultural yields and productivity. The capitalist
459 structure of agricultural production and competitive rental agreements with yeoman
460 tenants enforced high yields and productivity to meet this new demand. Landlords
461 under these conditions could see clear opportunities for rent increases, and the age
462 of agricultural 'improvement' that accompanied this was ushered in after 1750.
463 Agricultural prices remained relatively buoyant as urban population and consumption,
464 with 'real subsumption' of labour, proceeded apace. Sustained war with France from
465 1793 saw wheat prices skyrocket, and they remained high until the repeal of the Corn
466 Laws in 1846. Thus, once the industrial revolution had been 'pump-primed' by the
467 confluence of a growing wage-dependent proletariat and 'artificially' cheap calories
468 and raw materials for manufacture, a virtuous articulation could be established
469 between increased yields in agriculture, increased domestic consumption, and
470 increased profits. This halcyon period for capitalist agriculture in Britain, comprising
471 the age of 'improvement' or the 'first' agricultural revolution (Overton 1996), was to
472 continue until the middle of the nineteenth century with the repeal of the Corn Laws
473 and the introduction of free trade;

474 **2. The First *International*, or 'Liberal', Food Regime 1846-1870.** The British 'Liberal' or
475 'Free Trade' Food Regime that arose during the middle of the nineteenth century may
476 be said to represent the first capitalist food regime founded on the integration of
477 'core' states (notably Germany and France) as, for the first time, predominantly
478 capitalist economies. This arose because, in Britain, the cost of cereals, the main item
479 in the working-class diet, became too high due to protectionism and due to the
480 inability of the 'organic' four-course rotation system to sustain output increases
481 (Overton 1996). This was leading to a squeeze on profits and, consequently, to
482 pressure by industrial capitalists to look for cheaper supplies. These pressures could
483 be eased by 'spatio-temporal' fixes in the form of bilateral trade agreements with
484 complementary class fractional interests overseas, and, in so doing, drawing on a
485 'frontier' of extraction where labour and/or the conditions of production were
486 cheaper. Britain thus began to invoke the principle of 'comparative advantage',
487 whereby wage foods should be sourced from wherever they could be produced most
488 'cheaply' (in this case mainland Europe and, later, North America), supplying in turn a
489 competitive boost to Britain's preeminent industrial status.

490 **3. The Second *International*, or 'Imperial', Food Regime 1870-1930.** Increasingly cheap
491 imports, based on the 'soil subsidy' through the exploitation of previously
492 uncultivated soils in the USA particularly, began to compromise the profits of the
493 Prussian Junkers, the most powerful class in Germany, as a result of loss of grain sales
494 to Britain. At the same time, these cheap food imports undermined agricultural
495 production more generally in Europe, threatening considerable social unrest. At the
496 same time, German industrialists were constrained in their ability to accumulate as a
497 result of continuing competition from Britain. Thus, there developed a new confluence
498 of interest between the agricultural and industrial class fractions of German capital.
499 Protectionist, rather than free trade, policies began to be favoured, and the German

500 state was, at the same time (from 1871), consolidated. These developments coincided
501 with an over-accumulation crisis, a cyclical tendency that capital could overcome in
502 two possible ways: first, by moving away from an extensive and quantitative mode of
503 growth (absolute surplus value) towards an intensive or qualitative (relative surplus
504 value) one, which implied that the working classes needed to be integrated
505 increasingly in a virtuous circle of enlarged production and expanded consumption.
506 This imbricated nicely with sectoral articulation and new nationhood (social
507 articulation), so that both accumulation and legitimation needs could be satisfied in
508 the states of the core. The second means of overcoming over-accumulation was by
509 supplementing and underwriting qualitative growth through the importation of super-
510 cheap primary commodities from the periphery (primary means) and by securing
511 captive markets in those regions (secondary means). Under conditions of rival, rather
512 than complementary capitalisms, these means were secured through imperialism.
513 Competitive, protectionist, and nationalistic economies, bolstered by racialized
514 ideologies of 'social imperialism', generated an underlying dynamic of mutual
515 aggression that was to erupt eventually in the First World War. In the aftermath
516 Germany was effectively destroyed, for a while, as a competitor capitalist nation, and
517 caused a temporary trend, following the war, away from aut centrism and towards
518 'free trade' policies until over-accumulation struck again with a vengeance towards
519 the end of the 1920s, with the Great Depression as the outcome. This stimulated a
520 return to aut centrism and protectionism during the 1930s.

