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Democratising Food: The Case for a Deliberative Approach

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Abstract:

Prevailing political and ethical approaches which have been used to both critique and propose alternatives to the existing food system are lacking. Although food security, food sovereignty, food justice and food democracy all offer something important to our reflection on the global food system, none is adequate as an alternative to the status quo. This paper analyses each in order to identify the pre-requisites for such an alternative approach to food governance. These include a focus on goods like nutrition and health, equitable distribution, supporting livelihoods, environmental sustainability, and social justice. However, other goods, like the interests of nonhuman animals, are not presently represented. Moreover, incorporating all of these goods is incredibly demanding, and some are in tension. This raises the question of how each can be appropriately accommodated and balanced. The paper proposes that this ought to be done through deliberative democratic processes which incorporate the interests of all relevant parties at the local, national, regional and global levels. In other words, the paper calls for a *deliberative* approach to the *democratisation of* food. It also proposes that one promising potential for incorporating the interests of all affected parties and addressing power imbalances lies in organising the scope and remit of deliberation around *food type*.

Keywords: deliberative democracy, food politics, food justice, food security, global food system, democratisation, nonhuman animals

Introduction

There is broad consensus that the contemporary food system produces outcomes which are detrimental to human nutrition, producer and worker livelihoods, environmental sustainability and animal welfare. The current organisation of the global food system is dominated by market-centric productivism, underpinned by liberal economic thinking, and increasingly driven by corporate agrifood. This has been propelled by the state-led expansion of large-scale industrial agriculture, the liberalisation of agricultural trade, the financialisation of food, and the increasing involvement of multi-national food corporations in all aspects of the food chain.[1] Since the 1970s, several approaches – and counter approaches – have developed which attempt to either reform or radically alter the status quo.[2] The most prevalent has been the concept of 'food security' which arose in the 1970s in response to rising food and oil prices. Although it has a range of permutations, its key focus on access to food has meant that it does not always adequately attend to *where* food comes from and *how* it is produced. Consequently, since the 1990s, three additional discourses, which are more normative in orientation – 'food sovereignty', 'food justice' and 'food democracy' – have also emerged, partly in recognition of the limitations of the food security model, but also in more direct opposition to increasing corporate domination and injustices affecting different groups both globally and locally.

Academic interest in food security, food sovereignty, food justice and food democracy has mushroomed since the global food and financial crisis of 2008-9, signalling renewed recognition of the need to find new and different ways to tackle the exigencies and socio-ecological inequities of the continually globalising food system. While it is true that each of these approaches stems

[1] Jennifer, Clapp, Food (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2012).
[2] Eric Holt-Giménez and Annie Shattuck, 'Food crises, food regimes and food movements: rumblings of reform or tides of transformation?', Journal of Peasant Studies, 38:1 (2011), pp. 109–44.

from a distinctive empirical and theoretical location, and each promotes attention to different actors, interests and geographical scales, they are not necessarily mutually exclusive: they can also be seen as relational and overlapping, rather than in direct opposition to each other.[3] Nevertheless, not only have these ideas been the subject of theoretical, empirical and definitional wrangling, but a growing body of literature has focused attention on problems with them, including, amongst others, that they are either too consumer- or too producer-focused, unduly 'romantic' and 'localist',[4] inward-looking, or anthropocentric.

The purpose of this paper is to draw on these discourses and their critiques to identify the pre-requisites for a new and more comprehensive approach to global food governance. This is not to dismiss the existing discourses – as each is useful and important – but rather to say that each is lacking in some way; indeed, there are two striking omissions. The first is the inclusion of a meaningful approach to the *democratisation* of food, the central argument of this paper. The second is that none takes into account the interests of nonhuman animals. This omission is stark given the increasing recognition of the moral worth of sentient animals not only in the academic literature, but also in law.[5] It further argues that these proposed pre-requisites are incredibly demanding and sometimes in tension. So, any new approach by which to organise contemporary food systems must find some way of accommodating and balancing these competing demands.

[3] Jennifer Clapp, 'Food security and food sovereignty Getting past the binary', Dialogues in Human Geography, 4:2 (2014), pp. 206–11; Justa Hopma and Michael Woods, 'Political Geographies of "Food Security" and "Food Sovereignty"', Geography Compass, 8:11 (2014), pp. 773-84.
[4] Alberto Alonso-Fradejas, Saturnino M. Borras Jr, Todd Holmes, Eric Holt-Giménez, and Martha Jane Robbins, 'Food sovereignty: convergence and contradictions, conditions and challenges', Third World Quarterly, 36:3 (2015), pp. 431–48; Henry Bernstein, 'Food Sovereignty via the "Peasant Way": A Skeptical View', The Journal of Peasant Studies, 41:6 (2014), pp. 1031–63; Katharine Bradley and Hank Herrera, 'Decolonizing Food Justice: Naming, Resisting, and Researching Colonizing Forces in the Movement', Antipode, 48:1 (2016), pp. 97–114.
[5] Anne Peters, 'Global Animal Law: What It Is and Why We Need It', Transnational Environmental Law, 5:1 (2016), pp. 9–23; Christopher Schlottmann and Jeff Sebo, Food, animals, and the environment: an ethical approach (New York, NY: Routledge, 2018).

The paper posits that this is best done through *deliberative* democratic processes at the local, national, regional and global level.

The paper analyses the possibilities for a deliberative approach to the *democratisation of food* over two parts. In the first, the existing ideas of food security, food sovereignty, food justice and food democracy are introduced and analysed in order to establish the necessary conditions for an alternative approach to food governance. In the second, we examine how these prerequisites might be best met. To begin, we argue that because some of the goods which a food system must realise are sometimes in tension – take, for example, the need to protect livelihoods and the need to respect the interests of nonhuman animals – we need an approach which can *balance* them in ways that can be regarded as legitimate by the relevant affected parties. This provides the basic rationale for the *democratisation* of food: all relevant actors in the food system should be able to have their interests heard and represented in decisions regarding how it is produced, distributed and consumed. However, the paper goes on to argue that achieving a fair balance requires participants to move beyond bare self-interest when making such decisions. As such, it draws on theories of *deliberative democracy* which argue that decision-making should not merely be the result of expressed preferences, but should instead follow practices of evidence-gathering, discussion and reason-giving. We argue that such deliberative tools can and should be applied to food. In the third and final part, we argue that before deciding the shape of deliberative fora, we need first to look at what kinds of issues will be deliberated: i.e. we need to discuss the *scope* and *remit* of deliberation. Here, we offer some initial reflections on how that might be done, drawing on and extending several existing examples from within the global food system. We conclude by suggesting that organising the scope and remit of deliberation around *food type* offers one promising way to include all relevant affected parties and to address imbalances of power.

Section 1: Analysing Existing Approaches to Food Governance

This section introduces and analyses the existing ideas of food security, food sovereignty, food justice and food democracy, and the discourses – sometimes overlapping – that coalesce around each, in order to establish what the pre-requisites for a new approach to food governance might be.

1.1 Food Security

'Food security' has long been the dominant approach to addressing the challenges of the global food system. Operating at the level of international development organisations and governance regimes, the concept arose amid discussions of the 1970s 'global food crisis' when experts feared that increased food prices represented a threat to food availability for the world's poor and hungry.[6] One of the earliest definitions of food security, from the *World Food Conference* in 1974, attests to the international, security and supply dimensions: 'it is the common responsibility of the entire international community to ensure the availability at all times of adequate world food supplies of basic food-stuffs by way of appropriate reserves'.[7] Since then, the concept has gained increasing prominence in the international development arena, prompting a plethora of meanings and usages, accommodating: a Malthusian concern for food supply (availability); Amartya Sen's

[6] FAO, 'World Food Security: A Reappraisal of the Concepts and Approaches' (Rome: FAO, 1983); Simon Maxwell, 'Food security: a post-modern perspective', Food Policy, 21:2 (1996), pp. 155–70.
[7] United Nations, 'Report of the World Food Conference' (5-16 November 1974) (New York, NY: United Nations, 1975), p. 6.

broadening of the debate to include food entitlement (accessibility);[8] the inclusion of contemporary livelihoods approaches; and a focus on the household level. This has led to the most commonly used definition of food security which 'exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life'.[9]

Securing adequate nutrition for all humans is vitally important from any ethical or political standpoint. Food security policies can be seen to have increased the availability of calories in many developing countries. These calories, however, have been increasingly derived from imported processed foods that are high in salt, fats and sugar.[10] 'Food security' discourses, therefore, have been criticised for not taking into account *who* produced the food and *how* it was produced. Some critics (perhaps unfairly, because it was originally an open-ended concept) also apply a normative agenda to food security.[11] They argue that policy responses from the development and aid arena – such as the World Bank and the United Nations (UN) Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) – tend to fit within the overarching neoliberal paradigm that positions industrial agriculture as the solution to food insecurity.[12]

Nonetheless, food security's primary focus on adequate human nutrition overlooks other important ethical goods that a just food system ought to respect: in particular, animals and the environment are rarely given a place within such discourses. Furthermore, food security tends to

[8] Amartya Sen, 'Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation' (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981).
[9] FAO, 'Rome Declaration of World Food Security and World Food Summit Plan of Action' (Rome: FAO, 1996), p. 3.
[10] see for example: FAO, 'State of Insecurity in the CARICOM Caribbean' (Rome, Italy: FAO, 2015); Merisa S. Thompson, Still searching for (food) sovereignty: Why are radical discourses only partially mobilised in the independent Anglo-Caribbean? 101 (2019), pp. 90-99.
[11] Clapp (2014), p. 207.
[12] Philip McMichael and Mindi Schneider, 'Food security politics and the Millennium Development Goals', Third World Quarterly, 32:1 (2011), pp. 119–139.

be ‘reformist’ rather than ‘radical’, and therefore notably does not address power relations and their global imbalance.[13] Similarly, where food security aligns with productivist discourses, the focus on technology and production does not guarantee adequate nutrition for all. Although technical advances must have *some* role to play in an equitable food system (such as the use of GPS and soil monitoring), we must also address issues such as equity, control and distribution. Therefore, any new approach must retain the focus on providing sufficient levels of human nutrition while also going beyond it to include consideration of *how* food is produced, the *effects* of that production on humans and nonhumans, and *where* it comes from.

1.2 Food Sovereignty

More radical in its orientation, ‘food sovereignty’ is both a movement and an approach that developed in the global South in opposition to the increasingly globalised nature of food systems, corporate domination, trade liberalisation and agricultural industrialisation. Thought to have roots in a 1983 Mexican government food programme,[14] the concept stems from a geographical and political environment where farmers or peasants struggle directly against such processes and changes in the global political economy. It operates at the level of agrarian and labour organisations and is grounded in discourses of redistribution and rights.[15] The idea was first introduced onto the global stage by the international peasant movement, collectively known as La Vía Campesina, at the *World Food Summit* held in Rome in 1996, who defined it as: ‘the right of each nation to maintain and develop its own capacity to produce its basic foods respecting

[13] Eric Holt-Giménez and Annie Shattuck, ‘Food crises, food regimes and food movements: rumblings of reform or tides of transformation?’, Journal of Peasant Studies, 38:1 (2011), pp. 109–44.
[14] Marc Edelman, ‘Food Sovereignty: Forgotten Genealogies and Future Regulatory Challenges, Journal of Peasant Studies, 41:6 (2014), pp.959-978.
[15] Holt-Giménez and Shattuck (2011).

cultural and productive diversity'.[16] However, the definition has broadened over time, most notably from 'the right of nations' – with a focus on the state – to the 'right of peoples to define their own food and agriculture' in 2002.[17] Most recently, in 2007, the Nyéléni Declaration defined it as: 'the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agricultural systems'.[18]

The key point is that it brings fundamental questions of rights, democracy and control to the centre of discussions about food security. It emphasises the right to food and the right to feed; agrarian and land reform; people-centred, small-scale diversified agriculture; domestic-orientated food production; sustainable livelihoods for farmers and agricultural workers; and sustainable agricultural practices.[19] It also accentuates the importance of women's roles and their disproportionate constitution of the world's poor and hungry.[20] Although, the emphasis on *family* farming in the Nyéleni Declaration, which relies on women's unpaid labour, also arguably goes against claims made about advancing women's rights.[21] Finally, it calls for increased accountability of international actors, strengthening of local and regional food systems, and for decision-making to be brought back under the purview of people and state.

[16] La Vía Campesina, 'Declaration of Food Sovereignty' (Rome: La Vía Campesina, 1996), p. 1.
[17] International Planning Committee (IPC) 2002 definition.
[18] Declaration of Nyéléni (2007) Sélingué, Mali, available at: {https://nyeleni.org/spip.php?article290} accessed 28 October 2018.
[19] Miguel A. Altieri, 'Agroecology, Small Farms, and Food Sovereignty', in Fred Magdoff and Brian Tokar (eds), Agriculture and food in crisis: conflict, resistance, and renewal (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2010), pp. 253–66.
[20] Richard Goulet, '"Food Sovereignty": A Step Forward in the Realisation of the Right to Food', Law, Social Justice & Global Development Journal, 1:13 (2009), pp.1-23; Merisa S. Thompson, 'Critical Perspectives on gender, food and political economy', in Juanita Elias and Adrienne Roberts, Handbook on the International Political Economy of Gender, (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2018), pp. 470-485.
[21] Bina Agarwal, 'Food sovereignty, food security and democratic choice: critical contradictions, difficult conciliations', Journal of Peasant Studies, 41:6 (2014), pp.1-22.

With a more political and normative agenda, food sovereignty, consequently, incorporates more ethical goods than food security, such as environmental justice and equity, and also places a much stronger emphasis on livelihoods. It also incorporates marginalised voices and puts forward an environmentally friendly method of production: agroecology. It is also clear that food sovereignty explicitly aims to address power imbalances in the global food system. Nonetheless, the approach has been critiqued for its problematic and unresolved ideals of localism and self-sufficiency versus the reality of international trade.[22] Others have problematised its seemingly unduly romantic view of 'the peasant way' and small farming as the solution to inequity in the global food system.[23] Finally, it can easily slide into a simplistic and problematic relativism, assuming that the way things are done in a given community should be free from critique and change. These issues are problematic because it is evident that contemporary food production does and must engage more than one community, meaning that we require an approach which is transnational in scope. Finally, and as with food security, food sovereignty omits consideration of the place of animals and their particular vulnerabilities within the food system.

1.3 Food Justice

'Food justice' is also both a movement and an approach to governing the food system. However, it differs substantially from 'food sovereignty' in terms of origin and orientation. Largely emerging from environmental and racial justice movements in the United States, its focuses on injustices that disproportionately affect people based on race and class.[24] Rather than focusing on peasant production, it is more associated with the work of community groups and organisations,

[22] Bina Agarwal (2014); Merisa S. Thompson (2019).
[23] Bernstein (2014).
[24] Jessica Clendenning, Wolfram H. Dressler, and Carol Richards, 'Food justice or food sovereignty? Understanding the rise of urban food movements in the USA', Agriculture and Human Values, 33 (2016), pp.165-177; Robert Gottlieb and Anupama Joshi, Food Justice (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2010), p. 6.

such as ‘eat local’ movements, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) groups, urban agriculture, farmers’ markets, and school and community gardens in the global North. Although, there are also now burgeoning movements in the global South.[25] A distinction is often made between, on the one hand, ‘food justice’ with its concern for social justice, race, marginalised socio-economic groups and well-being, and, on the other, what has come to be known as the Alternative Food Movement (AFM), which, according to some, is primarily championed by the white, Western, middle class and privileged elite who promote local, organic, healthy and sustainable eating and food production.[26]

Gottlieb and Joshi define ‘food justice’ as: ‘ensuring that the benefits and risks of where, what, and how food is grown and produced, transported and distributed, and accessed and eaten are shared fairly’.[27] For them, it has three key components: seeking to ‘challenge and restructure the dominant food system’; a focus on ‘equity and disparities and the struggles by those who are most vulnerable’; and establishing ‘linkages and common goals with other forms of social justice activism and advocacy’.[28] However, despite its powerful appeal, they argue that ‘it remains a relatively unformed concept, subject to multiple interpretations… a work in progress, residing at the edges of an emerging alternative food movement’.[29] Therefore, arguably there is a lack of clarity in the food justice movement about what, exactly, food justice is, and what it should look like.