521 **4. The Third International, or 'Political Productivist', Food Regime 1930-1980.** The need
522 to build 'articulated' economies from the 1930s and, particularly, in the post-Second
523 World War era in the face of the communist 'threat', to defuse socialist movements
524 whilst securing capital accumulation, and to address agricultural commodity
525 oversupply in the USA, led to intensified 'state-centred' accumulation of 'political
526 productivism' or Fordism, classically in the 'core' states. Wage increases were
527 balanced by productivity increases through the realization of relative surplus value,
528 while increased output was absorbed by increased consumption. These developments
529 were mirrored in the agri-food sector, where massive increases productivity and
530 absolute increases in yields, produced 'cheap' wage foods from within the nation for
531 the industrial proletariat. Labour within agriculture was simultaneously shed, but
532 could be absorbed without contradiction by the industrial sector. Restructuring was
533 undertaken deliberately to favour the capitalist family farm, however, with the state
534 engineering a 'farmer road' to capitalism. Peasant agriculture (that is, self-subsistent
535 farming) largely disappeared from Western Europe and North America. Productivism
536 led, over time, to over-supply (over-production) of agri-food commodities, leading to
537 downward pressure on prices, an increased subsidy burden in what was a state-
538 supported system, and, thereby, to increased pressure to export surpluses, principally
539 to the global South. At the same time, productivism's ecological contradictions led to
540 increasing calls for constraints on production and the diversion of funds to support
541 agri-environmental schemes and wider rural diversification measures. The
542 concentration of capital in the agri-food sector and beyond led to calls for increasing
543 liberalization of trade and trans-nationalization of production, so that profitability
544 could be restored through the exploitation of cheaper sources of supply in the global
545 South. However, this advocacy of globalization and reduction in subsidy in the global
546 North by transnational capital fractions was contested by neo-mercantilist and social

547 welfare constituencies, leading to the retention of certain 'market constraining'
548 features in the core states to mitigate the impacts of full liberalization. By contrast,
549 the global South was 'opened up' following the subsidized destruction of its staple
550 food producers by means of dumping. This engendered pressure for neoliberalization,
551 instantiated in the founding of the new World Trade Organization (WTO) as the
552 outcome of the Uruguay Round of GATT negotiations.

553 5. **The Fourth International, or 'Neoliberal', Food Regime 1980-2010.** Reciprocal
554 relations between imperial transnational capital and the agro-exporting oligarchy in
555 the periphery led to the exploitation of ever larger areas in the latter for export of
556 agricultural commodities to the North. The North, however, refused itself to embrace
557 fully 'free market' norms, retaining, primarily for reasons of political legitimacy,
558 generous, although increasingly 'decoupled', supports for its farmers (see Tilzey 2006,
559 2018). This accorded with the continuing imperial role of the North vis-à-vis the South,
560 the latter constrained to adopt in full the norms of neoliberalism. Simultaneously,
561 there was increased migration of industrial manufacturing from the North to the
562 South, subsidized by super-exploitation of labour and the 'functional dualism' of semi-
563 proletarianization. This, together with the resurgence of extractivism, led to the
564 further erosion of the self-subsistent peasantry which became formally subsumed, as
565 a semi-proletariat, within capitalist relations of production. This peasantry did,
566 however, retain crucial links to land, but this land was generally insufficient to secure
567 full 'autonomy' from capitalism. In this way, continuing poverty, ecological
568 degradation, and loss of productive land to capital led to an upwelling of agrarian-
569 based, and anti-neoliberal, protest during the 1990s and early 2000s, particularly in
570 Latin America. Food sovereignty claims within both a national developmentalist and a
571 post-developmental discourse began to be articulated.

572 6. **The Fifth International, or 'Post-Neoliberal', Food Regime.** As the new millennium
573 progressed, neoliberalism began to encounter increasing contradiction: in terms of
574 capital accumulation, whereby greatly increased wealth disparities generated a crisis
575 of commodity under-consumption (over-accumulation) (the financial crisis of 2007
576 was symptomatic of this trend); in terms, relatedly, of greatly increased precarity for
577 the global majority, located particularly in the global South, and induced by
578 heightened processes of primitive accumulation and accumulation by dispossession,
579 leading to inability of the precariat to access even basic necessities (the 2008 global
580 food crisis was symptomatic of this trend); and in terms of a progressive deterioration
581 in the biophysical fabric of the planet and its ability to continue to supply resources
582 to, and absorb waste from, an ever more profligate capitalism. In order to manage
583 and mitigate (but not resolve) these contradictions, states re-emerged 'from the
584 shadows' to take again more interventionist roles in securing accumulation and
585 legitimation functions for capital. These roles are manifested in a number of different
586 ways: through greater market intervention, or neo-mercantilism, to secure food and
587 energy supplies both domestically and overseas (the latter in part through 'land-
588 grabbing'); through the adoption of neo-developmental and redistributive policies to
589 alleviate poverty, as in the 'pink tide' states of Latin America; and through efforts by
590 right-wing governments to legitimate and obscure the impacts of capital accumulation
591 through authoritarian populism (Trumpism being an exemplar) and neo-imperialism.
592 These developments suggest the fragmentation of neoliberal hegemony, if not as yet

593 its supersession, and a return to heightened inter-state competition and antagonism
594 reminiscent of the 'Imperial' Food Regime.
595