Nonetheless, it does go beyond food security to connect food issues to fundamental matters of

[25] Grace Githiri, ‘Enhancing food justice for urban communities in Africa’, UN Volunteers, available at: {https://www.unv.org/our-stories/enhancing-food-justice-urban-communities-africa} accessed 24 September 2019.
[26] Holt-Giménez and Shattuck (2011).
[27] Gottlieb and Joshi (2010), p. 6.
[28] Gottlieb and Joshi (2010), p. ix.
[29] Gottlieb and Joshi (2010), pp. 5–6.

social justice, such as civil rights, environmental justice, health and poverty. The attention given to urban locales also distinguishes it from food sovereignty's predominant focus on rural peasantries and means that it accepts the reality of most consumers' existence. However, and in spite of attempts to separate it from the AFM, the dominant narrative has been critiqued as largely white and middle-class and for ignoring racial and class injustice.[30] As such, marginalised voices and agency are often therefore squeezed out.

Food justice has also been critiqued for a tendency towards the conflation of 'more just' with 'more local'.[31] Such localism is problematic, for while the benefits of community organising and local food networks can prove fruitful – reduced fuel use, increased participation, knowledge sharing and involvement in decision-making – scholars generally agree that it is a mistake to see changing the scale from global to local as a solution in itself. Furthermore, in some cases (depending on the project) food justice also fails to challenge the dominant paradigm of food production by working within it rather than against it, fetishising consumption for profit, and seeing people as consumers rather than citizens.[32] Indeed, less attention is also given to the role of the state, to issues of governance and regulation, and tackling the roots of structural inequalities.

1.4 Food Democracy

[30] Alison Hope Alkon and Julian Agyeman, Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class, and Sustainability (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2011); Bradley and Herrera (2016); Julie Guthman, 'If they only knew": The unbearable whiteness of alternative food', in Alison Hope Alkon and Julian Agyeman (2011), pp. 263–281.
[31] K. Cadieux and Rachel Slocum, 'What does it mean to do food justice?', Journal of Political Ecology, 22:1 (2015), pp. 1–26.
[32] Julian Agyeman and Jesse McEntee, 'Moving the Field of Food Justice Forward Through the Lens of Urban Political Ecology', Geography Compass, 8:3 (2014), pp. 211–20; Alison Hope Alkon, 'Food Justice and the Challenge to Neoliberalism', Gastronomica: The Journal of Critical Food Studies, 14:2 (2014), pp. 27–40; Charles Z. Levkoe, 'Learning Democracy Through Food Justice Movements', Agriculture and Human Values, 23:1 (2006), pp. 89–98.

'Food democracy' differs from the preceding approaches in that it focuses explicitly on citizen participation in decision-making about the food system. The concept is often attributed to Tim Lang's coining of the term in the mid-1990s to highlight the need to counter the increasing control of private capital over the food system and 'to achieve the right of all citizens to have access to a decent, affordable, health-enhancing diet, grown in conditions in which they can have confidence'.[33] Its roots, therefore, lie in debates on environmental sustainability and social nutrition.[34] Blake suggests that in comparison to food sovereignty and food justice, it is 'less concerned with identity politics' and its key actors tend to be 'from backgrounds that have historically had more political purchase in local, national, and global political arenas'.[35] According to Hassanein, at its core 'is the idea that people can and should be actively participating in shaping the food system'.[36] She sees this as particularly necessary for agrifood systems where values and interests are constantly in conflict over the contested nature of 'sustainability' and delineates five key dimensions of food democracy: collaboration; becoming knowledgeable; sharing ideas; developing efficacy; and acquiring an orientation towards the community good.[37] Food democracy is therefore about 'citizen power' and seeking to 'organise the food system' in a way that people can 'directly engage with the decisions made in their own food system'.[38]

The demand for participation means, therefore, that food democracy is often articulated by activists as a vision that is decentralised and organised at a scale where democratic needs can be

[33] Tim Lang, 'Towards a Food Democracy', in Sian Griffiths and Jennifer Wallace (eds), Consuming Passions: Food in the Age of Anxiety (Manchester University Press, 1998), p. 18.
[34] Megan Blake, 'Landscape and the politics of food justice', in Joshua Zeunert and Tim Waterman, Routledge Handbook of Landscape and Food (Oxon: Routledge, 2018), pp. 487-499.
[35] Blake (2018), p.491
[36] Neva Hassanein, 'Practicing food democracy: a pragmatic politics of transformation', Journal of Rural Studies, 19:1 (2003), p. 79.
[37] Neva Hassanein, 'Locating food democracy: Theoretical and practical ingredients', Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition, 3:2–3 (2008), pp. 286–308.
[38] Carlson and Chappell (2015), pp.6-7.

met.[39] Moragues-Faus argues that 'egalitarian food democracies' should be place-contingent and 'revolve around the construction of spaces where people have the capacity to act politically' allowing for the meeting of heterogenous needs, interests and 'non-recognised voices' and connectivity at different scales.[40] Therefore, it is often placed-based, local and connected to projects such as farmers' markets, urban agriculture, CSA, food policy councils and food box schemes. In this way 'food democracy' overlaps with 'food justice'. However, rather than 'voting with your dollar' the focus here is to 'vote with our vote'.[41] These ideals are therefore positioned in sharp opposition to those of the corporate food system which is based on elite power and decision-making. Whilst most work on 'food democracy' focuses on the local scale, Vandana Shiva also mobilises the concept at the global level. She calls for the democratisation of control over access to and distribution of resources such as land, water and credit to counteract the 'dictatorship' of multi-national food corporations.[42] However, beyond calls for increased citizen involvement and democratic governance, the concept remains relatively underdeveloped at this level.

The idea of transforming people into citizens rather than consumers is therefore central to food democracy.[43] As will be shown in the next part of the paper, we share the view that the ongoing participation of affected parties in the food system is essential to the project of reforming it. However, food democracy as it currently stands very much focuses on consumers/citizens and the role and interests of other important groups in the food system, such as producers, processors,

[39] Josée Johnston, Andrew Biro, and Norah MacKendrick, 'Lost in the Supermarket: The Corporate-Organic Foodscape and the Struggle for Food Democracy', Antipode, 41:3 (2009), pp. 509–32.
[40] Ana Moragues-Faus, 'Problematising justice definitions in public food security debates: Towards global and participative food justices', Geoforum, 84 (2017), p. 472.
[41] Jill Carlson and Jahi M. Chappell, 'Deepening Food Democracy', Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, (Washington: IATP, 2015) p.6
[42] Vandana, Shiva, Earth Democracy: Justice, Sustainability and Peace (London: Zed Books, 2005),
[43] John Coveney and Booth, Food Democracy: From Consumer to Food Citizen (New York, NY: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 2015).

non-governmental organisations (NGOs), corporations and farmed animals is somewhat less clear. It has also faced scepticism from some who 'cast doubts on the values underpinning liberal "democratic" practices as deployed by the governments of nation-states'.[44] Importantly, as was the case with both food sovereignty and food justice, in its place-based focus, food democracy also currently lacks a strong engagement with the international dimension of the food systems, limiting its transformative potential.

1.5 Pre-Requisites of an Alternative Approach to Food Governance

Having surveyed and evaluated the dominant discourses on governing the global food system, we are now better placed to explore our alternative which seeks to overcome the evident shortcomings of these existing perspectives, while maintaining and combining the important insights that they undoubtedly provide. So, what are the pre-requisites for this new approach?

Food security, food sovereignty, food justice and food democracy have all revealed that a robust and just food system must realise a number of important goods. Food security has shown us that it must meet the *nutritional and health needs* of a growing population. That means it must ensure that sufficient nutritionally adequate food is produced. Moreover, food security and food justice show us that it must be *distributed equitably*. Food sovereignty and food justice, moreover, demonstrate that it must produce food in a way that *supports livelihoods* – including small-scale producers who are vulnerable to the power of inordinately larger national and multinational corporations – and in a way that is *environmentally sustainable*. This means not only that production practices must not exhaust vital natural resources, including that of the soil and land

[44] Ana Moragues-Faus, 'Emancipatory or Neoliberal Food Politics? Exploring the "Politics of Collectivity" of Buying Groups in the Search for Egalitarian Food Democracies', Antipode, 49:2 (2017), p. 461.

themselves, but they must also refrain from producing waste, gases and other pollutants at levels which threaten the opportunities for current and future generations to lead flourishing lives. Finally, food democracy and food justice illustrate how a just food system must be *shaped by the participation* of relevant affected parties.