596 The justification for, and detailed characterization of, the first four of the above food regimes
597 is presented in ... (reference withheld for peer review purposes). It is the proposed fifth
598 regime that we will focus on in the remainder of this paper. This is both because it exemplifies
599 well the way in which our revised theoretical base enables us to define anew food regimes,
600 arising from our dialectical understanding of capital, state, and class, and the dynamics of
601 'combined and uneven development'; and because the existence of a 'post-neoliberal' food
602 regime has not been seriously or systematically broached hitherto (although see Belesky and
603 Lawrence (2018) for tentative moves in this direction). Indeed, some still dispute the
604 existence of a truly 'neoliberal' food regime (see, for example, Pritchard 2009) precisely
605 because of the retention of mercantilist and protectionist elements in agricultural policy by
606 the global North, which Pritchard interprets as a 'hangover' from the previous regime. But, as
607 suggested above, such asymmetrical retention of protections and supports by the global
608 North vis-à-vis the global South is something to be expected and understood if we see
609 unmitigated neoliberalism to be a manifestation of neo-imperialism in the latter, and
610 mitigated, or 'embedded', neoliberalism to be a feature of the former, the imperium (see
611 Tilzey 2006, 2016). Below we will examine the key features and dynamics of the 'Post-
612 Neoliberal' Food Regime, these manifest most particularly in: a) the appearance of 'land-
613 grabbing' and neo-extractivism in the peripheries; b) the emergence of China, particularly, as
614 a sub-imperium; and c) the rise of the Latin American 'pink tide' states as a response to
615 neoliberalism, and within the favourable international conjuncture defined by China's
616 ascendance.

617

618 **The 'Post-Neoliberal' Food Regime: Land-Grabbing and Neo-extractivism, the emergence of** 619 **China as a sub-imperium, and the dynamics of the 'pink tide' states in Latin America**

620 We suggested above that neoliberal hegemony is now fragmenting, if not as yet subject to
621 complete supersession, and we are in a conjuncture characterized by a return to heightened
622 inter-state competition and antagonism reminiscent of the 'Imperial' Food Regime. We seem,
623 therefore, to be currently in the throes of an immanent, epochal, crisis of neoliberalism, if
624 not yet of capitalism in general. Imperial monopoly-finance capital has escalated its
625 accumulation of land and natural resources in the peripheries. Money alone, however, is
626 becoming no longer adequate to ensure continuing, and cheap, supply of food and energy to
627 these consumption heartlands of neoliberalism. The imperative of the imperium, together
628 and in competition with the 'BRICS' states, to secure such supply is reflected in the tendential
629 turn to 'neo-productivism' at home, and to 'land-grabbing' in the periphery, with increasing
630 recourse to overt state/imperial intervention to realize this end. Thus, while it appeared, as
631 recently as 2006, that the neoliberal food regime had resolved the agrarian question in its
632 favour through the global allocation of 'comparative advantages' in the quest for enhanced
633 rates of profit (Akram-Lodhi and Kay 2009) and the 'secure' supply of food according to
634 market norms, the subsequent global food crisis has revealed the spectre of food insecurity
635 stalking even the imperium and the inadequacy of money alone to assure the continuing flow

636 of cheap and abundant food. Land-grabbing, particularly, reveals the 'invisible hand' of
637 neoliberal market rules to be little more than a thin ideological veil concealing the 'visible
638 boot' of core-periphery class exploitative relations (Araghi 2009), as the immanent
639 dependence of transnational capital upon state imperial power (in alliance with peripheral
640 'extroverted' classes) to secure surplus value from the extractive frontier is realized as 'agro-
641 security mercantilism' (see McMichael 2010, 2013. McMichael does not seem to have
642 absorbed the implications of this for his 'corporate' food regime, however.). We might well
643 refer to this changed relation as 'formal imperialism' in all but name.

644 Thus, since 2007, an estimated 220 million hectares has been acquired by foreign investors in
645 the global South (Borras et al. 2010; Veltmeyer 2017). This global land grab has been
646 stimulated in part by crises in food and oil markets since 2007, and in part by the opportunity
647 to make super-profits through 'accumulation by dispossession', by extracting and exporting
648 primary commodities. Additionally, the financialization of these markets has provided
649 lucrative new investment opportunities for sovereign wealth funds, hedge funds, and global
650 agri-business (Veltmeyer 2017). But, importantly, these dynamics exhibit trends away from
651 pure neoliberalism and a modest, if significant, shift in the centre of gravity of global power
652 towards the sub-imperium. Thus, while imperial agencies, both corporations and
653 governments, dominate as investors and 'land grabbers', the BRICS states and food-insecure
654 Middle Eastern oil states in certain regional contexts, are also active competitors. China and
655 Malaysia, for example, dominate investments in land acquisition in Asia, South Africa exhibits
656 potential dominance in Africa, while China and Brazil are emerging as major sub-imperial
657 powers in Latin America within the context of neo-extractivism (see below). The rationale
658 behind land grabbing for these states is not principally the accumulation of capital in a direct
659 sense, but rather the satisfaction of domestic food and energy security, and therefore
660 legitimacy, needs, thereby bypassing unreliable and expensive international food/energy
661 markets.

662 The Northern imperium, attempting to uphold the 'new imperialism' (Harvey 2002) of
663 neoliberalism in the global South, faces three political challenges here. The first two represent
664 sub-hegemonic class challenges, within the semi-peripheral and peripheral state-capital
665 nexus, to the hegemony of neoliberalism: firstly, the national sovereignty regime established
666 in the twentieth century, although attenuated, is nonetheless still exercised even by the small
667 states, often in the form of neo-developmentalism, supported by means of neo-extractivism
668 (Veltmeyer and Petras 2014); secondly, the emerging semi-peripheries (the sub-imperium),
669 the unintended consequence of globalization, have created new spaces and opportunities for
670 manoeuvre by peripheral states, notably the 'pink tide' states of Latin America. Monopolistic
671 firms are springing up in the sub-imperium, notably the BRICS states (China, India, Brazil,
672 South Africa) and scrambling themselves for natural resources, land, and food supplies. These
673 often maintain a higher commitment to the sovereignty regime and to national development,
674 as is the case with China particularly, than the global Northern imperium. The third challenge
675 arises from counter-hegemonic groups (middle and lower peasantries, semi-proletarians,
676 indigenous groups particularly) propounding a post-capitalist way of 'good living' akin to eco-
677 socialism (Lowy 2013).

678 The first form of 'sub-hegemonic', peripheral, resistance to neoliberalism derives in important
679 respects from 'internal' state-level dynamics that can be understood only from the class

680 analytical and state-capital nexus perspective invoked in this paper. This has been facilitated,
681 but not caused, 'externally' by the rise of the sub-imperium, notably China. Neither of these
682 phenomena can be understood from a perspective of a monolithic or fully trans-nationalised
683 capitalism such as advocated by Robinson (2017) or McMichael (2013) (see Tilzey 2016).
684 China, in particular, and representing the second form of 'sub-hegemonic', or semi-peripheral
685 resistance to neoliberalism, has deployed neoliberal globalization as a strategic means of
686 strengthening the industrial and military infrastructure of the state as a counterweight to the
687 northern imperium, particularly the USA. China's emergence as a key site of capital
688 accumulation has, as noted, opened up a space for other states in the global South to re-
689 assert more nationally-based capitalist development or, at least, for national class fractions
690 of capital to selectively displace global Northern dominance. This has coincided with
691 neoliberalism's widespread loss of legitimacy in the global South, and in Latin America
692 particularly. The boom in primary commodity prices stimulated by China's growth has
693 enabled sub-hegemonic fractions of national capital to ally with non-capitalist class (counter-
694 hegemonic) forces to install a wave of populist, centre-left ('pink tide') regimes in Latin
695 America (Spronk and Webber 2015). Here, therefore, there is an asymmetrical symbiosis
696 between the sub-imperium, supporting national development through neo-mercantilism, and
697 the 'pink tide' states of the periphery, seeking to pursue redistributive national-popular
698 programmes on the proceeds of neo-extractivism.

699 China itself faces the ineluctable contradictions of capitalism, however. With the rural semi-
700 proletariat no longer subsidizing the cost of industrial labour due the process of progressive
701 full proletarianization (see Tilzey 2018), wage demands have been increasing, and China faces
702 the prospect of losing its 'comparative advantage' in low labour power costs. This would
703 potentially entail the migration of industry overseas to still cheaper areas of production such
704 as Vietnam and Bangladesh, the suppression of wage demands, or the increased replacement
705 of labour through mechanization. China thus confronts the 'political' contradiction of
706 attempting to sustain high rates of growth in the face of rising labour costs, due to increasing
707 full proletarianization of its labour force, and in the face of stagnating global demand, due to
708 over-production/under-consumption crisis (see Tilzey 2018). Meanwhile, it attempts to
709 maintain downward pressure on costs of production through the increasing import of energy,
710 minerals, and indeed food, as 'cheaps' (Moore 2015), from overseas, undertaken by means
711 of extractivism and 'land-grabbing' as a form of neo-mercantilism. Looming scarcity of
712 'cheaps' has stimulated China to seek access and control of petroleum, mineral, and agri-food
713 resources on a global scale, bringing it, of course, into increasing competition with the other
714 major centres of manufacturing and consumption, principally the states of the imperium.
715 Soya production has been prominent in Chinese stimulated agro-extractivism in Latin
716 America, with Bolivia playing an important role among the 'pink tide' states (McKay 2017).
717 Through increasing political resistance in the zones of extractivism, through the inevitable
718 secular depletion of resources, and through the unavoidable need to address unsustainable
719 levels of pollution at home, rising costs will also constitute an 'ecological' contradiction for
720 Chinese capital accumulation.