There are two striking absences from each of these approaches. The first is that little consideration is given to the meaningful *democratisation of food* at different levels, which Section 2 will shortly discuss in depth. The second is acknowledgement that a just food system must also recognise the *sentience and moral worth of nonhuman animals*.[45] In other words, the ways in which food is produced, distributed and consumed must be compatible with the fact that many animals have complex cognitive and emotional capacities – which entails that they have a value of their own which cannot be reduced to their ability to provide protein for human beings.[46] Crucially, while a good deal of domestic animal welfare legislation acknowledges that sentient animals have this kind of worth,[47] meaningful protection of them in the food system nevertheless fails to materialise for at least three reasons.

Firstly, some jurisdictions like the United States exempt farmed animals from federal animal welfare laws, thus permitting all sorts of harmful practices on those used for food which are prohibited in relation to others (such as pets). Second, even where animal welfare legislation does apply to farmed livestock, this is dramatically limited by the fact it generally adopts a framework of 'humane regulation'; that is, it only outlaws those harmful practices which are deemed to cause

[45] Alasdair Cochrane, Sentientist Politics: A Theory of Global Inter-Species Justice (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Alasdair Cochrane, Animal Rights without Liberation (Columbia University Press, 2012).
[46] Much has of course been written in defence of this view, but one of the classic statements comes in Peter Singer, Animal Liberation (2nd ed.) (London: Pimlico, 1995).
[47] See, for example, Article 13 Title II of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), available at: {https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/welfare_en} accessed 3 February 2019.

'unnecessary suffering' to animals. The problem here is that what is deemed 'necessary and unnecessary' is driven solely by human interests and concerns, meaning that the desire for plentiful cheap meat, eggs and milk is necessarily prioritized over the basic interests and lives of the cognitively complex and social animals bred, confined and killed to produce these foods.[48] Finally, even if robust legislation could be enacted at a domestic level, such efforts are inevitably undermined by the lack of animal welfare laws at the international level. The absence of such standards allows corporations to move production to jurisdictions with lower regulations, ensuring that the harms perpetrated against animals in our global food system continue to rise.[49]

But the moral worth of nonhuman animals is just one good which systems of global food governance must recognise and promote. What is consequently required is an approach that combines *all* of the important prerequisites we have outlined, and, on that basis, overcomes their individual limitations. In addition, and as food justice informs us, when promoting these goods, it must recognise the imbalances of power within societies. In other words, the approach must acknowledge that access to nutritionally adequate food is inextricably tied up with social cleavages around class, race, gender, and more; put simply, it must acknowledge that food is an issue of *social justice*. But it must also acknowledge that our food system is a *global justice* issue too – thus acknowledging the power imbalances within, but also across, state boundaries. This is crucial in virtue of the fact that food supply chains are international in nature, meaning that any alteration in one part of the supply and consumption chain will often have effects in multiple and quite remote locations.

[48] Darian Ibrahim, 'The Anti Cruelty Statute: A Study in Animal Welfare', Journal of Animal Law and Ethics, 1 (2006), pp. 175-204.
[49] Steven White, 'Into the Void: International Law and the Protection of Animal Welfare', Global Policy 4:4 (2013), pp. 391-398.

Section 2: The Democratisation of Food: A Deliberative Approach

We now explore how the prerequisites outlined in Section 1 might be best met. We do this by first providing a basic rationale for the *democratisation* of food. We then draw on theories of deliberative democracy in order to argue that decision-making should not merely be the result of expressed preferences, but should instead follow practices of evidence gathering and reason-giving.

2.1 Democratising Food

Coming up with an approach to governing the food system which incorporates all of these prerequisites is incredibly demanding. Indeed, there is no possible way in which any food system could fully realise *all* of these goods absolutely. And that is quite simply because sometimes these goods are in tension. For example, consider the tension between supporting livelihoods and respecting the moral worth of nonhuman animals: millions of farmers across the world make their living from breeding, confining and slaughtering animals. As such, fully recognising the moral worth of animals necessarily entails putting some constraints on livelihoods, just as promoting farmer livelihoods constrains respecting the interests of animals. Crucially, this particular tension is not some strange outlier; for the simple fact is that attempts to promote any one good within food production, supply and consumption will often come at the expense of some other important good. This makes any *simple* framework by which to reimagine and remodel our global food system either hopelessly naïve, or radically incomplete. If we acknowledge the range of goods with which food engages, we must also recognise the complexity of devising a framework by which we can remodel and transform our global food system.

In light of this plurality of goods, which are frequently in tension, how ought we to proceed in designing a new approach to governing the food system? One possibility would be to simply rank these goods in order of priority, so that when a clash between them occurs, it is resolved by prioritising that good which has greater value. In this way, we might assert that nutritional health wins out over distributional equity, which wins out over livelihoods, which wins out over environmental sustainability and so on. The problem with this approach – and which the ranking example probably makes clear – is that any hierarchical arrangement of these different goods is going to be rather difficult to justify. First of all, many would argue that these goods are 'incommensurable'.[50] After all, how could one defend the idea that livelihoods ought to be prioritised over environmental sustainability? What, precisely, is the shared currency between these two goods, of which livelihoods has more? Furthermore, even if we suppose that it is possible to rank these goods, any ranking that we come up with is bound to be extremely controversial, and contested as such. Obviously, by itself such contestation would not render that ranking wrong – but it would make it unlikely that any new food system built on it could be endorsed by relevant parties, undermining its prospects of being established and maintained.

What we are searching for, then, is a food system which balances these different goods – and achieves that balance in a way that can be reasonably accepted by the relevant affected parties. It is here that the case for democratising the food system can be made. This is because democratic procedures provide a means by which a plurality of goods, interests and preferences can be balanced – and by which the outcome can be accepted. Democratic processes are commonly thought to provide a means by which 'all affected' individuals can have their say over some

[50] see Nien-hê Hsieh, 'Incommensurable Values', in Edward N. Zalta (ed.), The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2016).

decision.[51] And, even though some individuals may end up not having their preferred interests win out, because each has participated in the procedure, each can also be reasonably expected to accept the result as legitimate. So, if we were to truly democratise food, the balance and prioritisation of all the relevant goods outlined previously would be *constructed* by the relevant parties in the food system, rather than *imposed* by any particular political or ethical framework.

In response to this call to 'democratise food' two immediate objections might be raised. The first concerns whether our proposal offers anything different to the existing discourses around 'food democracy', which we outlined earlier in the paper. After all, food democracy also places *participation* at its heart, arguing that the food system needs to be governed not by corporate forces, but by those whom it affects. And yet, our call to 'democratise food' differs from existing notions of 'food democracy' in at least three fundamental ways. For one, the food democratisation advocated in this paper cannot just take place within one community. Instead, we must face up to the globalised and interconnected nature of the food system, and the ways in which the goods are set back and promoted transnationally. Relatedly, recognising that the democratisation of food must be global in scope means that *all* affected parties – and not only consumers – must participate in the proper balancing of the competing goods at stake: it is essential that producers, distributors and other workers have their voices heard in redesigning and shaping the food system, and this applies to both human and nonhuman parties. As sentient creatures who can experience themselves in the world, farmed animals are obviously affected by food production, distribution and consumption. Since our food system must take their worth seriously, it is vital that their

[51] Robert E. Goodin, 'Enfranchising All Affected Interests, and Its Alternatives', Philosophy & Public Affairs, 35:1 (2007), pp. 40–68.

interests shape food policies. While they cannot themselves vote for particular outcomes, it is possible to imagine proxies acting on their behalf who ensure that their voices are heard.[52]

The final reason why our call to democratise food differs from more conventional notions of food democracy comes down to its underlying rationale. The impetus behind the democratisation of food is not merely to turn consumers into engaged citizens concerned about the source and quality of produce; instead, the ultimate justification for democratisation comes from recognising the *plurality* of goods which are at stake. Empowering consumers is obviously an important good, but it is not the only one engaged by food, and democratisation is required in order to balance the various and often competing goods upon which food impacts. So, for us, democratising food must mean more than simply taking power away from corporations and giving it to the 'people'.[53] After all, the 'people' are not a homogenous entity, but individuals with often very different stakes in the food system. Democratising food thus entails recognising and facing up to these multiple goods, and establishing fair procedures which acknowledge that the best way to balance those goods is through the participation of all affected parties at each point across the food system so that they can shape how our food is produced, shared and consumed.