721 These dynamics we can understand through our revised causal basis for defining food
722 regimes, these comprising a sub-set of politico-economic relations within and between
723 different state-capital nexus. These are the key relations between capital and state which the
724 state-capital nexus deploys to secure economic growth and political stability, and which

725 frame the form and function of food regimes. In the case of China these are principally and in
726 order of priority:

- 727 1. Market direction: to direct and supervise capital accumulation when private capital
728 fails, or is unable, to do so, commonly referred to as 'state intervention in the
729 economy' (accumulation function). This is deployed in the service of 'national
730 development';
- 731 2. External representation: to represent the external interests of 'domestic' capital,
732 extending from economic diplomacy to the forceful, or military, protection of business
733 interests (accumulation and legitimation function, the latter elevating the 'national
734 interest' above class and class fractional interest in the service of nationalism). This
735 takes the form of neo-mercantilism (incorporating 'land-grabbing' and agro-
736 extractivism), when accumulation demands grow beyond the capacity of the national
737 territory to supply primary commodities in quantity and cheapness sufficient to secure
738 continued competitive accumulation and the quiescence of the workforce;
- 739 3. Market correction: to mitigate the destructive social and ecological impacts of capital
740 accumulation and, more generally, to manage the capital-labour relation, and to
741 reproduce the subordination of the labour force to capital (legitimation function).

742 In the case of the 'pink tide' states, these are principally, and in order of priority:

- 743 1. Market correction: to mitigate the destructive social impacts of capital accumulation
744 and, more generally, to manage the capital-labour relation, and to reproduce the
745 subordination of the labour force to capital (legitimation function). This assumes the
746 form of social support and welfarism, through which subaltern classes may purchase
747 food at reasonable cost. Such food is increasingly imported, however, although
748 Ecuador has paid some attention to expanding the production of traditional food
749 staples by the small farm commercial sector (upper peasantry);
- 750 2. Market direction: to direct and supervise capital accumulation when private capital
751 fails, or is unable, to do so, commonly referred to as 'state intervention in the
752 economy' (accumulation function). This is deployed in the service of 'national
753 development', largely in the form of the state syphoning off an increased share of
754 extractivism's proceeds via ground rent. However, little in the way of 'national
755 capitalism' has eventuated, with most funds being directed to infrastructure
756 construction as employment generation schemes. There has been little attempt to
757 improve the national production of food staples (other than Ecuador above) and the
758 primary focus remains upon agro-extractivism within the sector.

759 Here, populism, as a national-popular programme of development, pursues a form of
760 redistributive capitalism, focusing on the accumulation needs of its core sub-hegemonic class
761 constituency, while using the proceeds of neo-extractivism (generated largely by the agrarian
762 oligarchy and transnational capital) to placate counter-hegemonic classes through welfarism.
763 This enables the structural bases of inequality and poverty to be temporarily by-passed or
764 mitigated, but only at the cost of deepening the political and ecological contradictions of
765 extractive capitalism. As these contradictions deepen, exacerbated by 'jobless' growth and
766 high dependency on external markets, so does social unrest grow commensurately. The
767 response of the ruling bloc in the 'pink tide' states is a turn to increasing authoritarianism to

768 push through its programme of accelerated commodification and destruction of the
769 biophysical foundations for sustainable living (*buen vivir*) in the name of short-lived growth
770 and consumerism. Under these conditions, a de-legitimation of 'left' populism threatens, and
771 a resurgent right, 'flying the flag of nationalism' (Malamud 2017) is poised to take over the
772 baton of authoritarian populism (Herrera 2017). As 'left' populism moves to the right and the
773 right itself invokes national populism, it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish the two
774 variants of authoritarian populism, both premised on a programme of neo-extractivism.

775 These profound and deepening contradictions, both 'political' and 'ecological', of the 'Post-
776 Neoliberal' food regime across the inter-related dynamics of imperium, sub-imperium, and
777 periphery, imply that it is inherently unstable. While all capitalist food regimes are unstable,
778 achieving at best only provisional equilibrium, the present regime may prove
779 unprecedentedly so. Indeed, this regime may mark the endgame of capitalism in general, as
780 it encounters an epochal crisis defined by spiralling political and ecological turmoil. We may
781 speculate, perhaps hoping against hope, that the 'capitalogenic' apocalypse which threatens
782 to engulf our planet over the next century may foment an unprecedented resurgence of the
783 third anti-imperial challenge identified earlier, arising from counter-hegemonic groups
784 propounding a post-capitalist way of 'good living', ushering in a non-capitalist food regime as
785 'radical' food sovereignty (see Tilzey 2017, 2018).

786

787 **Conclusion**

788 This paper has sought to undertake a reassessment and critique of Friedmann and
789 McMichael's seminal 1989 paper. Our critique has sought both to uphold the tradition of
790 radical political economy that informed Friedmann and McMichael's paper, and the value of
791 the concept of the food regime itself. Our critique, therefore, has taken place from within
792 that tradition. That tradition is a broad church, however, and there is much controversy within
793 it. Friedmann and McMichael's work exhibits the clear influence of the Braudel-Wallerstein-
794 Arrighi line of thinking, complemented by that of Polanyi, together with, detrimentally, only
795 a partial incorporation of RT. We have suggested that the influence of WST and the failure to
796 embrace RT in plenary, together with the neglect of a rich vein of non-reductive Marxian
797 theory in the form of 'Political Marxism' and neo-Gramscian thinking, have been both
798 pervasive and detrimental to Friedmann and McMichael's formulation of FRT in terms of their
799 understanding of capitalism, the state, and class dynamics, with clear adverse implications for
800 the way in which they conceive causality underlying food regimes and the periodization of
801 those food regimes. Indeed, we have suggested that this limited incorporation of RT and the
802 neglect of more agential and 'political' currents in Marxian theory, were significant factors in
803 the 'turn' to post-structural approaches in critical rural geography and sociology in the 1990s.

804 Consequently, we have attempted remedy these asserted deficiencies in Friedmann and
805 McMichael's presentation of FRT, by delineating a revised causal basis for understanding
806 capitalist food regimes and their dynamics on the basis of a novel fusion of Political Marxism,
807 neo-Gramscian IPE, RT, and Poulantzian state-capital theory. This body of thought throws a
808 significantly different light on the categories of, and relations between, capital, state, class,
809 structure and agency than the WST and an accumulation-biased RT deployed by Friedmann

810 and McMichael. It has also enabled us, on this different causal basis, to present a revised and
811 more comprehensive periodization of capitalist food regimes, extending from the birth of the
812 first capital-state nexus in England in the late eighteenth century through to the current re-
813 emergence of overt state management of, and inter-state competition around, flows of food
814 and resources in what we have chosen to call the 'Post-Neoliberal' regime.

815

ⁱ McMichael (2013) prefers the term 'Food Regime Analysis'.

ⁱⁱ Although FRT owed an equal or greater debt to World Systems Theory.

ⁱⁱⁱ These assigning each region of the world economy to a specific zone: core, periphery, or semi-periphery. Similarly, each zone was assigned a specific form of labour control which corresponded to the specific form of economic activity in which the particular region had come to specialize. Thus, class structure is determined primarily by the form of economic activity in which the specific region specializes and the mode of labour control which 'corresponds' to that form of production. In turn, political forms or states arise out of the needs of the dominant classes in the three zones.

^{iv} 'Class' is deployed here in a non-reductive sense whereby power relations and exploitation may be expressed and take place through class, ethnic, racial, gender, religious, etc. categories. It is also to recognize that 'objective' class position may not translate into 'subjective' class positionality, and that the latter can only be understood through the ways that exploitation and discrimination are *actually* experienced and understood by actors, as expressed in terms of 'cultural politics'. Such a non-reductive understanding of class follows in the political and cultural traditions of Marxian thinking exemplified by, for example, Gramsci and E.P. Thompson.

^v At risk of anticipating our argument, we will suggest that the nature and balance of class interest within, and at the level of, the state appear to be vital determinants of the character of food regimes. The deployment of the concept of 'class' here seeks to capture the structural character of interests in society and their reproduction through agency. Class, as 'structured agency', is thus operational at all spatial scales, vitiating the dichotomy between supposedly 'behaviourally' grounded explanation at local level, and those putatively grounded in 'structure' at higher and wider scalar levels (see Potter and Tilzey 2005, Tilzey and Potter 2008 for further discussion).

^{vi} Constraints of space forbid discussion here of the ecological dimension of food regimes, but this important dimension is addressed by the author at length elsewhere (reference withheld for peer review purposes).

^{vii} McMichael (2013, 11) makes reference to the 'mode of regulation' as expressing a policy environment conducive to an 'accumulation regime' and its normalization, but the full implications of this concept in terms of class, state, capital relations and dynamics are never really explored.

^{viii} Thus, while they do suggest that 'it is possible to see a mutual conditioning of the state system and capital' (Friedmann and McMichael 1989, 112) this is clearly conceptualized as an external relation, as is indicated by the following: 'In both movements agriculture became incorporated within accumulation itself, and states and national economies became increasingly subordinated to capital. We conclude that the growing power of capital to organize and re-organize agriculture undercuts state policies directing agriculture to national ends, such as food security, articulated development, and the preservation of rural/peasant communities' (Friedmann and McMichael 1989, 95).

^{ix} Friedmann (2005) later takes her development of food regime theory a certain way in this direction through her notion of 'implicit rules' governing each regime, but this, in our view, is never systematically delineated.

^x There may, of course, not be a confluence of interest between dominant class fractions in different states, in which case the would-be hegemon will be resisted, and divergent food regimes may then run concurrently, as in the case of the 'Imperial Food Regime' as defined by Tilzey (2018).

^{xi} It is unfortunate that the twentieth anniversary commemoration of the 1989 paper in *Agriculture and Human Values* (2009) failed to mention the important work of Potter and Tilzey (2005). In our view, this 'retrospective' did not really advance the discussion of food regimes significantly, and certainly brought no resolution to the global/local/structure/agency issue. Friedmann unsystematically brings into dialogue, but does not resolve, debates between FRT and 'post-structural' approaches such as Actor-Network Theory, her 'synthesis' comprising little more than eclecticism. McMichael repeats the well-worn theoretical categories delineated in 1989. Campbell and Dixon suggest, correctly, that Friedmann and McMichael, through reference to RT, 'held open the latent potential to create a non-linear narrative of capitalist food history and politics' (2009, 263).