The second objection is whether it is wise to open up the food system to democratic forces. After all, as we have seen, the global food system is incredibly complex, involving myriad actors and engaging a whole host of interwoven political and ethical goods. It might be argued that, in the face of such complexity, what we need is *expertise* rather than democracy. This would chime with

[52] On representing animals politically see, Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka, Zoopolis: A Political Theory of Animal Rights (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); and Eva Meijer, 'Political Communication with Animals', Humanimalia 5:1 (2013).
[53] Merisa S. Thompson, 'Cultivating "new" gendered food producers: intersections of power and identity in the postcolonial nation of Trinidad', Review of International Political Economy (2019).

some recent calls in political theory in favour of so-called 'epistocracy' over democracy: if we are interested in creating forms of governance that produce the right outcomes, it is vital that those in charge of decision-making are competent and sufficiently well-informed about the issues facing them.[54] But this objection misses the mark for at least two reasons. In the first place, we need to question whether there is some single determinate and correct balance of these competing goods to be had. Many would argue that the proper balance is one that is c*onstructed* by those with a stake in it, rather than 'out there' to be discovered. More importantly, even if there is some definitive correct balance, that answer will not be of much use in the real world if it is rejected by those affected by it. For this reason, and as we argue, greater democratisation has the *political* advantage of producing decisions which all can live with, even if not all can agree with. Moreover, democracy and expertise are not mutually exclusive. Lack of knowledge amongst affected parties does not by itself provide a reason to exclude those individuals from decision-making; rather, it provides a reason to create mechanisms by which to improve the understanding of those parties. And the kinds of deliberative fora proposed later in this paper – where individuals are exposed to alternative ideas and to evidence from experts – are certainly intended to have educative potential.

2.2 The Deliberative Democratisation of Food

But what kind of democratic participation is required to balance these goods? It might be thought that relevant parties across the food system ought to be granted a vote in order that each can have their say over the production, distribution and consumption of food. However, democratising food requires more than mere voting. For one, on what issue should parties be granted a vote?

[54] For example, see Jason Brennan, Against Democracy (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016); and David Estlund, 'Why not Epistocracy?' in Naomi Reshotko (ed.). Desire, Identity and Existence. Essays in Honor of T. M. Penner (Kelowna, BC: Academic Printing & Publishing, 2003), pp. 53–69.

Decisions over food production, consumption and how to balance the various competing goods at stake, are complex matters that can rarely be reduced to binary choices. As such, it seems we need participative decision-making procedures that are sensitive to such complexity. Secondly, there are various problems with a decision-making procedure that simply aggregates the preferences of affected parties. While such aggregation will help to construct a balance between the various goods at stake, it is dubious that it will construct the *best possible* balance. Preferences of individuals are not and should not be 'fixed'; many are based on brute self-interest. What we argue for is a balance of goods and interests that, while inevitably creating 'winners' and 'losers', can nonetheless be meaningfully described as oriented towards the common good.[55] Aggregating unreflective self-interested preferences, however, undermines such a goal. Instead, then, we require a decision-making procedure which allows for preferences to be both transformed and oriented towards the common good. A final problem with simple aggregation is that it can also create 'permanent minorities' – that is, groups whose interests are always dwarfed numerically by other parties – irrespective of the validity of their views. This suggests that a process that at least provides opportunities for these minority interests to win out is also required.

In order to overcome these problems, a number of democratic theorists have advocated 'deliberative' decision-making processes.[56] While the nature of these processes is varied, they all share the core idea that democratic participation is not best realised through one-off voting by citizens, but rather through their coming together to discuss, debate and deliberate over policy options. Whether such deliberations occur in 'citizen assemblies', 'juries', 'town hall meetings' or other 'mini-publics', the core idea is to get affected parties together to hear from experts, listen

[55] Joshua Cohen, 'Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy', in Alan Hamlin and Philip Pettit (eds), The Good Polity: Normative Analysis of the State (New York: Blackwell, 1989), pp. 17–34.
[56] John S. Dryzek, Deliberative democracy and beyond: liberals, critics, contestations (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Jon Elster, Deliberative Democracy (Cambridge University Press, 1998); Amy Gutman and Dennis Thompson, Why Deliberative Democracy? (Princeton University Press, 2004).

to the views of others, reflect on their own preferences, and make an informed collective decision. In this way, deliberative procedures facilitate each of the goals outlined previously: they allow for decision-making over complex issues; they encourage individuals to think about what is best for the community as a whole; they allow for preferences to be transformed; and they also allow minority views to be aired and even eventually to win out.

Our call, then, is for the food system to be democratised in order that affected parties can shape the production, distribution and consumption of food via deliberative fora at all different levels along the food chain. In this way, we believe, an appropriate balance of the goods previously outlined can be constructed; and because that balance is the outcome of fair procedures, it is one that all can be reasonably expected to respect as legitimate.

Section 3: From Theory to Practice

The purpose of this paper is not to provide a fine-grained blueprint of what a deliberative democratic food system must look like. Indeed, producing such detailed prescriptions is futile: for one, a good deal of institutional innovation and experimentation will be required; and furthermore, it seems likely that a variety of institutional arrangements might be able to fulfil the desiderata previously outlined. Nonetheless, what is clear is that not just any institutional arrangement will do, and that certain ones will perform better than others. But it is also apparent that a democratised food system does not need to be conjured out of nothing. Indeed, since the so-called 'participatory turn' in global food governance,[57] processes of participation and deliberation have made some in-roads in food system governance. Community organisations and

[57] see: J. Duncan and D. Barling, 'Renewal through Participation in Global Food Security Governance: Implementing the International Food Security and Nutrition Civil Society Mechanism to the Committee on World Food Security', International Journal of the Sociology of Agriculture and Food, 19 (2012), pp. 143–61.

large international organisations such as the FAO have begun to recognise the need for improving accountability, deliberation and participation.

What can we draw from these existing practices? One lesson is that it is unclear *what* precisely affected parties should be deliberating over. That is to say, what should the scope and remit of deliberation be? Deliberation about food could be *broad* and all-encompassing: we could deliberate about food as a *whole system* and ask what does a good food system look like? Another approach would be to deliberate thematically by food-related *issues,* such as biotechnology or contracts. Yet a third approach could be to deliberate on issues related to a particular *type* of food, such as chicken or tomatoes. This section evaluates each of these approaches by drawing on real-world examples, and concludes that organising deliberation around food type offers significant potential benefits.

3.1 Deliberating on Food as a *Whole System* Approach at the National and Global Level)

One approach to tackling the challenges of our food system is to acknowledge the many interrelated issues – such as food poverty, public health, biodiversity loss, climate change and animal welfare – and, rather than tackling them separately, focus on the bigger picture. Questions asked might be: 'what would a good or sustainable food system look like?' This is often the approach taken by those with an interest in developing policy and planning locally (Food Policy Councils) or nationally (food charters, bills, or a National Food Service). This is in part because tackling food as a big picture issue is necessarily complex, thus a local or national context helps to situate the parameters of the debate and to enable citizens to participate. Grassroots, community groups and other non-governmental organisations are also increasingly interested in deploying a

range of public engagement methodologies in order to produce local food policy and plans that is reflective of public opinion and values.[58] A whole-systems approach has also been adopted at the global level by initiatives such as the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) and the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS) which aims to ensure food security and nutrition for all through a process of stakeholder engagement. This sub-section examines an example from the national and global level in turn.

In response to the Scottish government's pledge to introduce a new law to 'cut across the food system: the Good Food Nation Bill' in 2018, the Scottish Food Coalition (SFC) – a coalition of civil society organisations – launched a public consultation using a methodology popular with such groups, known as 'Kitchen Table Talks' (KTTs).[59] This public engagement methodology involves organising small groups of citizens to come together – in different locations, such as the home, local cafes, schools and community centres – to share their views on a particular topic. Moderated by a facilitator, KTTs are informal and convivial and allow everybody at the table to express their views. The results of the discussion are recorded and fed back to the organisers to collate.[60] Although this form of deliberation does not tend to involve any direct decision-making or policy-making, it is often used as a way to canvass public opinion and differing values about a particular issue.

[58] Rachel A. Ankeny, 'Inviting Everyone to the Table Strategies for More Effective and Legitimate Food Policy via Deliberative Approaches', Journal of Social Philosophy, 47:1 (2016), pp. 10–24.
[59] Scottish Food Coalition, 'A Seat at the Table: Becoming a Good Food Nation is everyone's business' (2018), p. 1., available at {http://www.nourishscotland.org/resources/reports/} accessed 7 November 2018.
[60] Lucy Parry, 'Kitchen Table Conversations', Participedia, available at: {https://participedia.net/en/methods/kitchen-table-conversations} accessed 7 November 2018.

The aim was to find out what really matters to people about food, what they want the Bill to achieve, and to improve democratic processes in food and agricultural policy-making. Groups and individuals were asked to discuss what 'living in a Good Food Nation' meant to them and to devise their top five concerns and priorities for action. Over 800 people participated and over 140 conversations took place over a 12-week period. The aim was to advocate for food and agricultural policy that is made both *for* citizens and *with* citizens, and for joined up policy making that brings together both food *and* farming, and public health, environmental and social justice concerns.[61] Public engagement such as this is beneficial because it has the potential to increase democratic legitimacy of policy and involve a wide range of actors in food policy-making. It also offers opportunities for civil society and citizens to learn about government policy and strategy. This increased knowledge leads to a more informed citizenry/civil society that is better able to hold government to account on its policy decisions. The local and community level of this approach also fulfils Iris Marion Young's call for inclusion – which argues that decision-making and debate processes often marginalise certain individuals and groups – as it allows for a diverse range of people to come together in settings that are both familiar and accessible.[62]

The challenge for KTTs, however, is reaching audiences *beyond* the food movement which in some cases tends to be white and middle class.[63] This is because it is likely that volunteer hosts are already connected in some way to the cause and organisations involved. It also excludes, rather than includes, corporate and commercial actors. Therefore, although inclusive in terms of openness, not everyone with a stake is necessarily included, because they will not know about or even be interested in the fora. KTTs reveal, then, that a holistic remit can end up being dominated

[61] Nourish Scotland, 'A Good Food Nation Bill to transform Scotland's food system', available at: {http://www.nourishscotland.org/campaigns/good-food-nation-bill/} accessed 10 November 2018.
[62] Ankeny (2016); Iris Marion Young, Inclusion and Democracy (Oxford University Press, 2000).
[63] Charles Z. Levkoe and Amanda Sheedy, 'A people-centred approach to food policy making: Lessons from Canada's People's Food Policy project', Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition, 0:0 (2017), pp. 1–21.

by groups with predetermined ideas about what an ideal food system could or should look like. Consequently, there is a possibility that many important alternative viewpoints will be excluded.

At the global level, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) also takes a whole-systems approach to food security and nutrition. This UN organisation is arguably the 'most advanced' example in the field of food and agriculture of a transnational body incorporating elements of deliberative governance. [64] The committee was established in 1974 but underwent far-reaching reforms following the 2009-10 food price crisis.[65] This became an opportunity to systematically integrate civil society representation within its framework. In its reform document, it is stated that the CFS 'will constitute the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for a broad range of committed stakeholders to work together in a coordinated manner'.[66] As per a deliberate democracy approach, it is the intention that its internal architecture 'will ensure that the voices of all relevant stakeholders – particularly those most affected by food insecurity – are heard'.[67] To this end, the committee consists of an executive Bureau of 12 member states and an Advisory Group, consisting of representatives from five different categories of Participants (including civil society and NGOs; the private sector; international research institutions; international financial institutions; philanthropic organisations; and UN Agencies). Organisations may also be invited or apply for Observer status.[68]

[64] See Josh Brem-Wilson, **'**La Vía Campesina and the UN Committee on World Food Security: Affected publics and institutional dynamics in the nascent transnational public sphere', Review of International Studies, 43:2 (2017), pp.302-329.
[65] Nora McKeonm 'Global food governance in an era of crisis: Lessons from the United Nations Committee on World Food Security', Canadian Food Studiesm 2:2 (2015), pp.328-334.
[66] CFS, 'Reform of the Committee on World Food Security', Committee on World Food Security (14-16 October 2009), p.2, available at: {http://www.fao.org/tempref/docrep/fao/meeting/018/k7197e.pdf} accessed 10 January 2019.
[67] CFS (2009), p.5.
[68] CFS (undated), CFS Structure, available at: {http://www.fao.org/cfs/home/about/structure/en/} accessed 28 June 2019.

The body has embraced elements of a deliberative approach, which are expressed in the composition of the organisation and also in some of the related processes. For example, both civil society organisations (CSOs)/NGOs and private sector actors have a right to organise autonomously and to consult with their constituencies prior to deliberation of a particular issue.[69] This has led to both the creation of an autonomous Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) and a Private Sector Mechanism (PSM). Representation of those 'most affected' by issues of food security is also prioritised.[70] Therefore, the CSM currently has four seats on the Advisory Committee whilst the PSM has only one.[71] However, these mechanisms are not without their challenges, as the PSM has increasingly used its 'growing influence' to seek to 'obtain changes in the participation structure of the CFS in ways that threaten the prioritization of civil society voices' (for example, by seeking parity with the CSM on the Advisory Committee).[72]

Ultimately, however, member states 'remain the ultimate decision makers as well as principal actors in the attainment of food security'.[73] The lack of change to this traditional structure has not gone uncontested. Hospes, for example, argues that 'It is very unlikely that the reformed CFS can become relevant for the global food security agenda and address the fundamental issue of food violence, if state actors do not share decision-making power with non-state actors'.[74] In other words, it is the lack of political rights granted to CSOs that undermines the promise of the participatory approach advocated for by the reformed Committee. Further democratising the CFS is therefore seen to be especially important because many southern farming organisations are

[69] CFS (2009).
[70] CFS (2009).
[71] Jessica Duncan and Priscilla Claeys, 'Politicizing food security governance through participation: opportunities and opposition', Food Security, 10:6 (2018), pp.1411-1424.
[72] Duncan and Claeys, (2018) p.1418
[73] CFS (2015), p.2.
[74] Hospes, 'Food Sovereignty: The Debate, the Deadlock, and a Suggested Detour', Agriculture and Human Values 31:1 (2014), p.128.

interested in the forum precisely because of the prospect of holding powerful actors that influence their food and agricultural systems to account.[75]

McKeon, furthermore, outlines that while the organisation favours inclusive decision-making, when the stakes are high, the preferred approach of negotiated consensus has a tendency to 'sink towards an only marginally useful lowest common denominator'.[76] This leads her to question whether on these occasions voting might be preferable to consensus building.[77] Currently when consensus cannot be achieved between members and participants, states alone 'maintain the right to vote'.[78] However, it is also important to question whether the problem is deliberation itself, or rather that the scope and remit of deliberation in this case is simply too demanding. When the focus of decision-making is so broad, it is perhaps little wonder that participants can agree on so little.

The workings of KTTs and the CFS thus reveal some notable limitations with deliberating about food holistically. Firstly, and as we have seen, the breadth of the focus can make it extremely difficult to arrive at meaningful agreement and determinate decision-making. This obviously impedes the ability to make effective beneficial changes to our food system. Secondly, that breadth can also allow powerful actors with vested interests to dominate the process. We return to the question of power in subsection 3.4, but for now we argue that while processes of community and multi-stakeholder engagement will surely play a vital role in multi-layered processes of democratising food, those processes must have a more focused remit if the goal of meaningfully including all affected parties is to be furthered.

[75] Declaration of Nyéléni (2009).
[76] McKeon (2015), p.331.
[77] McKeon (2015), p.331.
[78] Duncan and Claeys (2018), p.1414

3.2. Deliberating by Food-Related *Issue*

A possible way of focusing the scope and remit of deliberative processes is to have fora make decisions on food-related *issues*. An instructive example of an attempt to stimulate nation-wide deliberation on a crucial issue in the contemporary food system comes from the Dutch Government. In 2001, a special purpose committee was charged with organising a nation-wide debate on the introduction of genetically modified organisms into the Dutch food system. The objective was three-fold: to increase the available information and exchange of information on biotechnology and food amongst a broad public; to offer opportunities for discussion and opinion formation on the use of modern biotechnology in food, as well as the desirable limits of such use; and to record the outcomes of these debates. The overall aim was to engage as large a segment as possible of the population in deliberating the 'future of food'.