But, we argue, this is a potential that remains *latent* in Friedmann and McMichael's work because of the failure properly to ground a mode of regulation as a *legitimation* device, to ground 'history and politics' in 'class struggle' (conjoining 'structure' and 'agency'), and, therefore to *theorize* contingency as, for example, 'structured agency'. By contrast, the work of Potter and Tilzey did achieve precisely this, in our view. Incidentally, the paper by Campbell in this commemorative issue proposes, questionably, that mainstream 'productivism' and more locally/ecologically-based 'post-productivism' be treated as discrete 'food regimes'. Again, however, reference to the work of Potter and Tilzey might have been of some help here, since they suggest that 'post-productivism' operates essentially as 'flanking', legitimation device (as part of a mode of regulation) ancillary and subordinate to an emergent 'market productivism' (see Potter and Tilzey 2005; Tilzey 2006; Tilzey and Potter 2007, 2008).

^{xii} Absolute surplus value refers to an extension of the working day, or intensification of labour, essentially without the introduction of labour-saving machinery; relative surplus value refers to an increase in labour productivity due to the introduction of labour-saving machinery, thus potentially reducing the length of the working day.

^{xiii} The term is deliberately reversed here because it is the combination of a core with a super-exploited periphery that generates uneven development.

References

Aglietta, M. (1979) *A theory of capitalist regulation: the US experience* (London: Verso)

Amin, S. (1974) *Accumulation on a world scale* (New York: Monthly Review Press)

Amin, S (1977) *Imperialism and unequal development* (New York: Monthly Review Press)

Araghi, F. (2003) Food regimes and the production of value: some methodological issues. *Journal of Peasant Studies* 30 (2) pp. 337-368

Arrighi, G. (1994) *The long twentieth century: money, power, and the origins of our times* (London: Verso)

Belesky, P. and G. Lawrence (2018) Chinese state capitalism and neomercantilism in the contemporary food regime: contradictions, continuity and change *Journal of Peasant Studies* doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2018.1450242

Bernstein, H. (2010) *The class dynamics of agrarian change* (Halifax/Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing)

Bieler, A. and A.D. Morton (2004) A critical theory route to hegemony, world order and historical change: neo-Gramscian perspectives in international relations. *Capital and Class* 82 pp. 85-113

Boyer, R. and Y. Saillard (2002) *Regulation Theory: The State of the Art* (London: Routledge)

Brenner, R. (1977) The origins of capitalist development: a critique of neo-Smithian Marxism. *New Left Review* 104: 25-93

Brenner, R. (1985) The agrarian roots of European capitalism. T.H. Aston and C.H.E. Philpin pp. 213-328 *The Brenner debate: agrarian class structure and economic development in pre-industrial Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

Brenner, R. (1989) Bourgeois revolution and the transition to capitalism. A. Beier, D. Cannadine, and J. Rosenheim pp. 271-304 *The first modern society: essays in English history in honour of Lawrence Stone* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

Brenner, R. (2007) Property and progress: where Adam Smith went wrong. C. Wickham 49-111 *Marxist history writing for the twenty-first century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press)

Byres, T.J. (1996) *Capitalism from above and capitalism from below: an essay in comparative political economy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan)

Campbell, H. (2009) Breaking new ground in food regime theory: corporate environmentalism, ecological feedbacks, and the 'food from somewhere' regime? *Agriculture and Human Values* 26 pp. 309-319

Campbell, H. and J. Dixon (2009) Introduction to the special symposium: reflecting on twenty years of the food regimes approach in agri-food studies. *Agriculture and Human Values* 26 pp. 261-265

Cox, R. (1987) *Production, power, and world order: social forces in the making of history* (New York: Columbia University Press)

De Janvry, A. (1981) *The agrarian question and reformism in Latin America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press)

Dimmock, S. (2014) *The origin of capitalism in England 1400-1600* (Chicago: Haymarket Books)

Friedmann, H. (1993) The Political Economy of Food: A Global Crisis. *New Left Review* 197 pp. 29-57.

Friedmann, H. (2005) From colonialism to green capitalism: social movements and the emergence of food regimes. *Research in Rural Sociology and Development* 11 pp. 227-264

Friedmann, H. (2009) Discussion: Moving Food Regimes Forward: Reflections on Symposium Essays. *Agriculture and Human Values* 26 pp. 335-344

Friedmann, H. and P. McMichael (1989) Agriculture and the state system: the rise and decline of national agricultures. *Sociologia Ruralis* 29 (2) pp. 93-117

Gramsci, A. (1971) *Selections from the prison notebooks* (New York: International Publishers)

Hobsbawm, E. (1987) *The age of empire, 1875-1914* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson)

Holt-Gimenez, E. and A. Shattuck (2011) Food crises, food regimes and food movements: rumblings of reform or tides of transformation? *Journal of Peasant Studies* 38 pp. 109-144

Jessop, B. (2005) Critical realism and the strategic-relational approach. *New Formations* 56 pp. 40-53

Jessop, B. (2016) *The state: past, present, future* (Cambridge: Polity Press)

Koning, N. (1994) *The failure of agrarian capitalism: agrarian politics in the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands, and the USA 1846-1919* (London: Routledge)