In order to realise these objectives, the Committee on Biotechnology & Food organised three different layers of deliberation and information gathering. First, two debates – in which experts, a group of 150 citizens, and Committee members played a role – were organised. Second, 320 civil society organisations (professional organisations, action groups, working groups as well as religious groups) and 2,000 schools were approached with an invitation to organise debates themselves which would then report to the Committee. Eighty social organisations and 200 schools organised such debates, drawing upon the committee's 'toolbox' designed for the purpose. Locally, various workshops, roundtables, debate nights, theatre productions and a court simulation took place.[79] Third, the Dutch public at large was informed and invited to take part in

[79] Jan. C. Terlouw et al., Eten & Genen: een publiek debat over biotechnologie en voedel; rapport uitgebracht door de staatscommissie biotechnologie en voedsel, (Den Haag, Ministerie van Landbow: 2002).

the public debate and its constituent activities through information pages in several national newspapers as well as a free nationally distributed groceries magazine. In other words, through a wide range of activities the Committee sought to engage the population on the topic of GMOs and provided spaces and opportunities to deliberate on the potential implications of their introduction into the Dutch food system. Following the publication of the final report as well as various polling exercises it was possible to assess how the public evaluated a number of themes in relation to biotechnology and food and compare these to figures from other European countries. Overall, it was concluded that the Dutch did not see the 'added value' of the use of biotechnology in view of current knowledge about the risks.[80]

This deliberative exercise provides important food for thought for those interested in assessing the merits of an issue-based deliberative approach. In terms of inclusivity, issue-based deliberation seems like a useful way of engaging with affected parties. In the biotechnology exercise, Dutch people were provided with numerous opportunities to discuss and evaluate the issue. But while this makes the system open, it of course also makes it more likely for discussions to be dominated by those who are already politically engaged and concerned about the issue. Nonetheless, it is certainly possible to imagine a different issue-based deliberative exercise making concerted efforts to represent all relevant groups affected by that issue in its discussions, including those from different political communities.

However, there are two wider concerns with fixing the scope and remit of deliberation about food to *issues*. One is the question of *which* of the myriad food-related issues are to be discussed. Some of these cover topics that engage with a variety of food types (such as biotechnology, for

[80] Lucien Hanssen, Jan M. Gutteling, L. Lagerwerf, J. Bartels, and W. Roeterdink, In de marge van het publiek debat Eten & Genen. Flankerend onderzoek in opdracht van de Commissie Biotechnologie en Voedsel [In the margins of the public debate "Eating and Genes"] (Universiteit Twente: Afdeling Communicatiewetenschap, 2001).

example), while others are only applicable to certain sectors (such as the castration of pigs). This raises important questions about which are chosen for deliberation, and, perhaps even more importantly, who gets to decide. Indeed, this problem is exacerbated by the fact that there is even disagreement about what counts as an 'issue' at all. For example, there are groups who passionately believe that massive shifts towards a 'paleo diet' will reap important health and perhaps even environmental benefits.[81] Others, however, regard such claims as at best cranky, and at worst dangerous. So, who gets to determine whether this, or any other topic, is an issue worthy of deliberation?

The other problem with issue-based deliberation derives from the fact that many issues are and will be appraised very differently when applied to different food types. Biotechnology offers an interesting example of this. After all, the Dutch public did not produce definitive outcomes, as either 'for' or 'against' the application of biotechnology in food. And perhaps this is no surprise when one considers that whether one is 'for' or 'against' biotechnology in food will likely depend on the type of food in question: for example, many people have very different instincts about the modification of animals as they do plants, particularly when it comes to plants that have already been subject to considerable biotechnological intervention.

3.3. Deliberating by Food *Type*

A way of plausibly including all interested parties, having a meaningful and determinate set of topics over which to deliberate, and being attuned to the different questions raised by different products, would be to organise deliberation around a specific food *type*. This model has several

[81] Karen Pendergrass, 'Is the Paleo Diet Sustainable? Paleo Foundation', available at: {https://paleofoundation.com/is-the-paleo-diet-sustainable/} accessed 8 October 2018.

appealing characteristics. First of all, on an empirical level, it is difficult to generalise across different foods and especially different markets and supply chains. Differences are related to the nature of the food (such as fruits, vegetables, legumes, cereals, derivative products like honey or meats) since, although it is possible to group some foods together, perhaps based on their growing cycle or other conditions, most foods are actually unique. Indeed, the history of breeding or other forms of more advanced genetic modification means that different foods are situated within different material, biological and ecological contexts.

Secondly, and pertinent to the question of (global) governance, food markets have different characteristics which need to be understood and dealt with where effective regulation is being considered. International commodity markets may be: thin (few buyers and sellers) or thick (many buyers and sellers, lots of liquidity); have derivative markets that influence price (futures markets); or may be mature or new. Some markets may have a price-floor as a result of government intervention; some may not. These factors may change over time and space, and all will exercise influence on productive conditions and labour standards. While it may be possible to speak about certain trends from a macro-perspective, when it comes to addressing specific conditions these vary greatly across food markets. Thirdly, in view of potential public apathy, it might be the case that governance mechanisms organised around a specific food (or food product) can avoid this pitfall if institutions are built around those who are directly affected and/or involved in the food chain.

A fourth argument is that many *existing* governance frameworks are in fact organised around a specific food, making their transformation along inclusive and deliberative lines, if not straightforward, then at least plausible. For example, Fairtrade International started its journey towards the incorporation of ethical values within food supply chains with bananas and coffee.

Gradually it has expanded the range and scope of its activities. While Fairtrade is not a perfect model and the embedding of 'alternative' networks of production within capitalist relations of production must be critically evaluated, the organisation also coordinates some of the most ethical contemporary trading networks.

Organising around food type has also increasingly been adopted at a global level by private industry, for example, the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) and the Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (GRSB). Of course, these groupings have been heavily critiqued for propelling market-centric and business narratives that mask the continuing negative realities of production.[82] In terms of participation and accessibility, membership fees are often tiered by level of access to governance structures, decision-making fora and information. For example, in RSPO, organisations that pay the highest fees buy the right to vote at and participate in General Assemblies, to access all RSPO information, and to be elected to the Board of Governors, whereas those on the lowest tier have no access to voting rights or information. Therefore, although in theory actors from across the supply chain can participate, and increasingly they do, inequitable fee structures prevent full inclusion (particularly for smaller and less powerful actors) and access to information which are both key to meaningful deliberation.

A relatively recent – and perhaps more promising – addition to the growing number of multi-stakeholder fora,[83] which potentially strikes a different balance in terms of accessibility, is the World Banana Forum (WBF) which was launched in 2009. Hosted by the FAO, the WBF represents 'a space where the main stakeholders of the global banana supply-chain work together

[82] Peter Dauvergne, 'The Global Politics of the Business of "Sustainable" Palm Oil', Global Environmental Politics, 18:2 (2018), pp. 34–52.
[83] HLPE, 'Multi-stakeholder Partnerships' (Rome: High Level Panel of Experts, FAO, 2018).

to achieve consensus on best practices for sustainable production and trade'.[84] Since its inception it has held three conferences, the last of which was attended by over 300 delegates from 42 countries with participants representing a balance of players along the chain including small, medium and large-scale growers' organisations, unions, importers and exporters, retailers, civil society, scientists, research institutions, governments and inter-governmental organisations.[85] The most recent conference in Geneva included participatory workshops and working groups on issues such as the spread of Tropical Race 4 disease and gender equality.[86] The underlying ethos of the WBF is collaboration. It is partly member-funded through a fee which is tiered by organisation size and location, with the smallest members from least-developed countries paying the least (US$60) and very large companies paying the most (US$21,600). Moreover, all members are equally eligible to become part of the Steering Committee, to coordinate a Working Group, to be involved in the 'global change process' and to access WBF information and contacts.

The forum operates through two tiers of governance. A Steering Committee is composed of nominated representatives and coordinates the ongoing work of the forum and its Working Groups. Participation on the Committee is open to all (with the proviso that they have the time and willingness to commit). Above this is the Executive Board (made up of between 5 and 9 elected members) which is mandated to implement decisions made by the Committee and represents the highest decision-making body. The Board rotates its members in order to maintain a balance in representation of the business sector (two persons), producers (one person), retailers (one person), trade unions (one person) and civil society organisations (two persons). WBF

[84] FAO, 'About the WBF', available at: {http://www.fao.org/world-banana-forum/about-the-forum/en/} accessed 25 September 2018.
[85] Banana Link, 'The World Banana Forum consolidates and celebrates the achievements of industry cooperation', available at: {http://www.bananalink.org.uk/world-banana-forum-consolidates-and-celebrates-achievements-industry-cooperation} accessed 28 September 2018.
[86] Banana Link (2017).

suggests that a balance of regional and gender representation is also taken into account. In order to focus discussion and break the forum into smaller groups, there are also three Working Groups that address different dimensions of sustainability: sustainable production systems and environmental impact; fairer distribution of value along the supply chain; and labour rights (including human rights, health and safety, gender equity and decent work).