Lacher, H. (2006) *Beyond globalization: capitalism, territoriality, and the international relations of modernity* (London: Routledge)

Lowy, M. (2015) *Ecosocialism: a radical alternative to capitalist catastrophe* (Chicago: Haymarket Books)

Marx, K. (1981) *Capital* (London: Penguin)

Mazoyer, M. and L. Roudart (2006) *A history of world agriculture from the Neolithic to the current crisis* (London: Earthscan)

McMichael, P. (2001) Revisiting the question of the transnational state: a comment on William Robinson's 'Social Theory of Globalization'. *Theory and Society* 30 (2) pp. 201-209

McMichael, P. (2005) Global Development and the Corporate Food Regime. F. H. Buttel and P. McMichael, 265–300. *New Directions in the Sociology of Global Development* (Amsterdam: Elsevier)

McMichael, P. (2009a) A food regime analysis of the 'world food crisis'. *Agriculture and Human Values* 26 pp. 281-295

McMichael, P. (2009b) A food regime genealogy. *Journal of Peasant Studies* 36 (1) pp. 139-169

McMichael, P. (2013) *Food regimes and agrarian questions* (Halifax/Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing)

McMichael, P. (2016) Commentary: food regime for thought. *Journal of Peasant Studies* 43 (3) pp. 648-670

Mooers, C. (1991) *The making of bourgeois Europe: Absolutism, revolution, and the rise of capitalism in England, France, and Germany* (London: Verso)

Morton, A.D. (2007) *Unravelling Gramsci: hegemony and passive revolution in the global economy* (London: Pluto)

Morton, A.D. (2010) *Revolution and the state in modern Mexico: the political economy of uneven development* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield)

Overton, M. (1996) *The Agricultural Revolution in England 1550-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

Perelman, M. (2000) *The Invention of Capitalism: classical political economy and the secret history of primitive accumulation* (Durham: Duke University Press)

Polanyi, K. (1957) *The great transformation: the political and economic origins of our time* (Boston: Beacon)

Potter, C. and M. Tilzey (2005) Agricultural policy discourses in the European post-Fordist transition: neo-liberalism, neo-mercantilism, and multifunctionality. *Progress in Human Geography* 29 pp. 581-601

Poulantzas, N. (1978) *State, Power, Socialism* (London: Verso)

Pritchard, B. (2009) The long hangover from the second food regime: a world-historical interpretation of the collapse of the WTO Doha Round. *Agriculture and Human Values* 26 pp. 297-307

Smith, J. (2016) *Imperialism in the twenty-first century: globalization, super-exploitation, and capital's final crisis* (New York: Monthly Review Press)

Taylor, P. (1994) The state as container: Territoriality in the modern world-system. *Progress in Human Geography*. 18 pp. 151–162

Teschke, B. (2003) *The myth of 1648: class, geopolitics, and the making of modern international relations* (London: Verso)

Tilzey, M. (2006) Neoliberalism, the WTO, and new modes of agri-environmental governance in the EU, USA, and Australia. *International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food*. 14 pp. 1-28

Tilzey, M. (2016) Global Politics, Capitalism, Socio-Ecological Crisis, and Resistance: Exploring the Linkages and the Challenges. *Colloquium Paper No. 14*. Global governance/politics, climate justice & agrarian/social justice: linkages and challenges: An international colloquium 4-5 February 2016. ISS, The Hague, Netherlands.

Tilzey, M. (2017) Reintegrating economy, society, and environment for cooperative futures: Polanyi, Marx, and food sovereignty. *Journal of Rural Studies* 53 pp. 317-334

Tilzey, M. (2018) *Political ecology, food regimes, and food sovereignty: crisis, resistance, and resilience* (London: Palgrave Macmillan)

Tilzey, M. and C. Potter (2007) Neoliberalism, neo-mercantilism, and multifunctionality: contested political discourses in European Post-Fordist rural governance. L. Cheshire, V. Higgins, and G. Lawrence pp. 115-129 *International Perspectives on Rural Governance: new power relations in rural economies and societies* (London: Routledge)

Tilzey, M. and C. Potter (2008) Productivism versus post-productivism? : modes of agri-environmental governance in post-Fordist agricultural transitions. G. Robinson pp. 41-63 *Sustainable rural systems: sustainable agriculture and rural communities* (Aldershot: Ashgate)

Trotsky, L. (2008) *The history of the Russian revolution* 3 volumes (Chicago: Haymarket Books)

Van Apeldoorn, B., N. de Graaff and H. Overbeek (2012) The reconfiguration of the global state-capital nexus. *Globalizations* 9 pp. 471-486

Wallerstein, I. (1974) *The modern world system: capitalist agriculture and the origins of the European world economy in the sixteenth century* vol. 1 (New York: Academic Press)

Wallerstein, I. (1976) *The modern world system* vol. 2 (New York: Academic Press)

Wolf, E. (1982) *Europe and the people without history* (Berkeley: University of California Press)

Wood, E.M. (2002) The question of market dependence. *Journal of Agrarian Change* 2 (1) pp. 50-87