The WBF model, therefore, provides a global platform for deliberation on key issues facing the banana industry. It is also inclusive of a broad range of interested and affected parties, both large (such as Tesco) and small (such as WINFA, the Caribbean Windward Islands Farmers' Association), and from all regions of the world. The quality of participation and inclusion is therefore potentially greatly improved in comparison to industry-led private commodity Roundtables.

Of course, the WBF is not immune from criticism. It can legitimately be argued that it remains a form of elite deliberation that both excludes citizen participation and only offers opportunities of participation to those who are already integrated to such global networks in some way. Furthermore, the WBF has not yet found means by which to represent the interests of other affected parties, such as the animals whose habitats or migratory routes span banana plantations. Nonetheless, it does not require vast leaps of imagination to think how a similar model of deliberative practice – focused on food type – could become even more inclusive, by reaching out to and representing all affected parties.

3.4 The Question of Power

One important issue remains: the question of power. In all of the real-world examples above, a central problem is not only in ensuring that affected parties participate, but that they can deliberate on equal terms: that their voices are heard, but also make a difference. If the democratisation of food is to take place not just in one community, but across local, national and regional borders, this raises challenges about the possibilities for equitable participation and deliberation. While a focus on food type might help to an extent, it cannot by itself resolve the problem. With such a broad range of perspectives and interests that need to be represented, how can we stop the powerful from dominating and enable those with less power to deliberate on an equal footing? This problem might be particularly acute for our model, since we are advocating for deliberative practices which also include the representatives of nonhuman animals – perhaps the paradigm example of a 'voiceless' marginalised group.

In the citizen forum or 'mini-publics' context, giving everyone the opportunity to make themselves heard has been found to be one of the major challenges.[87] With this in mind, an increasing number of studies have started to examine the 'participatory *quality'* of deliberation [emphasis added].[88] Several strategies have been proposed. Smith argues that random sampling (as a way to ensure a diversity of viewpoints), provision of additional information and facilitation can be used to mitigate power.[89] In particular, he finds that *active* facilitation plays an essential role in shaping and reshaping the conditions of free and equal deliberation, and that this makes a qualitative difference to the conditions under which deliberation takes place. Effective facilitation ensures that marginalised voices are heard by encouraging contributions from those who are less predisposed to speak, ensuring that more politically able and charismatic voices do not dominate,

[87] Staffan Himmelroos, 'Discourse Quality in Deliberative Citizen Forums – A Comparison of Four Deliberative Mini-publics', Journal of Public Deliberation, 13:1 (2017), p.1-28.
[88] Himmelroos (2017).
[89] Graham Smith, Democratic innovations: designing institutions for citizen participation (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

and that 'democratic virtues' such as 'mutual respect and reciprocity' are encouraged.[90] This can motivate delegates to consider the interests of their neighbours and to act in more solidarity with their needs, thereby transforming seemingly self-interested motivations into ones orientated more towards the public good.[91] For example, at a Participatory Budget forum in Chicago, a trained facilitator was able to create a shared space in which participants from opposing sides of a neighbourhood learnt about the problems facing the other and ranked the problems together, resulting in a shift in priorities towards those most in need, where before they had been overlooked.[92]

Others have suggested that power is best mitigated when disempowered voices deliberate in their own enclaves.[93] Karpowitz et al, for example, suggest the creation of homogenous groups of the least powerful. Membership of such groups can be structured by the sharing of similar viewpoints, structural locations (such as occupation), or identities. They suggest that the quality and equity of deliberation in such groups has potential to be higher than in heterogenous groups as it allows groups to develop a 'stronger collective identity'.[94] It can give 'disempowered or marginalized groups an opportunity to develop their own unique perspectives and arguments, which might otherwise be overlooked or ignored'.[95] This type of deliberation is particularly common and valuable amongst community groups, civil society organisations and social movements. Of course, if members *only* speak to each other, this would decrease both the diversity of viewpoints and utility of the discussions. However, participants 'may oscillate between protected enclaves'

[90] Smith (2009) p.169
[91] Smith (2009).
[92] Smith (2009).
[93] Christopher F. Karpowitz, Chad Raphael and Allen S. Hammond, 'Deliberative Democracy and Inequality: Two Cheers for Enclave Deliberation among the Disempowered', Politics & Society, 37:4 (2009), pp.576-615.
[94] Karpowitz et al (2009), p.604
[95] Karpowitz et al (2009), p.582

enabling them to 'test their ideas against the reigning reality'.[96] Moreover, if enclave deliberation *precedes* wider deliberation, then it could play a valuable role in mitigating the power of dominant actors.[97]

As Curato et al. argue, the simple fact is that deliberative democracy has an 'ambivalent' and 'inextricable' relationship with power. It offers opportunities for 'confronting coercive forms of power' but also 'creates new forms of power of its own'.[98] Consequently, it is impossible to ever fully remove power from deliberative interactions or to completely overthrow structural and political constraints.[99] Power instead is both 'integral' and 'constitutive' of deliberative democratic practices.[100] Deliberation is therefore vulnerable to 'coercive power' and the domination of commercial and political interests, but at the same time integral to counteracting this by generating 'productive power'.[101] This means that as power shifts, the organisation of participation and deliberation needs to be continually reformulated. As Mansbridge argues, 'no democracy ever reaches the point where justice is done', therefore the ability to fight power lies in the proliferation of 'oppositional discourses' and 'oppositional cultures'.[102] The more deliberative arenas there are, the greater chance of counteracting coercive power from a variety of different angles.

While power imbalances are a difficulty for *every* decision mechanism, including deliberative ones, they do not constitute a reason to reject deliberative processes. Instead, they give us reason

[96] Jane Mansbridge, 'Using Power/Fighting Power: The Polity' in Seyla Benhabib (ed.), Democracy and Different: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), p.51.
[97] Karpowitz et al (2009), p.580
[98] Nicole Curato, Marit Hammond and John B. Min, 'Power in Deliberative Democracy: Norms, Forums, Systems' (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), p.173.
[99] Curato et al (2019).
[100] Curato et al (2019), p.vi
[101] Curato et al (2019), pp.175-176
[102] Mansbridge (1996), pp.58-60

to find ways to *mitigate* such imbalances. As we have seen, there are a number of strategies which offer plausible and effective means to allow for marginalised, minority and other disempowered groups to participate on equal terms. Such means are perfectly applicable to deliberative practices organised around food-type.

Section 4: Conclusion

In order to tackle the multitude of competing ethical tensions in the global food system, we need a new approach that more effectively captures and balances competing interests than existing discourses. We argue that this is best achieved through deliberative democratic processes at the local, national, regional and global level. The paper's motivating stance is that the approaches presently available – food security, food sovereignty, food justice and food democracy – while important and beneficial, are also limited in significant ways. By analysing each in turn we have shown there to be a number of prerequisites for a new approach to global food governance, which includes the participation of all relevant affected parties, including sentient nonhuman animals. We propose that one way to balance these competing tensions is through a deliberative approach to the *democratisation* of food. This is because in order to change the status quo, we need a framework that allows all affected parties to have their say in a fashion that is regarded as legitimate by all relevant parties. Importantly, this process must provide opportunities for minority interests to win out, and for preferences to be both transformed and to be orientated towards the common good. Deliberative decision-making is particularly suited to this challenge because it allows affected parties to hear from the experts, listen to the views of others, reflect on their own preferences and make an informed collective decision.

By evaluating three approaches that cut and dice the scope and remit of deliberation in different ways, we argue that organising deliberation around food *type* is potentially more effective than deliberating about food *holistically* or by *issue.* Deliberating by food *type*, overcomes the need to generalise across different types of food and their greatly varying markets. Additionally, if institutions are built around those who are directly involved in food chains, there is a higher likelihood of including those who are interested, affected and knowledgeable. The WBF, on paper, in particular embodies an archetype of an existing plausible deliberate forum that includes (nearly) the full gamut of affected parties along the supply chain, with equitable participation and governance structures, that puts significant weight on issues of social and global justice, is orientated towards the common good, and importantly emphasises collaboration as one of its key guiding principles.

The contribution of this paper is therefore to bring a new procedural perspective to ongoing debates about the merits and limitations of current approaches to the global food system. Rather than arguing for food sovereignty over food security, or for food democracy over food justice, this paper, suggests that each of these approaches flags up important prerequisites to the development of a new approach for the global food system, that centres the *deliberative democratisation* of food. Key to this thesis is that the answer to the myriad challenges facing the global food system is procedural – in that it requires all affected parties to participate – and requires the reforming of institutional arrangements in order to support this.

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